

1st Research Report

Media and community culture

A European history of television



ISTITUTO STORICO **PARRI** EMILIA-ROMAGNA

Regione Emilia-Romagna

Assemblea Legislativa



il filo
d'EUROPA **2**

1st Research Report

Audiovisual media and community culture

A European history of television



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The second volume of the publication “Il filo d’Europa” presents the first step of a research about the representation of history in the Western European televisions. This study is the result of a 2 years work on the initiative of Assemblea legislativa of the Emilia-Romagna Region, in particular the Europe Direct Centre and the Videoteca, and carried out by the Istituto storico Parri Emilia-Romagna in cooperation with seven professors from seven different European countries.

At the beginning of the project we had some questions as “does exist an European history? In which way the history is shown in the European televisions? How do they talk about Europe? Is it possible to outline a common television history that can be shared by all?” There are many questions for sure and this study is only the first attempt to find an answer. We intend this study as a stage of a route that will involve the others European countries and we want offer it to the European institutions as a contribution to the European integration process.

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I n t r o d u c t i o n

Luisa Cigognetti, Lorenza Servetti, Pierre Sorlin

In 2006, by initiative of the Legislative Assembly of Emilia Romagna Region, the Parri History Institute started a research project on how history is represented on European TV channels. This project had four goals:

- considering the importance of television in providing information, to find out the subjects and the history periods represented on television, in order to understand how historical references are created in each country;
- to assess the importance of the TV programs which have to do with Europe's past, even partially;
- to find whether some subjects concerning a country's history can reach a European dimension, and to what extent;
- to make proposals for the production of programs on European history, to be submitted to the Brussels authorities.

At first it was agreed with the Region that the research project would focus on seven countries of Western Europe. However the goal remains to take into consideration the 27 countries of the European Union. Nonetheless it was easier, for experimental purposes, to concentrate only on a limited area, bearing in mind the importance of recent history that is extremely interesting to the audience and at the same time the particular experience of the countries of the former Soviet block.

The survey was carried out in four phases:

1. Questionnaire on the evolution of history representation, on the division between public or private channels, specialized channels and successful history programs.
2. The participants had not understood all the aims of the research project and did not know each other, the answers to the first questionnaire were various, sometimes they were just lists. A second questionnaire was drafted and adapted to each case, enabling to complete the first document and to unify the research procedure.

3. A final questionnaire asked to think about the stylistic, narrative and visual parameters of the history account and to define the present evolution of representation.
4. In the final seminar the participants use some excerpts from programs, regarded as examples, and analyze the idea of history in their country; the people in charge of the research project present a summary to a group of experts who assess the work carried out and make suggestions, both in order to spread the survey to other countries and in order to think over the diffusion of a European history on television.

Models of narration on history

The question at the beginning of the survey: “how is history represented by TV channels?” seemed to be easy, but during the research project it turned out to be a complex problem. It was clear beforehand that the vision of the past was extremely different in countries that differ from each other for their historic evolution, political regime and school system. Each nation created a TV channel in different periods and situations and with a particular statute, and those channels operate in different ways. The first TV programs were broadcast within 8 years, from 1948 for Great Britain to 1956 for Spain. In a post-war Europe, with a very strong cultural particularism and protectionism, the way the past was represented had to change according to the different countries. But for each country television was a new mass communication medium, different from the radio and the cinema, there were no models, rules, specialists and methods. On the other hand, the technologies and the conditions under which the programs were broadcast were the same. New methods were tried, looking for lessons, examples and solutions from abroad. Imitations, adaptations and emulations are the keywords to understand the reasons behind some choices: Treinta años de Historia was a Spanish re-adaptation of American and French programs; El tribunal de la historia (TVE 1) was inspired by Les énigmes de l’histoire (Tf 1); the American program You were there inspired the Italian I giorni della storia; Channel 5 re-elaborated the documentaries of the German channel ZDF on the Second World War; The Great War, produced by BBC, gave the idea for Nascita di una dittatura and for the Italian programs that derived from it; La tribuna de la historia (TVE 2) and Luci e ombre sulla storia (History

Channel Italia) are “twin” programs, and it would be difficult to say which was inspired by the other. The various TV programs on ancient times are international and always moved from one channel to the other; some prestigious and expensive programs, such as Rome o Pompei: the last day, a BBC production, spread throughout Europe.

The diffusion of programs between channels can be easily explained. The founders of channels were technicians and journalists and were not particularly interested in history. They received proposals from people of letters and asked film directors to carry out such projects. There was an enthusiastic and improvisation atmosphere, and no-one in the TV channels thought carefully about what type of services the medium was able to promote; this happened in all channels, for sports, news, games, the theater or history. It was quite late when RAI 3 prepared a “history project” with the aim of finding the right ways to make history more interesting and easier to understand, but no attempt was made to evaluate the importance of history in people’s education, with the help of politicians and teachers, or the opportunities of a possible European history. When BBC was only a radio network, it started to cooperate with scholars and writers, before the Second World War. ITV, the first commercial channel created in 1954, proved to be original, by inviting a famous historian and brilliant commentator, AJP Taylor, for a history series. Challenge (1957) launched a new style, the educational report, with long explanations of an eloquent professor. The same procedure was adopted on BBC 2 (1969) by another historian, Kenneth Clark, who went in person to monuments or famous places, in Civilization he outlined the main stages of human imagination through art. By talking in the first person the historian can choose the material, images and texts and be free to comment it in the way he or she wants. However the example from the UK had a limited impact and inspired only La huella del hombre (TVE 1, 1969-70), which followed Civilisation, and then Alain Decaux raconte (Tf 1, 1972), but it remained something peculiar to the British TV, and is still under way at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

The networks were afraid of the strong “professoral” nature of the programs hosted by specialists. Their fear is understandable, if we think about the evolution of the public. In Great Britain the success of televi-

sion grew very fast, going from 250,000 television sets in January 1950 to two million three years later. In France and Italy the number of television sets reached two million in 1961, the slowness of the evolution led to the tendency to prefer less demanding programs, hosted by writers or journalists. The trend in the Sixties was to give three types of presentation: the historical reconstruction, that gives the illusion of witnessing the event, the history lesson in episodes, and the talk show.

The account in the first person does not hide the subjective point of view of the historian, the history lesson in episodes is completely different from that, it is anonymous as it is presented by an off-screen voice. The author is usually a journalist, sometimes assisted by a specialist, and does not take responsibility for the text, he or she writes without knowing the available images and gives explanations that will be hard to explain.

The viewer can listen without looking at the screen or follow the images without paying attention to the text. The first attempt of this kind, *Das Dritte Reich*, was broadcast by ARD (1960). The subject was so hot that it was necessary to have an outward neutral point of view of an invisible reader. With *The Great War* (1964) BBC launched a fundamental innovation. The narration was in a classical form and was enriched by declarations from famous persons and unknown survivors who interrupted the reading of the comment and captured the attention of the public. The double presentation, distant and veiled behind the screen and yet somehow present, immediate, gave to the program a strength that was previously unknown.

The success of *The Great War* launched a new approach, to resort regularly to witnesses. First contemporary critics were asked to analyze the evolution of the twentieth century, on the basis of their experience, but they were all political or scientific authorities. So Willy Brandt, Hannah Arendt, Günther Grass and Konrad Adenauer gave their version of Nazism in *Zur Person* (ZDF, 1963), whereas *Das Dritte Reich* had remained intentionally a perfect lesson in a traditional form. The idea of alternating a sober and clear account of facts and memories, which were often moving, was successful, and was a turning point in television production. The same approach was adopted in Italy (*Vent'anni di Repubblica*, 1966, *Nascita di una dittatura*, 1972) and Spain (*España siglo XX*, 1970) and

has been used up to the present, with *La grande storia in prima serata* (RAI 3). From a human point of view, the account of the life experience of the witnesses, without thinking about the past, seemed more rich than the history summary presented by experts. For the fiftieth anniversary of the First World War RTBF broadcast *1914-1918: Le Journal de la Grande Guerre*, a sort of evocation based on individual memories; and ARD aired *Augenzeugen berichten*, memories of “eye witnesses”. This type of program, that was low-cost for TV networks, rapidly became the touchstone of television history, to such an extent that scriptwriters often introduce into costume films “witnesses” with the task of reporting on imaginary memories. The “point of view of those who experience history without having the chance to talk about it” spread in a wide series of programs whose aim, according to the commercial of an English program, is to “make history interesting” and which are an example of the widely used “intimist report”.

We can divide this type of programs as follows:

- following the example of Carlo Ginzburg and his “microhistory”, reconstructions of the life of humble people and of the changes of private lives throughout centuries, by means of images, letters and legal documents;
- mysteries of the past or unknown events;
- reports on local life and traditions, districts, streets, houses;
- genealogy;
- “reality history”, something peculiar to Britain, in this type of program people are asked to “re-live” in front of the camera moments of the past, the trenches of the First World War, the life of miners.

These are variegated programs that alternate short sequences, comments from historians and journalists, comments from the public, giving an idea of complicity between the network and the viewers, their ancestors, their families and their country.

The “privatization” of history influenced reconstructions too. In the first decades of television, programs on history showed only famous persons or important events and the authors did anything possible to translate written documents into dialogues or representations; the characters and

the setting were artificial but historical texts were respected. The representation of personal experiences and daily activities changed the setting, the approach changed, moving from the idea of dealing with high-level politics to the idea of talking about the problems of common people, in this way the story reconstruction often started from a modest background. The great success of *Heimat*, broadcast by ARD in 1984 and later broadcast on all European channels, showed that fiction can be entertaining and at the same time make people reflect on the past. In its first part the program evokes in an impressionist way the days and the years of an imaginary village and its inhabitants from 1919 to 1984, by showing everyday facts and banal deeds. The “great history” is shown only on the margins, a soldier coming back represents the First World War, a public ceremony represents Nazism and women’s work is a symbol of the Second World War. Almost all characters are residents in the area where the film was shot, they pass through quickly, none of them is a protagonist and most events do not come to a conclusion, as if to represent the uncertain flow of life.

Shortly after that (1986) BBC 1 found an alternative solution with *The Monocled Mutineer*. The network presented an authentic character, an English soldier, about which little is known, except for the fact that he took part in a mutiny of the English army in September 1917; the channel reconstructed the daily life of soldiers, the suffering, the useless operations, the incompetence of commanders, and the progressive impatience of combatants.

Starting “from the bottom”, the German and British programs opened two opposite roads. The first ignored the noise of the world and offered a many-voiced and almost anonymous journey across the twentieth century; the second started from everyday experience to reconstruct the military experience of the Great War.

All channels made use of history fiction, making up characters and events within a precise period of the past; the short programs explained above are aimed at introducing a more cheerful tone and compensating the gaps of iconographic documentation.

Main trends

In the second half of the twentieth century TV channels tried a wide range of narrative forms to evoke the past: account in the first person,

anonymous speech, showing witnesses, moving from the local to the general and universal situation, imagination and personification of real or imaginary characters. If people look at the program schedule they can think that history is everywhere on the small screen. But those who take into account audience statistics notice that history plays just a minor role in TV programs. Until the eighties, when TV networks were more or less integrally under state control, the past, both national and international, was often reported or represented. Those were the decades of Challenge, Das Dritte Reich, The Great War, Vent'anni di Repubblica, Civilisation, España siglo XX.

The commercial channels, whose number multiplied from the Eighties, were eager to attract as many viewers as possible, and decided not to broadcast those programs that were regarded as difficult or boring, in order to increase the revenues from advertisement. Many public networks followed their example, to keep the pace with competition.

The “hunt for the audience” encouraged TV networks to offer “packages” of channels specialized in sports, travel, information, history, etc. History channels are in all countries and are useful to “blow up” the supply of TV programs, but their audience rate is low and since administrators know that it cannot increase they buy low-cost series, especially in the United States. Most of the programs on history are aired by BBC 2 and its digital channel BBC 4, by Fr 3, RAI 3, RTP 2, TVE 1 and ZDF with its digital channel, ZDF History.

The “intimistic accounts”, nostalgic tales of past times or precise analyses of local traditions, are broadcast during a time of the day with a medium-level audience share, in the afternoon or late in the evening, they involve a limited but faithful audience which watches them regularly and in some programs the audience can participate with phone calls or by sending documents, amateur films, photographs and some testimony. But the attention paid to everyday situations and places went beyond the programs for curious amateurs and got into the big series during prime time. The most significant example of this kind was in 1995, The People's Century (BBC), a wide analysis in twenty-six episodes, each for one year, which explored the changes introduced by the twentieth century in the knowledge of the world, in private life and international relations. A

similar type of inspiration, even though less ambitious, can be found in programs on neglected communities or categories, on immigrants, the middle class (*The Middle Classes: their rise and sprawl*, BBC, 2002) and on women, who were portrayed first in Great Britain (*A Skirt through History*, BBC, 1994, six episodes on the story of many women and on how women perceive the world), then in Spain (*Mujeres en la historia*, TVE 2, 1995-2003 on the women of history in Spain) and in Italy (*Anni Sessanta*, RAI 3, 2008).

Contemporary history and in particular the evocation of the Second World War, remained the preferred subject of the European TV networks, but the wide-ranging programs gave a lot of space to witnesses, who were interviewed on their everyday experience, this is the case of the following programs: *Hitler, eine Bilanz* (ZDF, 1995, six episodes dealing with many aspects of the character), *The Nazis: A Warning from History* (BBC 2, 1997), *Portugal do século vinte* (History Channel Iberia, Portugal, 2002), *Memoria de España* (TVE 1, 2004), *Auschwitz: the Nazis and the "Final Solution"* (BBC, 2005), *Moi Belgique* (RTBF, 2006, history of Belgium from the beginning, in 1830, to the twenty-first century).

And the recent historical fiction has used political evolution as background of personal events, evoking the story of two brothers through forty years in contemporary Italy in *La meglio gioventù* (RAI 3, 2003), the Spanish Civil War and the onset of Franchism in *Amar en tiempos revueltos* (2005), the last years of Franchism in *Cuéntame lo que pasó* (2001 and the following years), this series was imitated in Portugal with *Conta-me come era antes* (RTP 1, 2004), the vicissitudes of a family in the days of Salazar.

National Peculiarities

European TV networks leave a lot of space to individual memory, they do so for economical reasons and also because it is taken for granted that the audience prefers life experience, emotion and individual memories to abstract stories and reasonings. This parallel evolution did not change deeply the original characteristics of each national television. Even though networks deal with problems in a similar way, they remain faithful to autonomous subjects, which are rooted in different historical traditions.

Belgium never gave much space to “the great history”, whether international or national. The series on general history are expensive and are on the television networks of Britain, France and Germany that can be seen everywhere. Since the country is divided into three language communities, Flemish and French-speaking networks decided to promote local history, both through fictions which highlighted the traditions of the different groups and through the reconstruction of small episodes that represent a certain period. Most of all, the collaboration between networks enabled to go back to critical moments of the past: the collaboration with the Nazis (*Ordre nouveau*, 1984) and the bloody colonization of Congo (*Roi blanc, caoutchouc rouge, mort noire*, 2004).

France, when television was a public monopoly, followed an original road. From 1957 to 1966 *La caméra explore le temps* reconstructed famous moments or events with actors and historical documents, giving an “objective” version against the distortions of tradition. At the same time some historians were sent to write and supervise prestigious series, such as *Le temps des cathédrales* in 1976. The separation of television networks, which became autonomous, and the creation of commercial television networks led to permanent competition to increase the audience and to a progressive tendency to leave behind historical subjects. Only one channel, Fr 3, broadcasts history programs on the twentieth century, and its main themes are the German occupation and Algeria’s war. The German-French channel Arte airs many documentaries on the Second World War, the Third World and recent history, however the audience rate is very low.

The favorite subject of television in Germany is Nazism and its corollaries, war, the occupation of Europe and the Shoah. In 1960 *Das Dritte Reich* was an innovative program which explored deeply a recent and dramatic period. The Eichmann process and later the American series *Holocaust*, that was broadcast many times, received a lot of attention from the audience. Afterwards many programs analyzed the evolution of the army and the condition of women or other social groups, analyzing their relation to Hitler.

The reunification made TV networks take into account the evolution of the “communist block” and of the former democratic Germany, but the Third Reich, its legacy and its dramatic events are still dominant in the programs on history.

In the European scenario Great Britain is an exception. A commercial channel, ITV, opened in 1954, but this did not lead BBC to look for easier programs, there was mutual emulation. Whereas in the other countries the evocation of the past is declining, the two British systems continue to produce important history programs. A lot of space was given on all screens to local history, genealogy, the editing of amateur films, the evocation of old castles and traditions and interviews, and the same goes for the Scottish or Gaelic history or the history of the former colonies (The Story of India, BBC, 2007). Despite that the “Great History”, far from losing importance, keeps its position. In the twentieth century the British television, differently from other televisions, did not focus on the national past. The first important series, Challenge (ITV, 1957), was on the Russian revolution, and was followed by four series, all different from each other, on the wars of the twentieth century; programs on the evolution of art in the world (Civilisation, BBC 2, 1969) and the impressive The People’s Century. At the start of the twenty-first century British television channels give more importance to the British islands (A History of Britain, BBC, 2002; Seven Ages of Britain, Channel 4, 2002; Monarchy, Channel 4, 2004), but are still open to the problems of all European societies (The Middle Classes: their rise and sprawl, BBC, 2002).

In Italy RAI broadcast for two decades documentaries based on the editing of archive documents with a comment, as off-screen voice. From 1972 onwards, due to influences from the British experience, it produced accurate and complex series on the recent past (Nascita di una dittatura, 1972, La notte della Repubblica, 1989). The same model is applied in La grande storia in prima serata (RAI 3), that focuses on the twentieth century and in particular on the dictatorships and the evolution of Italy. The commercial networks, whose number multiplied from 1983 onwards, introduced new ways to talk about history, and RAI adapted to the trend. Lively and brilliant programs mix authentic documents, reconstructions, scenarios and characters reconstructed with computer graphics, and are characterized by the interaction of experts or listeners. These programs deal with relevant events, whether old or current (La storia siamo noi, La superstoria, RAI 3; Altra storia, Italia 7) and unsettled issues (Enigma, Blu notte: Misteri italiani, RAI 3; Vite straordinarie, Rete 4). The TV channels of the Mediaset group broadcast also American-style docudramas, with

special effects and with a shocking editing style, due to the violent sensation caused by the extremely rapid succession of images, for instance from a very wide shot to a close shot (Totò Riina. Capo dei capi, Nassyria, Canale 5). History remains an important element of Italian televisions, as in British televisions, but in Italy more emphasis is placed on the past of the peninsula, without looking beyond the Italian borders.

In Portugal history is portrayed most of all on the public channel RTP 2, that broadcasts American or English programs and productions of the channel itself. The main public channel, RTP 1, prefers fictions and documentaries aimed at a wide audience. But the representation of the Portuguese history on RTP during the dictatorship until 1974 remains influential until the beginning of the twenty-first century. Many issues of the Portuguese contemporary history are covered in a serious way and brought onto screen only now. An example of this new approach is *A guerra*, eighteen episodes on the colonial wars of the Sixties and the Seventies and on the independence of the Portuguese territories in Africa. The commercial channels, SIC and TV1, give less space to history, but *Salazar*, aired by SIC in 1999, was the first attempt to portray the dictator and to take stock of his *Estado Novo*.

TVE held the monopoly of TV programs in Spain until 1983. It broadcast classical documentaries on the Second World War and on the Post-War period, with English or French series that were integrated with Spanish newsreels. Soon the programs started to include witnesses, at first important personalities and then common citizens (*España siglo XX*, 1970, *La tribuna de la historia*, 1978, which continued with *La vispera del nuestro tempo*, 1981). The transition toward democracy led to think carefully about the four previous decades, from the second republic to the end of Franchism, the main programs were broadcast on the public channels (*Memoria de España. Medio siglo de crisis*, 1983, *España, historia inmediata*, 1984, *La transición*, 1995) but also on private channels (*Que treinta años no es nada*, *La Sexta*).

At the beginning of the twenty-first century history slowly goes out of television programs, even though the twenty-six episodes of *Memoria de España* (2004) gave an account on the general history of the peninsula from the first appearance of the human being to the elections in May 2004.

examples: comparing the different points of view of Hungarians, Czech people and Austrians on the 1848 events in Hungary and the different points of view of Spanish and French people on the “Mayo de 1808”.

Mythology is important because it brings together the members of a national community, but it is not history. It is extremely difficult to explain the general evolution of Europe, the twenty-seven countries of the Union had very different political, military and social experiences in the nineteenth and twentieth century, the provinces of the Austro-Hungarian empire did not live like the Western democracies, and after a short period in which those countries got closer to each other the “Iron Curtain” imposed a division whose traces are still visible now. The TV programs on history should highlight such differences. The European Union was built on common principles: the independence of States, democracy, free movement, cooperation. In most cases independence and democracy have been attained recently, it would be important to explain when and how they were achieved.

Borders and conflicts have never hindered trade, journeys and migrations. How did merchants, workers and tourists consider the countries they went to? How were they welcomed? To what extent did they adapt and what type of relations did they keep with their country? Given the current tendency to broadcast programs with life stories and personal memories, some examples of Inter-European connections before the creation of the Union could be long term family relations and the memory of settlement, of the difficulties and of success, a memory that is passed on through generations.

Whether by means of mythology, of the account of relevant events or of personal memories, there are enough ways to put on screen the historic elements of a future European memory. The obstacle lies in the strategy of TV networks that are prisoners of copywriters and that worry only about audience statistics. A European history will not be promoted by commercial channels, as in schools the boost will come from a political decision. For this reason the initiative of the Emilia Romagna region is important. If it is continued it will contribute to promote an analysis of how the European past is represented on television.

Translated by *INTRAS Congressi*, Bologna

Appendix

TV channels in Western Europe*		
Belgium	<i>public channels</i>	VRT , Flemish channel
		RTBF , French-speaking channel
	<i>commercial channels</i>	RTL-TVi
France	<i>public channels</i>	Fr 2
		Fr 3
		Fr 4
		Fr 5
	<i>commercial channels</i>	Tf 1 (1948)
		M 6
		Canal +
<i>german-french channel</i>	Arte	
Germany	<i>public channels</i>	ARD - First program, 1952
		ZDF - Second program, 1963
		Third programs of the Federal States
		3 SAT , German-Austrian-Swiss channel
		Arte , German-French channel
	<i>commercial channels</i>	RTL plus
		SAT 1
		PRO 7
		and minor channels
Great Britain	<i>public channels</i>	BBC 1 (1948)
		BBC 2 (1974)
	<i>commercial channels</i>	ITV (1954)
		Channel 4 (1982)
		Channel 5 (1997)

Italy	<i>public channels</i>	RAI 1 (1952)
		RAI 2 (1961)
		RAI 3
	<i>commercial channels</i>	Rete 4
		Canale 5
		Italia Uno
La 7		
MTV		
Portugal	<i>public channels</i>	RTP1
		RTP2
	<i>commercial channels</i>	SIC
		TVI
Spain	<i>public channels</i>	TVE 1
		TVE2
	<i>commercial channels</i>	Telecinco
		Antena 3
		Canal +
(*) Name changes have not been considered, the names of the channels are the current ones		



part 1st

R e s e a r c h



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2

History on TV in the French-speaking part of Belgium

Muriel Hanot

The most important History Programmes put in the air by the main Television Channels

Public channels

Until the middle of the nineties, history was typically part of the public service broadcasting (RTBF) in the French speaking part of Belgium (French Community). The general-interest channel was born in 1953. In 1964, it began to broadcast what their producers considered as the first series devoted to history. 50 years after events happened, *14-18: Le Journal de la Grande Guerre* (“14-18: news over the World War I”) intended to report chronologically major facts of the conflict, by compiling pedagogical presentations and interviews of witnesses. It began to broadcast once a week and then, when facts became less abundant, once a month. The broadcast ended in 1968, numbering 126 episodes of half an hour.

30 years after this experience, public service which has lost its state monopoly (in 1987 with RTL-TVI’s birth), did the same again with Second World War. From 1990 to 1995 *Jours de guerre* (“Days of war”) dealt once a month with events of the period.

Technical means had evolved but it seems obvious that *Jours de guerre* took its inspiration in *14-18*: interviews, reports and -from now on- reconstructions and archives filled in the series. Historians took part in the direction of the TV production completed by a radio broadcast.

The project ended in 1995 first replaced by a similar one called *Jours de paix* (“Days of peace”) and then by a monthly magazine, *Les années belges* (“Belgian years”) that analyzed questions linked to Belgian history. It disappeared in 2005 without being replaced.

cational methods to evoke traditional aspects of history (old, medieval and modern history). Contemporary history was side line. In 1967 it won an international prize with *Ce que César n'a pas dit aux Gaulois* ("What Caesar didn't say to the Gauls").

In the sixties and seventies, the public service broadcasting launched also *Entre-deux guerre*, ("Between the two wars", 1968) a short series lead in the tradition of *14-18*"; *25 ans après* ("25 years after", 1969) that assured a critical analysis of the end of Second World War on the basis of documents produced by BBC; *Sous l'Occupation* ("Under Occupation", 1971-1972), that rerun and analyzed German original news that have been screened in Belgium during the Second World War. *Cinéma du Dr Goebbels* ("Dr Goebbels' movie", 1972-1973) did it the same way.

Then took place a series on the cold war (*La guerre froide*), in 1972-1973.

In the eighties, beside a lot of home-made documentaries on Second World War, RTBF broadcasted *Inédits* ("Unpublished"), a documentary series on everyday life between 1930 and 1950. It was made of amateur silent films shot at the time and commented by the "maker" or someone of his relatives. It's a "subjective" discovery of the middle-class everyday life during this era. It travelled the viewers everywhere (China, Congo, Lille, the air and so on).

The broadcast disappeared in the nineties when its producer retired.

In 1984, RTBF translated and broadcasted the Flemish report (produced by BRT, i.e. the Flemish public broadcasting service) *Ordre nouveau* ("New Order", 1982) directed by Maurice De Wilde. He investigated on the collaboration years and interviewed one of its Belgian figures, Léon Degrelle.

Other sorts of historical programmes have also appeared in the end of the eighties and in the beginning of the nineties: Quiz-shows as *Double 7* ("Dubble 7") or *Forts en tête* ("Strong minded", until 2005) used patrimonial reference to entertained "intelligently" people. Those games have known a real success.

In 1992 and 1993 RTBF broadcasted *Ces années-là* ("Those were the

years”) a compilation of hits that covered archives montage. On the Flemish side, BRT did the same with *Histories* (“Stories”).

In the nineties, a restructuring plan cut back the spending of RTBF. Advertising encouraged broadcast of more commercial programmes. So history disappeared from the public service. Only a patrimonial and tourist broadcast remained until 2004, called *La roue du temps* (“Time wheel”), that talked from time to time about medieval history. History slipped to specialised channels. The public service kept commemorative reports and prestige documentaries bought to other channels or production societies. In 2004 a fictitious documentary called *Roi blanc, caoutchouc rouge, mort noire* (“White King, red rubber, black death”) produced by Peter Bate (Periscoop Productions) revisited dark sides of Belgian national colonialism. That documentary featured a fictitious court that brought King Leopold II with prosecution witnesses. It had been broadcasted both on RTBF and VRT (the new name of the Flemish public service broadcasting). Facing controversy, RTBF warned viewers before launching the programme and organised a debate with specialists after.

In 2006 RTBF launched *Moi, Belgique* (“I, Belgium”), a narrative TV series told by a French speaking national star (Annie Cordy). It reviewed in seven episodes the periods that lead from the birth of the nation to today’s identity problems. Annie Cordy took viewers in a story, with heroes, mysteries and twists by addressing them with emotion.

“It wasn’t the first time that RTBF talked about national history. In 1980, RTBF had launched *1830. Chronique imaginaire d’une révolution* (“1830. Imaginary news on a revolution”), as part of the 150th anniversary of the country. It presented historical facts like TV news, with false interviews, false reports but period iconography. By the end of the nineties, *L’Europe de la Toison d’or* (“Golden Fleece Europe”), a documentary series, had been co-produced with the BRT. It commented period iconography, contemporary images, and historical reconstitutions.

Since 2003, RTBF revisits its archives by rerunning them on the second channel of the public service (*Zoom arrière*, “Zoom out”). After the broadcast, the director, the producer (or a journalist) comments the context and the content.

Fictional series or films have often been broadcasted on the public service as on the other commercial channels. But they weren't produced home: RTB(F) has never invested in such expensive productions. In fact, at the beginning of Belgian TV, the French speaking managers didn't believe they could do better than French TV. So they completed the programme schedule by relaying the signal from Paris. Most of the INR (RTB)'s programmes were French at the time: the news until 1956; *La camera explore le temps* ("The Camera explores Time") until 1961. So were the historical series like *Thierry la Fronde* ("Terry the Sling").

The place of French channels in the French speaking Community audio-visual landscape is so important that nowadays they attract such a large audience as RTBF and RTL-TVi.

On the Flemish side, things were different: NIR (BRT)'s managers believed in the power of the new media and thought that television could familiarize Flemish people with their cultural heritage. All the programs were dedicated to this goal. So managers decided to launch home-made news and to produce a lot a fictional dramatics, inspired by Flemish literature or by popular culture of the past (folklore) :

- *Schipper naast Mathilde* ("Master after Mathilde", 1955) was broadcasted until 1963. It numbered 185 episodes. The story was located in a small village in the past and told the comic adventures of a retired and obstinate boatman who lived together with his sister Mathilde. The series glorified the quiet life in the village and the simplicity of its inhabitants.
- *Jeroom en Benzamien* ("Jerome and Benjamin", 1965) was a series based on a book written by Ernest Claes, a well-known Flemish author. It told the story of retired butchers.
- *Wij, Heren van Zichem* ("We, the Lords of Zichem") was produced in 1969. It was also based on Claes' work. It was the chronicle of the life of a small village, evoking struggles between nobility and peasants, between generations and between Catholicism and socialism. The linguistic dispute is also discussed by a specific character.

19 of the 32 series broadcasted during the time of the Flemish public television monopoly are located in the past, almost in the first half of the

twentieth century. 15 of these series are literary adaptations. They show rural landscape, poor but courageous people which are able to overcome their bad fortune through hard work.

If we except their participation to the writing of series like *Jours de guerre*, historians were not often invited at TV: they intervened in debates like *Ecran témoin* (“Witness screen”, until 2004) that followed a film on a specific theme, sometimes a historical one, or commented some news reports that treated from time to time a historical matter.

Commercial channels

No similar attention is paid for history on French-speaking commercial channels in Belgium. RTL-TVi is particularly noted by broadcasting some major external productions on World War two, (documentaries or fictions) and by commemorating Belgian events like the Belgo-Italian agreement, Innovation’s burn out... Those programmes look like usual reports or mix information and entertainment.

In 2007, RTL-TVi broadcasts a temporary thematic channel called “RTL-TVi 20 ans” that reruns programmes of the past 20 years for celebrating its 20 years existence in the French-speaking Community of Belgium.

Other commercial channels (AB3, AB4) that appeared in 2001 and 2002 do not mention history, except by broadcasting fictitious external productions or the French entertainment on TV history *Les enfants de la television* (“TV children”).

In the years 2000, pay-TV’s (BeTV and Belgacom TV) propose thematic history channels: *Toute l’histoire* on Be TV and *Histoire* on Be TV and Belgacom TV. Their audience is limited because of the small impact of this broadcasting which is complementary to the basic cable.

Local TV

This audiovisual landscape would not be complete if not mentioning the 12 local channels of the French-speaking Community. Those are private but have public remit. Born between 1970 and 1980 they have almost developed local information programmes. They have to broadcast home-made production with patrimonial intent.

So many of them broadcast programmes devoted to historical views. The genres are various: quiz-shows, reports, commemorations, rerun productions, commented archives... For example, Antenne Centre TV broadcasts a game called *La mémoire des rues* ("Streets' memory") that explores the past of streets of the country; TV Lux has produced a documentary series called *La Bataille des Ardennes* ("The battle of Ardennes"), Télé Mons-Borinage broadcasts a magazine called *Quartier d'histoire, histoire de quartier* ("Peaces of history, history of district") that travels through different district of the region. And so on.

All the 12 local channels treat history on their particular way: subjects are always of local interest and because of their lack of means, they often use iconography, investigation, interview specialists or witnesses and rerun some of their own productions. So historical programmes look like report magazines based on oral history.

They broadcast little fictitious films and series because of their lack of financial means. Their productions are only available on their legal reception zone (only one by channel). They are not very known and little studied.

Closeness

In general TV history programmes are close to viewers' time because they use and need images.

Time doesn't always matter. Only does the way history is conceived.

Historical programmes can be close in other ways: history can evoke things people have in common (country, memory, identity...), can speak about lives of ordinary people, can use characters to identify with, and can tell stories people can be involved in...

Like other TV programmes, history needs also some newness: programmes tell stories people could not understand alone, speak about things left unknown, bring new light on particular events, solve enigmas.

Historical programmes also use the living TV language: the way the programme is conceived depends sometimes on specific fashions: docudrama is a genre that has allowed to talk about Spartan life in a contemporaneous way.

History seems to have disappeared from the Belgian audiovisual landscape. It has been replaced by sporadic current affairs reports (related

to very contemporaneous history) and by commemorative celebrations. The phenomenon seems to be due to financial options (historical documentaries or serials have high costs for small audiences and are not valuable on international audiovisual markets). It is also indicative of a bigger interest in memory than in history. For oldest channels it points a new way of commercialising their own archives.

Useful or useless

Historical programmes can give keys for better understanding of our time by explaining the way it used to be in the past. The more the programme is close to our time, the more it could appear useful for the understanding, almost when the historical programme looks like a current affairs programme.

But historical programmes usually talk as much about the time they were conceived as about the time they are talking about. They reflect ideals, social ground, and political interests of their time. As the first Flemish fictitious serials, TV history can contribute to build a national identity. As the series “*Days of war*”, it can help to activate a collective memory and allow a better understanding of complex situations.

Heroes

“*Heroes*” are ordinary people, ordinary citizen. They brave less others people than adversity or bad circumstances. The more history looks like fiction, the more it is stereotypically divided between good and bad people. But these last years even fiction has become more “human”: nowadays heroes can fail.

In the quizzes or in “*I, Belgium*”, the heroes are generally collective: heroes are a city, a region, or a nation (the anonymous men that make the city, the region, the nation).

In “*Days of war*” as in other programmes, the heroes are quite often individual: they are one among many other, they can die but their death leads to liberation, they have mistakes but they succeed... Their story is in keeping with many other ones. All individualities together build history.

Most of the time, all individual characters or groups of characters are acting in a collective way.

Commemorative celebrations usually point out some individuality. They are invited to talk about the commemorated event and their feelings about. They are living witnesses. They are heroes not only because of the way they acted or the things they lived, but also because they have a duty of collective memory.

Narration accounts

Interventions of experts who undertake to tell and explain the facts on the basis of pictures and sounds they comment are quite unusual. The only debate (“Witness Screen”) has been replaced with discussions in studio about old programmes broadcasted integrally just before (“Zoom out”).

Commentary is the most used formula. In the oldest programmes voice over is generally a peremptory and anonymous one. Recent programmes use more friendly or inquiringly voices. Commentators sound closer to the viewer. They use also narrative processes to do so.

Commentaries are often playing with other narrative accounts. The most frequent (past and present) is the inquiry of a journalist who questions witnesses, actors, specialists and shows pictures or original footage. The commentator is a journalist that reports on his work. He had collected all documents he shows to the viewers and links all the sequences to give people a coherent story.

Fiction was almost used on the Flemish side. Reconstructions were the brand images of “*Days o war*”. They gave the impression that the story image was unfolding itself as the commentary developed at the same time a journalistic and historical point of view.

Some programmes rerun entirely TV documents. History (memory) is told just like it is happening with our own eyes. In « Belgian years », this look back in the past is reinforced by the add of a musical hit in the background. Archives are like revivalistic narratives.

Commemorations are led by a presenter speaking in place of the channel. He structures the ceremony, the interviews, the entries, the exits and links the sequences. He features the channel.

As time goes by, enunciation process becomes more and more televisual: journalism takes the advantage on fiction, docudrama develops into history, archives allow to “live” history, and current affairs programmes become history.

Programme	Channel	Year of reference	voice over	experts explanation and comment	inquiry of a journalist	intervention of fictional witnesses	broadcast of a story	Rerun (past enunciation)
Master after Mathilde	NIR (BRT)	1955					X	
14-18	RTB	1964	X		X			
Jerome and Benjamin	BRT	1965					X	
Between the two wars	RTB	1968	X		X			
25 years after	RTB	1969	X		X			
We, the Lords of Zichem	BRT	1969					X	
Witness Screen	RTB	70's		X				
Under occupation	RTB	1971	X	X				X
Dr Goebels' movie	RTB	1972	X	X				X
The Cold War	RTB	1972	X		X			
Unpublished	RTBF	80's	X	X	X			X
Double 7	RTBF	80's	X					
1830. Imaginary news on a revolution	RTBF	1980			X	X		
New order	RTBF/BRT	1984			X			
Commemorations (Belgo-Italian agreement, Innovation's burn out...)	RTL-TVi	90's	X	X	X			
Strong minded	RTBF	90's	X					
Time Wheel	RTBF	90'	X					

Streets' memory	ACTV	90's	X		X			
Golden Fleece Europe	RTBF	90's	X		X			
Days of war	RTBF	1990	X		X		X	
Those were the years	RTBF	1992	X					X
Histories	VRT	1992	X					X
Days of peace	RTBF	1996	X	X	X			
Belgian years	RTBF	1998	X		X			
Zoom out	RTBF	2003		X				X
White King, red rubber, black death	RTBF	2004		X	X	X		
White King, red rubber, black death	VRT	2004			X	X		
Peaces of history, history of district	TLMB	2005	X		X			
The Battle of Ardennes	TV LUX	2005	X		X			
I, Belgium	RTBF	2006	X		X			
RTL-TVi 20 years	RTL-TVi	2007						X

History programmes during the last eight years

Since 2000, Belgian TV has broadcasted few historical programmes. The most popular one (according to echoes in the press) were selective commemorations of recent tragic or happy events (Belgo-Italian agreement, Innovation's burn out, celebration of the channels...) or controversial debate as the one that appeared when *White King, red rubber, black death* was broadcasted. *I, Belgium*, a recent series, had been successful almost for the reading commentary of the national singing and acting star but also because of the political context (the hoax around "the end of Belgium"). The most popular programmes are produced out of Belgium and are fictional (i.e. *Rome*, broadcasted on pay TV and RTBF).

Days of war that ended in 1995 attained fame. The historical magazines that followed never reached a similar audience. They were not serialised and were broadcasted at a late hour.

History programmes work when:

- they offers new perspectives or some revelations;
- they focus on different local stories;
- they mobilise emotional feeling or play on traditional narrative processes;
- they mobilise a collective memory;
- history is more a context than an object;
- they mix fiction and reality;
- they create an regular appointment with viewers (with a serial or a series);
- the channel shows its interest by an all-media publicity, by a primetime broadcast or by creating an event around the programme.

Historical games are also successful when evoking local traditions. Nonetheless these games seem not to be exportable considering the local interest that they are mobilising

Quizzes like *Streets' memory* that focus on very specific and local anecdotes (linked to the region where the local channels are based) are not broadcasted on other local channels.

Future history programming of interest to all European viewers

Europe is often seen only as a political instrument. Political topics are usually considered as boring. So the snapshots at events that were decisive for Europe could be interesting to all viewers if not only political. Topic of European transmigrations could be integrated in these events, as well as the topic of wars, social events, and acts of political leaders.

Oral history is a necessary material, it enlivens history, makes it closer to everybody's life. The docudrama could be a good way to attract viewers. This kind of story allows to follow easily history as a story. It could be easier to build a serial.

Serious debates seem not to be adequate. They are followed by few people in Belgium. But entertainment evenings (commemorative ones) that are illustrated by bits of archives or reports are quite well followed.

History on French television channels

Pierre Sorlin

Since its beginning, in 1948, until 1982, television, in France, was a state monopoly, with one, then two (1964), eventually three (1967) channels. The first and most important channel, Tf 1 was privatised in 1987. There are, in 2007, more than 240 channels, some parts of multi-channel packages, others independent commercial stations which broadcast local information, quizzes, games, cheap American series.

The national channels are:

- Public channels gathered under the same banner, France television, but in fact independent and even competing with each other. The oldest, Fr 2 and Fr 3 are Hertzian, the newest, Fr 4 and Fr 5, are digitalised, cable channels. In addition the German-French channel Arte (1984) is partly managed by France television.
- Commercial channels, mainly Tf 1, M 6, initially a musical channel, now a general-interest one, Canal + (1984), a pay channel.

The audience share is roughly 60% for the commercial channels, with a preponderant Tf 1 (between 30 and 40 %), 40% for the public ones.

Advertisement is limited to five minutes each hour, but the percentage is weighed up upon the whole day, no publicity is broadcast during night, the spared minutes are transferred to the peak listening hours. Public channels cannot interrupt a programme; commercial channels can make a break in the middle of any transmission

History programmes

There has never been any attempt, either from public or from private TV channels, to define the function of history programmes. Mythically, according to a watchword borrowed from the BBC, television is meant to inform and educate, but nobody has ever ventured to tell what TV was able to teach or how it could do it. With the passing of time the importance of history broadcasts, evaluated in time of screening, has been

constantly decreasing. Few filmmakers or scriptwriters work in the field, but those who dare do it know each other quite well and, consciously or not, have delimited a domain and some empirical rules. There is no theory of history on television, but there are usual ways of selecting the themes and shooting which have resulted in what could be labelled a pragmatic, elementary system.

Under state monopoly history was an important heading. It consisted of history films, often followed by debates among specialists, re-enactments of famous events, illustrated talks, portraits of great people. The main history programmes were broadcast in prime time, some, in the late 1960s, when there was a choice, amounted to 80 % of the audience.

Today commercial channels have totally given up, history is considered too serious, even boring. However Canal + and M 6, which put in the air reports on ongoing issues such as the crisis in the Near East, conflicts in Africa, the new Chinese economy, insert historical references in their transmissions, mostly thanks to talks delivered by experts.

History is confined to public channels but Fr 2, second most important channel, in permanent competition with Tf 1 avoids history and so does Fr 4.

Fr 5 was initially an educational channel. It has no longer any didactic mission but the tradition of broadcasting informative programmes has not vanished. In the middle of the afternoon it broadcasts, once a week, a "light" history programme for instance about the destiny of Marilyn Monroe or the much debated plot which is said to have provoked Lady D's deadly accident; made with recent archival material and interviews these programmes are extremely cheap. The prime time is devoted, about twice a month, to more serious inquiries about archaeological investigations (e.g.: "The Motorway which goes back in time" *L'autoroute à remonter le temps*, about excavations along a new motorway the course of which follows an old Roma road), about WWII (e.g.: "The survivors", *Les survivants*, testimonies of Jews who survived death camps) or to retrospectives (e.g.: "The Eurovision years", *Les années eurovision*, selection of programmes broadcast in Eurovision). The early night show is consecrated, once a week, to demanding series like "The Bible revealed"

(*La Bible dévoilée*, 4 programmes), “A history of French Police” (*Histoire de la police*, 4 programmes), “The Great Vanished Cities” (*Les grandes cites disparues*, various cities in Greece and Egypt).

Fr 3 boasts a cultural ambition with literary and artistic transmissions. On the historical level it is cautious and specialises in 20th century history, with programmes likely to provoke reactions: “They had their hair cropped” (*Tondues*, about women whose hair was cropped in 1944 because they had had sexual intercourse with Germans), “The hidden face of the Liberators” (*La face cachée des libérateurs*, about violent acts, especially rapes, committed by GIs in France), “The Close Enemy” (*L’ennemi intime*, conscripts who served during the Algerian war report crimes and torture inflicted by the French army).

Arte gives much time to history in a rather eclectic way, jumping from antiquity (Sumer, Egypt) to our time (the Israeli athletes taken in hostage in Munich in 1972), from re-enactments (*Trafalgar*) to serious debates (*Mohamed and women*), from speculations (*Diana against Elisabeth*) to epopée (*The True History of Far West*).

History channels

There are two main historical channels:

- *Histoire*, a subsidiary of Tf 1 founded in 1997, which boasts four million subscribers (in fact a joint subscription to the package sold by Tf 1). Aimed at people fond of light, diverting history. Buys programmes already broadcast on foreign channels and is on the lookout for something sensational: “Princess Margaret, a Love Story”, “Grace Kelly, princess of Monaco”. Mostly oriented towards recent problems, “The time of Black Market, 1940-1950”, “Penicillin, the Miracle Medicine”, “War at any Price” (*La guerre à tout prix*, the second Iraq war, how it was imposed on the Congress by the White House)
- *Toute l’Histoire*, one of the 30 stations offered by AB World Com. Not much different from the previous one, slightly more serious. The schedule seems built at random, jumping from WWII in Italy to the Council of Trent, then to Mata Hari. At times, long serious documentaries, e.g. “The Epopée of the Black Gold” (4 transmissions).

Most important history programmes

1) In the years of state monopoly

Four series were of special importance:

- “The Camera explores Time” (*La caméra explore le temps*) 47 programmes broadcast between 1957 and 1966. A historian presents the programme. There is then a re-enactment of some dramatic scenes, based on contemporary documents. Most programmes referred to scandalous or dramatic cases, The Man with an Iron Mask, Maria Walewska, but there were at times less superficial themes such as “Terror and Virtue, Danton and Robespierre”. The re-enacted part was often emphatic and artificial but extremely clear and easily understood. The programme was tremendously popular. It was removed for bad reasons, because the director was a communist, but it was time to stop it at any rate.
- “Five Columns in Front Page” (*Cinq colonnes à la une*). A monthly News Magazine broadcast from 1959 through 1968. The first part was dedicated to recent issues, the second to political problems including historical questions: Mussolini, Stalin, the Hungarian Revolution of 1956. The transmission was much appreciated but did not survive the May 68 events.

“Alain Decaux talks” (*Alain Decaux raconte*) Decaux was one of the historians involved in “The Camera explores Time”, after the programme was removed he tried to renew it, along the 1970s, by tackling the same sort of topics in a more light way, with interviews, short sequences based on contemporary illustrations and debates. There was a stable but limited audience, Decaux’ style looked too didactic and professorial.

There was, during the state monopoly period, what can be labelled a “history spirit”. The most popular fictional series were all set against a “historical” background, “Terry the Sling” (*Thierry la Fronde*, 1963-1966) during the Hundred Year’s War, “The Bitter Bread (*Le pain dur*, 1974-1975) along the 19th century. In these series, ordinary people resisted the oppression of bad lords and selfish masters, it was a populist vision of the past, which did not contradict the vision given in history programmes centred on famous victims of history. France was the focus of television history; spectators were invited to commiserate with the weak and sufferer.

The history spirit was confirmed by the systematic interview of historians questioned about their career during the 1970s and above all by the commission given to a famous filmmaker, Roberto Rossellini, to make a programme about “the Sun King”, Louis XIV. Rossellini stuck to the traditional image of a young, shy man who managed to subjugate a rebellious nobility and glorify the monarchy.

It must be noted that there was no reasoned historical series comparable to the fourteen part *Das Dritte Reich* broadcast by the German ARD in 1961-62 or to the British *The Great War* (1964) and *World at War* (1973) which means that nobody, in French television, thought over the meaning and objectives of history programmes.

II) After the monopoly

The absence of reflection about the screened history may account, at least partially, for the radical disappearance of history from commercial channels in the 1980s. Other factors may have mattered especially the scandal around “The Sorrow and the Pity”. It was a four-hour history transmission about life in a French town during WWI produced by Swiss television. French television had scheduled it but the government forbade its broadcasting because it gave a pitiable image of the French and questioned the Gaullist legend of an unanimously resistant country. After two years the programme was put in the air but the governmental interference had been so heavy that many thought they had better not deal with recent history. In addition the conception of the transmission, with cross interviews of resistance fighters, collaborators and not committed, indifferent people was new, traditional filmmakers, used to working in studios, were not ready to adapt to such methods.

In the two last decades, history was extensively used for commemorations, it is part of the “heritage”, spectators accept it more willingly if it is related to a date, an event, a personality. The bicentennial of the first year of the French Revolution is a good example, history flooded the screens in 1989, some 120 hours of documentaries, dramatizations, and lectures dealing with the period were programmed, partly to inform, partly because the Revolution provided an exciting background for a thriller or a love story. The tribute to the past began a year earlier with for instance “A Physician of the Enlightenment” (*Un*

médecin des Lumières) about people who paved the way for the Revolution. Then came rather didactic, not very congenial programmes such a four-hour “French Revolution” broadcast by Fr 2. Other typical cases were the anniversary of the Rome treaty in 1997 celebrated by Fr 2 in 1997 and all public channels in 2007 or the Chilean coup recorded for the anniversary of Allende’s death or in occasion of Pinochet’s arrest.

Beside celebrations, public channels broadcast programmes about historical French (Versailles, Mont St Michel) Greek (Olympia) or Egyptian monuments, history so to say. The main field remains what worries French opinion and had never been solved, WWII and the Algerian War. In 2002 an entire series, “Resistance fighters’ Memories” (*Mémoires de Résistants*) was devoted to systematic interviews of famous or less well-known resistance fighters, theoretically because they were old and likely to disappear but also to show, against “The Sorrow and the Pity”, that there had been many French liberty fighters. The programmes dealing with tricky periods are willingly unadventurous. Fr 3, the only daring channel, may broadcast challenging productions but its ongoing history transmission, “The Right to Assess” (*Droit d’inventaire*) is an innocuous mixture of talks and archive materials, which will not provoke protests or debates.

III) In the 21st century

TV history deals with the past. A truism? Sure, but one which deserves a few remarks. Everything bygone is potentially historical, provided it is over and done with. The answer to the first question is therefore extremely simple: TV history has nothing to do with current issues, it is, and must remain irrelevant to the present days. It is not aimed at helping to understand the present and there are no lessons to be learnt from it. History is like a vast landscape, a territory many parts of which are still unexplored and mysterious. Television will contribute to solve the enigma, or at least to lift a corner of the veil. A monthly series broadcast by M 6 is titled “Topical secrets”, the typical heading of one of the film was: “Pierre Bérégovoy, Mysteries around a suicide” ⁽¹⁾ - in fact there was no mystery, the reason why this former Prime minister committed suicide are unambiguous and the programme did not disclose anything new.

1) *Secrets d’actualité*. Pierre Bérégovoy: mystères autour d’un suicide, 23 April 2008.

“The Right to Asses” mentioned above is characteristic of such trend. It began, in October 2007, with a new historical series, “Additional Information. The right to Know” ⁽²⁾, the first programme of which was devoted to de Gaulle, or rather to five puzzling aspects of de Gaulle’s public life:

- How did a colonel, whose promotion to the rank of general was never official, manage to be considered the head of French resistance? (Answer: because he was “built” by Churchill);
- How did he manoeuvre to come back to power in 1958?
- Did he know that the French army was using torture in Algeria?
- Why, in Canada, did he make a public declaration in favour of an independent Quebec, creating thus a diplomatic crisis with Ottawa?
- Why was he stunned and unable to react in May 1968?

Every time, the riddle is clearly, insistently exposed. Details about the context are illustrated thanks to archival material and a witness (whose right to talk is underlined, especially in the programme I have chosen) discloses a hidden side of the topic, the importance of which is discussed and belittled by a panel of “experts”. Spectators are given the impression that they are let into the secret, but they are also warned that the matter was probably much more complicated – which leaves the way opened for other broadcasts on the same quandary.

Detective stories have always been popular in France. It was there that to the only “genre” characteristic of French cinema had its rise. TV channels have pursued in the same direction, all produce, or buy abroad, and put in the air weekly stories whose plot revolves about a police investigation. The audience is so infatuated with mysteries that writers and directors must adapt to this general tendency if they want to shoot a history film. Even the programmes devoted to Antiquity, the Middle Ages or modern times put forward and try to solve an enigma: what were the secrets of Egyptian graves, of Greek secret rites, of the Knights Templars, who was the girl who killed Marat, the revolutionary leader?

Criminal chronicles are replete with unsolved cases, superficial enquiries, and miscarriage of justice. The failures of the judicial system offer

2) *Complément d'enquête*, Fr 3, 11 October 2007.

novelists a limitless supply of thrilling plots and unconventional guys. Some are inexhaustible because, with the passing of time, the direct witnesses have disappeared and the papers have been lost. They also belong, undoubtedly to the past because no judicial authority will ever reconsider them. Such instances are ideal for history broadcasting. On the one hand, they are mysterious, took place in foregone epoch, and have no connection with the present. On the other, they are traceable in cinema, radio and television archives as well as in newspapers, and there are always people who have been in contact with those who were involved in the happening.

Let us take two examples. In 1952 Sir Jack Drummond, his wife and daughter, who were travelling in southern France, were killed not far from an isolated farm inhabited by a large family. The family head, Gustave Dominici, 75 of age, confessed to the crime; there was neither motive, nor evidence, but he was declared guilty and sentenced to life imprisonment. Murderer? Innocent? Nobody will ever know, which makes the story a perfect conundrum. The film broadcast in October 2003 ⁽³⁾ “historicized” the episode. The farm, the surroundings, the police station and tribunal were reconstituted with great care. The programme was conceived to offer its public a coming back to a rural France that had long disappeared. It depicted a traditional family, lead by its patriarch ⁽⁴⁾, united against “them”, the others, and showing a cautious distrust for the outer world. It stressed the reluctance of the family members and neighbours to talk. Sociological works published in the 1960s, and now widely popularized, have emphasized the cultural distance between the representatives of authority, judges, police officers, and ordinary citizens. Today’s spectators, implicitly referring to such studies, impute the silence of the countrymen to their limited use of highbrow language. Since the middle of the 20th century secondary education has been extended to most young people, asphalted roads and cars have linked the faraway hamlets to big centres; running water,

3) *L’Affaire Dominici*, Tf 1, 13 October 2003. Another film on the same affair had already been shot in 1973 and, no doubt, there will be other films in the future.

4) As is recalled in the film some thought that Dominici had confessed to protect another member of the family because, at his age, he could not be sentenced to death.

electricity, television and domestic appliances have reached rural areas. In short this film, dwelling on the archaism of 1952 France, separated clearly yesterday and today, past and present and, by comparison, stressed the (of course advantageous) changes undergone by the country.

There are few contemporary visual documents in *The Dominici Affair*, mostly stills taken during the process. On the other hand *The Villemin Affair*, put in the air in 2006 ⁵⁾, is based on pictures shot at the time of the investigations. The archival material correlated to the case was so abundant that the film, three times as long as *The Dominici Affair*, was broadcast three days on end. In October 1984 the four-year old Gregory Villemin was found drowned in a river of Lorraine. Why had he been killed? The crime gave rise to an avalanche of rumours, hypothesis, false reports, blackmail and denunciations. What matters for us is that television was one of the main actors in the play. Since 1981 commercial radios were authorized, they were a serious challenge to the three public channels, which tried to prove that they could deliver fresh, relevant information. Gossips and images kept the country in suspense during several months. There was thus a huge amount of rushes that was used for the films. Intimate scenes that had not been recorded were re-enacted, but always in a television like style, with the jolting and shaking of a camera hold on shoulder. Television channels are their own historians. By recycling their archive they spare money and they please their public which is happy to see again what it had seen ten or twenty years earlier. *The Villemin Affair* was a reminder of past emotions and surprises. And it was history inasmuch as it was a return to an earlier, bygone epoch.

However different they are, these two programmes share a few characteristics. They are disconnected from the time of their broadcasting, the first because it evokes a totally different context, the second because it bears no relation to any historical background. In the first case the present is appreciated since it is not like the past. In the second the past distracts momentarily from daily worries. French television, when it granted much room to history, in the 1950s and 60s, did not underline the enduring influence of former times, but it did not sever the past from the present as it is doing at the beginning of the 21st century.

5) *L'affaire Villemin*, Fr 3, 28-30 Octàber 2006.

How history is told

Those implicated in a criminal affair are rarely famous in history. They are more often anonymous people unwillingly mixed up in a nasty bit of business. The choice of unresolved cases, which prevents from treating the characters as either criminal or innocent, has introduced a new fashion in historical programmes. In cinema and traditional TV broadcasting the protagonists, heroes or traitors, are prominent actors, their name, printed in the credits, suffice to inform the public about the genre, and help it to take its pick. Conversely, the questionable innocents or wrong suspects are impersonated by little known players whose coming inside the screen is neither announced by other characters, nor underlined by a special framing. Usually these people been present in the frame from some time, but have remained unnoticed, when the inquirers single them out. It is thus implied that everybody can be brought to a conspicuous position, but that fame does not necessarily means bliss. In addition to reconstructed sequences, such programmes recourse extensively to real or fictional witnesses, all ordinary citizens, who have seen, or feign to have seen, something of interest. I think that we are allowed to associate the reserved, discreet presentation of the main characters, and the ephemeral attention paid to witnesses, with the growing interest for oral testimonies and life histories: the nameless prevail over the conspicuous.

Not all criminal affairs are isolated and almost clandestine misdemeanours which come to the fore because the press, or television, emphasize them. Two periods, the German occupation and the Algerian war still haunt French opinion. Both can provide myriads of odd events, unexplored circumstances, villainies and lawless occurrences. We have seen, above, an example regarding de Gaulle, a character often called to the screen. TV channels are cautious not to provoke action for libel of the part of people still alive but the danger does not exist where WWII is concerned and a great many history films deal with the enigmas of that period. The basic ingredients of such programmes and the way of linking them are very close to those implemented in the average criminal episodes mentioned above, the only significant difference relates to the characters.

Those who take part in political happenings during a war are “historic”, because the war, any war, is history. In such instance, unremarka-

ble actors cannot impersonate the characters. However, some of these people were heroes, some played an ambiguous part, some betrayed. Televisions abide by an implicit recommendation according to which the fame of the actor determines the part he will be offered: stars will not be villains. Here again an illustration is necessary. In October 2007 Arte devoted a film to René Bousquet ⁽⁶⁾, a high civil servant who having been promoted, during the occupation, to the direction of the French police, organised with zeal and application the arrest of the Jews required by the Germans. After the liberation the man was not bothered and became an influential businessman. It is only in the 1970s that a press campaign led to a re-examination of his role. His killing by a madman prevented him from being prosecuted – and enigmas remained unsolved: why did he collaborate so actively, why was he not arrested and judged like other pre-eminent collaborationists, why was he assassinated? From a moral point of view Bousquet was not very commendable, but he had been, all his life long, an important person. The character was built according to these peculiarities. The part was given to a light-theatre actor who had never featured in cinema or television but, in the film, the previous comments of his fellows and the motion of the camera, which places him at the centre of the screen, manifest that he is the protagonist.

The fabrication of characters evidence a new trend of visual history, put into practice without having ever been exposed. Historical cinema dwelt on great people, saints, kings, political leaders, but had also a glance at humble classes that lived in past epochs. TV channels have adopted another strategy. They are interested neither in fame, nor in characteristics distinctive of former times. Looking rather for secrets, scandals, arguable cases, they give prominence either to the mystery (who was responsible for that crime?) or to the individual who caused scandal (why did he behave like that?) and they selected their actors, they insert the characters into the story in line with the type of enigma that they have privileged. The nature of the riddle determines who will perform and which shooting method will be adopted.

Together with the building of characters, enunciation (the way events are

6) *René Bousquet ou le grand arrangement* ("René Bousquet or the big compromise"), 16 october 2007.

presented) is of paramount importance. In written text, historians have the initiative; they decide what is worth being exposed and commented. History films use an all-knowing voice-over, which narrates and supplies an interpretation of the facts. In both cases someone knows and tells the truth. Television, in its first decades, stuck to the cinematic fashion, an anonymous spokesperson, talking from nowhere, explained the meaning of the pictures. In respect of enunciation, television history has undergone, at the end of the 20th century, a radical transformation by passing from the statements of an omniscient instance to the interference of several voices.

Let us take, as a specimen, *Mitterand in Vichy: the shock of a revelation* ⁽⁷⁾. It is, once again, an enigma (hence the “revelation”) related to WWII. Mitterand, future president of the French republic, joined late the French resistance, after having been for three years a supporter of the Vichy regime, but he always belittled the importance of his involvement in the politics of the *Etat français*. The programme we mention opens with an interview in which Mitterand had given his version of the facts. Pictures and texts of the early 1940s set a few indisputable points: the man was assigned a role by Vichy. But what kind of function was it, and for what purpose? Witnesses chronicle what they knew at the time and what they remember. According to their indications some meetings between Mitterand and Vichy officials are re-enacted by actors. All along the film, but especially at the end, historians evoke the context and express their opinion.

We have thus, on the screen, contemporary documents, contradictory accounts delivered by the man himself and by his contemporaries, staged scenes which recreate an atmosphere and clarifications given by “experts”. No book or film could offer such a variety of conflicting judgements; it is a privilege of television because the small screen is not obliged to follow a perfectly ordered, rational trajectory, but can waver from authentic documents to fictions, from passionate assessments to reserved considerations. When the programme comes to its end no answer has been suggested, the question remains opened.

7) *Mitterand à Vichy: le choc d'une révélation*, Fr 2, 22 April 2008.

I am not pretending that this is an ideal manner of dealing with the past, the method has its flaws. First, inasmuch as they are anxious to avoid objections or critics, TV channels invite historians to play their customary part and edict, from their vantage point of view of specialists, a mixed verdict, neither white nor black. There is more. A well-balanced arrangement works perfectly where enigmas or debatable issues are concerned: Dominici was he guilty? Was Mitterand a true collaborator or a young man in search of the most honourable course? Everyone will reply in conformity with their feelings. But the study of the past cannot be limited to controversial problems, even if those may have been of importance. History deals also with more general, not contentious questions such as social evolution, economic transformations, political conflicts, and international relationships. TV channels seldom tackle these problems. When they do it, they renounce to their multifarious enunciation and have recourse to the all-knowing voice over. Where debating would be necessary, because what is at stake is the development of the modern world, doubt and pondering are banned while “truth” becomes clear and incontrovertible.

The response of spectators

I have tried to bring out the most salient features of TV history as they develop at the present moment. I must add that traditional programmes going from Stonehenge to Martin Luther King, from the ruins of Olympia to the sputniks are broadcast during the off-pick hours. Generally bought abroad (it is cheaper) such films are absent-mindedly watched by a handful of onlookers. Coherent series like the English *Tudors* or the American *The War* meet with a better response, which never exceeds four per cent of the potential audience. Yet, quantitatively, such productions constitute two thirds of what can be labelled history on television.

French channels do not broadcast “serious” films, be they fictions or history on Friday and Saturday evening. The few history programmes broadcast on prime-time are chiefly put in the air on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday, when the average public amounts to some twenty five million onlookers. It must be remembered that, for the five main national channels, an audience inferior to ten per cent is considered a flop.

Measuring the impact of a programme is not easy, statistics, useful though they are, do not suffice. Films likely to interest a large public may fail because they are in competition with a sportive championship which will automatically attract a maximum of spectators, or because too much has already been broadcast on the same topic. This is what happened with the anniversary of May 1968. TV channels are intent on exploiting what their audience remembers, as soon as April 2008, they began to recall “the May movements”, so that the films put in the air in May missed their target.

More than twelve million people watched *The Dominici Affair*. Its broadcast was a television event, comparable only to the transmission of the most long-awaited football matches. The date had been cleverly chosen, a Monday, in the middle of October, with nothing outstanding on the other channels. Two generations felt concerned: those born before 1952 were keen on recalling their youth, while those born after, having often heard comments about Dominici’s name, wanted to be informed about his case. Such remarks do not account for an achievement that nobody had anticipated, no even the company managers, who expected less than ten million onlookers. The main commercial channel, Tf 1, which produced the film, did not reiterate the experience. The executives of public channels know that a history programme will never have very good ratings, at best twenty per cent of the audience, more often slightly more than ten per cent. They sponsor projects that, while focusing on an enigma, look solid and well learnt. They do it because they do not want to let down serious scriptwriters and directors but they do not count too much on such works.

Looking at the future

Let us sum up the main aspects of the French television history. All in all, little room is devoted to periods anterior to the 20th century. A first reason is the fact that nobody ever formed opinions about the function of television in the teaching and explication of the past, even in the “golden age” of state monopoly. But, at the beginning of the 21st century, another more important reason is the disinterest of a large portion of public opinion for foregone epochs which, until WWII, were considered a common, national heritage, but look now far away beyond one’s comprehension. The focus

on WWII and the Algerian war is part on an internal conflict between old and newest generations, between immigrants or second-generation immigrants and French of old stock. Public television clumsily broadcasts some material on these topics but, once more, nobody is responsible for defining a planned course of reflection about the past.

In the first decade of the 21st century new tendency have emerge. Emphasis is put on individual cases, even where VIPs are concerned. The past is presented as finished but filled with unsolved enigmas that TV channels try to elucidate; the task is difficult, the only solution is to offer diversified, multifarious information. TV history seems old-fashioned; the young interested in past problems have recourse to internet and seldom watch the small screen.

France remains the centre of the world. Very little is devoted to the past of foreign countries, especially of the European ones, even on the occasion of anniversaries.. All channels dealt with May 68 but there was no special programme on Czechoslovakia or on the other places where, that very year, important events had taken place.

In such instance it is not easy to plan programmes devoted to European history. A comprehensive series intended to illustrate the main dates of the European past, in the manner, for instance, of *The people's century* would not meet with a positive reaction – it is not by chance that this programme has not been broadcast in France.

Foreign history could be evoked through mysterious, debatable cases such as the burning of the Berlin Reichstag, but spectators would probably take too much interest in the police aspect of the episode and miss its political side. Anniversaries might be much more congenial. Frenchmen are fond of commemorations. These ceremonies, for them, are closely associated to the past, they are considered in the light of a return to foregone periods. Obviously a particular event, an important date, do not synthesize the history of a country, they are mere signals, they may oblige to look beyond the borders of the nation.

It is not very much but, for the time being, it seems that there is no other solution: arouse attention on the fact that the other members of the EU have a history.

Televising History in the United Kingdom

Erin Bell

In the UK, the mid-1990s saw an increase in history programmes on TV, both on individual channels but also because a number of specialist channels, such as the History Channel, began broadcasting. British TV history is very eclectic and reflects the wider popularity of history in the UK - this also depends on how broadly history is defined; in the UK programmes such as *Who do you think you are?* (genealogy) and re-enactment programmes may be considered history on TV.

The most important History Programmes put in the air by the main Television Channels

Public terrestrial channels:

- BBC1 has some history programming, most notable recently is the celebrity genealogy series *Who do you think you are?* which includes elements of social, women's and black history. There have also been a number of costume dramas and dramas based around historical events (see below).
- BBC2 was the main broadcaster of BBC history programming before its digital channels were launched. It now broadcasts some history programmes, often already aired on the digital channel BBC4. In the mid-1990s one of the few regular history series on TV was *Timewatch* (BBC2), the BBC's long running history documentary series, with no set theme: much like other BBC documentary series covering, for example, science or art. Various time periods and geographic areas are considered.
- An extremely significant series broadcast in 1997 was Laurence Rees' award winning *Nazis: a warning from history* which was then sold to several overseas broadcasters including PBS in the USA. The series used reconstruction, original footage, oral testimony and arguably represents a continuing British/US TV and cinema fascination with WW2 (possibly because they were victors and also not occupied nations, putting the atrocities at a 'safe distance') and with the question of how

Germany could 'allow' a dictator to rise. Rees is a specialist in the area and has close ties to Prof Sir Ian Kershaw of the University of Sheffield, who is an expert in the history of the Third Reich. Both of these aspects give him credibility at the BBC. Rees challenges notions of TV history as 'safe' by intellectualizing it.

- In the early 2000s there were a number of 'reality history' series on BBC2. These programmes are often neither light nor easy; they represent one of very few ways in which on TV women's, black and working class history are represented, and scholarship on historical re-enactment on TV, in which 'ordinary people' materially recreate elements of (often) their ancestors' lives, is a growing field and should not be discounted. It exists elsewhere in Europe (e.g. Germany) and the *House* type of series has also been broadcast in USA, Australia, Germany and elsewhere. We may also mention *The Ship* (2002), *The Trench* (2002) and, more recently, *Coal House* (2007). There has been a recent BBC2 season to mark the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade in the UK.

Commercial terrestrial channels:

- ITV - some regional programming such as *The Way We Were* (archive-based) for which different material is produced in different parts of the UK
- Channel 4/S4C (Welsh language Channel 4) - in the 1980s C4 was a source for alternative/minority history programming such as the Welsh History series *The Dragon Has Two Tongues*; in the 1990s and early 2000s this developed into reality TV history such as *Edwardian Country House* (2002).
- Channel 5 (Five) - Five began in the early 2000s by broadcasting WW2 documentaries, often re-versioned from ZDF (Guido Knopp) series, and now commissions history series on a range of topics and periods.
- Commercial and public digital and satellite channels - see below.

Channels specializing in History programmes

- UKTV History (free with a set top box) - mainly BBC programmes originally aired on terrestrial channels

- History Channel UK - UK version of the USA History Channel; primarily archive-based C20th history
- Biography Channel - biographical programmes, some historical
- BBC4 (free with a set top box) has a large number of history programmes including history 'seasons', sometimes marking specific events. These have included:
 - Edwardians
 - 200th anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade
 - 40th anniversary of the legalisation of homosexuality
 - Eighteenth-century history

A list of History Programmes considered of particular importance

We have tried to take into account audience figures; original or revived formats; critical responses; and those deemed 'landmark' by the broadcaster.

We have created the following broad categories:

Presenter-led series - the first British history programmes were those of the Oxford historian AJP Taylor, who from the 1950s until the 1980s presented his lectures on BBC, ITV and Channel 4. His series included *Challenge* (on the Russian Revolution) (ITV 1957) and *How Wars Begin* (BBC 1977). In the 1960s the art historian Kenneth Clark presented the landmark series *Civilisation* (BBC2 1969) in the same era as Jacob Bronowski's *The Ascent of Man* (BBC2 1973). They have received a second life through DVD and so continue to be significant.

From the early 1980s, other presenter-led history programmes included those of Michael Wood. His programmes continue to be based around the model of the quest (rather than a lecture) and he has recently made a series *The Story of India* (BBC 2007), part of a season marking the 60th anniversary of the independence of India. Other historians involved in similar styles of presenting include Bettany Hughes, one of few female historian-presenters on British TV. Her series have included *Seven Ages of Britain* (Channel 4 2003) and *Athens* (Channel 4 2007).

One of the most significant developments in history on TV in the UK was the resurgence in the mid-late 1990s of the presenter-historian, especial-

ly in a model closer to that of Taylor - the individual historian as authority. Examples are Simon Schama's *A History of Britain* (BBC 2000-2002), David Starkey's *Monarchy* (Channel 4 2004-7) and Niall Ferguson's *Empire* (Channel 4 2002). In response to the alleged Anglocentrism of Schama's series, BBC Scotland broadcast *In Search of Scotland* (2002).

Hughes' and Schama's series were very different: other than being overviews of British history with historian presenters, in content and form they were not alike. Whilst there has been competition between different broadcasters around 'landmark' TV series, the Hughes series was never marketed as such and was a much smaller scale production, which aimed to tell the story of ordinary people rather than elites. Hughes' work can be more easily identified as a Channel 4 production; the use, for example, of the 'quest' model in the programme (she travels around interviewing experts, seeking answers) in contrast to Schama and Starkey's bardic model (they already know the answers and are telling us). Schama was accused of elitism and Anglocentrism by some critics although he likens his history, especially *HoB*, to the work of Macaulay in the C19th, in the sense that both have created blockbuster, grand narrative national histories. This is a familiar model in TV history. The media fixated on Hughes as woman; in that sense her series have allowed a female voice (including female interviewees in series such as Miriam Gill from Leicester University).

In terms of viewing figures, *HoB* was very successful (up to 4.3m according to BARB figures; www.barb.co.uk; Hughes' series garnered respectable audience figures (c.2.1m) especially considering that far less time and money was put into marketing the series. *HoB* did very well in the USA, shown on PBS and making lots of DVD sales - it seems to have been selling British history as tourism. Starkey's series was shown on PBS too (2006) and *Monarchy* DVDs are available for region 1 (USA and Canada) players. The emphasis on British history may be a result of responses to the millennium: both *Monarchy* and *HoB* were developed pre-millennium in preparation for 2000. Outside of TV, English Heritage and the National Trust, for example, ran a number of events to mark the year 2000 which reflected, implicitly or explicitly, on national identity in the UK. Also, many series and individual programmes (e.g. some *Timewatch* episodes do have a non-British perspective, or BBC4's recent *Art of Spain* series (2008).

Archive and eyewitness-driven series - in 1964 to mark the anniversary of the beginning of the First World War, the BBC broadcast *The Great War*. The series was groundbreaking, using interviews with veterans and original footage, and was followed 10 years later by the Thames TV (ITV) production *World at War*, which included interviews with a range of eyewitnesses. Such programmes have continued to be made and in the 1990s included the co-produced *The People's Century* oral testimony series (BBC 1995); historian/producer Steve Humphries with his production company Testimony Films, seeks to represent 'history from below' makes programmes using oral history. Oral history has been a recognised form of historical research since at least the 1960s, especially when researching women's, w/c or other subaltern histories. Arguably this relates to the (Marxist) history workshop project active in the UK from the 1970s onwards: this certainly reflected a shift in what history might be conceived to be. This also reflects the different ways that 'history' is conceived of in different countries, such as more varied responses to public history.

As part of the season marking the end of the Second World War, the series *Auschwitz* (BBC 2005), based on some CGI but largely testimony was broadcast.

'*Found archive*' series such as *Mitchell and Kenyon* (BBC2 2005) and *The Lost World of Friese-Greene* (BBC2 2006). The former used recently-found black and white footage of Britain in the 1900s, and gained an audience of 4.5 million. The latter, showing colour film of Britain in the 1920s, broadcast on BBC2 the following year to an audience of 3.9 million. Such series were developed relatively recently and are very popular. Similarly, where colour footage has been available but previously thought too 'modern' looking for the TV audience, ITV offered *The British Empire in Colour* (ITV 2002), amongst others.

Archaeology series - as part of the broader representation of the past, archaeology programmes have also been popular in recent years and significant examples include the long-running *Time Team* (Channel 4 1992 - present) and the BBC's rival series *Meet the Ancestors* (BBC2 1997 - c. 2003)

Dramatic reconstruction/fiction - In 1964 the BBC first aired Peter Watkins *Culloden* and in more recent years these have included *Rome* (BBC

2005-7, 2 series); *Pompeii: the last day* (BBC/ Discovery 2003); *Seven Wonders of the Industrial World* (BBC 2003); *Congo* (BBC4 2004) and *Rough Crossings* (BBC2 2007) a dramadoc/ docudrama one-off programme which was an account of liberated slaves who had fought for Britain in the Revolutionary Wars and then, in the late 1770s, sailed from N America to new, British-run settlements in Sierra Leone, shown as part of a season marking the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade in the UK.

Contemporary history -examples of this include the documentary *The Death of Yugoslavia* (1995). The 1980-1 BBC2 series *Ireland: a television history* presented by broadcaster Robert Kee provided at times contentious insights into Irish history and contemporary politics.

Women's history has to date been largely limited to individual series such as the BBC's 1994 *A Skirt through history* a 3 part series examining different chronological eras and different European countries, which focussed on women's history. Similarly, postcolonial history tends to be broadcast as part of 'seasons', so in the 2001 'Indian Summer' season on Channel 4, Maria Misra, the first Asian woman historian to front a TV series, presented *An Indian Affair*.

Groundbreaking historical research was also done in *The Middle Classes: their rise and sprawl* (BBC 2002) a series of 6 episodes, each considering a different theme (such as politics or education) in the history of the urban middle classes in the UK mid- C19th to the mid-C20th. It used oral testimony as one means of gaining insights into this otherwise little-researched area. CGI was also used to a great extent in *Virtual History; the secret plot to kill Hitler* (Discovery Channel 2004) which received a great deal of publicity for its use of CGI to mock up film footage.

Populist history - this included ex-Monty Python Terry Jones' *Medieval Lives* (BBC 2003); the *What the Tudors/Romans/Vikings did for us* series presented by Adam Hart-Davis; reality history series may perhaps be placed in this category and, if so, include the various *House* series on Channel 4: *Edwardian Country House*; *1900s House*; *1940s House* and *The Trench* and *The Ship* (discussed above).

'Event TV' based around anniversaries and commemoration such as the

histories but not of how these related to broader historical events. Both forms of memory appear in *WDYTYA*, which attempts to reconcile the personal, family album view of the past, often using family photographs as a starting point, with broader, and often traumatic, historical knowledge. This serves to make such events comprehensible to a wider audience whilst making the archival research necessary to historical - including genealogical - research more visible. Television is particularly well-suited to the combination of history and memory, combining aspects of personal, collective and national memories, and offering the audience some of the skills necessary to carry out similar research themselves.

Televising History in Spain

Julio Montero

In Spain, television broadcasting started in 1956, and it worked as a government monopoly until 1983, when public channels of diverse Autonomous Communities started to broadcast. In 1990, commercial channels were opened in Spain, but this did not imply that the government channels were suppressed or privatised. On the contrary, government channels, “autonomic channels” and commercial channels overlapped.

During the first period (1956-1983) two channels broadcast: TVE1 (La 1) and TVE2 (La 2). They had the same Director-General and their programming tried to be complementary. This picture changed when a political regime based on regional Autonomous Communities was established. Then, every autonomic government launched its own regional channel: Catalonia and the Basque Country started in 1983; Andalusia, Galicia, Valencia and Madrid, between 1983 and 1990; and Canarias, Castilla-La Mancha, Asturias and Extremadura from 1990 to 2000. All of them focus on the general interest, even if they have a special consideration for their own communities.

In 1990, three new commercial channels started. Two of them offered open broadcasting (Tele 5 and Antena 3), and one of them offered pay broadcasting (Canal+). Lately, in 2004 and 2006, two more channels started: Canal 4 and La Sexta. With the arrival of the TDT broadcasting, every broadcasting entity (governmental, regional and private) has multiplied its broadcasting channels with theme channels (news, series, sports, music, etc.). In respect to the generalist channels this had had an influence on the broadcasting method, which combined present analogical broadcasting and TDT.

The emergency of TDT channels has been striking due to the fact that every regional government has given a great deal of authorisations in its region. On the other hand, digital television platforms have passed through a difficult process. Nowadays, there is one major platform, another one supported by *Telefonica*, and some of a more reduced scope. The

programming choices are very similar in these channels and only films *in premiere* and pay per view football display the difference. The schedule offered by some theme channels focused on history documentaries, like History Channel, has many things in common with this last proposal.

Audiences are distributed throughout this arc: a bit less than the 50 per cent for the commercial channels (Tele 5 and Antena 3, together 35 per cent), and the rest for both TVE channels (21 per cent), the autonomic channels (15 per cent), and digital platforms on pay (11 per cent).

The Autonomic channels in Spain are public channels, financed at the same time by the Autonomic governments and the advertisers, which are also under the influence of the Autonomic governments. The first Autonomic channels on air were the Catalanian and the Basque channels, two regions which have been ruled since the Transition by the same nationalistic parties. The Catalanian Autonomic channel broadcast mostly in the regional language (Catalan), as well as one of the Basque channels broadcast in Basque language. However, the difficulty of this language and the its practical use by the population suggested to create since the beginning another Autonomic channel in Spanish, with the desire of switching into Basque as soon as the majority of the population can speak it.

Both the Basque and the Catalanian channels broadcast very early some documentary series with their nationalistic version of history, offered as an alternative to the official Spanish version. It was not only an alternative to the history defended by Franquism, but to the history of Spain, no matter what its ideology could be (conservative, liberal, socialist, etc). That is to say, it is not a complementary history but an alternative history: that which corresponds with the history of the region, conceived as independent from the Spanish rule. In some aspects, it could be said that a regional history is presented as the history of a repression: the one the Spanish governments imposed to the regions throughout the centuries.

TV3, the Catalanian channel, offered many history documentary series. They had a classical format and a laborious production, and among them, *L'or de Moscú* and *Cambó* had a special relevancy. The recent productions that reconsider the recent history of Catalonia (Civil War,

Franco's Era and Transition) follow the line of these documentaries, overall from 1994 until the present. The party in the government (moderate nationalism of *Convergència i Unió* or radical nationalism of *Ezquerra Republicana de Catalunya*) have traditionally had a great influence on the documentary narrative, and the radicalisation of the demands presented in them. However, there is always the traditional demand of what it is considered to be "typically Catalanian" against what it is "Spanish", often identified with the Spanish language. The series which contributed most to the cultural, political and social rehabilitation of the Catalanism were: *El meu avi y Noms*. They were series focused on the biographies of relevant personalities of Catalonia, that were broadcast between 2001 and 2006. They were co-produced by TV3 and Mediapro. At the same time, many not-serial documentaries were broadcast.

The arrival to the government of the radical nationalist party, *Ezquerra Republicana*, increased the number of documentary series with a demanding character: *Zona roja, Dies de transició y Exilis* (broadcast between 2003 and 2005). However, the series that were more successful (20% share) were: *Histories de Catalunya* (two series in 2003 and 2005) and *Pecats Capitals* (2006). They did not stress the demanding political aspects but they represented as assumed image of Catalonia as an independent nation. These series were focused on different aspects of the daily life, and they were very innovative from the narrative viewpoint.

Concerning the audience, the Catalanian TV3 has been the most successful channel among the Autonomic channels. Its history documentary series have been broadcast on prime time with fine shares. Three history series are noteworthy: *Aquel 98. De la perdua de Cuba a la Setmana trágica, A l'ombra de la gran Guerra y L'herencia de Xarleston*. The first one was broadcast between May and August 1998, and the last two were broadcast in 2000 and 2001. The three series were focused on social and political aspects from the loss of the Spanish colonies to the Civil War. The success of the first one encouraged to continue with the other two series, with similar characteristics and the same production team (co-production between TV3 and Mercuri).

The Basque television (ETB) has broadcast three documentary series with a historical character, with the help of two Basque production companies. These three series are focused on the recent history: *La Guerra Civil en Euzkadi* (1996); *La transición en Euzkadi* (1998) and *Estatuto: 25 años de recuerdo* (2005). All these series underline the existence of a Basque history, and stress the cultural, social and political particularity of the region against the (more or less intentional) misunderstandings of the Spanish governments. ETB has also co-produced a series of documentaries which have been firstly released in theatres and secondly shown on TV. The most important of them was *La pelota vasca*, which supported an auto-determination referendum as the only way for ending the institutional and political crisis opened by the ETA's radical nationalism. Its narrative was forged by interviews with many personalities of the political, cultural and social spheres of the Basque Country and the rest of Spain, in order to give a broad approach to the "Basque problem". The idea which raised from these interviews was that it was necessary a final political dialogue, in spite of the fact that this solution was not shared by everyone. To sum up, the version of history which is broadcast by the Autonomic channels in Catalonia and the Basque Country tends to support the nationalistic ideas embodied by their governments. There is a stronger link between politics and history in these programmes than in the vision offered by the national channels, no matter which ideology is supported in them. Andalucía, Galicia, Madrid and Valencia are the other Autonomic Communities with Autonomic channels. In spite of the fact that all of them have often programmed history programmes (specially Galicia and Andalucía), none of them has presented the historical demands with a political message posed by the Catalanian and Basque channels. They have not presented an alternative version of history yet. On the contrary, they have confirmed with a regional size the basic ideas supported by the official history of Spain broadcast by TVE. The differences in focus (liberal, conservative, socialist) depend on the political colour of the government of every region. In any case and with the only exception of Tele Madrid (which has identified itself with the Spanishness), the channels of Galicia, Andalucía and Valencia have stressed which is culturally specific of every community.

The most important History Programs put in the air by the main Televisionchannels

Nowadays (2007) there is no programs to popularise history in the air, in spite of the fact that some documentary miniseries have been broadcast.

The best known of them is *Que treinta años no es nada*, made up of four 75 minutes long chapters. It tackles the social and cultural development in Spain from the approval of the Constitution to the present, with many interviews to outstanding personalities of this period. It has been broadcast on La Sexta.

The rest of commercial channels have not even scheduled something like this in five years. Just in some occasions, a documentary dedicated to relevant or surprising historical events have been broadcast, like the miniseries Antena 3 produced concerning what it was said to be Franco's unknown features: the first chapter on the circumstances of his death; the second on the anarchist attempt to kill him - no more than a kind of planning and a clumsy study of the possibilities -, etc. These chapters were broadcast again some years after on Tele 5.

Another program which could be considered as historical - in the sense that it tackles the past - is entitled *Hormigas blancas*. It is broadcast in Tele 5, and consists on a brief revision with newspaper cutting of the life and remembrances of some popular people. A glance on the chosen personality is very revealing: Only one of them belongs to the political sphere - Adolfo Suárez - whilst the majority - 18 in 19 - are related to the show business. Due to the sources the program chooses, it can be considered to be a celebrity journalism.

In respect to both public channels, there have not been history programs in the last four years, at least with a conventional format. However, some documentaries with a historical nature have been broadcast. The newest trend in this field is the broadcast of fiction series with historical settings that try to reconstruct the economical, social, cultural, and daily life of the period in which it is based on.

These series have a special relevancy. The first season of *Cuéntame...* has a broad audience, reaching the five favourite programs of the share every week. The series started in 2001 and it is nowadays in its ninth season. Its narration starts in the last years of Franco's era, and continues

chronologically until the beginning of Transition. Progressively it has lost its popularising aspects and has underlined the dramatic elements. Actually, the series was thought to last just one season, but its success suggested its creators that it was necessary to reduce the chronological rhythm of the events. This fact has made the series lose its character of historical narration which portrays the life of a middle class Spanish family.

The other series is *Amar en tiempos revueltos*, which was first broadcast in 2005 and it is now in its fourth season, with a periodicity of four chapters a week. The beginning of its narration coincided with the triumph of the Popular Front (February 1936) and since then it has been developed through Franco's era. The dramatic plot is important with respect to the reconstruction of the atmosphere of these years, and the scenarios are also controlled by a historian (Angel Bahamonde).

Some particular programs concerning relevant ephemerides - *50 años de Televisión española*, for example - or the decease of some popular personalities - mostly show business people - are broadcast, as well.

Channels specialized in History programs

Canal Historia. It broadcasts documentary series and miniseries. Most part of them is produced by an American company, A&E Television Networks. It barely has any production by its own.

Documanía. It was a documentary channel which included series on history. It finished broadcasting in 2006, and it has been substituted by *Odisea* channel, which broadcasts documentary series on science, technology and social sciences. On some occasion, it also broadcasts series of a historical nature.

A list of History Programs considered of particular importance

The most important programs broadcast on television correspond to TVE, due to the fact that it has produced many of them throughout its long history.⁽¹⁾ Many have been documentary series, but other formats

1) There is a very complete list of them, from the beginning to 2003 (Sira HERNÁNDEZ CORCHETE, *La serie de Televisión Española La Transición, como documental de divulgación histórica*, Pamplona 2004), as well as an article (Manuel PALACIO, *La historia en la televisión*, "Cuadernos de la Academia", Vol. VI, septiembre

had also been shown. They were scheduled in prime time very often before the emergence of the private channels and the fight for share. The best known - from oldest to newest - are:

The Sixties. This is the decade in which crews for the broadcast of historical documentaries in TVE were forged. Foreign formats are imitated and other channels' archive material is bought:

- *Testimonio*: A documentary series on Spanish history through the 20th century. Every chapter had a preface by an outstanding personality. It lasted four seasons, and it was broadcast three times a month, prime time.
- *Treinta años de historia*: It was made with the editing of *Trente ans d'histoire* and *Les grandes batailles*, as well as some shots of *The Twentieth Century* (CBS). Some material came from the archive of NODO and other Spanish archives on the two world wars. The result was a prime time documentary once a week.
- *El mundo en posguerra*: A weekly documentary series which gathered in the success of the latter. It used images of the CBS archive and lasted a year in the air (1969).
- *Biografías*: It was a biopic series of thirty minutes long with 30 episodes. It told the story of popular people from different areas of knowledge (1967). It was shown once a week in prime time, and lasted a year more with a new title: *Ahora y siempre* (1968-1969).
- *La víspera de nuestro tiempo*: Its goal was to "introduce people different authors in relation to their geographical and human landscapes." They were thirty minutes long documentaries in prime time, shown weekly in TVE2. (1967-968).
- *Medio siglo de imagen*. Thirteen chapters about the main Spanish archives. It was shown once in fifteen days. Prime time. 1969.
- *Históricos del balompié*. Twenty four chapters on the history of the most important football teams in Spain. Late prime time. Once a week (1969).

The immense majority of history documentary series during the Sixties that were broadcast on TVE (specially, La 2) wanted to reveal unknown

aspects of “the Spanishness”: geography, folklore, art and culture of the country. This production and broadcast line coincided with the governmental aim of promoting tourism - from abroad and also inside Spain - with the slogan “Know Spain.” Two reasons confirm this point. Firstly, the close relationship between television programming and the Ministry of Information and Tourism. Secondly, the fact that Salvador Pons, who planned these series, left his position as Chief of Information in the Ministry of Information and Tourism to be the first Editor in Chief of La 2 (from November 15th 1966 to 1974). Actually, he was the editor of *Conozca usted España*.

The rest of the series fits the concept of documentary. With more or less relevancy, every series present testimonies and - sometimes - experts who talk about a topic. In some of them anthropologist and historians have also a role. Many of the series were shot by filmmakers (young directors who studied at the first centre for the cinematographic education in Spain). Besides, the goal of these documentaries was primarily educative (to talk about people, facts, landscapes, institutions, etc.), but they did it within a context of propaganda. The Ministry of Information and Tourism (the one which controlled the information and communication during Franco’s era) was in charge of launching this policy, consisting on the censure of contents, mostly transformed into self-censureship.

It is interesting to underline the fact that since La 2 was created there was a press office that was dedicated to promote its programmes through the press: articles and news were presented to announce the release of series and programmes, with the aim of creating a certain feeling of expectation. In a time when audiences were barely measured, the opinion of the specialised press was highly valued. Due to the fact that La 2 had to compete against TVE1, this channel used the press office as means for publicising its products which - at this time - were conceived as high culture.

However, series did not strictly talked about history in the sense that their main goal was not to popularise Spanish history. The first aim was to popularise what was understood as “the Spanishness” through different formats, remarkably biopic: biographical profiles of people from different areas, like the arts, the politics, the literary world and general culture. The first programme conceived as a biopic was *Biografías*. After this, *Ahora y siempre* came, followed by *Lo que va de siglo* and *La vispe-*

ra de nuestro tiempo.

Another kind of programme was dedicated to the Spanish institutions - specially to their history -. *Toda la memoria de España* presented to the general public the most important museums, archives and libraries of Spain; *Recuerdos del Teatro Real* showed the history and the actuality of this centre; *Medio siglo de imagen* gave a first version about the history of Spanish cinema. Other series were focused on the habits of the diverse regions of Spain (*Conozca usted España, Fiesta, Aquí España*).

To sum up, history documentaries focused on world history instead of the promotion of Spain were an oddity (among them, they were *Treinta años de historia* and *El mundo en postguerra*). They were broadcast on TVE1 at the same time the programmes mentioned above were broadcast on La 2. However, these documentary series (*Treinta años de historia* and *El mundo en postguerra*) were not considered as history programmes nor even by their creator, Ricardo Fernández Latorre. He was a journalist who always worked at television and always thought about his job as a work of journalistic documentation: a way for understanding the present from a past viewpoint.

There is not a clue to think about an openness for producing these programmes. It seems that they corresponded with two aims. On the one hand, they offered what it was branded as “quality information,” or the aim of offering an explanation on the historical background. In this sense, it has to be underlined the fact that history later than the First World War was not taught at the universities in Spain, even in the Sixties. Officially, the Spanish history always finished in 1898, after the Spanish-American War in Cuba, and only tackled the Civil War at the end of the decade of the Sixties, without studying it in depth.

A whole conception on historiography is at the core of this trend: the fact that it was considered of little importance to study the history of the recent years. For this reason, what it was not history (recent past, understood here as a period from which there are still people alive) was labelled “journalism.” The past which is not studied by history is only a background for the present, something immediate. It was also understood as a kind of journalism called “retrospective journalism” at that time. The second aim of these series was related to the task the government gave to television. The goal was spread

ding the knowledge, and overall, the *right* version of the recent history.

The lack of audiovisual resources at the newly created television, specifically of archive materials, led to bought the French and American series mentioned above. It is probably that they were acquired as a pack along with *Grandes Batallas*. I have found out that *Grandes Batallas* was broadcast on TVE (at least 13 episodes), but it seems difficult to believe that all the content was integrally broadcast, so we can suppose that a special version for Spain was created. Thus, precious archive material was used for underlying the Regime's version of the 20th century history.

This hypothesis can be supposed from two facts. The first one, the fact that the series did not use the parts in which experts and testimonies were shown, a very strange editing choice, overall for a director who used them so much in other documentary series. *Treinta años de historia* and *El mundo en postguerra* only presented the images with a voice over. It coincided with the official version the Regime gave on the recent world history. It was a way to explain the Spaniards how the Regime behaved as it did.

Ricardo Fernández Latorre, the director of both programmes, pioneered the production of history documentaries in the Spanish television. There is not data about other previous works by him as a filmmaker. He was a journalist at TVE and he was the editor of a series of documentaries, but he did it as something complementary to his work as a journalist: a way of talking about the present through the past. From a formal standpoint, the images shown in *Treinta años de historia* and *El mundo en postguerra* were part of a French (*Trente ans d'histoire; Les grandes batailles*) and American (*The Twentieth Century*) documentary series. There were also many archive footage acquired at the Filmoteca Española and NODO, as well as the Ministry of Air Force and Navy, the Instituto Histórico de Barcelona (Institute for History of Barcelona) and TVE itself.

They were unknown images for the Spaniards. This fact contributed a lot to the success of the series, but the footage presented with an interpretative aim that avoided showing the original testimonies of witnesses and the experts' commentary. These elements of control have to be underlined due to the fact that the same director skilfully used them in his first TV work: the series *Testimonios*. That is to say, the avoidance of this resource is intentional,

a way of assuring the correct interpretation of the recent history.

Another fact to be underlined here is the lack of a history adviser for these series. There was no historian working on them. All the members of the team considered themselves as journalists or - in the case of La 2 - filmmakers.

The Seventies. During the seventies the historical reconstructions got to the Spanish television, and the material shot by Spanish TV crew increased. Programs on general historical discussions with historians and other specialists began. Actually, some of the most important series - in terms of audience and impact on Spanish memories - were produced during this period, especially until 1975. Since then onwards, the political circumstances - the Transition - lead to fill the schedule with programs concerning the political background.

Franco's death and the process of Transition to democracy radically divided the political history of Spain, and also the history of its public television. Nonetheless, this rupture in content did not change what was understood as the adequate TV formats and formulas. It is necessary to take into account the fact that there were not rigorous studies of audiences at that time, and therefore the opinion of the specialised press and radio were the only clue to check the acceptance or rejection of TV formulas. This is why the formats remained many years until they were drained, and the members of the team were assigned to other tasks.

One case that is important for our study is also a characteristic example of this. In 1974, a history documentary series of 13 episodes (30 minutes on the history of Spain between 1896 and 1936) was produced: *Tiempos de España*. Their history advisers were: Joaquín Abrarás (the official historian of the Franquism, concretely an expert on the Second Republic and the Civil War); Ricardo de la Cierva (assistant of Fraga in the old Ministry of Information and Tourism); Palacio Atard (a conservative historian with liberal ideas, linked to the ACN de P); Ramón Salas Larrazábal (colonel of the Army and military historian on the Civil War); and Martínez Bande. That is to say, a team of historians who were close to Franco's Regime at that time. However, the most remarkable fact was that they were professional historians. That is to say, TV opened itself to the opinion of historians and left the arena of politics, at least to some

extent. It seems that these series were not finally broadcast. *La tribuna de la Historia* followed this trend - let historians talk about history, making the documentary series leave the arena of politics - with a new TV format which was very successful at that time: the debate on television, whose best example is - besides *La tribuna - Clave*.

España siglo XX: It was a documentary series that studied the Spanish daily life from the beginning of the 20th century to the moment of broadcast. It had 150 chapters with a weekly frequency. It is one of the most remembered series. (1970-1973). the scripts were written by two relevant intellectuals who supported Franco's Regime. Both of them were on their seventies when the series were broadcast. The first part of the series, consisting on 52 episodes, was written by José María Pemán. He was a monarchist, catholic and conservative, who supported Franco's dictatorship. His task was describing the period 1889-1918. The second screenwriter was Eugenio Montes, an early Falangist whose task consisted on adapting the original fascist ideology to Franco's pragmatic ideas. This is why his part of the series was devoted to the justification of the Regime: from the interwar period to the Seventies. None of these authors were historians: they were just writers, journalists. Herms says that in Monte's episodes "the definitive ideologization of the programme took place, since historical events were interpreted or distorted in a very particular way." (Baget Herms, *Historia de la televisión en España 1956-1975*, p. 217). The series had a great success, specially during the first period, maybe due to the distance with the described historical period. .

Under the influence of *Civilisation* (1969), *La huella del hombre* (1969-1970) was broadcast with 52 chapters and an evening broadcast; as well as *La noche de los tiempos* (1971, 50 chapters in prime time). The latter of great importance.

Los españoles: Its goal was to think about the Spanish character through its history and the description of typical crafts. They were 46 thirty minutes long chapters, shown two by two. Prime time. (1970-1971).

Si las piedras hablaran: It was a historical reconstruction based on the texts by Antonio Gala. The *leitmotif* was the search for a place of a certain importance in the history of Spain. This series was very popular. (1972). Si-

milar to this but inferior in importance was *Los pintores del Prado* (1973).

La tribuna de la historia: This program was focused on the discussion by historians a thirty minutes long documentary shot *ad casum*. A presenter hosted the debate and testimonies of people who lived the events - when it was possible - and the opinions of the specialists: historians, writers, journalists, etc. It was broadcast once a week in prime time in two different periods: the first one lasted two complete years (1978 and 1979), and the second was shown 1981. *La tribuna de la Historia* did not present something that could be understood as a main issue. The most important thing for the creators was to show the ideas of the experts and (when possible) the characters who lived a historical event of social relevancy. The idea of “general interest” has to be understood from a cultural standpoint: the understanding of a particular aspect of history that can illuminate the present time, even in a remote way. The series had three editors in chief but we cannot talk about three periods, due to the fact that it was broadcast in a continuum from 1978 to 1981. The first episodes were directed by Luis Ignacio Seco (between April and December 1978, with the only exception of the Summer season), probably 13 episodes. After him, Ignacio Salas directed the programme from the episode number 21 to the episode number 59. His substitution by other director was a managerial choice, and it did not have an effect on the rest of the team. Actually, there were not many theme changes. Quoting Salas, the programme finished when a new TVE Director in Chief changed the members of the team. By this time, the team work was more difficult and the format was drained. Until the episode 57, there are only 8 episodes concerning Spain. From these 8 episodes, 5 are placed between the episode 35 and the episode 57. Taking into account that, of the remaining three, one tackled the approval of the Constitution in 1978, and the other two tried to balance the reconverted Franquism and the new ideological forces (which were linked to the Second Republic and the siege of the Alcázar of Toledo), it can easily be understood the difficulty for talking about Spanish matters.

The tendency of the political Transition was to balance and silence some dark aspects of the recent history in order to avoid confrontations. From the episode 57 onwards, Spanish issues appeared more often, and it derived into a revision of the Spanish contemporary history from the trium-

ph of the liberal ideology (linked to an event which is generally considered as the emergence of the modern Spanish nation, the Independence War, 1808-1814) to the Fifties. During this period, 57 episodes in 76 had a Spanish theme. In general, the experts who discussed had different ideologies, with a majority of liberal-conservative historians, followed by social-democrats, socialists, and - rarely - communists. The audiovisual contents that posed the debate - 10 minutes long until 1981, and 30 minutes after this - could not be considered as documentaries. Simply, a historian or an expert on the issue wrote a text that constituted the voice over which completed the archive footage that the editor chose. The programme was successful, but it had not got a great deal of viewers. Although it was a prime time programme, it was broadcast on La 2, a minority channel. Only between January and April 1981 it was broadcast on TVE1. The main characteristic of the programme was to perpetuate the novelty of *Biografías* (April 3rd - November 13th 1973, prime time, La 2): the documentaries were used as an introduction for the discussed issues. That is to say, this kind of programmes were focused more on the discussion than on their documentary part.

The Eighties. Some history programs which were lost during the Transition were retrieved in the Eighties. Then a series of documentary and history programs were produced with the goal of reconsidering the recent past, linked to the legitimisation of the past and the beliefs the losers of the Civil War fought for. The prevailing and even exclusive issue was the reconsideration of the 20th century from this perspective. Besides, the first co-productions with international companies (BBC and RAI) took place at the end of the decade (BBC and RAI). Historians were at the core of the history programmes broadcast on TVE, as screenwriters, advisers, guest historians, etc during the Eighties. It was maybe a way of separating history from the political debate, while helping to forge an “official history” of the immediate past: the 20th century, and more specifically, the Second Republic, the Civil War and the Franquism. The presence of historians in TVE can be divided in three different periods. The first one was not successful because it was not properly established: the last months of Franco’s Regime. The second period covered the political Transition, from 1975 to 1982 approximately. These were years in which the spirit of political negotiation influenced the contents of history pro-

grammes. The goal was to avoid a new civil war (at least, that was the justification at that time). This fact involved to accept that the war was a great mistake and both parts were guilty of being unable to avoid it. That is to say, the mistake was shared by both parts and the atrocities were committed by both parts. As a conclusion, it was necessary to begin again and forget the immediate past. Finally, the third period was characterised by the presence of historians with different ideologies who represented different political parties. Between 1982 and 1996 the official history was close to the ideas of the Socialist Government: the Spanish rightists and upper class leaders rejected to recognise the validity of a Government that during the Second Republic tried to reform and modernise Spain, because it was a threat for their old privileges. From this viewpoint, the Partido Popular members took the legacy of the privileged ones, and the Socialist party were the reformists. This interpretation remained (with another stress) during the years the Partido Popular was in the government (1996-2004). In this period, two history series were supported by this party: on the one hand, a documentary series, and on the other hand, a fiction series, both with great success. Both series reflected the normal life of average people during Franco's Regime. The fiction series was a transposition of *The Wonder Years* (1988-1993), and told the story of a boy who grows up during these years with a nostalgic tone. During these years there was not a particular choice in historiography matters, in spite of the fact that the programmers claimed the opposite in their fight for audiences, specially when TVE lost its monopoly and the private channels start broadcasting. In this sense the introduction of cultural aspects of popular history in history programmes (both documentary and fiction) was an attempt to offer something new. Nor even the emergence of female history as an important academic approach had an impact on television series. It has to be said that three biopic programmes on three women were broadcast, but it had to do more with the relevancy of the issue than on the new historiography trends.

The most relevant series were:

- *La víspera de nuestro tiempo*: A glance on the Spanish history in order to underline its effect on the present. Evening scheduled. It was a history program which made historians discuss during one hour and

fifteen minutes. Another 15 minutes long documentary shot for this program was previously broadcast. It was very well known for many years, from 1981 to 1985. *La víspera de nuestro tiempo* followed another programme that has been mentioned before, *La tribuna de la historia*. It was substituted because the last one was considered long and boring during its last seasons. However, *La víspera de nuestro tiempo* was a very similar programme concerning content and format (the editing of history footage with a voice over written by a historian, followed by a discussion), but it showed some variations concerning the length. In fact, director and editor also had conceived *La tribuna*. The managers of the programme said in an oral interview that the title came from an old idea that was never used. TVE had the copyright and the message seemed attractive. That was the only reason. The only change was the length of the footage of history film with the historian's voice over (I use this description because it is not a proper documentary film). It turned to be 50 minutes long. It was broadcast from 1981 to 1985, and it experienced another great variation concerning the way it was broadcast: it was shown once a week, on La 2, at 15.30 (afternoon timetable). At the same time, TVE1 broadcast a feature film (*Primera sesión*), so the audience of *La víspera de nuestro tiempo* was very small.

Maybe its reduced influence explains its long exhibition. In November 1982, the new Socialist Government carried out an important change of staff, but *La víspera de nuestro tiempo* continued in spite of the fact that many of the guest historians had a liberal or conservative ideology. Discussions were ideologically balanced in *La víspera de nuestro tiempo*, with historians of every tendency: conservatives, liberals, and leftists. Perhaps conservative ideas were more relevant in the program because of the importance conservative lecturers had among who taught at universities (concretely, among professors) at that time. After this programme, many history series with a leftist leaning were broadcast between 1982 and the triumph of the Partido Popular in 1996. These series were focused on the history of the 20th century, with a special stress on the Second Republic, the Civil War and the Franquism. It can be stated that professional historians arrived at TVE during the Eighties, with programmes like *La Tribuna de la historia*. This trend

began at the end of Franco's era (November 1975), but it remained during the Transition, in spite of the fact that programmes with special focus on news, political analysis and political popularisation were more relevant. In this sense it is very revealing the fact that a documentary series was produced during the late days of Franco's Regime based on the opinions of historians who supported Franco. However, it seems that the series was not broadcast. Since then onwards (*La tribuna de la historia* and *La víspera de nuestro tiempo*) the presence of historians as advisers in history programmes was very usual. They even helped with the writing of the script, and when they did it, they were also the editors and the guest historians in the discussions.

- *Memoria de España. Medio siglo de crisis*: The actor Fernando Rey was the host of every chapter of this documentary series on the 20th century. He also played its voice over, very important in these documentaries. Prime time. (1983).
- *España, historia inmediata; España en guerra. 1936-1939 y Ayer*: These three series had continuity, and a similar number of episodes: 21, 23 and 35 each. The first was broadcast in prime time on TVE 1 in 1984, the second in 1987, from 11 pm to midnight on TVE 1, the third in 1988 from 11.30 pm to 0.30 on TVE 2..

The Nineties. Despite the fight for audiences since 1990 onwards, there were some series of interest with regard to two fundamental issues: the end of the 20th century - its summary and interpretation - and an important ephemeris: the 400th anniversary of St. Ignacio de Loyola, Fray Luis de León and St. Juan de la Cruz; the universal Exposition in Seville; the 50th anniversary of the end of the Second World War; and the centenary of the 98 literary group. In spite of this abundance, the old series with more than 23 have disappeared. Why is it such a variety of history programmes during the Nineties? There are two main reasons. Firstly, the share: every ephemeris was remembered on TV to gain some audience. Of special relevancy there were *1898* (which commemorate the Spanish-American War), *Felipe II*, *Carlos V*, *El fin de siglo*, etc. The same can be said about the programmes on the World War II. However and in contradiction to programmers' ideas, these programmes were not successful. During these last two decades, the only successful series

have been those concerning political matters of general interest (*La transición*) or the social and historical reality of Spain (*Memoria de España*). The second reason for the variety of history programmes is an increase of formats, more concretely the weekly fiction series. *Cuéntame cómo pasó* was a great success that began with its first season (September 2001) and continues nowadays. It is a prime time weekly programme with historical content, but since the third season the history plots were more secondary due to the necessity of stopping the course of the years in order to make the series longer. The series was created during Aznar's presidency, and a TVE executive said to me in an oral interview that the prime minister himself approved and supported the programme. Because of its success, the PSOE government (2004) has supported as well its broadcast, but since its electoral triumph onwards the plots concerning the opposition to Franco have increased. As a consequence, the daily life problems of the Alcántaras are less important right now. It is remarkable the fact that the series does not count with the advise of a historian (or at least, there is no new of it on the web site or the articles related to it), maybe because the creators did not think about it as a history series. The other fiction series concerning history is *Amar en tiempos revueltos*, which is also a great success. It is broadcast five days a week at 4 p.m., and in spite of the fact that "it is not a historical reconstruction", every episode shows history footage taken from the TVE archive. On the web site an explanation for the use of footage is given: "It is not an exhaustive analysis of the period (first years of Franco's Regime) but an attempt to represent the spirit of the time". The credits reflect who the history adviser is: Ángel Bahamonde, professor of Contemporary History at the Universidad Carlos III of Madrid.

His advising tasks consists on reading the scripts before the shooting in order to avoid historical mistakes (chronological, in many cases), and answering the questions the screenwriters may have. Sometimes the screenwriters ask many details concerning prizes, adequacy of sets, wardrobe, etc. However, Bahamonde is not considered to be part of the screenwriting staff. There was not a history adviser when the series started, and Bahamonde began to work when the screenwriters needed him. He helped with the definition of one of the main characters, whose bad temper and rude expression Bahamonde advised to lighten, due to

the fact that it was inappropriate for the time he lived in. None of these series has a specific historical interest, in the sense that a version of the Spanish history is not intended to be offered. However, both *Cuéntame* and *Amar en tiempos revueltos* offer it in spite of their motivation, and the creators are increasingly concerned with this fact. Finally, it has to be underlined the fact that, since some years ago, these series have circulated through different formats. The fiction series are sold (or rented, in less degree) on DVD, and the documentary series (specially *La transición* and *Memoria de España*) are offered for a small prize when buying a national newspaper (El País, El Mundo, Abc), as a strategy for selling the newspaper itself.

Now, the outstanding programs were:

Testigos del siglo XX y Los años vividos: Two documentary series (1990 and 1992) based on the testimonies of relevant personalities of the 20th century in Spain. Ten chapters each. The latter *in prime time*.

Lo que el siglo nos dejó: Documentary series of eleven chapters, very conventional in the way it was shot. It was broadcast after lunch in evening schedule, and it had a slight character. (December 1999 to March 2000).

Tres grandes del siglo de oro: Biopic of St. Ignacio de Loyola, Fray Luis de León and St. Juan de la Cruz. It was broadcast on night schedule during the Summer of 1991.

Felipe II: Series of seven episodes on the Spanish king and his kingdom. Every episode was made up by a thirty minutes documentary and a thirty minutes discussion lead by a historian. It was shown prime time in TV2 in 1998.

Exposiciones universales. El mundo en Sevilla: A series of 13 chapters on the universal expositions from London 1851 to Seville in 1992. Weekly broadcast in late prime time during 1992.

Memoria de guerra: Seven chapter series on the Second World War. Broadcast in evening schedule in 1995.

Mujeres en la historia: Documentary biopic; 19 episodes on the relevancy of women in the history of Spain. It was broadcast in late prime times during 1995 (the first ten chapters) and 1998 (the rest of them). It was

renewed in 2003.

The history documentary series of most importance, impact and dissemination in the history of Spanish television was broadcast during this period: *La Transición*. Formed by thirteen 50 minutes long episodes, it was broadcast in its first season during July and October 1995 - in Summer - and had an average share of almost 15 per cent. Every chapter was watched by 2 million people. The next year, the series was put back - from April 1996 - with more than a million people share. Its sale on DVD has been a success, too, thanks to the way it was distributed through daily national newspapers such as *El País* y *El Mundo*.

First decade of the 21st century. The documentary series are on the eve of disappearance. The oblivion of this genre is represented in the way *Carlos V, un monarca, un imperio* - an 11 chapters series of great quality produced concerning of the 500th anniversary of the birth of this king - was broadcast: It had no known periodicity whilst it was broadcast, between September 2000 and August 2001.

Despite this, the most expensive and ambitious Spanish history documentary series was produced during this period. It was *Memoria de España*, which included wide dramatisations and expensive settings, especially those referred to the years before the 19th century. It was directed by the historian Fernando García de Gortázas, very well known for his books to popularise history. The series had 26 episodes and run from the first men on the Iberian Peninsula to the general elections of March 2004. It was shown through two seasons: the first one, between February and April 2004, and the second between November 2004 and March 2005. It was broadcast on TVE1 in *prime time*. It was watched by many people: 20.2 per cent and 14.9 per cent of share, which means 3.7 and 2.7 million people, respectively.

History in fiction

The Spanish production of history fiction series is not remarkable enough until 2001. This is why we can talk about two stages: from 1956 to 2001 and since then onwards. Besides, it is very difficult to define 'history fiction series,' since there are many essential concepts involved.

We have separated these two stages attending to the motivation the creators of the series argued. Thus in the first stage (1956-2000) there is no 'historical motivation' or at least 'historical awareness.' During the second stage (from 2001) this awareness raised, but it is important to underline that it did it without what we may describe as 'historical intentionality,' the attempt to talk about history. The creators of the series have always stated that their main goal is to dramatise history, not to talk about historical events.

During the first stage, the history series coincided with the series which adapted literary works: overall, novels and Spanish plays. That is to say, they did not strictly have a historical content, but they adapted the historical content of the novels on the one hand, or they adapted old novels and plays that turned out to be 'historical' years after they were written. In any case, there was a non-intentional consideration of history. However, the evolution of Franco's Regime itself had an effect on the way history was considered.

The most important example of this production line was *Novela*, a popular TV series that lasted from 1962 to 1979. Every week a novel was adapted to be broadcast in five 50 minutes episodes once a week. However, this final format was developed through the years, since there were adaptations with a smaller length, and others which were broadcast even two times a day, at 3.30 p.m. and 9 p.m. (always prime time). Many of the best Spanish actors, actresses and directors were trained in *Novela*: Pablo Snaz, Luisa Sala, José María Escuer, and José María Caffarel were among the actors and actresses; Pilar Miró, Pedro Amalio López, Juan Guerrero Zamora and others, among the directors.

Of special relevancy were two series broadcast under the label *Novela*, with a history content: *Diego Acevedo* (1966) and *La saga de los Rius* (1976). *Diego Acevedo* was a 13 episodes series that gave an overview of the conflictive reigns of Carlos IV and Fernando VII, with a patriotic tone (it was advertised as "Stories about Iberian people") against the French invasion of Spain. Every episode lasted 30 minutes. *La saga de los Ruis* was another 13 episodes series which lasted 50 minutes. It was an adaptation of a famous novel by Ignacio Agustí, and it told the story of three generations of a Catalanian bourgeois family from 1880 to 1916. This is why it portrayed at the same time the industrialization process in Catalonia. The series was formed by three blocks:

Mariona Rebull, Los muertos no se cuentan and El viudo Rius.

Other series with a historical content broadcast in *Novela* were *Nace un hidalgo* (1967) - a Cervantes' biopic narrated by Quixote and Sancho -, *El conde de Montecristo* (1969) - the longest series in Spanish history, with 15 episodes -, *La pequeña Dorrit* (1970) - on a novel by Dickens with Pilar Miró as its director -, and *Los tres mosqueteros* (1970), among others.

In 1968, a mini-series entitled *Cristobal Colón* became a milestone in the history of Spanish audiovisual fiction of history content (four 65 minutes episodes). The reason was the novelty of its production system, due to the fact that it was the first co-production with another country, in this case Italy. The director of this successful series was Italian, Vittorio Cottafavi, but the producer and the main actor were Spaniards: Javier Pérez Pellón was the producer, and Francisco Rabal embodied Cristobal Colón, a story on the difficulties to discover America. This mini-series was followed by another Spanish-Italian co-production, *La leyenda del alcalde de Zalamea* (1973), another adaptation from a play directed by Mario Camus. *Misericordia* (1973), another adaptation from the book by the Spanish author Benito Pérez Galdós, represented the difficult life conditions in Spain during the last years of the 19th century.

Until this moment, the literary aspect of these series helped them to avoid being censured, even when they represented, as *Misericordia*, difficult features of the Spanish reality, disguised by its historical aura. However, from 1973 onwards some TV series or telefilms began to have problems with the censure system, for their portrayal of the Spanish reality, even when they talked about the past. This was the case of *Juan Soldado* (1973), a TV movie directed by Fernando Fernán Gómez, who also started in it. *Juan Soldado* was released in several international film festivals with success, but was terribly cut out when broadcast in Spain. It happened something similar to *Otoño romántico* (1973), a series set at the end of the 19th century which was censured because of the image of a soldier as a weak and coward character. The 13 episodes series *El pícaro* (1974) continued this critic line.

These three series were not very important from a production viewpoint,

but they advanced a sense of realism which prevailed in other adaptations like *La saga de los Rius* - mentioned above - and the first adaptations of novels by another Naturalistic Spanish writer, Blasco Ibáñez, *Cañas y barro* (1978) and *La barraca* (1979). Actually, the end of the Seventies is the golden age of the history literary series in Spain.

There are two main reasons for this new, critic approach to the historical social reality of Spain: firstly, the end of Franco's regime, and secondly, the beginning of a financial collaboration between the Spanish Ministry of Culture and the Spanish production companies. Along the Seventies, production companies in Spain asked for an agreement with TVE in order to produce films that could also be shown on TV. However, this agreement was not possible until 1979, when a mix financed system proved to be good for TV contents. As Patricia Diego states, from the beginning of the Seventies until the end of this decade, TVE entrusted diverse production companies to produce series and mini-series. Sometimes, TVE offered its staff and facilities to the production company ("*producción asociada*"), and other times, it only offered financial help ("*producción financiera*"). The result was so satisfactory that the Ministry of Culture, RTVE and the production companies in Spain signed an agreement to produce films which could be transformed into mini-series. By this agreement, the Ministry of Culture awarded 1,300 millions pesetas to produce films with literary plots. This agreement was renewed in 1983 and 1987. That is to say, there were ten years for producing literary series.

The result was a golden age for the Spanish series with a historical background. Some of the most important are: *Fortunata y Jacinta* - 1980, 10 episodes -, *Ramón y Cajal* - 1981, 9 episodes -, *Los gozos y las sombras* - 1983, 13 episodes -, *Juanita la Larga* - 1983, 3 episodes, on La 2 -, *Crónica al alba* (1983), *El mayorazgo de Labraz* -1983, 4 episodes, 60 minutos -, *La plaza del Diamante* -1981, 4 episodes - , *El obispo leproso* -1983, 4 episodes -, *Sonatas* - 1981, 6 episodes -, *Teresa de Jesús* - 1984, 8 episodes -, *Los pazos de Ulloa* - 1985, 4 episodes -, *La forja de un rebelde* - 1988, 9 episodes, 60 minutes -, *Los jinetes del alba* - 1990, 5 episodes -, *La regenta* - 1995, 3 episodes -, *Vicente Blasco Ibáñez. La novela* - 1998, 2 episodes -. All these series can be separated in three blocks: literary series (*Fortunata y Jacinta*, *Los gozos y las sombras*, *Jua-*

nita la Larga, El obispo leproso, Los pazos de Ulloa, etc); biopics (*Ramón y Cajal, Teresa de Jesús, Goya -1985-, Miguel Servet -1988-, Pedro I El Cruel -1989-, Vicente Blasco Ibáñez, etc*); and original series, which were the exception (*Los desastres de la guerra -1982-, Crónica del alba -1983-, El mayorazgo de Labraz -1983-*). That is to say, there was a remarkable tendency to produce literary series with a historical background without being properly history series.

As we have said at the beginning, from 2001 onwards the situation has varied, since *Cuéntame lo que pasó* and *Amar en tiempos revueltos* present an aware use of history in them, even when their goal is to be entertainment without becoming an audiovisual version of history. Nonetheless - as we will see in the answers to the queries concerning the Eighties - they use history footage in their narratives, and their characters face the challenges of their historical time - Franco's regime in *Cuéntame lo que pasó* and the Civil War and first Franquism in *Amar en tiempos revueltos* -. The differences between them are considered in the next answer (the Eighties), but it is important to underline here that this relevant change was the consequence of the search for ideas to launch a really new series in Spain (*Cuéntame*). Besides, it happened in a time characterised by a worldwide reflection on history (anniversary of the beginning of the Spanish Civil War, the Second World War, and commemoration of the end of both wars).

History on German television channels

Irmbert Schenk

The most important History Programmes put in the air by the main Television channels

Television began in Germany under the Third Reich, in 1936 (with a peak during the Olympic Games), reception was collective except for a few rich individual users. In 1948, it was decided in Western Germany that the broadcasting services (*Rundfunk*) would be independent from the government and that representatives of socially relevant institutions and groups would take place in their supervisory committees. The first broadcasting corporations were the *NWDR* (for North Rhine Westphalia, Lower Saxony, Schleswig-Holstein and Hamburg as well as Western Berlin) in Hamburg (*NDWR* was then divided into five separate institutions), the *Bayrische Rundfunk* in Munich, the *Hessische Rundfunk* in Frankfurt/Main, the *Süddeutsche Rundfunk* in Stuttgart, *Radio Bremen*, the *Südwestfunk* in Baden-Baden. According to the federal regulations on culture and education the legal responsibility of the corporations was entrusted to the Länder.

At the end of 1952, a two hour evening programme was broadcast for the first time by the *NWDR*. Later it was transmitted by all the federal broadcasting institutions reunited in the *ARD* (Working Pool of the Broadcasting Corporations of the Federal Republic of Germany). The commissioning of the *ARD* responded to the federal structure of the Republic of Germany. An attempt was made by the *CDU* government to establish a nationwide central broadcast but the project was rejected by the Federal Constitutional Court in 1961. As a compromise, the *ZDF* (Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen, Second German Television), broadcast for the first time in 1963 and was established by a national contract signed by all federal states. The *ZDF* is centrally located in Mainz and regulated by public law. It only receives 30 percent of the television license fees (fees are divided 70 to 30 in favour of the *ARD* and has to cover 70 percent of its costs through adverts. There has been advertisement on *ARD* since

1956. On public channels (*ARD* and *ZDF*) the broadcasting time for commercials is limited to 20 minutes per day before eight pm on weekdays and forbidden on weekends. Since 1973 the programmes have been broadcast in colour. In the 1960s, *ARD* channels established a *Dritte Programme* (third channel), predominantly oriented towards regional and cultural needs - without advertising.

Since 1984 private broadcasting has become legalised according to the respective federal laws of broadcasting, which led to a so-called dual system comparable to the former regulations of BBC and ITV in Great Britain. Privatisation and the viewers' preference for private channels (which, in 1995, cumulated 60 % of audience and 90 % of advertising revenue) forced the public channels to diversify their activities by broadcasting by cable and satellite, digitalising *Spartenprogramme* (special interest programmes) and promoting international co-operations thanks to *3 Sat* (Germany, Austria and Switzerland) or *Arte* (Germany, France). Programmes on commercial television privilege entertainment and public channels, under the pressure of audience ratings, put more and more emphasis on entertainment.

Channels specializing in History programmes

Nowadays, history appears almost exclusively on public channels (*ARD*, *ARD Third Programmes*; *ZDF* as well as its national and international co-operation programmes). Commercial channels seldom broadcast historical films which are never part of a regular programme. Still, "culturally orientated" providers (e.g. magazines and newspapers such as *Spiegel*, *Stern*, *Fokus*, *Süddeutsche*, *Neue Zürcher*), being legally obliged to broadcast programmes of "collective interest", put in the air documentaries, reports, interviews with contemporary witnesses.

In the early sixties, as a reaction against the conservative climate of the fifties, entertainment lost its importance, political magazines (e.g. *Panorama*, starting in 1960, *Zeichen der Zeit* [*Signs of the time*] or later *Report*) provided more critical and accurate information. This process that accelerated in 1963/64, then during the student revolt in 1968, had an influence on the treatment of history, there had been 42 dossiers dedicated to historical issues on the first (and only) channel in 1959, there were more than 100 in 1961.

When dealing with the topic of history on German television, we must mention a specific feature which does not apply to other countries: most history programmes can be clustered under the heading “Vergangenheitsbewältigung” (coming to terms with the past) which means that, treating German fascism, the so-called Third Reich, the NS-period, they evoke aspects of the German guilt. This was largely due to the arrival of a new generation of historians as can be seen with the opening at Ludwigsburg, in 1958, of a central public prosecutors office investigating the crimes perpetrated by the Nazi regime. There are also programmes on national and international history, from antiquity to the fifth French Republic, from Egypt to the colonisation of Patagonia - but also a strong emphasis on the Nazi-period: there were 16 programmes about the Third Reich in 1955, 39 in 1960 and 87 in 1961.

This was closely linked to the *Eichmann* trial in Israel, between 1959 and 1961, spectators were continuously informed about the case which, in 1961, was summed up in a 31 episode series. The same happened with the Auschwitz trial which began in Frankfurt in December 1963. A landmark was the 14-part documentary “*Das Dritte Reich*” (The Third Reich), broadcast between 1960 and 1961, in prime time on Friday evenings, repeated on Monday evenings at 10 p.m. It was watched, on an average, by 58 % of the spectators. In 1963 the whole series was again put in the air on Sunday afternoons, this time - as an answer to former criticism - with a fifteenth programme placed at the beginning to treat the period before 1933. In 1964 the whole series was published in book. Commemorations often provide a pretext for a return to the past, as is the case with the 20 July 1944 attempt to kill Hitler, the *Reichskristallnacht* of the 9 November 1938, or the end of the war on the 8 May 1945.

Beside documentaries, fictions or semi-fictions must be taken into account. Numerous in the fifties, they declined in the sixties to restart in the last decades of the century. The return to fiction is in part linked to the development of digitalisation, but most importantly to the competition with private TV channels, which broadcast mainly entertaining programmes and thus cream off viewing figures. Public service broadcasting cannot completely refuse to follow this trend. The early programmes were presented from an individual-moralising point of view, the angle of vision was strictly personal. Such programmes have long been criticised for their inadmissible simplification of the complexity of history.

The US-American TV-series *Holocaust* (USA 1978, NBC, director Marvin Chomsky), broadcast in 1979, attracted a huge audience and initiated a broad discussion. Originally, it was supposed to be screened on the first channel of ARD. Eventually it was shown on the Third Channel. Nonetheless its ratings wavered for 31 to 41 per cent (during its repeat in 1982 it was still between 16 and 30 per cent). The public discussion (first in the USA, later in Germany) centered less on the correctness of historical representation than on the strong individual and emotional accent of a series that many considered a soap-opera. A much more complex theoretical television and history debate was initiated by the 11-part series *Heimat* directed by Edgar Reitz in 1984 which, in the framework of a village, presents the history of the German 20th century viewed “from the people”. Conversely the debate about the broadcasting of Claude Lanzmann’s nine-hour *Shoah*, at the beginning of the 90s, was rather limited to experts.

A researcher ⁽¹⁾ has calculated that, on the basis of 450 programmes, every fifth deals with the prosecution of Jews, every tenth with the German resistance and every twentieth deals with Hitler as an individual and that 213 million viewers watched these productions. The highest rating went to the 6-part ZDF series *Hitler - eine Bilanz* directed by Guido Knopp, author of a great number of books, now responsible of the historical programmes broadcast at peak times. The access to graphical material from Eastern Germany and Eastern Europe after 1990 (cf. the co-production with Russian television of *Der verdammte Krieg* in 1991), a sometimes pathetic approach to the topics, the inclusion of “scenic quotations” (re-shot when necessary) and Knopp’s sententious screen performance have created a style, bitterly criticized by historians but rather popular as shows the list of recent programmes: 1996 *Hitlers Helfer*, 1998 *Hitlers Generäle*; in 1999 a film about Hitler’s takeover, another in 2000 about the Holocaust; later *Hitlers Frauen*, *Hitlers Vollstrecker*. The ARD also competes by, for example, showing a programme about the German Armed Forces *Soldaten für Hitler*.

1 Jürgen Wilke (1999). “Massenmedien und Vergangenheitsbewältigung.” In: Jürgen Wilke (Hg.) (1999). *Mediengeschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*. Bonn, p 662.

These programmes must be referred to the public discussions about the historiography of the Third Reich, first the so-called *Historikerstreik* (historians' quarrel) which began in 1986 when Ernst Nolte tried to lessen the importance of German fascism by associating it to other totalitarianisms, then the *Wehrmacht* exhibition 1995 in Hamburg (1995) which brought to light for the first time the crimes committed by the *Wehrmacht*, eventually the *Goldhagen*-debate (1996) provoked by a book which rejuvenated the old collective-guilt-thesis of an intrinsic German anti-Semitism..

Here are the most important ZDF history transmissions since 2000 (except the special program "ZDF History"):

2000: Hitlers Kinder, 5 parts, 3,5 million spectators = 11,1 % of total audience.

Holocaust, 6 parts; 2,64 million = 8,2 %.

2001: Hitlers Frauen, 6 parts, 4,15 million = 16,1 %).

Die große Flucht, 5 parts, 5,00 million = 16,1 %), (Germans fleeing from the East to the West in 1945)

2002: Der Jahrhundertkrieg, 9 parts, 4,08 million = 12,6 % (World War II)

Die SS - Eine Warnung der Geschichte, 6 parts, 4,66 million = 14,6 %.

2003: Stalingrad, 3 parts, 4,28 million = 12,9 %.

Goodbye Erich, 1 part, 3,44 million = 14,1%) („Goodbye“ to Honecker).

2004: Sie wollten Hitler töten, 3,37 million = 10,4 %) (Attempt against Hitler).

Die Befreiung, 5 parts, 3,38 million = 12,3 %) (The liberation, 1945).

Hitlers Manager, 5 parts, 3,05 million = 12,6 %.

2005: Goodbye DDR, 4 parts, ca. 3,50 million = ca. 12 %.

Der Sturm, 4 parts, 3,42 million = 10,8 %, (Germans fleeing before the Russian Army, 1945).

2006: Der Feuersturm, 2 parts, 4,04 million = 11,6 %, (Bombing of Dresden 1945).

Göring - Eine Karriere, 3 parts, 4,21 million = 12,3 %.

Majestät!, 5 parts, 4,19 million = 13,8 %, (Today's European Kings and Queens)

Die großen Diktatoren. 3 parts, 3,55 million = 12,2 %, (Hitler, Stalin, Mao).

ZDF-History (see below) 2006: 32 parts + 4 repetitions

2007: Hitlers nützliche Idole, 3 parts, 3,19 million = 9,6 %, (Rühmann, Schmeling, Riefenstahl).

Die Wehrmacht - Eine Bilanz, 5 parts, 3,19 million = 9,8 %.

Die Königskinder, 6 parts, 4,56 million = 16,4 %, (Children of today's European kings and queens).

Dianas Hochzeit - Die wahre Geschichte, 1 part, 5,12 million = 17,3 %, (Diana's Wedding - the true history).

ZDF History 2007: 40 parts + 5 repetitions + 1 special.

Most important History Programs

The German reunification of 1990 brought a "dual way of coming to terms with the past", since the GDR-history undergoes also a critical re-evaluation - in fact limited to the actions undertaken by the Stasi (Ministry of State Security, Secret Service of the German Democratic Republic) in order not to offend the former Eastern Germans. Feature films contribute more than television to a revision of the DDR-past at times awkwardly, at other times dramatically.

The National Socialist period is till continuously present on television with a stronger insistence on fiction, visual effects and emotion in documentaries as well as in television plays (often shot in cooperation with feature films producers). What is noticeable is an expansion, content-wise as well as topic-wise, which can be of interest to further research: besides the Germans being the perpetrators, in other words being guilty, have surfaced the Germans as victims, as can be seen in:

- *Die Flucht* (ARD 2007), flight of German families before the Russian army, from East Prussia to the west, in 1945. It had on the Sunday and Monday an average of 10 ½ million spectators which mean more than 28 % of the total audience. It was repeated the following Friday on arte with 2,46 million spectators.

- In March 2008 two fictional programmes, in two parts, done by ZDF:
- *Dresden* reenacting the British bombardment of Dresden in January 1945. Sunday 12,68 million = 32,6 % of shares, Monday 11,25 million = 31,2 %.
- *Die Gustloff* showing a ship with 9000 refugees fleeing westward through the Baltic Sea in 1945 and being destroyed by a Russian submarine was seen by 7,87 spectators. The two documentaries treating the same topic have been seen by 5,31 million spectators.

In the 90s most contributions focused on Nazi Germany. Today the importance of that period has been reduced, there are more programmes dealing with the concrete experience of those born after the 1960s. A new program dealing with „living history“ has appeared lately, it combines in documentaries on the life in past periods, followed by reports about volunteers who, today, have accepted to live in the same conditions. One of the most successful emissions is the „ZDF History“, established in this format in 2000, and transmitted every Sunday during 40 minutes on late evening, which reached initially 11 % of the audience and has climbed up to 13,5 %. There is only one topic presented by the chief of ZDF-Zeitgeschichte, Guido Knopp. ARD (First and third program) has a similar format with “Geheimnis Geschichte”, transmitted since 2007, less often and with a minor audience than “ZDF History”.

Regarding the film form we note a blend of various voices: moderator, hidden all-knowing narrator, eyewitness, historians, original pictures with fresh takes of the place, black and white originals and coloured retakes. More importantly, there is a growing mixture between documentary and fictional forms which, according to many specialists, prevents spectators from taking a critical view of the past. Another contemporary trend is an attempt to involve spectators in an interactive participation. ZDF, at the end of October 2008, starts a ten part documentary series *Die Deutschen*, a history of Germany in ten periods from the 10th century to the foundation of the republic in 1918. Tests and interviews on the current knowledge of German history have been filmed and will be presented in “ZDF-History”. The series will be paralleled, on “ZDF-History”, by a five part documentary on German history from 1918 to 1989 and by a debate between historians. Teachers and students are also invited

to send texts, pictures or videos and to find “places of memory” in their region. ZDF is opening this year a call for contributions for the 2009-celebration of the fall of Berlin Wall in 1989: People should communicate their life experiences of the end of German Democratic Republic, their testimonies will be used in the making of historical films.

In order to illustrate the situation at present let us take a sketchy look at history representations during two weeks on current German TV schedule from 26 January to 8 February 2008:

a) Feature Films (including TV-plays):

1 x Second World War and post-war period (escape from Russian imprisonment)

2 x War: German occupation (1 x Luxemburg, 1 x France)

1 x Satire on Hitler

1 x Gestapo

2 x Concentration camps / Holocaust

1 x Holocaust / Pogrom

1 x GDR before fall of Berlin Wall

1 x Western German terrorism during 70s (and GDR)

b) Documentaries:

The unknown soldier (about Wehrmacht exhibition and the crimes committed by the German Armed Forces)

The Wehrmacht (series in 5 parts)

Jewish resistance towards Hitler

Escape from the KZ (concentration camp) in Auschwitz

Humour in the Third Reich

Carnival in the Third Reich

Year chronicle of the Reich (from 1933 to 45)

KZ Dachau

Battle of the Atlantic (3 parts)

Friedrichstraße in Berlin

The Knights Templar in the Middle Ages

The Ancient Egyptians (series)

Pompous ships in the ancient world

ZDF History with its historical magazine on Sunday evening, which was established by the ZDF redaction for contemporary history, is a representative example of history on television in Germany. The main topics in the programmes of the season 2007-2008 were:

- *On the Third Reich:*

Hitler's useful idiots (careers under the Swastika; series)

The Wehrmacht (German Armed Forces)

Albert Speer, Architect of Death

Myth Miracle Weapons

Myth Kamikaze (Japan and Germany)

Myth Battle of the Atlantic

Paul von Hindenburg (The person who supported Hitler to power)

In the shadow of the war (victims, perpetrators, rescuers)

- *On GDR:*

5 films with different subject matters about the Stasi

The Miracle of Berlin (about the fall of the Berlin Wall 1989)

RAF-Terrorism in the 70s:

3 contingents

- *Diverse:*

The emperors' long night (Caesar, Wilhelm, Cortés, Napoleon)

The dictators (Hitler, Stalin, Mao)

The Cold War

Stars that die at a young age (Mozart, Dean, Joplin, Presley u.a.)

The sinking of the ... (Titanic, Lusitania, Andrea Doria, Estonia u.a.)

Napoleon's Russian campaign (3 parts)

The bought revolution (Germany and Lenin 1917)

The Merovingian's secret

Seven biggest lies in history; Bronze Age

Franklin D. Roosevelt

Barbarians against Rome (England's conquest)

Homer and Troja.

Future History programming of interest to all European viewers

Programmes made in Germany are not the only opening onto history, a rather large number of British and American documentaries are also put in the air. More important is the up to now rarely realized attempt to produce documentaries of European interest emphasising the different visions of several European societies.

In my opinion this could be the way for the future: make programmes on aspects of a national history, with an inclusion of other interpretations since, while knowing that interpretations are mere constructions, especially in times of migration and globalization, we are also aware of the fact that they are deeply rooted in the public discourses and ideology of any country. Topics must be chosen under this perspective, trans-national co-operations must be realized (and not only in order to sale the products abroad, which means an emphasis on the spectacular, without reference to the different national sights and interpretation).

In Germany this complex of national and international/European identity, which should be dealt with in history programmes all over Europe, has evolved strangely: until about 1990 Western Germany was the less national oriented country in Europe, but since the unification there is a strong endeavour to (re)constructing something like a national identity. A tendency that is always in conflict and interaction with the old one of non-national orientation.

Showing different attitudes with regards to the past (as well as to the present) seems to be a crucial point, and the first step towards a future (European) television history in both sectors: channels with a large public and special channels.

History programs in Portuguese TV

Maria Joao Guerreiro

Since the early 90s the most important and significant national TV channels in Portugal are four: RTP1, RTP2, SIC and TVI. RTP1 and RTP2 are both public channels, although RTP started just as single public channel in the mid-fifties and it was the only TV channel in Portugal for decades. SIC and TVI are both private channels and started to broadcast in the early nineties after an important law about radio and television that changed the TV legislation in Portugal giving permission and opportunity for the first time in Portugal to the existence of private channels. Since then the public enterprise RTP created several thematic and local channels like, par exemple, RTP International: oriented to the vast number of Portuguese emigrants all over the world in places like Canada, USA, Brazil, Venezuela, France, Luxembourg and Germany among many others; RTP Africa oriented to the ex-Portuguese colonies in Africa: Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, Cabo Verde and São Tomé and Príncipe; RTPN oriented to a local audience in the north of Portugal; or even RTP Memória, RTP Memory, a reprise channel with the golden moments of the history of RTP. Despite this, since the mid-seventies that RTP owned two local channels, RTP Madeira and RTP Azores, because after the 1974 revolution these two regions obtained a new political status that gave them a certain autonomy from the continent and the power centred in Lisbon.

The most important History Programs put in the air by the main Television channels

In Portugal, the most important and the biggest part of programs of History use to be broadcasted by the two national public channels. Though, there are considerable differences between both of them: In RTP1, the programs of History are definitely more commercial making part in many cases of popular TV contests or assuming the forms of fictional presenting that in some cases results in soap formats; In RTP2, the most usual

History programs form is the documentary some times of national production although RTP2 several times broadcasts too documentaries of other origins like for exemple from Brazil, USA and, of course, from other countries of the European Union, specially from United Kingdom. In this channel, José Hermano Saraiva maintains an history program, since the seventies, but often enough since the nineties. In general these programs deal with several aspects of Portuguese History and is centered in his recognized talent to speak for wide audiences. So, he completes the whole program with his speech travelling by the country discovering a monument or a certain historical place. Criticized by historians he is however admired by the so-called “general audiences”.

The other channels, private and commercial, barely broadcast History programs. Even the SIC cable channels (like SIC Woman, SIC Radical or SIC News) don't use to broadcast History programs, not even about thematics with strict relation with the orientation of those channels. However in the first years of the 21st century when the Public television struggled to survive their deepest crisis of audiences ever, SIC national channel broadcasted three of the most popular documentaries series of the history of portuguese television: *Salazar*, *The Big Travel* and *The Portuguese 20th Century*.

Salazar, made by Joana Pontes, in 1999, was a serial of six episodes. In these series, for the first time ever, the Portuguese dictator, António Salazar, was revealed in a biographical and historical point of view. *The Big Travel* made by Brandão Lucas, author of one of most popular documentary series of RTP 1 *Remote People*, a serial about distant lands in Africa and Asia where the Portuguese have been during the 15 and 16th century. *The Big Travel*, produced with an ephemeris purpose, celebrated Vasco da Gama's travel to India occurred in the late 15th century. These programs tried not only to remake the Da Gama's travel, but and at the same time to present the Portuguese influences in Africa and India. *The Portuguese 20th century* was made after under influence of BBC TV Series about twenty century history. Both series shared a similar style and conception: archives films and photos that supported a text improved by the veracity of testimonies. These three series produced by SIC were all of them broadcasted by History Channel Iberia and were released edited for home video entertainment.

These three examples had no continuity in SIC production due, perhaps, to the fact that this commercial channel preferred to invest in more popular and entertaining programs, like soap novels or in general reality shows. By other hand they created a new specialized channel: Sic Notícias (Sic News) that broadcast documentaries but not specifically history ones. In fact journalistic programs about politics and present life dominate the channel agenda. In present times, historical documentaries series seems to be condemned to disappear from the commercial television.

In the public channels the situation is different. As we've said it's notorious a certain distinction between RTP1 and RTP2: the first channel is constructed for wide audiences and in general it imitates commercial channels. What concerns History programs there are a clear preference for fiction. Since the beginning of the nineties that almost every year RTP1 produced at least a History fiction serial with a medium-low rate public acceptance. In present days there is a meaningful example, inspired in similar Spanish series: *Tell me how it was once* is the title of a fiction serial about a Portuguese family who lives in the end of the sixties during the fascism times.

The last of these history fictional programs is about the regicide of the king D. Carlos I, in February 1908, an historical event generally associated to the end of monarchy in Portugal and the beginning of the republican revolution of 1910. In this program the ephemeris purposes are clear - when TV, private or public, produces history programs based on ephemeris, this one get the status of a "special daily event" and makes part of the day news agenda.

But there are some exceptions in this channels usual programming schedule. Sometimes historical documentaries are broadcasted in RTP 1's prime time. This use to happen, when documentaries have a huge and recognized quality production and their authors are already popular. We stress two great documentaries series broadcasted in RTP1, in the last months: *Portugal: a social portrait* these series deal mainly with general aspects of contemporary life in Portugal, in the last forty years. So, each episode is dedicated to one specific theme, presenting the past and present *status quo*: the last fifty years of dictatorship, the 24th April revolution and the construction of democracy.

With a high production pattern, using amazing archives images (we can't forget that RTP possess the greatest film archive in Portugal), these series announce the discovery of an identity for Portuguese people, and do not exclude non-Portuguese people living in Portugal. One more time the director is Joana Pontes and the author, António Barreto, is a known socialist politician and a distinguished sociologist.

The War is a serial about the Portuguese colonial war, in the sixties and early seventies.

In the eighteen episodes of *The War* are used rare films not only from RTP archives, but also from the archives of image of the Portuguese Army, Navy and Air Force and some private footage too. Joaquim Furtado, the director of *The War* is one of the most well-known journalists in Portugal and a singular personality that participated in the Portuguese Revolution of 25 of April of 1974 and integrated too the Portuguese army in the seventies.

The War dealing with the recent Portuguese colonial war, deals with a very polemic question in the actual Portuguese society, because there are war victims in both sides and because some political questions end emerging on the discussion of the program: the end of colonial war, the independence of the ex-colonies and, in a more practical way, the diplomatic relations between Portugal and the African countries that speak Portuguese.

In general, the so-called cultural programs are broadcasted especially in RTP2. In fact, is only in RTP2 that we could see a wide range of non-Portuguese documentaries in general American or British and Portuguese documentaries reprise. These programs in general are broadcasted late at night, because the channel policy about prime time gives privilege to commercial series. Some years ago prime time in this channel were occupied only by cultural programs. So, in nowadays American series are cultural programs? Or cultural television no longer exists in public television, or only exists late at night?

It's true that the notorious low audience performance of this channel, in the last few years, almost condemned it to disappearance. But the so-called "sociedade civil", public or private institutions who wants to

participate in public television, contribute to maintain this channel until the present days. Is in this context of “sociedade civil” that we can understand Universities participation in TV?

Universidade Aberta, as a distance learning University, broadcasted daily a 25 minute program, several times dedicated to History themes. That program, *Entre Nós*, ends in last December. In the present, Universidade Aberta broadcasts every Saturday, early in the morning, a meaningful number of programs dealing with cultural issues, and there History is not forgotten. Today new pedagogical strategies evolved to *on-line* education and television as an educational medium lost a big amount of its appeal. Universidade Aberta and her television role is in the present largely discussed: should Universidade Aberta continue to broadcast in public television? What are the opportunities in specialized cable channels? Shall we construct a strategy plan in order to make our production more aggressive and more adapted (contents and forms) to present commercial TV?

Universidade Aberta is not yet a channel, perhaps in the future...

What we intend about a history program?

History programs issues deals with several questions: What we intend about a history program? Only documentaries? What about other television genres when fiction and reality are mixed? And what to say about TV contests on History? Some of these contests are sometimes powerful television audience events...

Par example a sophisticated production contest like *The Best Portuguese of all Times*: it takes long for months, with the participation of popular politicians, actors and intellectuals and even one historian (historians community attacks the contents of this contest, criticizing the low quality of historical presentations). RTP made short documentaries about the personalities that were chosen by the audience through Internet and telephone votes. Conclusion: in the very long night poll, the winner was..... Salazar. Weird isn't it? Even me predicting that terrible result, send my personal vote (not in Salazar, of course...). Well, not all about that contest was disappointing. In fact, Aristides de Sousa Mendes (curiously,

well known by Portuguese audiences through a RTP 1 documentary of Diana Andringa made in the early nineties), the portuguese consul in Bordeaux, in 1940, who saved thousands of jewish refugees got the third place...the second place went to Alvaro Cunhal, the leader of Portuguese Comunist Party.

So History themes could mobilize audiences, but like in the last example focused, not always with the best results. Even the word “mobilize” audiences are weaker than in the past...What to say when we look in the present and we see continuous specialization of audiences? Results from the so-called global world? We know that today it is difficult to see audiences like we’ve seen them five years ago. People search what they want to watch on TV set, in their own schedule, getting their favourite programs in DVD formats. Historical documentaries are searched by those who want to construct their private DVD collection. That is perhaps the present and the future. So, we must produce high pattern quality history programs, and to do it, we must do it the irreplaceable contribution of historians.

Representation of History in Italian television

Paola Valentini

Italian television was a state monopoly, from the beginning (1952-1954) until the Seventies. Next to the first channel (Programma nazionale, then RAI 1) came (1961) a second channel (Secondo canale then RAI 2), then (1979° a third (RAI 3). Officially the RAI monopoly should have ended by 1972 but it was never abolished and simply vanished between 1972 and 1983 in front of the growth of dozen of local, commercial and even foreign Italian speaking channels (TeleMontecarlo, Tele Svizzera Italiana, Tele Capodistria). Berlusconi, owner of TeleMilano took advantage of the situation to buy most of the commercial channels creating thus a “duopoly”, with RAI on one side (RAI 1, RAI 2, RAI 3), and Mediaset (Berlusconi’s network, CANALE 5, RETE 4, ITALIA UNO) on the other. A few independent channels (LA7, MTV) have also a national diffusion and are involved in a digitalization process. There are about 100 thematic channel, all part of satellite bouquet “monopolized” by Fox Italian Division, and about one thousand independent and local commercial stations.

The most important History Programmes put in the air by the main Television Channels

Public Channels

History TV programs in Italy are a traditional monopoly of journalists, who, simple news-readers in the first years, became interviewers and were allowed to express opinions, take positions in public debates and mediate with audience. Due to the preponderance of journalists History Programs on public channels were almost exclusively documentaries made with archive footage (usually bought from the Istituto Luce which made newsreels under Fascism) with a narrator’s voice over. A turning point came the 10th November 1972, when Sergio Zavoli, mixing original footage and interviews with witnesses, journalists and historians, produced *Nascita di una dittatura*, evocation in six episodes of the Fascist rise to power. The accuracy of the reconstruction and the inventiveness of the treatment were much appreciated, Zavoli applied the

same method to *La notte della Repubblica* (1989), which dealt with the initial period of the Italian Republic. There was thus what can be labeled an “Italian style in History Programs”, still in use in a popular series, *La storia siamo noi*, which combines a sober, unemotional presentation with a spectacular exhibition of television means (numbers of cameras, set decoration, various use of shooting plans, camera movements and visible editing). The other national turning point in History programs was the experimental films that Roberto Rossellini created for RAI (often in co-production with other European TV channels) during the Sixties (e.g. *L'età del ferro*, *La presa di potere di Luigi XIV* with ORTF). Misunderstood by an audience that found them too complicated these broadcast nevertheless represent a prefiguration of the present docudramas.

There is no fix schedule for history programs, they are put in the air in different situations, for instance the same episode of *La storia siamo noi*, scheduled on RAI satellite in prime time is also broadcast on Rai 2 or Rai 3 early in the morning or late in the evening while *La superstoria* may be broadcast in prime time or in late evening, according to its subject. When the theme changes the schedule follows, *Enigma* deals with “mysteries” but the episodes dedicated to biographies are put in the air in prime time and their format wavers from fifty minutes to more than an hour.

Nowadays history is a trademark of RAI 3 which, from that point of view, is almost a thematic channel (38 History programmes in prime time in 2005 and 65 in late evening) and broadcasts documentaries as well as reconstructions historical feature films.

Documentaries are made up of original newsreels bought in various archives, not only at the Istituto Luce, with just a narration voice over to surround the images and to bridge the gaps in the editing. It's the traditional History programs of public channels, virtually unknown on commercial channels and not modified since the 1970s.

Un minuto di storia by Gianni Bisiach (RAI 1, Monday to Friday) is a modern version of this formula. It's a one-minute documentary with a voice over inserted in the 8.00 a.m. TV news, and is the only example of History in daytime in RAI 1 or 2. Every morning it has a large audience (from 7.00 to 9.00 Rai 1 is the preferred channel with 27,67% of audience in April 2008).

Passaggio a Nord Ovest (Saturday, 17.45, RAI 1), aimed at young people, privileges ancient history, adventures, archaeological discoveries in accordance with scholarly textbooks. Travels throughout historic places is a pretext for a narration in voice over and for explanations given, on the spot, by the anchorman (for example Rome for gladiators, story of Spartacus, etc.).

La grande storia (from 1997 on RAI 3. First broadcast in prime time, it is now broadcast daily at 8.00 a.m. and twice a week in late evening, with a repetition on RAI SAT [see below]). Since its the beginning the structure of *La grande storia* has not changed, it consists of newsreels, images shot for the programme, interviews and deals mostly with Italian history between or during the two world wars. The curators do not hesitate to treat twice the same subjects, *Casa Savoia* (31st August 2007, h. 21.05) had the same author (Nicola Caracciolo), the same historic consultant (Valerio Castronovo), the same theme (the end of monarchy in Italy) that a 1979 documentary (*Il Piccolo Re*) and Caracciolo declared: “My point of view is the same, what changes is the way I narrate the story”).

Correva l'anno - (RAI 3) with newsreels and narration in voice over has three sections: “Speciale Fascismo” [extra edition Fascism], “Speciale Guerra fredda” [extra edition Cold War] (until 2006), “Biografie parallele” [parallel biographies].

La Superstoria - (Saturday, 20.10 or 23.00, depending upon the subject, RAI 3). Aimed at young people, it updates the documentary formula, the mood is satirical and the attitude is often sarcastic. It's always a montage film but the rhythm is quick thanks to a very fast editing and a mixing of contemporary music, striking images and visual and audio counterpoints. Subjects are different (from documentaries on the Eighties till history of Italian Television, or history of working conditions). Much attention is paid to micro history, everyday life and different ways of documenting a period (with an attention to the role of cinema, media, literature, music, etc.).

La storia siamo noi - Heading programme, meant to illustrate the “history project” of the RAI, is repeated daily by all RAI channels (daily at 8.05 on RAI 3, Monday h 23.25 on RAI 1 and Wednesday h. 0.45 on RAI 2, and in repetitions on RAI satellite channels). Created and presented by

Gianni Minoli it's a unique experience in Europe with about 240 hours transmitted all year round. It has multiple interests: the secrets of history, men of XX century, "mass autobiography for a memory of the future". It has a particular audiovisual syntax, interrupts documentary images with "spectacular" shooting from studio, boasts dozen of screens in the studio reduplicating the image of the host and his guests, has recourse to close up, steady cam, etc.

The conception of history in these programs has been strongly influenced by a detective miniseries, *La Piovra*, and so by the politically committed Italian movies of the Seventies. The same influence is to be found in recent television films, *La meglio gioventù* (M. T. Giordana, 2003, Rai 1, 4 episodes) which recounts forty years of Italian history seen through the lives of two young brothers, with scrupulous reconstructions or real documentary segments about crucial moments (the Florence flood, the "Red Brigades"), or *Cefalonia* (Rai, 2004) in which official documents but also diaries, memories, witness statements help recreate historical events (the struggle of the Italian army against the Germans in the Greek island of Cefalonia the 8th September 1943) in the framework of individual experiences.

Istantanee dal passato ["Snapshots from the past", in *Superquark* 2007 edition] gives a historian, professor Alessandro Barbero, a chance to present aspects of everyday life from the Middle Ages to the 19th century, thanks to famous pictures (e.g. Arnolfini by van Eyck for pregnancy and woman condition in the past) and sketches of the well known cartoonist Bruno Bozzetto.

Il caffè (originally a production for RAI International 1, the satellite channel for Italian in the world; repeated daily by RAI 3 h. 6.30). Cinzia Tani presents, with the help of guests, period shorts and interviews, an Italian cultural event of particular importance such as the memory of actress Anna Magnani, novelist Alberto Moravia - or even the Shoah.

TG2 Dossier Storie. Journalist Maria Concetti Mattei, with guest and filmed interview, talks about stories often involving Historic questions (exterminations, but also 50 years of history of rock).

Voyager. Ai confine della conoscenza (RAI 2, Tuesday, h. 20.30) created and presented by reporter Roberto Giacobbo, who worked also for

commercial TV [see below, *Stargate*] is a traditional talk-show aimed at answering every time a new question (from the Templars to the pyramids or Jack the ripper) with the help of original location shot and witnesses. The program is often surprising as in the episode of 25th December 2007 on the history of pyramid, when professors and historians had to talk on the bottom of the Sphinx in Egypt.

Ulisse (Saturday 21.30, RAI 3, originally *Ulisse: il piacere della scoperta* presented by Piero Angela and from 2007 by his son Alberto Angela). The program, interested in archaeology, art, science organizes a sort of journey to the past. The History is narrated through fictional images (from international TV movies), the commentary is both is registered in historic places (i.e. for historic reconstruction of Middle Age a castle or a land where took place crucial battles).

Enigma (by Corrado Augias, RAI 3, 23.45) The 2007 edition explored “Il lato oscuro della storia” [the dark side of history] and selected subjects as Hitler and the women, but also the history of starlet Anna Nicole Smith, the Italian defeat in Caporetto or Jesus between faith and history. With often unpublished period shorts and with the support of two guests in studio, journalist Augias, tries to shed light on widespread versions of big and small historic mysteries. Except for interesting newsreel, history is often a pretext for a more general chat: in the first episode “Hitler e le donne” the guests were a criminologist and a psychotherapist.

Blu notte. Misteri italiani (RAI 3, from 2000, Tuesday, h. 23.45), is intermediate between the two examples given above. Narration has a preeminent part (the presenter is the detective stories writer Carlo Lucarelli) but reconstruction is visualized through real period shootings often borrowed from TV news, and shots taken in location alternate with by fictional scenes. The program has a narrative pattern as a detective movie (with use of suspense, cliff hanger, mystery) and themes are various, from Nazi-fascist massacre until the Genoa G8 conference in which several protesters were seriously injured by the police.

At last, there is fiction area, very appreciated by the major channels, both public and commercial. The reconstruction of history periods is offered as a romance (*Il cuore nel pozzo* 2005 RAI 1 fiction on the Foibe massa-

cre) or an original biopic (from *Rino Gaetano* to *Exodus. Il sogno di Ada*), great attention is given to scenography, costumes, actor performances and the audiovisual language is typical of a TV movie. These are big money productions, often international, which meet with great success but may also failed entirely. These are broadcast in prime time and are reserved to RAI 1 (and Canale 5).

Except for RAI 3 and its “Progetto storia”, in RAI (and more or less generally in public channels) the “logic of anniversary” is still dominant, especially in occasion of the “giornata della memoria” (27th January), the “memory day” established in 2000 by the Italian Parliament to keep alive the memory of the Jewish extermination, on which are put in the air the movie *Exodus*, thematic programs and sometimes well known moving picture on Shoah (the strategy preferred by commercial channels).

Commercial Channels

Fiction predominates in commercial channels, where Italian typical format “mini-series” (series of 2-4 episodes usually in co-production with international partners) is considered the best way to shed light on the past. Romance, hagiography, adventure are predominant, but there are also docu-dramas that reconstruct in a spectacular manner real events (i.e. *Totò Riina*, *Nassyria*, *Maria Montessori. Una vita per i bambini*, *Il generale dalla Chiesa* etc.), mixing up impressive images typical of commercial TV with pedagogic commentaries akin to those of the public networks. *Totò Riina. Capo dei capi* (Canale 5, 2007, Thursday) narrates the history of fifty years of Italian mafia. The narration begins when an ancient protagonist evokes his past; in the 6 episodes emphasis is put on the degradation, poverty and ignorance of Italian isolated south lands, real world and history are set-aside. Much attention is paid to the construction of characters: episode 1 presents the death of Placido Rizzotto and a brief encounter with general Dalla Chiesa, but the portrait are totally biased, Rizzotto seems to be a young, naive socialist who helps writing letters and tries to “convert” people to good common sense values, while Dalla Chiesa is a good man who tells young “picciotti” to study. The historic reconstruction is based on stereotyps. The episodes related to historic events like the big battles between State and mafia or the

criminals arrests are represented with gangster movie clichés, close ups on newspaper titles, freeze frames, passages from movie to black and white photographs. The series was much criticised for its celebration of the criminal Riina.

Appuntamento con la storia - (RETE 4, 22.30) presents international documentaries devoted to men and facts of 20th century. Before the projection the anchorman interviews historians, specialists, journalists or famous people about facts narrated in the documentaries.

Matrix - (Canale5), news talk show, has specials dedicated to the history of world television - in fact mostly to Italian TV in order to please an audience that likes to see again old programmes and even or TV adverts

Peste e corna e gocce di storia (RETE 4, h 6.20), critical monologue on politic or social matters ended by one minute on events of the past.

Vite straordinarie (RETE 4, Elena Guarnieri) the subjects are uncommon, extraordinary lives and especially their dark side (Maria from Nazareth, Jesus, Madre Teresa or Gianni Agnelli). The goal is to find a “scoop” in the past.

LA7, exception among commercial TV, boasts its cultural and political autonomy (some think that it embodies the real spirit of public service television), and uses history in experimental TV programmes.

Atlantide (daily, h 16.30, adapted from a well known USA programme) is an afternoon TV magazine with a strong interest in history. It uses international TV movie and spectacular historic reconstructions but avoids the “actualization” of the past and deals more with remote periods (i.e. Maya history or crusades). In each episode appear two themes different but interconnected (for example Isle of Pascua and myth of Atlantis but also Mussolini and Hitler).

Stargate. Linea di confine (from 2000). In 2003, when former host Giacobbo changed TV channel, [see above *Voyager*], the programme changed his format; from science-fiction it moved to history and archeology and it left the studios for location shots. Nowadays it is presented by archeologist and best-seller writer Valerio Manfredi.

Altra storia (from 2002, 13.00, Sunday). Pierluigi Battista presents in ev-

ery edition a main theme of the XX century analyzed with images, shorts, interviews. some themes were the Eighties, the end of the Italian “Prima Repubblica”, “L’Italia e gli italiani in tv” [Italy and Italians in TV].

Il sergente (30th October 2007) was born as a theatrical performance and preserves this character, with a live performance in front of a real public, without commercial interruptions. It is not just a show registered by television but really a television event on history the fictional narration is dominant but photographs, the set decoration, special shootings made for the performance help recreate a historical episode.

Channels specialized in history programs

There is no Italian channel specialized in history, the programs on Satellite Television and DTV are subsidiaries of *The History Channel* or *National geographic* managed by Fox International Channels Italy S.r.l., and distributed together in “bouquet” by Murdoch’s Sky. The programs are international productions (by BBC, ARTE, ...) dubbed in Italian with a few Italian productions about Italy in the 20th century.

History Channel, built around thematic evenings, has regular appointments, biographies, documentaries and fictions (*Storia viva* / living history). Documentaries, dealing mostly with the Italian past, are old-stock programs bought to the Istituto Luce, but also new films like *Documenti per la nostra memoria - La strage di Bologna* which used the takes of two amateurs who arrived to the Bologna station immediately 1981 the August massacre, *Lambretta*, study of the ascent and decline of an Italian factory, *Storia proibita del ‘900 italiano* (Friday, 22.00), “journey into the intimate Italian history of the 20th century”. Each episode is a two hour program about unknown aspect of great Italians (Mussolini’s hobbies, D’Annunzio and the age of pleasure). Commentaries are given by voice over, there are newsreels, fictional scenes, interviews with historians. *Luci e ombre sulla storia* (Friday, 21.00), one of the original films produced by History Channel Italia, is extremely traditional, the journalist talks with an historian (Giovanni Sabbatucci, Andrea D’Onofrio) about the subject of the evening (for example Goebbels, but also the conquest of K2 or Argentinian dictators), shows a documentary or a fiction, and talks about the event and his controversial sides.

RAI satellite TV, RAI Sat Extra programs and RAI Sat Premium broadcast a selection of “the best RAI programs the day after” (*La superstoria*, *Enigma* and *La grande storia*) and offer international cult programs or fictions (from *Dallas* to *Mujeres*).

National Geographic, Nat Geo Music, Nat Geo Adventure deal with past adventures and mysteries (*Stonehenge: il mistero svelato*).

Most important History Programs

Dieci anni di Costituzione (Ugo Zatterin, 1958) - typical example of the first period of history programs usually associated with anniversaries and made of archival takes commented by journalists.

Vent'anni di Repubblica (Hombert Bianchi, 4 episodes, 1966), with interviews and repertory documentaries, reveals the influence of contemporary debates in the press.

I giorni della storia (1968) one of the first examples of crossover between historical documents and contemporary re-enactement (the model is the American *You were there*).

Nascita di una dittatura (1972) and *La notte della Repubblica* (1989) by Sergio Zavoli [see above]

Mixer - Monarchia o Repubblica? (5th February 1990, RAI 2) was a turning point in history programs, Gianni Minoli presenting a program about the constitutional referendum of the 2nd June 1946, which gave birth to the Italian Republic demonstrate that it was the monarchy, not the republic that had won. The following week, Minoli declared that all his evidences were faked but he had unleashed a violent debate in the country.

Combat film (1994, RAI 1) used the films shot by the “Combat Camera Unit” during WWII.

La grande storia in prima serata (1997, RAI Tre, see above). The first episodes (*Galeazzo Ciano. Una tragedia fascista* and *Hitler e Mussolini: gli anni degli incontri*) met with an unexpected success. In many cases the commentary was given into the care of historians (Nicola Caracciolo or Sabbatucci).

La storia siamo noi by Giovanni Minoli [see above]

The “nature” of history on Italian television channels

There are, basically two main manners of dealing with the past:

- the inquiry, historic programs akin to television news,
- the travel into the past, in which history is something that must be investigate, brought to light, because it is one of the mysteries of (human) nature that viewers are invited to visit.

In both case what matters is the search of hidden facts, the disclosure of the truth, but the way of looking at the past is quite different. The “Travels into past” make use of spectacular resources, locations shots, fictional reconstructions, digital effects, recourse to post production to recreate ancient ruins or mythological figures. In “inquiries” what matters is the document, the archive, the direct evidence; the inquiry often focuses only on a letter, a secret paper, a misunderstood photograph likely to unveil the secrets of history. In TV studio, which is the centre of inquiry programs, wallpaper screens often reduplicate the words of the witnesses, the documents exhibited as evidences, the details of a photograph. Spectacular resources are used, but in a more “conceptual” way, in a superficial demonstration of the way historians re-interpret evidences.

In *Nazismo esoterico* (Esoteric Nazism), a section ofr the series *Voyager: ai confini della conoscenza* (Rai2, 16/03/2008) the anchorman really travels into time and space. Exploring in ten minutes the power of the myth of the Holy Grail in Nazism, he walks in Germany, in front of the Wewelsburg Nazist Castle, then in a crowded place in Munich, a few seconds later in Monseguro (France) just to show a plaque commemorating the Cathar massacre and the theory of Otto Rahn, then back to the castle, at last in Egypt, in front of the Pyramids. The program uses a wide range of spectacular resources, images pass from black and white to colors, at times the anchorman suddenly disappears, the musical score, at the beginning is the main theme of *Schindler's list*, with no evident reference to the massacre of the Jews massacre.

In *La storia siamo noi - Il caso Mattei* (Rai2) everything everything is buit around an audio recording of the “black box” found where statesman Mattei died the 27th October 1962 in an air crash. The opening sequence shows a series of giant writings (the line of the dialogue, the date of the

disaster), the image of Enrico Mattei is reduplicated by camera, the conversation between the pilot and the air control interferes with the voice over of the anchorman, Gianni Minoli, who is not present, the half-lit studio is full of widescreens, monitors, cameras, the point of view changes constantly as if the camera was kin on displaying all its potential (ralenti, travelling, wide shot, close up).

In both historic formats mentioned above, the past is equally something close to our times, never ending, that we have to always take into account although it is rather obscure. In *Il caso Mattei* analyzed above, the information contained in the “black box” is ambiguous and inconsistent, heard again and again the recording reveals emotional but not relevant details, like the voice of the dead pilot, the sudden silence, the rumble of the storm. After an hour part of the mystery is partially unveiled, but not thanks to the evidence given during the program, an expert reveals that Mattei’s gold ring recently analyzed with new technologies proves that there was a bomb on board. The answer is of limited interest: who put the bomb and why? A mysterious plot is always the most attractive “solution” for Italian historic programs.

This distinction between two conceptions of the past ideally results in the building of typical characters represented by two pairs: guilty and innocent (“inquiry”) or constructive and destructive powers (“travel into past”). The typical characters are ambiguous and reflect an ill-defined, slippery conception of historic events. The cinematic portrait of Giulio Andreotti in the film *Il divo* is much indebted to television standards, the man is at the same time an hero and a loser, a leader who favoured Italian economic growth and a failure, which suggests that there is a universe to investigate and a secret land to visit. Characters, in television history, are pieces in a game whose rules change constantly. Emphasis on individual cases reveals a clear preference for biographies more or less fictionalised. The images selected to speak, for instance of Nazism or Fascism, are often repetitive and centred on know people, Hitler means Berlin or Germany, Mussolini speaking from the balcony of Piazza Venezia is synonymous of Rome during 30s. The accent is always put on the everyday life of VIPs (Mussolini and the women of his life, for instance) or exceptional cases (Enzo Tortora the well-known show man

arrested for the perjury of a former mafia member), individual lives look more significant to understand Italy of the past (or of the present) than public and collective events.

Another example is offered by *Blu notte. Misteri italiani*, a program whose main purpose is to deliver a coherent, linear reconstruction of an event. Even the interviews serve only to make the narration go forward. The role of individual characters is crucial, the anchorman speaks while moving around giant photographs of the people mentioned in the programs, the silhouette are there to remind us that history is made of individual destinies.

La storia siamo noi gives sometimes the impression that the manner of re-presenting the past is more important than the past itself. *La storia siamo noi* offers countless examples of rewriting, some episodes are mere reruns of previous episodes, at times very old - a way of illustrating the persistence of mysteries which opens the way to other inquiries on the same topic. The anniversary of terrorist attempt which, in Milan, provoked a slaughter the 12th December 1969, *La notte della repubblica: piazza Fontana*, episode created in 1989 by Sergio Zavoli in his historic program, was broadcast the 12 December 2003 and again the 10 December 2004. This was one of the most dramatic terrorist attempts, and a turning point in Italian history itself for the institutional crisis it caused as well as for the enduring suspicion regarding obscure, dangerous forces it provoked. Despite new inquiries and a series of trials (seven, the last in 2005) *La storia siamo noi* goes on presenting the same old program, with at the end a long caption mentioning the verdicts passed after 1989. One possible explanation is that the traditional presentation of the story appeals to many spectators.

The will to leave “open” the conclusion is obvious in *Correva l'anno*, where a five minute speech delivered by the anchorman corrects what has been previously shown by mentioning the latest results of historical research. In *Il caso Rosselli* devoted to the killing by Fascists of the Rosselli brothers, adversaries of Mussolini, the presenter, at the end, explains that one of the hypothesis evoked in the film, the involvement of Italian Communists in the attempt, is totally false. Something similar happens in *Appuntamento con la storia* where the projection of a documentary (usually a History Channel or Luce documentary) is followed by

a chat between the anchorman and an historian who try, in a couple of minutes, to expose the present state of the research. *Blu notte. Misteri italiani* begins usually in the present time, then returns to the past, *Storia della mafia* shows at first the killing of Falcone and Borsellino, two judges presiding the struggle against mafia in the 1990s, then goes backwards; *Storia delle Brigate rosse* starts with the arrest in 2003 of Nadia Lioce, member of a new terrorist group, then goes back to the 1970s. The flash-forward anticipates the “end” and makes it useless to offer any deep analysis of the events.

Audience's response

Historical programs are categorized as “educational”, *La storia siamo noi* is broadcast under the label Rai educational, so that the channels do not care much of viewers' opinion, Satellite TV had no audience survey before April 2007 and the specialized history channels are content with a general (not minute by minute) survey. History is usually scheduled on early morning, Saturday afternoon and in some case late at night. But, due to the great success of the “travel to past” formula, some travel programs aimed at a little demanding audience are scheduled in prime time on Rete 4, one of Berlusconi's channels.

Here are the most successful programs during the eight last years:

Il sergente by Marco Paolini is one of the greatest surprise, the 3 November 2007 it registered one million 200.000 spectators (5,5% of the shares), an extraordinary result for a history broadcast in prime time. There are many reasons for such success. The broadcast itself was cleverly advertised in the press and on television announcement with an emphasis not only on the historic relevance of the event but on the originality of the experience clean any no advertisement and programmed for a long term. Paolini is a well known, much admired playwright, his play took place in cold caves near Vicenza, spectators were seated around the actor, they felt cold and recreated the gloomy atmosphere of the Italian retreat from Russia, in January 1943, when 30.000 people died,.

Fiorello is the episodes of *La storia siamo noi* that attracted the maximum of spectators, from a means of 5%, normal for a program put in the air at 10.30 p.m., it jumped to 14,64% the 11 February 2008 (more than one million and

half spectators) while the rerun interested the record audience of three millions spectators (more than 15% share). The program was a return to the euphoria of the 1980s, it stressed the growth of local televisions and the strange sense of freedom it provoked, the drugs, the awareness of the power of media (symbolized by a live television karaoke in city squares that caused disorder and incredulity when the streets were flooded by over 1 million people who wanted to sing). Audience figures are not enough, Internet provides important data about people's but (especially young people) reactions. On *You tube*, for instance, we find extracts of the broadcast of the Bologna slaughter which show that the film had a strong impact on public opinion.

It is also useful to ponder some big fiascos as was the case of *Il cuore nel pozzo*, a controversial series on the Foibe slaughter of Italians by Yugoslavian partisans. This fiction was strongly supported by the then right government but the biased historical interpretation and the rough reconstruction of places and people (it not shoot on location) annoyed the audience.

Looking at the future

On Italian channels the past itself is not only an amount of unsolved enigmas but also something mysterious and confused, an attractive fog which explains or at least legitimates the present state of confusion. Emblematic titles concern blue, night, mystery, the narration indulges in coup de theatre, and prefers a "cliff-hanger", an appointment with a future episode to a clear conclusion.

Emphasis on individual cases reveals a constant difficulty of speaking in collective terms.

"Multifarious and diversified information" makes it difficult even for a conscious viewer to get a clear notion of the event, there is no red thread, only an accumulation of data:

- internet plays a crucial role not only for the information it provides and for its interaction with television as shows the history section of *You tube* always full of new images; the web site of *La storia siamo noi* is like an enormous and multimedia hypertext where extracts of all the broadcasts from 2003 are available with synopsis of different episodes, photographs and bibliographies;

- yet, with the exception of Fascism, mafia and the 1960s-70s Italian terrorism, Italy is not the centre of the world and surprisingly (If we consider the indifference of television and of the press for foreign questions) the recent past of other countries is often evoked, even when there is no evident connection with Italian context with for instance programs on Rommel, DDay, Lady D, the 09/11.

Given Italian habits, European history should be dealt with indirectly throughout:

- biography. A possibility would be to single out personalities interesting various European countries (for example Guglielmo Marconi in twenty century's first decade). Parallel biographies presented in *Correva l'anno* are much appreciated: in a given year what was happening day by day in different countries, to different statesmen? The efficiency of this form is strictly connected to the accuracy of the montage which can create conflicts or resonances between the frames. Another solution is a fictional format, something like *La meglio gioventù*, directed by Marco Tullio Giordana for Rai, which, following two brothers in the third quarter of the 20th century, recreates the people, events and dramas that marked the period;
- crossover subjects connected at the same time to social history and everyday life as terrorist attempts in Europe, reactions on the 09/11 in different countries, role of European music in social changes, birth of big European metropolis, "golden age" of each European nation.

In both case I think would be useful to put great attention to three things:

- narration. The telling of a story is crucial in the Italian way of making television history. The experimentation, from *La storia siamo noi* to *Correva l'anno*, has to do with the difficulty of bringing to life single individuals without sacrificing the accuracy of the historic reconstruction. Debates, talk shows look out-of-date, the best solution seems to establish connections with the present days, but in such case the past is often absorbed by the present;
- real locations. A journey into the most famous places of European history could be more attractive for Italian audience than the recon-

struction of great battles. Italian spectators are fond of travelling in time and space. Location shots can be used in different ways, from the pure exhibition (a sort of “exotic” option) to useful comparison (the juxtaposition of places “now and before”). The crescent interest in architecture, the fame of “archistars” demonstrate that changes in urban landscape could enlighten the historical evolution characteristic of each European countries;

- archival footage: the fact that spectators are not bored with a new presentation of exactly the same frames proves how attractive “true” images are. An example is Il caso Rosselli: witnesses are interviewed in the places where the events took place, the film sticks to the biography of the characters without betraying historic accuracy and invites the viewer to react by juxtaposing different points of view on the same story.



part 2nd

final reports



Can local programmes survive and spread in a global TV system?

Muriel Hanot

Belgium is a small country with a small audiovisual production. How can this be interesting for building a European history when compared with other European nations?

Belgian TV was born in 1953 and knew an experimental phase until 1958. The media became a real mass media around 1965⁽¹⁾. Two facts enlighten this late birth of TV: on one side there was a lack of financial means. The country didn't want to spend too much money in this expansive media⁽²⁾. On the other side, there were political, cultural and linguistic tensions about TV: should it be bilingual, French or Flemish? The government agreed finally on a single public service broadcast divided in two separate channels: one for the French speaking people, the other one for the Flemish people⁽³⁾. The programmes were totally different from the start⁽⁴⁾. The small country was divided in two smaller audiovisual landscapes where homemade productions weren't numerous because a lack of means. New viewers were able to compare them with the programmes of other countries. Foreign TV aired over Belgian borders: Holland and Britain in the North, Germany and Luxembourg in the East; France in the South and West. The environment of the new born Belgian TV was a competitive one. It has grown at the time of deregulation⁽⁵⁾.

- 1 M. Hanot, *Premières télévisions en Belgique*, in M. Hanot (dir.), *50 ans de RTBF : L'extraordinaire jardin de la mémoire, vol. 1 : Télévision*, Musée royal de Mariemont, Mariemont, 2004, p. 17-27.
- 2 Ibid. A. Roekens, *Des télévisions siamoises au royaume de Belgique*, in «Médiatiques», n°33 : *Les débuts de la télévision belge*, ORM, Louvain-la-Neuve, 2003, p. 3-6.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 L. Desmet, *Voir loin avec les yeux d'ici. Richesse et diversité des premiers JT*, in «Médiatiques», n°33 : *Les débuts de la télévision belge...* loc. cit., p. 15-18. M. Hanot, *Premières télévisions en Belgique*, op. cit., loc. cit.
- 5 Ibid. A. Roekens, *Jalons pour une histoire de la RTBF*, in M. Hanot (dir.), *50 ans de RTBF : L'extraordinaire jardin...* loc. cit., p. 108-112.

This background enlightens the way historical programmes have appeared and developed in Belgium. This can be first summarized in three topics: historical programmes are made of political choices; their contents changed from PSB monopoly to deregulation; and their use evolved under the influence of audiovisual language. In a second time, some aspects of one of the most original and successful programme of the French speaking TV will be detailed, considering how it has been structured and produced.

To believe or not in the power of media

First step in this historical overview: the way political choices oriented historical programmes. On the Flemish side of the country, the NIR (BRT)'s manager believed in the power of media. He thought that TV was a way to spread and develop national culture, especially Flemish culture⁽⁶⁾. NIR broadcasted fictions series and serials inspired by Flemish literature or by popular culture of the past⁽⁷⁾. These fictions had historical backgrounds. They created representations in which Flemish people found some new forms of identity.

On the French speaking side, the INR (RTB)'s manager didn't believe in the new media. He also thought that he couldn't do better programmes than the ones French TV was airing at the time. He decided that it was a better thing to improve the INR's programme schedule by relaying the signal of Paris⁽⁸⁾. Most of the INR's programmes were French: the news until 1956; *La caméra explore le temps* until 1961, and so on. So French programmes belongs to the historical background of Belgian viewers⁽⁹⁾.

6 L. Desmet, op.cit., loc. cit. A. Dhoest, *Images de la nation. Les débuts de la fiction télévisée en Flandre*, in Médiatiques, n°33 : *Les débuts de la télévision belge...* loc. cit., p. 19-21.

7 *Ibid.*

8 M. Hanot, *Premières télévisions en Belgique ...*, op. cit., loc. cit. J.-C., Baffrey, *Le développement de la télévision en Belgique et ses répercussions sur les autres moyens de communication de masse*, UCL, Ecole des Sciences politiques et sociales. Section Presse et Sciences des moyens de diffusion, 1961, p. 15. (Mémoire).

9 M. Hanot, *Raconter les programmes : une histoire de spectateurs*, in M. Hanot (dir.), *50 ans de RTBF : L'extraordinaire jardin de la mémoire*, vol. 1 : Télévision, Musée royal de Mariemont, 2004, p. 123-133.

The early division of the Belgian audiovisual landscape has led to poor cooperation between the two channels. Most of them appeared in the context of European productions (EBU). Homemade programmes did always its level best but when time slots grow, less expansive foreign productions have appeared. Nevertheless, history has remained a national programme, almost on public service broadcast.

Moving contents

The Belgian government chose a monopolistic public service broadcast. Coming from North or South, historical programmes were linked to legal public remits. PSB was due to produce informational and educational programmes. History was part of it: there was scholar TV for scholar history, fictions with historical backgrounds, commented archives to understand the past. TV was due to spread culture or identity in a pedagogical way, even if this way was considered as a subordinated way of understanding the past on the French speaking side.

At the time of deregulation and the appearance of new commercial channels, history became to fade away. On PSB, contents have changed: scholar TV has disappeared; history has turned into a journalistic work where inquiries have pointed out the past; patrimonial history, game shows, infotainment, celebrations have taken the advantage. The concept of serial (*14-18, Jours de guerre*) has been given up to one shot programmes. Competition and advertising have encouraged broadcast of more commercial programmes.

Commercial networks have never been found of history. RTL-TVi has produced some homemade historical programmes like talk shows or infotainment commemorations (on the Belgo-Italian agreement, on the Innovation's burn out...). The channel has bought expensive fictions and documentaries with historical background (World War II) supposed to attract big audience. In 2007, the network celebrated its 20 years existence in the French-speaking Community of Belgium by airing a temporary thematic channel called "RTL-TVi 20 ans" that reused programmes of the past 20 years.

Other commercial channels (AB3, AB4) that appeared in 2001 and 2002 acted the same. They never mentioned history, except by broadcasting fictitious external productions or the French entertainment on TV history *Les enfants de la télévision*.

History has progressively disappeared from general TV taking refuge in the years 2000 in pay-TV's (BeTV and Belgacom TV). But their audience is limited because of the small impact of this broadcasting which is complementary to the basic cable.

The most appropriate way to tell history

No matter the channel or the period, agenda setting has always ruled TV history. There is a necessary link between past and present on TV. So commemorations seem to be the most appropriate way to tell history: month by month, 50 years after, TV has followed all the events of the first and the second world wars; TV has reconstructed the days of national independence; TV has talked about dramatic events or has celebrated audiovisual anniversaries... The phenomenon has grown as time has gone by. History has faded away but celebrations have become one of the most popular "historical" programmes.

The need of images has also always been very important for historical programmes: is it possible to broadcast history without it? At the beginning of TV broadcasts, archives were determining in the success of historical programmes. In 1964, people saw the past at a time they were discovering the world in images at home, at a time when images remained scarcity. Archives had a great significance. Numerous programmes produced between 1964 and 1975 used them: *14-18, Entre-deux guerres, 25 ans après, Sous l'occupation, La guerre froide*.

After that period, TV and archives have become more usual. And less attractive. Copyrights cost a lot. Home production couldn't afford it. So producers managed to broadcast history without it. They decided to talk about unfilmed past events by using journalistic methods: they investigated the present to undercover the past and collected testimonial. So did *Jours de guerre* between 1989 and 1995⁽¹⁰⁾.

More recently, TV images have started to offer a patrimonial interest. The older a TV is, the more it has the possibility to rerun and to reuse its own archives (at a lower cost) to evoke the past. TV is a living source for TV

10 Y. Sevenans, *Jours de guerre. De l'histoire au média*, in *Recherches en communication*, n°14 : Télévision et histoire, 2000, p. 121-128.

history. TV memory is becoming history.

A journalistic way of serializing the war

Jours de guerre offers a good illustration of the successful use of a new way of talking of the past on TV, using journalistic methods, reconstructions and archives. The formula wasn't new. *Jours de guerre* inspired out of 14-18⁽¹¹⁾.

In 1964, "14-18" began to broadcast what their producers considered as the first series devoted to history. 50 years after events happened, *14-18: Le Journal de la Grande Guerre* intended to report chronologically major facts of the conflict, by compiling pedagogical presentations, archives and interviews of witnesses. It began to broadcast once a week and then, when facts became less abundant, once a month. The broadcast ended in 1968, numbering 126 episodes of half an hour⁽¹²⁾. This series was much criticized: too long (longer than the war, said viewers in TV magazines!), too boring...Historians would have preferred a unitary document and films de montage than a series⁽¹³⁾. It would have been more instructive and durable. *Jours de guerre* appeared 30 years later on the same public channel (RTBF). From 1990 to 1995-once a month-, it reported chronologically major facts of the Second World War. As *14-18*, it lasted five years but knew a real audience success and was acknowledged by historians and intellectuals⁽¹⁴⁾.

How did producers manage to serialize the Second War? They chose to use audiovisual language and to report on the war like journalists. *Jours de guerre* looked like the news. A presenter introduced news from the front and two reports on an event that happened at some particular place 50 years before. These were 15 to 20 minutes long and mixed all kind of documents: interviews of witnesses, photographs, in situ imag-

11 M. Hanot, *Entre contraintes médiatiques et exigences scientifiques : les figures d'auteurs des séries historiques télévisuelles belges*, in «Productions(s) du populaire. Actes réunis par J. Migozzi et Ph. Le Guern», Limoges, PULIM, 2005, p. 154.

12 TV 25, Liège, Crédit communal de Belgique, 1978, p. 104.

13 M. Hanot, *Entre contraintes...* op. cit., loc. cit., p. 156. Ibid., p. 163. *Télévision et histoire. Conférence professionnelle RTB*, in «Etudes de Radio-Télévision», n°13, 1967, p. 144-145.

14 M. Hanot, « *Entre contraintes...* » op. cit., loc. cit., p. 154-155.

es, archives, fiction. They looked like short docudramas. Most of these sequences told about great history using the bias of local characters.

Global structure
Presenter
News from the front (voice over)
Presenter (scenes of usual life)
Presenter
Report 1
Presenter
Report 2
Presenter

The narrative choices of the programme are often the same: the guideline of each report is given by a journalistic voice over. This voice leads the story, linking all kind of images in a narrative way: past succeeds to present, present to past, reality follows on fiction, fiction reality, still images is replaced by moving images and moving images by still images... From time to time interviews cut the narrative to enliven and detail some aspects of the story. The voice over makes it easy to follow and understand. It wipes the disparity of information delivered by the varied documents. For example, reconstructions that allow the author to build a particular point of view unfold of itself on the images as the commentator keep the viewers at a certain distance and giving them some information to understand the historical ground.

The viewers accept it as a good story but still know it is truthful history.

Jours de guerre was less a historical series than a journalistic magazine developed in an historical process. The producers' objective was to create a journalistic magazine that used all the media possibilities. History was an object of inquiry. It wasn't the main topic of the programme. Investigating the present was a one of the solution to adapt historical themes to media constraints.

Producers and editors worked together with researchers (historians, so-

ciologists...)⁽¹⁵⁾. They all chose the topics on the basis of documents they had collected and analyzed, and on researches that have been held. Historians took part in the writing of scenarios filled in with interviews journalists had got. If historians were part of the team work, they never appeared on the screen. No historians could talk in the series. They were considered as too abstract, too cold. Producers wanted to put live to the screen, to enliven the past. What historians couldn't do, witnesses did. If documents and witnesses weren't enough, fiction - reconstructions - must be used to fill in the gaps of the story.

All this producing rules were written in a grammar - a bible: organization, length, sequences rhythm, use of archives, testimony... Before the launch of the first episode, pre-tests were held; adaptations were made. The introduction of the series took one year. The team worked without pressure. They had no obligation of result to last. They knew from the start that the broadcast would last 5 years. By « chance », the audience followed. The model they had built became a reference in the Belgian audiovisual landscape.

This programme has never been rerun and never tested in foreign countries. For only one reason: copyrights of war archives were acquired for one broadcast on the limited area of the French speaking community of Belgium.

In 1995, *Jours de guerre* ended and was replaced by other programmes as *Jours de libération* or *Jours de paix*. The last one was a monthly thematic magazine. Since that time public service seemed to have preferred current affair reports and commemorative celebrations to historical series. History has progressively disappeared from the Belgian audiovisual landscape.

This Belgian tour of history on TV reveals three major features that can be pointed out:

1. Belgian TV has developed a few local programmes to satisfy local audience. But the more audiovisual market has grown, the more international programmes have circulated, the less these local programmes have survived.

15 Y. Sevenans, *Jours de guerre* ». *De l'histoire au média ...*, op. cit., loc. cit., p. 122.

2. The lack of financial mean pushed out new creative ways to evoke the past by using all media possibilities. But this approach disappeared when channels have discovered that the reuse of their own archives was a cheaper way to tell history.
3. “Jours de guerre”’s experience appeared to be a real success, but it never had a chance to spread in other countries to show how it worked. No matter how original was this programme, it was condemned to stay unknown on European scale.

Its broadcast on a European scale could help to its discovery: the World War II and the narrative are interesting and common enough to catch foreign audiences. This could be a first step to a European historical tour.

History on French television channels

Pierre Sorlin

History programmes

Under state monopoly, until 1983, history was an important heading. It consisted of history films, often followed by debates among specialists, re-enactments of famous events, illustrated talks, portraits of great people. The main history programmes were broadcast in prime time, some, in the late 1960s, when there was a choice, amounted to 80 % of the audience.

Today commercial channels have totally given up, history is considered too serious, even boring. However Canal + and M 6, which put in the air reports on ongoing issues such as the crisis in the Near East, conflicts in Africa, the new Chinese economy, insert historical references in their transmissions, mostly thanks to talks delivered by experts.

History is confined to public channels but Fr 2, second most important channel, in permanent competition with Tf 1 avoids history and so does Fr 4.

Fr 5 was initially an educational channel. It has no longer any didactic mission but the tradition of broadcasting informative programmes has not vanished. The prime time is devoted, about twice a month, to more serious inquiries about archaeological investigations or to retrospectives. The early night show is consecrated, once a week, to demanding series like "The Bible revealed" (*La Bible dévoilée*, 4 programmes), "A history of French Police" (*Histoire de la police*, 4 programmes), "The Great Vanished Cities" (*Les grandes cites disparues*, various cities in Greece and Egypt).

Fr 3 boasts a cultural ambition with literary and artistic transmissions. On the historical level it is cautious and specialises in 20th century history, with programmes likely to provoke reactions: "They had their hair cropped" (*Tondues*, about women whose hair was cropped in 1944 because they had had sexual intercourse with Germans), "The hidden face of the

Liberators” (*La face cachée des libérateurs*, about violent acts, especially rapes, committed by GIs in France), “The Close Enemy” (*L’ennemi intime*, conscripts who served during the Algerian war report crimes and torture inflicted by the French army).

Most important history programmes

I) In the years of state monopoly

Two series were of special importance:

- “The Camera explores Time” (*La caméra explore le temps*) 47 programmes broadcast between 1957 and 1966. A historian presents the programme. There is then a re-enactment of some dramatic scenes, based on contemporary documents. Most programmes referred to scandalous or dramatic cases, The Man with an Iron Mask, Maria Walewska, but there were at times less superficial themes such as “Terror and Virtue, Danton and Robespierre”. The re-enacted part was often emphatic and artificial but extremely clear and easily understood. The programme was tremendously popular. It was removed for bad reasons, because the director was a communist, but it was time to stop it at any rate.
- “Alain Decaux talks”(Alain Decaux raconte) Decaux was one of the historians involved in “The Camera explores Time”, after the programme was removed he tried to renew it, along the 1970s, by tackling the same sort of topics in a more light way, with interviews, short sequences based on contemporary illustrations and debates. There was a stable but limited audience, Decaux’ style looked too didactic and professorial.

It must be noted that there was no reasoned historical series comparable to the fourteen part *Das Dritte Reich* broadcast by the German ARD in 1961-62 or to the British *The Great War* (1964) and *World at War* (1973) which means that nobody, in French television, thought over the meaning and objectives of history programmes.

II) After the monopoly

In the two last decades, history was extensively used for commemorations, it is part of the “heritage”, spectators accept it more willingly if

it is related to a date, an event, a personality. Beside celebrations, public channels broadcast programmes about historical French (Versailles, Mont St Michel) Greek (Olympia) or Egyptian monuments. The main field remains what worries French opinion and had never been solved, WWII and the Algerian War. The programmes dealing with tricky periods are willingly unadventurous. Fr 3, the only daring channel, may broadcast challenging productions but its ongoing history transmission, “The Right to Assess” (*Droit d’inventaire*) is an innocuous mixture of talks and archive materials, which will not provoke protests or debates.

III) In the 21st century

TV history has nothing to do with current issues, it is, and must remain irrelevant to the present days. It is not aimed at helping to understand the present and there are no lessons to be learnt from it. History is like a vast landscape, a territory many parts of which are still unexplored and mysterious. Every time, the riddle is clearly, insistently exposed. Details about the context are illustrated thanks to archival material and a witness (whose right to talk is underlined, especially in the programme I have chosen) discloses a hidden side of the topic, the importance of which is discussed and belittled by a panel of “experts”. Spectators are given the impression that they are let into the secret, but they are also warned that the matter was probably much more complicated – which leaves the way opened for other broadcasts on the same quandary.

However different they are, these programmes share a few characteristics. They are disconnected from the time of their broadcasting, the first because it evokes a totally different context, the second because it bears no relation to any historical background. In the first case the present is appreciated since it is not like the past. In the second the past distracts momentarily from daily worries. French television, when it granted much room to history, in the 1950s and 60s, did not underline the enduring influence of former times, but it did not sever the past from the present as it is doing at the beginning of the 21st century.

How history is told

Not all criminal affairs are isolated and almost clandestine misdemea-

nours that come to the fore because the press, or television, emphasize them. Two periods, the German occupation and the Algerian war still haunt French opinion. Both can provide myriads of odd events, unexplored circumstances, villainies and lawless occurrences. TV channels are cautious not to provoke action for libel of the part of people still alive but the danger does not exist where WWII is concerned and a great many history films deal with the enigmas of that period. The basic ingredients of such programmes and the way of linking them are very close to those implemented in the average criminal episodes mentioned above, the only significant difference relates to the characters.

Those who take part in political happenings during a war are “historic”, because the war, any war, is history. In such instance, unremarkable actors cannot impersonate the characters. However, some of these people were heroes, some played an ambiguous part, some betrayed. Televisions abide by an implicit recommendation according to which the fame of the actor determines the part he will be offered: stars will not be villains.

Looking at the future

Let us sum up the main aspects of the French television history. All in all, little room is devoted to periods anterior to the 20th century. A first reason is the fact that nobody ever formed opinions about the function of television in the teaching and explication of the past, even in the “golden age” of state monopoly. But, at the beginning of the 21st century, another more important reason is the disinterest of a large portion of public opinion for foregone epochs which, until WWII, were considered a common, national heritage, but look now far away beyond one’s comprehension. The focus on WWII and the Algerian war is part on an internal conflict between old and newest generations, between immigrants or second-generation immigrants and French of old stock. Public television clumsily broadcasts some material on these topics but, once more, nobody is responsible for defining a planned course of reflection about the past.

In the first decade of the 21st century new tendency have emerge. Emphasis is put on individual cases, even where VIPs are concerned. The past is presented as finished but filled with unsolved enigmas that TV

channels try to elucidate; the task is difficult, the only solution is to offer diversified, multifarious information. TV history seems old-fashioned; the young interested in past problems have recourse to internet and seldom watch the small screen.

France remains the centre of the world. Very little is devoted to the past of foreign countries, especially of the European ones, even on the occasion of anniversaries.. All channels dealt with May 68 but there was no special programme on Czechoslovakia or on the other places where, that very year, important events had taken place.

In such instance it is not easy to plan programmes devoted to European history. A comprehensive series intended to illustrate the main dates of the European past, in the manner, for instance, of *The people's century* would not meet with a positive reaction – it is not by chance that this programme has not been broadcast in France.

Foreign history could be evoked through mysterious, debatable cases such as the burning of the Berlin Reichstag, but spectators would probably take too much interest in the police aspect of the episode and miss its political side. Anniversaries might be much more congenial. Frenchmen are fond of commemorations. These ceremonies, for them, are closely associated to the past, they are considered in the light of a return to foregone periods. Obviously a particular event, an important date, do not synthesize the history of a country, they are mere signals, they may oblige to look beyond the borders of the nation.

It is not very much but, for the time being, it seems that there is no other solution: arouse attention on the fact that the other members of the EU have a history.

Televising History in the United Kingdom

Erin Bell / Ann Gray

Since the 1990s non-fiction history programming has flourished on British and other national televisions, leading to Ann Gray's interest in representation of the past on TV. The Televising History 1995-2010 project originated in September 2004, when Ann received 12 months' funding as a start-up project, to support an application to the Arts and Humanities Research Council and to fund a Research Fellow, Erin Bell. The bid was successful, and in September 2006, 2 doctoral students, Barbara Sadler and Sarah Moody, joined them.

The project asks how do we get the kinds of television histories we do, and why. Starting with the relationship between the academy and media professionals, through commissioning and programme making, we explore the often competing professional discourses about how to 'do' history. Key sub-genres have been identified and throughout the course of the research we have sought to examine how historical meanings are achieved. Focussing on 'non-fiction' programming, we examine the different genres employed by producers: this includes not only analysis of specific history programmes, but also tracking of their commissioning, production, marketing and distribution histories. A key focus is the relationship between 'public history' and academic history. Through a number of case studies, including interviews with academic and media professionals involved in history programming, we have begun to analyse the role of the 'professional' historian and producer/directors as mediators of historical material and interpretations.

Research undertaken by the two PhD students includes Sarah Moody's user study of history programming in schools: how and what kind of history is taught in British schools is a contentious area and subject of recent political debate. Barbara Sadler is researching the articulation of ideas about the past through different televisual forms, including comparative analysis of programming produced in the regions of Britain. In addition, the project's Advisory Board members are of great assistance

in drawing our attention to key developments in the media industry, education and in academia, facilitating dialogue across the different professional areas.

So far we have held several international events and published our findings and those of scholars working in the same field: for example, a special issue of the *European Journal of Cultural Studies* on 'Televising History' was published in February 2007, based in part on papers presented at our first symposium. This collection particularly sought to publish the work of scholars from across Europe, allowing comparison to be made between representations of the past on TV across borders. An edited collection, *Televising History: the pasts on the small screen*, including contributions by John Corner and Pierre Sorlin, will be published by Palgrave MacMillan in 2009. In July 22-25 2009, a large final event will be held, which we hope will be truly international.

The three clips we will discuss here represent a sample of the range of sub-genres we have identified, but also allow us to consider, briefly, their commissioning and production histories, and their significance as historical representations. They are:

- The presenter-led history series *A History of Britain*
- A 'Reality' or 'living history' series, in which volunteers live as people from a past era, *Edwardian Country House*, and
- The innovative new format, *Who do you think you are?*

As our report discusses at greater length, one of the most significant developments in history on TV in the UK was the resurgence in the mid-late 1990s of the presenter-historian. One example is Simon Schama's *A History of Britain* (BBC 2000-2002), which gained an average audience of c.3.3 million. It fulfilled the BBC's public service remit to provide high quality programming, and further developed Simon Schama's TV career. It was criticised for, amongst other things, its Anglocentrism although he likens his history to the work of the C19th historian Thomas Macaulay, in the sense that both have created blockbuster, grand narrative national histories. Certainly, *HoB* did very well in the USA, shown on PBS and making lots of DVD sales – it seems to have been selling British history as tourism. The emphasis on British history may be a result of respon-

ses to the millennium: both *Monarchy* and *HoB* were developed pre-millennium in preparation for 2000. Outside of TV, English Heritage and the National Trust, for example, ran a number of events to mark the year 2000 which reflected, implicitly or explicitly, on national identity in the UK. This clip from the introductory episode clearly aims to set the scene for the series when Schama declares 'From its earliest days, Britain was an object of desire'. Shots of the British coast and landscape are common throughout the series, underscoring themes of British identity and history and demonstrating the high production values of the BBC.

In our report we suggested that *Edwardian Country House* may be considered a form of populist history attractive to those who are not traditionally perceived to watch history documentaries: a younger audience, and women. *Edwardian Country House* (Channel 4 2002), was one of the most successful 'living history' series, gaining audiences of c. 3 million. This clip, from the first few minutes of the first episode, demonstrates how the themes of class and social inequality are clear. A 'historical experiment' which demonstrated the significance of material conditions to the experience of individuals living in earlier eras, it continues to be debated by historians and media scholars and was made in a period when Channel 4 sought to fulfil its remit to provide innovative and challenging programming.

WDYTYA is one of the most notable examples of history programming on BBC1. Sold globally to the USA and Canada, amongst others, it is now in its fifth season. It has sought to popularise history by combining celebrity with family history and with 6.5 million viewers it has gained the largest audience figures for popular history programming in recent years. Both *WDYTYA* and *ECH* were made by the independent production company Wall to Wall, and *WDYTYA* now includes a genealogy magazine published by the BBC and annual public events. Although it is most immediately about the family history of famous British individuals, it is one of few series to consider alongside family and social history, women's history, black history and cultural history. This episode, based around the family history of the newsreader Moira Stuart, considers her Caribbean ancestry and attempts to find out how her great-great-grandfather George Christian had relatively high social status for a black Antiguan. After

a brief overview of the nature of slavery in the Caribbean, the clip gives details of the different experiences of mixed race people in Antiguan society, at a time when ethnicity could be determined where one lived, and the implications this has for Antiguan today.

Recent changes in the BBC have highlighted shifts in history programming since 2000. Laurence Rees, the BBC's former Head of History, has recently departed his post and this has ushered in a new era at the channel. Whilst Rees was famous for large scale series dealing with the twentieth century, especially WW2, it has been suggested by Martin Davidson, the commissioner for specialist factual programming, that there will be a move from this era towards a broader perspective, both chronologically and geographically. For example, the concepts that shaped modern Europe have been cited as an example of forthcoming history on TV, and a greater proportion of ancient history. Reflecting contemporary concerns, programmes which are seen as timely, with a fairly clear parallel to the present, are also popular. Furthermore, presenter-led television, including female historians, Davidson suggests, needs to be made for both Channel 4 and BBC2, as this form gives the audience 'authority, knowledge, and passion.' These developments are in parallel with the growth of BBC4, one of the BBC's digital channels, which even before this recent announcement had broadcast history with a European and global perspective: for example, *The Lost World of Albert Kahn* (2007), photographic representations of a global past, albeit largely from a French perspective. The comments also reflect a shift in the perception of the role of history programming: described as the 'new gardening' when it first flourished on British television in the mid-1990s, it is now viewed in part as fulfilling people's need to understand the current global financial and political situation. Certainly this would require a broader perspective than just the national; there may be more possibilities for co-productions both with US and other European nations. British television has often looked to the USA for co-productions due to their linguistic, political and cultural similarities, and this may well be paralleled by a greater number of intra-European series.

In conclusion, and in response to one question asked by the workshop organisers, it seems possible that, given the success of *Who do you*

think you are?, programmes will consider family history more directly; perhaps combining this with a distinct Europe-wide approach, especially when so many people in Europe can trace their ancestors to a number of different nations both inside and outside the continent. By default this would consider key events and transmigration through the lens of individual families. The *WDYTYA* format has already been sold to Australia, Canada, Poland and the USA, and as literary scholar Friederike Eigler has written of the surging interest in family narratives in literature, such works are ‘a segue for recapturing 20th century collective and individual histories...at the beginning of a century where a more integrated Europe faces new challenges.’ Further, given the assertion by British historian Vanessa Agnew that several television series, broadcast in both Germany and the UK, have demonstrated a turn to ‘affective history’, by emphasizing individual experience and daily life rather than historical events, Harald Welzer’s analysis of the ways in which individuals experience affective and cognitive memories separately, for which he uses the metaphors ‘family album’ and ‘encyclopaedia’ respectively, seem particularly appropriate. As both album and encyclopaedia appear on the same bookshelf in the households he visited, so the individuals appearing in *WDYTYA* have often been aware of family histories but not of how these related to broader historical events. Both forms of memory appear in *WDYTYA*, which attempts to reconcile the personal, family album view of the past, often using family photographs as a starting point, with broader, and often traumatic, historical knowledge. This serves to make such events comprehensible to a wider audience whilst making the archival research necessary to historical – including genealogical - research more visible. It is similar, then, to the developments described by Eigler, which acknowledge ‘the historical, political, familial and individual forces that complicate or preclude facile notions of identity and continuity’.

Indeed, these issues have been considered by the European Science Foundation-funded *National Histories* project, which from 2003 until the end of 2008 considers the writing of national histories across Europe and their roles in constructing and maintaining national, regional, cultural and religious identities, both in the continent and globally, in order to facilitate greater international understanding. Some analysis of the representation of the national past in other arenas such as film and heritage sites

has also been undertaken. As our research project suggests, television too is particularly well-suited to the combination of history and memory, combining aspects of personal, collective and national memories, and sometimes offering the audience some of the skills necessary to carry out similar research themselves.

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History on TV Spain

Julio Montero and Amaya Muruzabal

If we had to define in a few words the development of the representation of History on Spanish television, we may say that it started as a journalistic research and finally turned into fiction series. While this development was taking place, History also worked as a tool for the political action, with different goals that required a varying degree of intensity.

Another way to look at it would be thus: at the beginning programmers and creators refused to deal with history; then they left that role to historians and their political and historiographic approach; nowadays, history has become the background on which many fictional plot lines and dramatic characters develop.

The first documentary series on history broadcast on Televisión Española (*Testimonio*, *Treinta años de historia*, *El mundo de postguerra*, etc) were presented as current affairs programmes, as they offered some historical documentation about a current affair that, paradoxically, was not even mentioned. In fact, this was the main consequence of the series' authorship: the creators were journalists instead of historians. For them, the fact that the footage was taken from some American and European history series like *The Twentieth Century* and *Trente ans d'histoire* did not seem relevant.

Why all this effort to hide history? Perhaps it was not only the result of a perverse Francoist device but yet another way to understand history: a way that underlined the importance of the course of time, the temporal distance, in order to tackle a determined historical topic. To put it differently, only the events that were of a certain age could be understood as "history." The rest of the matters belonged to the present, and therefore they were a journalistic task: a provisional knowledge that waited for more sources and a wider perspective that only the passing of the years could give.

This way of understanding history, as the knowledge and the explanation of an event that took place a long time ago, was also the dominant

thinking in the Spanish Schools of History, Literature and Humanities. The following anecdote may illustrate the way history was considered in the Spanish universities. In 1968 the second public university, Universidad Autónoma, was created in Madrid in order to reduce the number of students who attended the Universidad Complutense. New degrees were developed with the help of many students that wanted to give their opinions, and the result of this was the inclusion of an original subject in the degree: Spanish History of the Twentieth Century. It was 1971.

The course began, and a new professor coming from the Colegio Español of Paris was in charge of the subject. The classroom was crowded on the first day: dozens of Spanish students were eager to talk about contemporary history. The professor started his lecture saying that he was honoured to give this new course, which was so important for the Spanish university. However, after this encouraging start he said: "Let's begin with a brief introduction: Jovellanos." Referring to this Spanish politician and essayist of the Enlightenment was the same as acknowledging that the today's France cannot be described without talking about Voltaire.

Maybe the reason for this obsessive explanation of the past was a kind of fear of the present. Establishing "the present" in the first years of the twentieth century disguised the overwhelming presence of the Francoist regime. Thus, Franco's system seemed to be out of time, in an undetermined time between the past and the current issues. That is to say: between history and the present. Explaining this system in its entirety - which means, historically - was avoided in a systematic way, in order to gain a better perspective: its end.

We can consider that this position came to an end around 1970. Since that year historians seem to have taken control of the history on TV along with privileged witnesses and experts on the topics the TV shows were about. There were many formats, but most of them were debates and documentary series. This trend lasts until the last years of the twentieth century with the only interruption of the period known as the Transition (from 1975 to 1978). The years of the Unión de Centro Democrático (UCD), from 1978 to 1982, coincide with the recurrence of debates on history on Televisión Española. The main reconsideration of the Spanish historiography on the recent years came with the Socialist Era (1982-

1996) which was made mainly through documentary series. One of the most relevant aspects of this period was the inclusion of historians, usually professors, to the production crews. Most of them shared many of the government's ideas and approaches to reality.

The topics of the TV programmes were focused on a recent present. At that time, historians as well as journalists acknowledged the fact that history extends itself almost to the present. Both historians and journalists benefited from this viewpoint, in a time in which there were coming up several studies on historical memory and new historical methodologies on oral history. The most successful documentary series ever on the Spanish television was shown at this time: *La transición* (aired in two groups in 1995 and 1996), which achieved audience *shares* of 15%. Its producer, Elías Andrés, was specialised in documentary series on history, and the screenwriter, Victoria Prego, was a renowned journalist specialised in politics.

Most of the elements that were usual in the representation of history at that time are also represented here: TV crews that had made many documentary series on the public channel; crews that integrated experts - historians or current affairs' analysts -; the presence of the main characters and witnesses in the production process; archive material taken from the daily life - like TV commercials -, easily recognizable and understandable for the viewers. To sum up, a look that was attractive, close, and easy to recall for the audiences. In general, the series gave an optimistic explanation of the meaning of the process known as the Transition: its main character and its political goals, seen as democratic achievements.

The why of the most successful historical programmes

The three most successful historical programmes were, a classic historical documentary series, (*Memoria de España*), a weekly fiction series (*Cuéntame*) and another which was aired almost daily (*Amar en tiempos revueltos*). Since the last season (2007-2008) a soap opera with a historical setting has come to air (*La señora*) produced by the same company as *Amar...* (Diagonal TV, Grupo Endemol). *La señora* was meant to replace *Cuéntame*, in the same time slot during the 2008 season, while the new episodes of the long-running series were being produced.

The influence of these three fiction series in the broadcasting/ transmission of a certain attention to the recent history of Spain has been, and continues to be, remarkable. Whilst the influence of the documentary series (*Memoria de España*) has gradually diminished with the passage of time, (despite its subsequent distribution on DVD), the influence of the latter has not only been maintained, but has gradually intensified.

This pre-eminence of historical fiction series over the documentary, or other more formally objective or descriptive genres (with all the limitations that these terms imply, particularly in audiovisual language), obeys widely to varying factors. The first group has to do with the rise of fiction series throughout the world, and more specifically in Spain, in a wide variety of formats: daily soap operas, weekly series etc. For example, we must underline the fact that among the ten most watched programmes nearly every day there are at least: three fiction series (at least one of which is produced in Spain); a cartoon series, (The Simpsons); an action film, a quiz show of the edge of Primetime, and the retransmissions of the day's sporting events (a Champions League match, the Spanish football league etc).

Another specifically televisual factor is the success that TVE's programmers have experienced.⁽¹⁾

On two occasions they have provided continuity between Thursday afternoons and evenings as *the historical fiction day*: at 4pm, (*Amar en tiempos revueltos*), and in Prime Time, (*La Señora*). Moreover, on several occasions, they have organised special programming for the day to reinforce this idea of "Historical Fiction Thursday." The first time, they took advantage of the last episode of the soap to organise a programme of substantial length, which included a special programme, aired prior to it: *La Señora, felices veinte*. With the appearance of a documentary, it presented images of the era -from the archives- alongside with others from the soap itself. Thus, the latter gained a strong sense of realism/ more

1) The information on the series *Amar en tiempos revueltos* and *La señora* are taken from an unpublished article by María del Mar Chicharro, "*Información, ficción, telerrealidad y telenovela. La representación televisiva de la sociedad española y su historia.*" I would like to thank her for generously allowing me to make use of it.

credibility as they were visually comparable - the voice in OFF did not make any differentiation between them and the archive material when commenting on them. It was hugely successful in terms of audience, which led to schedule on the following weekend, Saturday and Sunday, the broadcast of a special programme (Maratón La Señora) which summed up the whole of the thirteen episodes which had been aired that season.

A similar strategy of exploiting existing success followed with *Amar*. As the transmission of *La Señora* had finished and there was still some time before the summer season (specifically the Thursdays 5th and 12th of June, 2008) the programme schedulers decided to keep the historical fiction tone on Thursdays with the broadcast of two special episodes (in reality a miniseries) with characters from *Amar* which would allow the development of a specific plot. They also prepared a documentary-style production, in which the voice in off presented supporting images with those from the archive alternating indistinctly with ones from the series itself. The schedulers wanted to maintain the prime time historical fiction space designated to Thursdays. For this reason, the episodes were broadcast in the slot for *La señora*, and not *Amar*'s own slot (4pm).

A second group of factors which contributed to the success of historical fiction series' has to do with history itself. On first impressions *Amar* could lead us to jump to false conclusions: its time slot would be specifically for female audiences, housewives, over fifty, with little historical training, more interested in following a sensationalist/melodramatic plot than in the historical aspects of its context. Right from the start, its flexibility for attracting heterogeneous audiences grabs our attention: the special episodes broadcast in prime time were even more successful than the daily afternoon slot. The data on the social groups and gender of the audience are mildly disconcerting: *Amar* succeeds in prime time as *Cuentame* and *La señora* did. To put it another way, historical plots interest the majority of the audiences of the mainstream broadcasters.

Of course, we should not draw false conclusions from this. It appears that the audience is not really interested in historical plots, but rather fun, entertaining and therefore light spaces, in which the historical context has prominence. Instead, they are interested in a gaining a certain un-

derstanding of the present from a historical perspective. Of course, this is the declared objective of its creators: that the spectators share that objective is quite another thing.

It is important to point out that the long historical debate (legislature 2004-08) which has taken place and in fact continues in Spain, has brought history into the present. In reality, what's on the street is historical memory, not history; but neither the general public nor the general media distinguish clearly between one and the other. Even a professional historian seems to perceive a certain determination on the part of the media (both entertainment and information) to identify - confuse- both. For the general public, there is no decision to be made. Audiences of television series do not prefer memory to history. Simply, they settle for a visual image which allows them to have a coherent view. Others are satisfied if the series facilitates the reconstruction of their own memories.

These external factors do not account for everything. This has not prevented schedulers and analysts of the channels from perceiving the TVE phenomenon and deciding to try their luck with new series' with a historical setting. Currently, Antena 3 has bought the rights to *Life of Mars*, which will be titled *Ida y Vuelta* in its Spanish version. The period in which it will be set has not yet been decided, but is likely to be the Transition (1975 onwards). More in keeping with its line of production - specially focused on so-called pure entertainment - will be a further production by Globomedia. It is titled *Aguila Roja* and is set in the Spanish Golden Age. Its protagonist has similar characteristics to the swashbuckling fiction heroes such as El Zorro, for example.

These initiatives indicate that the directors of production companies and television channels have noted the success of these fictional series set in the past, and therefore, at least at the moment, a project set in Europe with these characteristics could be considered.

Documentary and fiction series

The beginning of the twenty first century coincides with a preponderance of the fiction series set in a recent past. However, another relevant documentary series was shown in two groups with a moderate success: *Memoria de España* (2004 and 2005). This documentary series had a

classical look and required a high budget. It also had a political intention: to support one history of Spain against the various versions of history defended by the nationalistic parties in the Basque Country and Catalonia, as well as other similar humble attempts in other regions of Spain.

The ratings seem to be significant. Whilst the first season, broadcast at the end of the PP administration, got a 20 per cent *share* and an average audience of 3.7 million viewers, the second season, aired during the first months of the new Socialist administration, got just a 15 per cent *share*, and 2.7 million spectators. It seems that ratings and the elections were related. Taking into account the fact that the later episodes tackled the most recent years, the drop in the audience figures seems meaningful. In a way, it meant that the Spanish nationalistic discourse of the Popular Party was losing its importance among the voters as well as the audiences.

In any case, it continued to be a classical historical discourse, focused on the Spanish institutions. Even during the PP period, there were not many references to the diverse political forces. As always, the documentary was almost exclusively made by archive footage accompanied by the narrator's voice over. There is no room for the interpretation.

The broadcast of this documentary series overlapped with the presentation of two fiction series set in the past. Both series have turned out to be real hits, with ratings that reach the "top ten". With these ratings, it is especially remarkable the fact that one of them, *Amar en tiempos revueltos*, is broadcast from Monday to Friday. The other, *Cuentame*, is a weekly series.

Amar en tiempos revueltos starts its plotlines in 1936, with the triumph of the Popular Front in the Spanish elections. Each episode starts with archive material (the title credits) in a fiction context. The lyrics of the soundtrack have also been translated since they pointed out the theme of the series: the difference between winners and losers of the Civil War, and the problems of living in difficult times. The music also determines the emotional tone of the series. It is, in fact, a soap opera: the interest in love plots, the stereotypes: the heroine in red, the proud poor lover, the best friend, the rich father..., but it also expresses the screenwriters'

interest in history and its importance for the plots (the Popular Front has won the 1936 election, the characters are happy or worried because of the news, etc). It portrays a tragic time with a tragic viewpoint that contrasts with the fondness of the child's memories in *Cuéntame*.

Cuéntame cómo pasó became a great success since its first broadcast in September 2001. It was and continues to be a weekly prime time series, even if it started whilst the Popular Party governed. The success of the series helped it stay on air when the Socialist Party got to power in 2004. However, there is a slight change in the content: from 2001 to 2004, the screenwriters paid more attention to daily life, whilst since 2004 and up to the present day, increasing interest is devoted to the process of opposition to Franco. The series does not have an advising historian, which probably means that the producers do not consider what they are producing to be a historical programme.

From the very first minutes of the series, we could see an introduction to the characters. It gives an idea of the “historical tone” and attitude and their effect on the narrative of the series. The interest and the approach of the series are not giving an account of the past from a historical viewpoint, but offering an evocation of the Spanish past. This evocation is usually presented in terms of fond remembrances of the past, due to the narrator's standpoint: he is an eight year old child.

In a way, *Cuéntame*'s screenwriters and producers assume that audiences are not really interested in the historical plotlines. What matters for them is to develop an amusing show in which the historical background could be stressed. It is not only an example of the memory of the past but an explicit attempt to understand the present from a historical perspective.

It is important to underline the fact that in the long political debate that has taken place in Spain between 2004 and 2008 the topic of the “historical memory” has been tackled in the Parliament by the political parties. This debate has brought history to the realm of the historical memory. Whilst they are different issues, the majority of the public cannot distinguish between them. With the help of the mass media, it is usually assumed that they are exactly the same.

Audiences here seem to be satisfied with a vision of the past that has not to be complex but coherent. In fact, many of the viewers follow this series just because they can refocus and share their memories. Producers have noticed the power of these “narratives of memory” and they have launched more projects based on the same premise.

Proposal for possible programmes on the History of Europe for television broadcast. Historical fiction: series and miniseries

Analysis of the means in which history has been transmitted via television in Spain in the last twenty years, shows the growing importance of fiction series’ with a historical setting as a vehicle for this objective. Doubtless, not all transmit correct versions of history from an academic viewpoint. The viewer almost always perceives history as the ‘packaging’ for the dramatic plot, which is what’s really important to them and for the scriptwriters and producers, although that is not always the case.

In some examples there is a genuine historical objective: they aim to offer a version of history which is precise and determined in a conscious way. This includes *Amar* and *La señora*, although this objective is only perceived by historians when they follow these series regularly. The majority of the audience is unaware of it - they lack the prior historical knowledge to recognise it - but accept it without any sort of resistance, and without giving the subject further consideration.

The focuses and interpretations are usually simple and repetitive, which ensures their reception as just another element of the production. Interviews with the designers of the storylines and scripts confirms the impression we got from the viewing: they seek to transmit a certain focus and evaluation of the periods, regimes and cultures in which the action develops. The miniseries can also be situated in this same line of historical fiction

In other cases (*Cuéntame*), recent history is just another anecdote, external to the action and ignored by the protagonists themselves. Sometimes viewers are offered advances in the dialogue which confirm phrases which have become popular for the generation of spectators.

What they are looking for is more an evocation than an explanation of the history, and the elements recovered from television images, radio and press of the period, and archives are mere tools with which to achieve this.

Other possible programmes with content on the History of Europe

With large audiences and mainstream channels in mind, in Spain it would be difficult to find a more efficient format than historical fiction to get basic messages of European history across to the general public. There is also the possibility of organising simple competitions or quizzes whose subject matter is European history and geography.

In the world of television, our era has seen the fragmentation of large audiences and a rising number of viewers who prefer television which is tailored to them. Thus the classic documentary formats, both great series and independent programmes, are united lightly in a broad concept (the containers).

We should not forget that mainstream television has offered good solutions and had great success in audience terms with documentary series. In Spain this success has usually been accompanied by controversy in the media - long run and intense - about a historical problem or question with repercussions in the present day in each case (*Memoria de España* is the most recent example).

Another option is documentary style programmes, lasting no longer than 30 minutes, which present broader contents. Here the presence of experts from various countries would be appropriate.

The final showing of fiction films with some historical value could also be taken advantage of. (Channels usually show each film three or four times over two years). A debate or commentary could be organised, (whether open to the public or not,) to be led by experts on some of the aspects of European history dealt with in the film⁽²⁾.

Conclusion

The Spaniards' fondness for this kind of narratives has encouraged us to present fiction as a good way to approach a common European history

2) Non-military subjects of a European nature could include: the acceptance of Roman law and the origin and development of the universities in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; the renaissance and humanism; Baroque Europe and the religious conflicts; the world of the Enlightenment; European expansionism (fifteenth - nineteenth century); Liberal Europe; Socialist projects and constructions in Europe; the rebuilding of Europe in the aftermath of World War Two; Population movements: from the former colonies to the metropolises.

on television. We consider that a responsible development of fiction series about the European history is possible if we know how to do that. For us, the important thing is to find and separate the targets and to sell the historical product as something attractive. To do this, it is important not to overwhelm the audience trying to explain the entire European history, but to focus on particular events that can offer a global insight of their time, and to have characters with which we can emphasize.

Probably, the most important thing to do is to bring into the public consideration the European history (some of its processes, characters or events). the television can place in the public sphere these historical topics and favor their discussion as well as to promote the reading of books, press reports or viewing of already made films. To sum up, placing the history of Europe in the cultural agenda of the media and maybe, also in the explanations made in the classroom.

History on German TV

Irmbert Schenk

In 1948, following the Second World War, a radio authority was established in various occupied areas of Western Germany (American, British and French regions). Independently of state or government intervention, it was set up as a public body so that the supervisory board consisted of socially important organizations and institutions. All these radio stations formed part of the German broadcasting network ARD and, just as with culture and education, they were run by the Federal States in accordance with the federal principle of the German constitution.

The history of television dates back to the Third Reich (1936) and, in particular, it is linked with the Berlin Olympics. After the war, in 1952, the Hamburg Radio station started broadcasting and in 1954 all radio stations in the ARD network aired a regular daily program. The Christian Democratic Government's attempt to create a central government television station was censured by the Constitutional Court in 1961 and, in 1963, ZDF (Germany's national public television) was created based on an agreement between all the Federal States. ZDF has its premises in Magonza and broadcasts one of the main programs; however, it has an *öffentliche Rechtlichkeit* (public body) structure. ZDF receives only 30 per cent of the compulsory TV license fee, while ARD receives 70%; which implies that ZDF mainly relies on revenue from advertising. During the 60's, ARD TV stations started broadcasting independent programs submitted by third parties, which met regional and cultural requirements without advertising.

In 1984, the federal legislation authorized private television broadcasting, which led to the establishment of a dual system affecting both radio and television: public bodies on the one side and commercial and private organisations on the other. Following this turn towards marketing and privatisation, television viewer ratings showed a shift from public to private channels (in 1995, private channels attracted 60% of the audience and received 90% of advertising revenue). In response to this, public stations presented a series of cooperation programs, taking advantage of new broadcasting technologies (cable and satellite distribution); Phoenix, for

example, is a current national cooperation program, while 3Sat and Arte are international cooperation programs. Moreover, there are also digital channels divided by genre (for the broadcasting of documentaries among other things). Commercial television focuses almost entirely on leisure and entertainment and public channels as a consequence, have also increased or are increasing the broadcasting of this type of programs in order to meet audience demand.

The representation of history on German television

History, nowadays, is almost exclusively presented on public sector channels (ARD, ARD third party programs, ZDF and their cooperation programs). Undoubtedly, its significant qualitative and quantitative presence is worth mentioning. Private channels almost exclusively broadcast documentaries or fiction films that focus on highly important historical issues: single events that have been extensively advertised. Some exceptions are found within the so-called “broadcasting windows”, which, by law, private channels should reserve for cultural purposes (e.g. magazines and newspapers). Sometimes these television spaces feature historical programs of various nature (documentaries, reportage, interviews with witnesses or experts etc.). Due to the predominant role that public stations have assumed in broadcasting historical TV programs, the document will only focus on describing issues related to these stations.

In the case of Germany, the presentation of history on TV focuses on different areas compared to those described in other countries. Most part of the programs fall within the so-called *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (overcoming or elaborating the past): this applies to German fascism, the Nazi period and always refers to the fact that it was Germany’s “fault”. Clearly, German television also described history on a wider scale (from the Greek and Roman past to the fifth French Republic, from Egypt’s pharaohs to the colonization of Patagonia), however, the attention was mostly focused on the Third Reich.

This tendency started with Eichmann’s trial in Jerusalem during the 1959-61 period and the Auschwitz Frankfurt trial in 1963. It is fair to say that the subject has been discussed more frequently since 1963. The starting point was the 14 episode series *The third Reich*, which was

broadcasted in 1960-61. In 1979, the American series *Holocaust* attracted an unusually high percentage of viewers and led to a wide debate; the program was going to be aired on the first channel but was subsequently broadcast only on the third. Although relegated to this channel, the program attracted up to 31-41% of viewers (even the repeat run in 1982 reached between 16 to 30 % viewers). The public debate (firstly in the United States but more significantly in Germany) revolves around the question of whether the presentation is historically “accurate” and, most of all, whether the strong individual and emotional imprint of the Hollywood series should be allowed from a moral point of view: the series was accused of portraying events as in a *soap opera*, which is not appropriate considering the gravity of the subject matter. In 1984, a far more articulate debate started with the eleven episode TV series *Heimat* by Edgar Reitz, who provides a fictional reproduction of the twentieth century in a small village, by looking at history on a smaller scale.

In order to illustrate how much space was occupied by programs on the Nazi period, some figures are provided below. In 1995, for the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II, 450 programs were aired on German TV, one in five of these focused on the extermination of Jews, one in ten on German resistance and one in twenty on Hitler. Overall, these attracted 213 million viewers.

The highest percentage of viewers was attracted by the six episode series: *Hitler - eine Bilanz*. This was produced by ZDF’s main editorial department “Zeitgeschichte” and by its director Guido Knopp. To this date, the above editorial department and the “ZDF History” unit have played an essential role in presenting history on German TV. This is usually achieved with programs shown during ideal broadcasting times that attract the audience’s interest through the use of specific measures such as the portrayal of emotions with fictional scenes, the so-called “scenic imagery”. Such portrayal, together with Knopp’s rather academic rendering is still the main criticism raised by historians and media scholars. Series such as *Hitler’s Helfer* (“Hitler’s helpers”, 1996) and *Hitler’s Generäle* (“Hitler’s Generals”, 1998) started in this way and achieved great success, and so did a series on Hitler’s rise to power broadcast in 1999, one on the Holocaust shown in 2000 and, in later years, series such as

Hitler's Frauen ("Hitler's women"), *Hitler's Vollstrecker* ("Hitler's perpetrators") etc. ARD also produced similar series, such as that on Wehrmacht in 1998 *Soldaten für Hitler* ("Hitler's Soldiers"). These series were created by the historical channels on a regular basis: the most important program is "ZDF-History", which is aired on Sunday evenings for 40 minutes and currently attracts 13.5% of viewers. Listed below are a few themes discussed in recent years: the series *Hitler's nützliche Idioten* ("Careers in Hitler's Army"); *Albert Speer, the architect of death*; *The myth of miraculous weapons*; *Myth of the Kamikaze* (Japan and Germany); *Myth of the Battle of the Atlantic*; *Hindenburg, the man who brought Hitler to power*; *5 films on the Stasis period*; *The miracle of Berlin* (the fall of the wall 1989), *RF terrorism in the 70's*; *The eternal night of the conquerors* (Caesar, William and Napoleon); *The dictators* (Hitler, Stalin, Mao); *The cold war*; *Stars who have met an early death* (Mozart, Dean, Joplin u.a.); *The shipwreck of ...* (Titanic, Lussitania, Andrea Doria, Estonia); *Napoleon's war in Russia*; *The bought revolution* (Germany and Lenin 1917); *Barbarians against Rome* (England's conquest); *The seven biggest lies in history*. Although the percentage of programs on the Third Reich is steadily decreasing, these shows remain a central reference point in the TV schedule.

They are all based on an educational ideal that moves towards the bourgeois enlightenment. And they naturally reflect public and expert debates on the historiography of the Third Reich, or, more in general, on the methodology of historical research, which, unfortunately, we do not have time to discuss here.

As per the style of this kind of "documentaries", nowadays it is difficult to define any rules in a traditional sense. It seems that the earlier categories applied to cinematographic documentaries are no longer valid. Often, even a single program can feature all the traditional elements such as the presence of a moderator, of a narrator or of a voice off-screen commentary and the presence of witnesses, experts, historians, original materials from that period, reconstructed materials, fictional scenes with actors etc. It is thought more important to focus on the increasing tendency of bringing together different documentary and fictional styles, in a way that is significantly more flexible compared to that used in the traditional

docudrama. It is noticeable that in both of these contexts, the use of “virtual” materials, in other words, of digital artificial production, is growing increasingly. This point will be further discussed below. In the meantime, it would be appropriate to mention (for the purist’s sake) that it has been many years since the notion of the “true” documentary had become illusory, as demonstrated by the debates on Direct Cinema and Cinéma Vérité or, in Germany, debates on film documentaries, which took place in the 70’s. In any case, the historians’ outdated theory that the audiovisual representation must be faithful to reality should be dropped.

After the German reunification in 1990, we can refer to a double *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, as, nowadays, even the history of the German Democratic Republic is subject to critical analysis. In this context, the *Stasi* (the secret service of the German Democratic Republic) occupies a special place and is featured in a large number of films, often comedies that were shown in cinemas.

Considering the way in which history is represented on TV there has been an increase in fiction; in other words, more visual and emotional stimuli are offered to the viewers. This applies to documentaries in the strict sense of the word and to semi-documentaries or *Fernsehspiel* (TV fiction, TV drama), a sector that is growing rapidly and is having great success and may consist of a two-episode film, for example. Sometimes this happens in direct cooperation with the cinema.

With respect to the content of historical programs, an interesting development can be noticed: as well as portraying Germans as *Täter* (“The Guilty Party”), they are currently more and more often presented as *Opfer* (“victims”), such as in the major bombings of German cities by British and American forces or such as in the expulsion and escape from Eastern territories. A topic that was broadcast recently was the sinking of the ship *Gustloff* in the Baltic Sea by Soviet submarines in January 1955, which had 9,000 refugees on board. The event was presented as part of a famous fictional film, which was followed by documentaries. Similarly, ZDF already produced *Der Sturm* (“The Storm”) in 2005, which had four episodes and described the German escape as the Red Army advanced and *Der Feuersturm* (“The storm of fire”) in 2006, which consists of two episodes and describes the bombing of Dresden.

In general, these programs propose advances that are essential for the future of history on TV. These two-episode fictional films produced by ZDF and ARD represent media events, they deal with historic events that were widely discussed at the time, they feature leading directors and actors, are accompanied by a high degree of advertising noise and are always followed by one or more documentaries on the same topic. In other words, they are well integrated in the current public debate and play an active role within it. Thus, the combination of fictional and documentary styles, of emotion and empathy in historical representation is a very direct way of attracting the public's attention successfully. Clearly, this is what the audience wanted to see, as it is proven by the following successful programs:

- *Die Flucht* ("The Escape") by ARD, 2007, which describes the escape of some German families from eastern Prussia in 1945 as the Russian army advanced. Both on the Sunday and on the Monday episode it reached an audience of 10.5 million people, which is 28% of the total number of viewers. The repeat session on the following Friday on Arte was viewed by a further 2.46 million people.

In March 2008, two significant fictional works created by ZDF were screened, both consisting of two episodes:

- *Dresden*, which describes the bombing of Dresden in January 1945, attracted an audience of 12.68 million people (comprising 32.6 % of the total number of viewers on a Sunday) and of 11.25 millions (equal to 31.2 % of the total number of viewers on a Monday).

Die Gustloff, mentioned above, which describes the sinking of the ship by the same name, reached an audience of 8.45 and 7.87 million viewers respectively.

The documentaries following both films had an audience of 7 million and 5.31 million viewers respectively.

Looking at the future

In the future, fiction and the dramatization of emotions will undoubtedly become dominant aspects in the presentation of history on television in western societies. This tendency will be accelerated thanks to digital produc-

tion methods. On the one side, traditional documentaries are in contrast with this movement, on the other they are also influenced by this dramatization. The traditional narration method used in “conventional” documentaries is still employed for some audience niches of local or specialized channels.

This ongoing process can be illustrated by an example provided by ZDF, which is taking place in these days. At the end of October, ZDF started broadcasting a ten episode series during the prime time band together with a major advertising campaign. Aired on ZDF-History and entitled *Die Deutschen* (“Germans”), it is a narrative overview of German history from the tenth century up to the foundation of the republic in 1918, featuring interviews with ordinary people and various important personalities. At the same time, ZDF-History also features a five episode program on the history of the years between 1918 and 1989, accompanied by a discussion between historians and a *making of* documentary. As part of this series, professors and students were invited to take part in a competition to look for “places of memory” of German history in their region. Clearly, all details and information would be released in DVD form and as a book, which now is customary in ordinary practice. The style of the series *Germans* is interesting in its own right: the voice-off narration is particularly traditional from a documentary point of view, while the visual representation consists of a dramatic production with actors and stage design, excerpts of interviews with historians or sceneries and graphics produced with the aid of computer technology.

Another example of this kind of movement is ZDF’s campaign, which started by collecting accounts for the 2009 celebration of the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989. People had to share their experiences of the end of East Germany, which would then be used to create films of various nature. In *Unsere Geschichte* (“Our History”) viewers can send texts, images or videos that will then be shown on TV.

Conclusions

So far, this study dealt with historical subjects and with ways of presenting history (especially German history) on national TV, in the past, present and in the near future. Ultimately, it would be appropriate to mention an issue of epistemological nature, which is essential for the portrayal of

history on the future European television, or, at least, on a Europe-oriented television, which unfortunately does not exist in any form or in any country yet. Currently, all historical programs are mostly produced nationally. In the unusual case of co-productions or in more common productions designed for the international television market, programs seem to operate in a similar way, with the difference that, in the latter, the national perspective is replaced by a supranational one, in other words it has an “artificial” quality that is marketable because of the particular appeal of the subject or style. “Artificial” means that it is not related to the real historical conscience of people from different nations. The truth is that the historical development process in Europe is mostly, or rather, exclusively national. Compared to the perspective of other countries, to the characteristics they assumed and to their history, nowadays this process is stereotyped almost as much as it has always been in the past.

This leads to an essential conclusion for the presentation of European history on a television that is truly centred on Europe: the need to present two, three or more national productions on the same subject so that they can be compared and integrated with each other. This solution would still allow the creation of historical programs based on national history and identity, but would also enable the comparison with other identities and European productions on the same subject, within the same program. Although this identity is a mere fabrication, especially in this time of migration and globalization – and we are fully aware of this –, it still operates as usual within public discourse and ideology. Thus, it seems appropriate that subjects and styles of presentation are chosen according to this perspective, even in the case of new transnational collaborations (these should not just be limited to reaching marketing objectives alone as it has been so far). A new intercultural relationship between national televisions should begin.

In any case, the solution of making public different national identities and attitudes towards history seems to be essential and represents the first step towards presenting history on a Europe centred television of the future. The second step could consist in developing a transnational identity or at least a shared vision of essential aspects of European history.

Translated by *INTRAS Congressi*, Bologna

History and Portuguese Television

Representation of history on Portuguese TV

Magdalena Soares Dos Reis

RTP - the national television and the only network until 1992 - lived under censorship of Salazar's and Caetano's political regime.

With the April 25 Revolution in 1974, which ended the dictatorship, TV has completely changed. During the revolutionary period (1974-1975), RTP was the screen of the Revolution. In those days, a new television time arise. There was a great will to show the real country, the one that was covered by censorship.

Nevertheless, there was no great investment in history programs. Those days were too intense and the men and women who produced and directed TV programs were too busy being part of the Revolution and representing it on TV.

After the end of the revolutionary enthusiasm and with the establishment of democracy, in the 80es and 90es, history programs were always present in the television schedules but not in prime time. The themes and the kind of enunciation were the same as in the past.

In the late 90th TV market had changed with the arising of private networks.

Moreover, in the turning point to the 21st century, some programs about the Portuguese 20th century emerged. For a while, history became a more profitable product.

Still there were absent themes and even though history programs are mainly (the national ones) about Portugal, general ignorance about national history remains as pointed out by some intellectuals and opinion makers.

Historical myths about Portuguese history and identity, which were constructed during the dictatorship, still persist on the imaginary of most of the viewers.

The contest *The greatest Portuguese of all times* (2007), has generated enormous controversy because it was the dictator Salazar who was voted as the greatest Portuguese. The problem, as some concerned historians said, was that the Portuguese didn't know their own history. Knowledge of national history always seems to be connected to the definition of who we are (as a people) in the present, that is to say, is connected to national identity.

This contest put History in the media agenda and it was of general agreement that there isn't enough national history in television. That was the reason why Salazar was elected the greatest Portuguese.

Curiously, Álvaro Cunhal, the communist leader took the second place. This seems to indicate that this contest stood for the political (and social) conflict between left and right.

However, broadcasters find it difficult to make history an interesting (with good ratings) TV product. Therefore, History isn't often a choice for prime time.

Nevertheless the existence and success (as they were scheduled for prime time) of some programs (*The war, Portugal, a social portrait*) suggests that there is a will, even a determination, to talk about national history. There is also a new but fragile trend to journalist or academics (and even film directors - like Inês de Medeiros who made *Cartas a uma ditadura - Letters to dictatorship*) to take history and represent it on screen.

Moreover, one must not neglect the influence of documental cinema and the importance of formal enunciation - shots, editing, the treatment of original footage - for the success of history in TV.

The viewers are sensitive to the perspective and the care taken in the treatment of every theme. In addition, there is a need to rely on what kind of historical truth TV presents.

There is still a lot to represent and to discuss about on Portuguese history.

Europe's History and TV

As for Europe's History, one must say that it is covered, hidden, and remains almost completely absent on Portuguese television.

We don't know much about each others history and how the former Portuguese colonies are establishing new relations with the former colonizers, the European are establishing new relations with each other. Economy, politics, migration, shared institutions.

May be in order to understand who we are today, as Europeans, we need to look back in history, in a supranational perspective.

By studying the representation of history on TV and by hearing how historians and opinion makers discuss it, one understands that history still plays an important role in the construction and definition of a nation's identity.

Therefore, perhaps by finding supranational issues, European history issues, we are in the way to discover our European common identity.

As constructing a visual representation of Europe's History, we must expect to hear different versions of the same events. History will have more interest for the viewers as it establishes a relation of identity with them. Maybe we need to take in account social history, and everyday life history.

In my opinion, the question is: how did we get to here? Which paths were taken by each country to get to this idea, this possibility of a European common history?

Perhaps the present is a good starting point to talk about the past.

A Guerra colonial. Do Ultramar. De Libertação

A Guerra ("The war") represents a new approach to history on Portuguese television.

This program was produced by RTP - the public Portuguese network - and it was screened in prime time during 2007.

As this program was put on the air, Portuguese contemporary history (particularly the colonial war) became a current subject that people discuss and historical issues became more relevant in the media agenda.

About *The War*: this is a program of 2007, directed by a journalist - Joaquim Furtado.

The first episode of the series, *Angola, dias de morte*, deals with the theme of colonial war, which lasted since 1961 to 1974. Portuguese Armed Forces were sent in Angola to fight the military forces organized by the liberation movements of Angola, Moçambique and Guine Bissau.

This series has a triple subtitle: *Colonial \ Liberation \ Ultramar War*. Therefore, just by looking at the title, the viewer expects to see different perspectives of one same event. The subtitle makes clear that the purpose of this program is to show both sides of the war.

The first episode is dedicated to the events of March 15 1961. On this day, UPA - Angola's Population Union - a liberation movement led by Holden Roberto, set up an attack and massacred white population as well as black farm workers in the Uíge region. This is one of the most traumatic episodes of the colonial war and this was the first TV representation of it.

A Guerra is the result of a journalistic investigation and it approaches a very sensitive issue: the colonial war. This particular episode tells about a dramatic event, the massacre of March 15. The Portuguese have already heard about it but not often discuss it. It is almost a forgotten issue.

So, for the first time, one of the central events of the 20th century in Portugal that is the colonial war, was represented on TV. This was an absent theme and it hasn't yet been approached on television. Even in fiction, colonial war was never the main issue and it was always treated superficially.

The colonial war as the April Revolution or even the period of the First Republic are issues that are still immersed on political controversy. Moreover, this is one of the reasons of this silence, of this lack of representation.

On the opening sequence of *A Guerra* we can find a visual image of the purpose of this series: to show the both sides, to give an opportunity for the military who were enemies to meet and talk and express their vision and also their feelings about the war. So, we see in this opening shot 2 soldiers, former enemies, talking about the war and discovering things, new facts, and new details, about the fights. This intention of showing both sides is achieved by editing intervenient statements - unknown military and some well-known politicians' ones - of the Portuguese side and of the colonies side.

Most of the statements of unknown men, who were once soldiers or political activists, are very emotional. *A Guerra* shows soldiers going to places where they have killed other persons and talking to the families of the victims.

Concerning to its formal and visual structure *A Guerra* doesn't present itself as innovative. It uses a classical edition with statements, a voice over, original footage (one must not forget that most of these images were forbidden by censorship and so they are aired up for the first time).

The original footage used belongs not only to the National TV Archive but also to the Military Forces Archive and private collections.

As for the most important reasons for the success of the War, we can point out two:

- The theme - which was an absent one (especially for the younger generations, who know very little about it) and it is something that it seems that people needed to talk about. Therefore, this program allowed people who lived or just heard about those events to discuss them, to say something about it. In addition, we can hear not only the political leaders but the unknown men who fought as well.
- The way the theme was presented and treated - the purpose of showing both sides of the war received a good response from the viewers. They relied that what they were watching was the result of a serious and profound research - this confidence on TV was a very important factor for success.

In a time when Portugal and its former colonies are establishing a new kind of relations - migrations, economy, politics, all has changed - that re unites people from those countries (once enemies), so the discussion of this common history is of great importance for the future of these new relations.

Maybe it's the importance of coming in terms with the past.

However, one can ask ourselves: does the African side see itself well represented in this series?

The portrayal of history on Italian television

Paola Valentini

Historical programmes on Italian television play a leading role, as we can see by the recent formation, in February 2009, of a dedicated history channel, RaiStoria, which can be viewed for free on terrestrial digital television, by satellite link and direct streaming.

In fact, history on Italian television is a strong choice, so strong indeed as to contribute significantly towards the identity of some networks, in particular RaiTre - in common with other European channels, such as BBC2 and ZDF - and is a conclusive evidence of the role of public service itself.

The example of La7 provides this crucial test, a commercial channel which has built its experimental character - and provocatively has offered an alternative competitive idea to that of public service - also upon history programmes, for instance, snatching the exclusivity for Marco Paolini's programmes away from Rai, as well as focusing on the dual concept history - young audience, transmitting a daily journalistic strip with a highly dramatic content (*Atlantide*, *Storie di uomini e di mondi* and re-reading history from unpublished and intriguing points of view (*L'Altra Storia*))⁽¹⁾

The presence of history on television has become over time a strong palimpsestual choice and an inalienable option, and displays the strength of the public service, starting from the broadcast in early evening of the cycle *La grande storia* by Rai in 1997, which was a bold choice at a moment of great competition between public and private television, and an impressive demonstration of the prevailing logic of public services over that of audience attraction.⁽²⁾

RaiTre rapidly became the channel leader in this area, explicitly called "history Project" and which, in 2005 presented 38 history programmes in prime time and 65 in fringe time.

The flagship of this project is the programme *La storia siamo noi* which transmits more than 250 hours of history a year.⁽³⁾

At the same time, in spite of this editorial project, the only one in Europe, which boasts an extremely high number of internal productions, the concept of history presented by Italian television is often the subject of criticism and controversy, mainly because of the reoccurring obsession for specific subjects (fascism and Nazism), the scholasticism and superficiality of some presentations (the private life of great leaders) and also because, according to some critics, historical programmes clearly tend towards the spectacular (the many Histories built around the history of television) and towards the pure pretext: one cannot forget that the episode of *La storia siamo noi* which obtained the highest audience ratings was the one dedicated to the histrionic television presenter, Fiorello. This programme, transmitted on February 11, 2008, achieved an exceptional 14.64% of audience share (compared to an average of 4%), in fringe time, making this the most successful historical program.⁽⁴⁾

History thus represents a complex and many-faceted area which in Italy has to contend with an institutional attitude and with a particular radio-television market, but also, as I will try to demonstrate, with a certainly not obvious way of *talking* about History.

“Welcome to the theatre of the dam on the Vajont”

In order to tackle the subject of history on Italian television, maybe we could start at the end, and use a procedure typical to history in Italian television where retrospective narration and flashbacks often occur.

Probably, as it transpires when we make a comparison with other European countries - in Italy it would not be possible to propose cases such as *Heimart* (ARD, Germany, 1984) or *Roi blanche, caoutchouc rouge, mot noire* in which Belgium television put its own colonial past under discussion in 2004 - it would appear that history cannot really be made with the use of the media: by and large, the approach is unrelated to the intense historiographical problems described and, bound to scholastic history, often limits itself to the circulation of the vulgate or common version and at the very least continues to observe from a single point of view.

However, if making history using television can still seem to be a utopia, it is clear what the *genre history* on television is.

The constitution of a specific genre which has been assumed by history within Italian television, is, in reality, very evident even within apparently inhomogeneous transmissions and it reveals a very Italian strength in the way *o enunciate* history.

Vajont, a programme by Marco Paolini broadcast by RaiDue on October 9, 1997, about the infamous Toc landslide, promotes some really important ideas, and begins initially with the words with which the author appears on the scene and starts his performance.⁽⁵⁾

Here we are.

Welcome to the theatre of the dam on the Vajont.

I do not know why you have tuned in this evening to hear this story....

Some newspapers have stated that this evening's performance is a documentary, others a drama film.

Instead, you are in a theatre; these people are here to listen to theatre.

For one evening we intend to remove this scene from the here and now and create a live connection to our memory.

That is why it is so difficult to write this, to define what it is we are doing tonight:

maybe there is no live connection to memory. What is it? Well, in short, it is a sort of knot in one's handkerchief which we have already tied.

Let's try and tell it together, let's try to make it understood.

I will ask you for some of help now and again

The *racconto del Vajont* immediately reveals the difficulty we have in defining "making history", and this effort is certainly not a minor one: what is this transmission? What sense is there to make history on television? It is a knot in one's handkerchief, a live connection to our memory.

Paolini in fact presents us with a text which, apart from - and in some ways as well as - promoting itself as the champion of the so-called "*teatro civile*" or of that branch of "*teatro di narrazione*" in the tradition of Dario Fo's *Mistero Buffo*⁽⁶⁾, declines the typical Italian way of making history.

Thus we can see the constant search for the meaning and the reason of making history, the variety of materials used in the reconstruction and

the pretentious bricolage (such as newspaper clippings, documentaries, functional reconstructions and excerpts from television programmes), the highly narrative tone, the progress forwards and backwards in time, continuously breaking the chronological line by alternating present and past, the portioning of the past into micro stories and micro periods (for example, October 6, the day of the tragedy, but also October 10 when the young Paolini was woken by his mother's weeping as well as the previous summer recalled because of the train taken to go on holiday which passed by the town of Lavarone) breaking the flow of history into modular blocks while being well aware of the congenital flow of its nature.

This would be more than enough to recall important storiographic theories, such as the *bricoleur* of Claude Lévi-Stauss or Marc Bloch's coexistence of historical periods. Even without promoting such an enforced analysis, it certainly testifies to the great attention given to the way history is enounced, and a questioning of the way history is made with television in which this medium is never only a simple method of circulation.

In October 1997 had an audience of three and a half million viewers and many more supported Paolini's further historical undertakings, as the recent live transmission of on November 3, 2007, confirmed with an audience of one million 232 thousand viewers and a 5% television share, which was an extraordinary result for the private network La7 who placed this as its most watched programme of the year.

Certainly the "Paolini formula" has now been tested and its success is based on multiple factors : shows are always coupled with an exceptional promotion of the event on newspapers and on the network's promotional spaces and attention is given not only to the importance of the historical reconstruction - the Vajont, the tragedy of Ustica ⁷ and the massacre of 30 thousand soldiers killed during the Italian withdrawal from Russia in the winter of 1943, as told in Mario Rigoni Stern's novel, *Il sergente delle nevi* and from which Paolini draws inspiration - but also to the new and exceptional experience of a television event articulated over long periods when we compare it to the usual frenetic media times, without any distraction from commercial breaks (an ostentatious choice in the case of the most recent commercial network broadcasts) or indeed any other interruption and with a rediscovered sense of live transmission

nurtured by a strong feeling of *hic et nunc*: Paolini and his participant audience ⁽⁸⁾ tell about places touched by tragedy, while clinging to the side of the dam on the Vajont or in the freezing ravines of a quarry near Vicenza to evoke the deserted and rigid Russian winter.

The relevance of an anniversary, a good dose of irony, the desecration his shows feed upon, and a tendency to autobiography are all present.

However the success of these projects, which are well known not only to theatre goers but also to the popular television audience, demonstrates something else: the power of being able to let the viewer *touch* the historical event and to do this by emphasising the actual *location* thanks to the power of television which can transport the viewer to the real places where the event took place.

In a slightly provocative way, I would assert that if Italian television is not the instrument with which to undertake a revision, and does not appear to be the place in which to deposit a concept of history, if only because of the schizoid nature of the historical references in its broadcasts, however it certainly does show a great novelty in the *enunciation* of history; even though it is obvious that the old lessons from American television and the newer British ones have been perfectly assimilated, it demonstrates that it is not only original but often at the very heart of our reflexions.

This is a way to make history through television in which the audiovisual element is never an accessory but a central element of the discourse.

The "genre history" in Italian television

The origins of history in Italian television obviously intersect perfectly with the great paedagogic project undertaken by the so-called Mamma Rai and consequently television, as a place not for reflexions on history, but from which to circulate a notion of history which is not even scholastic, was subjected to the political control exercised upon it by the not very stable majority party at the end of the second world war.

The first to appear are initially montage films which will continue to use the palimpsests as support material for the next few decades. These are documentaries executed using repertory material and are inspired both by the

great Anglo-Saxon examples and by the inheritance of the cinematographic newsreels produced by Luce, which had already been tested within the structure of television news and are sometimes indistinguishable from it. Beginning with the omniscient voice-over, this weighty heritage immediately removes from the start any possibility that the *bricoleur* - picking up the reference to Claude Lévi-Stauss - can carry out any real innovations, allowing the *ingénieur* and a logic of montage - and of signification - predetermined in some way by the except itself, to predominate.⁽⁹⁾

In these early montage films, all the production effort is concentrated on the extraction and rediscovery of material; among the first examples we can mention *Cinquantanni di vita italiana*, which Rai broadcast in ten episodes on the solitary television channel of the period, starting from December 15, 1958, which was extraordinarily successful; edited by Silvio Negro, the programme, which re-constructs the life of Italians from 1898 until 1948, was praised at the time on magazines and newspapers, and valued mainly because of the challenge required to handle “a million metres through the film viewer” originating from Luce’s archives.⁽¹⁰⁾

Silvio Negro was a scholar of Vatican problems and an important contributor to the “*Corriere della sera*”, as well as a collector of antique photographs and the curator of many television programmes, and is the typical representative of early Italian television: a monopoly on journalists and a moment of crucial evolution of the figure of the television journalist who, thanks to history, emerges from the shadows of the simple news reader to become the interviewer, and is finally given the legitimacy to express opinions, to take up positions in debates and to become a mediator with the public.⁽¹¹⁾

On the wave of these montage films - and in the light of the evolution and crucial impact of the British model, such as *The Great War* -⁽¹²⁾ even Italian television develops belatedly new interview models, establishing in its turn a formula which will become the real Italian television history genre.

The turning point is represented in 1972 by *Nascita di una dittatura*,⁽¹³⁾ the prelude to a more conscious and specifically television-orientated exploration of the subject of history, but also the prodrome of a centrality of enunciation which is very Italian and which risks subsequently to become hypertrophic.

By established tradition, there are many scruples in the making of historical reconstructions, with an enormous number of historians directly involved in the project and a tireless research into the materials; in addition to this, following the British model, the occasionally emotional unpublished interviews, one for all, that with Donna Rachele, wife of Mussolini.

The recipe for the history genre of Italian television is finally completed, as we have said, by the extensive emphasis given to dialogue; Zavoli in actual fact creates a narrative web and a precise audiovisual syntax which is always exhibited, becoming itself very nearly proof of the truthfulness of the historical reconstruction immediately declared as such.

The modalities of enunciation are in fact there from the beginning, television cameras, large size screens and monitors are never hidden from view starting with the impressive leading titles and the calculated power of some shots leaves us in no doubt as to it being a performance - and maybe even a show .

This style returns in 1989 in the occasion of that other great success, *La notte della Repubblica*⁽¹⁴⁾, which asserts itself among many “imitations” as the truly real genre and where the high number of television cameras, even during studio shots, the hypertechnological set , the frequent changes of viewing points, the movements of the machinery, and the editing which is never “transparent” and highlights the fractures rather than mending them, are the counterpoint to a narration which is only apparently restrained and emotionally detached.

In the first episode, devoted to the massacre of Piazza Fontana, Sergio Zavoli “enters” the site of the massacre, guiding with his voice-over commentary an unrelenting panoramic forward motion along the wet night streets of contemporary Milan until reaching Piazza Fontana:

“December 12, 1969, was a Friday. It has rained all night in Milan, the weather will stay unsettled until the evening. It is market day. Let’s go along this street and let’s stop just here in front of this building”.

After these words, the repertory images and the films of the period, opportunistically enhanced by graphic effects, take over from the present, while the story of our narrator starts and moves with efficacy to the past (“The branch of the Banca dell’Agricoltura of Piazza Fontana is full of cu-

stomers mostly from the provinces....”). Not very different to what Paolini will do nearly twenty years later, the Italian formula already appears to be sound and well recognisable.

Alongside, but in some way also subsequent, to documentaries and “investigations” the talk show makes its appearance.

The television debate takes some sporadic incursions into historical reconstruction, not usual in Italy, where it is eminently the domain of news which has not yet become history and that of choice for news and political information.⁽¹⁵⁾

As with *La notte della Repubblica*, the talk show is nearly always only an offshoot of the documentary, and rather than bringing the debate up-to-date historiographically, it gives a televisual update to the montage film such as replacing black and white with colour.

A test is given by the fact that the places of this, only apparent, contradiction are remote and nearly inaccessible and, again, the talk show appears more as the exhibition of a further potential enunciation than the exploitation of a resource which allows the audience to grasp the complexity of History⁽¹⁶⁾.

Finally, the last typology, last also in order of time in the light of its continual development, is represented by a variegated domain which goes from historical reconstructions to fiction and in which the weight of History is extremely heterogenous and discontinuous.

The correspondence to history, the attention to scruples about historical reconstructions within televised stories, becomes evident in particular by the middle of the Sixties; we only need to think on one hand about programmes such as the telecast novel *I Promossi Sposi* (S. Bolchi, 1967) which makes comparisons between the most influential historians of Alessandro Manzoni’s time, and, on the other hand, the direction taken following the impact of Roberto Rossellini’s experimental television programmes, which apart from the well known European television productions (such as *La prise de pouvoir de Louis XIV* in collaboration with the French ORTF) lead to experiments such as the five episodes of *L’eta’ del ferro* (RaiDue, from February 19, 1964) in which the history of mankind from the Etruscans to the postwar years is told in the light of innovations tied to metal working.

The area of fiction is the preferred option of the more generalised traditional channels, such as RaiUno and Canale5 and it also represents their typical path to history on television.

Starting in particular in the Nineties⁽¹⁷⁾, the all - Italian formula of mini-series of two or four episodes, with lavish, in some cases international, productions, big budgets, great attention to the most authentic elements of a show (such as costumes, scenery, music and the actors' performances), knowledgeable mix of romance, adventure, hagiography and dramatic surprises, and naturally a broadcast in prime-time, suitably announced beforehand and amplified by the other media, begins to be considered as one of the best ways to attract the general public to History.

This is offered, often paradoxically, under the banner of education and information, underlining the precision of historical references and the spectacular reconstruction of real events.

Historical representation is, in these productions, extremely inhomogeneous: such as the simple pretext setting (*Toto' Riina. Il capo dei capi - Toto' Riina. The boss of bosses* reduces Giovanni Falcone, General Carlo Alberto Della Chiesa and fifty years of Italian history to meager figures with lines belonging to supporting actors), the attempts to paint scholastic chronicles in brighter colours (such as the brave Italian defence against the Germans on September 8, 1943, in *Cefalonia - Cephalonia*), the uninspired reworking of the historical image of a certain period (such as the misogynous Italy of the end of the nineteenth century shown in *Maria Montessori. Una vita per i bambini*) and a place where often unsuccessful attempts are made to propose new critical readings (*Il cuore nel pozzo*, a love story against the confused backdrop of the Italian Foibe massacres).⁽¹⁸⁾

The typology which moves between montage films and fiction also reflects a certain temporal progression which goes from the origins of television in Italy towards current events, and also a certain inclination to go from public to private television: montage films are virtually unknown to commercial television, except in the form of great documentaries purchased abroad, and inserted into the schedule while stressing the tone of the cultural process and the exceptional spectacularity of the event (such as the afternoon broadcast of the previously cited *Appuntamento con la storia*) But history remains also, more or less opportunistically, the

place where continual research is carried out. New transmission slots such as on Saturday evening, new formats such as the “false documentary”, the adoption of a point of view imitating that of a target young audience, new themes, often self-referring, and an enhanced importance given for example to paranoia and irony have produced agile, innovative and captivating transmissions (as in the case *La SuperStoria* which however are often only partially interested in making the viewer reflect on history or contribute to his or her understanding of it.

However, even in these cases, the enunciation method of making history is very evident.⁽¹⁹⁾

Setting up the scene and re-writing history

The transformation of historical programmes are evident just by looking at the themes which speak for themselves, as shown by this table showing an example of the gap between the 1999 edition of *La storia siamo noi* and that of the 2007/08 season

Edition 1999 of <i>La storia siamo noi</i>	Edition 2007/08 of <i>La storia siamo noi</i>
Basilicata. Una nuova America? (11.01.1999) <i>Basilicata. A new America?</i>	Il Capitano (04.09.2007) <i>The Captain</i>
Viaggio nel sud (12.01.1999 - 15.01.1999) <i>Travels in the south</i>	Cinema indipendente cinese (06.09.2007) <i>Independant Chinese cinema</i>
Viaggio nel nord (18.01.1999 - 22.01.1999) <i>Travels in the north</i>	Stalingrado - L'inferno di ghiaccio (29.10.2007) <i>Stalingrad - The hell of ice</i>
Cerco case (25.01.1999) <i>House - hunting</i>	Napoli al tempo del colera (31.10.2007) <i>Naples at the time of the Cholera</i>
Ferite del bel paese (08.02.1999 - 12.02.1999) <i>Wounds of Italy</i>	Sulle orme di Gandhi (07.11.2007) <i>In the footsteps of Ghandi</i>
Mito dello sport (10.03.1999 - 16.03.1999) <i>Sport Myths</i>	Uccidere Hitler (12.11.2007) <i>Killing Hitler</i>
Tra i banchi di scuola (23.03.1999 - 30.03.1999) <i>In the school room</i>	Rino vive! (13.11.2007) <i>Rino lives!</i>
Emigrazione (07.04.1999 - 13.04.1999) <i>Emigration</i>	Partire, ritornare - in viaggio con Tahar Ben Jelloun (14.11.2007) <i>Leaving, returning - travels with Tahar Ben Jelloun</i>
Benessere (14.04.1999 - 20.04.1999) <i>Wellbeing</i>	Garinei & Giovannini - I parte (20.11.2007) <i>Garinei & Giovannini - I part</i>

The transformation is obvious just by reading the titles of the first episodes, and similar reports come from other European televisions.

If the original project of Sandro Lai (with the consultation of Rosario Villari and Candiano Falaschi) was directed towards composing a mosaic of the whole Italian social history from 1945 onward (and Rai's old pedagogic project re-emerged simply in the idea of a journey and the implied aspiration of a unified country), in recent television history small invisible actors have been replaced by great protagonists, social history by omnivorous biographism, important themes like immigration or economical crisis by peripheral themes like show business and sport, and the sobriety of the investigation, evident in the crisp titles and lack of rhetoric is replaced by allusion and the power of evocation.

But overcoming the pedagogical project which history in television is burdened with is something more complex and provides the attention to detail of the typically Italian "setting up of the scene", although not in fact its originator, which, as we have said, becomes the prerogative of the "genre history".

Apparently, the formula does not seem to change, offering the usual montage film alternating with studio parts and interventions of the presenter; however everything changes.

The steps, the presence of the audience in the studio, the scene which vaguely evokes a classroom with the presenter moving round to unite the various sectors, are replaced by studios constructed with shadows and light, indecipherable caverns, but also a sort of control room from which to mysteriously direct the game.

In the first episode of *La storia siamo noi* at 10:00 in 1999, the presenter, Maurizio Maggiani, moves round a very simple studio, traversed by a single raised platform displaying a map of Italy, on top of which are some simple guest chairs accommodating a small public presence and a few experts, underlined by a restrained and unseen direction (filming often using long shot techniques to highlight the scenery and shot-counter-shot techniques during interviews).

Jumping ahead a few years to Gianni Minoli's edition, in the episode of

La storia siamo noi dedicated to Enrico Mattei, the presenter does not even seem to be physically on scene.

If in 1999, the transmission faces the historical, political and social events which had defined 1958 in Italy, taking ideas from the investigation by Virgilio Sabel, *Viaggiando nel sud* produced in 1958, on February 18, 2005, when *La Storia siamo noi* presents *Il caso Mattei* on RaiDue in fringe time, the revision work was not carried out from the original source, but from a reconstruction done at the time in an episode of *Mixer*.

It is evident that enunciation is at the heart of the elaboration right from the beginning: the opening scene starts with the sound of the original unpublished recording of the radio communications between the control tower of Linate and Mattei's aeroplane in the foreground: everything rotates around this recording of technical data, those standard procedures, nearly incomprehensible to the layman, normal in the manoeuvres of approach to the airport, but which foreshadows that silence we know will be filled by the aeroplane crash on October 27, 1962.

The presenter is totally absent, but his voice is present, commenting on what we are hearing ("What you are listening to is a unique document, it is the original, unpublished recording of the communications between the control tower of Linate and India Alfa Papa, the code name of the aeroplane taking the president of Eni - Ente Nazionale Idrocarburi, Enrico Mattei to Milan") and he raises the stakes:

Although the weather is bad the voice of the pilot Irnerio Bertuzzi appears calm.

The pilot actions the command to open the undercarriage.

India Alfa Papa does not respond any longer, the aeroplane has fallen in the countryside around Bascape', a few kilometers from the airport.

The president of Eni, Enrico Mattei, the English journalist William McCall, the pilot Irnerio Bertuzzi all die.

But what really happened to that plane? Was it an accident or sabotage?

The death of Mattei became the first Italian mystery. We told it on *Mixer* and we are re-telling it to you.

The photographic frames show a series of gigantic superimposed writings (which display phrases from the dialogues, dates of the disaster, etc), while the images of the aeroplane, of Enrico Mattei, of the airport radars are multiplied by the monitors and the large screens distributed throughout the studio, among which the television camera sinuously moves and the editing team probes this dimly lighted studio, its equipment and its dialogue from every possible point of view, extolling both mystery and wealth.

The oscillation of the genre history has produced great changes in television transmissions, which maybe we can synthesise in the evolution from the pedagogic project to the scene-setting of the mystery which, more than in the themes, leaves its mark in the modalities of the setting-up of the scene.

The role of enunciation on the other hand is crucial and nearly atrophic, and in some cases poses the question of what is more important, the way of presenting history or history itself.

This is the case, for example, of *La storia siamo noi*, which, alongside new episodes, offers a literal and constant process of re-writing: some episodes are constructed by re-transmitting previous episodes, even if these are old and do not take into account the historians' most recent achievements (or if they do, the correction will consist of a small appendix lasting a few minutes at the end of the programme: a rapid interview, a declaration, more often super-imposed writing).

Nevertheless, instead of historical anachronisms, these seem to be a tribute to the Italian way of representing history in television and at the same time - undeniably - the demonstration, the reassuring inactivity, of a persistency of the mystery which makes any of further investigation useless. ⁽²⁰⁾

The attention to the role of enunciation aggressively enters the field of perception of history and its sense. In many Italian historical programmes, the "genre" is characterised by an insistence on the idea of a conspiracy which also has precise enunciation motives.

In many cases, the solution is not only left to the end, but indeed outside the considerations of history: in substance, the narrative is constantly left open or the conclusion is to shown elsewhere.

An example is offered by *Correva l'anno*, in which the presenter, the journalist Paolo Mieli, only comes on scene at the end with a rapid speech of not more than five minutes in which, sitting at a desk, looking straight into the eyes of the spectator, he integrates and sometimes partially corrects the montage film or the documentary just seen.⁽²¹⁾

On the opposite side, with similar results, there is the strategy elaborated by *Blu notte. Misteri Italiani*⁽²²⁾. The programme nearly always starts with current events or in any case it starts with the most recent ones: *Storia della Mafia* first shows the massacres in which Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino lost their life, and from then it goes backwards; *Storie di Brigate Rosse* starts with the arrest in 2003 of Nadia Desdemona Lioce, a member of recent terrorist cells, and then it tells the story of the Nineteen-Seventies.

The pace is of importance; thanks to this type of flash-forward, the public always knows the “end” -and its non-resolution-, the hypothesis of a real solution is negated from the beginning and the “ideology” of the programme - and in some way, that of making history on television in Italy - is that of an exercise of and on history as a work-in-progress and as a continuous flow (in transmissions which often utilise cinematographic and television metaphors) where the challenge is at least that of stopping the image for a moment and trying to see the events more clearly.

And like in a film, as Carlo Lucarelli says when talking about the capture of Nadia Lioce, we are able to go back and look at things more closely.⁽²³⁾

Everything happens very fast. And in a novel or in a film at this point there would be something to lengthen the tension, to maintain the suspense.

But this is not a film. This is a real story, which really happened in that carriage of the inter-regional train 2304. And nothing is needed to make it more dramatic and fierce than it really is.

The woman goes up to one of the policemen and tries to take his gun. But the policeman resists.

His ordinance “Beretta” falls on the ground, under the seat. The woman bends down and picks it up. The policemen try to stop her. She tries to fire, but the lock is on and the trigger does not release.

The other man shoots and hits Superintendent Pedri in the neck. A

policeman fires back with his Beretta and hits the man in the chest, who shoots again and hits the policeman in his side.

Further shots, yells, laments; the lady who was alone runs along the corridor; the other lady throws herself under the seat while her husband intervenes because he is also a policeman, even though he is off duty.

Then everything stops, leaving in the carriage a strong smell of burnt gunpowder. It looks like the scene of a film, it looks like it, but it is not.

On the ground, Superintendent Pedri is in a puddle of blood spreading over the floor of the carriage : a bullet has cut his jugular killing him nearly instantly.

This extraordinary attention to enunciation, and the knowledge that it is part of the important process within the method of making a discourse on history in which television is central, is a common element to history in Italian television and returns also in programmes which are apparently very different to each other, if not else, at least in their roots.

Beyond the kaleidoscope of transmissions on the subject, Italian television establishes two models: on one hand the informative-journalistic one, which we can define as that of the investigation, in which the history of television uses the resources of the micro-genre of information; on the other hand the model of the journey back in time, in which historical programmes inherit some of the scientific television transmissions.

The superficial traits of these two models can change (investigation prefers repertory films, while the journey through time values the solid spectacularity of TV movies and the cinema; in the first case, the place of the investigation is the television studio, in the other it is the world and the possibility of allowing the spectator to journey to distant countries; on one hand, the object which is a symbol, the fetish, is the original document to be exhibited, on the other it is the real location, also to be touched by hand; the journalistic experience of some presenters is answered by the medico-scientific experience of others, etc).⁽²⁴⁾

The power of history is not very different in the two formats: the past is something remote, precluded from our comprehension, whose only

evidence is the perfect continuity with the confusion of the present. In the cited *Il caso Mattei* information contained in the famous black box, listened to at the beginning, is ambiguous and inconsistent and after listening and listening again does not reveal anything. On the other hand after an hour's transmission, a partial solution of the mystery is reached, but it has nothing to do with what has been already seen up until then: Minoli interviews an expert who reveals the results of the decisive mineral analysis on the wedding ring of Mattei, which using the power of modern equipment reveals the presence of explosive, confirming sabotage.

The solution is therefore elsewhere; and in any case is not resolved: the idea of a sabotage attempt was given at the beginning, but who and why remain totally precluded to us. The undefined and mysterious idea of a conspiracy always remains the most appealing "solution" for historical programmes on Italian television; and however the game of enunciating history is not for this less effective or engaging.

A test is given by the fact that this operation of re-writing history has opened the field of television to many writers who do not create a television of words, but instead make an increased use of its story-telling dimension and its audiovisual resources.

The works carried out by the famous writer of historical best sellers, Valerio Manfredi, and those of the fine detective story writer Carlo Luccarelli are not so far apart, although one writes the scenes of great mythological stories and the other small dark Italian mysteries, the first moves among majestic archeological sites, and the second stands next to cardboard cut-out silhouettes of the central characters of the events which fill the emptiness of the studio.

In reality, the mechanism of construction of history, the story of History, shows a strong identity of genre and the closeness of the strategies of enunciation: such as the obsession of detection compared to the fetishism of proof, the emphasis of individual cases compared to the difficulty of a collective story, and the narrative modalities which activate a real processes of serialization and guarantee that texts and meanings can be unlocked

In any case, the attraction for the story of History, the consciousness of the game of audiovisual writing is strong and determinant.

The public of History

The educational-pedagogic label given to historical television programmes in Italy is, as said, an indication of public service and ostentatiously provides one of the few cases where scheduling is virtually unaffected by audience response, in particular during the daytime slots, directly inherited from the so-called access programmes on RaiTre, designed precisely to promote minority programmes and representations on television.⁽²⁵⁾

Prime-time transmission does sometimes occur but in the case of montage films, it is still an exception limited to great celebratory days and to anniversaries, or, in the case of adventurous historical journeys, are mixed with the more spectacular contents of programmes such as *Star-gateor Voyager* or *Ulisses*.

This proves that television production does not have a precise public.

However, we cannot evaluate the success and hold of history on the public in purely traditional terms. A great part of the power of history in television, in actual fact, is that it creates discussion and becomes itself an element of further “*discorsizzazione*”, a semiotic definition which describes the method with which to make discourse.

From this point of view - especially in an age of enviable medial interconnections - the internet exercises a crucial role both for the historical research carried out by the same groups of popular or young audiences targeted by television (consider the strength of the Wikipedia encyclopedia model, one of the most visited web sites in the world, with 60 million hits a day), and also by the positioning of the web as a support and important interlocutor for historical television transmissions: the idea of history as belonging to the public domain and being a right of everyone can easily be transferred to the web’s democratic spirit.

RaiTre and RaiEducational’s history Project has understood this well and *La storia siamo noi* boasts a rich web site with an ample availability of contents (for example dossiers, archives containing excerpts of episodes on live streaming, further in-depth analysis).

History in television therefore is also necessary in order to evaluate the availability of its archives, also thanks to the net.

Internet, however, also becomes an important mirror held up to the reactions of people and the number of hits a subject or an episode receives becomes an important indicator.

A striking example is shown by *YouTubewhere* many extracts from historical episodes are available and where the web research methods allow users to compose personal palimpsests or podcasts using television historical contributions.

In Italy, a significant example was recently given by an amateur film, shot by some local journalists who arrived immediately on the scene of the massacre of the station of Bologna on August 2, 1980.

This unpublished semi-professional video lasting about forty minutes, full of details of the effects of the bomb, and showing the sense of loss, of confusion and of distraction in those first hours, was exclusively broadcast by the Italian satellite channel History Channel on August 2, 2007 at 10:25, exactly at the time when the explosion occurred, and then had a parallel life on the internet, exercising an extremely strong effect on the web population, as seen by the excerpts on YouTube, on the peer to peer sites, in the traceable recall keys in search engines and in the echo between blogs: a result without comparison for this type of satellite transmission, where an audience of 50-100.000 viewers is considered high.

Another example is given by those historical programmes in some way subject to censorship or simply removed from transmission, not such an unusual occurrence in Italy.

Censorship has been particularly strong in the case of *Blu Notte. Misteri Italiani* On April 25, 2004, the then director of Rai, Flavio Cattaneo, blocked the episode that Carlo Lucarelli had dedicated to the mafia, as being potentially a violation of "par conditio", due to the proximity of general elections.

The unpopularity of this decision and its ambiguity⁽²⁶⁾ had a wide resonance on the web, becoming the centre subject of many blogs and causing a chain of uploads and downloads which brought about - as regularly happens in cases of censorship - an extraordinary circulation of the episode and the confirmation that audiovisual operation of re-writing history, the operation of bricolage using fragments of television images, is an unstoppable process and is the real history game on the Italian landscape.

Translated by INTRAS Congressi, Bologna

Notes

- 1) Presented by Francesca Mazzolai, *Atlantide* (La7, daily at 16:30) it is the Italian edition of the famous American programme, from which it takes the television services, constructed from a montage of majestic historical reconstructions and grandiose post-production effects and characterised by a mostly adventurous and exotic vision of history, from the Maya to the crusades.
L'altra storia on the other hand goes on air (initially on Saturday nights, then at 13:00, and recently Sunday evening), from 2002 also on La7 presented by Pierluigi Batista (who has replaced Sergio Luzzatto); the programme, with a very altered concept, has at its heart, in particular in its most recent editions, the theme of television and its relationship with Italians and especially with politics.
La grande storia (on RaiTre from 1997) was the first occasion in which history challenged the films and the great evening shows in prime time; currently it is broadcast daily at 08:00 and twice a week late at night with repeats on RaSat Extra. *La grande Storia* has more or less maintained an unmodified structure (montage film) and the same historical preferences (Italian history over the two world wars) and often the program goes back to the same subjects: the documentary film by Nicola Caracciolo (with the historical consultancy of Valerio Castronovo) *Casa Savoia* on the end of the Italian monarchy and broadcast on August 31, 2007 is a sort of second edition of the documentary *Il Piccolo* which the same authors also produced for *La grande Storia* in 1979.
- 3) Leader programme which now represents Rai itself, *La storia siamo noi* is repeated daily on all Rai channels (daily at 08:05 on RaiTre, Monday at 23:25 on RaiUno and Wednesday at 00:45 on RaiDue, with numerous offers and repeats on satellite channels and on digital terrestrial television.) The programme created in 1999, as we shall see later, a few years later was taken over by its author, the producer and Rai Educational director Gianni Minoli, who radically changed its format, making it the real heir of the socio-historical experiences of Sergio Zavoli, updated in its language and breadth of themes which the author and presenter had previously tried out with the successful television news programme *MixerIt* is characterised by a specific audiovisual syntax, a very rapid transition between repertory images and films and spectacular studio shows, with wide use of montage, post production effects, bold shots in steady cam or dolly, and the use of every type of resource, from music, to noise, to close-ups, and with a constant duplication of the image on numerous videos, displays and monitors in the studio.
- 4) Although the intent to surprise the public is clear, the introduction of a present-day character within a historical transmission is not such a pretext. In the episode of *La storia siamo noi* the rise of this young artist is seen as a metaphor of the euphoria of the Eighties in Italy with the growth and the “disinhibition” of local television stations and the knowledge of the strength of the media (underlined by the extraordinary success of the program *Karaoke* incarnation of the mythical 5 minutes of fame defined by Andy Warhol which was in all the newspapers because of the million of people who filled local town squares just in order to sing in front of TV). The episode thus well inserts itself in the very Italian attention for the role of media in the history of Italians and in historical reconstruction.

- 5) This is the television version of *Il racconto del Vajont* written with Gabriele Vacis and programmed in 1994, which was adapted for television with Felice Cappa and Gabriele Vacis and directed by of Antonio A. Moretti. The initial sequence is so constructed: the leading titles interchanges with frames of the valley and details of the geographical map, together with a strong noise which the image finally reveals as being that of the deafening noise of the dam in front of which the performance occurs. In live transmission, Marco Paolini standing on a bare platform, in front of the dam starts his monologue; at the end of the excerpt shown here, the author relates the main information about the tragedy while the film alternates details of the front pages of newspapers with images taken on the spot immediately after the disaster showing bodies being retrieved from the water and the ruined village of Longarone while the overwriting rolls on repeating his words and the data on the disaster. When Paolini recalls his personal perception of the tragedy (« On October the 10th I was in second grade.... »), in those places which reconnect him to a train journey with his parents during the summer holidays, the film shows a close-up of the actor - who articulates the names of the stations of that childhood train - superimposed with of a long shot from repertory of a train rushing over rails going across mountains and tunnels until it fills the frame with the image of the broken tracks and invaded by mud and rubble.
- 6) Cfr. Gerardo Guccini, *La bottega dei narratori*, Rome, Dino Audino Editore, 2005.
- 7) I-TIGI *Canto per Ustica* (dedicated to the massacre of Ustica. Written with Daniele Del Giudice and broadcast live on RaiDue from Piazza Stefano, Bologna July 6, 2000.
- 8) A reminder that the television broadcasts of Paolini always programmed on occasion of the dramatic anniversaries of the tragedies related, as well as always making use of a very visible public on site, who participate with its reaction to the prompts of the actor, also counts among its audience witnesses, survivors and relatives of the victims.
- 9) The reference obviously is to the famous theory exposed in Claude Lévi-Stauss, *La Pensé e sauvage* (Paris, 1962)
- 10) *Cinquantanni di vita italiana in dieci trasmissioni televisive*, «Radiocorriere», XXXV, 50, Dicembre 14-20, 1958, pp. 12-14. Cfr. le enthusiastic reports in U. Bz., *Cronaca televisiva*, «La Stampa», December 17, 1958 and December 23, 1958 and G., *TV: "Cinquantanni" di vita italiana*, «Corriere della sera», December 17, 1958.
- 11) Cfr. Francesca Anania, *Immagini di storia. La televisione racconta il Novecento*, Rome, Eri, 2003 and Aldo Grasso (edited by), *Fare storia con la televisione*, Vita e Pensiero, Milan, 2007.
- 12) Part of the novelty of *The Great War* (BBC, 1964, 26 episodes) which influenced the way of making history all over Europe, and particularly in Italy in the productions of Sergio Zavoli, is tied to the presence of a real live "master of ceremonies" - the actor Michael Redgrave- who organises each episode according to a clear narrative sequence as well as the systematic role given to witnesses: not only to the observations of influential characters and scholars but also to the experience of the immediate protagonists.

- 13) Conceived on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the march on Rome, the transmission was broadcast in six episodes on national television from November 10, 1972 on Fridays at 21:00. With the historical consultancy of Alberto Aquarone, Gaetano Arfè, Renzo De Felice, Gabriele De Rosa, Gastone Manacorda, Salvatore Valitutti, Zavoli illustrates the context that accompanies the start of the fascist dictatorship, gathering a wide consensus and on average over 9 million viewers.
- 14) At the centre of the investigation this time are the “anni di piombo - years of lead” and the darkest pages of Italian terrorism, investigated over eighteen episodes broadcast on RaiDue from December 12, 1989, anniversary of the massacre of Piazza Fontana in Milan. The television format of *Nascita di una dittatura* is revisited in a rather schematic form, which is not always effective: there is the tendency to separate the various “souls” of the programme, films and reconstructions prevail in the first part, and in the second there are a series of significant interviews and sometimes a small discussion.
- 15) An recent example is given by *Matrix* presented and conceived by Enrico Mentana, ex director of Telegiornale, for Canale 5, and transmitted from September 19, 2005 three evenings a week at 23:40. In competition with *Porta a porta* (talk show Bruno Vespa presents in parallel on RaiUno from January 22, 1996), Mentana’s programme sometimes analyses the most recent events - as in the successful episodes dedicated to the birth of private television in Italy - but in reality historical reconstruction dominates the political re-reading of the present.
- 16) While Zavoli at the end of each episode interviewed his guests sitting in a chair suspended, using a postproduction effect, over a sort of styled world map, Alessandro Cecchi Paone opens *Appuntamento con the storia* (Rete4 at 22:30, then Saturday at 14:00) proceeding the transmission of famous documentaries produced internationally, with interviews with historians and famous people, speaking from the sumptuous, remote and nearly inaccessible Federiciana Reading room of the historic Biblioteca Ambrosiana of Milan.
- 17) These are legislations of the so-called European directive TSF “Television senza frontiere -television without boundaries” (ratified with the law 122/1998) in which it was agreed not only to the free circulation of television programmes within the European Union, and also to the introduction of “circulation quotas”, the requirement, for television channels, to reserve more than half the transmission time for European works which initially meant an explosion of national productions and in particular of works of fiction. More recently this euphoria has cooled, due to an unexpected audience which transformed some of these television mega productions into spectacular flops, making fiction one of the most unstable products of the television market.
- 18) *Totò Riina. Il capo dei capi* (Canale5, from October 25, 1007, 6 episodes, directed by Alexix Sweet and Enzo Monteleone), *Cefalonia* (RaiUno, April 11-12, 2005, 2 episodes, directed by Riccardo Milani), *Maria Montessori. Una vita per I bambini* (Canale5, May 28-30, 2007, 2 episodes, directed by Gianluca Maria Tavarelli), *Il cuore nel pozzo* (RaiUno, February 7-8, 2005, 2 episodes, directed by Alberto Negrin).

- 19) The transmission of Andrea Salerno - director of the satire division of RaiTre - is broadcast from 2002 (RaiTre, Saturday, at 20:10 or 23:00, according to the subject) *La SuperStoria* updates the formula of the montage film aiming at a young audience, with its satirical tone and an often sarcastic attitude, and also with its fast rhythm, the topical music themes, the offer of powerful and unexpected images and audiovisual counterpoints. The themes covered include the Eighties, the history of Italian television, and work conditions, paying attention to micro-history, to reflections on daily life and to the way in which media register and condition social changes.
- 20) So, for example on the occasion of the anniversary of the massacre of Piazza Fontana of December 12, 1969, both in 2003 (12/12/2003) and in 2004 (10/12/2004), *La storia siamo noi* decided to re-transmit the first episode, cited earlier, of *La notte della Repubblica* realized by Zavoli in 1989. And all this in spite of being one of the most significant episodes of Italian terrorism, considered a turning point in the history of Italy, the warning sign of that crisis in institutions, to the open confrontation between right and left and that climate of suspicion and conspiracy in the existence of obscure powers within the demographic institutions which will modify the subsequent flow of history. And despite the numerous court cases (as many as seven, the last in 2005) and the years of investigations, *La storia siamo noi* re-proposes the same old episode, simply applying to the end a long caption with the list of all the verdicts and sentences pronounced after 1989. The explanation is in the words with Minoli briefly presents the episode: « An extraordinary page of television to conserve in order to remember.., » a still modern form of enunciation which is still more relevant maybe the recent news and a sense of conspiracy and mystery that simply extends with the years.
- 21) *Correva l'anno* is broadcast on RaiTre from 2000 at 23:40 and it re-proposes the formula of documentaries with montage of repertory material and voice-overs. The formula is based on the choice of a year and the exposition of two different historical cases (such as the special edition on fascism and that on the cold war) which are significant even in their juxtaposition, as in the case of the tested series "Biografia parallele - parallel biographies" *Correva l'anno. Il caso Rosselli. Un delitto di regime* (a wonderful documentary directed by Stella Savino, proposed the previous year on History Channel Italia in occasion of the seventieth anniversary of the slaughter June 9, 1937) is broadcast on July 4, 2007 at 23:45 on RaiTre, the last episode of the cycle dedicated to the special edition on fascism by *Correva l'anno*. In the brief final comment, Paolo Mieli explains to the public that the involvement of Italian communists in the death of the Rosselli brothers, presented in the film as one of the possible hypothesis formulated in the past, was subsequently shown to be totally false.
- 22) The programme is broadcast on RaiTre from 2000 at 23:45. The first two editions limit themselves to the analysis of famous and brutal cases of news, but from 2001 the programme follows those cases which had a strong impact on *Italian history, from Sindona to Salvatore Giuliano*. The format of the transmission never changes: the narration is a strong component of the programme, with the exploitation of recourses such as suspense, cliffhangers and the expansion in general of the wait as well as the usual mix of repertory film, photographs and reconstructions.

- 23) The monologue of Lucarelli converses with the film of the dramatisation of the event, shot with all available cinematographic resources: analytical montage, slow motion, the details and the variation of the viewing points.
- 24) *In Nazismo esoterico*, part of the episode of March 16, 2008 of *Voyager: ai confini della conoscenza* (review by RaiDue with a wide outlook on history, broadcast from 2003) the presenter Roberto Giacobbo really travels in time and space. During the exploration of the myth of the Sacred Graal during Nazism, in a 10 minute film, the presenter goes from outside the German castle of Wewelsburg to a busy Munich square places loved by Himmler and the SS; a few instants later he is a Monseguro (in France) showing us a plaque recording the massacre of the Cathars and so explain the theory of Otto Rahn; finally Giacobbo takes the viewer inside Wewelsburg and from here, with a jump, inside the Egyptian pyramid of Cheope. The programme is an example of the “travel in time” and makes wide use of spectacular resources: counterpoint of black and white and colour, over-impression, disappearance and reappearance of objects and a wide recourse to special effects, postproduction, emotional use of music.
- 25) *La storia siamo noi* is produced under the Rai Educational label (direction and satellite production staff directed by Minoli) and has taken over the Rai schedules times previously given over to the didactic purposes of the DSE (Dipartimento Scuola Elementare)
- 26) In reality this is a repeat of the first episode of the edition of 2004 which had a great success of nearly 16% of television share. In reality, the reconstruction of the history of the Mafia stopped in the Nineties and there is no mention of the recent verdicts and their possible political repercussions.

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