

ACTA UNIVERSITATIS UPSALIENSIS

Studia Historica Upsaliensia

210

Utgivna av

Historiska institutionen vid Uppsala universitet
genom Torkel Jansson, Jan Lindegren och Maria Ågren

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The Historian-Filmmaker's Dilemma

Historical Documentaries in Sweden
in the Era of Häger and Villius



UPPSALA
UNIVERSITET

Dissertation in History for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
presented at Uppsala University in 2003

ABSTRACT

Ludvigsson, David, 2003: *The Historian-Filmmaker's Dilemma. Historical Documentaries in Sweden in the Era of Häger and Villius*. Written in English. Acta Universitatis Upsalien-sis. *Studia Historica Upsaliensia* 210. (411 pages). Uppsala 2003. ISSN 0081-6531. ISBN 91-554-5782-7.

This dissertation investigates how history is used in historical documentary films, and argues that the maker of such films constantly negotiates between cognitive, moral, and aesthetic demands. In support of this contention a number of historical documentaries by Swedish historian-filmmakers Olle Häger and Hans Villius are discussed. Other historical documentaries supply additional examples. The analyses take into account both the production process and the representations themselves. The history culture and the social field of history production together form the conceptual framework for the study, and one of the aims is to analyse the role of professional historians in public life.

The analyses show that different considerations compete and work together in the case of all documentaries, and figure at all stages of pre-production, production, and post-production. But different considerations have particular influence at different stages in the production process and thus they are more or less important depending on where in the process the producer puts his emphasis on them. In the public service television setting the tendency to make cognitive considerations is strong. For example, historical documentarists often engage historians as advisors, and work long and hard interpreting visual source materials such as photographs. The Häger and Villius case also indicates that the influence exerted on programmes by aesthetic considerations grows as the filmmaker learns about the medium.

Among general conclusions are that it is not always important that the producer be a trained historian. What is crucial is that whoever is to succeed in making fine historical programmes must learn both history and filmmaking, must learn to balance the demands of content and form. Previously, researchers have suggested that historical documentaries function as entertainment, orientation, and restoration; this study adds the functions of interpretation and legitimisation. Finally, the study submits that typically historical documentaries attempt to convey cognitive and moral insights about the past.

Keywords: historical documentary, history and film, history culture, historiography, communication of history, Olle Häger, Hans Villius, Swedish history 1968-2001.

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ISSN 0081-6531
ISBN 91-554-5782-7

Cover design: Håkan Belin. Photo of the author: Cecilia Dykert
Typesetting: Editorial Office, Uppsala University
Printed in Sweden by Elanders Gotab, Stockholm 2003
Distributor: Uppsala University Library, Box 510, SE-751 20 Uppsala
www.uu.se, Acta@ub.uu.se

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A Note on Availability of the Films and Programmes Discussed

Inquiries about hiring or buying programmes made at SVT should be made to Sveriges Television, SE-105 10 Stockholm (www.svt.se). SVT sells many of Jan Bergman's films on VHS and DVD. Ginza, Fåglum, SE-465 81 Nossebro (www.ginza.se) sells VHS and DVD copies of Herman Lindqvist's *Hermans historia*, and Olle Häger's *Hundra svenska år*. Unfortunately, none of Häger and Villius's older productions are currently available for purchase. *Tur retur helvetet* can be hired for educational use from AV-centralen (www.sli.se). For research copies of Häger and Villius's programmes, or other programmes made at SVT or TV4, contact Statens Ljud- och Bildarkiv, Box 24124, SE-104 51 Stockholm (www.ljudochbildarkivet.se).

Different companies distribute the non-Swedish historical documentaries that are mentioned in this book. Many of them, such as Ken Burns's *The Civil War*, are available from major bookshops such as Amazon.

Acknowledgements

Between my finger and my thumb the squat pen rests. It has been my working companion ever since I began investigating modern uses of the past. There were other companions along the road. I want to extend my collective thanks to all the persons who contributed to this study, through their encouragement, their pointed criticisms, or their comments suggested in passing.

The help of some people has been especially valuable. My three supervisors read the whole study in first draft, splinters and bark and all, and offered cogent criticisms and suggestions. Professor Rolf Torstendahl always kept a sharp eye on what should be in focus. This book would have been very different without his critical expertise and I thank him for everything. Docent Christer Öhman and Professor Donald Broady provided expert help on their respective fields. Many valuable suggestions have been offered at the seminars and conferences where I presented early drafts; in particular I want to thank Mikael Alm, Ragnar Björk, Rosemarie Fiebranz, Håkan Gunneriusson, Åsa Linderborg, Lars-Åke Skalin, Margareta Svennbeck, and Chris Vos. Marie Clark Nelson watched two films with me and talked with me about them. Robert Brent Toplin graciously invited me to North Carolina and gave comments on a couple of early texts. In North Carolina I also benefited from suggestions by John Kasson, Robert C. Allen, and Peter Wood. Finally, Jan Lindegren's creative reading of the manuscript caused me to make a substantial revision of the text. The following people also read the final manuscript and provided helpful suggestions: Maria Ågren, Hernán Horna, Lars Petterson, Pelle Snickars, and Cecilia Trenter. Daniel Popp, Annie Goldberg, and Bob Goldberg provided valuable help with English language matters, and their suggestions often led to clarifications of content. Esbjörn Larsson helped me construct two figures. I also wish to thank Samuel Edquist, Hanna Hodacs, Karin Jansson, Stefan Johansson, and Jonas Larsson for reading proofs.

My thanks to SVT and to Olle Häger who allowed me access to Häger's working materials, collected through decades of work on historical documentaries and a goldmine for a digging researcher. Without that mine, this study would have been a different one. Olle's friendly encouragement has also been important and much appreciated. Thanks also to Hans Villius for encourage-

ment. Further, I am grateful to those other television and film professionals who gave generously of their time in interviews and private talks. In particular, Kjell Tunegård helped me understand how documentaries are made in practice.

A number of librarians and archivists helped me track down source materials and literature. The staffs of the Carolina Rediviva Library at Uppsala University and of Wilson Library at UNC Chapel Hill provided me with excellent assistance. The staffs of The National Archive of Recorded Sound and Moving Images in Stockholm and of Uppsala Stadsbibliotek supplied me with numerous television programmes and the facilities to view them. I am especially grateful to Börje Sjöman at SR/SVT Dokumentarkivet. Thanks also to those institutions and private persons who let me reprint photographs in this book.

Professional support is vital – personal support is indispensable. I have been continuously stimulated and sustained by my friends in the Department of History at Uppsala University. Special thanks to Sofia Ling and Ola Winberg for great support during the arduous last year. Thanks also to my Lund connection and fellow *östgöte* in exile, Stefan Nordqvist. To my mother and father, my brothers and my sister, and to my old friends, I express my love and profound appreciation for their support and for reminding me that life is not just about completing a study. Finally, Magdalena Åkerlund helped provide an environment in which love and work could flourish equally. Her unwavering support came with some of the most insightful criticisms of the book: she played an invaluable role throughout the project.

Centrala studiestödsnämnden and the Faculty of Education and Sciences at Uppsala University financed the study. Support for part of the research, including the publication of the book, was provided by the Faculty of Arts, the Department of History, and the Department of Teacher Training, all at Uppsala University, Fonden för avhandlingstryck at Uppsala studentkår, Gunvor och Josef Anérs stiftelse, Helge Ax:son Johnsons stiftelse, Holger och Thyra Lauritzens stiftelse för främjande av filmhistorisk verksamhet, Ridderstads stiftelse för historisk grafisk forskning, K. G. Westmans stiftelse, and Wasenii stiftelse. I want to add that during my undergraduate years, an Erasmus grant allowed me a year at University College Cork, which was vital to my future work. I also benefited from two Nordplus grants, which allowed me study at the University of Iceland and at Oslo University.

A few technical matters: I have been sparing with the use of initials for companies and organisations. The major exceptions are SVT for Sveriges Television and SR for Sveriges Radio. Translations from Swedish into English are my own. When dates are given in notes, the appendix, and the reference list they are written year.month.day, for example 1977.12.27.

Uppsala, October 2003

David Ludvigsson

Introduction

1. A glimpse of the subject of the study

In the autumn of 1999, the Swedish television company Sveriges Television (SVT) broadcast an eight-part historical documentary called *Hundra svenska år*, “One Hundred Swedish Years.” The series, which was made by producer Olle Häger and narrated by Hans Villius, depicted the twentieth century in Sweden, and it was an immediate success with both audiences and critics. Although broadcast in the same time slot as the nine o’clock news and the popular series *Ally MacBeal*, the first instalment of *Hundra svenska år* won the race for viewers and received what for a documentary were very high ratings. The series also became a best-selling home video, a distinction rarely seen before in Sweden. Among the awards its makers received was the prestigious Ikaros award, the highest recognition a Swedish television programme can be given.

Hundra svenska år marked a highpoint in the period of history productions by Olle Häger and Hans Villius, which had begun as early as in the 1960s. Both men had academic training as historians, and SVT hired them for the specific purpose of making historical television. Thirty-five years of work together yielded a total output of more than two hundred historical programmes and made an institution of Häger and Villius in Swedish television, as well as in the Swedish history culture. Most emblematic perhaps is the characteristic narrator’s voice of Villius, recognised as Sweden’s “voice of history.” But behind the production name Häger & Villius are a number of additional people, in particular cameraman Jan-Hugo Norman, editor Kjell Tunegård and sound recordist Gunnar Nilsson. A large part of the present study deals with the film products of this veteran team.

Hundra svenska år was a great success, yet interestingly enough it also aroused controversy. A year after the series was broadcast, two prominent Liberals attacked it in a polemical pamphlet,¹ charging that the series had distorted history. In brief, they argued that the series offered a selective perspective on the twentieth century. Because its focus was on workers rather than on entrepreneurs, and its treatment of the struggle for voting rights made too much of the role of the labour movement, the critics felt that the series had

¹ Holmberg, Håkan & Anders Johnson, 2000.

purposely excluded the Liberals from twentieth-century Swedish history. Their charges left the series a topic of discussion in newspaper reviews, in a morning show on television – and probably at coffee tables everywhere around the country. How fair the charges were is a matter I return to further on, but that charges of the sort were levelled at all raises the very important question of just how history is utilised and represented by the modern media. The underlying assumption of this study is that history can be represented in different ways, which, sound so or not, is certainly not trivial. Different, and even competing, forces always influence how in given cases the past becomes represented. We both can and must study these forces, in the interest of obtaining a clearer understanding of the ways history is put to use.

2. History culture and the historians

The basic question the study presents is how is history put to use in modern society? But before taking up this question with regard to the historical documentary film, the focal point of this study, I propose a conceptual framework for understanding modern use of history. Whereas some forces that influence the production of history are medium-bound, set for example by conventions the television industry follows, other forces are determined by the total societal context, and bring into the picture the mentalities of producers and audiences. We can better understand the place and significance these mentalities have if we examine the relationships that exist between history producers and the kinds of discussions they engage in among themselves. I therefore let the history culture and the social field of history production together form the conceptual framework for study here and suggest this framework for study in the future.

History culture is our term for that which includes and represents all the various uses of history that exist in society. A history culture is a community where communication about history is based on shared codes, or differently put, where communication about history depends on and is facilitated by a shared understanding or consciousness. The history culture of a society encompasses both (a) the historical consciousness of its people, and (b) the structures that govern when history is produced and communicated. The historical consciousness of people in a society is the instrument whereby those people make meaning of the past. Involved is the process of linking the past to an understanding of the world. More specifically, it is the process of remembering the past, of understanding the present, and of creating perspectives for the future.² The sharing of codes is inevitably tied to the structures of society. Among a society's material structures are its schools, universities, publishing houses and television companies, while such things as social classes, gender and ethnic relations are some of its non-material structures. These structures form the rooms and channels of communication which carry and spread messages about

² Cf. Jensen, Eric Bernard, 1997.

the past. The history culture manifests itself in different products such as historical books and films, museum expositions, or in people's relating of stories about past times and events. It also manifests itself in the symbols, rituals, and linguistic constructions that reveal people's views of the past.

Research that focuses on the history culture is a facet that is new to the field called "history of historiography," where study was long confined to the writings and research practices of professional historians. More recently, the history of historiography was expanded as scholars from different disciplines became interested in the public use of history. Studies are now made of historical novels, collective memory, the modern heritage industry, and other aspects of the history culture.³ In all, the communication of history in society has become much in vogue as a topic of research.

History culture research investigates uses that are made of history, and to be certain, history has a range of functions and is used for a wide variety of purposes. Friedrich Nietzsche discussed this matter in a classic text, and there identified what he termed the three separate forms of use of the past, the monumental, the antiquarian, and the critical. More recently, other scholars have attempted to extend the analysis.⁴ What is important in connection with the present study, is simply that each person has a relationship with the past. Every human seeks explanations for what makes up the world, and not least, in modern secularised societies, where religious myths have been moved to the background, history has come to stand as an important component of human identity and of people's understanding of society.⁵ People learn about the past through contact with the older generation and by living in a historical milieu, as well as through the teaching of history in school and other manifestations of history in society.⁶ Theoretically, the use of history has a cognitive, a moral, and an aesthetic aspect. To historians the cognitive aspect dominates because historians' professional function is to discover and reconstruct the past. But there is also a moral aspect to the use of history, because there are always values involved. History may construct, erase, or restore memories and values. It is made a means of instigating action or of assigning identity, whether such identity be national, ethnic, religious, or sexual. History can also be made entertainment, often for commercial purposes. In practice, the cognitive and moral aspects often overlap or appear in combination, but it is important to see that history does serve different functions and can be used with different goals in mind. The use of history also has an aesthetic aspect, because questions of form are involved in all messages about history.

A theory of German historian Jörn Rüsen is that historians play a key role in

³ The concept is used by such scholars as Jörn Rüsen. Rüsen, Jörn, 1994, pp. 1–34, 209–234. Some scholars prefer the term "historical culture." Cf. Lowenthal, David, 1998. Bryld, Claus, 1991, discusses the concept of historiography.

⁴ Nietzsche, Friedrich, 1998 (1874). Karlsson, Klas-Göran, 1999, speaks of scientific, existential, moral, ideological, and non-uses of history.

⁵ Eriksen, Thomas Hylland, 1996.

⁶ Glassie, Henry, 1982; Rosenzweig, Roy and David Thelen, 1998.

the history culture, as they respond to the needs and interests of their fellow citizens and serve the general function of orientation in time. Rüsen argues that professional historical research takes its direction from the particular needs for history that a population expresses.⁷ In everyday life people feel a fundamental need for orientation in time. Ideally when such a need is expressed it has the effect of prompting activity among historians. As a part of their effort to meet the population's demands, historians in turn answer through theories, and then test or expand their theories through methodically appropriate empirical research. In other words, historians apply *cognitive* strategies when handling the *moral* needs expressed by the population. Finally, when research has provided tangible results, historians resort to poetic and rhetorical strategies of historical representation to communicate what they have found. In this way, answers provided by the historical discipline enter into everyday life, where they facilitate people's orientation and perhaps generate new questions.⁸ Rüsen's model explains and legitimates the role historians play in society by assigning them the function of professional servants who help the population relate to its past and thereby find the present more fully understandable. Arguably, historians are better suited to the task than most others who figure in the history culture, because historians adhere to theoretical guidelines and ideally maintain a critical attitude towards the ideologically tainted knowledge that circulates in everyday life.

Others unlike Rüsen are of the opinion that the work of historians is less worthy. Nietzsche criticised the historians of his time for being myth-destroyers and considered their histories unfit for popular use. One of Nietzsche's followers, Hayden White, similarly disagreed with historians' claims that their histories, based as they were on the professional practice of history, were more useful and trustworthy than were other stories.⁹ These critics held that many questions that arise in everyday life are answered by others than historians. And indeed it is often people outside the discipline who produce knowledge and add to our reflection about the past, and in that capacity are linked to the cognitive form. I propose we call these people *acting historians*, as opposed to *professional historians*, those with academic training as historians and whose regular work is to perform historians' tasks, either via formal connection with academia, as freelancers, or else in another comparable capacity.¹⁰

While I agree with Rüsen that professional historians play an important role

⁷ The validity of this claim is limited and general. Much advanced professional historical research is of course the result of interest that develop inside the profession.

⁸ Rüsen has written extensively on this. See for example Rüsen, Jörn, 1997. Rüsen, Jörn, 1993, is a selection of writings in English. Cf. Megill, Allan, 1994. For further discussion of historians and social responsibilities, see Leerssen, Joep, and Ann Rigney, eds., 2000.

⁹ Nietzsche, Friedrich, 1998 (1874); White, Hayden, 1973.

¹⁰ Torstendahl, Rolf, 2001, makes a distinction between (a) historians who make history their trade and (b) historians who are recognised (by fellows in academia) as competent to practice the trade. My distinction resembles Torstendahl's, although my functional definition of the "acting historian" does not require that history be a full-time occupation. The expression "acting historian" has been used elsewhere, e.g. Toplin, Robert Brent, 1998, p. 6. However, I propose to give the expression a meaning more in principle.

in the history culture, I want to emphasise that anyone who produces knowledge about the past fits into the cognitive aspect of the history culture. Such a producer need not be a researcher, someone who uncovers new facts, but can be any one of many who operate in the communicative process as senders of messages about the past. The person might be the storyteller in the family, or a schoolteacher, or a writer of historical fiction. He or she might be a journalist, a politician, a television producer, a museum curator, or a person who does historical re-enactment at a festival or historical theme park. Many people fall into the category of producers of history in society. Some function only temporarily, and no one would think of them as historians. Others, such as history schoolteachers, function as historians at school, and perhaps also in their local setting. Certain television producers function continuously and indefinitely as historians, in effect make a trade of producing history, and as a consequence the public at large might think of them as historians.¹¹ Often those in the official role of historian have studied history formally. Their type of training and work varies greatly, and thus the line between professional historian and acting historian can be difficult to draw.

Professional historians and those publicly identified as acting historians function in the same social space. Or, to borrow the terminology of the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, professional historians and acting historians are engaged in a struggle within the same *field of history production*. A field of production, in Bourdieu's sense, is a system of relationships between positions held by individuals, groups, and institutions that meet in competition. The field that is sufficiently autonomous is marked by a specific type of *symbolic capital*, which is what the social group recognises as of worth, or the winner's stakes. Within the field of history production, capital might accumulate for example in the form of a university degree in history, or as a regular production of distinguished books and articles that follow what the discipline's methodology sets up as its rules. Those who win recognition for their work as historians acquire high positions in (the most autonomous area of) the field. The sharpest or most productive of these, usually esteemed university historians, obtain consecrating power, or legitimate power to judge what is good history and what is poor history. In concrete terms, a professor might review work by a younger colleague, report that it is good, and thereby transfer symbolic capital to the younger colleague. Thus, a person might acquire a better position in the field by following rules and earning the acceptance of the dominating historians. By another strategy for obtaining position is to challenge prevailing views and

¹¹ In a television interview (SVT 2003) prior to the broadcast of her documentary on the fourteenth-century saint Birgitta, on-screen graphics presented the producer (and acting historian) Maja Hagerman as a "historian." Hagerman had studied history, written a book on the Middle Ages, and made television programmes about the past. Shortly afterwards, in *Godmorgon världen* (SR P1 2003.05.25), acting historian Herman Lindqvist likewise was called "historian." Lindqvist had not studied the subject at a university but had written books and made television programmes about the past. Although neither Hagerman nor Lindqvist held an advanced degree in history, it is reasonable that the public would recognise them as historians.

those who hold them and perhaps succeed in altering the rules. The field is subject to constant change. Those who play for the stakes win and loose capital and switch positions. At any given time however it would be possible to map the distribution of the different kinds of capital involved and the positions the various players hold.¹²

Part of the logic of the theory is that while those who are part of a given field compete for the same stakes, the autonomy of the field comes under threat when persons in its influential positions come under pressure from forces outside the field and respond by allowing a corruption of field rules. The field consequently has a second dimension, namely, the dimension where *autonomy* and *heteronomy* form the poles.¹³ Professional historians are closest to the autonomous pole in the field of history production, but in practice few of them work fully autonomously. For example, many professional historians in academic institutions are under political pressure to overstep institutional boundaries and communicate to the public concerning activities and results.

Some who work in the field of history production even have primary loyalty in other fields, which means they are closer to the heteronomous pole. Journalists make up one such group, as journalists are often successful mediators of historical knowledge and thus win public recognition as acting historians, even though they think of themselves as journalists and continue to follow the rules of the field of journalism production. In contrast to persons who do academic research in history, journalists tend to work with constraints involving time and space, that is, face deadlines and strict temporal or spatial limitations. The fields of history production and journalism production employ separate formats with regard to the scope they give to their texts (and also with regard to rules they follow).¹⁴ When historians communicate in and through mass media, or when journalists write history, it is as when players from different fields meet in one and the same arena. A problem here is that autonomy in the field of journalism is threatened by factors conditioned by the field's greater orientation towards the market. When sales figures affect rules set for journalistic practices, historians who become involved in journalism may be aggravated by what is to them a corruptive spill-over, or "the intrusion of journalistic criteria and values" into the field of history production.¹⁵ In sociological terms, a professional historian who gives in to influences from the marketing world or the political arena will slip away from the autonomous pole towards the heteronomous pole of the field, while an acting historian (journalist or not) who sacrifices popular demands for historical demands will move in the opposite direction. The field of history production is relatively autonomous, but field autonomy is constantly threatened by pressure from outside forces.

¹² Bourdieu's most comprehensive analysis of academic production fields is Bourdieu, Pierre, 1988 (1984).

¹³ Bourdieu, Pierre, 1988 (1984).

¹⁴ Gripsrud, Jostein, 1999a, p. 39.

¹⁵ Cf. Bourdieu, Pierre, 1988 (1984), p. 112.

In the context of this study, the interesting conflict is that between historians who claim autonomy for the field, and acting historians who popularise history for broad segments of the public. I emphasise one particular aspect of this complex heteronomous pole and call it the *popular pole*.

Of chief concern in this study is the communication of history, a question of first importance being how do historians view the activity of communicating history? In the next chapter I discuss indications that in recent decades the history discipline has gradually come to close up its boundaries against everyday life. A sociological perspective on the problem would place special stress on the fact that the most important goal for a professional historian is to gain recognition in the field of history production. In terms of symbolic capital, recognition by the public carries no guarantee for a scholar of recognition within academia.¹⁶ Rather, historians who frequently appear on television or in press interviews risk being faulted by their peers.¹⁷ Jealousy may be behind this, or total distrust of the idea that mere connection to academia legitimates anything academia presents. A certain amount of media coverage may be helpful to the historian in the obtaining financing, just as it may boost the sales of a published book, but public appearances such as on television are not problem free. There is the attendant risk of becoming used for the purposes of someone else, and always the risk of being unable to influence the conditions and context of an appearance. On the other hand there is a legitimate democratic argument for working with the media, namely, that communication of knowledge helps citizens to be better informed.¹⁸ Not least, public-broadcasting monopolies such as SR/SVT in Sweden were legitimated by a vision born of the Enlightenment to spread knowledge.

The theoretical framework I offer for the public use of history is thus, in brief, people use history in a variety of ways. In the field of history production, professional historians are the most powerful of those who move towards or from the pole of autonomy, but acting historians may have more influence near to the popular pole, and in any event belong to the history culture as a whole. Tension arises in the field of history production when particular persons in the field champion other norms than those held by persons in leading positions.

3. The aim of the study

The fundamental question here – how is history put to use in modern society? – has been asked many times before, but the present investigation offers a new approach when it asks, specifically, *how is history used in historical documentary films?* I submit that the maker of historical documentary films constantly nego-

¹⁶ Heteronomous recognition, as opposed to autonomous recognition, is more important in journalism than in academia.

¹⁷ Gripsrud, Jostein, 1999a, p. 42.

¹⁸ Dahlgren, Peter, 1995.

tiates between competing cognitive, moral, and aesthetic demands. In support of my contention I discuss a number of historical documentaries by historian-filmmakers Olle Häger and Hans Villius. I enumerate both the merits and the limitations of the films, analyse the processes involved during filmmaking, and then critically examine the finished products when placed in the three separate contexts – social, political, and cultural – in which documentaries can be thought of as made, seen, and reviewed. Häger and Villius are not just any filmmakers. They were first professional historians who became historical documentarists, who however continue to call themselves historians; they were *historian-filmmakers*.¹⁹ Their case shows very clearly that there do exist limits to cognitive considerations in the making of historical documentaries, but that also, cognitive considerations can have a great influence on the making of such films. The study seeks to provide important new insights into how history is used in historical documentary films, as well as a better general understanding of the role historians play in the history culture. To be sure, the first aim of the study is to help clarify the phenomenon of historical documentary, rather than to investigate a single case. The work of Häger and Villius gives the primary examples, but additional examples are supplied from other parts of the Swedish filmmaking world and from the international film field at large.

The historical documentary is an important topic for research first of all because of its great popularity as a form for mass communication of history. Study of the historical documentary film can give insight into how history is put to use in popular culture. Robert Rosenstone suggests that “the visual media have become arguably the chief carrier of historical messages in our culture,”²⁰ and Gary Edgerton claims similarly that “television is the principal means by which most people learn about history today.”²¹ Indeed, television thoroughly permeates everyday life. The fact that many people are simultaneously tuned to one and the same television programme, means televised historical documentaries easily become a topic of discussion on a very broad basis, and successful films might even become significant events in the history culture. Even so, claims that people learn from watching historical documentaries on television or in the cinema are to be taken with a grain of salt. As media, both film and television allow an audience to remain more passive than active.²² Furthermore, an extensive American survey based on interviews has

¹⁹ The concept historian-filmmaker has been used infrequently in the literature; cf. Walkowitz, Daniel, 1985. See also Chapter 3 below.

²⁰ Rosenstone, Robert A., 1995, p. 3. Cf. Rosenstone, Robert A., 1995a, p. 22.

²¹ Edgerton, Gary R., 2001a, p. 1. Cf. Edgerton, Gary, 2001, pp. 149, 218; O'Connor, John E., 1988, p. 1201, suggests that “even well-educated Americans” learn most of their history from film or television; Rapaport, Lynn, 2002, p. 64, cites a 1994 survey in which 58 percent of Americans reported they learned about the Holocaust through television; 42.7 percent indicated books as the source of their knowledge of the Holocaust, and 33.1 percent said movies were that source.

²² There can be audience activity (thinking and talking) before, during, and after broadcast of a programme, but in comparison with more interactive media the film or television reader/spectator is passive. Cf. Sjöberg, Ulrika, 2002, pp. 163 ff. Of course, as is evident from research in the Cultural Studies tradition, spectators do react to what they see.

shown that although most people watch films and television about the past, these programmes do not result in their feeling they are especially close to the past. And certainly, people do not put much trust in television histories.²³ Dutch historian Chris Vos interprets the importance of television in a pragmatic way. He is hesitant to attribute to television too prominent a role in “changing historical awareness,” but he is willing to admit that television strengthens existing tendencies and shapes our imagination about the past.²⁴ I agree with Vos’s standpoint.

Our understanding of the past is linked to images, and because audio-visual representations of the past play on and influence images we already have, historical documentaries will always be important. But we must keep in mind that society changes rapidly. New digital media blur media specificity,²⁵ and in only a few years we will likely look back on the historical documentary as a form confined to the era of film and television. I stress this, because while I believe historical documentaries play an important role in the history culture today, this role is subject to change. I do not believe they will disappear in the near future, but we can already see added complexity in the interplay between television programmes and digital media. One change that will affect historical documentary is that new developments in technology may make it possible for audience involvement to become deeper than it has been.²⁶

An indication that audio-visual representations of the past are an important phenomenon in today’s world is that in October 2001, a first world-wide congress was held for producers of historical programming.²⁷ In the spring of 2002, the division of SVT responsible for documentaries held a similar three-day conference on how the past can be represented.²⁸ If even producers and their companies treat history as central in their programming, it is only to be expected that filmmakers around the world will continue to produce history. Audio-visual media have plainly permeated all Western societies, and while the extent to which these media influence people is yet unknown, we can be certain that the media do exert influence on individuals and within societies. Consequently, attention to matters of media influence and knowledge is a crucial component of the present study.

What influence the media actually exert is a much-debated issue. Decades ago scholars of the Frankfurt School argued that if products from the culture industry appear in standardised forms, the audience will start thinking in a standardised way.²⁹ Later critics have suggested that the media, not the least,

²³ Rosenzweig, Roy & David Thelen, 1998, pp. 19 ff., 26, 31, 91, 97 ff.

²⁴ Vos, Chris, 2001, p. 140.

²⁵ The point is made by Stam, Robert, 2000, p. 319. Cf. Jansson, Bo G., 2002.

²⁶ Cf. Walldius, Åke, 2001; Sjöberg, Ulrika, 2002.

²⁷ URL <http://www.history2001.com/> (2002-04-15). The first conference was held in Boston and the second (2002) in Berlin.

²⁸ The conference “Att gestalta det förflutna”, 4–6 April 2002, was a co-operative arrangement by SVT and the Dramatic Institute in Stockholm. The Dramatic Institute arranged a follow-up seminar on 15 October 2002.

²⁹ Horkheimer, Max and Theodor W. Adorno, 1996 (1944), pp. 137–185.

television, tend to uphold the dominant ideology. However, researchers have also found there are different ways of reading the messages the media convey.³⁰ We no longer believe an audience will accept as legitimate every opinion it is served up. But without a doubt the media do contribute to the reproduction of societal forms and do affect ways of thinking. If media producers cannot precisely determine how an audience will react, they can at least determine the subject matter it must react to.

A second good reason why historical documentary is and will remain an important topic for research is that, in contrast to the equally popular historical fiction film, the documentary film is a factual form. Study of the historical documentary will consequently shed light on the limits and possibilities for the communication of historical facts and interpretations. It is for this reason that I chose for study in this instance historical documentarists who have a background as professional historians. Other television genres such as historical fiction fulfil corresponding knowledge functions, but in the case of documentaries factual communication is a very central function. The limits and possibilities of such communication are matters of both theoretical and practical interest.

Under influence of postmodernist thinking, many scholars in the field of philosophy of history have in recent years directed attention to the question of form. It is argued that the boundary between fact and fiction has become dangerously blurred. Hayden White and other theorists insist that language is not just a vehicle for content, but that rather there is a content of the form itself.³¹ Historiography indeed has the capacity to claim attention for itself as a text, and certainly a text has a form, and that form will influence the way we apprehend the content. But the eagerness of many critics to use the term *fiction* obscures the fact that they themselves use the term with a high degree of variation.³² While any text is necessarily a construction, it is important that not every text be given the epithet of fiction. Fiction is that which is *invented* rather than real, and in principle fiction is also announced as such to the reader through textual and contextual indicators.³³ In normal historiographical practice the historian is forced to construct a text, and the text is therefore made rather than found, but the crucial difference is that the historian lacks the freedom to invent. To be precise, a historian often suggests generalisations and makes analytical comparisons that have no equivalents in external reality. Nevertheless, the watchful eyes of critical colleagues impose limits on the historian's freedom to invent. If non-factual elements appear in historical texts, and of

³⁰ Cheveigné, Suzanne de, 1999, suggests four principal styles of reading; (1) the intellectual reading, (2) the beneficiary reading, (3) the intimistic reading and (4) the excluded position.

³¹ There is a flood of literature on the subject. See White, Hayden, 1987.

³² Rigney, Ann, 2001, pp. 5 f.; Rigney, Ann, 1996, argues that fiction can be four different things. Cf. Partner, Nancy, 1995, pp. 24, 33, who distinguishes between the primary and secondary meanings of fiction.

³³ Some say it is a question chiefly of what the reader perceives; I deal with this in Chapter 3.

course they do, the presence of such elements does not immediately qualify the texts as fiction. Where the boundary between fact and fiction lies is a question that empirical research can and must clarify.

In the present study these very questions, of content and form, narrative and interpretation – in short, of *how* history is communicated – are raised in connection with the historical documentary film. However, because the historiography studied here consists of filmic representations rather than regular verbal texts, it seemed important also to take into proper account the images of history. The study fits as part of the emerging area of concern called the pictorial turn. One important insight it has already given us is that images are fraught with textuality and discourse. Like words, images are complex entities that may be subject to various forms of reading.³⁴ A full-scale theoretical investigation of these matters forms no part of this study, though to be sure the recent theoretical currents mentioned above to an extent inform the study.

A practical matter of concern to the study is that better understanding of how history is communicated through the audio-visual media may lead first to an improvement of our skills of communication, and second to a sharpened critical awareness on our part of how others communicate history. A first benefit would be a more fruitful dialogue between filmmakers and historians. If such materialises, one of the foremost aims of this study will be fulfilled. As filmmakers and historians discover more about one another, obstacles to more efficient co-operation will be overcome and ultimately more interesting historical documentaries will be fashioned. A second possible benefit, heightened critical awareness, would serve at the very least the many teachers who use historical documentaries in the classroom. Audio-visual media of all types are used in history education, in Sweden and in other countries. Hopefully the present study will contribute to a fuller understanding of what these historical representations are.

4. Research on the historical documentary and on the filmmaker's considerations

To date few studies have been made of historical documentaries. A constant problem with the literature that is available is its regular omission of cross-references to other research literature on historical documentaries. An example can be made of three separate American collections of articles that have appeared, and discuss, respectively, the three documentary series *Vietnam: A Television History* (1983), *The Civil War* (1990), and *Cold War* (1998).³⁵ All

³⁴ Cf. Mitchell, W. J. T., 1994.

³⁵ Banerian, James, 1985; Toplin, Robert Brent, 1996a; Beichman, Arnold, 2000.

lack cross-references. A Canadian collection of articles dealing with *The Valour and the Horror* (1992) likewise shares the fault.³⁶ The article-length studies in these books furnish insights on relevant events of the past, or specify inaccuracies in the programmes produced and broadcast, or discuss moral interpretations which the films make. Yet very few of the studies take up specifically the complex issue of how events of the past are represented in documentary films. Matters of representation are treated interestingly in the body of now existing studies of audio-visual portrayals of the Holocaust. However, Holocaust scholars are apt to deal with the Holocaust as a historical event in its own right, and they rarely make comments concerning the representation of events in principle.³⁷ This characteristically scant cross-referencing to existing research is due partly to the fact that the scholars involved come from a variety of disciplines. They are historians, film scholars, sociologists, or literary scholars, and in their work most maintain views consistent with problems and contexts familiar to them from their own fields.

I have searched for literature in languages other than English and Swedish, but have not had great success. References to works in other languages are lacking in many lists of research literature, and as a consequence it is difficult to obtain anything close to a complete picture of extant research literature. As my command of German is not good, I make minimal reference to literature in German. However, I have made a serious effort to assemble references to literature on historical documentaries, and it is my hope that my list at the end of this book will provide a useful starting point for others working on the topic. The list is moreover meant to help establish historical documentaries as a proper research topic in history.

A few scholars have completed studies that are of particular interest. Historian Chris Vos has worked on Dutch documentaries about World War II, and stresses how early films were subject to both moral restrictions and technical limitations. He comes to the conclusion that historical documentaries tend to be late in conveying new perspectives, the delay due not just to professional historians and historical documentarists standing at rather some distance from one another, but also to a gap that occurs between societal debate and television documentaries.³⁸ Isabelle Veyrat-Masson has made a comprehensive study of historical programming on French television in which she discussed issues from a sociological perspective.³⁹ Among more interesting article-length studies is one by Michael Frisch, urging us to investigate how individual interviews function in historical documentaries. Frisch's own view is that what gets conveyed of things an interviewed person say typically depends on what position the person has in society. Jeannette Sloniowski argues in a study that we must investigate historical documentary in the context of popular television conven-

³⁶ Bercuson, David J. & S. F. Wise, 1994.

³⁷ Cf. articles in *Film and History*, 2002, no. 1.

³⁸ Vos, Chris, 1995; cf. Vos, Chris, 2001.

³⁹ Veyrat-Masson, Isabelle, 2000.

tions.⁴⁰ Certain individuals with experience in the production of historical documentaries have commented on their work, and what they say provides many useful insights.⁴¹ Useful comments also appear in two recent article collections on the topic history and television; not the least the introduction by Gary Edgerton in one gives helpful insights on historical documentary in general. Edgerton's book-length treatment of the American historical documentarist Ken Burns stands as one of the major works on historical documentaries to date.⁴² Ken Burns's series *The Civil War* (1990) has attracted much scholarly attention, including one finished dissertation on its rhetoric, and another on its reception (the latter dissertation analyses the reception of two other historical documentaries as well).⁴³ It is well to note that few of the scholars mentioned are historians, most instead having their background in another discipline. In recent years a number of film scholars have become interested in documentary film, and of these especially Bill Nichols and Carl Plantinga have contributed theoretical writings that have been of help to this study.⁴⁴

Works which have appeared in recent years on historical dramatic films are another source of ideas, especially those on films made in Hollywood.⁴⁵ Several critics suggest that historical film has evolved into a genre of its own, with separate codes and conventions. A few years ago historians as a whole were still negative in their attitude toward dramatic historical films, many arguing that respect for correct information was, as one of them declared, "routinely subordinated to the need for dramatic effect."⁴⁶ More recently it has become common to assess historical films for what they do that, as well as bad, is also good. Robert Brent Toplin argues for example that historical dramas can be effective in prompting the public to ponder "significant questions" about the past. A filmmaker who works towards that goal must be free to exercise artistic license, he says, but at the same time filmmakers must treat the historical record responsibly.⁴⁷ Leger Grindon suggests that filmmakers face the basic option of choosing between romance, on the one hand, where personal experience is emphasised, and on the other hand spectacle, where public life is emphasised. He finds that especially when the latter is chosen, films can help us towards a social understanding of historical events.⁴⁸

⁴⁰ Frisch, Michael, 1990; Sloniowski, Jeannette, 2002.

⁴¹ Downing, Taylor, 1998; Wood, Adrian, 2001; Walkowitz, Daniel, 1985; Griffin, Patrick, 1972.

⁴² Robert, Graham and Philip M. Taylor, eds., 2001; Edgerton, Gary, 2001; Edgerton, Gary, 2001a. Three older collections that include useful articles are O'Connor, John E., 1990; Smith, Paul, 1976a; and O'Connor, John E., 1983.

⁴³ Lancioni, Judith Ann, 1994; Eitzen, Dirk, 1995.

⁴⁴ Nichols, Bill, 1991; Nichols, Bill, 2001; Plantinga, Carl, 1997.

⁴⁵ Though historical documentary and historical fiction film present certain specific research problems in common, this study does not include treatment of the latter form. Historical Hollywood films are the subject of one Swedish study: cf. Jönsson, Mats, forthcoming. A Danish study is Nielsen, Carsten Tage, 1998.

⁴⁶ Leab, Daniel, 1980, p. 83.

⁴⁷ Toplin, Robert Brent, 1996; Toplin, Robert Brent, 2002.

⁴⁸ Grindon, Leger, 1994.

Robert A. Rosenstone is very positive in assessing the potential that film has for representing history in innovative ways, and he feels good films may indeed alter our sense of the past. He advocates a tolerant attitude towards errors, and suggests that important things to consider are the broader meanings and truths that films construct and transmit. Invented images are as good as true because they “symbolize, condense, or summarize larger amounts of data; true in that they carry out the overall meaning of the past that can be verified, documented, or reasonably argued.”⁴⁹ Rosenstone’s position has to be regarded with some scepticism, as it is wholly unreasonable to suppose, as his view implies is so, that virtually anything will go. Nevertheless, I agree that we must not let ourselves get lost in the truth of details, but must maintain a view of historical documentaries as works with synthesising ambitions. Proceeding from this principle, in my own study I assess what historical documentaries do and can do, rather than indicate in detail what unfortunate kinds of errors they might commit.

As indicated was an aim of the present study, I hope to provide some general insights into historical documentary. Rosenstone has proposed six general characteristics for the historical film, and in this broader category he explicitly includes historical documentary. His six characteristics are: (1) historical film tells a story that reflects the idea that history is progress; (2) it insists that history be the story of individuals; (3) it tells a story that is closed and excludes alternative possibilities; (4) it dramatises and emotionalises history; (5) it offers a period look of the past; and (6) it shows history as an integrated process.⁵⁰ All six characteristics seem at first reasonable; however in my concluding chapter I return to Rosenstone’s list of characteristics and, backed by findings from this study, point out places in it where, at least for historical film of the documentary type, there are serious reservations to be made.

John E. O’Connor, one of the pioneers of research on film and history, has pointed out that to obtain a full understanding of historical documentaries one must study each of the three aspects, production, representation, and reception.⁵¹ I take up each of the three for treatment in my study. In particular I give the matter of production close attention. It is no longer disputed that films about the past are to a degree also films about the present.⁵² Nevertheless, the production phase remains in important respects unknown, which makes of production a matter of crucial importance, inasmuch as film has to be seen as the product of an organised culture of production. Choices that are made in the production phase can determine how a film is received by the audience. Some scholars argue that the way a film is interpreted is a matter for viewers to

⁴⁹ Rosenstone, Robert A., 1995a, pp. 32, 128. Cf. Daniel Walkowitz, quoted in Abrash, Barbara and Janet Sternburg, 1983, p. 13, “I am less concerned with the authenticity of the details in a scene [...] than with the pattern of a set of social relationships that exists in a period of time.”

⁵⁰ Rosenstone, Robert A., 1995a, pp. 55–61.

⁵¹ O’Connor, John E., 1990, pp. 10–26.

⁵² Sorlin, Pierre, 1980; Ferro, Marc, 1988 (1977).

decide, but holding tenaciously to this view can lead one to overlook important aspects of the production phase. Production must be analysed with great care.

My fundamental argument is that different competing forces influence the process of making historical documentary films. A number of historians and filmmakers have testified that such is the case. Historian Lynn Goldfarb, coproducer of the documentary *With Babies and Banners* (1978), remarked that “[t]here was always a tension between what was historically accurate and what was visually best.”⁵³ Her remark indicates a type of negotiation is part of the process. However, the quote does not tell what for Goldfarb made certain images visually better or best, whether it was a question of aesthetics, a matter of their capacity to engage viewers morally, or had to do with how well they supported particular cognitive points that filmmakers wished to stress. Historian James Green was speaking from experience he had making *The Great Depression* (1993) when he stated that “[t]ime limits [...] worked against the producers’ opportunity to find unconventional visuals and unusual story treatments.”⁵⁴ Like Goldfarb, he in effect acknowledges the presence of competing forces and that the filmmaker must decide how to resolve conflicts among them. Cognitive considerations pit themselves against aesthetic or moral considerations.

After grouping the factors that influence the filmmaker into three categories, according to the kinds of considerations they involve, cognitive, moral, or aesthetic, I treat each category in some detail in the empirical chapters of the study. The essential question is of course what any given filmmaker makes his or her guiding principle. The choice can be more or less conscious, but it will always be conditioned by habits and training. In the case of *cognitive considerations* knowledge imparted is of primary importance, the matter of conveying to the audience *that* something happened. The study of cognitive considerations consists of following the filmmaker’s quest for and discovery of specific knowledge, and then his or her subsequent effort to communicate that knowledge.⁵⁵ *Moral considerations* make “external” values the matter of primary importance – such values as tell *why* a matter or event is important. In studying this category of considerations we note how the filmmaker chooses and interprets a subject, and either registers a clear moral judgement or sets conditions for an open inquiry. *Aesthetic considerations* give priority to notions of *how and how well* particular subjects can be represented on film, or simply, what “works” on film. Such considerations are partly medium-bound, but take also into account certain more general ideas and theories concerning how the past can be represented. Some scholars work with yet other groups of factors,⁵⁶ though to my

⁵³ Goldfarb quoted in Reverby, Susan, 1979, p. 66.

⁵⁴ Green, James, 1994, p. 6.

⁵⁵ Note there is a “cognitive” film theory, which is not the same as my category of cognitive considerations.

⁵⁶ O’Connor, John E., 1998, in a study of Hollywood films posits three categories of considerations, namely, commercial, dramatic, and political. Rösen, Jörn, 1997, suggests political, cognitive, and aesthetic strategies or dimensions, which are identical with my categories although I speak of moral rather than political considerations.

view the three-way division I describe is the most logical and the most relevant. It is possible even to form sub-categories within the three principal categories. Such a sub-category of moral considerations could be the commercial matter of cost effectiveness; if market conditions are of utmost importance, money will often determine what is going to happen. However, in my study I work only with the three basic categories. It is relatively unimportant if some elements of filmmaking seem to fit well into one of the categories, while others seem to fit into several categories. What is important is that the grouping of production factors itself lends strength to my basic argument: that different kinds of factors influence the documentary filmmaking process.

Negotiating between the mentioned factors of production is from the start a part of the creative process in all imaginable cases involving historical productions, though what the crucial factors will be in a given case is determined by what particular genre or type of production is involved – and according to who the individual in charge is. Let us suppose that a historian writing an article for the scholarly community constantly exercises great care in using factual matter and discusses uncertainties regarding interpretation with peers and fellow workers. The case would be one where considerations of the cognitive type are uppermost. But the same historian will consciously or not also make moral and aesthetic considerations. Or let us suppose, in the case of a Hollywood studio making a historical adventure movie, that what counts most is not whether a love story actually played out during the course of certain events, but rather whether the story will win hearts in the audience. This would be an example of where both commercial and aesthetic considerations figure in. But the studio cannot risk heavy criticism for picturing inauthentic details or context. Cognitive considerations will not then be absent altogether.⁵⁷ Production in these examples, as in many imaginable others, will be a matter of negotiating and maintaining a balance between different types of considerations.

5. Methodology and techniques

I approach the question how history is put to use in historical documentaries by selecting for study a group of documentary films produced by SVT, Sweden's public television service. SVT is one of several European public television companies designed on the model of BBC, the British Broadcasting Corporation. Although strictly speaking the findings of this study apply only to television service in Sweden, they nonetheless indicate in part the state of affairs of public television companies elsewhere. Certainly what holds for SVT sheds light on phenomena that are characteristic for more than just that company. Fortunately enough there is a recently completed research project that adds

⁵⁷ Custen, George F., 1992, pp. 111–118, alleges Hollywood studios in the 1930s and 40s had their own research departments that worked to render everything in correct form.

significantly to what is known of the workings of SVT.⁵⁸ Certain of the insights that come from that project have been of use here.

In deciding what time limits to set for the study I considered both the structural environment of public television in Sweden and the plan I had to focus on a particular producer team. Television broadcasting began in Sweden in 1956 and the first historical documentaries made for television came late in the 50s. The broader time frame for the study is then the period spanning just over forty years during which historical documentaries have been made for Swedish television. However, the time frame ended up to be somewhat narrower. In the mid-1960s SVT hired Hans Villius and Olle Häger to oversee production of historical programmes and in 1968 the two formed the section for historical documentaries. SVT has since undergone reorganisation, the section for historical documentaries becoming merged with other units, but production co-operation between Häger and Villius continued up to 2001. Since I make of their teamwork the primary empirical example of the study, the time limits for the study actually become 1968–2001. In addition I look at traditions from before the time of Häger and Villius and also at certain of their contemporaries both in Sweden and abroad.

My choice of the producer-team Olle Häger and Hans Villius for focus came at a quite early point and was quite easily made. Though the two were not sole producers of historical programmes at SVT in the years 1968–2001, they played the most central role in the company's historical programming. The choice was obvious first in consideration that both had the training and background of the historian. Their case is one would permit close study of how cognitive considerations figure in production work, and make it relatively easy to observe role interplay between historian and documentary filmmaker. A second good reason for choosing the team Häger and Villius is the very large number of historical programmes the team has produced. Häger and Villius have the status of specialists, not that of just occasional historical filmmakers. A third consideration making them a good choice is that in their work historical representation takes many different forms. The value here is of course that many aspects of historical representation obtain clarification at one time. Fourthly, at SVT is a full archive of production materials that pertain to their work and form a splendid support for study. And finally, their producer-lives occupy a good number of years during which important changes took place both in production conditions in public television and in attitudes characteristic for the Swedish history culture. I have found few scholarly articles that deal with Häger and Villius. This study of their work is the first of book length.⁵⁹

The research done on historical documentaries for this study was carried out

⁵⁸ Books from the project are published by Stiftelsen Etermedierna i Sverige.

⁵⁹ Earlier studies of the work of Häger and Villius are Fledelius, Karsten, 1974, and Nielsen, Carsten Tage, 1993, plus two student essays: Lundgren, Nils et al, 1987; Svensson, Gary, 1992a. In addition to these minor studies, there are a large number of newspaper articles about Häger and Villius and their programmes.

in three separate ways, namely, by viewing documentary programmes, by examining archival material, and by interviewing persons. Maintained throughout was the notion that in the study of production factors there are the three types of considerations to take into account, namely, the cognitive, the moral, and the aesthetic.

I viewed a large number of historical documentaries. For the selection I made extensive use of the database of the National Archive of Recorded Sound and Moving Images and the database at SVT that comprises its programme catalogue. I was helped by these, and by published literature,⁶⁰ when I sought to identify the main producers of historical documentaries. The same sources enabled me to discover what historical subjects have been treated, and obtain information about different forms that have been used for historical representation. I selected programmes that appeared to me typical for the respective documentarists, and to these added a few well-known programmes mentioned in the literature, plus a few programmes the producers themselves mentioned. Included is the major share of Häger and Villius's programmes, but only around half of the five-minute programmes of their *Svart på vitt* series, with its over one hundred episodes. Archival copies exist for all programmes broadcast in Sweden since 1978, and for many programmes broadcast before that year.⁶¹ The archive made it possible for me to view copies of the selected programmes. On hand during viewing I had a set of questions based on notions of the type of considerations the filmmaker faces.

In the actual study I undertook a qualitative analysis of the programmes, mapping first the content elements of facts, stories, and analyses, and then the devices used to articulate the content. Several texts or tracks run simultaneously in a typical television programme, the main ones of which are soundtracks and the image-track, and these tracks work with one another in various ways. Film scholars have developed an extensive terminology for describing film phenomena, and a few of their key terms appear in my analysis in chapters that follow. In describing the structure of a programme I utilise the terms *shot*, *sequence*, and *segment*. A single piece of film exposed continuously without cut is a *shot*. A group of shots that form a natural unit, unified for example by action or by sharing a common motif, constitutes a *sequence*. A typical one-hour documentary might consist of as many as forty or fifty sequences, and in speaking of some portion of a programme it is convenient to think of it as a group of sequences, or as what is called a *segment*.⁶² Sometimes there is need to describe the individual camera movement(s) of a shot. The most common movements are *zoom in* and *zoom out*, where the camera creeps in on or moves out away

⁶⁰ In particular Furhammar, Leif, 1995.

⁶¹ The National Archive for Recorded Sound and Moving Images holds research copies of the programmes broadcast in 1978 or after. SVT and other Swedish broadcasters may or may not preserve broadcasting copies, that is copies that hold such good quality that the programme may be broadcast again.

⁶² The division into sequences and segments is normal practice in film studies. See Bordwell, David and Kristin Thompson, 2004 (1979).

from the subject; to *pan* is to move the camera horizontally across an image; and to *tilt* is to move the camera vertically up or down over the image. There are a number of specialised terms to characterise individual shots, but basic are to zoom, pan, or tilt. Sometimes a graphics track is placed over a piece of film footage to convey information such as the time and place of a shot or the name of an interviewee. Finally, regarding accompanying soundtracks, they can be – any or all – (1) *synchronised* with the imagery, (2) *voice sounds* such as narration that work parallel with the image, (3) carriers of other added sound effects, or (4) ordinary music. All the soundtracks together form the *soundscape*. Synchronised sound is also called *diegetic* sound, the term indicating that sound emanates from within the pictured scene or diegesis itself; other sounds are *non-diegetic* sounds.

After or parallel with viewing I performed archival studies, which amounted mainly to examining in certain individual cases programme production (and reception). Production materials are assembled in the archives at SR/SVT in Stockholm, but because archive-technical routines have not always been just as they should be, the archives lack materials on many producers. A major exception, happily enough, is that there are a lot of materials that pertain to the work of Häger and Villius, and I could make full investigations of these. From an initial inventory I made, I chose for study materials relating to documentaries that represent different types and which I think illustrate especially well how relevant and appropriate it is, as a matter of principle, to work with the division of considerations into cognitive, moral, and aesthetic considerations. I kept this division in mind when reconstructing and analysing the production processes.

I went on to interview a number of producers who have made historical programmes for SVT. All of those I spoke with have made more than a handful of historical programmes.⁶³ I conducted interviews in a uniform and distinct fashion.⁶⁴ Certain central questions I gave to the interviewee beforehand. I began the interview by explaining the aim of the study; then asked questions from a set. In addition, I followed up on points of interest the interviewees themselves brought up, and finally I summarised the main points and asked the interviewee to respond to my interpretation.⁶⁵ The interplay between interviewer and interviewee is complicated in that it sometimes includes spontaneous and emotion-filled statements about the matters discussed. Basing findings on such utterances is problematic unless what is said can be checked against other sources or evidence. The results of interviews were analysed following a combination of source-critical and interpretative techniques.

An exception to my regular interview model are the contacts I had with Olle

⁶³ There is also a number of producers who have made singular historical programmes.

⁶⁴ I throughout followed the model suggested by Kvale, Steinar, 1997, except that I took notes instead of taping the interviews. The interviews with Hans Villius, 2003.06.02, and Olle Häger, 2003.06.03, were recorded on tape.

⁶⁵ In a few cases the interviews were conducted via telephone but otherwise followed the same model.

Häger. In one period of research I studied Häger's working materials on site in his office at SVT,⁶⁶ which involved meeting with him and some of his co-workers on a daily basis. This afforded me the opportunity to track the production process quite closely. To an extent, therefore, I was able to combine study of working materials with direct observation of the live work setting. The weeks spent at SVT included informal talks over lunch. The daily contact widened my understanding of the production process,⁶⁷ but valuable too was the way the contact increased my awareness of the need for self-reflection on the part of the field-worker. Ethnologists tell us that a fieldworker will inevitably influence the milieu he or she is studying. The original milieu is corrupted by the presence of someone new. It is very possible for the field-worker to become emotionally involved in what is under study.⁶⁸ On one occasion I watched a rough version of what was to be the film *Fy fan, ett sån't land!* (2000) together with Häger and some others of the crew. Following the screening, Häger asked everyone – including me – what improvements could be made. I answered the question, as everyone did, and it is possible that what I said had certain, if only minor, influence on the resulting programme. Interactive research such as involves fieldwork or interviews leads regularly to this type of methodological problem. One strategy for handling the problem is for the researcher to engage in conscious self-reflection. Aware of the problem, I reflected on my own role (discussed it as well with colleagues) as a means of maintaining proper analytical distance from the subject matter.

6. Outline of the study

The study stands on two legs. One leg consists of the history culture and my discussion of it. In Chapter 2, I focus on the Swedish history culture mainly of the latter part of the twentieth century. I point out certain of its characteristics and then discuss the roles played in the culture by professional historians and acting historians. My intention is to make clear that not only professionals function as historians in Sweden, but also that professional historians communicate their knowledge to society at large and have at least this important function in the history culture. Therefore, it is inappropriate to think of professional historians as stationed off in some ivory tower of academia. The chapter thus points to a special context for historical documentaries, which to me constitute a form, one among others, that serves the process of communicating history.

⁶⁶ Upon Häger's retirement in 2000, the materials were transferred to the company archive (DA). All footnotes refer to the present archive. However, a couple of files seem to have disappeared when the materials were moved. In such cases, the footnote here reads DA. T21, [original place of document]. I have notes to support these footnotes.

⁶⁷ Information achieved through informal talks was used as a means to understand the thinking of filmmaker Olle Häger. Quotes always go to formal interviews.

⁶⁸ Cf. Ehn, Billy & Barbro Klein, 1994.

The second leg consists of my investigation of media production and of one of its particular types, dealt with in Chapters 3 and 4, the historical documentary. In Chapter 3, I indicate theoretical foundations for the study of the historical documentary. Even though the boundaries between what flows in modern media are not always clear, I believe we can devise and utilise a cognitive definition of historical documentary. The chapter also includes a section on the development of historical documentary film, which seeks to connect theory to existing traditions in documentary representation. An overview I provide shows that historical documentaries have made use of a variety of formal devices and the basis of such continue to develop. The chapter ends with a discussion of the place historians have in relation to historical documentary production. Chapter 4 seeks to indicate the exact position of historical documentary in the Swedish history culture. I review productions by several SVT producers and try to set them in a meaningful relation to international representational trends, as well as in relation to the Swedish history culture at large. I caution that while Chapters 2, 3, and 4 form an extensive discussion of the Swedish history culture as well as of Swedish and international examples of historical documentaries, that discussion is not exhaustive. Rather, the chapters are meant to posit a workable frame for what follows, which is my “case in point” study of how history is put to use in historical documentary films.

Chapter 5 is an in-depth introduction of Olle Häger and Hans Villius as a producer-team. Not intended as a biography as such, the chapter includes certain biographical information when this sheds light on the producer-team’s starting points. The major part of Chapter 5 forms an overview of their work and a discussion of production, representation, and reception aspects of that work. The chapter describes in some detail the making of a historical documentary as a working process. A clear idea of such a process is essential to any analysis of historical documentaries.

A central idea that informs the entire study is that there is a negotiation process that must constantly take place as the filmmaker faces the need to make different considerations. Treatment of this matter constitutes chapters 6, 7, and 8, the major empirical part of the study. In these three chapters I examine a number of historical documentaries by Häger and Villius. I might have treated the programmes in strictly chronological fashion, but instead settled on a thematic treatment where the guiding principle was to clarify how the filmmaker’s negotiating among the various considerations has important consequences. Thus, I analyse programmes under the three separate headings cognitive considerations (Chapter 6), moral considerations (Chapter 7) and aesthetic considerations (Chapter 8). In principle, any programme can be examined thinking of any one of these headings, but it is particularly illuminating to discuss certain programmes under just certain and maybe not all headings, and I divide my discussion to take full advantage of this principle. Cognitive, moral, and aesthetic considerations inform discussion in all three chapters, but in each it is always the salient aspect of that chapter that is emphasised. Analysis is made of

how various histories are articulated in programmes, and of what route was taken to that articulation. Remarks on reception are often included, but reception was not a targeted topic. Together, Chapters 6, 7, and 8 show how various factors have been of influence on historical documentary films – and that cognitive, moral, and aesthetic considerations have all influenced the work of Häger and Villius, even though as I indicate the influence shifts.

Finally, Chapter 9 brings the different parts of the study together. First, Ken Burns's *The Civil War* (1990) is discussed as an object for comparison with productions by Häger and Villius. Then follow concluding remarks on relationships between the different types of considerations. Understanding any documentary representation of the past requires evaluation of a host of different production factors. Though all filmmakers will be found to negotiate with regard to the three types of considerations, and negotiate in some fashion similarly, still different filmmakers will emphasise one consideration, or more than one, and which consideration comes up most influential will naturally vary. In concluding I discuss the development of the Häger and Villius team and characterise their altered position in the Swedish history culture. I end with a theoretical discussion of the historical documentary. I argue that in the past researchers have tended to underestimate the cognitive aspects of the genre, and I set down what is my revised set of characteristics of the historical documentary.

The History Culture in Sweden

1. Public use of history in Sweden

Historical documentaries are made in a societal context, where particular views on history always prevail. The Swedish history culture is the broad context for the documentaries that are the focus of this study. First below, the contours of the history culture in Sweden are drawn, with the latter half of the twentieth century receiving special attention. Not intended to be a complete account of the Swedish history culture, it pictures instead certain of its characteristic features and attempts to indicate how in parts of it cognitive, moral, aesthetic, and commercial factors make their presence felt, and even vary in strength. Coming second is a discussion of professional historians and of the roles they play in the Swedish history culture. Third, in brief form, conflicts over the communication of historical knowledge are reviewed. The chapter as a whole posits a clearly marked out and workable context for a close study of Swedish historical documentaries and in particular for analysis of some of the documentaries of Häger and Villius. The chapter attempts furthermore to gauge the extent to which Swedish professional historians fulfil the ideal role of history guide for the public which Jörn Rüsen assigns them.

The Swedes are part of an international history culture, and they regularly meet non-Swedish histories through books and films and through journeys to foreign locations. Even so, there is good reason to say that a particular Swedish history culture exists.¹ This culture, which gives Swedes a definable part of their national identity, is constituted by a shared national and political story as well as by such tangible factors as a common language, a public school system, and a largely public-run national radio and television industry. The country's population of nine million is commonly labelled homogeneous. However, portions of it have a native language other than Swedish. Small native groups speak and write Finnish, Sami, or Romany, and in addition large numbers of immigrants from as far away as Chile and Kurdistan have recently joined the native population and continue to join it. Different segments of the new population naturally have different collective memories. The once more uniform national his-

¹ Until recently there was little research available on the Swedish history culture; see references below.

tory culture is also challenged in border regions by kinship felt with the neighbouring Nordic peoples, the Norwegians, Danes, and Finns. Not least, people in regions of Skåne and Jämtland closest to borders with Denmark and Norway identify strongly with their neighbours.² A special case exists in the Swedish-speaking minority in Finland, the Finno-Swedes, whose cultural history is closely linked to that of Sweden, but who by most other structural factors are part of the Finnish history culture. In sum, the Swedish history culture is relatively homogenous and stable, and yet it must be recognised that certain complexity and instability exist within it.

The past has long been considered a source of lessons from which something is to be learned.³ But in Sweden history became a particularly potent spiritual resource in the nation-building process that came in the 1800s, as then history instilled in the new (bourgeois) entities a common national feeling. Nineteenth-century Swedish historical fiction provided a forum for the age-old contest between the forces of reaction and progress. Both conservatives and liberals wrote stories set in the past, and while portraying the deeds of historical characters they mapped the road for the future.⁴ The national narrative acquired another visible form when monumental statues of past kings and other national heroes were set up and historical motifs appeared in paintings.⁵ In the decades around 1900 history as a school subject stood at its peak. History teaching focused on the grand narrative of Sweden and was seen as a prime tool for waking and nurturing patriotic feelings.⁶ Thus, history came to have a significant moral purpose. In the 1920s when military officers, seeking to forestall cuts in the Swedish defence budget, took the initiative to produce two feature films on the old warrior-hero king Karl XII, their effort became one of the period's last monumental uses to which Swedish national history was put.⁷

There is a cognitive aspect to the use of history in the nationalistic era, namely, a desire to educate the public. Philanthropically-minded members of academia organised popular lecture series throughout the country, as did emerging popular movements such as the free churches, the temperance union, and the labour movement. Through these efforts, highly qualified lecturers, many of them historians, came to visit even the tiniest of Swedish villages.⁸ The newly-formed organisations also produced historical writings. For example, the Good Templars idealised the Swedes in their writings on history, searching out

² Zander, Ulf, 1997, discusses historical memory and regional identity in Skåne.

³ In 1585 Per Brahe d.ä. recommended that young noblemen learn history; Jensen, Ola W., 2002, p. 3. Johanna Widenberg is working on a study of the use of history in seventeenth-century Sweden.

⁴ Petterson, Lars, ed., 1999; Johansson, Stefan, 2000. Dekker, George, 1987, p. 1: "No other genre has even come close to the consistent popularity enjoyed by historical romances from *The Spy* in 1821 down to *Gone With the Wind* and *Roots* in recent times."

⁵ Rodell, Magnus, 2002; Nodin, Anders, 1997; Rudnert, Sune, 1991.

⁶ Andolf, Göran, 1972.

⁷ Furhammar, Leif, 1998, pp. 114 ff. Currently, Erik Tängerstad is researching these monumental historical films. Qvist, Per Olov, 1995, pp. 427 f., explains that such films disappeared because it was "difficult to make Karl XII fit with the rhetoric of the Folkhem."

historical examples useful as arguments against the use of alcohol.⁹ Similarly, the labour movement attempted to establish a historical legitimacy by suggesting that it was part of the tradition of rebellion. Once in office, the Social Democratic Party re-interpreted history such that its leaders became bearers of much of the ideology championed by national leaders hundreds of years earlier. Thus, the labour movement consciously used history to provide arguments for the present.¹⁰ Historians were involved in many of these writing projects, although most professional historians were more conservative than were members of the popular movements.

By late in the 1900s many groups and associations in Sweden were making active use of history. The popular heritage and folklore movement began as a protest against transition and change, working initially for the preservation of rural farm buildings and culture,¹¹ later becoming involved also with studies in local history. Today the movement has some 1800 local chapters and 400.000 members,¹² and is an important institution for developing and supporting Swedish relationships to the past. Professional historians have played a part in the movement's local research circles and historical societies,¹³ although it is uncertain how large a role. Related to the popular heritage and folklore movement, but with politically a more radical profile, are the "dig-where-you-stand" popular ethnographical groups. These had a peak period in the late 1970s and early 1980s, their success likely due first of all to the 1970s economic crisis and resulting huge worker layoffs. Ten thousand study circles were active in Sweden in those years, studying the past and its issues and documenting local working life and conditions.¹⁴

Another popular movement that stimulated historical interest outside academia is the widespread movement promoting genealogical research. It has been suggested that on a visit to a Swedish provincial archive, one would find most reading-room seats filled not by professional historians but by amateur researchers, whether working in the genealogical or the heritage and folklore tradition.¹⁵ The numbers of amateur genealogists have grown rapidly from the 1960s onwards, and a recent estimate declares Sweden has some 110 local

⁸ Olsson, Björn, 1998, pp. 84 f.; Leander, Sigfrid, 1978. In the winter of 1906–1907, the Stockholm chapter alone of *Folkbildningsförbundet* engaged 172 lecturers who gave 1610 lectures, of which 272 were on history or cultural history. Most lecturers were educated at a university. Poppius, Ulla, 1991, pp. 57 ff. gives statistics for popular lectures until the 1940s, and shows that history lectures continued to be frequently given.

⁹ Edquist, Samuel, 2001, especially pp. 91–131.

¹⁰ Linderborg, Åsa, 2001.

¹¹ The famous heritage park of Skansen in Stockholm opened in 1891. On museums, history, and nationalism in Sweden, see Bohman, Stefan, 1997.

¹² URL <http://www.hembygd.se> (2002.01.25)

¹³ Aronsson, Peter, 2000, p. 345.

¹⁴ Zander, Ulf, 2001, pp. 392–397. Isacson, Maths, 1994, is a synthesis based on dig-where-you-stand research.

¹⁵ Aronsson, Peter, 2000, p. 345. Gillingstam, Hans, 1987, p. 403, writes that the very formation in 1933 of a Genealogical Society can be seen as a move in reaction to academics, the founders of the new society having been "deterred and frozen out" by academics who dominated the society.

societies gathering 30.000 individuals. To add to the figures are a large number of non-organised genealogical workers and genealogists. The movement has been helped in its growth by the appearance of courses and handbooks in genealogy, and today's technical developments tend to make genealogy easy and fruitful to study.¹⁶ Interest in genealogy is essentially interest in one's own past and that of others, a matter of awakened cultural identity. The growth of amateur genealogical research indicates that interest in history continues to be strong in Sweden in recent decades. It is also a clear sign that cognitive matters are becoming an important aspect of the history culture outside academia.

That the history culture has acquired a moral aspect is perceivable in historical fiction stories written during World War II. Novels and films picture Swedish peasants and yeomen and Robin Hood-styled figures struggling against German noblemen and soldiers, these heroes well-timed models for Swedes living at the time under threat of Nazi-controlled Germany.¹⁷ After the war, the past remained a useful setting for the exploration of moral values, as exemplified by Ingmar Bergman's *The Seventh Seal* (*Det Sjunde inseget*, 1957),¹⁸ where the plague-stricken Middle Ages provide a metaphor for a present-day world doomed to lasting fear by the atomic bomb.

Other works of historical fiction took up themes having clear cognitive sides. A historical experience many Swedish historical novels deal with is the migration from the Swedish countryside to America or else to Swedish towns and urban centres.¹⁹ The journey to America was undertaken by perhaps one-fifth of all Swedes during the late 1800s and early 1900s. This historical experience was portrayed in Vilhelm Moberg's tetralogy *The Emigrants* (1949–56), where a small group of peasants leave their homes in southern Sweden and move to Minnesota. Moberg's novels enjoyed extraordinarily wide acclaim. The story inspired academic research, and it was adapted and retold in two successful films plus cast into a popular musical. At the turn of the century the tetralogy

¹⁶ Börnfors, Lennart, 2001, pp. 18 ff., 35, 89 f. An association for genealogists with computers (DIS) numbered 10.000 members in late 1999 and was growing rapidly.

¹⁷ Vilhelm Moberg's novel *Rid i natt!* [*Partisan's Ride Tonight*] (1941) is the most famous of these works; cf. Aronsson, Peter, 2000, pp. 115 ff. On the film *Rid i natt!* (1942), see *Svensk filmografi 4. 1940–1949*, 1980, pp. 233–236; Soila, Tytti, 1998, pp. 182 ff.; Olsson, Jan, 1979, pp. 94 f. One wartime adventure film set in the past but which carried an important political message was *Snapphanar* (1942). A similar film from the 40s was *Harald Handfaste* (1947) where a freedom-loving Robin Hood-styled hero fights vicious foreign bailiffs. On the political message of the latter film, cf. Vesterlund, Per, 1999, p. 244. There are also A. M. Marksman's wartime short stories about Per Stigman. Harper, Sue, 1994, tells the interesting story of British public institutions seeking to influence the wartime production of historical films, which constituted a very popular genre.

¹⁸ Granlid, Hans O., 1964, pp. 297 f., suggests that several motifs in the film can be traced to historical novels.

¹⁹ Larsmo, Ola, 1990, pp. 10–36, calls chronology itself a central character in the Swedish twentieth-century novel. Surprisingly, all successful Swedish writers have written stories set in the past. For an overview, see Hellstrand, Åke, 1995–1998. For critical studies, cf. Granlid, Hans O., 1964; Öhman, Christer, 1991; Johansson, Stefan, 1999. Johansson points out that, interestingly, in the nineteenth century many Swedish historical novels were written by female authors.

was voted the best Swedish work of fiction of the century.²⁰ With good reason *The Emigrants* is now widely regarded as a national epic. There is an urban equivalent to Moberg's rural epic in Per Anders Fogelström's novel series set in Stockholm (1960–1985), where the author tells of life in the poor quarters of Stockholm from 1749 to 1968, and indirectly of the fashioning of the welfare state. The series generated huge sales and its first book was made into a play, broadcast as a radio play, and like *The Emigrants* also made into a film. Study guides came out, and the books were read widely in schoolrooms and made a topic by study circles.²¹ Without a doubt Moberg's and Fogelström's novels have helped shape ideas Swedes have of what life in the past was like for the poor in Stockholm and in rural areas.

Particularly interesting in the case of Moberg's and Fogelström's works is how carefully each author keeps the historical facts straight and accurate. Moberg spent twelve years doing research for and writing his emigration novels. Because little historical research was available on Swedish emigration, he had to work along much on his own. He wrote to the captain of a sailing-ship to get correct factual matter about emigrant ships, read up extensively on Native Americans, and studied the journals of American settlers, among many other things.²² Fogelström sought and found huge quantities of information on his subject and collected some 120 shelf-metres of stockholmiana plus some 10.000 photos and pictures. Historical details abound in his novels; one can even say Fogelström's narration at times falls into the diction of history. Certain critics found this tiring, feeling the careful descriptions got in the way of the story. Fogelström gave evidence of his own research competency when he issued a sixty-page supplement to one of the books and there described sources he had used.²³ The novels by Moberg and Fogelström are works of fiction that make serious claim to historical authenticity. Both authors took historical research seriously and were widely appreciated by the historical community, maybe nowhere more than there. Worth noting is that the professional historians hardly regarded either a challenger in the field of history production.

One must however not fail to see that such dramatisations of the past have their important aesthetic side. Writers and filmmakers have aesthetic ideals, and in many cases aesthetic considerations condition their decisions. Rather few Swedish feature films were set in the past,²⁴ but foreign-made historical dramatic productions were commonly shown in Swedish cinemas and on tele-

²⁰ The vote taken on the SVT programme *Röda rummet*; Zander, Ulf, 2001, p. 373.

²¹ Brantly, Susan, 1993, p. 2. Cf. Kassman, Charles, 1986, pp. 212–270.

²² Eidevall, Gunnar, 1974, pp. 13–131; Beijbom, Ulf, ed., 1972; Wennberg, Ingrid, 1962; McKnight, Roger, 1979.

²³ For references, see Mollner, Katarina, 1986. Mollner compares one of Fogelström's novels with Natalie Zemon Davis' milestone work *The Return of Martin Guerre* (1983), a comparison that ends with her complete dismissal of Fogelström. Like Fogelström, his author colleague Lars Widding also published a book that documented the sources for his novels; Widding, Lars, 1972.

²⁴ Furhammar, Leif, 1998 (1991). In recent decades, Jan Troell, Kjell Grede, and Bo Widerberg made successful films that were set in the past.

vision and thus were not an unimportant element of the history culture. Dramatisations of the American West saw their breakthrough in SVT programming in the 1960s and are still shown in series like *Bonanza*, *Little House on the Prairies*, *Centennial*, and *How the West Was Won*. Star actors from these series, such as Michael “Little Joe” Landon and Duane “Wolfpaw” Lokan, have made tours through Sweden. *How the West Was Won* [Sw. *Familjen Macahan*], was even elected “best television series of the past fifteen years” by a vote of readers in 1984 – second in the vote was the Swedish historical dramatic series *Raskens*, adapted from the novel by Vilhelm Moberg. When *Raskens* was broadcast in 1976, as much as 76 percent of the Swedish television audience, or 5.2 million Swedes, saw the second to last episode, and on the occasion of its fourth broadcast in 1991 the series drew close to three million viewers.²⁵

A more recent phenomenon than historical novels and films which has affected the Swedish history culture is the advent of historical parks and festivals. The first commercial theme park was businessman Big Bengt’s Wild West Park called High Chaparral. It first opened in 1966 and has been very alive and kicking since.²⁶ The popularity of the park is a new variant of Sweden’s popular culture. Through letters from emigrant relatives many Swedes came to know America as a land of hopes and dreams, and in the early Cold War years America was extremely popular. The Wild West was always accessible in cheap paperback fiction as well as on television and in cinemas. The American West is the cultural context for High Chaparral with its marshal, cowboys, and Indians. The Swedish view of America changed during the radical years around 1970. Then critics of White America (and the Vietnam War) joined hands with those with romantic interest in Native Americans. An American Indian Society was established, and several Swedish authors wrote books set in pioneer America that celebrated forms of old Indian life and its values.²⁷ But interest in the American West, albeit transformed, lived on. And so did High Chaparral.

But for the most part Swedish historical parks are a phenomenon of the 1980s and 90s and concern us here for their cognitive quality far more than as commercial enterprises. The “living history” idea has been behind the efforts of museum professionals to make museums more lively and accessible. The key idea was that a visit to a museum should be a unique experience. Accordingly, it was a common practice for a time for museum staff to dress in period costume and, looking and acting like people from the time and place portrayed,

²⁵ Bjork, Ulf Jonas, 2001; Järnefors, Sara, 1984; Björkman, Anders, 1991; Björkman, Anders, 1992. No survey tallied the numbers of viewers of the last episode of *Raskens* in 1976. When SVT broadcast *How the West Was Won* a fourth time in 1999, the explanation came that this was the most asked for repeat ever; Bjurman, Per, 1999; cf. Bull, Olle, 1984. On *Raskens*, see also Furhammar, Leif, 1991.

²⁶ URL <http://www.highchaparral.se> (2002.03.27)

²⁷ Christian F. Feest in an article about literature on Native Americans mentions two Swedish writers, Stig Ericson and Helmer Linderholm; Feest, Christian F., 1988, p. 586. The most important Swedish award for children’s literature, the Nils Holgersson-plaketten, was presented to Ericson in 1970 and to Linderholm in 1981.

deliver first-hand interpretations of exhibited material.²⁸ In the 1980s the old heritage park of Jamtli in northern Sweden was transformed into such a living history park. Similar parks in America inspired this one, although the personnel worked hard to find a concept that fit the Swedes.²⁹ At other places such as Kalmar museums offered time-journeys for school children.³⁰

A phenomenon similar to the historic parks, but more modest in scale, is the series of prehistoric villages reconstructed by archaeologists and local enthusiasts.³¹ In 1999 around forty such reconstructed ancient villages were in existence. There any enthusiasts who wanted to could contribute with quality their own pedagogic offerings.³² Many of these sites were set up during the 1990s and they now have many thousands of visitors each year.³³ The villages typically feature some concrete connection between locale and history, and like many historical theme parks such as Jamtli they awaken and support feelings of identification with the location and the region.³⁴ It is acting historians rather than professional historians who lead the movement.³⁵

Another invention in the Swedish history culture from near the end of the century was the historical festivals that seemed to mushroom everywhere during the 1990s.³⁶ At these festivals people dress in Medieval or Renaissance clothes go shopping and eat in historic marketplaces. Enthusiasts hold tournaments, entertain with singing, or stage religious processions characteristic of the period. Sometimes a historic event is re-enacted.³⁷ The mother of these festivals in Sweden is the Medieval Week held in the island of Gotland and notably in the picturesque town of Visby with its surrounding ring-wall. The site is a UNESCO world heritage site. Since its start in 1984 the Medieval Week has grown to now be a major tourist attraction, with visitors now numbering over one hundred thousand. Interestingly, organisers uphold antiquarian rules so only things that pass as correctly-styled medieval artefacts can be used in the festival.³⁸ One of the festival's main events is a historic re-enactment of the Danish conquest of Visby in 1361, which is performed by actors from

²⁸ Hunner, Jon, 2002, pp. 19 f.

²⁹ Weilert, Bengt & Sten Rentzhog, 1998. For an analysis of the case of Jamtli, see Andersson, Elisabeth, 1994; Larsson, Erika, 2002, p. 119, points out that a problem regarding enacting difficult issues is the demand for humour at Jamtli.

³⁰ Aronsson, Peter et al, eds., 2000.

³¹ An example is Eketorp in Öland.

³² Petersson, Bodil, 2002; Petersson, Bodil, 2003.

³³ URL <http://www.fortntidateknik.z.se> (2003.03.06)

³⁴ Aronsson, Peter and Erika Larsson, 2002, p. 257.

³⁵ One interesting commercially founded Viking reserve is that at Foteviken, where a private entrepreneur was supported by hundreds of local sponsors; Petersson, Bodil, 2002. For a gender analysis of Foteviken and Jamtli, see Magnusson, Åse, 2002.

³⁶ A few of the major events are the Renaissance days in Kalmar, the historical market in Nyköping, Skokloster days, and the Medieval week in Visby. There are many more local festivities with historical themes.

³⁷ Gustafsson, Lotten, 2002, pp. 52 ff., suggests that a relative of the medieval festivals is the fantasy-inspired movement of role-play, which in the 1990s engaged several hundred thousand young Swedes. In Gustafsson's opinion, the Middle Ages are "the fictive world par préférence."

³⁸ Gustafsson, Lotten, 2002, pp. 161 ff.

among festival participants. Ethnologist Lotten Gustafsson has told of persons trying to “change history” in the process of such public re-enactment, which is a sign of the importance re-enactments are in making history subject to “ideological reinterpretations, polemical projections, and carnivalesque pranks.”³⁹ This particular episode also suggests that professional historians have little influence on how history is used at historical festivals.⁴⁰

It has been suggested that interest in history in Sweden diminished in the decades after World War II, but the sketch above shows the picture is not all so clear. Surely belief in progress and in the modern project initiatives was strong and was possibly a sign that people had only lost faith in history’s explanatory force.⁴¹ However, studies show that history continued to be a potent resource for moral arguments. An example is the much debated historical event of the labour conflict in Ådalen in 1931 that ended in the fatal shooting of five people. Different political parties laid sole claim to the legacy of Ådalen,⁴² which is worth bearing in mind later when we see how Häger and Villius handled the event. But it is true that a tendency to de-historicise events had begun, and it was due in part to changes that came in the subject of history in schools. The new task of history was not so much to promote feelings of national identity as to impart to individual pupils some understanding of the workings of progress and change, and to train them in the use of the critical mind. The number of history hours was reduced by a series of school reforms,⁴³ which in and of itself shows history had lost certain importance in Swedish society. Perhaps, the absence of national trauma such as a civil war or active involvement in the Second World War made it difficult for Swedish politicians to argue for the essential place of history in schools. Yet the changes can also have been cued by new subjects which had come to require space in the curriculum. Social studies took over much of the role history had previously had, and later different groups lobbied for greater emphasis on modern languages, physical education, science, and computer training. In such a context history lost ground.

According to observers the cuts in history hours in the school curriculum led to the Swedes becoming *history-less*, and certainly, the cuts added to the impression older people at times had that young people “know nothing” about the past. However, we must distinguish being history-less in a technical sense from what it is to be so in a functional sense.⁴⁴ The former instance is to be ignorant

³⁹ Gustafsson, Lotten, 1998, p. 66.

⁴⁰ Aronsson, Peter, 2000, p. 345, argues that historians played only a minor role in the recent expansion of the use of history in Sweden. Cf. Gustafsson, Lotten, 2002, p. 59. Of course, a few historians such as Dick Harrison have appeared as lecturers in historical festivals. To be added is that few professional historians work at museums; Isacson, Maths, 1993, p. 252.

⁴¹ Zander, Ulf, 2001, pp. 317 ff.

⁴² Johansson, Roger, 2001.

⁴³ Dahllöf, Urban, 1981, p. 47; Larsson, Hans Albin, 2001. Samuel, Raphael, 1994, p. 444, wrote “questions of individual and collective identity are making history a front-line subject in the schools,” but history certainly is not a front-line subject in Swedish schools.

⁴⁴ Anselm, Jonas, 1993, pp. 13 f., speaks of a technical, functional, and institutional cultural heritage.

of a body of facts that (some people claim) is a timeless cultural heritage, while the latter means what is missing is historical consciousness.⁴⁵ Studies have shown that the level of knowledge of specific historical events has decreased in Sweden,⁴⁶ and such is to grow history-less in a technical sense. Limited knowledge of the past also makes it hard for a person to make relevant use of history when going about present-day tasks of self-orientation and self-reflection, or otherwise put, hard to develop and utilise a historical consciousness. But references to history are not absent from homes and ordinary life.⁴⁷ By the functional definition of being history-less, focus is moved from a revered body of stories and facts to a past that appears to be meaningful today, and looking at the Swedish situation so makes it seem far less the hazard condition it is sometimes suggested to be.

During the 1970s rather few historical trade books were published in Sweden. To an extent this was an effect of publishers judging there was a poor market for such books, but it can also imply that few writers were then seeking to publish books on history and its subjects. Because the number of professional historians rose significantly in these years, it must be that professional historians had very little to do – either way – with market conditions affecting historical books. But some interest in history remained among Swedes. In 1972 Hans Villius said in an interview that “the Swedes have a great interest in history,”⁴⁸ which Olle Häger echoed in another interview in 1984,⁴⁹ and in 1980, when reviewing a historical book by Häger and Villius, historian Alf Åberg wrote of a “new interest” in history.⁵⁰ These voices qualify the oft-claimed lack of interest in history in the 1970s and 80s.

If interest in history was somewhat reduced in these years, there certainly was a revival of it in the late 1980s and early 1990s. In 1988 the young historian Peter Englund published a book about the 1709 battle of Poltava, where the Swedish army was defeated by the Russians.⁵¹ *Poltava* became a surprise best-seller and Englund suddenly a national celebrity. Inspired by John Prebble’s *Culloden* (1961),⁵² *Poltava* told of a military defeat that changed a nation, and the book made Swedes recall how exciting history can be. The book also helped form the history wave that washed over Sweden during the next decade, giving

⁴⁵ Rosenzweig, Roy & David Thelen, 1998, argue that in America there is an absence of conventional historical narratives but that people do pursue the past actively and make it part of everyday life. This indicates a certain history-lessness in a technical sense, but also that people master the functional use of history.

⁴⁶ *Utvärdering av grundutbildning och forskarutbildning i historia vid svenska universitet och högskolor*, 2003, pp. 23 f.; Queckfeldt, Eva, 1999.

⁴⁷ Garnert, Jan, 1994, pp. 59–118, 130 f.

⁴⁸ Villius quoted in Carlsson, Jörgen, 1972. In the early 1980s, Häger and Villius similarly claimed that “there is great interest in history;” DA. T21, [Programlista & målsättning, Lärardag i Karlstad, p. 6, undated {1981}].

⁴⁹ Häger quoted in Malgefors, Lars, 1984.

⁵⁰ Åberg, Alf, 1980.

⁵¹ Englund, Peter, 1988.

⁵² Englund, Peter, 1994, pp. 14 f.

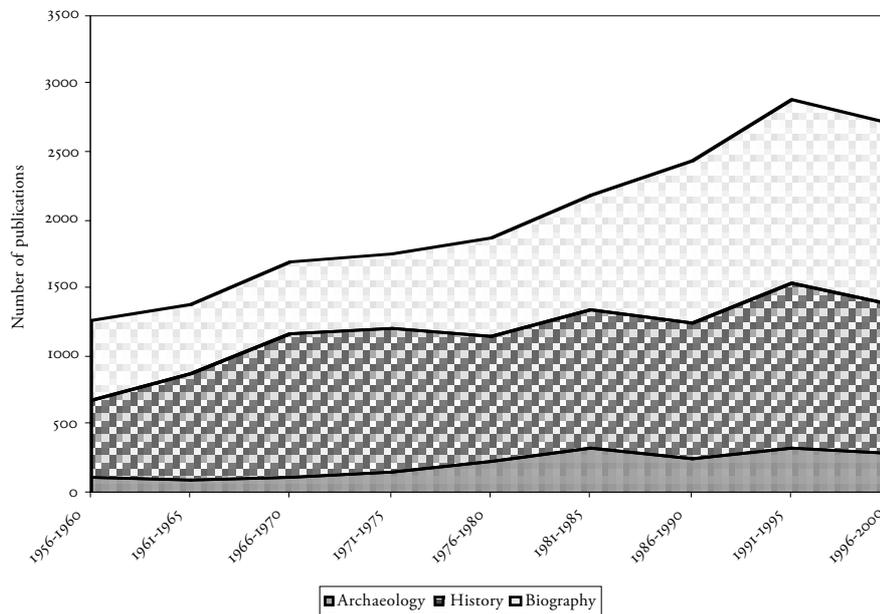


Figure 1. Published historical books 1956–2000. The figure shows three historical genres, archaeology, history, and biography. The number of historical books published in the early 1990s rose considerably. Weak in the radical 1960s and 70s, the genre biography fairly exploded in the 1990s. The total number of books published in Sweden fell in the late 1970s, then rose and peaked in the mid-1990s. *Source: Svensk Bokkatalog and Statistical Yearbook of Sweden.*

Swedish publishers proof that history could sell and professional historians assurance that there was now great public interest in past times. Certainly, events such as the fall of the Berlin Wall and the quickly evolving European integration also contributed to making publishers and citizens more interested in the past. In the next decade, the numbers of historical books published in Sweden rose significantly. Several small publishers made historical books their specialty.⁵³ That historical books were popular with the reading public is also indicated by the fact that in the 1990s, several historians were nominated for, and won, the Swedish publishers' *August* non-fiction award.⁵⁴ Finally, the history revival in Sweden was manifested in a new magazine *Populär Historia* [*Popular History*] which started publication in 1991 and soon had a circulation of over 20.000.

When history returned to the central stage in popular culture, that also meant that the past became the focus of debate.⁵⁵ Some of the debates concerned the quality of popular histories and the roles of professional historians,

⁵³ One new publisher, Historiska Media, even made historical products its sole product item.

⁵⁴ The award was given to well-written books, but very likely publishers would nominate books they thought would attract a wide readership.

⁵⁵ Zander, Ulf, 2001, p. 402, calls the 1990s “the decade of debates.”

which I will discuss more later in this chapter. Here I should just mention that one cause of debate was the appearance of acting historian Herman Lindqvist, who received massive attention for his books, television programmes and lecture tours. A second event that caused debate was a national museum exposition in 1993 about the history of Sweden. Benefiting from the excitement for history that was now well on its way, both Lindqvist and the museum exposition managed to reach hundreds of thousands of Swedes with their stories about the past.

Another type of history debate coming in the 1990s took heed of the circumstance that the wealthy Swedish economy had weakened dramatically and that the Folkhem was being partly dismantled. In this atmosphere several debaters drew moral arguments from the past. In some cases opponents of the Social Democrats argued that the welfare system had not been accessible to all. An example was forced sterilisation that took place in the 1940s and 50s and on a minor scale after that. Intense debate began over this and criticism hit the Social Democrats hard.⁵⁶ Also in the 1990s, and largely as a reaction to neo-Nazi marches in the streets, the government initiated an information campaign centred on the Holocaust. An illustrated book about the Holocaust (written by two professional historians) was distributed for free to all families with school children; the government sponsored screenings of Holocaust films in schools; the liberation of Auschwitz on 27 January was made a day of national celebration; a large international conference on teaching about and remembering the Holocaust was organised; and numerous other like events can be cited. Before that time the Holocaust had been well known enough, but hardly thought of as a significant event in the minds of historically thinking Swedes. Perhaps that changed when the Holocaust was used in the campaign as a master moral paradigm, as a frightening example of what could happen if democracy did not continue to be respected.⁵⁷

The campaign about the Holocaust, called Living History [*Levande historia*], is an interesting example of how different actors and factors influenced the Swedish field of history production. When the campaign started it provoked a number of schoolteachers and teacher-educators who felt teachers had a professional right to decide which historical examples to use in the classroom. Nevertheless, politicians decided that the Holocaust should become compulsory study. Before professional historians claimed the autonomous right to decide what they do, but now the government intervened and ordered a book on the Holocaust to be written and distributed to the entire population. The government also made funding available for research into genocide, which funding-hungry academics were soon fighting to get. Soon after the Living History campaign, politicians proposed a new information campaign – this time it was the evils of Communism. As a result of political opposition and protests from

⁵⁶ See Broberg, Gunnar and Mattias Tydén, 1998; Zander, Ulf, 2001, pp. 420 f

⁵⁷ Ludvigsson, David, 2001. Cf. Karlsson, Klas-Göran, 2000. There was an international Holocaust boom in the 1990s; Loshitzky, Yosefa, 1997, p. 5.

(leftist) historians, the campaign was never launched. But research money was made available for study of the evils of Communism.⁵⁸ There are other examples of how political interests marked out historical research interests, and also limited the availability of source materials.⁵⁹ In conclusion, in the 1990s there were several occasions when political interests interfered with autonomous scientific interests.

A final example of history usage with moral aims is the best-selling novels (1998–2000) of Jan Guillou about the Christian crusades to Palestine. Guillou openly stated that he had a moral aim with his novels, namely, to promote a new image of Islam to Swedish readers, an alternative to CNN's "evil Muslim" image.⁶⁰ He explained that limited knowledge of Medieval Sweden gave him "poetic license" to weave his story together with that of the formation of the state, and that he took advantage of lacunae in our knowledge of the crusades to give his knight Sir Arn a formidable role in the fight against Saladin.⁶¹ The novels acquired commercial value in the history culture, stimulating the regional tourist office in (the fictional) Sir Arn's home county to offer tours "in Arn's footsteps."⁶² The head of tourism in the county reported income from tourism went up fifty million SEK in one year, which must in large part be attributed to the Arn novels.⁶³ The novels also formed the basis for a historical television series where Guillou spoke on-screen about how the Swedish state began in a dim medieval past.⁶⁴ A good example of media symbiosis, the Arn story attracted a large readership in multicultural Sweden around 2000.

In conclusion, history was continually present in Sweden in the late twentieth century, and in use for different purposes. Its cognitive aspect was strong in some instances, as noted, but as a moral force it was important in specific instances as well. Clearly, both aesthetic and commercial factors also figure in the picture, but how emphasis was placed on the different factors varied from one part of the history culture to another. Exactly how important each factor was must be determined through detailed empirical research. Among important tendencies in the Swedish history culture are the series of reforms that made the school subject of history loose ground in the curriculum. History was generally less visible in Swedish society in the 1970s and 80s, but in the last decade of the twentieth century there was a revival of history. Historical festivals began and many historical books were published. There were also a number of public debates where conditions from the past were the focus. To be noted, there is yet no mention here of history on television. This begins in

⁵⁸ Ludvigsson, David, 2001.

⁵⁹ Jönsson, Christer, 2000.

⁶⁰ Guillou, Jan, 2002, pp. 15 f.

⁶¹ Guillou, Jan, 2002, pp. 20, 29.

⁶² URL <http://www.skaramus.se/arn/arnstart.html> (2002-04-12)

⁶³ Rogeman, Anneli, 2002.

⁶⁴ The series *Arns rike* (Troja Television) is to premier on TV4 in 2004, that is, after the publication of this study.

chapters to come, whereas history on the radio is discussed in the following section. So far there have been only hints of the role played by Swedish professional historians, a topic to turn to next.

2. Professional historians and their roles in the history culture

Of Sweden's population of nine million people, only a few hundred are professional historians, if the narrow definition is followed that a historian holds a Ph.D. degree in history and performs the tasks of work of historians.⁶⁵ But many more people are academically trained historians in the sense that they have studied history at university, and continue to work with history as teachers or in other capacities. In 2001, history was taught at twenty universities and university colleges throughout Sweden, and academic training in history was an option selected by some nine thousand students.⁶⁶ In addition, a number of students received academic training in the neighbouring disciplines of economic history or intellectual history.⁶⁷

When the Swedish community of professional historians was established it had a firmly based place in the Swedish nation-state. The nation's historians could rely on public institutions, such as universities, libraries, and archives, which funded research and teaching and made the historians members of the civil service. Though the scholarly community has claimed professional autonomy and scholarly independence, that independence is to some degree limited by the fact that historians employed by state universities must follow certain state regulations.⁶⁸ Even so, the historical community is characterised by a strong sense of professionalism, which is grounded in a formal training that requires members follow accepted methods and theories. Through its institutions, the community shapes its members to fit the routines and norms of the discipline, or otherwise said, follow the rules of the field of history production. During the twentieth century the historians' internal rules have become stead-

⁶⁵ Between 1890 and 1975, 447 Ph.D. dissertations in history were completed in Sweden. Of these, 110 were published between 1930 and 1949, 104 between 1950 and 1969, but 101 in the six years between 1970–75. Blom, Conny, 1978, p. 4. Landberg, Hans, 1988, p. 136, writes that 157 Ph.D. exams in history were awarded between 1977 and 1988. Even if there was an increase in the number of dissertations completed in the early 70s and the number since has continued to be high, the total Ph.D. output in history in Sweden since 1950 is probably less than 1000. The neighbouring disciplines of intellectual history, economic history, and classical history have produced a smaller number of Ph.D.s to be added to figures above.

⁶⁶ *Utvärdering av grundutbildning och forskarutbildning i historia vid svenska universitet och högskolor*, 2003, p. 30.

⁶⁷ *Utvärdering av ämnet ekonomisk historia vid svenska universitet*, 2003, p. 43.

⁶⁸ The regulations do not influence the research process, but state regulations decide the rules for who can be hired as professor or lecturer. Thus, the regulations have an indirect influence on many historians' decisions.

ily more refined, and as a result the opposition between professional historians and non-historians is more marked. When the Swedish historical association and its journal *Historisk tidskrift* were founded in 1880 they were intended to serve all who were interested in history. Later however the association and its journal developed into organs for professional historians only.⁶⁹ The gradual process of changing the rules and closing the boundaries around the historical discipline can be called a process of *professionalisation*.⁷⁰

One very significant part of the professionalisation process took place in the first half of the twentieth century, when the Weibull brothers at Lund University challenged their historian colleagues by asking that source-critical rules be more closely followed than had been the case. They also turned against nationalist uses of history that had become common some years earlier. The Weibulls won their struggle and eventually their viewpoints also came to prevail in Uppsala University and at other citadels of historical erudition. This meant that the old and conservative national line of discussion was gradually replaced by writings in the politically liberal spirit of the Weibulls and their followers.⁷¹ When the battle was won, the rules had been changed. In fact, the professional rules of historians are constantly negotiated.⁷² And yet the historical community continues to support the basic system of norms for learning and study, which form their cognitive identity as historians. At times re-interpreting norms leads to struggles between groups of professional historians, as in the fight between the Weibulls and their opponents. In theoretical terms, it is a struggle within the field of history production, where different participants attempt to gain control of the rules in the field. One time when those rules are negotiated is when scholars review one another's work,⁷³ and another is when established historians scrutinise the work of younger colleagues who apply for an appointment.

The appointment of academic historians is organised following strict rules, but a struggle has sometimes surfaced when representatives of certain groups try to obtain appointments at prestigious professorships.⁷⁴ As in other Western European countries, until around 1960 the Swedish world of professional historians was small. There were few universities and jobs were scarce, which led most newly-fledged degree-holders to teach in secondary schools or work in the state bureaucracy. For those who remained in academia, the climb up the career

⁶⁹ The association was founded by the archbishop and members of government as well as by history professors, see Silfverstolpe, Carl, 1881. Many scholarly journals developed as did *Historisk tidskrift*. Cf. Stieg, Margaret F., 1986; Myhre, Jan Eivind, 2000a, pp. 189 f.

⁷⁰ Torstendahl, Rolf, 2001. Note that I side with Torstendahl in his view of professionalisation as partly a sociological phenomenon.

⁷¹ Torstendahl, Rolf, 1964, pp. 335–378; Odén, Birgitta, 1975; Torstendahl, Rolf, 1979.

⁷² Rolf Torstendahl's concept of *minimum demands*, which signifies the rules that historians must follow, and his *optimum norms*, which signifies how the historian should ideally behave, provide a means of ascertaining what disagreements between scholars are actually about. Torstendahl, Rolf, 1996, pp. 77 f.; Torstendahl, Rolf, 1994.

⁷³ Trenter, Cecilia, 1999.

⁷⁴ Gunneriusson, Håkan, 2002.

ladder was arduous. The world they worked in was a very hierarchical one where the success that young historians were to have was much in the hands of the elder professors.⁷⁵ However, from the 1960s onwards, the expansion of higher education, including establishment of several new university colleges, both lead to an increase in the number of Ph.D.s awarded, and meant there were more teaching jobs for historians at universities.⁷⁶

With its main focus the Swedish nation, the historical community in Sweden long remained locked up in its own national past.⁷⁷ Although the focus of most historians is still on the Swedish past, the community has now opened up and become part of an international community. For linguistic and political reasons, ties with Norway, Denmark, and Finland were always strong. From 1905 onwards Nordic historians regularly met together at conferences, and from 1965 until the late 1980s there were annual Nordic conferences on methodologies.⁷⁸ Thus, neither intellectual discussions nor labour market conditions were sealed off in a restrictive national framework. A true challenge to the nationwide constitution of the society of historians came with the formation of sub-fields of historical study in the latter part of the century. The advent of sub-fields led to an increase in trans-national networking and to the creation of certain largely autonomous new fields of study.⁷⁹

From the 1960s onwards, historical research in Sweden became increasingly diversified, specialised, and fragmented. After a long period when political history dominated attention, there came in the 1960s and 70s the period of success that social history has enjoyed. And in the 1980s and 90s there emerged new interest in cultural history. Thus, the domain of the historical was vastly extended, older inherited narratives were displaced, and new subjects were introduced.⁸⁰ Starting late in the 1960s was a new and growing theoretical awareness throughout the profession.⁸¹ If earlier changes left the historical profession more heterogeneous, the later ones made historians' writings increasingly difficult for non-historians to read and tended to isolate professional historians from the general reading public. Gradually the social value of historians' work came in question. The expansion of the historical field as a whole and the introduction of theories were international phenomena, and while critique of

⁷⁵ In the first half of the twentieth century, there were only seven professorships in history; two in Uppsala, two in Lund, two in Stockholm, and one in Gothenburg. About the appointment of new professors, see Gunneriusson, Håkan, 2002.

⁷⁶ Aronsson, Peter, 2000, p. 344, estimates that there are fewer historians per capita in Sweden than in countries such as Germany, France, and the USA.

⁷⁷ Trenter, Cecilia, 2000, argues that Swedish historians are very conscious of international methodologies, but have not discussed the relevance of national and international history. Myhre, Jan Eivind, 2000, p. 17, argues that Swedish historians crossed national boundaries more often than did their Nordic colleagues.

⁷⁸ Simensen, Jarle & Sten Helland, 1984; Myhre, Jan Eivind, 2000, p. 12.

⁷⁹ Cf. Raphael, Lutz, 1996, p. 165.

⁸⁰ Ljungh, Agneta, 1999, discusses the appearance of women's history research in Sweden. Cf. Trenter, Cecilia, 1999, pp. 166–192. On the state of fragmentation in the American historical discipline, see Novick, Peter, 1988, pp. 415–629.

⁸¹ Torstendahl, Rolf, 2000a.

professional historians was not confined to Sweden,⁸² it was especially strong there. One scholar even suggests that professionalisation among Swedish historians “succeeded too well.”⁸³ Below, the communication activities of professional historians come up for more detailed discussion.

Swedish historians have played a number of roles apart from those of researcher and teacher. Examples are as participants in the political debate and as workers in public administration. Around 1900, several historians entered parliament and historian Nils Edén was even the Prime Minister of Sweden from 1917 to 1920, incidentally at the same time as the American historian Woodrow Wilson was the President of the United States. Historians such as these clearly believed political tasks and public work were part of what a historian was to do.⁸⁴ The next generation of Swedish historians was one far less deeply engaged in politics. A reason can be that a type of professionalisation of historians took place, so that research became valued more highly within the field of history production than accomplishments outside academia.⁸⁵ But historians continued to occupy positions in the state bureaucracy and were often commissioned to write official reports.⁸⁶

A major role of historians is that of communicator of historical knowledge to a wider audience, the role Rösen has discussed. Properly speaking this role comprises many sub-roles, as the communication of history is a complex process. Historical researchers are a heterogeneous group, just as are readers as a group. Moreover, acting historians such as science journalists and television producers often fill a slot in between the producer of original knowledge and the targeted reader. The communication of history seldom has a simple direct line-form from producer to reader, rather it is more correct to think of the line of communication as reaching out from the producer context to various reader or consumer contexts. Communication can take place (1) inside the academic discipline of history, (2) between the historical discipline and other disciplines of varying proximity, (3) for the good of people in various occupations in need of historical information in their work, or (4) to serve segments of the broader, reading public.⁸⁷ Depending on parties affected, communication follows different lines and moves along in different degrees of popularisation. If the intention is to communicate a message to colleagues or to students in the discipline, a professional historian can choose the form of the scholarly article, and accord-

⁸² Vann, Richard T., 2000, p. 175; Torstendahl, Rolf, 2000b, pp. 24 ff.

⁸³ Torstendahl, Rolf, 2000, p. 182.

⁸⁴ Björk, Ragnar, 1996, p. 132; Björk, Ragnar, 1988, pp. 63 ff.; Björk, Ragnar, 1993, p. 67.

⁸⁵ Surely a number of historians were engaged in politics, but most were conservatives, or liberals, which precluded their having positions in government, as for decades after 1932 the government was Social Democratic. More recently, historian Lena Sommestad became a member of the Swedish government (in 2002).

⁸⁶ Gunneriusson, Håkan, 2002, p. 188. E.g. Erik Lönnroth led the state-commissioned investigations of Swedish universities in the 1940s, Yvonne Hirdman participated in the investigations of the distribution of power in Sweden in the 1980s, and Ylva Hasselberg participated in the *Fisk och fusk* investigation in the late 1990s.

⁸⁷ Cf. Whitley, Richard, 1985, pp. 12 f.; Persson, Bengt, 1997, pp. 20 f.

ingly a fact-dense and theory-laden language. But to communicate the same message to other history users, say history teachers or museum curators, the historian must choose a different channel and another type of language. The strategy is again different when the message is to reach a segment of the broader public. Below is a discussion of the communication process in the case of purposes (3) and (4) above.

One group in need of history for its work is made up of schoolteachers and their pupils. Worth noting is that of Swedish authors whose history textbooks were used in secondary schools over the period 1820–1965, several have been professors and almost all have held Ph.D.s. Most were conservatives.⁸⁸ However, in more recent years the situation has changed. While several professional historians wrote textbooks for schools even after 1950,⁸⁹ schoolteachers rather than professional historians have produced the textbooks that became most popular. As a group these textbook writers can be characterised as liberal, middle-class men,⁹⁰ and they likely had a very similar educational background. Owing to the homogeneity of the writer group, the textbooks produced presented quite similar perspectives on history. But much of the contents of the history textbooks was determined beforehand by curricular needs and by rules set up for the state's textbook examining committee to follow. One rule from 1938 stated that the textbook contents must keep up with academic research, which put pressure on non-academic authors and their publishers to consult with historians to check facts and interpretations. In this way a link between school and the scholarly community was built into the regulations. However, there was an inevitable delay in the transmission of research findings to the textbooks, and this was one reason why in the early 1970s professional historians Göran Graninger and Sven Tägil decided to write textbooks.⁹¹ It is easy to overrate the involvement of professional historians in school issues, however. When school reforms began late in the century to reduce hours of history instruction, historians spoke out very little in protest.⁹² Klas-Göran Karlsson has noted a striking indifference to the curricular reform of 1980 on the part of historians, and in the early 1990s Håkan Arvidsson described yet another new curriculum that seemed not to disturb the scholarly community.⁹³ Although these are not cases of blanket ignorance on the part of historians,⁹⁴ the criticism rightly indicates that in recent years indeed quite few Swedish historians have involved themselves in the school subject of history.

In the twentieth century, radio and television came to succeed the popular

⁸⁸ Andolf, Göran, 1972, pp. 134, 321.

⁸⁹ For example Ernst Söderlund, Gunnar T. Westin, Göran Graninger, Sven Tägil, Alf Åberg and Jarl Torbacke.

⁹⁰ Långström, Sture, 1997.

⁹¹ Långström, Sture, 1997, pp. 92 ff.

⁹² Zander, Ulf, 2001, p. 401, names a few historians as active in the debates, but he probably has involvement in the 1960s and 70s in view.

⁹³ Karlsson, Klas-Göran, 1997, p. 40; Arvidsson, Håkan, 1993.

⁹⁴ E.g. Ahlmark, Per et al, 1999.

lecture as an important channel for transmitting historical messages in Sweden. Radio broadcasting began in Sweden in 1925, and as in other European countries a public service company, Sveriges Radio (SR), was given monopoly broadcasting rights.⁹⁵ Until 1955, SR operated with only one station, but more gradually additional stations were set up, while in the meantime and until in the 1990s private radio was prohibited.⁹⁶

Especially during its early years SR had strong educational ambitions. Radio lectures dominated to the extent shown in the 1930s when an average of three lectures were included within the daily ten hours of broadcasting.⁹⁷ Many of the lectures were on historical subjects, such as the series on famous Swedish kings broadcast in 1936 and 1937 by a group of young historians. The following year economic historian Eli F. Heckscher broadcast a series of lectures focusing on the history of industry and the business community. Also in the late 1930s, one of the group that lectured on famous kings, historian Ingvar Andersson, initiated a series on the French revolution. Between 1942 and 1947 Andersson was in full charge of lectures at SR, a guarantee that history was frequently dealt with in lecture broadcasts.⁹⁸ In the late 1950s, after Andersson left SR, the young historian Hans Villius was hired to the company. Like Andersson before him, Villius's job included both giving lectures of his own and co-ordinating lectures by other historians. Thus, for several decades radio lectures were an established way for Swedish historians to communicate history to the broader public. During those years a number of historians acquired well-known voices in many homes. In the 1960s, when Villius and his younger colleague Olle Häger left radio for television, historians Stig Boberg and Bernt Schiller started a forum-styled programme dealing with historical topics and issues. The programme was broadcast from Gothenburg and continued until the 1980s, when it became integrated with a new series broadcast from Malmö. In the 1990s, the science division at SR started a history series that was broadcast from Uppsala.⁹⁹ In these later programmes, interviews and conversations on history replaced the lecture. Plainly enough, history and historians have been a regular part of radio broadcasting ever since the first days of the industry in Sweden.¹⁰⁰

Swedish historians have played the role of communicator also within what for many years has been a tradition of groups of distinguished historians working jointly on a history of Sweden. The first of these writing ventures was, from

⁹⁵ In the first years the company was called Radiotjänst.

⁹⁶ Hadenius, Stig, 1998, pp. 298–302.

⁹⁷ Nordberg, Karin, 1998, p. 123.

⁹⁸ Nordberg, Karin, 1998, pp. 53, 58, 303–306; Gunneriusson, Håkan, 2002, p. 92; Zander, Ulf, 2001, pp. 279, 530.

⁹⁹ Abrahamsson, Ulla B., 1999, pp. 98 f. The series were *Nu och då*, *Historia att minnas*, and *Vetenskapsradion: Historia*. Another series from these years was *Historia på plats* that featured historian Jörgen Weibull; see Wahlström, Sten and Jörgen Weibull, 1990. Historian Alf Åberg participated in *Svar i Dag*, whereas other historians were involved in *Historiska klubben*.

¹⁰⁰ History on the radio should be made a topic of study in its own right; it is treated no further here. Åsa Gillberg is currently working on a study of archaeology on Swedish radio 1925–1950.

the 1870s and 80s, ended as six volumes. Several multi-volume ventures followed in the first half of the twentieth century, the books circulating in the wealthier parts of the population. The last such collaborative work on Swedish history appeared in the late 1960s, while histories of the world were being written yet in the 1980s. Historian Klas Åmark finds most Swedish historians today are opposed to such joint works, but he also alleges the main reason that no synthetic series has been written in recent decades is that publishing houses have not been interested. In the early 1990s, when history again became popular, the publisher Bonnier issued a reprint of a series issued in the 60s instead of commissioning a new work, a decision Åmark calls a cultural policy scandal.¹⁰¹ A Bonnier competitor Norstedts commissioned a new history of Sweden, but asked a journalist (Herman Lindqvist) rather than a group of historians to do the work. These decisions by the two publishers indicate that something had changed in the Swedish history culture. Either strong market forces had intruded, or the status of the professional community of historians had changed – at least in the eyes of the publishers.

Well into the twentieth century, the results of historical research could easily be disseminated to broad groups of readers. Early in the century historian Carl Grimberg wrote rows of books that became best-sellers.¹⁰² At mid-century, historians such as Nils Ahnlund, Ingvar Andersson, and Curt Weibull continued to write books that sold in numerous editions.¹⁰³ Ahnlund worked for ten years at the newspaper *Svenska Dagbladet* before becoming a professor of history, and then as professor he continued to write articles for the press. In the decades after the war, many other historians, among them Torvald Höjer, Erik Lönnroth, Sven Ulric Palme, and Sten Carlsson, wrote extensively for the press.¹⁰⁴ During these years then, the writing of book reviews and history articles for the press was regarded as one of the historian's normal tasks. In the latter half of the century Alf Åberg wrote more than five hundred newspaper articles in *Svenska Dagbladet* and more than twenty books, most of them seeking a readership in the broad public.¹⁰⁵ Of a younger generation, Jarl Torbacke likewise wrote hundreds of newspaper articles and certain of his colleagues similarly wrote for their local papers.¹⁰⁶ In the 1990s, with the revival of history, young historians Peter Englund and Dick Harrison, among others, wrote best-selling books and numerous articles for the press. Continuity seemed to be a permanent feature of the co-operation between historians and the press. But

¹⁰¹ Åmark, Klas, 2001, pp. 406 ff. Cf. Eriksson, Gunnar, 1988, p. 101. In 2003, *Historisk tidskrift* put out a special issue (no. 2) on synthesis history, which shows that Swedish historians share great interest in the subject.

¹⁰² Torbacke, Jarl, 1993.

¹⁰³ E.g. their biographies of great kings and queens; Gustav II Adolf, Erik XIV and Kristina, respectively.

¹⁰⁴ Gunneriusson, Håkan, 2002, pp. 51, 55, 149; Torstendahl, Rolf, 2002, p. 595. Zander, Ulf, 2001, pp. 400, 564, and Höjer, Torvald T:son, 1936, p. 703, mention more historians who wrote regularly in the press.

¹⁰⁵ Werkelid, Carl Otto, 1997.

¹⁰⁶ Torbacke, Jarl, 1993a, pp. 266 ff.

it has been claimed too that many newspapers have ceased reviewing historical works, or else only publish reviews written by non-historians.¹⁰⁷

A likely reason why during the late 1900s scholarly historical works were rarely reviewed in the press, is that the character of those works underwent change. Seen over the long period between 1890 and 1975, Swedish dissertations in history gradually became less epic and began to aim at solving problems.¹⁰⁸ To a degree, such changes are changes in communicative ideas, but are also a matter of separate generations of historians having different missions. Ragnar Björk argues that whereas the ambition of Nils Ahnlund's (born 1889) was "to communicate history to his reader," the younger Erik Lönnroth (born 1910) championed solving problems. Instead of presenting a picture of society "like the true one," Lönnroth chose to fashion a picture using "reliable reasoning."¹⁰⁹ In a debate in 1949–50, Lönnroth claimed it was crucial that historians stop writing epic history, "no matter how unpopular a decision that is or will be."¹¹⁰ He was a leading historian in his generation and many young historians were to heed his advice.

With stronger demands for analysis and with increasing specialisation, it became more difficult for the non-historian to read the historian's works. Need for a popular history genre had become apparent, one that would condense, simplify, and otherwise decipher difficult studies and make more readable texts of them. This need became acute when theories and quantitative methods took over the historical sciences from the 1960s onwards. In those politically radical years, biography was not held in high esteem – it has even been suggested that for anyone seeking to become established as a historian in the 1960s and 70s it was counter-productive to devote time to the life of a single human.¹¹¹ Nor did more than a few Swedish historians work with local history,¹¹² despite how many people are interested in local history and in the stories of individuals. These various factors combined set certain distance between professional historians and the reading public. In 1982, historian Birgitta Odén, reacting to this distance, complained that the rift between historical research and applied history was steadily widening, that in fact the historical discipline was in a crisis situation.¹¹³

¹⁰⁷ Torstendahl, Rolf, 2000, p. 182. Notably, more than sixty years before, Höjer, Torvald T:son, 1936, p. 703, complained that the press showed only a little interest in reviewing historical literature.

¹⁰⁸ Blom, Conny, 1978, p. 17.

¹⁰⁹ Björk, Ragnar, 1983, p. 329.

¹¹⁰ Lönnroth, Erik, 1949, p. 13.

¹¹¹ Ambjörnsson, Ronny, et al, 1997, p. 7.

¹¹² Trenter, Cecilia, 1999, p. 61, points out that local history had a stronger position in Norway and Denmark than in Sweden.

¹¹³ Odén, Birgitta, 1982, especially p. 9.

3. Historians and the communication of knowledge

There had long been criticism of how historians write history, and in it a common charge was that historians paid little attention to what people wanted to read. Already around 1830 several Swedish writers of historical novels ridiculed historians, alleging that no one thought much of their works.¹¹⁴ A hundred years later, in a radio discussion in 1935, the charge was heard that historians had made history uninteresting, that they were so bogged down in details they could no longer write meaningfully about the past. The head of SR, Carl Anders Dymling, complained that historians were offering the reading public “stones instead of bread.”¹¹⁵ A few decades later, author and acting historian Vilhelm Moberg attributed low reader interest in history to the writing of historians being “too damn boring,” and writer Sven Delblanc charged that historians had a “notorious inability” to write readable history.¹¹⁶ In the 1990s, historian Alf W. Johansson sided with these critics, and likened texts by some of his colleagues to “deserts.”¹¹⁷ The criticism has much the same ring down through the years, even though certain changes do appear in the writing practice of professional historians. What prompted Alf W. Johansson’s harsh verdict was that starting late in the 1960s what historians wrote had become such heavy reading due to all the theory and analysis it contained.

As mentioned already, throughout the twentieth century Swedish historians communicated knowledge to wide audiences through the channels of lectures, radio, schoolbooks, trade books, and press articles. But unless popular history was rewarded within the scholarly community, young historians would deem it a strategic mistake to involve themselves in popular history. What they wanted to know was whether this or that activity would facilitate the climb up the ladder to status and to a good position in the field of history production. Already in 1936 Torvald T:son Höjer complained that historians too seldom wrote for a broad readership.¹¹⁸ Reviewing a work of popular history in 1963, Erik Lönnroth (who earlier advocated that historians stop writing epic history) said historians themselves would need to popularise history to halt the eternal refrain of old lies in popular history books.¹¹⁹ His colleague Sten Carlsson acknowledged the problems historians had communicating their knowledge, and thought it would be advantageous to let acting historians help.¹²⁰ The question of who should popularise history, professionals or acting historians, continued to be debated. Bernt Schiller and Gunnar Eriksson discussed the

¹¹⁴ Johansson, Stefan, 2000, p. 107.

¹¹⁵ Dymling quoted in Nordberg, Karin, 1998, pp. 303, 429. Cf. Höjer, Torvald T:son, 1936, p. 697.

¹¹⁶ RA, 3402, Ingvar Anderssons arkiv, part II, vol. 18, letter from Moberg to Andersson, 1970.09.29; Delblanc, Sven, 1970.

¹¹⁷ Johansson, Alf W., 1993. Lilja, Sven, 1994, provides an account of the debate that followed.

¹¹⁸ Höjer, Torvald T:son, 1936.

¹¹⁹ Lönnroth, Erik, 1963.

¹²⁰ Sten Carlsson 1970, referred in Zander, Ulf, 2001, p. 376.

matter in 1970, and three years later Leif Björkman and Jarl Torbacke did so again.¹²¹ In the early 1980s, a group of young radical historians found the problem to be that professional historians formed a “closed guild that neither had been able nor wanting to reach out with its research to broad layers of the population.”¹²² Their main argument was actually that “people” should by rights have chief place in works on history, but in addition they identified as an awkward problem that professional historians lived in their closed world.

The issue of research communication was however not left to the historians to decide, for in 1977 the Swedish parliament revised laws regulating universities and colleges and a new law stated that historians (and other university employees) had to communicate their research findings to society. The new regulation was based on the idea that society only benefits from access to such information. The issue was in part an economic one, but one also of democracy. The argued point was that if researchers communicated their findings to society, citizens and politicians could make wiser decisions. The state-financed Swedish universities and scholarly communication was to be a type of payback to the public. In the 1990s the effect was sharpened when the paragraph requiring that research be communicated was given a higher priority among regulations in force. The government was increasing pressure on academics to work with society.¹²³

The law legitimated professional historians’ popularisation of history, but it did not automatically make popular history valuable as scholarly capital.¹²⁴ At mid-century Sven Ulric Palme, who wrote frequently on the past for the press and in radio lecture form, complained that his colleagues regarded popular history an immoral attempt to make money on the efforts of other historians.¹²⁵ Indirectly he claimed importance for his own activities, suggesting that he should get credit for them in future competitions for professorships. The attitude he criticised may have changed after a new law was introduced in the 1970s, but the matter is far from clarity. One historian in the 1980s appealed the appointment of a competitor, calling the expert report in the file “a sock in the jaw” for historians who had worked at the third task of the university.¹²⁶ Near the turn of the century historian Dick Harrison, known for his many popularly written books on the past, wrote that the third task is “almost routinely ignored” when experts and committees decide whom to employ.¹²⁷ He went so far as to claim that third task activities were blots on candidate’s career,

¹²¹ Schiller, Bernt, 1970 (1969); Eriksson, Gunnar, 1970. Björkman, Leif, 1973; Torbacke, Jarl, 1973; Björkman, Leif, 1973a; Torbacke, Jarl, 1973a.

¹²² Lind, Lennart & Janken Myrdal, 1982, p. 9.

¹²³ Ludvigsson, David, 1997, pp. 6 f., 13 f.

¹²⁴ In an official report in 1996 scholars said that social factors kept them from working with science information and popular science. *Spridning av forskningsresultat*, 1996, p. 25.

¹²⁵ Palme, Sven Ulric, 1954, pp. 212 f. Cf. Zander, Ulf, 2001, pp. 278 f.

¹²⁶ Richardson, Gunnar, 1992, pp. 22 f., 26, 29.

¹²⁷ Harrison, Dick, 2000, p. 169. Jörgen Weibull confirms that at appointments, popular history works are given little value; Weibull quoted in Ohlson, Bengt, 1994, p. 29.

amounted to “academic suicide.”¹²⁸ The opinion is hard to give credit. I suggest that third task activities have been valued but only for second class merit. Because most historians engaged in some third task activities, it was impossible for Harrison and others to win appointments primarily on the grounds that they had engaged in such activities. Nevertheless, Palme, Harrison, and their unnamed colleague were surely correct in saying professional historians did not value research communication activities to the extent the law required.

While the scholarly community placed emphasis on gains to be made in the internal circle, demands continued to be heard for historical writings for the public. Classics of national historiography like the books of Carl Grimberg, although quickly becoming outdated, continued nonetheless to be widely read. Certain historians tried to write for a broader readership, but the gap widened between what people asked for and what was delivered. Acting historians were soon looking to fill the gap, this not only in Sweden but in for example Germany and France as well. Sweden had acting historian writers in Jan Olof “Jolo” Olsson, Alf Henrikson, Lars Widding, Vilhelm Moberg, and in the 1990s, in Herman Lindqvist. Academic historians controlled only a portion of the market for historical literature.¹²⁹

Conflicts occasionally arose between acting historians and professional historians and a few of these are reviewed here. A later chapter takes up conflicts that arose in connection with televised histories. Conflict arises when views vary on what rules should guide the writing of history. In 1970, the writer of historical novels Vilhelm Moberg published a synthesis history of Sweden. In a foreword he says “for sixty years I read Swedish history,”¹³⁰ and thereby claims certain credibility. When the book met with criticism from historians, Moberg was greatly annoyed. In a letter to his aged historian friend, Ingvar Andersson, he wrote that he had never felt he held any particular view on history, and added “I don’t start out from any [view of history] when I write!”¹³¹ This exclamation should be taken with caution as on other occasions Moberg spoke of his views of history in other ways.¹³² It is interesting even so to see an acting historian claim not to have a view on history. A difference between professional historians and acting historians may in fact be that the latter rarely reflect on their roles as history producers.

Journalist Lars Widding frequently played the role of acting historian, as when he wrote articles on history for the large daily *Expressen*, made entertain-

¹²⁸ Harrison in *Sommar*, SR P1, 2003.07.01. Astonishingly enough, he called professional historians misanthropes.

¹²⁹ Raphael, Lutz, 2000, pp. 131 ff. On Grimberg, see Torbacke, Jarl, 1993. Seven acting historians from the nineteenth century and early twentieth century in Sweden are presented in *En annan historia: Sju folkliga historiker från Nils Månsson Mandelgren till Vilhelm Moberg*, 1982. The seven are Nils Månsson Mandelgren, August Strindberg, Alfred Kämpe, Ossian Håkanson, Fabian Månsson, Fredrik Ström, and Vilhelm Moberg.

¹³⁰ Moberg, Vilhelm, 1977 (1970), p. 9.

¹³¹ RA, 3402, Ingvar Anderssons arkiv, part II, vol. 18, letter from Moberg to Andersson 1970.11.04.

¹³² Per-Ola Jacobsson is working on a study on Moberg as historian.

ing history reports for television programmes,¹³³ and published historical novels and popular history books set in Sweden's warring past.¹³⁴ In fact, in the early 1980s Widding spent a year lecturing on eighteenth-century Sweden (and teaching creative writing) at the University of California at Berkeley, where his role was that of professional historian. Such a position would not be possible to hold in Sweden, as he had not studied history at a university. What is interesting here is that in 1978 Widding visited the Historical Society in Uppsala, affiliated with the university's history department, and at a meeting there communication broke down. In his memoirs Widding recalls how he was attacked by a (leftist) historian for not depicting the struggle of the poor against the powers, and for there being no visible "theory" in his books.¹³⁵ From his aggressive handling of the incident in his memoirs, it appears Widding failed to see the further implications of the attack, namely, that the historian faulted Widding for not making it clear what force drives history. The incident is not reported here to show Widding's relationship with academia was as frosty as it was then. And in fact, he has praised Uppsala historians for being helpful and always responding to his queries.¹³⁶ The episode shows rather another acting historian who seldom reflected deeply on the past and supplies an example of how communication between acting and professional historians could fail.

The debate over the communication of history intensified in Sweden in the late 1980s and early 1990s and did so partly in connection with the renewed public interest in history. Clearly historians' interest in theory collided with public demands, alienating readers and causing them to question the value of historians' work. There was what amounted to a "series of attacks on the withdrawal of the historians from their communicative and public role."¹³⁷ In the mid-1980s a group of Scandinavian historians were commissioned to evaluate Swedish historical research. In their report they expressed surprise that Swedish historians wrote so little popular history, a situation they compared with that in Norway, where many historians wrote local histories – largely for a local readership. However, intellectual historian Gunnar Eriksson, who served on the evaluation team, added that "there is a surprising amount of intelligible history produced by our present professional historians, whether or not they recognise their works are popular."¹³⁸

A truly fierce debate broke out in the early 1990s when publisher giant Norstedts contracted a popular journalist and author, Herman Lindqvist, to

¹³³ Many of the articles are collected in Widding, Lars et al., 1975. The history reports were made for the television show *Halv sju* in the 1970s. About *Halv sju*, see Edin, Anna, 2000, pp. 121–132.

¹³⁴ Widding, Lars, 1972, tells about the historical background of some of the novels. Holmgren, Ola, 1975, offers a critical view on Widding's novels.

¹³⁵ Widding, Lars, 1983, pp. 208 ff., 213 f.

¹³⁶ Widding, Lars, 1983, p. 213. He even began study as an undergraduate in the department a few years after his visit to the Historical Association.

¹³⁷ Aronsson, Peter, 2000, p. 343.

¹³⁸ Eriksson, Gunnar, 1988, p. 121. Cf. Myhre, Jan Eivind, 2000, pp. 20 f.



Figure 2. The conflict between professional historians and best-selling acting historians. Cartoonist Jan Berglin interprets the conflict. The cartoon reads “Why the big sweat over exacting research – some jerk will only make a million skimming what’s on top?” From the television set: “The morning of 6 November King Gustaf II Adolf felt a bit indisposed and writes in his...” The historian watching: “That’s all wrong! You dilettant!” His life companion: “Oh please be quiet, Peter... I think he’s interesting!” Easily decoded, the television storyteller is Herman Lindqvist, and the historian watching is Peter Englund. The two had a big row in the 1990s. Source: Jan Berglin, 2001, p. 91. Courtesy of Jan Berglin.

write a multi-volume history of Sweden. Lindqvist had written a few historical books before, but becoming formally commissioned to write a history of Sweden made him *the* acting historian of the country almost over night. For the next ten years he published a book each year, conducted extensive promotional tours with lectures, wrote numerous historical articles for newspapers, and was on-screen presenter in some thirty historical television programmes.¹³⁹ Thanks to his extraordinary productivity, the massive promotional efforts of his publisher, and his own optimistic appearance and enthusiasm, he quickly became widely known and his books sold in the hundreds of thousands.¹⁴⁰ His television programmes found an even larger audience. His is the best Swedish example of how history can be adapted and can switch among media forms. His strained relationship to the historical community requires further comment.

¹³⁹ Ludvigsson, David, 1997; Zander, Ulf, 2001, pp. 436–445.

¹⁴⁰ By 1997 the first five volumes had sold more than 1 million copies; letter from Lars Erik Sundberg (Norstedts) to the author, 1997.06.27.

The debate arose for a number of reasons. First, professional historians were provoked by the very fact that a non-trained historian was contracted for the writing job; second, they were provoked by the attitude he displayed; and third, historians thought the books were poor history. Ultimately his critics were saying Lindqvist was not the right person to write a synthesis history of Sweden. The debate was to go on for years and no further description of it is needed here.¹⁴¹ The very interesting point is the attitudes that Lindqvist and professional historians expressed about one another. In an early interview, from 1991, where the interviewer said that rumours had it Lindqvist was not a careful worker, Lindqvist replied there was no problem as the publisher would provide fact-checkers.¹⁴² He expressed this remarkable view before the first book was published and it obviously indicates a non-reflective attitude to history. When historians complained that the first book was poor, Lindqvist countered by arguing that professional historians were not fulfilling their duty to the public. Assisted by the media he posited a theoretical dichotomy where he himself was on the side of the public, providing them with the history they wanted, and the inward-looking historians were on the opposing side. He legitimated his own position by claiming he had read history “every day for thirty years.”¹⁴³ Negative response from historians followed Lindqvist through the 90s, culminating in the fierce review in 1994 by Peter Englund, who declared he had counted 140 errors in just one book.¹⁴⁴ Englund’s attack is interesting not just because it was an incredibly savage attack, but because it came from someone whom the public recognised. Englund like Lindqvist was the author of best-selling historical books, but unlike Lindqvist Englund defended the rules of the field and indirectly his own position in that field. By acting as a professional historian he won status or symbolic capital in the eyes of fellow historians. The criticism forced Lindqvist to be more careful with facts and interpretations.¹⁴⁵ Powerful actors on the field of history production forced Lindqvist to follow rules.

Another debate in the early 1990s arose over the museum exposition *Den Svenska Historien* [The History of Sweden], which made 1993 an official Year of Swedish History. The exposition was the result of a 1986 suggestion that museums and historians should co-operate in displaying “new perspectives” on

¹⁴¹ I discussed the early debate in detail in Ludvigsson, David, 1997, pp. 26–36. Zander, Ulf, 2001, pp. 436–445, draws the line up through 2000.

¹⁴² von Platen, Gustaf, 1992.

¹⁴³ Lindqvist quoted in Palm, Magnus, 1995, p. 47; Lindqvist says that he read Swedish history all his life as a way to confirm his identity, because he grew up in Finland and lived abroad most of his life; letter from Herman Lindqvist to the author, 1997.04.06.

¹⁴⁴ Englund, Peter, 1994a. Another grave defeat for Lindqvist was in 2000 when he was hounded by the media for mistakenly suggesting that an aged professor of economic history had taken a pro-Nazi stand in the 1930s. At this point the media joined with historians against Lindqvist instead of the other way around, as had largely been the case in the early 1990s. Cf. Zander, Ulf, 2001, pp. 443 f., 579 f.

¹⁴⁵ Cf. Aronsson, Peter, 2000, p. 347; Lindqvist confirms that he has become more careful; interview with Herman Lindqvist, 2001.02.22.

Swedish history.¹⁴⁶ Very few Swedish historians work at museums. Instead, museum personnel in Sweden have usually studied archaeology, ethnology, or art history.¹⁴⁷ Historian Christer Öhman was on the steering committee, and a number of other historians were invited to a meeting where the project idea was presented and historians were given an opportunity to respond. It appears the steering committee had already determined the framework for the exhibition, namely, that it was to be chronological rather than thematic, and that it was to present the “whole” history. The meeting resulted in a number of suggestions for events and processes to be highlighted, but historians also levelled criticism against the framework presented, questioning the chronological approach and asking “whose” whole history was to be exhibited.¹⁴⁸ The same criticism would be heard again when the exhibition was in place.

Christer Öhman has remarked that the exhibition was to awaken the emotions of the visitor. Individual parts were to form “stations of experience” featuring important individuals and events that signalled moments of major change in history, and individuals and events were to be chosen with what people were familiar with in mind.¹⁴⁹ Artists were commissioned to design and shape rooms from different ages to illustrate stories selected. Compared with most museum exhibitions very little use was made of extant objects.

Planning for the event had government backing, but economically the project was not fully independent. In the early 1990s when the Swedish government cut the spending, the lottery agency Tipstjänst stepped in with the big money needed to realise the project. However, private money was put into the project at a cost of another kind, because Tipstjänst demanded that showcases on gambling be included.¹⁵⁰ It can thus be said that commercial considerations partly influenced choices of what history to set before visitors. Further, it is fair to view as a commercial consideration the decision to commission Herman Lindqvist to write an exhibition guidebook.¹⁵¹ Lindqvist was just becoming famous for his book series on Swedish history, and was an attraction in his own right. He rather than historian Öhman or project director Sten Rentzhog was picked to write the exhibition guidebook that visitors would go home with.¹⁵²

The exhibitions opened both in Stockholm and at museums around the country and drew crowds of visitors. But aspects of it provoked debate. Several

¹⁴⁶ *Museiförslag: Kulturrådets överväganden och förslag angående de centrala museernas uppgifter och ansvar för landets museiväsende* 1986.

¹⁴⁷ In 1990, in total three professional historians worked in Sweden's 195 cultural historical museums. Their activities equalled two out of 4.100 yearly fulltime jobs; Isacson, Maths, 1993, p. 252.

¹⁴⁸ Lundberg, Bengt, 1997. Museum staff questioned the story approach and thought that one should start from extant objects.

¹⁴⁹ Öhman, Christer, 1994.

¹⁵⁰ Karlsson, Sten O., 1998, pp. 127 f.

¹⁵¹ Lindqvist, Herman, 1993.

¹⁵² Sten Rentzhog was an influential person in the Swedish history culture in the 1980s and 90s. Apart from directing *Den Svenska Historien*, he also directed the aforementioned *Jamtli Historyland*.

historians claimed the story of Sweden it told was outdated nationalistic. Other voices in the debate countered that the key problem was that historians were asleep off in their ivory tower and that if they cared about communicating their knowledge they would do so.¹⁵³ One critic complained that professional historians had lost the ability to make history come alive, and intellectual historian Tore Frängsmyr found historians' writings too full of heavy terms and concepts from social science theory. Peter Englund wrote of the pain he felt when seeing a historian "shine like cheese if his work sold over 100 copies." He said the stylistic ideals of university departments led to the production of "crushed gravel."¹⁵⁴

Following the debates over Lindqvist and over the exposition *Den Svenska Historien* a period began when self-reflection among historians intensified. Eva Österberg stated she hoped the year to come would bring less talk of historians as "blockheads who cannot write or speak."¹⁵⁵ One of the royal science academies arranged a seminar on the state of the history discipline. There, Tore Frängsmyr criticised the discipline for its use of "mumbo jumbo." Commenting on a set of dissertations he cited excessive use of sociological terminology, and too numerous theoretical discussions with tables and diagrams, all of which he said left texts unnecessarily difficult to read and aesthetically unattractive.¹⁵⁶ While historians countered with the argument that basic research often involved difficult concepts,¹⁵⁷ Frängsmyr's analysis that dissertations had become difficult to read was likely correct. Historians reacted in different ways. One leading historian replied that if a dissertation was easy to read that was no sign that it was good,¹⁵⁸ while a younger historian proposed that courses in developing writing skills be added in postgraduate studies.¹⁵⁹

A question that also came up for discussion was how historians were to relate to the media. Jarl Torbacke encouraged colleagues to write for the press, though he admitted there were those who felt it improper to make money on others' research efforts.¹⁶⁰ Anders Björnsson and Henrik Berggren, both historians who had left academia to work in the press, noted that journalists faced extreme time pressures and urged historians to confide to the public about their work as well.¹⁶¹ Klas Åmark felt Swedish historians were actually more interested in writing for a wide audience than they had been in the 1970s and 80s, and he suggested that Peter Englund's success had made other historians consider writing for larger audiences. But Åmark also remarked that a historian's choice of

¹⁵³ Jönsson, Lars-Eric, 1994, 79; Karlsson, Sten O., 1998.

¹⁵⁴ Berntson, Lennart, 1993; Frängsmyr, Tore, 1993; Englund, Peter, 1993.

¹⁵⁵ Österberg, Eva, 1994, p. 9.

¹⁵⁶ Frängsmyr, Tore, 1995.

¹⁵⁷ Jansson, Torkel, 1995. Cf. Åmark, Klas, 1993, p. 272.

¹⁵⁸ Ekman, Stig, 1999/2000, p. 63.

¹⁵⁹ Isacson, Maths, 1993, pp. 250 f.

¹⁶⁰ Torbacke, Jarl, 1993a, esp. pp. 261 f.; Eriksson, Gunnar, 1988, p. 121, makes the same point.

¹⁶¹ Anders Björnsson at Historical Society of Uppsala, 1997.03.20; Henrik Berggren at Historical Society of Uppsala, 2002.10.24; author's notes. Cf. Salomon, Kim, 1995, p. 135.

the right channel for communication depended on the audience that was the target. In his own case a learned article in the press was a poor channel because the targeted audience did not read such articles.¹⁶² Some historians were always suspicious of the media. In 1997, the Swedish media suddenly “discovered” the issue of eugenics and forced sterilisations. Because sterilisations were largely well-known both to medical personnel and within the historical research community, such sudden media interest led historians to aggressively assert that it was wrong of the media to select the research results it reported on the basis of media logic alone.¹⁶³

These debates tend to counter Rüsen’s idealised view of historians as public servants guiding their fellow citizens. And Swedish professional historians in the late twentieth century perhaps were more focused on criticising the weaknesses of historical representations than on constructing popular representations themselves. But it is clearly the case that historians discussed and reflected on their roles in society. A forum for their discussions were historical societies affiliated with some university departments of history. The records of the Historical Society of Uppsala show that a number of acting historians were invited to speak at society meetings in the 1970s as well as in the 80s and 90s.¹⁶⁴ Accordingly, the societies functioned as a meeting ground for professionals and acting historians.

4. Conclusions

Discussion in this chapter provides an introduction to public uses of history and to the roles of professional historians in Sweden. The view is offered that historical consciousness is dependent upon phenomena such as communication activities of professional historians, the teaching of history in schools, role-play at popular historical festivals, and widespread access to historical novels and to television programmes.

History played an important role in Sweden in the early 1900s, but it has been suggested that by comparison, the 1960s, 70s, and 80s were decades of history-lessness. In the latter half of the twentieth century, history lost ground as a school subject following several school reforms. Meanwhile, the process of professionalisation among professional historians, especially the introduction of quantities of theory, had gradually made historical writings difficult reading

¹⁶² Åmark, Klas, 1993, pp. 271, 277.

¹⁶³ Broberg, Gunnar and Mattias Tydén, 1998. See also Zaremba, Maciej, 1998; Broberg, Gunnar and Mattias Tydén, 1998a; Zaremba, Maciej, 1998a; Runcis, Maija, 2000. Zander, Ulf, 2001, pp. 420 f., also gives an account of the debate.

¹⁶⁴ UUB. Historiska föreningen, AI:5. Per Anders Fogelström, 1969; Sven Lindqvist, 1977; Lars Widding, 1978; Olle Häger and Hans Villius, 1981; Dag Stålsjö, 1982; Maja Hagerman, 1999; Henrik Berggren, 2002 (historian working as journalist); Jan Guillou, 1999; Stig Strömholm, 2001. In 1997 the society also arranged a debate on the role of historians in public debate. Herman Lindqvist visited the Historical Society in Lund.

for the lay public. This matter was frequently debated. It should not be overlooked that many historians did communicate their research findings, by such means as books and articles, popular lectures, and radio talks. Nevertheless, when the scholarly discipline reached the professionalised state, the need for intermediaries increased, a factor important to keep in mind when the roles of Olle Häger and Hans Villius come up for consideration. Häger and Villius were two among many historians who wrote popular historical works and made historical television programmes for a wide audience.

In moving toward a fuller understanding of uses of history in Sweden, it is necessary to give proper place to the fact that a wide range of acting historians write popular works for a wide audience. And, considering popularity of their works, historical fiction writers such as Moberg, Fogelström and Guillou must be thought of as within that range. Furthermore, there must be place for the popular movement of genealogists and amateur local historians whose work shows active use of the past taking place in local communities. It would be a grave exaggeration to say a general history-lessness prevails in Sweden, or prevailed there in the 1960s, 70s, and 80s. Towards the end of the century history did in fact gain new popularity. The number of historical books published rose significantly, historical festivals appeared, and the past became a frequently contested matter in public debate. Such then is the societal context for the analysis of historical documentaries in Sweden that follows in this study. It is curious enough, that many of the films treated here were made in just the decades that have been characterised as history-less.

The Historical Documentary

1. Defining historical documentary

Before turning to the documentary films of Häger and Villius, I discuss in this chapter matters that are essential to a proper understanding of the historical documentary genre. First I posit a working definition of the term historical documentary, and then survey modes of representation that historical documentaries commonly use. Next, to clarify how the modern documentary has come to have the forms and content it has, I review the international tradition of historical documentary. Finally I take up the relationship of historians to the historical documentary genre and to its evolution.

What a historical documentary is and is not is a disputed matter. Although viewers have certain general expectations of works that are promoted as documentaries, much theoretical uncertainty remains. Simply put, a historical documentary is a non-fiction film that deals with the past. To paraphrase John Grierson's famous definition, a historical documentary is a film characterised principally by the *creative treatment of past actuality*.¹ Visible in this preliminary definition is the crux of the contested point in all discussion of documentary. The actuality matter is clear enough; the historical documentary (as all non-fiction) has its points of reference in the real world, in contrast to fiction, which refers to a world constituted of itself alone. But, as Grierson points out, the making of documentary films involves moments of creativity. This can appear as artistic techniques such as editing, lighting, camera movement, and the like. But it can as well refer to the surface reality of the pro-filmic scene, that which happened before the camera, having been arranged or manipulated. As a consequence, although frequently documentaries are to a high degree works that inform, uncertainty exists regarding their epistemic status, the question always fair to ask being how "true" are the audio-visual representations?

Staged scenery has always been an integral part of non-fictional historical film. In *Combat naval* (1905) about the Russian-Japanese war, made by the French film company Pathé, the lack of authentic footage was compensated for

¹ Grierson first used the expression "creative treatment of actuality" in 1933. Cf. Corner, John, 1996, pp. 11 ff.; Paget, Derek, 1998, p. 117.

by including staged scenery.² In the early years of the twentieth century no clear distinction existed between fiction and non-fiction film.³ Seventeen years after *Combat naval*, documentary pioneer Robert Flaherty chose to stage events before the camera in his account of the Inuit *Nanook of the North* (1922). In this film, Inuit hunters use “true” hunting methods and equipment that had been abandoned years before. Thus, *re-enactments*, or sequences of staged pictures, were used to illustrate the real world. But Flaherty’s method caused a great deal of discussion. Debate over the nature of documentary thus started when film was yet in its childhood. The use of photographic images as such was questioned, not least from an ideological point of view. Bertold Brecht and others charged that even when a photographic image shows some part of the real world, far too often only the surface of that world is visible and little of what lies behind. Filmed workers might appear happy, but this does not prove they are content with conditions in real life. What is represented by the photographic image is only on the surface real. In spite of this objection, and while it is true some documentaries were criticised for staging scenery,⁴ the general feeling was that photographic images have the unique capacity of corresponding point by point with nature and thus of picturing reality.

For a long time, documentary as a genre was defined on the basis of intrinsic textual features. Content and techniques of representation determined which films were documentary and which were not. However, a key issue in more recent theoretical debate is the interpretative capacity of the audience. Theorists in cultural studies, and like them film scholars, have argued that members of a media audience are not passive consumers, but rather actively re-interpret dominant cultural forces. Emphasis has been placed on the open-ended aspects of representation. For example, John Fiske tells how Australian Aborigines ally themselves with the Indians in older American Westerns (instead of with the white heroes),⁵ and film scholar Edward Branigan holds that we can in fact view any fiction film in a non-fictional way.⁶ The theoretical bottom line of either point is that a text is defined in the act of reading. What is or is not documentary depends on audience response, on whether or not the viewing audience chooses to recognise a given film as documentary.

Seeming correct at first, this nonetheless simplifies the communication process too much. Less of the job of negotiating fiction from non-fiction is done by individual viewers than is done in the socio-cultural milieu. A determination is made largely by a film’s *indexing*. A film is labelled non-fiction in advertising announcements, interviews, and press releases, for one thing, and the individual viewer also learns by word of mouth how others have responded. A share of

² Snickars, Pelle, 2001, pp. 201 f.

³ Keil, Charlie, 1991; Snickars, Pelle, 2001.

⁴ Much later, Nichols, Bill, 1991, p. 250, wrote that documentaries that adopt re-enactments of historically based events “trade documentary authenticity for fictional identification.”

⁵ Fiske, John, 1989, pp. 25, 43.

⁶ Branigan, Edward, 1992, p. 193.

viewer response to a film will always be a simple reflection of expectations viewers have when seeing a film. The labelling or indexing that takes place through credits, titles, and other textual clues also tells whether a film was intended to be fiction or non-fiction. While the individual viewer is never only at the mercy of the sender, and at times freely makes an unanticipated interpretation, in most cases it is indexing that decides and amounts then to a kind of contractual agreement between filmmaker and audience.

The theory of indexing, with its foremost advocates Noël Carrol and Carl Plantinga, among others, holds that indexing results chiefly from initiative on the part of filmmakers. If a filmmaker indexes and publicly identifies a film as non-fiction, this prompts a specific type of viewer behaviour. Carrol believes indexing a film as non-fiction cues viewers to respond by mobilising “objective standards,”⁷ or informs them they are to read the text as non-fiction. Thus, non-fiction, here including documentary, constitutes a reading of one certain kind.

Carl Plantinga offers a cognitive definition of non-fiction films that is consistent with the theory of indexing. He calls them works that “assert a belief that given objects, entities, states of affairs, events, or situations actually occur(red) or exist(ed) in the actual world as portrayed.”⁸ Plantinga’s definition is appealing; what is asserted makes the film fiction or non-fiction. However, not well to forget is Grierson’s view that documentary practice is an activity involving expression. Combining Grierson and Plantinga is this my assertion-based definition of historical documentary: *creative treatment that asserts a belief that the given objects, states of affairs or events occurred or existed in the actual world as portrayed*. Use of the past tense in the definition requires a short comment. Scholars studying historical novels often claim that to be historical, a novel must have a setting from at least thirty to sixty years ago, or from before the birth of the writer. The rule is both too imprecise, and of little or no use when dealing with historical documentary. A first problem is that many historical documentaries are made from filmed materials, and thus tend to deal with present-day events. A thirty-year stipulation would rule out any World War II documentary made before 1975, and would disqualify classics like *Victory at Sea*, *Le Chagrin et la Pitié* [*The Sorrow and the Pity*], and *The World at War*, for example. Better and more flexible would be to rule that a film (or novel) is historical if the traits it represents are from a time-period “historically distinct from our own.”⁹ But I remind again that, just as at times historians by choice call the near past contemporary history, in the context of historical documentaries it may at times be useful and theoretically sound to declare as a matter of choice that recent events qualify as history.

There are surely additional points in my assertion-based definition that are open to discussion. One matter already touched on is critical viewer decisions.

⁷ Carrol, Noël, 1983, pp. 5–46.

⁸ Plantinga, Carl, 1997, pp. 17 f., quote p. 18.

⁹ Dekker, George, 1987, p. 14.

The definition might better read that a documentary is “perceived to make assertions” about the real world.¹⁰ But, as argued above, the fundamental decision is the one made in the film’s socio-cultural milieu. For pragmatic reasons therefore the viewer-related objection can be waived. Another point is sender related and text-bound, namely, that a historical film may assert something that is not actually true, or it may mix assertions in a way that it becomes ambiguous. A famous example is Oliver Stone’s *JFK* (1991), which treats a historical event with extensive artistic license, but at the same time includes archival footage, only to be expected for historical non-fiction to do, and so purports to give a picture that is true.¹¹ Assertions can be made with images and sounds as well as with words, and, be it quickly noted, in recent years digital image processing is providing many new ways of manipulating images.¹² Thus, the assertion-based distinction can leave the boundary between fiction and non-fiction a blurred one.

The truth-value of an assertion will always be relative. A producer has access to limited sources, never to the full text, and he or she can only assert that what the film shows is what truly happened. There are cases where the assertion, checked against the record, proves not to hold. In some cases the producer will be purposely misleading, choose to represent a process rather in simplistic fashion, and knowing full well complex forces were actually working together. Accepting this as fact, I hold to the assertion as the defining element determining that a film is or is not a historical documentary. The tough challenge for maintaining the assertion as criterion is the possibility that a documentarist makes a fake documentary, for example portraying events that he or she knows never took place. In principle, the assertion (seen in a broad sense) stands that the film treats past reality, and the film remains a historical documentary. With all respect for these problems, the index/assertive definition is an option good enough for the purposes of this study.

Finally, to reserve the label historical documentary for a specific genre requires that it be clear precisely where and how borders run between it and other film types. The distinction from other kinds of documentary representation can be made by choosing the right verb tense for the assertion; if the film asserts that events that include pictured objects happened in the past, then it is a historical documentary film, but not otherwise. What distinguishes documentary from non-fiction works such as news programmes is the creative, expressive form of the documentary. Questions of judgement are then involved, which may mean distinctions are less than entirely clear. But this is not an especially difficult problem. More important is that the assertion clearly separates historical documentary from fiction films on the grounds that it is not just “based” on a true story, but portrays events that did happen. By contrast, his-

¹⁰ Eitzen, Dirk, 1995, p. 92.

¹¹ On *JFK*, see Burgoyne, Robert, 1996; Toplin, Robert Brent, 1996; Rosenstone, Robert A., 1995a, pp. 120–131; Kurtz, Michael L., 2000; Stone, Oliver, 2000.

¹² Cf. Winston, Brian, 1995.

torical fiction does not purport to picture events exactly as they happened. Or does it? It is true that historical fiction films rarely carry explicit disclaimers – there are no signs saying “this is an invented story.” Instead fictionality is expressed implicitly by various aesthetic conventions.

In the case of one body of dramatised history, it is difficult to know whether as a type it belongs with documentary works or not, namely, the drama-documentary and docudrama – to use short-form names – otherwise called, respectively, dramatic documentary and documentary drama. The parent terms drama and documentary occur in each name, but the categories originate in different traditions and in my view remain distinct from each other. I propose we think of drama-documentary as something different than docudrama.¹³ There is good reason to make such a distinction.

The drama-documentary is a result of formal experiments within the documentary genre and uses dramatisation to overcome limitations of various kinds. Its protagonists and the sequence of events it shows belong to real history, and the drama-documentary claims to tell a true story. It speaks directly of the past, and its persuasive strength comes from the proximity of the re-created material to what were actual events. By contrast, the docudrama has evolved as drama. A relative of the dramatic fiction film, it uses fictional protagonists and an invented sequence of events.¹⁴ However, docudrama develops a documentary character, either through referring to real events, or through its documentary style of depiction. Thus, docudrama speaks indirectly of the past. It can be that a given docudrama is an excellent artistic rendering of history, but does not claim to be more than just based on a true story. Therefore, its truth-value – like that of historical fiction – lies in the validity of its metaphors, in the moral clarity its lens of melodrama gives to pasts that are difficult to catch and hold.¹⁵ In practice, clear-cut divisions are difficult to make. While drama-documentary and docudrama have developed as separate traditions, both are yet evolving genres. Certain drama-documentaries can feature invented personages, whereas in docudrama the persons who appear, even as protagonists, can be historical. It has been said that the 1970s and 80s were the golden age of drama-documentary, when “the reign of fact was absolute.”¹⁶ In the 1990s several critics

¹³ For a fuller analysis of the terms, see Paget, Derek, 1998. Cf. Corner, John, 1996. In some television cultures one of the types is predominant. Thus, docudrama is the relevant category in America, but in Sweden “dramadokumentär” is the only word used. For recent research, see also Rosenthal, Alan, 1999.

¹⁴ McKerns, Joseph P., 1980, suggests that American television docudrama include three subgroups, namely formats (1) predominantly fictional, (2) predominantly factual, and (3) making fiction fill the gaps not covered by the historical record (he names *Roots* as one example). When Musburger, Robert B., 1985, traces the origins of the American television docudrama, he starts from the definition “accurate recreations of events in the lives of actual persons.” Thus, Musburger’s definition of docudrama approximates McKerns’s second subgroup. In my vocabulary, emphasis placed on historical accuracy makes the film a drama-documentary. On *Roots*, see Chadwick, Bruce, 2001, pp. 266–277; Fishbein, Leslie, 1983.

¹⁵ Cf. Lipkin, Steve, 1999.

¹⁶ McBride, Ian, 1999 (1996), p. 111.

claimed the former boundaries had become blurred and that drama-documentary and docudrama were effectively merging.¹⁷ Steven Spielberg's and Tom Hanks's *Band of Brothers* (2001) is an example of a production that crossed boundaries. Theoretically it is the claim itself – the assertion – that determines which film is a drama-documentary and which a docudrama. The distinction remains of value for analysis, but in practice it may often be difficult to tell one from the other.

The definition does not take into account any particular resemblance between the non-fiction work and past actuality. It is entirely open to admitting programmes of various forms into the genre. However, this makes documentaries a diverse group. To better discuss varieties of historical documentary that occur, categorising tools are required. Division is possible according to content, a distinct group formed for instance by documentaries dealing with war, or, more specifically, with World War II. But a weakness with a content-based division is that an infinite number of subjects exist, so that division by specific subject will always seem arbitrary and inadequate. Another possibility is to group documentaries by similarities among production factors. The basis for division is then the cultural, social, and economic context in which films are made, an example being the context of public service television in Sweden 1968–2001, which is the production context of the films under study here. But production factors change continually and vary considerably around the world. Thus, the problem with this division is like with that based on content. Neither gets a grip on historical documentaries that is fully adequate and all-inclusive. A third possibility is to categorise documentaries with regard to form. Categorising by form can be designed to be all-inclusive, and so next to take up are forms of representation.

2. Forms of representation in historical documentary

How is communication organised in historical documentaries? What modes of representation are and have been commonly used? Various scholars have analysed and described the representational techniques the documentarist has to choose from.¹⁸ Many models and frameworks can be identified, but only those most relevant to historical documentaries come under discussion here. Bill Nichols's terminology has been the most influential in the field of documentary

¹⁷ Paget, Derek, 1998.

¹⁸ Renov, Michael, 1993, traces four tendencies of documentary, (1) to record, (2) to persuade, (3) to analyse, and (4) to express; Plantinga, Carl, 1997, suggests (1) formal voice, (2) open voice, and (3) poetic voice, referring to types of epistemic and aesthetic concerns; Corner, John, 1999a, suggests primary ingredients of documentary modality are (1) observationalism, (2) interview speech, (3) narratives of enquiry and exposition, and (4) the implicatory plane; Nichols, Bill, 2001, posits six modes of representation, (1) poetic, (2) expository, (3) participatory, (4) observational, (5) reflexive, and (6) performative; Nielsen, Carsten Tage, 1993, proposes the categories (1) objective, (2) subjective, and (3) personal documentary.

studies, and in his most recent work he identifies six principal forms or modes of documentary representation: (1) the poetic, (2) the expository, (3) the observational, (4) the participatory, (5) the reflexive, and (6) the performative.¹⁹ Each of the six amounts to a separate strategy for representing the actual world. Three, all of which are particularly common in historical documentaries, we take up here.

Of Nichols's six, his *expository* mode is probably most frequently used in historical documentaries. The expository documentary directly addresses the real, either through voice-over narration, that is, commentary that is heard while images are in view, or via an on-screen presenter. The narrator/presenter interprets the past, hence teaches or guides the viewer. Over the years the expository mode has been much discussed and often criticised, many filmmakers and documentary theorists thinking it overly didactic. Critics say narration gets in the way of the images, makes them less "pure," and voice-over speech has been called the "voice of God," with every insinuation of condescension and patriarchy present. But others vigorously defend the expository form. Jeffrey Youdelman rejects the notion that voice-over narration necessarily suppresses other voices in the documentary. He praises filmmakers who use voice-over for taking responsibility for the film's statements.²⁰ Stella Bruzzi also questions the notion that voice-over narration automatically is overly authoritative in films where it is used. She points to other ways the device works: it can give special sense to the images it is covering; it can be an efficient vehicle for directly conveying information; it can help the story make temporal and locational leaps as the programme unfolds; and it may be used as an instrument for creating irony.²¹ Thus, the expository mode has found and still finds its advocates, and certainly both voice-over narrator and on-screen presenter have been and remain common features of historical documentaries.

When utilising the *observational* mode the documentary observes actions and events as they happen, but typically omits commentary. To be observable something that happens must happen now, at the time of filming – hence the observational mode is useful in ethnographic documentaries but of little use to historical documentaries, concerned as they are with the past. Three exceptions are fond to this provision, each amounting to an additional way the observational mode can assist when portraying the past. First, directly observed scenes in the present time frame can be used in contrast with events of the past. Second, archival footage can be run with no commentary being read over it. Third and most commonly found, scenery from the past can for certain effects be filmed after being re-created, or action from the past, after being re-enacted. The observational mode proposes to the audience that "this is what it looked like, this is what happened," just as by many re-enacted scenes and drama-

¹⁹ Nichols, Bill, 2001. See also Nichols, Bill, 1991; Nichols, Bill, 1994.

²⁰ Youdelman, Jeffrey, 1988, pp. 454 ff.

²¹ Bruzzi, Stella, 2000, pp. 40 ff.

documentaries propose.²² Snow-filled forests, filmed today in an observational mode, can easily represent the snowy forests of another century. And while the viewer may recognise the scene is a re-enacted one, the scene in this mode is in a formal sense fully acceptable. The observational mode has been criticised for purporting to show reality unretouched, while actually what is before the camera will often be affected by the presence of the camera.²³

The third or *participatory* mode provides for the interaction of the filmmaker with the subject. It is the mode in use with interviews, the filmmaker being allowed to intrude in the film and be a social actor. In principle the filmmaker's participation is sensed in any film, through the perspective that is offered, but here the filmmaker is directly involved, is heard and perhaps also seen in actual person. The participatory mode is anchored to the historical present rather than historical past. If the historical present is only rarely the focus of historical documentaries, interviews from the present can nonetheless be useful to include. Their function is to impart an evidential sense, whether they are oral history styled as interviews with witnesses, or interviews with historians. Key testimonies from interviews grant authority by supplying the film with evidence. Further, interviews can be conducted in an on-site setting, where a thoughtfully designed *mise-en-scène* might be used for referential or associative purposes. Interviews with real people bring in feeling and give identification to an abstract subject, and show extant imagery in a new and different light (or even contradict it).

The expository, observational, and participatory modes dominate in most historical documentaries. All three are realistic, or evidentiary, forms of representation: The narrator, the observed imagery, and the interviewees purport to provide true information. By virtue of their realism, they present evidence about the past.²⁴ That a documentary is "made" in one mode does not mean that the mode is the sole significant formal element in the film, only that it is the dominant formal element. Usually in documentaries multiple formal elements are found. For example, an interview can be set in a particular (confirmatory or contradictory) relationship to the exposition of the film. As an example both of expository and participatory documentary, Bill Nichols names *Eyes on the Prize* (1987), on the American civil rights movement.²⁵ In the case of Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah* (1985), on the Holocaust, all of the images are from the historical present, interviews being mixed with shots of railways.²⁶ The shots of railways are in the observational mode. They depict a historical milieu as it is, but at the same time as it was, thus accomplishing the feat of transform-

²² Corner, John, 1996, speaks of "reactive" and "proactive" forms of observationalism, where the latter are staged scenes.

²³ Nichols, Bill, 1991, pp. 32 ff., argues that people become conscious of the camera and start at once to act differently.

²⁴ Cf. Corner, John, 1996, pp. 28 f.

²⁵ Nichols, Bill, 2001, pp. 100, 122.

²⁶ For an analysis of *Shoah*, see Bruzzi, Stella, 2000, pp. 99–114. Regarding its reception, see Eitzen, Dirk, 1995, pp. 152–171.

ing one period of time into another. *Shoah* is in formal terms filmed in a combination of observational and participatory modes.

The other three modes in Nichols's scheme, the *poetic*, *reflexive*, and *performative* modes, all challenge the conventions of realism. These forms are less commonly found in historical documentaries, so here they come in for only a brief look. They represent reality, just as the modes already discussed do, but they do so in non-realistic ways. The poetic documentary uses fragmentary, associative ways of representing the real, as it sets moods rather than conveys information. The reflexive documentary reflects on itself; it places in the limelight its own production, authorship, and inter-textual influences, turns its own formal qualities into objects of questioning and doubt. The performative documentary reminds us of the subjectivity of our knowledge, also heightens our awareness of the limits of representation. Performances are used as a means of distancing the viewer and stressing the impossibility of authentic documentary representation.²⁷ A documentary that shows one kind of use of reflexive elements is Karoline Frogner's *Mørketid* (1995). The re-enactment of a Nazi prison camp scene is interrupted by the entrance of a actual former camp prisoner who confirms what is shown is just as the prisoner experienced it. In *Stranger With A Camera* (2000) filmmaker Elizabeth Barret has a self-reflective narrator tell the story of the shooting of a Canadian filmmaker in eastern Kentucky in 1967. Both films foreground the representation and filmmaking process as well as tell about the past. Owing to their special form, the poetic, reflexive, and performative modes in documentaries prompt audiences to question the authenticity of documentaries in general. Seen as a political act, these non-realistic, questioning forms indirectly point out that society at large follows conventions and codes that need to be questioned.

All six modes were options open to filmmakers early on in the history of non-fiction film, but the way in which they progressively become utilized shows the chronological development of historical documentaries.²⁸ For many years the expository mode dominated historical documentaries. Films consisted of archival footage or other kinds of available imagery accompanied by an authoritative narrator. A major shift took place in the 1960s and 70s, as interviews began to appear more frequently. One factor behind the rise of the participatory mode was that new lightweight equipment became accessible, making it easy to go into a home to interview a subject. Another influencing factor was that historical documentaries were mainly produced for the small television screen. Close-up shots of people talking worked better on television than did long-distance shots filled with small details. A third factor was the urgings from the leftist quarter that historians as well as historical documentarists focus on

²⁷ I concur with Stella Bruzzi when she defines performative documentary; Bruzzi, Stella, 2000, pp. 153 f. Nichols, Bill, 1994, proposes a different definition.

²⁸ Nichols, Bill, 2001, p. 138, alleges the modes first became common in the following decades: poetic 1920s, expository 1920s, observational 1960s, participatory 1960s, reflexive 1980s, performative 1980s.

previously unseen, little people. Interest in portraying what had not been registered before in footage also led to more ready acceptance of the observational mode in historical documentaries. Early historical documentarists, many of whom were trained historians, had been suspicious of re-enactments, feeling they were a fictional device. Now re-enactments became widely accepted.

In the 1980s and 90s new changes affected which representational modes were used in historical documentaries. While most films continued to be made in the expository, observational, and participatory modes, as a result of a new post-modernism historical documentaries made in the reflexive and performative modes began to appear. Thus, the development in the formal modes used in historical documentaries was away from relatively *closed* structures towards *open voice* structures.²⁹ The tendency now is for historical documentaries to resist asserting epistemic authority over the viewer, to show rather than tell, to explore rather than explain. Some films use several narrators as a means of letting viewers create their own interpretations.

Certain factors have influenced which forms of documentary representation are in recent years in favoured use. For decades historical documentaries were the domain of established history units at broadcasting companies. However that relatively stable state changed radically in the 1990s. In a now far more commercialised environment, the quantity of historical documentaries produced has increased, the rise coming from the formation of new production companies that often work on very tight budgets. There exist now a number of very expensive, high quality productions, but also to be found is a mass of historical documentaries that pay little respect to the old rules. It has been alleged that television is now characterised by excessive concern with figurative representations, that television weakens the referential value of image and sound and makes them into devices that serve videographic creativity.³⁰ It appears that as the market searches for attractive recipes, it has tended to convert historical documentaries into entertainment, with effects on both content and form. Writing of British television documentaries, John Corner tracked their intensification of narrative and immediacy effects, and their growing reliance on comic and ironic devices as a way of generating affective strength.³¹ Corner did not comment on historical documentaries specifically, but some of the television trends that he followed have come to belong fully to that genre too. A clear sign of this is that the on-screen presenter appears now very frequently. Further, it appears that great-man biographies and war documentaries have come into their heyday. The influence of commercial and aesthetic considerations on the making of historical documentaries has grown significantly.

²⁹ Plantinga, Carl, 1997, pp. 110–119, 171–200, develops the concepts of formal, open, and poetic voices in documentary. Rosenstone, Robert A., 1995a, p. 58, argues that even if a documentary calls on alternative points of view from witnesses or experts, these viewpoints rarely make a real impact because they are marginalised through editing.

³⁰ Caldwell, John Thornton, 1995.

³¹ Corner, John, 1999a, p. 182.

3. The historical documentary tradition

After considering in the abstract what constitutes historical documentary, a survey of the tradition of actual historical documentary films is in order. A few well-known films that are easily tied to the representational forms named above are surveyed here, major emphasis going of course to the type featured in this study, namely, documentaries for television. Viewing prior works as a tradition can be another way of defining the historical documentary. Because each film is in a sense modelled on a previous one, a mapping of the tradition indicates how changes and tendencies in historical documentaries have arisen over time and suggests the enormity of possibilities earlier work has afforded documentarists. Research on historical documentary being very young, a tool yet badly needed is a historical overview; the present study can link itself to studies already done in no better way than by providing that needed item.

The earliest historical documentaries made their appearance before television. The famous 1898 pamphlet by Boleslas Matuszewski shows it was recognised already early on that films were going to become a valuable historical resource,³² and once film archives were set up, compilation films began to appear. The first compilation films appeared in the 1910s and 20s, the most famous of which is *The Fall of the Romanov Dynasty* (1927) by Soviet filmmaker Esfir Shub. Especially interesting in the case of this film is that it has revolutionary character although it was made from counter-revolutionary materials. Images of a well-fed bourgeoisie are juxtaposed with those of hard-working farmers and miners, and likewise the image of the owner of the armament industry stands against images of workers who are to be sent to slaughter in World War I. The examples are evidence that already pioneers such as Shub were masters of the art of editing.³³ The same examples show too that moral considerations played an important part in her filmmaking, another argument for defining historical documentary by noting what a film asserts rather than how historically true its story is. Whether Shub did or did not think of her own film as historically true is another matter. Criticising Eisenstein's famous *October* (1928) she wrote, "You must not stage a historical fact because the staging distorts the fact."³⁴ Clearly she had ideas concerning the problems of historical representation.

The compilation film passed through a period of weakness in the 1930s, one reason being that the old films were shot at sixteen frames per second, while for sound twenty-four frames per second had become the normal speed. Shown in this fashion, old footage looked comical and was thus difficult to use for serious purposes. Convention required extant footage be used for documentary portrayals of the past, so that in effect aesthetic considerations precluded historical documentaries. World War II brought back compilation films. Many of its

³² Matuszewski, Boleslas, 1898, pp. 12 f.

³³ Leyda, Jay, 1964, p. 25; Winston, Brian, 1995, pp. 166 f.

³⁴ Shub, Esfir, 1988 (1928).

battles were filmed to become an accurate record of events or for propaganda purposes, so accessible here was an immense wealth of dramatic historical events on film. Since that time, documentaries about war have poured out, two of the most famous series being the American *Victory at Sea* (NBC 1952–53) and the British *The World at War* (Thames Television 1973–74). No doubt it was this availability of so much film materials that stimulated documentary productions about war. Stimulating too however was the sheer dramatic force of large-scale bloody struggles that would easily satisfy audience demands, whether political or psychological.³⁵ It should be noted that both the above series were made for television rather than for cinema. The introduction of television was a major event in the history of historical documentaries. Not least, public service television became a prime supporter of historical documentaries. Because history is thought of as educational and far from merely entertaining, it was perhaps calculated that historical documentaries would strengthen confidence in public service television companies.

The NBC series *Victory at Sea* consists of twenty-six half-hour programmes depicting World War II fought at sea. It is a panoramic perspective of the global struggle, made from American, German, and Japanese footage. Interestingly enough, the war is shown in many relatively short episodes, a result of the series being broadcast by television rather than shown on the cinema screen. One detects in this format a sort of adjustment to the aesthetic possibilities or requirements of the medium. The series is made in the expository mode with a voice-over narrator guiding the viewers, while music accompanies the narration and sets the desired emotions. The moral interpretation made of the war, that it was about liberation and freedom, probably derived much of its rhetoric from the Cold War climate that prevailed at the time the film was made. But it is possible that the interpretation was coloured in part as well by commercial factors. It has often been suggested that television cannot afford to place radical challenges before its audience and sponsors. The long survival of the production unit behind *Victory at Sea*, which over a long period also made the Project XX specials, was partly a result of its success in avoiding controversial interpretations.³⁶ *Victory at Sea* was a notable success with the American audience. Nevertheless, Peter C. Rollins wrote that it “failed as a documentary,” a verdict he based on his opinion that it made the wrong ideological points. Rollins believed, as Grierson in his time did, that a documentary should inform and move the audience to “humane social action.” By insisting on America’s innocence, the series indirectly claimed America had no domestic problems, which perhaps created obstacles for social reform. In Rollins’s judgement the series avoided actual sounds, like those of guns and shells, plus omitted the voices of participants, and in so doing kept the viewer “far enough away from the heart

³⁵ Vos, Chris, 2001, p. 124, says that between 1951 and 1990 a third of all Dutch history documentaries dealt with the occupation years.

³⁶ Cf. Kopley, Jr., Vance, 1984, and Marcus, Daniel, 1997.

of darkness to see its light and shades as romantic and alluring,” and so “no one is forced to confront the face of war.”³⁷

Victory at Sea was followed by many war documentaries, among them BBC's *The Great War* (1964) and Thames Television's *The World at War* (1973–74). The British series combined the compiled archival footage with interviews, thus providing a new model for historical documentaries.³⁸ Some of the filmmakers were historians, but in general they co-operated with historian consultants, thus opening the way for cognitive considerations. But it was not just war films that were made from old footage.³⁹

As the early historical documentaries were made using archival footage, they could deal only with the twentieth century, the only century that had been extensively filmed. The number of subjects for historical documentaries expanded greatly when filmmakers started using other materials. Once this began, filmmakers learned quickly that any historic relic or artefact was a potential image source and possible instrument for telling about the past. Inventive filmmakers let the camera move through towns and landscapes and over paintings, engravings or other art works that became “fragments of history.”⁴⁰ Perhaps the most famous of this new generation of historical documentaries was the Canadian *City of Gold* (1957), by Colin Low and Wolf Koenig, which told of the Klondike gold rush of the 1890s and used a large number of original photos. The innovative Low and Koenig team experimented with *re-framing*, the use of camera movement over enlarged photos. In one shot the camera moves along the line of men climbing the Chilkoot Pass. The camera seems to move on forever, and the illusion is that this is regular footage rather than the result of inventive camera-work and editing. In other shots the filmmakers focused on some particular significant detail, moved on to another, and then zoomed out to picture a larger context. *City of Gold* provided makers of historical documentaries with a host of new ideas; it can almost be said it opened another century.⁴¹ It is an aesthetically very attractive film, starting in the present, moving back into the past, and then returning to the present. The narrator acquires authority by claiming to refer to personal memory. Made in the expository mode, the subject and the narrator's personal tone make the work very different from *Victory at Sea*.

Historical documentary continuously found new subjects and new voices, and tested new modes of representation. As the technical conditions for docu-

³⁷ Rollins, Peter C., 2001, pp. 114, 120 f.

³⁸ On *The World at War* see Chapman, James, 2001; *Journal of the Society of Film and Television Arts*, 1974, 2:9–10, and Rosenthal, Alan, 1980, pp. 35–88.

³⁹ Barnouw, Erik, 1983, p. 199, lists European and Asian filmmakers who in the 1950s and 60s made documentaries about the early 1900s. See also O'Brien, Harvey, 2000, who deals with early Irish historical documentaries.

⁴⁰ Barnouw, Erik, 1983, pp. 201 ff. Barnouw mentions especially Curt Oertel's *The Titan*, a film about Michelangelo made already before the war, and Victoria Mercanton's *1848* (1948) about nineteenth-century upheavals in France.

⁴¹ Barnouw, Erik, 1983, pp. 200 f.; Rosenthal, Alan, 1990, pp. 46 f., 181.

mentary filmmaking improved with the coming of lighter, cheaper equipment, some filmmakers took on more political subjects. Far from the individual touches in *City of Gold*, or the political correctness of *Victory at Sea*, the 1960s, 70s, and 80s saw filmmakers making strong moral considerations of their own kind and producing historical documentaries on controversial subjects. Films came out such as *Le Chagrin et la Pitié* (Marcel Ophüls, 1970) about French collaborators with the Nazis, and *The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter* (Connie Field, 1980) about women workers during World War II. Made in the participatory mode, both films are built on a mix of interviews and archival footage. In Ophüls's film the interviewees have diverse ideas about the past and it becomes clear one cannot trust all of them. The past becomes disturbing not only because of what happened during the war, but also because it is difficult to discover what in fact did happen. The film was conceived for French television (ORTF), but when completed turned out to be so challenging that the company refused to show it. It was not aired on French television until 1981.⁴²

Rosie the Riveter is based on interviews with five American women who share similar experiences, namely, of first becoming an industrial worker during World War II and then of losing work and job to servicemen returning in 1945. Their memories, one's story supporting another's, become powerful evidence of conflicts and events from the 1940s. The film is a strong piece of feminist history, where subjects are first pictured as individuals in the present time before being shown as young women in the past. As has been suggested by Sonya Michel, the device of presenting the women as older persons prevents the patriarchal code of young female beauty from becoming valid.⁴³ There is no voice-over narrator in the film, but the argument becomes clear from the testimonies given and again from the editing. Formally, the film is interesting because it raises a question in the viewer's mind rather than treats that question explicitly.⁴⁴ With regard to cognitive considerations, the producers interviewed over seven hundred women before choosing the five voices that would represent the female experience of working on the home front.⁴⁵

A film formally very interesting is Peter Watkins's *Culloden* (BBC 1964), which deals with the infamous 1746 battle between Highland Scots and their southern neighbours, and with the aftermath of the battle, when the victorious lowlanders brutally pacified the Highlands. *Culloden* is a drama-documentary, but a peculiar one in that it presents the past as a current news report by a television crew. Part of the film is made in the observational mode, with the camera only observing the re-enacted events, while other parts are participatory, with the invisible documentarist posing questions to actors who answer

⁴² Veyrat-Masson, Isabelle, 2001, p. 158; Insdorf, Annette, 1983, pp. 195–201.

⁴³ Michel, Sonya, 1986, pp. 293–304, 405–407.

⁴⁴ Corner, John, 1996, pp. 137 f. Cf. White, Mimi, 1994; Zheutlin, Barbara, 1981.

⁴⁵ Chamorand, Elisabeth, 1993, p. 186. On leftist historical documentaries of the 1970s and 80s, see Leab, Daniel J., 1980a; Brown, Joshua, 1987, pp. 115 f.; Walkowitz, Daniel J., 1991; Dubofsky, Melvyn, 1981; Klehr, Harvey, 1985.

straight to the camera. The opening scene provides interviews and close shots of clansmen, soaking wet and worn-looking. The scene is a kind of conceptual breakthrough, making the viewer sense the horrible conditions of war. There is also an eighteenth-century historian who appears and reports before the camera what he perceives of the battle. While the shaky camera and the close-up shots place the viewer right in the battle, where the feeling is inescapable that this is real, the Brechtian devices alienate the same viewer.⁴⁶ Both the re-enactments and the distancing effects serve to transmit knowledge about the 1746 events – and about the impossibility of really grasping them. Clearly, cognitive considerations played an important part in the filmmaker's choices.⁴⁷

The historical documentaries that deal with the Holocaust are interesting, because the stark subject forced filmmakers to struggle with cinematic language. For moral reasons, not any one form was thought to be appropriate. In Alain Resnais's *Nuit et Brouillard* (*Night and Fog*, 1955), the voice-over narrator read a lyrical script that gave the film a tinge of the poetic just as much as it served as exposition. The film avoided a self-righteous moral stance and rather made a purely human moral statement, prompting soul-searching in the viewer. Resnais designed an experimental contrapuntal structure for the film, alternating colour and black-and-white sequences, which created a sense of movement between past and present.⁴⁸ It is noteworthy that while Holocaust survivor Jean Cayrol wrote the narration script, Resnais also obtained factual assistance from historians. In fact, the initiative for the film was taken by a group of historians,⁴⁹ indicating the scale of cognitive interest behind the project. This however could not prevent political pressure from being directed towards the film. First, French pressure forced the filmmaker to cover the image of a French gendarme who oversaw the transport of Jews, and second, German pressure led France to withdraw the film from competition in Cannes.⁵⁰

Another remarkable Holocaust documentary is Claude Lanzmann's nine-and-a-half-hour *Shoah* (1985), which dispensed with archival images and background music completely. Perhaps with *Le Chagrin et la Pitié* as inspiration, *Shoah* was made from long interviews replete with questions and pauses. The filmmaker's intrusive presence marks the film as one made in the participatory mode. One telling sequence is Lanzmann's interview with a man who had been a barber in Treblinka, there cutting the hair of women and children just before they entered the gas chambers. The interview is performed with the barber in

⁴⁶ On *Culloden* see Hark, Ina Rae, 1985; Lajtha, Terry, 1981; Cull, Nicholas J., 2003.

⁴⁷ John Prebble, who had just published a book on *Culloden*, was historical consultant on the film.

⁴⁸ The inventive use of oscillation impressed many critics, one writing that the film "challenges existing visual language." Raskin, Richard, 1987. Quote Insdorf, Annette, 1983, p. 31. Also see Rothman, William, 1997, Chapter III; Krantz, Charles, 1985, suggests that *Nuit et Brouillard* be read as an allegory of the war in Algeria; Rice, Louisa, 2002, discusses the film in relation to silences in post-war France; Hirsch, Joshua, 2002, p. 16, calls it "the founding text of posttraumatic cinema."

⁴⁹ Raskin, Richard, 1987, p. 8.

⁵⁰ Raskin, Richard, 1987.

the act of cutting a man's hair. Under Lanzmann's aggressive questions the barber breaks down, the camera remaining focused on his distressed weeping face. The scene illustrates how Lanzmann worked to commingle past and present through the process of "reliving;" the barber being pushed to remember and relive past experiences before the camera. Although *Shoah* avoids archival footage and mimetic re-enactments in the observational mode, and thus does not attempt to realistically represent the Holocaust, the scene shows how Lanzmann evokes the final destination.⁵¹ Such a tangible particular (the haircutting) can for the viewer be a device linking him involuntarily to the intangible whole (the Holocaust). Clearly, cognitive considerations designed the film as much as aesthetics; for that matter its sheer length would make many viewers find it aesthetically appalling. The film uses interviews to lay bare so many particulars that no denial of the Holocaust is possible. But the interviews are not placed in a particularly logical order, only that the film pictures repetitive "journeys" to the Holocaust.⁵² Through its repetitive and thus open form the film also mediates feelings of uncertainty.

The historical documentary genre consists on the whole of films made directly for television, and therefore it is important to understand what production and distribution conditions were in force for television documentaries. Different systems were established in different countries. For example, several European countries such as Sweden created monopoly public service broadcasters and hired permanent staff (such as Häger and Villius) to make historical documentaries. The American television scene was characterised by competitive, commercial conditions and relatively few legal restrictions. For decades, its three broadcasting networks NBC, CBS, and ABC dominated the scene. By means of deals cut with local stations, the networks controlled the programming at prime time, that is, what was aired in the peak hours in the evening, usually reserved for popular series, as was the case in 1959 when thirty-two Western series were shown in prime time. In the Cold War climate moral considerations strongly influenced programmes produced, the networks barring works by outside producers "if any 'opinion influencing' content was involved."⁵³ The Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) started up in the 1960s as a fourth network, but in decentralised form with each local affiliate station determining what it would air.⁵⁴ Thus, while PBS had the capacity of distributing national programmes, it rarely gathered a large audience. Even so, due to the public service profile PBS and its affiliate stations had, PBS became an important financier and distributor of historical documentaries in America.⁵⁵

In 1990, PBS broadcast the eleven-hour *The Civil War* (Florentine Films,

⁵¹ Cf. Bruzzi, Stella, 2000, pp. 99–114; Lanzmann, Claude, 1990; Bartov, Omer, 1997, pp. 54 ff.

⁵² Bruzzi, Stella, 2000, p. 110, points out that the journey theme recurs throughout the film, with many shots on railway tracks.

⁵³ Barnouw, Erik, 1983, p. 226.

⁵⁴ Brown, Les, 1998, quote p. 154.

⁵⁵ For a discussion of public television between 1985 and 1993, see Bullert, B. J., 1997.

1990), which set viewer records and made producer Ken Burns the signature figure in the trend to expand production of historical documentaries.⁵⁶ Through its mixture of eyewitness voices from the past, re-framed photographs, scenery, and music, *The Civil War* succeeded in bringing the past to life in the minds of many viewers. Burns felt and once said that historical documentaries used to be “boringly didactic,” but then he and other filmmakers learned to relate more than facts, learned to “communicate deep emotional truths.”⁵⁷ In the 1990s, the less didactic and information-oriented style adopted by Burns and others became normative in many parts of the world.⁵⁸ *The Civil War* can be seen as symptomatic of a trend towards aesthetically more attractive historical programming. The series is described further in the final chapter here, and a comparison is made between it and Häger and Villius’s productions.

The historical documentary became mainstream television fare during the last years of the twentieth century.⁵⁹ Many production companies identified historical programming as a significant new type, and the now regular appearance of annual world conventions of history producers clearly indicates that historical programming is very much a present vogue. In America, scholars have pointed to Ken Burns’s phenomenally successful *The Civil War* as instrumental in creating interest in historical documentary,⁶⁰ and it is indeed likely that *The Civil War* played this role in America. But as the Swedish case serves to show, interest in history was already world-wide and hardly due to any single television production. If there is a single decisive factor behind the new volume of historical programming, it is rather that around 1990 the stable media situation with relatively few broadcasters was replaced by one with a large number of “narrowcasters.” By cable or satellite, new attempts were made to reach not all potential viewers but large portions of them. Because some segments of the viewing public are particularly interested in history, a few recent comers such as Discovery, Biography, in 1995 the History Channel, and in 1997 Histoire,⁶¹ came to choose historical programming as their profile product. It is less certain that history has become mainstream fare in the big broadcaster’s programming. It may be so in Britain,⁶² but by contrast, Wulf Kansteiner reports that German public service television abandoned serious historical reflection partly in re-

⁵⁶ Eitzen, Dirk, 1995; Lancioni, Judith Ann, 1994; Toplin, Robert Brent, 1996; Edgerton, Gary, 2001, are four major works that deal with Burns and *The Civil War*.

⁵⁷ Burns quoted in Waters, Harry F., 1992.

⁵⁸ Edgerton, Gary, 2001, pp. 27–84, 218. Edgerton mentions, p. 61, that historian David Culbert originally proposed the film *Huey Long* (1986). This indicates that Burns had good contact with historians in these years.

⁵⁹ Edgerton, Gary, 2001, p. 108, writes that in America historical documentaries formed “a minor programming niche at best” in the 1980s, but went mainstream in the mid-1990s. See also Edgerton pp. 152 f.

⁶⁰ Toplin, Robert Brent, 1996d, p. 1110; Edgerton, Gary, 2001, p. vi. Also see Toplin, Robert Brent, 1996a, and Edgerton, Gary R., 2001b.

⁶¹ URL <http://www.historychannel.com> (2003.01.20); <http://www.histoire.fr> (2003.01.20).

⁶² The claim was often made at the History and the Media conference, Senate House in London, 2002.12.16–18.

sponse to the challenge of commercial television. He finds that the heyday of historical reflection on German television came instead in the 1980s – and had passed by the 1990s.⁶³ Many of the most interesting documentaries on World War II have been made in Germany,⁶⁴ and fortunately production continues. In the course of this study no strong increase in history programming made for Swedish public service television was observed.⁶⁵

Commercial interest in historical programmes has resulted in two kinds of productions: the cheap staple programmes and the expensive specials and series. Brian Taves has analysed the offerings of History Channel and can show how the channel initially mined the lode of existing documentaries, but then gradually turned to making its own original productions. Taves is very critical of these new productions, claiming they are often characterised by embarrassing photography work, loose linking, and confusing and even misleading use of archival materials. The visuals in modern commercial documentaries, Taves alleges, are designed around need for three things: (1) movement, (2) colour, and (3) minimal expenditures. Because it is often cheaper to film new footage (of actors or amateurs acting), producers do not search archives for images; he mentions the costumed arm writing words that the narrator is quoting as perhaps the most clichéd of these cheap devices. But commercial considerations also set limits for content. Content is determined in large measure by what the production companies believe the audience wants. Because History Channel's bedrock supporters are thought to be middle-aged men, its programming emphasis is on war, weapons, and technology. In order to appeal to the broadest possible audience, and to make overseas resale easy, the programmes are not allowed to present a truly controversial angle.⁶⁶

The view of the staple historical programming as conservative and closed to new bold perspectives seems depressing. But Taves also recognises that the History Channel has offered opportunities for academic historians to reach broad audiences. In the case of certain programmes, historians were invited to the studio to comment on what has been shown or to offer their own perspective on an event or period. Furthermore, in recent years one popular experiment has been to place a presenter in a historic location and let him or her relate stories that took place there. A few charismatic historians such as Simon Schama have been cast in such a role. Thus, the commercial interest in history programming has also made historians more attractive as interpreters of the world.

⁶³ Kansteiner, Wulf, 2000. Note that much of the German historical reflection appeared as “high quality historical fiction” rather than as historical documentaries.

⁶⁴ There is much literature in German, for example Bösch, Frank, 1999. Cf. Kaes, Anton, 1989.

⁶⁵ I want to emphasise that no quantitative study of history programming on Swedish television has been made. There may have been an increase in how much history programming was broadcast, because SVT often bought high quality historical series produced in Britain or America.

⁶⁶ Taves, Brian, 2001. Like the History Channel, the History Book Club stresses military and political history. According to Jane Clarke, Market Research Director at the History Book Club, as referred to in Rosenzweig, Roy & David Thelen, 1998, pp. 30, 264, three times as many men as women join the Club.

A development parallel to the new outpouring of cheap historical documentaries, is a number of large ventures made into quality historical programming. CNN hired legendary producer Sir Jeremy Isaacs, the man behind *The World at War*, to make the twenty-four parts of *Cold War* (1998). Isaacs had a group of producers do the groundwork, he himself functioning as executive (controlling) producer.⁶⁷ Although the moral position of the series drew criticism from certain conservative Americans, the series was a huge success and was broadcast around the world.⁶⁸ BBC achieved a possibly even greater success with *People's Century* (1996), which was also broadcast around the world. *Cold War* and *People's Century* are examples of historical documentaries backed by very generous allotments, which could only be covered by large television companies. Series such as these both reinforce the quality of public-service channels and attract a certain type of viewer at a particular time of the viewing day.⁶⁹ The two series are formally similar in their mixing of the expository and participatory modes; they are made from archival images as well as from interviews, and a voice-over narrator attempts to "tell the story" as objectively as possible. Not the least because of the high quality of these ventures, their producers were careful to check facts and interpretations with scholars. Accordingly, cognitive considerations were very important. In the case of *Cold War*, for example, Isaacs enlisted three eminent Cold War historians (one American, one Briton and one Russian). But even if facts are correct, interpretations are always interpretations. John Lewis Gaddis, who worked as consultant on *Cold War*, writes that he knew beforehand that the series would be "a great white whale and that harpoons would fly from several directions."⁷⁰ And the harpoons did fly.

In recent quality historical documentaries the boundaries between genres sometimes become indistinct when non-fiction productions resort to aesthetic devices formerly thought of as suited only to fiction. In the supremely expensive ten-hour series on World War II, *Band of Brothers* (HBO 2001) by Steven Spielberg and Tom Hanks, all scenes and the actors that play in them were filmed in the observational mode. There can be no doubt that for many scenes the conversations were designed just for the series. But the actors play the roles of authentic people, and not only was the script developed in consultation with surviving war veterans, but these aged veterans appear in the sequence that opens each episode. This device serves to purport that the story to follow is the true record.⁷¹ Furthermore, at the opening of each episode come the names of co-workers and the statement that the series is based on a book by historian Stephen E. Ambrose. This also implies firm basis in past reality. Perhaps the

⁶⁷ Among Isaacs's co-workers were Taylor Downing and Martin Smith, who had both worked with Isaacs many times before. Smith produced the famous *Vietnam: A Television War* (1985).

⁶⁸ See Beichman, Arnold, 2000. Cf. Downing, Taylor, 1998. On leftist criticism of the series, see Lowinsky, Benjamin D., 1999.

⁶⁹ Cf. Kilborn, Richard & John Izod, 1997, who suggest (p. 188) that *People's Century* adopted an equitable approach hoping to be well received in all the countries where it would be marketed.

⁷⁰ Gaddis, John Lewis, 2000, p. 137.

⁷¹ Cull, Nicholas J., 2002; Schatz, Thomas, 2002.

series should be seen as the definitive marriage of dramatic documentary and docudrama.

Another historical documentary that leans towards docudrama is the Canadian *The Heritage Minutes* (1989–), a series of one-minute programmes that were broadcast by CBC, but were part of the privately funded Heritage Project that sought to improve the teaching of Canadian history. The Minutes are high quality drama and present stories from the Canadian past. National figures such as the red-coated Mounted Policeman are celebrated, as well as lesser known heroes like the Chinese workers who built the Trans-Canadian railroad.⁷² The Minutes present a mixture of subjects, but they were meant to strengthen an all-Canadian identity generally and few conflicting views were registered. Historian John Herd Thompson, who suggested subjects for the series, says all his suggestions for class-related subjects were turned down by the board. Likewise, his suggestion of the famous seventeenth-century lady Madeleine de Verchères as subject was turned down, and Thompson says the reason was likely that she lived in a time of conflict between French, English, and Indians.⁷³ Such avoidance of domestic conflicts indicates the board was intent on telling of an untroubled Canadian past.

Some of the Minutes closely followed historical events, whereas others presented imaginary conversations between key figures. The question arises, how much of the Minutes can be trusted, how documentary are they? Clearly, the sponsor intended for the Minutes to spread knowledge about the past, and historians like Thompson were hired to submit proposals for episodes. Based on the historian's information, a writer would write a script, and a director would design the staging. But in the actual making, certain negotiations took place, and sometimes the historian's cognitive considerations became diluted or lost. One Minute tells of how the legendary 1690s French governor Frontenac encountered attacking Anglo-Saxon officers. The meeting is well documented in several different accounts, and the script had a firm historical foundation. However, on stage the director arbitrarily invented another script and made a Minute that was historically absurd. The resulting episode is a case of documentary integrity sacrificed for dramatic qualities. Put another way, aesthetic considerations win over cognitive ones. Advisor Thompson claims in fact that not on one occasion in working with the Minutes did cognitive considerations put down aesthetic considerations.⁷⁴ Nevertheless, the informative quality of *The Heritage Minutes* is not to be denied, and historically there was much that was valuable and enlightening in the programmes.

In sum, historical documentary has developed into a distinct and often pop-

⁷² URL <http://www.histori.ca> (2001.10.30); McGinnis, Janice Dickin, 1995; Cameron, Elspeth, 1995, p. 21, suggests that non-Canadians watching the Minutes would be puzzled more than emotionally moved.

⁷³ Interview with John Herd Thompson, 2001.10.22.

⁷⁴ Interview with John Herd Thompson, 2001.10.22. The Minute in question was called *Frontenac* (1990); it is available through URL <http://www.histori.ca>.

ular ingredient of modern television. The expository mode was long the most common mode and perhaps remains so, but the frequent use of interviews is an indicator that other modes are at least common. Political historical documentaries are still made, particularly films about war, but social and cultural history now provide subjects for a large share of historical documentaries. While the classic historical documentaries were films with a formal voice, led by a voice-over narrator claiming a high degree of authority, there are signs that recent documentaries are more open to free interpretation. Finally, despite living in a hostile environment where educational values can be lost to commercial considerations, there is every sign that historical documentaries have a sturdy and vigorous life. But whereas historical documentaries are popular with audiences and relatively inexpensive to make (usually much cheaper than regular drama), it should be noted that “chill winds of commercialism” blow through today’s television institutions and are now a formative part of the production environment.⁷⁵ While some historical documentaries of quality are being made, often in co-operation with academic historians, there is also a large outpouring of documentaries that do not hold a high standard.

4. Historians and the historical documentary

That historians often have a role in making films is an important aspect of the tradition of historical documentary. Historians we saw were involved in documentary filmmaking quite early on. However, some of them experienced difficult relations with filmmakers, the explanation often being given that the historian’s first concern is accuracy while the filmmaker’s is entertainment. Discussing the relationship in France, Isabelle Veyrat-Masson writes of thirty years of distrust of the television industry.⁷⁶ Thinking they would only serve as a quality mark, a guarantee of the programme’s historical acceptability, some historians avoided becoming involved in historical documentaries. In the present study historical filmmaking is thought to include more complex negotiations than “accuracy versus entertainment.” David K. Dunaway, comparing radio production with oral history work, reports major differences concern “time pressures, legal questions and authorship, and differing end products.”⁷⁷ His main argument, that there are complex differences between history production in the media and in academia, is valid also with regard to film and television.

Historians started to discuss film as evidence and as a possible pedagogical tool already in the first half of the twentieth century. A book on the subject was published as early as in 1916,⁷⁸ and in the 1920s and 30s a group under the

⁷⁵ Kilborn, Richard & John Izod, 1997, p. 26.

⁷⁶ Veyrat-Masson, Isabelle, 2000, pp. 219.

⁷⁷ Dunaway, David K., 1996 (1984), pp. 311 f.

⁷⁸ *The Camera as Historian* by H. D. Gower, L. Stanley Just and W. W. Topley, London 1916, referred to in Burke, Peter, 2001, p. 159.

auspices of CISH (Comité International des Sciences Historiques) worked out principles for the selection and preservation of film sources. Articles were published on the subject, and an International Iconographical Commission was founded.⁷⁹ On several occasions, leading historians called on their colleagues to start working with film. Cambridge historian George Kitson Clark was among those who in 1948 founded the British Universities Film Council to promote the use of film in higher education, and in 1949, work on film as a historical document started in Göttingen, Germany.⁸⁰ In spite of these early initiatives, few historians began at once to use film as a source. There were no clear research methods and film sources were difficult and expensive to obtain and use – which is still sometimes the case. But historians' interest in film advanced on a broad front from the 1960s onwards. Danish historian Niels Skyum-Nielsen wrote a textbook of audio-visual source criticism, and in 1968 the University Historians' Film Committee was set up in Britain. Also in 1968, French historian Marc Ferro published a famous article in *Annales* calling on historians to pay more attention to film documents. Two years later American historians formed the Historians' Film Committee and the periodical *Film and History*. In Europe a series of conferences led to the establishment in 1977 of IAMHIST, the International Association for Audio-Visual Media in Historical Research and Education. This body soon launched a journal, *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*.⁸¹ However, television and history remains a weakly explored subject of research. In the early 2000s there is still just a handful of Swedish historians who seriously consider film a source material.⁸² Further on we see the very limited amount of research done on audio-visual media has important bearing on the relationship between historians and filmmakers.

Historians soon realised their help was needed with the production of historical films. Already in the 1920s a group of American historians joined filmmakers in making a series of historical films. The project, under the aegis of Yale University Press, resulted in fifteen short films but was a flop with the audience.⁸³ In Britain, the Historical Association made concerted efforts to reform the popular historical feature film. In 1929 it established a committee to conduct study and inquiries, and Frances Consitt was appointed to write a report on films in history teaching. The Association's influence is seen when, in 1937, the British Film Institute recommended that a historian, a teacher, and a technician jointly ratify historical films.⁸⁴ From the early 1950s onwards, the insti-

⁷⁹ Aldgate, Anthony, 1979, pp. 5 f.

⁸⁰ Smith, Paul, 1976, pp. 1 f.; Fledelius, Karsten, 1989.

⁸¹ Smith, Paul, 1976, pp. 1 f.; Ferro, Marc, 1968; Fledelius, Karsten, 1989.

⁸² A pioneering conference on history and film was held in Stockholm in 1998; it was organised by Eva Blomberg and Maths Isacson. At the meeting of Swedish historians in 2002 the present author chaired a well-attended session on history and film. Clearly many Swedish historians are interested in film as a source.

⁸³ Mattheisen, Donald J., 1992.

⁸⁴ Harper, Sue, 1994, pp. 64–76. In 1935 American historian Louis Gottschalk wrote to MGM in Hollywood that "No picture of a historical nature ought to be offered to the public until a reputable historian has had a chance to criticize and revise it;" quoted in Novick, Peter, 1988, p. 194.

tute at Göttingen produced editions of film documents with printed critical commentaries, and later the British Inter-University History Film Consortium produced films for educational use.⁸⁵ No doubt initiatives of these types were taking place elsewhere as well. Historians often became key persons in the production of educational historical programming.

In America, the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) was charged with funding films as a means of bringing scholarship to the general public. A condition for funding was that a project include historians, and in this way starting in the 1970s several hundred American historians became involved with film projects as consultants or project directors.⁸⁶ One long-running television series, *The American Experience* of PBS affiliate station WGBH in Boston, has involved many historians. WGBH launched another project in the late 1990s, *A Biography of America*, twenty-six half-hour programmes featuring on-screen historians who discuss the American past. This series was made specifically for the educational programming market.⁸⁷ In the 1990s, when history programming became more in vogue also in commercial television, historians became involved even more in television productions. Increased involvement has allowed at least some of the tension between historians and the media to relax. Gerald Herman points out that not long ago “respected historians” did not mention work related to the media in their CV’s “for fear of having their reputations as serious scholars diminished by the association.”⁸⁸ Herman’s comment indicates that American historians were then still suspicious of filmmaking, or at least wary of how their colleagues might react. Gary Edgerton adds that television programmes are considered “the most ephemeral and untrustworthy of all historical forms.”⁸⁹ But as serious programming continues unabated to be produced, much of this suspicion evaporates.

Historians have played a number of different roles in relation to historical documentaries. Some roles have been on-screen, but most are off-screen. It was noted historians were involved in the making of many famous historical documentaries. A group of historians, Comité d’Histoire de la Deuxième Guerre Mondiale, were behind the initiative for Resnais’s *Nuit et Brouillard*, and historians Henri Michel and Olga Wormser worked as historical consultants on the production. Basil Liddel Hart acted as consultant for *The Great War*; Noble Frankland for *The World at War*; John Prebble for *Culloden*; John Gaddis,

⁸⁵ Smith, Paul, 1976; Grenville, John, 1976; Reimers, K. F., 1970; Fledelius, Karsten, 1989; Skyum-Nielsen, Niels, 1972. Fledelius p. 152 claims that Skyum-Nielsen finished his book already in 1966, although it remained unpublished for some years.

⁸⁶ In the mid-1990s the NEH cut its funding support for public programmes by almost 60 percent. Robert Brent Toplin quoted in Edgerton, Gary, 2001, p. 172. Cf. Dunaway, David K., 1996 (1984) p. 308; Rosenstone, Robert A., 1995a, p. 47.

⁸⁷ On *A Biography of America*, see URL <http://www.learner.com> (2001.10.30). Cf. Herbes-Sommers, Christine, 2000.

⁸⁸ Herman, Gerald, 1999, p. 125. Media-related work would have been mentioned in the CV’s of Swedish historians at least from the late 1970s onwards, because the state had decided that such activities should be considered an additional qualification; cf. Chapter 2.

⁸⁹ Edgerton, Gary, 2001, p. 217.

Vladislav Zubok, and Lawrence Freedman were consultants for *Cold War*; C. Vann Woodward among others consulted on *The Civil War*. The list is still longer. The consultant's role varies considerably from one production to another however. Many consultants come on just an occasional basis, assisting with writing historical background papers or checking facts. These might be called *secondary advisors*. However, some consultants are involved in multiple stages of a production. For example, Natalie Zemon Davis tells how in the making of the film *Le retour de Martin Guerre*, which was based on her book, she assisted the director in instructing actors.⁹⁰ Davis was thus a consultant with extensive and continuous involvement in the production, and her type can be called *primary advisor*.⁹¹ Primary versus secondary advisement is a matter of the degree of involvement, but the terms provide a useful distinction. A primary advisor has more continuous contact with the production than a secondary advisor, and can exercise much more influence.

Other supporting roles are played by historians when they appear in the final form of a production. Many programmes feature them as interviewees, or *talking heads*. Eloquent historians are used quite frequently as visible authorities. The talking heads may be consultants on the project staff, as Barbara Fields was in the case of *The Civil War*, or simply a historian interviewed for an opinion on the subject. Another (less common) on-screen role the historian plays is that as the *subject of the film*. Particularly successful and charismatic historians have been and will likely continue to be portrayed either in biographical programmes or as heroes in "the researcher story."⁹²

The roles mentioned here are all supporting roles the historian plays. As project advisor a historian may however actually suggest what film or programme is to be made, there of course always being a filmmaker at the absolute head of the project. It was not least as a reaction to failures among television documentaries that a movement began among historians to make films of their own. Some thought historical films contained too many errors, while others were more concerned with what history was and what should be told of it. Recognition that content is an inherently critical part of all production and its design set the stage for the appearance of *historian-filmmakers*;⁹³ two of the earliest on the scene being Olle Häger and Hans Villius. Some historians such as Nicholas Pronay wrote historical programmes for broadcasting corporations, thus filling the role of *scriptwriter*, while others engaged in independent filmmaking.⁹⁴ A 1978 product, *With Babies and Banners*, issued by the Women's

⁹⁰ Davis interviewed in Benson, Ed, 1983; cf. Abrash, Barbara & Janet Sternburg, 1983, pp. 28 ff.

⁹¹ Robert Rosenstone played a similar role in the production of *Reds*. Rosenstone, Robert A., 1995a, pp. 83–108.

⁹² Veyrat-Masson, Isabelle, 2000, pp. 226 f. mentions a few French examples.

⁹³ The concept of historian-filmmaker is used by Walkowitz, Daniel, 1985. It appears elsewhere in the literature, for example O'Connor, John E., 1973, p. 551, who refers to a conference session on "The Historian as Filmmaker."

⁹⁴ Robert, Graham, 2001, p. 1; Chapman, James, 2001, pp. 138 f.

Labor History Film Project,⁹⁵ was surely prompted by the movement for historians to make their own films. Certain scholars suggested organising a learner's course for historians, one that included practical experience in making film.⁹⁶ And a number of universities now provide courses in the field. In 1987 the American Social History Project produced a film as part of its multi-media curriculum, and in the 1990s the Center for History in the Media at George Washington University established a summer institute in historical documentary making.⁹⁷ At Erasmus University Rotterdam, historian-filmmaker Chris Vos let masters-degree students make historical documentaries as part of course requirements.⁹⁸ These may be isolated phenomena, but with lightweight filming equipment rapidly becoming cheaper this may also change.

In some film projects, notably those in America supported by the NEH, historians such as Daniel Walkowitz or Robert Brent Toplin have played the role of *project director*. This role has brought historians into the central part in the production process. Not just offering qualified advice, they work directly with the filmmaker and are part of the full decision-making process. They can be included in work on conception development, and even in work with the script. Both Walkowitz and Toplin have written about experiences they have had.⁹⁹ The role of project director may resemble that of the primary advisor, but the project director will always be the more involved in the filmmaking process and may for example be engaged in scriptwriting. The chief determining factor is whether or not the position is one of decision-making.

Another role the historian plays is as *presenter*, the on-camera narrator who guides the spectator on the historical journey. The presenter often writes the narration script, and perhaps he or she also helps choose locations for shooting. The role of presenter is interesting for several reasons. In a narrative-technical sense the presenter can fulfil important cognitive functions, such as directing viewer attention. The presenter may also provide relieve from the rush of imagery, give the viewer time to breathe and to think about information given. Especially in programmes dealing with subjects that lack imagery picturing humans, the presenter can fill an aesthetic function by representing the human dimension in the full audio-visual sense. Frequently presenters achieve status as stars (and strike lucrative deals with their television company).¹⁰⁰ In addition to these functions, the narrator brings a personal authority to the programme, the on-screen presenter especially; looking the viewer directly in the face the presenter demands viewer trust. An example is Simon Schama in *A History of*

⁹⁵ Leab, Daniel J., 1980, pp. 104 f.

⁹⁶ Hughes, William, 1972; Raack, Richard, 1973. Cf. Dunaway, David K, 1996 (1984), p. 318.

⁹⁷ Brown, Joshua, 1987; Seavey, Nina Gilden, 1995; see also Walkowitz, Daniel J., 1985, pp. 62 f.

⁹⁸ Oral information from Chris Vos, 2002.09.28.

⁹⁹ Walkowitz, Daniel, 1985; Toplin, Robert Brent, 2002, pp. 139–159. Cf. Helle, Knut, 1991.

¹⁰⁰ In 2002, David Starkey and Simon Schama signed with Channel 4 and the BBC respectively, the deals making them two of the highest paid television stars in Britain. Wells, Matt, 2002; Wells, Matt, 2002a. In Sweden, presenter Herman Lindqvist has enjoyed similar star status; however, television resources are smaller in Sweden than in Britain.

Britain (BBC 2000–2001), who appears in a number of historical milieus. Irrespective of the other roles that Schama had in the making of this production,¹⁰¹ his role as presenter is interesting. In my view the historian as presenter is the optimal audio-visual quality mark. As a question of narrational authority, the very presence of the researcher will likely be a strong signal to the viewer.¹⁰² A variation of the presenter is the historian as off-screen *voice-over narrator*. In order to transmit a historian's authority to the audience, the narrator's voice must be recognised. The audience often mistakenly thinks the narrator is the filmmaker, and certainly it perceives the narrator as a guarantee of the correctness of the programme. Thus, if the audience recognises the narrating voice as that of a trusted historian, that recognition can add credibility to what is said. A good example is Swedish historian Hans Villius who has narrated many programmes he did not himself produce, and whose much-trusted voice – known in Sweden as “the voice of history” – certainly has added credibility even to other programmes than his.¹⁰³

Other on-screen roles are as *studio host* and as *studio guest*, where a historian comments on a production but does not feature in it. Comments can come both before and after the programme itself, and may either transmit information or voice critical objections. The studio guest is an expert commentator brought in to comment on a particular subject. By contrast, the studio host is often a person well-known to viewers, say one who introduces a new film each week. The studio host is a visible representative of those who decide what historical documentaries are shown and, for that matter, are made. Various administrative roles are invisible functions historians can fulfil in relation to historical documentaries. In Sweden and France, and surely in other countries as well, there are instances of historians serving as *members of programme committees* or *administrative heads* at television or film companies.¹⁰⁴ Though almost invisible, persons in these positions are extremely influential when it comes to determining what historical documentaries are actually made and shown.

The roles of advisors, talking heads, project directors, scriptwriters, presenters, and administrative heads brought historians into the production of historical documentaries. However, the people able most decisively to shape historical documentaries are the filmmakers, that is, the producer or at times the director

¹⁰¹ Bremner, Ian, 2001, associate producer of the series, has related some of the production history. He says that each episode was outlined by editor Janice Hadlow, Schama, Mike Ibeji, and himself; Bremner and Ibeji spent most pre-production time finding and setting up locations for filming, while Schama wrote the script. At the History and the Media conference, Senate House in London, 2002.12.17, Schama told of continuously having to negotiate with the producer, Clare Beavan. Author's notes.

¹⁰² Tolson, Andrew, 1985, regards direct address, on-screen speech to be the most powerful discursive mode of television.

¹⁰³ On Villius, see chapters 5–8 below.

¹⁰⁴ Veyrat-Masson, Isabelle, 2000, pp. 223 f., 227. In Sweden, classical archaeologist Hans Furu-hagen was one of the heads at SVT. Historian Erik Lönnroth was a member of the company board of directors.

and producer. A number of historians have played the role of historian-filmmaker, making historical films occasionally for teaching purposes, but also making regular historical documentaries and drama-documentaries for television. Swedish historians Olle Häger and Hans Villius serve as examples in this study. Others are Chris Vos in the Netherlands, Alfredas Bumblauskas in Lithuania, Marc Ferro in France, Guido Knopp and Hans-Hermann Hertle in Germany, and Peter Rollins in the United States.¹⁰⁵ While some of these, like Guido Knopp and Olle Häger, took the full step from the profession of history over to the filmmaking profession, others like Hans-Hermann Hertle, Chris Vos, and Alfredas Bumblauskas have kept one foot in academia.

5. Conclusions

At the start of the taxonomy of historical documentary film provided above, this definition of historical documentary was given: a creative treatment on film that asserts a belief that the given objects, states of affairs, or events occurred or existed in the actual world as portrayed. In formal terms this is a quite inclusive definition. It accepts as documentaries many films that use re-enactment techniques that have become common in recent years. Cited next was Bill Nichols's six principal forms or modes of documentary representation: (1) the poetic, (2) the expository, (3) the observational, (4) the participatory, (5) the reflexive, and (6) the performative, each a different strategy for representing the actual world. Three of these modes, namely the expository, the observational, and the participatory, are common in historical documentaries. The expository documentary directly addresses the real, either through voice-over narration or via an on-screen presenter. The observational documentary observes things as they happen but typically omits commentary. The participatory documentary has the filmmaker participate in the film, for example through conducting interviews. All three modes are modes of realism that present us with evidence about the past. Documentaries often exist with elements from several modes, but in a single programme one mode normally dominates.

Most historical documentaries were made from extant archival footage, which limited the choice of subjects to the period of the twentieth century. But following discovery that other image sources exist, such as paintings and historical milieus, and the insight that still-photos can be re-framed, documentaries were made about times prior to that of the filming. Possibilities were opened further in the 1970s when interviews and re-enacted scenes began to see frequent use in historical documentaries. Wars, not the least World War II, was always a popular subject in historical documentaries, but some of the most ambitious historical documentaries have treated the Holocaust. What gave

¹⁰⁵ On Knopp's productions, see URL <http://www.zdf.de/wissen/zeitgeschichte/index.html> (2001.09.24).

cause for lengthy discussion was both what image materials could be used, and what was morally acceptable. In the 1990s, historical programming came into vogue, and in fact led to expanded production of cheap staple programmes.

The makers of historical documentaries are important players on the field of historical production. Significantly enough, a number of historians have assumed the role of maker of historical films. They play a number of roles such as primary and secondary advisor, talking head, subject of the film, historian-filmmaker, scriptwriter, project director, presenter, voice-over narrator, studio host, studio guest, member of programme committee, and administrative head. Through these roles the scholarly community exerts influence on the nature and quality of historical documentary film.

Historical Documentary in Sweden

1. The early years

In this chapter the principal contours of the historical documentary terrain in Sweden in the latter part of the twentieth century are sketched against the background of history usage in Sweden and of international developments in historical documentary. In a first section below are a few remarks on early historical documentaries in Sweden, and then two sections follow on Sweden's national television corporation, SVT, one comprising a brief look at production conditions at SVT and the other a survey of historical documentaries made at SVT through the years. The chapter is not meant to serve as a conclusive catalogue of names, the list of documentarists and their productions being far from complete. Rather, discussion is confined to the most significant makers of historical documentaries and to the positions they occupy in the Swedish history culture. An investigation in itself, the chapter identifies and describes the context in which Olle Häger and Hans Villius made their films.

Already in the pre-television period, Swedish film was world famous. Early Swedish cinema directors such as Victor Sjöström and Mauritz Stiller and an actress such as Greta Garbo were known to all, and in fact, some film historians regard the years after the First World War as the golden age of Swedish non-fiction film as well. Some of the non-fiction films portrayed the past. Film historian Pelle Snickars has shown that there was a debate as early as 1911 concerning the need for a national film archive.¹ The capacity of film to preserve images of the past for the future was thus recognised in Sweden at an early point. Several institutions tried to use film as a means of transmitting knowledge about the past and consciously used historical non-fiction film for serious purposes. At the Nordic Museum in Stockholm, discussions were held already around 1915 on film as a documentary and pedagogic medium. The Historical Museum co-operated in the making of *Stenåldersliv* [*Life in the Stone Age*]

¹ Snickars mentions articles on the issue from 1911, 1913, 1915, and 1917. Snickars, Pelle, 2001, pp. 34, 226 f.

(1919), which was a reconstruction about the Stone Age showing how tools were used at that time.² From the mid-1920s until 1940, the Nordic Museum produced a number of cultural history films. The producers were aware that there could be unwanted flaws in these representations. In a 1926 article on the use of film, museum assistant Torsten Lenk noted that while the cultural history film could offer valuable information and meaning, there was a risk that it could be marked by carelessness and false information. Therefore, Lenk argued, to ensure correctness and truth, the presence of a specialist was needed during the making.³

The examples show that some early historical non-fiction films in Sweden were used as tools in the task of providing cultural or educational enlightenment. However, the commercial interest in historical documentary was rather limited, in Sweden as in other countries. In 1922, the leader of the section for educational film at the film company Svensk Filmindustri (SF) claimed that cinema audiences were not interested in historical film.⁴ When the cinematically interesting film *Häxan* [*The Witch*] that same year became perhaps the greatest economic catastrophe of the Swedish silent film, this could easily have deterred the film industry from further historical non-fiction ventures. Nevertheless, in 1924 SF's section for educational film offered as many as forty-two cultural history films for schools to rent.⁵

Interest in historical documentaries was rather low during the 1930s and 40s. In 1937 literary scholar Oscar Wieselgren wrote an article suggesting that Swedish historians and filmmakers join forces and make historical "chronicle plays." His idea was that a trustworthy speaker text would accompany images that were "shifting in motifs and content [...] documents, portraits, landscapes, maps et cetera," and he pointed to a recent film about one of the Stockholm islands which was an attempt in that direction.⁶ However, the response of historians to Wieselgren's idea was not enthusiastic. Historian Sven Tunberg argued that quasi-historical films did more harm than good. Historian Nils Ahnlund, who had been involved in historical programmes for the radio, was also sceptical. He warned that historical films had so far been a miserable story and felt that if past reality were misrepresented in historical films as a means of romanticising, such films were better left unmade.⁷

Certain interest in the historical documentary returned during the war years, and then in the 1950s the film company Artfilm made a few historical films

² Nyström, Bengt, 1998; Nyström, Bengt, 1982.

³ Lenk, Torsten, 1926, p. 526.

⁴ Berg, Gustaf, 1922, pp. 1, 5.

⁵ Berg, Gustaf, 1924.

⁶ Wieselgren, Oscar, 1937.

⁷ Tunberg and Ahnlund quoted in [anonymous], 1937. The harsh verdicts might have been influenced by the two Hollywood films *Queen Christina* (1933) and *Cardinal Richelieu* (1935), which contained unhistorical portraits of Swedish monarchs. Custen, George F., 1992, p. 37, writes that the latter film's portrait of Gustavus Adolphus as a drunken lout drew protest from the Swedish government, and eventually led Fox to drop the offensive scenes. Cf. Valentin, Hugo, 1922.

from still images.⁸ As already noted, using image materials other than old footage had become an international trend. A professor of economic history Ernst Söderlund co-wrote the scripts to these films.

2. SVT takes over the scene

With television completely new opportunities opened up for historical documentaries in Sweden. Documentaries had been given little and only diminishing space in cinemas, and although schools and organisations provided an alternative arena, and continued to do so in the years to come, the arena was a rather limited one.⁹ When SVT started broadcasting in 1956, television soon became the most important factor in determining what historical documentaries were produced in Sweden, and in what form they appeared.¹⁰ A few documentaries continued to be shown on the big screen,¹¹ but the overwhelming majority was produced directly for the small screen. A further characterisation of the Swedish television scene follows next below.¹²

When the radio and television industry started in Sweden it was built on a public service philosophy. Instead of following the American model with privately owned radio and television seeking to give the audience “what it wanted,” Sweden looked to the British example, and like the BBC, Sveriges Radio (SR, first called Radiotjänst) was given a public service assignment. SR was set up in 1925 as a limited company, jointly owned by popular movements, the press, and private industry, and operated by license from the state. The government appointed the chairman, and legislation set rules for programming, which included that it be impartial, objective, and diverse – plus of high quality. Educational and informative programming was given high status.¹³ In the 1950s, the television broadcaster Sveriges Television (SVT) was implemented into the existing public service monopoly. Advertising was not allowed, the service relying instead on government funding and user-license fees.¹⁴ A separate authority, the Radio Board, was founded and charged with overseeing SR compliance with the

⁸ Furhammar, Leif, 1998. Artfilm also made the Oscar award-winning *Kon-Tiki* (1950) about history explorer Thor Heyerdahl, who crossed the Pacific on a raft constructed as he believed ancient Polynesian rafts had been.

⁹ Some of these films can be found in the National Archive of Recorded Sound and Moving Images (SLBA), see database on film and video. Martin Karlsson is studying the use of historical films in Swedish schools.

¹⁰ Cf. Furhammar, Leif, 1995; Kilborn, Richard & John Izod, 1997.

¹¹ Two recent examples are Jan Lindqvist's *Tiden är en dröm* (part 1, 1999) and Lars Lennart Forsberg's *Min mamma hade fjorton barn* (2000), which both were made using huge quantities of still photos. The first film gave an account of the industrialisation of Sweden in the late nineteenth century, while the second told the story of a large Stockholm family; cf. Wahlberg, Malin, 2003, pp. 191 f.

¹² For a history of radio and television in Sweden, see Hadenius, Stig, 1998.

¹³ Lundgren, Solveig, 1994, pp. 15–30, 34–42.

¹⁴ Syvertsen, Trine & Eli Skogerbo, 1998.

terms of the agreement with the state. Individual listeners and viewers were free to complain to the Radio Board if they felt some programme or practice failed to live up to standards of impartiality or objectivity.¹⁵

When SVT started with its documentary production, four communicative traditions nurtured it as it grew.¹⁶ One tradition was that of cinematic film. Lennart Ehrenborg of Artfilm was hired to help set up a film section at SVT, and he remained the principal organiser of the section for fifteen years. The aesthetic ideals he brought with him to SVT, together with those of other documentarists working there and who were trained in cinematic film, helped form strong artful ambitions for Swedish television documentaries. Another tradition was that of radio. Both technically and organisationally, SVT was derived from SR. And much of the staff had been with SR; many of the first television documentarists, having begun as radio documentarists, brought orality with them to the new medium. The third tradition was journalism. A large part of the early television staff, including some of the heads, came from newspapers. They helped create a focus on the world of today, which strained against the more artful ambitions of the producers around Ehrenborg. Finally, a fourth contributing communicative tradition was adult education. Not least this tradition, recognised for its emphasis on public service, led to a large production of educational historical documentaries. What is indeed striking about the young SVT is the company's academic stamp. None of the early staff had training in television production or its management, as no such training was available in Sweden. Instead, many had sound knowledge acquired through academic studies in subjects such as history and art history.¹⁷ Thus, they were better trained to work with content than with form.

SVT retained its monopoly position on the television scene for more than thirty years. In 1969 a second television channel (SVT2) was set up within the company, creating a situation of mild competition. Although SVT's headquarters and most of its personnel were situated in Stockholm, there were editorial offices in several towns around Sweden and the tussle among them for money added to the state of competition. Historical documentaries were made at various sections or offices of the company. In the late 1960s and early 70s Olle Häger and Hans Villius formed the Section for historical documentaries at the main unit in Stockholm, but even during these years there were other history producers at SVT. In 1987 SVT was redesigned so that one of the channels became the Stockholm channel (SVT1) while the other offices made up the all-Sweden channel (SVT2). This reorganisation explains the somewhat confusing detail that a number of producers, among them Häger and Villius, worked for SVT2 until 1987 but then were transferred to SVT1. In addition to SVT1 and SVT2, there was a separate company within SR called Utbildningsradion

¹⁵ Important cases of the Radio Board are referred in the series of publications called *Radionämnden anser*.

¹⁶ Furhammar, Leif, 1995, pp. 20–38.

¹⁷ Engblom, Lars-Åke, 1998.

(UR), which produced educational television programmes for school use. But UR did not have a broadcasting license and therefore had to negotiate for broadcasting time for its programmes through SVT.¹⁸

Although the Swedes were relative latecomers to television, lagging behind most other countries in Western Europe, television soon had a remarkable popularity. Seven years after television was introduced, there was one television set for every five Swedes, making Sweden the most television-dense country after the United States and Canada. This is all the more remarkable since broadcasting hours during the first years were very limited. Much of SR's resources went to constructing a network of stations, and Sweden being an unusually large country, this meant that quite little actually went to the production of programmes.¹⁹

Broadcasting hours were expanded owing both to the growing body of permanent staff at SVT and to increased purchase of outside productions. Many productions were bought from independent Swedish producers, who had often made their products in co-operation with SVT, while other programmes were bought from foreign countries. But when buying foreign productions, the SVT officials still worked under rules set for the company. An example of what could happen is the case of SVT and the American western, the big import item of the 1960s. When SVT head Nils Erik Bæhrendtz announced a plan to start broadcasting westerns, he pointed out that a prerequisite for acquisition was that SVT could find "a series that meets our standards for relative decency and quality," with prospects for purchase to be judged by a viewing committee. This same moral attitude actually caused SVT to stop broadcasting certain series that were popular with the audience.²⁰ Thus, SVT took active part in shaping the flow of foreign productions that reached Swedish viewers. But such an action as stopping a popular series was a matter of negotiation. Former television official Oloph Hansson recalls that in the seventies, a "viewer forum" in the little town of Lycksele showed one of the most popular series to be *Little House on the Prairies*. That series had been turned down "for ideological reasons" by the Section for children's programming while being accepted by the Section for entertainment programming. Hansson acknowledges that the viewer forums could offer wholesome lessons to the SVT staff.²¹

The start of a second channel, SVT2, led to a large recruitment of new

¹⁸ For an extensive account of SVT's development, see Hadenius, Stig, 1998.

¹⁹ Bjork, Ulf Jonas, 2001, pp. 310, 319.

²⁰ Bjork, Ulf Jonas, 2001; Bæhrendtz, Nils Erik, 1959.

²¹ Hansson, Oloph, 1998, p. 400. SVT employee Göran Sellgren has said he saw *Little House on the Prairies* in its first American broadcast in 1974, but that it took four years before SVT officials agreed to buy it; Cederskär, Rosemarie, 1983. The Swedish historical series *Trälarna* [*The Thralls*], based on Sven Wernström's books that identified strongly with the poor, was typical of progressive children's programming in the 70s. Another very popular historical series for children was the French *Il était une fois*. In 1985, an episode from *Little House on the Prairies* was reported to the Radio Board for including too much violence, and the Board criticised SVT for not issuing a warning before the broadcast; GR. E2, SB 294/85. The case shows there was continual discussion of the quality and content of programmes.

personnel. The new channel was soon accused of being very radical and it has been speculated that half a procession of Vietnam demonstrators was allowed to march through its gates. Although research has indicated that it was as much the old personnel as the new employees who were so radical, what is important is that large parts of the establishment could be annoyed by the radical views expressed in SVT programmes. Many documentaries were made with the clear intention of heightening social and political awareness in viewers, one of the most famous cases being a historical series, up for discussion further below. The radical atmosphere at SVT manifested itself also in that many issues were discussed and decided at general meetings and by programme committees rather than by staff superiors, as eventually became the case. In the mid-1970s the state trimmed the budget for SVT, which was probably due to radical programming in the years just before.²²

The principles of documentary filmmaking was an issue for debate on several occasions, for example, following the broadcasting in 1968 of a documentary on a Stockholm school. The film brought a lot of angry response, one SR critic charging that the film was “subjective” and therefore false, and further that it was proof that a television documentary could never be true. Documentary head Ehrenborg defended the programme on aesthetic grounds, making a distinction between documentary and “report.” He argued that while the latter is a journalistic representation of actuality, a documentary is always the product of a creative mind.²³ If there was a problem, Ehrenborg argued, it depended on lack of clarity in making this distinction. Therefore, he said, the key question for SVT staff was to try to reach a “uniform terminology in our headlining,” to give viewers “reliable” and if possible “unambiguous” information about what kind of programme was being broadcast.²⁴ What Ehrenborg asked for in this debate was a clear labelling or indexing, of documentary programmes. This was not a unique Swedish stance. A couple of years after the debate at SVT, the head of documentaries at BBC, Richard Cawston, led the production of a small book setting down principles and practices to be used as a guide in documentary filmmaking work at BBC. The book cites labelling as a fundamental principle, stating it is “essential that the nature and purpose of every programme be made clear to everybody.” Further, the book maintains that BBC has “no right to confuse or deceive its audience,” and points out that not only is it important to label a programme as a whole, but also ingredients such as reconstructions should be labelled.²⁵ At the time, around 1970, there were quite strong ties between SVT and BBC, an example the many discussions Ehrenborg had with

²² Engblom, Lars-Åke, 1998; Furhammar, Leif, 1995, pp. 117–192; for the demonstration image, see Guillou, Jan, 1997, p. 33; on general meetings, see interview with Häger, 2003.06.03. For a critical view of SVT in the 70s, see Arvidsson, Claes, 1999, pp. 149–173.

²³ Ehrenborg’s point is in spirit close to the “creative treatment” part of my definition of historical documentary.

²⁴ Ehrenborg, Lennart, 1968. The film debated was Eric M. Nilsson’s *En skola*.

²⁵ Cawston, Richard et al, 1972, pp. 17 f. The quoted passages are marked in Lennart Ehrenborg’s personal copy of the book. Cf. Vaughan, Dai, 1999, p. 10.

Cawston.²⁶ Regarding debates over documentaries at SVT it should be added that in 1967 documentarist Erwin Leiser published a book on documentary in Swedish. Further in 1968, literary scholar and SR employee Manne Stenbeck published an eight-page article on documentary in the company magazine.²⁷ Taken together, the cited matters show there was discussion at SVT about objectivity and subjectivity in documentary, about principles and practice in documentary filmmaking. Häger and Villius had to have been influenced by this discussion.

For a producer working at SVT neither financing nor distribution would have been a major difficulty. Once the idea for a production had company sanctioning, both financing and distribution was more or less guaranteed. The company of course set limits on time, technical matters, and budget costs, which means that if a producer proposed a project large enough to affect the channel budget it had to be sanctioned by company superiors. In some years, the televising of events such as the Olympic Games or Sweden hosting the Eurovision Song Contest could claim a large share of available funds. Strict rules specified what kind of sponsor money was allowed from private investors, to preclude any compromise of the independence of SVT productions. The relatively small number of big budget projects funded is a clear result of the economic limits of the system. But economic considerations rarely affected projects under way, because producers knew the limits beforehand.

The television monopoly of SVT was broken in the late 1980s, when commercial satellite broadcasters started their struggle for turf in Sweden. In the increasingly globalised economy media conglomerates tried to gain control over lucrative markets, and broadcasting structures changed all over Europe. With national regulations being undermined by the new distribution technology, the Swedish government moved to open up to private commercial broadcasting on a national level. In 1991 the parliament licensed the former satellite service of TV4 as a third channel on the national terrestrial network. TV4 was given the monopoly on television advertising in return for public service obligations, while SVT1 and SVT2 continued their advertising-free service.²⁸ Thus, the Swedish parliament tried to curb the effects of commercial forces by making the public service function a condition for a license. This condition is of certain interest in this study, as given the logic that historical documentaries may be added to programming to reinforce the public service credentials of a channel. TV4 would broadcast such programmes, which indeed it has done. Another effect of the disappearance of monopoly is that SVT became increasingly aware of audience sharing. When the commercial channels gained shares of the audience by broadcasting light entertainment programmes, SVT responded with similar programmes. It is difficult to say what influence that the new competition has had and will have on the SVT officials' interest in histori-

²⁶ Interview with Lennart Ehrenborg 2001.06.05

²⁷ Leiser, Erwin, 1967; Stenbeck, Manne, 1968.

²⁸ Syvertsen, Trine & Eli Skogerbø, 1998.

cal documentaries. Perhaps, when new international competitors offer their various niche products SVT will fall back on products that the competitors do not provide and which are of particular interest to the Swedish audience – namely programmes about Sweden. Documentaries about the Swedish past could be one such programme type.²⁹

In sum, one of the cornerstones in the building of SVT was adult education ideals, which is a sign that cognitive considerations were important. The same is suggested also by the demand for clear indexing of programmes. In the 1970s a radical atmosphere prevailed at the company, and in the 90s SVT met competition in a changed media landscape. In the section that follows, the work by a number of historical documentarists at SVT is surveyed. No exhaustive account of historical documentaries at the company, the survey does however provide information on key figures who were contemporaries of Häger and Villius and whose work may have influenced them in one way or another. The survey furthermore points out what formal options were available during these years.

3. The beginnings: Historical lectures and compilation films

One of the earliest traditions at SVT was the historical lecture, which goes back to radio and to customs followed by adult education. The first large SVT lecture series was Lennart Ehrenborg's *Liv och leverne i gamla Sverige* [*Life in old Sweden*], which was broadcast in fifteen parts 1957–59 and built around the historical insights of journalist and acting historian Gustaf Näsström. Producer Ehrenborg was responsible mainly for the form and content matters he left to Näsström, who had written a number of books about the past. Ehrenborg describes the production process as beginning with the two meeting to talk about a given programme, and then proceeding to the milieu chosen to do their filming– without a script. When Ehrenborg had made a rough editing, Näsström would view the pictures and afterwards write a narration script.³⁰ In some cases, Näsström appeared on-screen and lectured in an erudite way while walking around in the authentic milieu or a museum simulation of it. At that time he would have written some kind of script to follow before coming before the camera. Nevertheless, Ehrenborg's description of the filming as basically spontaneous is a corrective to the report of film historian Leif Furhammar, who says the programmes were “carefully planned.”³¹ Sometimes the camera would focus on fine details in art works and the result could be amazing for those used

²⁹ Hagerman, Maja, 2002, pp. 89 f., writes that SVT officials had declared there would be a strong new venture into historical programming but that nothing seemed to happen.

³⁰ Interview with Lennart Ehrenborg, 2001.06.05.

³¹ Furhammar, Leif, 1995, p. 38.

to seeing art works only as full pictures. After one programme on Swedish historical art, the former director-general of the Central Board of National Antiquities wrote to Näsström saying that he had wept with emotion on seeing the faces of the nation's old soldiers.³² He had surely seen the painting supplying the details before, but never those tiny faces.

The programmes described were made in the expository mode, with the reassuring lecturer either on screen as presenter or heard as voice-over narrator. The presenter claimed a high degree of narrational authority, which gave the programmes a rather closed structure. Similar formal solutions were used several times in the early years at SVT. In the course of one programme well-known historian Erik Lönnroth, who was also on the SR board, lectured on screen for several minutes about King Gustav III and eighteenth-century class society.³³ Lönnroth participated in many programmes around 1970.³⁴ But the lecture form was soon abandoned, believed not to work well on television.

Another type of historical programme that was made at SVT from the 1960s onwards was the compilation film, also usually made in the expository mode. SVT bought the newsreel archive from the older SF film company, and the purchase proved to be a priceless resource for documentarists. The archive contained newsreel footage from half a century, the oldest footage going back to 1896. The first to use the old footage for historical documentaries was Gardar Sahlberg, a trained historian of literature who had previously worked for SF and moved to SVT almost as part of the archive. In the 60s and 70s he made a number of compilation films on the early part of the century, drawing on the unique film resources of the archive.³⁵ Häger and Villius also found material for many of their programmes in the archive.

During the 1980s and 90s, Sahlberg's programmes were followed by those of Jan Bergman, who made two long series of ten-minute programmes, *Guldkorn* [*Grains of Gold*] and *Stockholmspärlor* [*Pearls of Stockholm*]. In these programmes, Bergman gathered archival footage from a specific year, added music from that same year, and tried to express some of its spirit in short, evocative statements. Bergman has described his work routine as first reading newspapers and listening to music from the year in question, to place himself in the mood of the times, and then going to the film archive in search of imagery. In trying to transmit a feeling for the year he was depicting, he would use original soundtracks if there were some,³⁶ and strive also to repeat the editing rhythm com-

³² Letter from Sigurd Curman to Gustaf Näsström, quoted in Näsström's letter to Ehrenborg, 1960.05.30. The painting in question is Gustaf Cederström's *Karl XII:s likfärd*; see also Chapter 6 below.

³³ *Gustavianskt* (1964); the programme was produced by Lars Krantz.

³⁴ Lönnroth and Göran Littke made one series on Sweden in the years 1939–1941 (*Sveriges kritiska dagar*, 1970) and another on Sweden's long period of peace (*Fredens land*, 1972).

³⁵ Sahlberg also commented on the archival riches of a book; Sahlberg, Gardar, 1966. Sahlberg illustrates how difficult it is to decide who is an acting historian and who is a professional; before working with film he was a researcher on eighteenth-century literature.

³⁶ Hellner, Lena, 1988.

mon to the time depicted – he points out that editing has changed over the years.³⁷ Often he concentrated on one theme, as in *Stockholmspärlor* on 1968, where his theme was police brutality and demonstrations against the Vietnam War. Both individual demonstrators and police officers speak directly to the camera, offering their views on the events. The voice-over, Bergman, provided brief linking commentary.³⁸

Bergman's interest in historical documentaries sprang from his interest in film, but he had also studied a bit of history and had contacts with museums and with the local history and heritage movement.³⁹ When a historical society attempted to make an inventory of remaining films about the iron industry, Bergman provided a page of suggestions for how the films should be stored and cared for.⁴⁰ His programmes were the first that SVT sold as VHS cassettes, this beginning in 1982.⁴¹ In the late 1990s SVT cut down its permanent staff and Bergman was forced to leave. Worth noting is that, like Sahlberg, Bergman's work was archive based, and he did not make films for any of the regular editorial offices. He formed an independent production company and continued making compilation films, but he also became a frequent critic of developments at SVT and finally his contract was no longer renewed.⁴²

4. 1970s and 80s: Established histories challenged and defended

In the two-channel decades, the 1970s and 80s, several members of the permanent staff at SVT were trained historians. Even so, it happened several times that television histories challenged established histories, either by taking a radical political stance or by having an anti-intellectual regional standpoint. Formally, the lecturing presenter tended not to appear in these years, probably owing to the criticism it drew for being authoritarian. But the voice-over narrator continued to be popular and was used in two series that attracted much attention, *Från socialism till ökad jämlikhet* [*From Socialism to Greater Equality*] (1971) and *Folkets historia i bild* [*The People's History in Images*] (1974). Both series told history from a radical perspective. While the producers in both cases were from SVT or UR, young graduate students of history had conducted the research and written part of the scripts.

The first of the two series, *Från socialism*, was produced at UR and told the story of the labour movement in Sweden from the late 1800s to the present.

³⁷ Johansson, Marika, 2000.

³⁸ *Stockholmspärlor: 1968* (SVT 2001).

³⁹ Interview with Jan Bergman, 2000.09.04; Stugart, Martin, 1999.

⁴⁰ Bergman, Jan, 1996.

⁴¹ Johansson, Marika, 2000.

⁴² Bergman, Jan, 2000a; Bergman, Jan, 2000b; Bergman, Jan, 2001; Gurinder, Jan-Olof, 2001. Cf. Winberg, Per-Erik, 2001.

The series was made from archival footage, but it included a number of interviews with aged politicians and political analysts. What is striking about the series is that it did not depict the history of the labour movement simply as a Social Democratic success story (the Social Democratic Party was in power just then), but rather as a struggle between reformist and revolutionary workers and their leaders. In its interpretation of certain events, the series depicted the reformists, including the Social Democrats, as traitors to the cause for socialism. For example, the fifth episode accounted for the Saltsjöbaden treaty in 1938, where the Swedish Employers' Confederation (SAF) agreed with the Swedish Confederation of Trade Unions (LO) to establish central wage negotiations. The treaty managed to keep Sweden free of strikes for three decades and was generally seen as a very positive agreement. The series claimed that it was a "strait-jacket" for workers. The account ended with a song where one line ran "We sell our power at a cheap price. Should there be the right to strike [...] should there be equality?"⁴³

The series had challenged the party in government and met with fierce criticism. In retrospect, one media critic has called it "the most criticised [production] in Swedish television history."⁴⁴ It was attacked in the press by leading Social Democrats, and complaints were filed with the Radio Board. The Board engaged three experts to assay the matter, and they wrote a fifty-two-page judgement. Based on this report, the Board declared the series censurable for violation of the legal requirements for objectivity and impartiality.⁴⁵ This judgement was controversial and the Board's experts were accused of being biased. The young historians who had written the script for the series wrote a memorandum in defence of their interpretations and against the critics. SVT1 manager Håkan Unsgaard likewise defended the series and wrote that in dispute was not facts but interpretations. He argued that SR had no right to make decisions that were of a scientific nature. He also argued that it was important to introduce a materialistic view on contemporary history – especially when traditional perspectives so dominated television. Unsgaard gave as an example of the latter the compilation films by Gardar Sahlberg and a recent series that featured Erik Lönnroth.⁴⁶ But the conviction handed down to *Från socialism* stood.

The dispute over the series has been interpreted as an example of the difficulties the radical left faced when it challenged the hegemonic version of history established by the Social Democrats.⁴⁷ But another way to read the matter is as one involving not interpretations per se, but rather the way interpretations were presented. This makes the dispute one over form rather than con-

⁴³ *Från socialism till ökad jämlikhet: 5. Vi smida medan järnet glöder*, SVT & UR 1971.

⁴⁴ Thurén, Torsten, 1997, p. 254. An interesting comparison is a Danish debate that followed a series that told the story of the Social Democrats in Denmark; Bryld, Claus, 2002, pp. 282 f.

⁴⁵ GR, E2, 41 (253/71, 277/71, 283/71, 284/71, 317/71); Thurén, Torsten, 1997; Linderborg, Åsa, 2001, pp. 423–434.

⁴⁶ Unsgaard, Håkan, 1972.

⁴⁷ Linderborg, Åsa, 2001.

tent. The agreement between SVT and the state demanded it be made clear whether a programme offered interpretations that were controversial or interpretations that were uncertain. The issue thus is one of labelling, which can be seen in connection with the BBC position described above that a programme must announce its purpose. Because *Från socialism* claimed narrational authority, the series had to be subject to Board examination. As it was, the experts did not support the interpretations and thus the complaints were found justified.

A couple of years after the storm surrounding *Från socialism*, a new radical historical series was made. Producer Kristian Romare co-operated in making it with a group of young historians called the Archive for People's History.⁴⁸ *Folkets historia i bild* was planned as a five-part series depicting the history of common people in Sweden from the Middle Ages to the nineteenth century. Production was eventually interrupted and only the two parts dealing with medieval times were finished and broadcast. The programmes are made in the expository mode and use hundreds of medieval images from churches and archives. But most interesting is that the programmes manifest conscious use of theoretical concepts. One of the researchers, historian Maths Isacson, recalls that it was the intention of the series to apply concepts of historical materialism in picturing the circumstances of ordinary people. According to him, the intention was to show what propels development.⁴⁹

The first programme was subtitled "When Adam dug and Eve span, who was then a nobleman," and examines life during the centuries when nobility enjoyed a favoured position. The voice-over narrator uses politically charged words such as "oppression," "produce," "right-wing coup," "struggle," "upper class," and "lower class," to mention only a very few of quite many. Antagonism between classes is made basis for an explanation that names oppression the cause of destitution and therefore ultimately the cause of the Black Death. While the narrator insists that peasants resisted the nobility's attempts to gain more power, he explains that "in times of progress it often happens that the vigilance of the people against the upper class is slackened."⁵⁰ The words have a contemporary reference point as well. They appealed to Swedish viewers not to slacken their own vigilance against the upper class. It was a political message typical for the radical 1970s.

The second programme was about popular uprisings and rebellions in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. In ways similar to those cited above it told of the many atrocities committed by the nobility, how soldiers committed murder and rape in the villages, and how peasants united against their oppressors. Comparing conditions then with contemporary conditions, the narrator called

⁴⁸ Arkivet för Folkets Historia. The motto of the association was "The people are the driving force in history."

⁴⁹ Interview with Maths Isacson, 2001.04.04. Cf. DA. A12, F3, 77, ärende 10/75, producer Kristian Romare's "PM om programmen 'Folkets historia i bild'."

⁵⁰ *Folkets historia i bild. 1. När Adam grävde och Eva spann, vem var då en adelsman* (SVT2).

attention to fellowship among workers as the basic factor giving unity, “just like in the work-places in our time.” Finally, he states that “the people are the driving force in history.”⁵¹ The two programmes are striking for their ideological rhetoric and can easily be expected to have alienated many viewers. But it is probable that the series had support in certain quarters at SVT, if as it was the first episode was broadcast on Christmas Eve, the most sacred of Swedish holidays.

The programmes drew a positive response from a number of reviewers,⁵² but they also caused a lively debate, and not least historians questioned the interpretations. Lars-Olof Larsson filed a complaint with the Radio Board where he criticised the “vulgar Marxist form” and alleged the form was an “insult to scientific decency, against objectivity and impartiality.”⁵³ Other historians wrote in the newspapers. Romare’s colleague at SVT2 Hans Villius criticised the series for its moralising and charged that by hailing the “holy people” it became a parallel to the nationalistic writings of the nineteenth century.⁵⁴ Sven Ulric Palme, who knew some of the young historians who wrote the series, responded that Villius had not fully understood that the young Marxist historians were of course romantics and added that he wished they would realise this themselves.⁵⁵ Ingmar Oldberg called the filmmakers Stalinists, while Christina Carlsson and Gunnar Wetterberg criticised the programmes for not being consistent in their radicalism.⁵⁶ The Radio Board finally ruled the widely debated series exempt from all charges.⁵⁷ However, it is likely that the complaints helped to stop production of the series. A lot of work had already been done on the three remaining programmes, yet they were never completed and broadcast.⁵⁸ SVT officials likely came to realise how radical the profile of the programmes actually had to be, when only the first two episodes elicited so much critical reaction.

In the 1980s another challenge to established versions of history appeared when producer Dag Stålsjö at SVT in Gothenburg made a series on the ancient history of Sweden. Provocatively enough, it was titled *Svearikets vaggå – en historia i gungning?* [*The Cradle of Sweden – a shaky history*] (1981–82). Though

⁵¹ *Folkets historia i bild. 2. De stora bondeupprorens tid* (SVT2).

⁵² GR. E2, 124, 10/75, Bilaga 5 till TV2:s yttrande.

⁵³ GR. E2, 124, 10/75, Anmälan mot programmet *Folkets historia i bild: De stora bondeupprorens tid*, p. 1. Other complaints were filed with the Radio Board, cf. GR. E2, 124, 32/75; GR. E2, 125, 59/75; GR. E2, 126, 69/75.

⁵⁴ Villius, Hans, 1975; Villius, Hans, 1975a. The filmmakers made their reply to Villius’s criticism in Garnert, Eva and Janken Myrdal, 1975. Erik Lönnroth regarded the programmes much as Villius did; Lönnroth interviewed in Anderberg, Rolf, 1975.

⁵⁵ Palme, Sven Ulric, 1975.

⁵⁶ Oldberg, Ingmar, 1975; Carlsson, Christina & Gunnar Wetterberg, 1975; response in Myrdal, Janken, 1975; Myrdal, Janken, 1975a; Oldberg, Ingmar, 1975a; see also Norborg, Lars-Arne, 1975. Zander, Ulf, 2001, pp. 389 ff., gives an account of the debate.

⁵⁷ GR. Prot. nr 175, 1975.05.15; E2, 124, 10/75; E2, 124, 32/75; E2, 125, 59/75; E2, 126, 69/75.

⁵⁸ DA. A12, F3, 77, ärende 10/75, PM om programmen ‘Folkets historia i bild’, p. 2; interview with Maths Isacson, 2001.04.04.

Stålsjö was an experienced producer and involved in programme making already in the 50s, this was the first time that he turned to history. Seen as a work of art, the series was made by a master of the medium, one film historian even claiming that when Stålsjö was at his best there was no one to compare with him.⁵⁹ The camera and the words are used in suggestive ways, in combination creating exciting feelings. The opening scene of the first episode is a telling example. It starts with dramatic music from the soundtrack and the camera follows a graveyard wall to the old church. After the gate is opened (by an invisible person) the on-screen Stålsjö meets us inside the building the key to the church in his hand. He speaks in fateful tones, utters the classic words of a Swedish nineteenth-century historian that the history of a country is the history of its kings, and points out that there are many royal graves in the province of Västergötland (in western Sweden, with the regional capital of Gothenburg), including the grave of the first Christian king, and even that the oldest regional law in Sweden was that of the province. Following the traditional, half-mythical history of the founding of Sweden, comes the story of how people around Stockholm conquered other provinces. The idea championed by Stålsjö was actually that of the “västgöta school,” which argued that because Västergötland was a rich and populous province in the Middle Ages, it is likely there that the kingdom of Sweden must have originated. In the scene inside the church Stålsjö looks into the camera and says, “a dog lies buried in Västergötland,”⁶⁰ an allusion to the conspiracy theory that holds someone had reason to hide the fact that Västergötland was the cradle of the kingdom. The programmes made Stålsjö a hero in the eyes of many locals.

What was controversial was not just that Stålsjö advocated a version of the history of Sweden that was different from the traditional one, but rather that he ignored historical knowledge that spoke forcefully against his ideas. One historian, who later acknowledged that Stålsjö’s programmes had been valuable for opening the eyes of both researchers and financiers, has even called the programmes “quite misleading.”⁶¹ For example, against the belief of the entire scholarly community they call for relocation of both the town of Uppsala and the Viking town of Birka from the Stockholm area to Västergötland.⁶² The towns of Uppsala and Birka have heavily symbolic importance because of frequent mention made of them in early medieval documents.

Interestingly, the narrator Stålsjö is often tentative in making his suggestions. When he mentions the eight-century monk Ansgar, credited with bringing Christianity to Sweden, he does not say, “*I believe* this was the route of Ansgar,” but “*some people think* Ansgar came by this route” (italics mine). Thus, he suggest there are alternative possibilities, leads the viewer, but rarely states opin-

⁵⁹ Furhammar, Leif, 1995, p. 232.

⁶⁰ *Svearikets vagger – en historia i gungning? 1. Skåne land utan förskoning* (1981).

⁶¹ Janson, Henrik, 1999, p. 7.

⁶² Stålsjö did not suggest which town had been located at the site of the excavated Birka, if the real Birka had been elsewhere.

ions clearly and instead plays the role of a man in search of the truth. He brings in the conspiracy theory of the “västgöta school,” but does not argue explicitly for its being correct. His tentative words indicate an open-voice structure, and one can claim Stålsjö allows viewers to draw their own conclusions. But this open quality is really illusory, because the selection of interviewees and examples point in only one direction and the viewer is left with little else to choose. Stålsjö does not utter the last word verdict, leaves that out for the effect. He makes his case through editing and narrational strategies.

The programmes met with stir and debate. Erik Lönnroth, who evidently suspecting nothing had participated as talking head in the programmes, now attacked Stålsjö, and at a seminar at Uppsala University Stålsjö was fiercely attacked also by his colleagues at SVT in Stockholm, Olle Häger and Hans Villius.⁶³ Stålsjö’s attitude and the reactions from many historians were a low-water mark in relations between the professional historical community and SVT.⁶⁴ In the end, complaints were filed with the Radio Board and the series was declared censurable for partiality.⁶⁵ However brilliant in narrative technique, the programmes did not adhere to the Swedish rules. A few years later, part of another Stålsjö historical documentary was included as a source-critical exercise in a textbook for university students of history.⁶⁶ It was perhaps the first serious effort among Swedish historians to train students to have a critical attitude toward the modern mass media.

The criticism of the three mentioned series should not conceal the fact that several SVT producers were trained historians whose historical programmes honoured scholarly perspectives. Best known are Häger and Villius, but there were other producers whose programmes were highly respected. One of them was classical archaeologist Hans “Hatte” Furuhausen who had taught at the university, worked as an entertainer, and had been a unit head at SVT since the 1960s. With one foot still in academia,⁶⁷ he spent the last years of his career making historical programmes. Several of his productions were made for UR, and as he himself has pointed out it is doubtful the programmes would qualify as documentaries in the traditional aesthetic sense. There were often educa-

⁶³ Interview with Hans Villius, 2003.06.02. Cf. Chapter 5.

⁶⁴ Cf. Lönnroth, Lars, 1987.

⁶⁵ GR. E2, 290, 42/83 (TV 1/82; 21/82, 25/82; 42/82). Notably, the Radio Board took the unusual step of asking an expert, professor Herman Schück, to scrutinise the series. His report was later attacked by two other historians, Birgit Sawyer and Peter Sawyer; 42/83, enclosures 14, 18 and 19. See also Sawyer, Peter, 1983. A few years later, Stålsjö was again charged but then freed; GR. E2, SB 80/88 (*Strövtag till Mälardalen*). Cf. GR. E2, SB 78/91 (TV 202/90) on *Strövtag till heliga källor och kor*, which was convicted of partiality with direct reference to the 1983 decision.

⁶⁶ Nilsson, Torbjörn, 1993. Stålsjö died in a traffic accident in the late 1980s and his production of historical programmes came to a sudden end.

⁶⁷ Furuhausen, Hans, 1982, was entrusted to write the volume on Classical Greece in publisher Bonnier’s 21 volume history of the world. A few years later he wrote an essay discussing traditions in Classical Studies regarding the decline of the Classical world; Furuhausen, Hans, 1985. Cf. Furuhausen, Hans, 1978.

tional ambitions behind a programme,⁶⁸ which had consequences for the choices of form. Furuhausen made strong cognitive considerations when arranging the programmes. He has said that he feels that an edited interview is far too much manipulation, and accordingly interviews in his programmes are unedited, shot with uninterrupted camera, and characterised by a slow tempo. Furuhausen himself often lectured on screen. In one programme he asked economic historian Staffan Högberg to explain what mercantilism was, and such a difficult and abstract question probably would not have been included in documentaries other than those by UR. Furuhausen says a problem is that few academics are accustomed to telling about a problem in few words and words with clear direction. Although unafraid of lectures, he claims only short, coherent lines of argument are suitable for television. In the mercantilism case an earlier attempt had failed, but when Furuhausen and Högberg sat down on a lawn following a stroll, suddenly the latter spoke well – and the camera was on. Incidentally, the image also offered a beautiful view of central Stockholm, a milieu of central importance to the subject in question.⁶⁹

The UR producers were intent on making educational programmes, but that did not preclude inventive formal experiments. In the seventies, historian Alf Åberg wrote the script for “television news from the past,” where history was re-enacted in an a-historic television studio. One programme was on the death of King Karl XII in 1718, complete with invented on-site interviews of participants in the trenches where the king had fallen, as well as with studio talks with political leaders.⁷⁰ In a series for children on-screen Furuhausen told of the Roman town of Pompeji in an elaborate tale on two time levels, where the narrator shifted between time in the present and time in the days of Rome. Standing in the remains of a tavern he would suddenly find local food and start eating, the soundscape indicating he was now in Roman times.⁷¹ Through a technical experiment, Furuhausen and his photographer painted the missing parts of buildings on a large glass-plate, which was then suspended upright before the camera. Ruins suddenly became undamaged buildings, making the narrator’s time-journey convincing. To break the illusory journey, the ruins would reappear.⁷² The experiment with the glass-plate preceded the computer animations of productions like *Millennium* (Jeremy Isaacs, 2000). These programmes show that the producers recognised that children demand aesthetically attractive exciting programmes, and that they tried to find forms that combined cognitive and aesthetic benefits.

⁶⁸ Letter from Hans Furuhausen to the author, 2001.04.24. It can be noted also that Furuhausen was involved in writing a school textbook in history; Torbacke, Jarl et al, 1979.

⁶⁹ *Äventyret Sverige: Kronans kaka* (SVT & UR 1993); interview with Hans Furuhausen, 2001.05.09.

⁷⁰ *Historisk rapport: 1. Året var 1718* (SVT & UR 1978). Cf. Hedberg, Birgit, 1979. The American series *You Are There* also combined re-enactments with a (modern) television studio talk-session; Horowitz, Robert F., 1983.

⁷¹ *Pompeji bakom ruinerna: 3. Törnrosa sov i 1900 år* (SVT2 1980).

⁷² Interview with Hans Furuhausen, 2001.05.09.

A vital history-producing part of SVT was the Section for cultural programmes,⁷³ where several producers had academic training in literature, art history, and history. One of these was Katarina Dunér who while working there in the 1980s and 90s made poetic programmes about historical milieus. Her highly aestheticised programmes were made in the form of series such as *Människans lustgårdar* [*Man's Paradise Gardens*] and *Svenska hus* [*Swedish Houses*], which focused on the architectural dreams and ambitions of people through the ages. In one programme she told of the eighteenth-century train oil factories on the Swedish West Coast. For some years this was a prosperous industry, train oil a product even exported to other countries. But rather than show in detail how the oil was produced and transported to markets in Western Europe (which might have been the natural perspective of Furuhausen or Häger and Villius), Dunér instead peeked into a manor house near one factory. With the help of an inventory drawn up around 1800 she was able to tell the viewers all about the tools and treasures that were a part of the household, thus much about the life in those times.⁷⁴ Originally an art historian, Dunér spent a full year making a complete inventory of a Swedish eighteenth-century palace.⁷⁵ The special competence she acquired by that work, her eye for detail in furniture and fixtures, she used over and over again in her programmes.

Dunér's programmes picture buildings, parks, and other historical milieus, but in a way one is reminded of a volume of prints. The images are accompanied not by sounds from the milieu, but by music and by a voice-over narrator's words (at times too by voice-over quotes read by actors). No people are visible in the milieus depicted. Instead, Dunér sets out in clear form the life conditions of people through their artful creations. While most of her historical documentarist colleagues have defined the world in terms of the concept of the nation state, culture does not automatically respect such boundaries. This may be part of the reason for the international orientation Dunér's programmes have. Though she usually depicted Swedish conditions, when illustrating the history of parks and gardens, for example, she took the viewers to the gardens of Cordoba, the cultural cradle of Europe.

Swedish documentarists dealt primarily with Swedish history, but a significant exception are films about the World War II and the Holocaust. Already in 1960 Erwin Leiser made *Den blodiga tiden* [*Mein Kampf*], which is one of the few internationally acclaimed Swedish documentaries.⁷⁶ In an expository mode, the film told the history of the Nazi movement from the thirties to the Holocaust. Leiser himself had fled to Sweden after the Crystal Night in 1938 and thus had first-hand experiences to draw upon. For the image material, he and producer Tore Sjöberg looked through an enormous amount of footage.

⁷³ Among the cultural history producers were Christian Stannow, Bengt Röhlander, and Tone Bengtsson. Cf. Furhammar, Leif, 1995.

⁷⁴ *Svenska hus* (1995), part 2.

⁷⁵ Interview with Katarina Dunér, 2001.05.02.

⁷⁶ The film was made for cinema and not for SVT.

They found particularly strong imagery in Goebbels's archive in Berlin showing Warsaw ghettos and this they used for the first time ever.⁷⁷ The film integrates the Holocaust into the master narratives of Nazi Germany and the war. It managed as it did to cover over the gap in the photographic record that the Holocaust events themselves should occupy.⁷⁸ Leiser later moved to Switzerland and continued to make films about Nazism.

Most programmes on World War II broadcast by SVT in the 1960s and 70s were produced in other countries, but even so were popular with audiences.⁷⁹ After the BBC series *The Great War* was broadcast on SVT, a history teacher wrote to Swedish narrator Hans Villius to say that in thirty-five years of teaching he had never succeed in waking such interest.⁸⁰ *The World at War* was also very successful in Sweden. Another important television event was the broadcasting in 1979 of the American docudramatic series *Holocaust*, which was seen by sixty percent of the Swedish population and caused debate both before the broadcast and after.⁸¹

Two SVT docudramas on World War II were just as successful and deserve mention for their actualising of the complex role played by wartime Swedes and for pointing out that drama can be used when extant film does not tell the story to be told. The first is the popular *Någonstans i Sverige* [*Somewhere in Sweden*] (1974), written by journalist and acting historian Jolo, which portrayed the experiences of a fictitious group of Swedish conscripts during the war. In one episode tension arises between the conscripts and German soldiers allowed to pass through the country on their way from Norway to the eastern war theatre.⁸² The episode thematised an infamous wartime episode in Swedish politics. The second of the two docudramas is the Swedish-Danish series *Jane Horney* (1985), a re-enactment of the authentic story of a Swedish woman who was executed by the Danish resistance in 1945. The series caused immense debate in Denmark. According to the resistance forces Horney had been a German spy, but when the truth of this was questioned by the series, it upset many Danes. During the production phase threats were directed against the filmmakers, against Denmark's television company (DR), and against key witnesses.⁸³ When the series was finally broadcast much of the Danish response

⁷⁷ Leiser quoted in *Svensk filmografi 6: 1960–1969*, 1977, p. 71.

⁷⁸ Hirsch, Joshua, 2002, pp. 14 f.

⁷⁹ Imported before the arrival of television in Sweden, *Victory at Sea* was shown in cinemas.

⁸⁰ E1, Korrespondens 67–70, J, letter from Nils Johnson to Villius, 1967.06.08.

⁸¹ On Swedish audience response, see Nilsson, Carina, 1980. Nilsson quotes (pp. 3 f.) Hans Villius saying that SVT should not have bought the series because it tried to make sensation of historical tragedy. On the Swedish debate, see also Zander, Ulf, 2003, pp. 277 ff. The series aroused strong reactions not least in Germany; Kansteiner, Wulf, 2000; Zielinski, Siegfried, 1980.

⁸² See also Olsson, Jan Olof [Jolo], 1974, esp. pp. 139–144. In the 1984 vote, *Någonstans i Sverige* was voted the fourth most popular television series in Sweden; Järnefors, Sara, 1984. Jolo wrote another notable historical drama, *De tre från Haparanda* (1974), set in the time of the First World War.

⁸³ Olsson, Stellan & Jan Moen, 1986, pp. 11 f., 285 f.; Ahnfeldt-Møllerup, Eline, 1993, pp. 69, 82.

was fiercely negative, especially that of old resistance fighters.⁸⁴ The broadcast triggered a debate that concerned very much with the moral aspects of history. Some critics argued that whatever the resistance did was justified because the Nazi enemy was the essential evil force, while others suggested that history not be cast in the mould the victors choose but should instead be continuously studied for its complexity. The engaging melodramatic form of *Jane Horney* may have been partial cause for upset reactions, but formed no major issue in the debate.⁸⁵

SVT documentarists made increased numbers of programmes on World War II from around 1980 onwards, and several of them took up Sweden's own past. In 1980 SVT broadcast a number of programmes marking the passage of four decades since the dramatic war spring of 1940. The most significant producer to focus on the war years, Björn Fontander, received a fine award for a series on the flight of Norwegian refugees to Sweden.⁸⁶ Like many BBC producers he mixed archival footage with newly-filmed interviews with witnesses from the war. Fontander continued to cover World War II in several programmes on Nazi leader Herman Goering, who married a Swedish woman and whose story thus provided a Swedish connection to the war.⁸⁷ There were also a number of Swedish films from the 1980s and 90s that treated the Holocaust,⁸⁸ one that was very powerful by Peter Cohen and Bo Kuritzén about Chaim Rumkowski and the ghetto in Lodz. The film was made from extant photographs and earned its makers the Guldantennen award.⁸⁹

Certain of the documentaries on World War II aroused controversy. One from 1980 treated the Soviet annexation of the Baltic States in 1940, and included a studio chat-session where the former leader of the Swedish Communists Hilding Hagberg argued that the Soviet annexation of the Baltic States had been historically just. Baltic refugees in Sweden were enraged and as many as one hundred and five charges were filed with the Radio Board. Still, the programme was declared free as charged, the argument given that the programme host had clarified that the view expressed was a debated matter.⁹⁰ A controversial filmmaker who frequently dealt with the war years was Maj Wechseltmann, one of whose main concerns was that of Scandinavian

⁸⁴ On the Danish debate, see Ahnfeldt-Møllerup, Eline, 1993, who gathered 300 articles from Danish newspapers. Cf. Bryld, Claus, 2002.

⁸⁵ Jansson, Bo G., 2002, pp. 93 f. The series was made by Stellan Olsson. Elsa and Hans Villius were researchers and commented on the difficulties in Villius, Elsa & Hans Villius, 1985a. Cf. Villius, Elsa & Hans Villius, 1987.

⁸⁶ Furhammar, Leif, 1995, p. 229. Fontander was at SVT in Falun.

⁸⁷ Lars Krantz also made several programmes on the Nazis and on occupied Norway.

⁸⁸ In Chapter 7 Olle Häger's film *Tur retur helvetet* (1996) is discussed.

⁸⁹ *Historien om Chaim Rumkowski och ghetton i Lodz* (1982); cf. Furhammar, Leif, 1995, p. 229. Lucjan Dobroszycki was historical consultant on the production. Guerin, Frances, 2002, writes of Dariusz Jablonski's *Photographer* (1998) that also deals with the ghetto in Lodz. Later, Cohen made other films on related themes, most well known *Udergångens arkitektur* [*Architecture of Doom*] (1989) about Nazism and architecture, see Sjöberg, Patrik, 2001, pp. 186–190. Sjöberg discusses the way that well known images coexist with unknown imagery and guide our reading of the film.

links with Nazi Germany. A film she did on the war years in Denmark caused intense debate there and was even halted in its planned Danish broadcast.⁹¹ In 1992 SVT refused to broadcast a film she made on the Swedish secret service. Häger and Villius had treated the secret service themselves and when Wechselmann gave a different interpretation than theirs – essentially, she argued that there was close co-operation between the Swedes and the German secret service – SVT engaged researchers to check the programme. On the basis of the check, the programme was banned from broadcast. This led to a very heated debate in the press where Wechselmann alleged that SVT tried to silence sensitive information about the past.⁹² The programme was finally broadcast the next year, but was opened with an oral announcement that declared the contents were controversial.⁹³

In sum, historical programmes were made by a large number of producers at SVT during the 1970s and 80s. But while working at the same company not all the history producers worked in the same section. Some had their base in Stockholm but worked in different branches of the company there, and others were based elsewhere in Sweden. A few programmes were controversial, either politically controversial (in the seventies) or – in the case of those of Dag Stålsjö – controversial because of their particular way of handling historical knowledge. A general impression is however that most producers made serious cognitive considerations in preparing the films.

5. Presenters, reconstruction, and commercialisation

The 1990s brought great changes to the world of SVT historical documentaries, both because commercial television stations challenged SVT and thus indirectly the SVT documentary production, but also because the generation of producers hired in the 1960s were retiring and being replaced by a new generation of producers. The most important newcomer was star presenter Herman Lindqvist, who made a long series of historical programmes, *Hermans historia* [*Herman's History*]. As noted in Chapter 2, Lindqvist was a bit like Stålsjö an acting historian in conflict with the academic community. Notably enough he was also like Stålsjö in making his series at SVT in Gothenburg. But Lindqvist

⁹⁰ *Krigsåren 1940. Del 4. Krigsslut i Norge, Baltikum ockuperat* (1980). GR. E2, 241–242, 311/80 etc. (SB 289/1980). Note that when a news programme suggested that the Baltic regimes of the 1930s were fascist, the programme was convicted; GR. E2, SB 398/85. Thus, it was not primarily the opinion stated but the form through which it was presented that was scrutinised and judged.

⁹¹ Bryld, Claus, 2002, p. 286. *Ingen Hamlet på Kronborg i år* (mid-1980s).

⁹² The 1992 debate involved a lot of people but especially Wechselmann and two historians who criticised her programme for want of careful handling of facts; see Magnusson, Lars and Jan Ottosson, 1992; Wechselmann, Maj, 1992; Magnusson, Lars and Jan Ottosson, 1992a.

⁹³ Interview with Maj Wechselmann, 2003.07.04. *Kallt krig i kallt landskap* (1993, in two parts).

did not offer controversial interpretations of the past, and there were no severe attacks on his programmes as there were on his books. Instead, what is of interest regarding his television programmes is that they reintroduced the on-screen presenter in Swedish historical documentaries.⁹⁴ Inspired by David Attenborough's televised appearances at sites around the world,⁹⁵ Lindqvist made a series where he himself was the pictorial subject, either standing or walking in historical milieu as he talked about it. His blue jacket became a famous article of clothing. As presenter he functioned as the explicit guarantee that what is said is credible, thus adding to the claim for faithfulness to reality implicitly made by displaying the historical milieu where the events happened.⁹⁶ Lindqvist revealed his own thorough knowledge in various ways, for example by pointing out anachronisms in a famous historical painting, and in that way would secure authority.⁹⁷

It is very surprising that Lindqvist, who wrote numerous articles and at least one book every year, found time each year to make four or five historical programmes. An important help to him was surely that when on location at say the royal Gripsholm castle, the film team would shoot pictures for perhaps three or four programmes. Furthermore, though Lindqvist wrote the script and spent time travelling to and visiting sites for the filming, it was in fact an experienced television producer who supervised the editing and other parts of production.⁹⁸

In Lindqvist's programmes the Swedish public once more encountered dramatic stories of the kings and queens of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. For many years the stories of these individuals had been upstaged by the history of the more anonymous working man (and at times woman), and when the kings and queens reappeared in Lindqvist's enthusiastic versions they were an instant success. Once again history was fascinating stories and light-hearted entertainment,⁹⁹ and the series continued for ten years with four or five new programmes each viewing season. The programmes introduced to viewers many a palace and museum and were effective advertisement for these historical milieus. Lindqvist says that after the first few programmes had

⁹⁴ Björn Fontander, Dag Stålsjö and Hans Furuhausen had appeared on screen, but their programmes were of a different kind. Hans Villius also had tested as presenter but assumed the role decisively only in 1993, that is, after Lindqvist. In the late 1990s, Per Eric Nordquist at SVT Örebro combined the presenter with extant photographs in his treatment of Swedes in the Klondike gold rush (his films in ways followed *City of Gold*). Nordquist also published two books along with the films: Nordquist, Per Eric, 1998; Nordquist, Per Eric, 1998a. Fontander made an interesting documentary that also followed in the tracks of Swedes in America; cf. Fontander, Björn, 1996.

⁹⁵ Letter from Herman Lindqvist to the author, 2001.01.28.

⁹⁶ An expression sometimes used is arguments from source.

⁹⁷ The point is also made by Gustafsson, Lotten, 2002, p. 288, note 12. Lindqvist's superior knowledge was questioned though, see Wase, Dick, 1994.

⁹⁸ Interview with Herman Lindqvist, 2001.02.22. Lindqvist says that the blue jacket was a practical solution partly the result of the particular filming schedule.

⁹⁹ In the seventies, writer Lars Widding made historical "reports" for entertainment programmes at SVT.

been broadcast, his team was always welcomed with open arms when setting up in a new milieu.¹⁰⁰

Formally, the programmes were constructed around Lindqvist's own appearance at historical sites, which largely spared them the limitations of extant imagery. The narrator-presenter's words are the most important communicative device, and Lindqvist says he shunned re-enactments, which only "limit the fantasy" of the viewer. Instead, by mentioning that soldiers from this or that region moved ahead into battle, or pointing to the palace in front of him saying why not "come and visit" it soon, he tried to open the past to all Swedes.¹⁰¹ There is a clear tendency to utilise the dramatic aspect of the past. In the film about Karin Månsdotter,¹⁰² the poor girl who became the queen of Sweden in the 1560s, the presenter dramatically appears torch in hand in the cellars of an old castle, and solemn music is used to enhance the serious nature of the sequence of events. The presenter relates spicy stories from the life of Karin and her husband king Erik, but confides that "most of these tales are not true." Visiting the castle in Turku (in what is now Finland), Lindqvist says that a "castle tradition" has it that the imprisoned king Erik hollowed out depressions found in a windowsill. He also reads aloud from a letter Erik wrote to Karin. Thus, Lindqvist refers to extant documents but also brings in stories with mythical qualities.

Seen in connection with Lindqvist's books, the television series is a rare Swedish example of media symbiosis, of how a producer delivered his message through several media channels. Lindqvist's programmes were made with enormous speed and simultaneously with his many other projects. Aside from fulfilling public service ambition to bring the past to the Swedes, the programmes meant personal income for Lindqvist and served as an important display window for his other products. It is likely that commercial considerations played a greater part in these productions than in those of SVT's permanent staff. Surely, cognitive, moral, and aesthetic considerations were also important, and not least Lindqvist's co-workers went to great lengths to fashion aesthetically fine programmes. But the balance between the considerations was different from that of many other SVT productions. In 2000, Lindqvist's producer Peter Lundvall formed an independent production company and continued to make his programmes outside of SVT.¹⁰³

A producer who had actually worked at SVT for decades was Bo G. Erikson. He was in the Section for science programmes, and though his background was studies in history, he had been a science reporter for the large newspapers and had written books on cultural heritage before joining SVT in the early 1970s. While at SVT he initiated the science feature programme *Vetenskapens värld* [*Science World*], which is yet running thirty years later. In

¹⁰⁰ Letter from Herman Lindqvist to the author, 2001.01.28.

¹⁰¹ Letter from Herman Lindqvist to the author, 2001.01.28.

¹⁰² *Hermans historia: Karin Månsdotter* (1995).

¹⁰³ www.savann.se (2003.07.01).

forum style and serving as studio host himself, Erikson was in a position to present either foreign productions or his own programmes. The studio afforded a pedagogical framework in which to use the films. As a producer Erikson became internationally famous for his programmes on the beginning of human life and earned three Emmy awards for his work with them.¹⁰⁴ But his interest in history also led to programmes on archaeology. In the mid-1980s he began a series on ancient Swedish history,¹⁰⁵ where the image-track was made mainly from aerial footage. It was devoid of human figures except those in a few re-enactments that illustrated work processes. Erikson always co-operated with archaeologists and one of them, Björn Ambrosiani, became deeply involved in the early 1990s in a series on the excavations of the Viking town of Birka. SVT in fact co-financed excavations in Birka as a means of securing image materials for their programmes. The same strategy was used already in the 1950s, when SVT funded the excavation of a site in Gotland and had Lennart Ehrenborg make a film about it; Ehrenborg also made archaeological film expeditions to Egypt.¹⁰⁶

The Birka programmes can be seen as an answer to Dag Stålsjö's anti-academic programmes of a few years earlier,¹⁰⁷ but they are interesting in their own right and not the least because they combine close attention to scholarly activity with different ways of presenting the past. Archaeologists are interviewed on screen and there is extensive talk of modern archaeological methods. The past is recreated partly by computer graphics, which reconstruct excavated buildings, and by reconstructed scenes where men (and a few women) are busy at their tasks. Furthermore, there is newly-filmed imagery of the site, which is beautifully situated on a small island. A memorable scene has the large Ansgar cross against a romantic sunset. Reconstructed scenes are accompanied by mystical music. As Herman Lindqvist suggested, reconstructions can be problematic because they show a scene very concretely, which leaves little room for the viewer to imagine anything else. Archaeologist Bodil Petersson has pointed out that the reconstruction of Birka in portraying mostly active males implies women were not part of trading situations, and that, she is quick to stress, is a circumstance that is disputed among researchers.¹⁰⁸

While Erikson was executive producer and narrator for the Birka films, most

¹⁰⁴ *Sagan om livet* (1982); *Livets mirakel* (1996). Emmy awards in 1983, 1984 and 1996. Erikson shared awards first with Carl O. Löfman and then (in 1996) with Mikael Agaton.

¹⁰⁵ *Sagan om Sverige* (1985). Erikson made the series together with Carl O. Löfman. The series was reported to the Radio Board (but freed) for its remarks on Birka and for emphasising excessively the Lake Mälaren area; GR. E2, SB 163/86.

¹⁰⁶ Furhammar, Leif, 1995, pp. 37 f.; Sellgren, Göran, 2000.

¹⁰⁷ The narrator is careful to point out that this was the Birka of Ansgar; cf. Petersson, Bodil, 1994, pp. 47 f., 65.

¹⁰⁸ Petersson, Bodil, 2003, p. 264; Petersson, Bodil, 1994. Petersson points out that reconstructed scenes end to portray males as active in most instances and women absent from trading situations (a circumstance that is disputed among researchers). In her latter she alleges that ultimately, the male-dominated view of Birka goes back to interest in trade expressed by a billionaire who provided fund for the excavation.

of the practical work was actually done by young filmmaker Mikael Agaton, who had prior experience making commercials.¹⁰⁹ Erikson left SVT in the early 1990s and founded an independent company. Agaton formed a company of his own in 1995 and continued to produce films about the Viking Age and ancient history, co-operating with non-Swedish television companies as well as with SVT. His stylistic trademark was combining interviews and reconstructions, the latter becoming accepted more and more as a means of representing the non-photographed past. In the mid-1990s Agaton and Erikson co-operated on a project on Viking voyages, which had a somewhat shaky production story. From the beginning it was planned as a five-hour series, but when the American co-producer failed to keep early promises the budget shrank and in the end it became a two-hour production, where NOVA at WGBH in Boston and Galafilm of Canada joined the Swedes. The production budget of around \$1 million was still very impressive by SVT standards. An interesting detail from the early production stage is that the American co-producers that eventually dropped out demanded that each episode be constructed around a charismatic character, which created a problem because few individual Vikings are known to us and would fit well as heroes in a programme.¹¹⁰ Eventually, the film did not follow an individual Viking but rather focused on structure, and a large part of the film consisted of two reconstructed Viking expeditions on Russian rivers.¹¹¹ Later, Agaton made the first broad historical documentary on the Sami, the aboriginal people in northern Sweden.¹¹²

Another young filmmaker who worked with historical reconstructions was Christian Arnet, whose independent company Troja Television started in the late 1990s and made rather short historical programmes for both SVT and its commercial competitor TV4. The practice followed was to have a recognisable person as presenter and add re-enactments minus dialogue, where aesthetic devices such as hand-held cameras, blurred backgrounds, smoke, slow-motion footage, and suggestive music were blended to create an illusion of the past. The company recruited re-enactment groups wearing their own clothes rather than expensive professional actors to keep costs down. Arnet says that when he started Troja there was widespread scepticism among older producers at SVT of the use of re-enactments in documentaries, but that acceptance gradually grew once it was seen that convincing re-enactments could be made.¹¹³

The acceptance of the presenter and the reconstruction were the two most

¹⁰⁹ Interview with Bo G. Erikson, 2001.12.05; interview with Mikael Agaton, 2003.07.07.

¹¹⁰ *The Viking Saga* (1998). Erikson, Bo G., 1998, p. 5.

¹¹¹ Agaton, Mikael, 1998, relates the story of the filming adventures in Belarus, where he had to struggle against bureaucracies. When the film was released in America it appeared in a version where there was less focus on the Vikings in Russia and more focus on the Viking westward movement. On a similar subject, Swedish documentarist Bo Landin made *Viking Voyages* (2002) in co-operation with Discovery Channel; www.scandinature.com.

¹¹² *Samerna [Guardians of the Last Wilderness]* (2001); www.agaton.se (2003.07.07).

¹¹³ Interview with Christian Arnet, 2003.06.25. Another filmmaker who worked with reconstructions is Bo Kindberg.

important formal innovations in historical documentaries in Sweden in the 1990s.¹¹⁴ One producer who attracted attention and chose to work primarily with the former device was Maja Hagerman, a science journalist who had enormous success with a book on medieval Sweden and who made television programmes about medieval Scandinavia. Hagerman always treated scholars as trusted authorities and often interviewed them on screen.¹¹⁵ In her films, the research process itself could be set on central stage, and thus hers is a further example of SVT producers who made cognitive considerations in the 1990s.

Finally, mention is to be made of producer Marianne Söderberg at SVT in Malmö, whose historical programmes were of a special kind both in terms of content and form. Dealing with the real past, two of them are subtitled “a family fairy tale” and “a true fairy tale about pride, love, and defamation in Sweden at the last turn of the century.”¹¹⁶ One series on Swedish queens, *Drottning av Sverige* [*Queen of Sweden*] (1997), has every episode start with the tale-styled opener: “Once upon a time there was a princess who came to a foreign country to become the queen of Sweden.” As the examples suggest, the programmes tell romantic tales picked from history. Much like Herman Lindqvist, Söderberg depicted the lives of individuals, not collectives, but by comparison her stories were less dramatic and had a much slower pace. The innovative aspects of her films were, first, that she focused on the experiences of women, whether queens or women of country estates, which opened new ground as female perspectives were largely absent in SVT historical documentaries; and second, that she had these women speak directly to the audience from their diaries and letters. The centrality of the women’s language was emphasised through images of singular words (such as “love”) in rostrumed letters, which corresponded with the words spoken by the female voice-over narrator. Their words were a significant part of the imagery. Physical visual evidence written by the protagonists themselves, they put the viewer in direct contact with the events from the past.

Many of Söderberg’s programmes were long in the making and the result of extensive research, where she co-operated with narrator Agneta Ulfsäter-Troell and cameraman Bo Blomberg. For example, the series on Swedish queens was based on correspondence in the Bernadotte archive and on the filming of some three thousand original still-photos and paintings. In addition, more than one hundred dresses and costumes were used in newly-filmed silent re-enactments.¹¹⁷ Typically, a queen in a beautiful dress would move down the stairs in the royal palace while the narrator told of the queen’s doings, worries, and

¹¹⁴ A format also tried in *Tidsmaskinen* (SVT, 2002–03) was the studio talk-session, where historians were invited to present chosen aspects of the past. Scenes in the studio were sandwiched with reconstructions. The series featured host Gunnel Werner and was made by SVT Malmö.

¹¹⁵ One of her best-known productions was *Tusenårsresan* (1999).

¹¹⁶ *Famna livet* (1992); *Skandalen i Ystad* (2000).

¹¹⁷ *Drottning av Sverige*, 1997, information brochure.

dreams as they appear in written sources. In an interview Söderberg says she did not think of her programmes as history, but assures that she was always careful to film authentic details and milieus.¹¹⁸ Picking personal, melodramatic stories from the past, the programmes treat the real past and convey the impression that its events actually occurred as portrayed. They are accordingly to be seen as part of the body of historical documentaries. The work of Söderberg and Lindqvist document the return of interest in individuals, as opposed to interest in collectives so widespread in Sweden in the 1970s. Their programmes indicate that it was again acceptable to tell in warm fashion about wealthy individuals and portray them as genuine humans with joys and sorrows.¹¹⁹

The late 1990s and early 2000s saw certain new orientation in moral respects in Swedish historical documentaries. Previously near total support for the Swedish Folkhem had prevailed, except in the critical programmes by Maj Wechseltmann and a few critical programmes by Häger and Villius and others. Now, in accordance with critical attitudes expressed in the press, there were producers who applied critical perspectives on the Folkhem. They expressed especially the idea that there were ideological links between Nazi Germany and the Swedish Folkhem, implied by the inclusion of footage of German soldiers in films on Swedish health care.¹²⁰

As indicated above a change of generations at SVT came in the 1990s. The new generation however did not work under the same conditions as the old staff. Maja Hagerman complains that though the SVT board decided in 1999 to put new life in historical programming, years later still nothing had happened. For that matter, when Häger, Villius, and Katarina Dunér retired, nobody was hired to take their places.¹²¹ The strategy of SVT to reduce the permanent staff stimulated the more rapid growth of independent production companies. Jan Bergman and Bo G. Erikson left SVT to operate as independents, as did Herman Lindqvist's producer Peter Lundvall. In addition, young independent producers like Christian Arnet and Mikael Agaton took over some of the production.

Independent companies often work on a single-commission basis, which tends to provide them with a special set of constraints. When trying to gain entry to the television market, filmmakers must avoid being politically outspoken or otherwise challenge television's mass audience. Another problem, one pointed out by Jan Bergman, is that historical documentaries can be relatively expensive to produce. Bergman argues that SVT will not cover the costs,¹²²

¹¹⁸ Interview with Marianne Söderberg, 2001.02.08. Söderberg says she travelled to London, Nice, and even further to film certain authentic objects for her programmes.

¹¹⁹ In 2003, Söderberg turned to the life stories of unknown individuals in *Din släktsaga* (2003).

¹²⁰ I think of Agneta Bernárdzon's *De icke önskade* (SVT 2002) and Thomas Kanger's *Kalla fakta: De livsodugliga elementen* (TV4 1999). In the latter programme, Kanger interviewed historian Maija Runcis whose research in sterilisations had aroused debate. Runcis's moral indignation added to the critical atmosphere surrounding the programme.

¹²¹ Hagerman, Maja, 2002, pp. 89 f.

¹²² Bergman, Jan, 2000a; Bergman, Jan, 2000b.

which puts pressure on the independent companies to find cheap solutions. It is likely then that moral and economic considerations influence independent historical documentarists a little differently than they do producers employed by SVT.

6. Conclusions

With the establishment in 1956 of the public television broadcaster SVT historical documentarists in Sweden found a stable basis for production and distribution. Historical television programmes were often popular with audiences and some caused intense debate. There are clear indications that there was indeed a living historical consciousness in Sweden in the post-war decades. In terms of content most documentaries dealt with the Swedish past, which meant that few historical documentaries were made in co-operation with foreign producers and that few programmes were exported to foreign markets.

There was a strong continuity among the history producers at SVT. Olle Häger and Hans Villius worked at SVT for more than thirty years, and likewise several other producers made historical programmes and worked at the company for many years. For example, first Gardar Sahlberg and then Jan Bergman were based at the SVT film archive and made compilation films on events of the twentieth century. In the 1970s there were two historical SVT series that came under criticism for their leftist bias. The first, on the history of the labour movement, met criticism from the political party in office, the Social Democrats, while the other, which dealt with the Middle Ages, was criticised mainly by historians for its Marxist interpretation of the past. In the 1980s, Dag Stålsjö made a series of programmes depicting the cradle of Sweden where he challenged much of the academic establishment and accordingly drew its criticism. In the 1990s, best-selling acting historian Herman Lindqvist made a series of programmes on kings and queens from the sixteenth through nineteenth centuries. Other SVT producers made a smaller number of historical documentaries. Notably enough it was not until the end of the century that a substantial number of women started to make historical documentaries in Sweden. Until then histories often pictured the past as a province dominated by males. In addition to Swedish-made historical documentaries, SVT broadcast many imported historical productions.

Regarding what role historians have had in the making of Swedish historical documentaries the observations so far made are as follows. In the 1950s, historian Ernst Söderlund co-wrote the script to Artfilm's historical documentaries. From the 1960s onwards historians Villius and Häger worked as historian-filmmakers, as did, to a lesser extent, classical archaeologist Hatte Furuhagen. In the early 1970s young historians were much involved in the making of a small number of radical historical series. In the works of many other producers, from the 60s to the present, historians were involved as talking heads and as

historical consultants behind the scenes.¹²³ Among popular historians, both Gustaf Näsström and Herman Lindqvist wrote scripts for their own historical series. Thus, Swedish professional and popular historians have been involved in the making of a large number of historical documentaries, but few of them have served as producers. A major exception is the team Häger and Villius. Whereas some producers such as Maja Hagerman allied themselves with professional historians and obtained solid positions in the field of history production, others such as Dag Stålsjö were for the most part indifferent to the rules of historians. Producers Katarina Dunér and Jan Bergman had connections with cultural history institutions or the heritage movement. The total impression is that most history producers at SVT respected the professional community of historians but had weak connections with it.¹²⁴

Perhaps the most striking fact to come out of this study's interviews with different producers of historical documentaries is that they seem not to have co-operated and discussed with one another. Although employed by the same company they did not sit down as a group to evaluate goals or discuss problems common to historical documentary. Villius has related that around 1970 SVT head Baehrendtz wanted to gather several producers under Villius's leadership and form a larger section for historical documentaries, but Villius was not attracted by the people that Baehrendtz had in mind and so was unwilling.¹²⁵ As we shall see, Häger and Villius maintained relations with the field of history production. Other producers of historical documentaries were more closely connected with the fields of cultural production or journalism. All the while they were rarely in contact with one another.

¹²³ One major case not mentioned was that historian Arne Jarrick was a consultant on the Strix production *Tusen år* (1999) that was broadcast by TV4.

¹²⁴ In 1989, historian Christer Öhman suggested that SVT arrange for historians to comment on screen on historical programmes; Öhman interviewed in Arnborg, Beata, 1989. The proposal was prompted by imported historical drama and not by historical documentaries, but it indicates even so that some historians were not happy with relationships to SVT.

¹²⁵ Interview with Villius, 2003.06.02.

Historian-Filmmakers Olle Häger and Hans Villius

1. Olle Häger and Hans Villius

This chapter provides a broad introduction to the work of Swedish historian-filmmakers Olle Häger and Hans Villius. Its two first sections introduce the filmmakers themselves and their roles in the Swedish history culture. Then follow a few remarks on the concept of filmmaker in a third section. The fourth section is a characterisation of the historical production of Häger and Villius as a whole, with an outline of the major trends in their work over the years. In a fifth section a detailed description of how Häger and Villius would typically produce their films is supplied. Then follows a discussion of the stylistic characteristics of the programmes, and finally one of matters of reception. This broad introduction is meant to lay ground for the specialised studies of certain of their programmes, which comprise three chapters that follow.

Hans Villius, son of a dentist, was born in Kalmar in southern Sweden in 1923. In his youth, Villius was referee when King Gustaf V played tennis at the resort of Båstad,¹ a circumstance indicating the Villius family was well off. After attending the local school, Villius went on to university education in Uppsala. He started in classical studies, but soon ended up in the history department, where he became a student of the famous historian Erik Lönnroth, himself pupil of the younger Weibull brother, the leading historian of his generation. However, Villius moved to Lund University, where he spent his remaining student years writing his doctor's dissertation under the guidance of professor Sture Bolin, whom Villius has called "wonderful."² Bolin, a talented historian, was a pupil of the older Weibull brother, Lauritz. Thus, Villius became through his teachers a third generation Weibull historian.³ As earlier mentioned, the Weibulls and their disciples represented a new direction in Swedish history writing, consisting of strict source-criticism and an aim to make history distinctly non-nationalistic. Such was the milieu in which Villius was educated.

¹ Interview with Villius, 2003.06.02; *Bland storkar och slott* (1996).

² Villius, Hans, 1991, quote on p. 397. Villius, Hans, 2002, p. 94, also has certified the importance of Lönnroth.

³ Lauritz Weibull was a guest at the party where Villius celebrated finishing his Ph.D. Villius, Hans, 1991, p. 400.

Already in 1951 Villius completed his Ph.D. in history. Influenced by the source-critical hard-liners of the Weibull School, his thesis was a study of the narrative sources of the Swedish king Karl XII's Russian campaign in the early 1700s.⁴ In his rather thin book Villius showed that earlier historians had known only very little about the interrelationship between the extant sources. The study earned him the distinguished honorary degree of docent, and he was given another six-year appointment in the history department. To be noted is that most Swedish docents in history during these years sprang from Bolin's seminar, one of them Villius's close friend Sven A. Nilsson.⁵ The seminar offered excellent academic training and here Villius established many academic contacts. During his years as docent he researched the Swedish seventeenth century and completed a study of the famous Casket Letters, concerning Mary Stuart's participation in the Darnley murder.⁶ He also published a book of local history, a lavishly illustrated volume with "glimpses" from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.⁷

While at the history department in Lund, Villius started to give history lectures on the radio. In 1957, when his appointment as docent ended, he was permanently hired by SR and moved to Stockholm. One reason for taking the job, as he has explained himself, was that many historians were competing for the jobs in the academic world.⁸ With a Ph.D. and period of experience as docent, Villius was entrusted to lecture on any historical subject he chose, and was also able to invite other scholars to lecture on the radio, thus becoming a person of some importance in the Swedish history culture. The lecturing years at SR gave Villius ample opportunity to develop his lecture techniques; he had to transmit historical messages to the audience through word and voice faculties only. Some of his radio lectures he gathered in a book. The lectures focus on dramatic moments in history, especially events during World War II.⁹ Another of his initiatives during these years was issuing famous historical speeches on record format.¹⁰ One of his more innovative radio programmes was an enactment of an imagined historical murder trial involving Mary Stuart, which

⁴ Villius, Hans, 1951. A few years later, Villius edited a book on Karl XII; Villius, Hans, ed., 1960. He also wrote the foreword for a new printing of a book on Karl XII's officers; Villius, Hans, 1977.

⁵ Gunneriusson, Håkan, 2002, p. 122; on the friendship between Villius and Nilsson, see interview with Villius, 2003.06.02. Note that Villius and Nilsson each thanked the other in the foreword of his dissertation.

⁶ Villius, Hans, 1950; Villius, Hans, 1952; Villius, Hans, 1954; Villius, Hans, 1954a; Villius, Hans, 1956.

⁷ Villius, Hans, 1955. Villius says that he wrote this book for economic reasons; interview with Villius, 2003.06.02.

⁸ Villius, Hans, 1991, pp. 400 f.

⁹ Villius, Hans, 1959. The book met with positive reviews, see Åberg, Alf, 1959; Hadenius, Stig, 1959. Palme, S[ven] U[lric], 1959, was positive but thought it problematic to put oral texts in print. It can be noted that the powerful historian Erik Lönnroth wrote a very positive review. Lönnroth, Erik, 1959.

¹⁰ Interview with Villius, 2003.06.02.

competed for a Prix Italia in 1962.¹¹ Villius was soon granted the position as editor-in-chief of the culture section at SR.

After working a few years at the radio, Villius moved to SVT. His first television production he made as early as in 1959, but it was not until the mid-1960s that he actually made the move to SVT. One of his first television programmes dealt with Raoul Wallenberg, the Swedish diplomat who worked to save the lives of so many Jews in Budapest during World War II but then disappeared into a Soviet prison. The case became a serial story in Swedish-Soviet political relations, and the Soviet authorities presented various investigations. When in 1957 the Soviets claimed that Wallenberg was long dead, a number of witnesses claimed the opposite. Intrigued by the subject, Villius and his wife started digging deeper into the slim traces left after Wallenberg, and in 1966 they published a book that was a thorough source-critical examination of the case.¹² Quite sensationally, and in clear opposition to public opinion at the time, the Villius couple said they believed Wallenberg had died already in 1947. The study, however convincing, is controversial still thirty-five years later.¹³

No trained television producer,¹⁴ Villius from the start collaborated with others on his programmes. The situation changed in 1967 when Villius teamed up with Olle Häger. From then on, they would work together for more than thirty years. Interestingly, although employed by SVT, Villius continued to have ties with academia. In the 1960s he edited two small anthologies on famous trials in the past; for one of these, he obtained essays by each of the legendary Weibull brothers, whom he knew from the years in Lund.¹⁵ Also during the 60s he sporadically worked as a teacher in the history department at Uppsala University where his friend from Lund, Sven A. Nilsson, now served as professor. That ties between the two were strong is obvious, as Nilsson even spent holidays with the Villius couple.¹⁶ In the 70s Villius taught history also at the history department of Stockholm University. That Villius was seen as a historian of some stature is shown by his being engaged in 1973 to act as

¹¹ DA. E1, Korrespondens 67–70, D, letter from Villius to Jörgen Vedel Pedersen, 1968.07.04. The programme was made by Villius and his wife Elsa; interview with Villius, 2003.06.02.

¹² Villius, Hans & Elsa Villius, 1966. The book was released on January 28 and was reviewed the same day. The debate in the newspapers (especially *Expressen*) went on for weeks. See DA. E1, Korrespondens 67–70, O, letter from Villius to Mats Oscarsson, 1967.06.26.

¹³ The fate of Wallenberg has come up in Swedish-Soviet and Swedish-Russian relations continuously since World War II. See Villius, Elsa & Hans Villius, 1979, and their articles in *Svenska Dagbladet* 1981.02.01, 1981.02.26, and in *Dagens Nyheter* 1993.07.06. Villius has expressed bitterness over the voiced suspicion that he was pro-Soviet, which he declares is complete nonsense. Instead, he regarded the case as a question of source-criticism; Mellbourn, Anders, 1986.

¹⁴ Both Häger and Villius took an introductory course in the late 1960s, but this course ran only a couple of weeks; interview with Villius, 2003.06.02; interview with Häger, 2003.06.03.

¹⁵ Villius, Hans, ed., 1961; Villius, Hans, ed., 1964. Villius was fascinated by trials, which offered him opportunities to test his source-critical method. See also Villius, Hans, 1972; interview with Villius, 2003.06.02.

¹⁶ Interview with Villius, 2003.06.02.

“faculty opponent” in a doctoral degree disputation at Gothenburg University.¹⁷

Villius’s position as a trained historian working inside Sweden’s chief media corporation was unique. As noted above, several Swedish historians wrote extensively for newspapers and in other ways were active in the media sector. But Villius was permanently employed and well-known at SR/SVT and this meant that he was often asked to comment on historical issues. Still in 1999, forty-two years after he left the history department in Lund and several years after his retirement, he was invited by a radio programme producer to comment on Communism’s “wicked deeds.” Two years later, marking the fortieth anniversary of the death of Swedish UN secretary general Dag Hammarskjöld, it was Villius who was asked in a radio programme to tell about the circumstances of his death.¹⁸ Quite likely, some of these requests to comment on historical issues were given to Villius not because he was the foremost specialist on the issues, but because he was the historian in the media par preference.¹⁹

Already the radio years helped establish Villius’s voice as a “voice of history.” After he moved to SVT his voice became increasingly well known. Apart from narrating his own and Häger’s productions, Villius was the voice-over narrator in hundreds of other historical programmes, many of which were imported. For example, in the early 1970s he narrated the multi-part *The World at War*, and in the late 90s he was the Swedish narrator in *People’s Century*. These jobs made his voice with its quite distinctive south-Swedish accent the definitive voice of history in Sweden. A sign of its fame is that it has been frequently imitated, even in commercials.²⁰ Villius has told the anecdote of his once visiting a restaurant in his hometown Kalmar and overhearing someone say “that must be Hans Villius, because when just ordering a herring sandwich it sounded like the outbreak of the Second World War.”²¹ The easily recognised narrator voice of Villius is a characteristic and important stylistic device used in the Häger-Villius documentaries. His voice was not just famous; it had even certain authority. Once Häger and Villius had established a reputation, that narrator voice would function as a signal to the audience, automatically telling what kind of programme they were watching and also – owing to Villius’s

¹⁷ While Villius prepared for the disputation, he and Häger made a documentary on the subject in point. Villius’s double role as journalist and historian was questioned in the media. Cf. Palme, Sven Ulric, 1973.

¹⁸ *Godmorgon världen* (SR P1) 1999.02.07; *Godmorgon världen* (SR P1) 2001.09.16.

¹⁹ In the 1960s, Villius was entrusted as expert to rank writers of science or popular science in order of preference for rewards from the Sveriges Författarfond, a fund for Swedish writers. This is another example of his status as a trusted academic in the media. DA. E1, Korrespondens 67–70, F, letter from Villius to Styrelsen för Sveriges Författarfond, 1967.04.14.

²⁰ Sima, Jonas, 1992; Kalfjäll, Birgitta, 1990; Ohlsson, Bengt, 1995; Dimming, Lars, 1999. In Wennman, 1998, Villius admits he has at times lent his voice to private persons for birthday greetings and such.

²¹ *Sommarnattens skeende* (SVT2) 1998.07.10. Villius and Häger have told the anecdote on many occasions, for example Dimming, Lars, 1995. Whether it is true or just a good story, it nevertheless catches the fact that Villius’s voice was well known and made people think of the past.

personal authority – that it was to be trusted. For the same reason Villius was also entrusted with reading warnings of roving pickpockets in the Stockholm subways in 1991, and asked to be the serious speaker in an informative film on traffic fatalities.²²

Olle Häger is twelve years younger than Villius. Born in 1935 in the Hälsingland countryside, in the north-central part of Sweden, he grew up on a farm surrounded by those doing physical chores. On his father's side were poor workers and five of his father's brothers and sisters left the home area for America.²³ Häger's social background was thus decidedly unlike that of Villius. As a young man Häger planned to be a journalist and graphic artist and for some time he contributed articles and drawings to various local newspapers. He also thought of becoming a writer and moved south to Uppsala with a plan to study literature, but ended up in the history seminar led by Sven A. Nilsson which was very popular at the time. Häger's literary ambitions continued, however, and after he published a short story in the literary review *BLM* in 1962 he actually went to Paris intending to write a novel.²⁴ When this project came to nothing, he returned to the graduate seminar and in 1964 finished his licentiate dissertation in history, which was a study into the written and oral sources of the sixteenth century chronicles of the Swedish king Gustav Vasa.²⁵

Perhaps one should not pay much attention to that early short story Häger wrote, but interestingly enough it is about a historian who was attempting an impossible task. The historian collects an immense amount of material for a study, but then discovers that a small number of cases work against his thesis. When for a moment the historian thinks he sees a solution, he is unable to write it down; the tip of his fountain pen “burst apart like the sword of Aragorn,” and “like the staff of Gandalf” his cane broke into countless pieces. Finally, the problem and the story end when he throws away his failed cases.²⁶ Certainly this was an early piece, but it suggests that Häger was intensely conscious of problems concerning the historian's task. It shows too his fondness for literature (in this case for *The Lord of the Rings*).

When Häger tired of dissertation work he went to Professor Nilsson and they talked of other possibilities. Häger's uncle had worked in radio and when Häger expressed a similar interest Nilsson contacted his friend Hans Villius, who hired Häger to work in the cultural section at SR in 1964.²⁷ Apart from Villius and Häger, the group there also included the classical archaeologist

²² [anonymous], 1991; Dimming, Lars, 1999.

²³ *Sommar*, SR P1 2000.07.29; on Häger's background see also interview with Häger, 2003.06.03.

²⁴ Häger, Olle, 1962; interview with Häger, 2003.06.03; Arnborg, Beata, 1991. Elsewhere, Vogel, Viveka, 1985, it is suggested that young Häger planned to be a journalist and graphic artist.

²⁵ DHUU. Häger, Olle, 1964. There is no international equivalent to the licentiate degree, which is between M. A. and Ph.D.

²⁶ Häger, Olle, 1962, quote p. 198.

²⁷ Interview with Häger, 2003.06.03. Redvall, Eva, 1993, tells of how Häger and Villius met for the first time.

Hatte Furuhausen, mentioned here already. Thus, all three academics cut their teeth on radio programming before moving on to television. Häger made radio programmes for three years, succeeding Villius as SR's prime history producer, and also for a brief time was editor-in-chief for part of the cultural section. However, in 1967 Villius brought Häger to work with him at SVT, and they formed the independent Section for historical documentaries.

Häger kept a lower profile than did his well-established and publicly talkative colleague. But although Villius was initially in charge with Häger titled researcher, they soon became a radar pair and formally shared responsibility for all productions. Häger, also a trained historian, was soon to exert influence of his own on films, with his different background and his historical, visual, and literary interests. Having become a professional and experienced producer, he in the 1990s taught filmmaking at the Kulturama School in Stockholm.²⁸

Häger's strong ties to his home region manifested themselves in the subject matter of many films where Hälsingland milieus are featured. Through the years he kept those ties close, both by continuing contact with a sister who took over the family farm, and by keeping a summer cottage there himself. Later he furthermore became a member of the Hälsinge Akademi, a group of local writers and cultural personalities. It should be added that Häger's wife came from the same area. Häger also published a lavishly illustrated book of local history on life in a little Hälsingland farming village at the turn of the century.²⁹ No coincidence, the village in the book is his home village, the milieu the one he grew up in. He has stressed it is a particular strength of his to be living not only in the media world in Stockholm but also to still keep up contact with people of other lifestyles in Hälsingland.³⁰

Häger returned to Hälsingland not only in films and history books, but also in two crime and detection novels. Although set in the present, both stories have at their core crimes actually committed in the 1930s and 40s. In the first, an award-winning novel,³¹ the crime goes back to a famous labour-market conflict in 1932. The conflict involved strikers and strikebreakers at Sandarne near Häger's home village and grew quite intense. In fact, Häger's own father, who was politically active, was involved in the events.³² Thus, Häger tied the plot of the novel to a historical context from his home area. To be noted too is that the main character in the novel goes to Uppsala to study history. A strike at another factory near Häger's home village was followed by extensive sympathy strikes, all eventually exploding in the Ådalen shootings on Ascension Day

²⁸ Interview with Häger, 2003.06.03.

²⁹ Häger, Olle, 1987. One reviewer, Erséus, Johan, 1987, calls the book "unique." Häger made an episode in *Svart på vitt* from the same materials; *Bonden och lokomobilen* (1985). He also drew extensively from it in *Sommar*, SR P1 2000.07.29.

³⁰ Interview with Häger, 2003.06.03.

³¹ Häger, Olle, 1991; the novel was awarded the Best First Novel award by the Swedish Academy of Crime Novels. Häger's second crime novel was published in 1993, and deals partly with spy traffic between Sweden and Estonia during World War II.

³² Interview with Häger, 2003.06.03.

of 1931. Häger explored the labour market conflicts of the early 1930s including the Ådalen shootings in several historical films, and he wrote of the Sandarne strike again in another book a couple of years later.³³

Häger and Villius started making television programs together in 1967. From the "channel split" that came in 1969 until 1987, they worked for TV2 (SVT2), then in the new organisation became part of the Stockholm-based Kanal 1 (SVT1). The entire time they had their base at SVT in Stockholm. During more than three decades of co-operation, they produced some one hundred (longer) historical documentaries, to which can be added one hundred and fifty short historical programmes and a few short historical "reports" made for other programmes at SVT. In addition each of them made programmes independently of the other. Villius made ten films in the early years before joining with Häger. In the 70s, Häger made a number of films in co-operation with Carl Torell, who joined Häger and Villius in the Section for historical documentaries, and after Villius retired in the 1990s Häger continued to make programmes on his own.³⁴

Häger and Villius became well-known and successful filmmakers. Already in 1972 a newspaper called them "veteran" filmmakers, and this was yet in the early years of their filmmaking career.³⁵ In the 1980s and 90s they were given several awards. Best known to a wider circle are the Stora journalistpriset [Grand Award in Journalism] they received in 1986 for the series *Svart på vitt*, and the Publicistklubbens Guldpenna [Golden Pen of the Publicist Club] awarded in 1991. The highest recognition among television producers, the Ikaros award for best SVT production of the year, they received both in 1986 (*Svart på vitt*) and in 2000, the latter for *Hundra svenska år*. On three occasions they were given prizes at foreign television festivals – at the Spanish SICIC festival and the Italian Teleconfronto festival, both in 1987, and at the Barent Festival in Norway in 2001.³⁶ In addition to these awards in connection with particular productions, they received certain awards of a more general kind. In 1996 the Swedish government granted them each the title of Professor, which in Sweden is a very uncommon form of honour. There were furthermore other awards,³⁷ all signals of the success of Häger and Villius as historical filmmakers. SVT celebrated them in the summer of 2001 by scheduling repeat broadcasts of a number of films hailed by the press as Häger and Villius's Greatest Hits.³⁸

³³ Häger, Olle, 1993b.

³⁴ See Appendix 1.

³⁵ Carlsson, Jörgen, 1972.

³⁶ The productions awarded were *När världen gick under* (1986), *Sammanvärjningen* (1986) and *Fy fan ett sån't land* (2000). The latter film was made by Häger and Kjell Tunegård without the involvement of Villius. Tunegård shared the Ikaros award for *Hundra svenska år*. The film *Stora 700* (1989) won the award for best industry film of the year.

³⁷ ME. U95/468/UH, 1a & 1b: 1996.02.22; other awards were Ord och Bild-Akademiens pris 1988, Hertig Karls pris 1995, Stockholmspriset 1999; Club 100:s pris 2000.

³⁸ Hammarkrantz, Oskar, 2001. I find Greatest Hits objectionable because neither *Svart på vitt* nor *Hundra svenska år* were represented, which were the productions that brought Häger and Villius their greatest successes.

2. Häger and Villius's job-sharing, gatekeeping, and other roles

During the many years of their co-operation, Häger and Villius developed various roles. It is nearly impossible to define exactly what these were, but certain indication is provided by comments they themselves offered in various interviews. Häger is portrayed as the more practical of the two, the patient researcher who spends long hours in the archives, in keeping with which is his gradually assuming the task of sole script writer, whereas in the early years they wrote the narration script together. Villius, on the other hand, is the somewhat absent-minded type with the journalist's impatience, who focuses on source-critical problems and insists on early action. He suggests one of his own strengths was the good sense to cut many items from programmes following the rule that what is not there the viewer will never miss. Häger salutes Villius for his emotional engagement. As mentioned, it is also Villius who typically reads the spoken text.³⁹

The rather official picture given so far is given clearer contours by what archival materials and the words of co-workers have to tell. Cameraman Jan-Hugo Norman says he and Häger often discussed image solutions,⁴⁰ while Häger has said that Villius was really a radio man and cared little about the image which he regarded a "necessary evil."⁴¹ Sound recordist Gunnar Nilsson says Häger was the one who led the shooting,⁴² and certainly it was Häger who directed the drama-documentaries *Fyra dagar som skakade Sverige* (1988) and *Raoul Wallenberg – fånge i Sovjet* (1990). Editor Kjell Tunegård for his part says that of the two producers, Häger was always the more active in the editing process.⁴³ All indicates that Häger was more active and perhaps the more interested in the filmic representation of the past. If the roles of Häger and Villius became more clear-cut during later years, it must be emphasised that little clarity was present in the first years, when the two were still learning how to make programmes. But the picture that emerges is that Häger pulled a heavy load in making the programmes. After around 1990, when Villius retired, Häger must definitely be seen as the principal creator of the programmes. However, to a large degree programme analyses presented in this study are made using production materials that Häger saved. Although the materials show also Villius's activities, it is possible that he would have appeared more active had he been equally careful to save his own working materials.

Häger's importance is worth stressing because Villius was always the team's

³⁹ Redvall, Eva, 1993; Dimming, Lars, 1990; Malgefors, Lars, 1984; Fridén, Gisela, 1986, p. 10; interview with Häger, 2003.06.03; interview with Villius, 2003.06.02.

⁴⁰ Interview with Jan-Hugo Norman, 2001.05.15. Cf. Ingelman-Sundberg, Catharina, 1990.

⁴¹ Häger, Olle, 1992; interview with Häger, 2003.06.03.

⁴² Interview with Gunnar Nilsson, 2002.12.05.

⁴³ Interview with Kjell Tunegård, 2002.10.10.

face to the world.⁴⁴ Because he read the speaker's text in so many of their programmes, viewers tend to assume he was also the principal creator. Gunnar Nilsson says that many times he heard people speak of Hans Villius-films.⁴⁵ Two piquant examples illustrate this. In the early 1970s Häger and Carl Torell were making a film, and in time a newspaper published an article on this but illustrated the article with a photograph of Villius, noting that he was a colleague of those making the film.⁴⁶ In the winter of 1999–2000, when Häger's series *Hundra svenska år* (1999) was nominated for the Ikaros award, the nomination was designated one for Häger & Villius,⁴⁷ although the retired Villius was merely the speaker for the series.

Häger and Villius have played several roles in the Swedish history culture. The historian-filmmaker role is the most important of these,⁴⁸ yet in addition to being producers of historical documentaries there were other roles they played. One is that of voices of history, which both of them played, but especially Villius who served as Swedish speaker in other television productions. Another role was as author of historical books. Already mentioned are Villius's scholarly books, and that Häger published a book of local history about his home village and wrote two historically based crime novels. The two also published an illustrated volume on the history of the world during the period 1961–1970, and Häger was involved in publishing youth history books (he checked facts) on the explorers Columbus, Marco Polo, and Vasco da Gama.⁴⁹ Further, Häger and Villius published books in connection with a number of their television programmes. In the early 1970s, they published more than ten booklets of contemporary history in connection with programmes, and later, five of their larger projects included accompanying history books.⁵⁰ Both the booklets and several of the books were essentially collections of historical documents, and thus of educational use. In connection with the series *1000 år* (1980), they also helped design a separately issued study plan.⁵¹ They appeared in a more specifically educational role in the late 1980s when they became co-writers of a textbook of history for schools. At about that time they also made a series of educational history programmes for SVT's sister com-

⁴⁴ In the press there are many interviews with Villius but only a few with Häger.

⁴⁵ Interview with Gunnar Nilsson, 2002.12.05.

⁴⁶ The film was *Embargo*; [anonymous], 1975.

⁴⁷ Author's observation; the nominations were posted on SVT's premises. Later, editor Kjell Tunegård was added as a nomination.

⁴⁸ Almost all their films were made for SVT. However, they also made a small number of films for museums, exhibitions, and jubilees (see Appendix 1). Cf. Stahre, Lars, 1989.

⁴⁹ Häger, Olle and Hans Villius, 1976; the youth history books were published by Bonniers in 1979 and 1980.

⁵⁰ The booklets were published in SR's Rubrik series and dealt with subjects such as the crisis in the Middle East, the H-bomb, and Stalin. One reviewer applauded the initiative but complained that they "as all bourgeois historians" placed too much emphasis on individuals; Wetterberg, Gunnar, 1971. The later books are Häger, Olle and Hans Villius, 1976a; Häger, Olle, Carl Torell and Hans Villius, 1978; Häger, Olle, Jan-Hugo Norman and Hans Villius, 1980; Häger, Olle and Hans Villius, 1986; Häger, Olle and Hans Villius, 1990.

⁵¹ Wallander, Gunnar, 1980.

pany UR.⁵² In the 1990s Villius wrote three books with eyewitness accounts of dramatic events in history, intended for school use.⁵³ Häger helped a Holocaust survivor write a book on the Holocaust, providing a historical background section, and with Villius he helped in the publication of a book of photographs documenting World War II in Sweden.⁵⁴ In all, they were involved in a large number of history book publications.

A particular issue that Häger and Villius took an active interest in was the television archives, which incorporated at the time of its formation the film company SF's older archives. These SVT bought in 1964, and since then they had been a topic of constant discussion at the company. In addition to the SF footage, new television programmes were constantly added to expand the archives. The preservation of so many programmes was very costly, and especially when funds were scarce, the archival programme lived a dangerous life. Routine practices have not been consistent; for example, many programmes from the early years of television were erased because no one saw any point in saving them. But programmes are still erased at times, as the archive has such limited resources.⁵⁵ Häger and Villius argued for a generous preservation policy, perhaps partly because they had backgrounds as historians (who need archives to reconstruct the past), and surely also because they themselves reused many old filmed pictures in their programmes. In 1967, Villius and his colleague Stellan Norrlander suggested that the Häger & Villius section have a formal role in deciding when and how SF footage was to be used in the making of programmes.⁵⁶ Their work on the archive committee at SVT, trying to halt erasings of old audio-visual materials, is perhaps one of their most important achievements in the history culture.

Another role was that of history gatekeeper at SVT. The gatekeeper lets in or locks out, or in other words has charge of controlling the standard observed by those who seek to issue a work. Being the established history producers at SVT, Häger and Villius had an interest in watching what other historical programmes were produced and broadcast by the company. In the early 1970s, when SVT was to buy *The World at War*, Häger and Villius were sent to London to watch the series and determine what episodes should be bought. On other occasions they would assist programme buyers in Stockholm.⁵⁷ But their activities as gatekeepers are difficult to diagram. As suggested in the foregoing

⁵² Torbacke, Jarl et al, 1979; the ten-part educational series is *Bilder från ett krig*, UR 1989, which also led to a book for school use, Palmér, Torsten, 1989.

⁵³ Villius, Hans, 1990; Villius, Hans, 1992; Villius, Hans, 1995.

⁵⁴ Grünfeld, Benny, with Magnus Henrekson & Olle Häger, 1995; Häger, Olle and Hans Villius, 1989a, cf. p. 128.

⁵⁵ For example, some of Häger and Villius's episodes in the *Svart på vitt* series from the 1980s were erased. DA. T21, F1, 41, Svart på vitt 87–90?, letters from Inger [Back]. There are study copies of these episodes at the National Archive of Recorded Sound and Moving Images, but the copies are of poor quality and cannot be broadcast.

⁵⁶ DA. E1, 1, Korrespondens 67–70, N, Förslag till instruktion för SF:s journalfilmsarkiv [not dated]. Cf. letter from Villius, 1967.01.19, under the same flap.

⁵⁷ Interview with Olle Häger, 2003.06.03; interview with Villius, 2003.06.02.

chapter, the history producers at SVT had little or no contact with one another. Most simply went about their business. Villius says he and Häger found little reason to associate with other producers; he confesses he felt great respect for some, such as Björn Fontander and Hatte Furuhagen but that there were others who he did not think made historical programmes in a serious way.⁵⁸ In fact, there is evidence to suggest that both Häger and Villius had strong ideas about how history could and should be treated on film. On several occasions they opposed the plans of other producers.

A case of such opposition once came in the radical years around 1970. At that time, proposals for new documentaries were discussed in programme committees, and at a meeting of such a committee Häger and Villius opposed a proposal for a historical programme by producer Lars Krantz. According to Häger their position was that Krantz made in their view bad history.⁵⁹ Krantz himself has acknowledged that even though he had made historical programmes in the 1960s it became more difficult to get backing for such projects after Häger and Villius started their Section for historical documentaries.⁶⁰

Another conflict in the 1970s between Häger and Villius and other history producers arose when SVT broadcast the aforementioned series *Folkets historia i bild*, which offered a radical interpretation of the Middle Ages in Sweden. Villius publicly criticised the production.⁶¹ In two newspaper articles he charged that the series portrayed the medieval rebellion leader Engelbrekt as a Che Guevara of the 1400s. Villius thought the hero's portrait was too black and white, making Engelbrekt a martyr and a saint much like nationalistic writings did in the nineteenth century. This time it was the "holy people" that drew the salute, rather than the "holy nation," as in the 1800s. Villius also criticised the programme for being as he said "spiced with moralising values and invectives."⁶² Part of Villius's criticism concerned the historical interpretation; he defended the thesis of his old teacher Erik Lönnroth. But it is interesting to note that Villius attacked what he said was a black and white portrait of a historical figure. Villius was thus arguing for more nuance and complexity in portraits. This is common criticism against audio-visual hero-portraits, but interesting here is first that the criticism was delivered by Villius, himself a filmmaker and thus someone who would be familiar with the difficulty of fashioning a balanced and unbiased picture. Secondly, he was repudiating the "moralising" tone of the series. Perhaps he held a different political opinion than the one championed by the makers of *Folkets historia i bild*. It seems likely though

⁵⁸ Interview with Villius, 2003.06.02.

⁵⁹ Interview with Häger, 2003.06.03.

⁶⁰ Interview with Lars Krantz, 2003.06.10.

⁶¹ To be noted is that Villius did not name the producer Kristian Romare in the articles. Noteworthy also is that when the programmes were reported to the Radio Board, the response from SVT2 (defending the programme) was written by classical archaeologist Hans Furuhagen. DA. A12, F3, 77, ärende 10/75, TV2:s yttrande.

⁶² Villius, Hans, 1975a; Villius, Hans, 1975b. The filmmakers defended against Villius's criticism in Garnert, Eva and Janken Myrdal, 1975.

that Villius, true to his scientific and public service ideals, wanted to avoid moralising messages. He wanted the history programming at SVT to be informative, not political.

If there was one history producer that angered Häger and Villius especially, it was Dag Stålsjö at SVT1 in Gothenburg, who made history programmes in the 1980s. As mentioned, Stålsjö was severely criticised for not taking into account historical knowledge that argued against his thesis that the cradle of Sweden had been in the western part of Sweden. When Stålsjö came to visit the Historical Society in Uppsala, Häger and Villius appeared at the seminar and fiercely criticised his handling of the past.⁶³ Secretly, they even wrote a letter to SVT1 superiors, asking that for its own good SVT had to keep Stålsjö in reins; his populist programming was in serious researchers' eyes compromising television as a medium.⁶⁴ In 1985 Häger and Villius made a documentary where the on-screen Villius discussed sources for Sweden's early history, which was very likely a response to Stålsjö's programmes.⁶⁵ Many years later, when asked what could make him angry, Villius said that one need only mention Stålsjö's name.⁶⁶ Häger and Villius thus acted against Stålsjö both inside and outside SVT. In their letter to the SVT1 chiefs they expressed concern over SVT's deteriorating relationship to the academic community. It is likely that this was a genuine worry to them, strengthening even more the impression of Häger and Villius as historical gatekeepers.

In the 1990s, acting historian Herman Lindqvist became one of the most famous figures in the Swedish history culture, and as discussed above, his historical works were severely criticised by many historians. His failure to follow the historians' minimum demands provoked even Häger and Villius, at least the latter. At a press conference Villius made a distinction between his own and Lindqvist's attitudes to the past. Commenting on errors with facts, he admitted he had once mistaken *The Odyssey* for *The Iliad*, but added "one can never be so careless a fellow [slarver] as Herman Lindqvist often is."⁶⁷ This is not to suggest that Häger and Villius in any way tried to halt Lindqvist's popular programmes. But the comment is a sign of their continuing to care about the history produced at SVT.

Another historical film producer that Häger and Villius had difficulties with was Maj Wechseltmann. As mentioned in Chapter 4, in the early 1990s she made a programme where she strongly denounced the Swedish secret service

⁶³ UUB. Historiska föreningen AI:5, protocol 1982.04.21; information from Christer Öhman, 2002.06.11; Vinberg, Björn, 1988. Häger says that later Stålsjö came to them in Stockholm to continue the discussion; interview with Häger, 2003.06.03. Villius also participated in an open debate with Stålsjö in Göteborg; interview with Villius, 2003.06.02.

⁶⁴ DA. T21, [Programlista & målsättning, letter [from Häger & Villius] to Olle Berglund & Oloph Hansson, 1984.01.17; cf. letter from Olle Berglund to Häger & Villius, 1984.01.18.]

⁶⁵ *Sverige Sverige fosterland: När Sverige blev Sverige* (1985). The programme was reported to the Radio Board with direct reference to the Stålsjö case; GR. E2, vol. 364, TV 254/85-I; GR. E2, vol. 367, TV 317/85-I, letter from Verner Lindblom to Radionämnden, 1985.08.05.

⁶⁶ Dimming, Lars, 1990; cf. Kalfjäll, Birgitta, 1990.

⁶⁷ Villius quoted in Hammarkrantz, Oskar, 2001. Cf. interview with Villius, 2003.06.02.

for what she thought was its fascism. Her interpretation was in effect criticism of Häger and Villius as well, who had previously dealt with the same subject. Häger says that he was engaged by SVT to check the Wechselmann film and found it contained grave errors.⁶⁸ SVT halted the film from broadcast for close to a year. Wechselmann says that she herself suspected Häger and Villius had acted to keep the film off the air.⁶⁹ Clearly no fond feelings were lost between the producers.⁷⁰

Finally, bad relations existed between Häger and Villius and their colleague at SVT in Stockholm, Jan Bergman. Bergman had worked with company film archives, while there making programmes from archival footage, but in the mid-1990s conflicts forced him to leave. He has suggested that if Häger had put in a word in his favour, he might have moved to the Section for documentaries and thus continued his programme production; instead, Bergman says that Häger opposed his joining the Section for documentaries.⁷¹ That Häger did may be true or not. No evidence exists that shows Häger made any effort to help Bergman. Further, when asked about Bergman, Villius expressed doubts about Bergman's historical understanding.⁷² Thus, testimony by both Bergman and Villius indicate there was a rift between them.⁷³

Altogether the instances cited are evidence that Häger and Villius (and particularly the latter) were very concerned over what historical programmes were produced at SVT. They minded their own business for the most part, but did not fail to enter at times into dispute with other history producers. Their gatekeeper role has to be ruled a conscious one. It is possible of course that Häger and Villius were only warding off their territory against encroachment by competitors, that they tried to block programmes by others on "their" subjects. But at least their strong opposition to Stålsjö and his programmes betray the struggle Häger and Villius waged to make other producers stick to the rules – to the rules historians follow. A fair speculation would be that Häger and Villius made only minimum demands, and if at times they attacked other history producers, they did so believing even those minimum demands were being violated.⁷⁴ Their attacks can also have been a social stratagem to secure safe distance from bad history, the pay off being increased symbolic capital in the field of history production. But the capital Häger and Villius accumulated would also affect regard for the institution of SVT in the field of history production. Seen fully as an issue of principle, when Häger and Villius attacked bad histories made at SVT they defended both themselves and the quality status of SVT.

In sum Häger and Villius played several roles over the years. In all roles,

⁶⁸ Interview with Häger, 2003.06.03.

⁶⁹ Interview with Maj Wechselmann, 2003.07.04.

⁷⁰ Cf. interview with Villius, 2003.06.02.

⁷¹ Interview with Jan Bergman, 2000.09.04.

⁷² Interview with Hans Villius, 2001.05.09; cf. interview with Villius, 2003.06.02.

⁷³ Häger suggests there was bad personal chemistry between Bergman on the one side and him and Villius on the other; interview with Häger, 2003.06.03.

⁷⁴ On the concept of minimum demands, see Torstendahl, Rolf, 1994.

whether as filmmakers, writers, educators, archive enthusiasts, or gatekeepers, they were influential figures in the Swedish history culture. They are likewise popular cultural personalities in Sweden. Especially in the years after Villius retired they frequently gave talks throughout the country. They received the historical Hertig Karls pris [Duke Karl's award] in 1995, and Villius received the cultural award of his hometown of Kalmar in 2000.⁷⁵ When Villius celebrated his seventy-fifth birthday he was given greetings on a television show. In the summer of 2000, the year after the successful *Hundra svenska år*, Häger was chosen to be a "summer host" for a popular radio programme and asked to speak on a topic of his own choice for ninety minutes.⁷⁶

3. The author/filmmaker

In the remarks on the filmmaker that follow, the word *author* is used as a synonym for filmmaker; both are of course composers of "text." There have been theoretical debates over the concept of the creator or author of a work. Briefly, a romantic idea of long standing sees the author as a lone genius, while later theoreticians have begun to think of an author as someone who works in an intellectual environment. Stress is placed on the strong influence an author comes under from colleagues and editors. Limitations due to production factors affect the author as well, according to the current paradigm of ideas. The now established realistic view of the author is as someone who subject to some or all of these factors works to construct a text.

Certain critics take a more radical standpoint and allege the author never has full control over the text. They urge the text to be seen as an autonomous system of meaning, a system that once written the author has no further command of. This view echoes in Roland Barthes's phrase "the death of the author."⁷⁷ The view that, once the author puts down his pen, the text starts a life of its own, is hardly controversial any more. French literary sociologist Robert Escarpit says that in principle the text will always be read differently by the reader than by the author, and the difference in readings grows in proportion to the distance (in time or space) from the environment where the text was written to that of the reader.⁷⁸ The full meaning intended by the author will never be known or appreciated by the reader/viewer. This of course does not rule out the contention spelled out above that a text can be indexed as non-fiction and filled with information.

Even though the author has little control over a text already published or broadcast, this does not mean that the author ceases to exist in the minds of readers. Rather, the author continues to be a historical factor in the form of the

⁷⁵ Villius received another award in his new hometown of Täby.

⁷⁶ *Sommar*, SR P1, 2000.07.29.

⁷⁷ Barthes, Roland, 1984 (1977).

⁷⁸ Escarpit, Robert, 1973 (1961).

implied author, and always seem real to the reader. The implied author is not identical with the real author but is instead the reader's idea of that author. Thus, the implied author is a kind of functional quality of the text and of the act of reading. In the instance of the work of Häger and Villius, the two are the real authors behind different programmes; viewers, on their hand, do not know the real Häger and Villius but have certain ideas about them. The point is that Häger and Villius, or any author, helps shape the reader's notion among other things of who the author is, what that author intended, and whether or not that author is trustworthy.⁷⁹ The author is not dead, because the author continues to be functional both within the text and during the act of reading. It matters therefore very much what is known about Häger and Villius, what is said about their programmes and about their trustworthiness. The implied author of Häger and Villius plays a definite role in the mind of the viewer.

To be emphasised is that the Häger and Villius programmes were designed and made by Häger and Villius, but not by them alone. Filmmaking is a collaborative art, and in the practical production process there are several people who exert strong influence on individual programmes.⁸⁰ This matter comes up for deeper consideration later in this chapter, and for now it is sufficient to briefly present the larger team behind the production name of Häger & Villius. Any producer at SVT would work with a cameraman, a sound recordist, and an editor, as these parties were currently available at the company. Nevertheless, personal chemistry and other more practical factors have their effect on cooperation between the different members of the staff. To note in the case of Häger and Villius, is how their production crew remained so extremely stable as a group over the years. That the two could always pull together the staff they wanted indicates that Häger and Villius enjoyed high esteem within the company.

The cameraman on all major productions from the early 1970s onwards was Jan-Hugo Norman. He also worked closely with one of the directors of SVT's drama unit, Lars Molin. Norman, an outstanding cinematographer, was one of the last of the SVT cameramen to leave the expensive film format and start working with newer video formats. This indicates both that he was alert to the weaknesses of the new technique, and that he was respected well enough at the company to be allowed to continue work with film, which was so much more expensive. It is obvious that Häger and Villius liked working with Norman; they once delayed the filming of a project half a year waiting for Norman, who was busy with other projects.⁸¹ Häger has said that without Norman's experience in filming both documentary and drama it would have been very difficult

⁷⁹ The implied author is well established in narratology, e.g. Booth, Wayne C., 1987, p. 272. Cf. Gunning, Tom, 1994 (1991), pp. 50 ff. David Bordwell suggests the concept of "biographical legend," which imparts similar sense; Bordwell, David, 1981, pp. 9 f., 20 ff.

⁸⁰ O'Connor, John, 1998, pp. 30 f. proposes that "filmmaker" should be understood as a composite term for all the collaborators.

⁸¹ Ström, Sven, 1980.

for them to make drama-documentaries, which demanded such very particular skills on the part of the cameraman.⁸² In addition to working with Häger and Villius, and with drama producer Molin, Norman also filmed other historical productions. In the 1970s he filmed *Folkets historia i bild*. Later, he worked with Bo G. Erikson on Viking film productions as well as on the dramatic historical series *Långtans blåa blomma* (1998). Thus, Norman's aesthetic eye figures as an influence on the conceptions Swedes have of the past.

Sound recordist Gunnar Nilsson was an experienced craftsman who had worked many years at SVT before he approached Häger and Villius in the late 1970s and suggested they work together. A perfectionist, Nilsson not only recorded sound at shootings, but added or created most of the sound for the silent footage used in *Hundra svenska år* and other productions. Nilsson came from the same part of Hälsingland as Häger, and in fact it was he who suggested they make a programme on the area's Lake Marmen.⁸³ Thus, his influence was not limited to the purely technical tasks he performed on films. Nilsson's historical interests were also manifested by his writing a book on Swedes who migrated to Canada. For that work, he made several trips to Canada, travelled through the country, and with tape-recorder interviewed the old Swedish-Canadians.⁸⁴

Editor Kjell Tunegård started working with Häger and Villius in the early 1980s, and was then experienced in his craft. His role included not only fitting pictures together but also adding music to the pictures (an additional musical advisor and sometimes composer for Häger and Villius's programmes was Hans Arnbom). Tunegård's role in programme making changed over the years. He says himself that during the 1980s he would edit the programmes with Häger and Villius present in the editing room. But then around 1990, with the introduction of the new digital editing system (which made changes much easier), he would start editing on his own and the producers would come in to discuss the result only now and then.⁸⁵ Underscoring Tunegård's importance is that *Tur retur helvetet* (1996) was delayed a year because Tunegård was busy with other projects; instead of choosing another editor Häger waited.⁸⁶ Furthermore, Häger gave Tunegård a free role as editor of the large eight-part series *Hundra svenska år* (1999), and Tunegård was named co-creator when the series was awarded the prestigious Ikaros award at SVT.⁸⁷ Both examples indicate that the producers were confident in Tunegård's judgement. Undoubtedly, his influence on many of Häger and Villius's programmes was considerable.

Norman, Nilsson and Tunegård make up the close circle of co-workers around Häger and Villius, and it is they who worked together in the 1980s and

⁸² Interview with Häger, 2003.06.03.

⁸³ Bjercknes, Kirsten, 2002; DA. T21 [Marmen; Eklund, Anders, 1991]; interview with Gunnar Nilsson, 2002.12.05, author's notes.

⁸⁴ Nilsson, Gunnar, 1995.

⁸⁵ Interview with Kjell Tunegård, 2002.10.10.

⁸⁶ DA. T21, F1, 65, *Tur retur helvetet*, F. Kort bakgrund, 1996.07.04.

⁸⁷ Tunegård and Häger were named co-creators also of *Fy fan, ett så'n't land!* (2000).



Figure 3. The Häger & Villius team at sea. Sound recordist Gunnar Nilsson, cameraman Jan-Hugo Norman, presenter Hans Villius, producer Olle Häger. During making of *Där farlig sunnan går* (1994). Courtesy of Olle Häger.

90s.⁸⁸ A fourth person to mention is Carl Torell, a producer and dramatist who worked with Häger and Villius during the 1970s. Torell had become famous in 1965, when he made a programme very critical of Fascist Spain. The programme was prevented from being broadcast, and a lively debate grew up in Sweden.⁸⁹ After Torell joined the Section for historical documentary, he worked with Häger and Villius for seven or eight years. Together the three producers made a series on Sweden in 1917–18 which featured re-enacted history, actors performing in scenes matching past events. Torell and Häger also produced two historical feature films. These were formative years for Häger and Villius, and it is worth noting that their co-operation in Torell's case was with a trained dramatist. Likely Torell's ideas of how to represent history using actors had measurable influence on Häger and Villius.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Häger emphasised the importance of the team in Hedberg, Tove, 1996.

⁸⁹ Torell's programme, *En sång, ett vapen*, was finally broadcast on 1965.08.26.

⁹⁰ At the time Villius said they had "good help" of director Torell; Villius quoted in Björkman, Leif, 1971. Later, Villius expressed doubts that Torell had been an important influence; interview with Villius, 2000.05.09. Torell cannot tell his version; he died in the 1980s.

Over the years, Häger and Villius worked with a great number of people, of which singled out here are the most important.⁹¹ To note is that the entire group consisted of men with clearly Swedish names. Villius was the oldest, born in 1924, Nilsson, Häger, and Norman were born in the 1930s, while Tunegård was born in 1948 and the youngest. To be sure, Häger and Villius at times had female, or younger, or even one or two foreign-born co-workers,⁹² but the close circle consisted of Swedish-born men of similar age. This is not so surprising, as in the years when this particular production group was established there were more men than women working at SVT, especially in the capacity of cameraman, and foreign-born people were a small minority at the company. Even so, the relative homogeneity of the production group is worth noting. It is not certain that one and the same idea was shared by all, but similar experiences may have facilitated co-operation and this would have affected programmes in various ways.⁹³

The main point to have in mind is that Häger and Villius were not the sole creators in their filmmaking enterprises. In the balance of the study Häger and Villius are spoken of as a producer-couple, and even the singular genitive *s* is used. This use of the genitive is a conscious means of underscoring that Häger and Villius are not just the names of two individuals, but also a producer name. It is seldom certain who was of key influence in a decision, whether it was Häger, Villius, or an unnamed co-worker. Still, there can be little doubt that the two historian-filmmakers played first fiddle in the filmmaking process.

4. Häger and Villius's historical productions in outline

Among the hundreds of programmes that Häger and Villius made,⁹⁴ all but a handful can be characterised as historical documentaries. In this section an outline is furnished of their production. All of Häger and Villius programmes appear in a list in an appendix at the end, but here trends and changes in the production are followed with focus most often set on programmes that come up for close study in the following three chapters.

First is an important reminder that during their entire career as television producers, Häger and Villius were employed by SVT. That is not only a technical question affecting institutional setting and production practices, but also

⁹¹ Two other persons who figured in frequently are Hans Arnbom, composer, and Bengt "Berra" Strömberg, lighting technician.

⁹² Among the women who worked with Häger and Villius were Ulla Lennman and Birgitta Nordin, who edited *Sammansvärjningen* (1986) and *Sista båten till Jurkalne* (1991) respectively, Inger Back who co-produced some *Svart på vitt* episodes, Maria Gratte and Cecilia Vejens who were involved in making *Hundra svenska år*.

⁹³ Villius says that they came to know one another so well that dialogue could often be omitted; interview with Villius, 2003.06.02. Trenter, Cecilia, 2002, suggests that male stereotypes dominate the history culture.

⁹⁴ Appendix 1.

involved is a question of mentalities. In a public service company, the producers worked in an atmosphere where they would ideally share certain values and have a range of similar goals in mind. At least officially, public service has always been a guiding ambition at SVT. While the concept itself is often debated, and its implications have changed over the years, it remains of importance to efforts to more fully understand the documentary production of Häger and Villius.⁹⁵ Early in their careers, when in 1968 forming the Section for historical documentary, they set down the principles for their future choice of subjects. In a rather academically formulated letter to one of the television heads, they suggest that

it is necessary to ~~radically~~ limit the production to subjects which can be said to be of central historic importance, and about which it can be considered important that the public has information. Descriptions of the historical background of, among other kinds, events of importance in the present, fall in this group. Other historical documentaries to be chosen should also concentrate on such subjects, and [among subjects] there should be purposeful co-ordination.⁹⁶

The letter makes it clear that Häger and Villius, at least at the time, thought of themselves as a kind of adult educators. Their job was to provide the public with “important [...] information”. In another document they argued against the purchase of foreign historical series not first subject to expert consultation.⁹⁷ This can be interpreted as an attempt to assert their own expertise, but it is more likely evidence that they took the educational role of SVT particularly seriously. However it should be noted that in the late 1960s Häger and Villius were yet quite inexperienced as producers of television programmes. Their understanding of the medium was to change, and so was their apprehension of the meaning of public service. In 1990, a more experienced Villius stated: “Our aim is to transmit a feeling for the material, to transmit the interest we ourselves feel for it and to waken interest in history as a subject. Not much information can go into a television programme.”⁹⁸ In other words, the emphasis had moved from information to wakening interest. Ten years later, Häger was asked about the successful series *Hundra svenska år*, and he declared there had been no didactical aims for the series whatsoever. That series he said was primarily to be “entertainment.”⁹⁹ Perhaps one should not take his remark literally, but it is doubtful that Häger could have uttered the same words in 1968. Between the letter of 1968 and Häger’s statement in 2000, much change had taken place. This study intends to cast certain light on that change.

An interesting formulation included in the 1968 letter speaks of how pro-

⁹⁵ Villius spoke of public service responsibilities when interviewed in *Sommarnattens skeende*, SVT2, 1998.07.10.

⁹⁶ DA. E1, 1, Korrespondens 67–70, B. Objective for the Section for historical documentary, from Häger & Villius to Nils Erik Baehrendtz, 1968.01.16.

⁹⁷ DA. E1, 1, Intern korr, TV2 1968–80, V. Section for historical documentary, objectives and requirements, 1968.09.14.

⁹⁸ Villius quoted in Kalfjäll, Birgitta, 1990. Cf. Mellbourn, Anders, 1986.

⁹⁹ Olle Häger at a seminar at Stockholm University, 2000.04.04. Author’s notes.

grammes should have subjects of “central historic importance.” Though perhaps a quite neutral statement, intending only to set an educational goal, it can also be interpreted as the historian-filmmaker’s attempt to assert the right to decide himself what subjects were important to deal with. Similar is a situation from 1968 when Villius turned down a suggestion by SVT manager Baehrendtz to make a programme in connection with the fiftieth anniversary of the Nordic Association [Föreningen Norden]. Among his reasons for saying no, Villius says there “should not be an external formal reason” for making the film, but rather a content-related reason.¹⁰⁰ Thus, Villius again claimed the content principle was to be followed in making choices. During these years Häger and Villius made a number of anniversary or news-event related programmes, but they claimed later they did not like making them and therefore finally refused to do so.¹⁰¹ Häger says they turned away suggestions to make such programmes, just as they turned away the suggestions to systematically cover new findings and discoveries made at universities.¹⁰²

These incidents indicate that early on Häger and Villius claimed an independent role at SVT. Though their Section for historical documentaries soon ceased to be an independent unit, and technically they were integrated into the Section for documentaries, there is good reason to think they continued to “do their thing” relatively independently. They were after all the most experienced history producers at the company. In 1989 they wrote that during their twenty-three years at SVT, no company superior had ever tried to influence their programmes with regard to content.¹⁰³ Looking back from 2003, Villius says they were for the most part free to make the programmes they wanted (he admits that at times they thought an idea would be too expensive to realise), and Häger says that he cannot remember a single occasion when they failed to get support for a proposal for a new programme.¹⁰⁴ If this is so, it is good evidence that they were given an independent role.

The outline that follows now of Häger and Villius’s historical productions reflects the change their work underwent over time and in several respects by distinguishing three phases of production. The first phase runs from their start in the 1960s to around 1976, the second phase run from there to around 1990, and there is a third phase from the early 1990s to 2001. There are thematic differences between the first phase on the one hand, and the second and third phases on the other. While in the first phase there was a tendency towards international political history, the second and third phases inclined towards Swedish social history. Further, in the first phase Häger and Villius were relatively unfamiliar with the medium, and only in time discovered their best au-

¹⁰⁰ DA. E1, 1, Korrespondens 67–70, B, letter from Villius to Baehrendtz 1968.10.04.

¹⁰¹ Häger at a seminar at Stockholm University, 2000.04.04. Cf. DA. T21, [Hundra svenska år. Avtal, L, letter from Häger to Ulf Lundell, undated [1999].]

¹⁰² Interview with Häger, 2003.06.03.

¹⁰³ Häger, Olle and Hans Villius, 1989.

¹⁰⁴ Interview with Villius, 2003.06.02; interview with Häger, 2003.06.03.

dio-visual language.¹⁰⁵ Conversely, in the second and third phases they mastered the craft, assembled their regular crew, and made several notable high-quality programmes. The division between the second and third phases recognises Villius's retirement and Häger's taking over as sole producer. Villius worked actively on productions until the early 1990s but less so thereafter. As he however worked with Häger through the series *Hundra svenska år* (1999), the official break-up coming in 2001, it is reasonable to speak of the 1990s as part of the Häger & Villius production era.

A characteristic of the first phase is the international thematic dimension. During the 1960s and 70s the team made many programmes from non-Swedish subject matter. Often these were programmes on heated questions which were presented from historical angles. One such programme was on the conflict in the Middle East, and another portrayed the historical background of the Prague spring and the Soviet invasion.¹⁰⁶ In these and similar programmes, history was the key to understanding the contemporary world, a help with practical orientation. Other films were also occasioned by contemporary events. Some programmes on the Russian revolution were made in 1967, to coincide with the fifty-year jubilee celebrating the 1917 events.¹⁰⁷

Yet another group of programmes made in the early years comprised biographies of famous men. They began with a portrait of legendary financial tycoon Ivar Kreuger (1969) and continued with one of Stalin (1970), then one of Swedish explorer and politician Sven Hedin (1971), and one of Italian dictator Mussolini (1972). Villius also made two programmes on UN secretary general Dag Hammarskjöld (1967 and 1971).¹⁰⁸ The programmes were made mainly from extant footage and were rather critical in their views of the protagonists. This was no surprise maybe in the case of Stalin,¹⁰⁹ yet it was quite conspicuous when a Swedish conservative hero like Hedin was treated with such critical distance.

By visiting archives in foreign countries such as Cuba and the Soviet Union, Häger and Villius made connections they could also use during future international productions.¹¹⁰ More than once they had plans for co-productions with British or Norwegian producers.¹¹¹ Until 1976 half of their productions dealt

¹⁰⁵ Häger says t they started "making radio programmes on television" and that it took ten years for them to learn how to make real television; quoted in Kalfjäll, Birgitta, 1990. Cf. interview with Villius, 2003.06.02.

¹⁰⁶ *Det bortförlovade landet* (1969); *Brännpunkt Prag* (1968).

¹⁰⁷ SVT planning for the event was extensive; Villius had a key role. DA. T21, E1, 1, Korrespondens 67–70, N, [notes from meeting] from Villius to Stellan Norrlander et al, 1967.02.22.

¹⁰⁸ *Högt spel i tändstickor. Ivar Kreuger och hans värld* (1969); *Stalin. Porträtt av en diktator* (1970); *En röst ur det förgångna. Om politikern Sven Hedin* (1971); *Mussolini* (1972); *Mitt namn är Hammarskjöld* (1967); *I nödfall med våld. Kongokrisen 1961* (1971).

¹⁰⁹ For example, an image of Stalin on a podium was contrasted with the narrator's commentary that he was "ruthless."

¹¹⁰ DA. E1, 1, Korrespondens 67–70, C & D.

¹¹¹ DA. E1, 1, Korrespondens 67–70, S, letter from Villius to Magne Skodvin, 1968.12.30; flaps M & V, letters between Villius and David Mudd, Westward Television Ltd; Häger, Olle and Hans Villius, 1970, p. 219.

with international subjects, but after 1976 most films had national focus. The international themes all but disappeared, as the focus moved steadily towards Swedish history. It cannot be shown through documents, but it appears that the producers began to concentrate on domestic conditions as a matter of conscious decision. Perhaps this was a result of the increased output of quality documentaries in other countries, which meant that Häger and Villius had to compete with able filmmakers in other countries if they wanted to make a historical documentary about say the Middle East or phases of World War II.

Most of Häger and Villius's productions deal with contemporary history, while only about ten percent of their programmes are about pre-photographic times. This is a little surprising, considering they spent their academic lives researching older Swedish history and both say the late sixteenth century is their favourite period of history.¹¹² But the focus on contemporary times enabled them to use authentic film, and also newly-filmed interviews with eyewitnesses. Thus, imagery could be fashioned easily and cheaply. When working in the participatory mode with interviews, Häger and Villius created their own first-hand sources for the past. Around 1970 they made a series of interview programmes with aged politicians, including a three-part programme with recently resigned Swedish Prime Minister Tage Erlander.¹¹³ In 1974, while preparing a programme on a secret service organisation, they again made interviews with key participants; a few decades later, these interviews became first-hand sources for research on the organisation.¹¹⁴ These programmes are indicative of the focus on political history that was their mark in their first years in television.

In the 1970s, Häger and Villius's efforts were devoted largely to a number of series picturing twentieth-century Swedish historical events. Dealing with the post-World War II era, which they did in a series on the Cold War and another on Sweden in the 1950s,¹¹⁵ they used interviews and archival footage. But lack of footage made them experiment with re-enactments. Coming to events from 1917–1918 when the threat of revolution led Sweden to at last grant universal right to vote, they and their companion at that time, Carl Torell, chose to include re-enacted scenes.¹¹⁶ A similar production made with Torell was a re-enactment of the trial in the aftermath of the Sandarne riots of 1932. Both the 1917–1918 series and the Sandarne film thematised the struggle of the labourers in Sweden in the years before the Social Democratic Party came into office in 1932.¹¹⁷ In both cases their re-enactments closely followed documented records. Häger and Villius continued to portray the struggle of the poor also during the second and third phases of their production, but then it was often from a social-historical rather than political-historical point of

¹¹² Thunman, Anna, 1999.

¹¹³ *Makten och ärligheten* (1970); four interview programmes called *Återblick* (1969–70).

¹¹⁴ *Folkhemmets hemligfolk. Om IB-affären* (1974). The interview transcripts were used by Lamper, Lars Olof, 2002, p. 19, 43, 410 ff.

¹¹⁵ *Sverige i det kalla kriget* (1971); *50-tal* (1974).

¹¹⁶ *Sverige 1917–1918* (1972).

¹¹⁷ Häger's father had been present at the Sandarne trial; interview with Häger, 2003.06.03.

view. One such project dealt with the starvation that crippled Sweden in 1867 and helped instigate the great wave of migration from Sweden to America. The project resulted in the documentary *Ett satans år* (1977) and in *Isgraven* (1977), the latter a docudrama by Häger and Torell. Both films come up in a later chapter.

In the programmes from the mid-1970s a new emphasis pervades Häger and Villius's productions, namely, they start to deal with history from below. In Chapter 2 mention was made that history from below was becoming a mass movement in Sweden in those years.¹¹⁸ No doubt, Häger and Villius were caught by the same spirit that inspired the history from below movement. After the starvation-year project Häger and Villius turned to their biggest project ever, *1000 år* (1980). This was to tell the history of Sweden over one thousand years. The six-episode series is formally interesting because it was partly made with actors playing the parts of ordinary people from the past. The series built closely on modern historical research. For example, in the episode portraying the seventeenth century Häger and Villius drew from the unpublished research of the young historian Jan Lindegren. The next chapter tells of that episode demythologising the heroic self-image of Sweden in the era of its great power.¹¹⁹ But *1000 år* is not to be taken as evidence that Häger and Villius had a conscious plan to communicate the new findings of the scholarly community. It was rather a matter of their choosing for independent reasons their particular subjects and perspectives.

A difference between the first and the later phases in Häger and Villius's filmmaking is that the programmes gradually became longer. Before 1980, most of their documentaries were less than forty minutes in length, but after 1980, and with the exception of the five-minute series *Svart på vitt*, they are longer.¹²⁰ The increased length of the programmes is of importance because a longer programme is in greater need of dramaturgy. A viewer can sit for twenty-five minutes and watch a non-dramatic string of events-programme, but the same viewer will ask more from a programme to remain seated for say fifty-five minutes. It could be argued that the greater length imposes more of dramaturgical thinking. But it is also possible that if a filmmaker first has accepted dramaturgical thinking then as a consequence he or she can make longer programmes. In a way then it is not surprising that, when they had become more experienced, Häger and Villius went over to longer programmes. Also possible is that their programmes became longer under the influence of Kjell Tunegård after he took over their editing.¹²¹

¹¹⁸ One particularly influential book was Lindqvist, Sven, 1978.

¹¹⁹ This is discussed further in the following chapter.

¹²⁰ Cf. Appendix 1. The main exceptions from the early phase are three films, namely that mentioned on Sandarne, which Torell produced, and two other dramatic films that Häger and Torell made together.

¹²¹ Häger says that Villius wanted the programmes to be as short as possible; interview with Häger, 2003.06.03. Gradually, Villius's influence over the editing diminished whereas Tunegård's influence increased.



Figure 4. Olle Häger and Hans Villius surrounded by enlargements of photos used in *Svart på vitt*. The series became their greatest success. Photo: Leif Schröder. Courtesy of Leif Schröder.

Most of Häger and Villius's films were parts of series. The longest and most famous of them was the five-minute *Svart på vitt* series (1984–1992) which came to be 127 episodes. Each *Svart på vitt* programme focused on a singular photograph, as a point of departure or cue for what to be told from the past. Building on the same techniques as Low and Koenig used in *City of Gold*, the filmmakers moved the camera across an enlarged photo, pausing to pick out seemingly insignificant details that opened up the past. A protest against the quick cuts on television, *Svart på vitt* allowed the same image to remain almost endlessly on the screen. The series, which netted Häger and Villius one of their most coveted awards,¹²² gave them the opportunity to treat very different historical subjects, not the least from social and cultural history. Building on the same re-framing technique they also made two series of five-minute programmes on World War II.¹²³

¹²² Stora journalistpriset (The Swedish Great Journalism Award) of 1986.

¹²³ *Bilder från ett krig* (1989); *Svart på vitt – i färg* (1990).

Although their interests expanded to include social history, the two kept up their interest in political history. In the 1980s, and parallel to the *Svart på vitt* series, they made two historical drama-documentaries¹²⁴ dealing with dramatic events from Swedish political history. First was the three-part *Sammansvärjningen* (1986) on the 1792 murder of King Gustav III and then *Fyra dagar som skakade Sverige* (1988). The latter film, one of Häger and Villius's most ambitious productions, dealt with the Midsummer crisis of 1941 when Nazi Germany attacked the Soviet Union. The film re-enacted discussions in the Swedish government offices during "the four days that shook Sweden" and in the process provided a portrait of then Prime Minister Per Albin Hansson.¹²⁵ A third drama-documentary dealt with vanished diplomat Raoul Wallenberg, and had the form of an imaginary trial where various witnesses presented testimony.¹²⁶

Häger and Villius also shared interest in historical mysteries and intelligence service operations. In the 1960s, Villius made programmes on the Kennedy murder in Dallas and on the death of UN secretary general Dag Hammarskjöld,¹²⁷ two high-profile contemporary history mysteries that like many of his radio programmes dealt with dramatic moments in history. In 1970 he and Häger made a number of programmes on famous spies. Twenty years later, at the end of the Cold War, old security officers started talking and archives were opened. Häger and Villius took advantage of this new opportunity to make several programmes, resorting extensively to interviews.¹²⁸ As Villius has pointed out, to have an exciting subject affords the filmmaker a great advantage,¹²⁹ and intelligence service operations often provided such subjects. That Häger was himself interested in mysteries and secret service operations is evident from his writing criminal stories.

When treating ancient history Häger and Villius compensated for the lack of eyewitnesses by travelling to the historic sites themselves. Sometimes they interviewed present-day authorities on the times, usually local archaeologists or historians, as in programmes on ancient civilisations in the Mediterranean (1981, 1986, 1990).¹³⁰ But several times the programmes instead took the shape of a mixture of history tourism and reminiscence, with Villius the on-

¹²⁴ In the early 1980s they prepared a drama-documentary series on the inventor Alfred Nobel that ultimately resulted in only one programme; *Mr Dynamite* (1983).

¹²⁵ The film is treated briefly in Nielsen, Carsten Tage, 1993, pp. 106 ff. It is discussed further later in this study.

¹²⁶ *Raoul Wallenberg – fånge i Sovjet* (1990).

¹²⁷ *Skotten i Dallas* (1966); *Mitt namn är Hammarskjöld* (1967). In these rather controversial programmes Villius made source-critical examinations of the events in question. French television came to interview him after the Kennedy programme; interview with Villius, 2003.06.02. Some viewers disliked his critical distance to Hammarskjöld.

¹²⁸ *För främmande makt* (1970), four parts; *Spionen som kom hem till kylan* (1993); *Spionjägaren* (1994).

¹²⁹ Interview with Villius, 2001.05.09.

¹³⁰ *Mitt ute på blånande djupet: Kreta* (1981); *När världen gick under* (1986); *Petra – den försvunna staden* (1990).

screen presenter. In these cases the journey took viewers to several historic sites, Villius all the while before them commenting on the dramatic history of the places, sometimes also telling personal reminiscences. Among the journey programmes are *Jag ser underbara ting* (1991), which is a journey through Egypt, and *Moses, Aron, och Karl XII* (1994), where Villius travels through Norway. Other journey programmes were to parts of Sweden to which Häger or Villius had some special connection.¹³¹ On an occasion after Villius's retirement Olle Häger made a journey programme featuring Holocaust survivor Benny Grünfeld revisiting Auschwitz.¹³²

Towards the end of the 1990s Häger spent several years making the eight-part series *Hundra svenska år*, which was an attempt to portray in synthesised form the whole of twentieth-century Swedish history. The series was made from archival footage and newly-filmed interviews and was a success with audiences. Häger continued making historical programmes into the new millennium but by then the ageing Villius had definitely ceased as a member of the team.

Broadly characterised Häger and Villius's productions are on the twentieth century or late nineteenth century, on Swedish subjects, and have as keyword class rather than either race or gender. They tend to deal with the poor rather than with "great men." Regarding women, it is true that a woman was the main character in the segment on the twentieth century in *1000 år* (1980), and in 1980 they spoke of the dream of making a women's history.¹³³ Women are often featured in the *Svart på vitt* series,¹³⁴ and interviewed on that series Villius said Häger made sure that a fair bit of women's history was included. Häger remarked that much history is about men, who tend to be those in power, but that women often appear both behind and in front of a camera.¹³⁵ Commenting in retrospect Häger says they often struggled to find space for women in the programmes and he points to *Hundra svenska år* as an example; there many female interviewees were used to balance the males who dominate in the archival footage.¹³⁶ Nevertheless it is plain enough that few programmes deal with female experiences. Regarding race, Häger and Villius never made a programme on ethnic minorities, although the Sami as well as immigrants were touched upon in *Hundra svenska år* and *Fy fan, ett sånt land!* (2000).¹³⁷ The producers shifted interest from context to experience, from history from above

¹³¹ *Där farlig sunnan går. Med Hans Villius längs Kalmarsund* (1994); *Bland storkar och slott* (1996).

¹³² *Tur retur helvetet. Med Benny Grünfeld i Auschwitz* (1996).

¹³³ Ström, Sven, 1980.

¹³⁴ For example *Kata vid Fejan* (1984); *Sömmerskorna och striden* (1985); *För evigt adjö, tecknar Carolina* (1985); *Ängeln i Limehouse* (1988); *Victoria och invaliderna* (1988); *Drottning per annons* (1988).

¹³⁵ Mannberg, Gittan, 1986.

¹³⁶ Interview with Häger, 2003.06.03. About *Hundra svenska år*, Häger remarked that it was difficult to find footage of women; Häger at a seminar at Stockholm University, 2000.04.04. Author's notes.

¹³⁷ Interview with Häger, 2003.06.03.

to history from below. Formally most programmes were made in the expository mode and were held together by a voice-over narrator. The programmes are told in an intellectual way, the spoken soundtrack being dominant. A tendency is for programmes from the first phase to be characterised by closed structure, while in the later phases the structure was rather more open. That is to say that in later programmes the narrator is not so much the teacher he was before, and the interviews that have been added give viewers more room for personal interpretations.

In the previous chapter, it was suggested that the documentary production at SVT developed from four communicative traditions, namely, cinema, radio, journalism, and adult education. Häger and Villius brought together first and foremost radio and adult education. Particularly their early historical programming is in the tradition of adult education. Secondly, and as already shown, both Häger and Villius worked with radio programming before starting at SVT. Thus, their works show how radio had the strong influence it did at SVT in the early years. But thirdly, and although they were historians and not journalists, many of Häger and Villius's early programmes dealt with contemporary controversial subjects. This indicates that they shared some of the journalistic ideals of their present-day oriented colleagues. Finally, regarding their cinematic-aesthetic influences, these did not come to SVT with Häger and Villius. Instead, it was through work at SVT that the producers in time found their own cinematic language.

5. Making a historical documentary

The making of a historical documentary film may be understood as a process of continuous negotiation between different production factors, and in following chapters considerations which belong to that process are examined under three headings, namely, as cognitive, as moral, or as aesthetic considerations. All theorising aside, however, the fact is that making a historical documentary is very much a matter of craftsmanship. Different filmmakers develop different techniques and approaches, as such make sense to them. And yet to an extent all follow the same rules, as the making of a historical documentary film is a natural progression that consists of a pre-production phase, a production phase, and a post-production phase. This section is a discussion of the steps that go into the making of a historical documentary. Not a normative how-it-is-to-be-done prescription, the discussion aims rather to specify elements the historical documentarists must deal with in the process. Many historians lack knowledge of the documentary production process,¹³⁸ which is one reason to go into the matter in detail. The exemplary case is of course how Häger and

¹³⁸ O'Connor, John E., 1988; Abrash, Barbara & Janet Sternburg, 1983.

Villius usually made their films and care is taken to cover the ways they in practice differ from other documentarists.¹³⁹ To note at the outset is that Häger and Villius usually spent four or five months making a historical documentary. This is a very short time compared with the time it normally takes to make high-quality documentaries for the big screen, but it seems to be a rather normal period for productions in public service television.

Pre-production is all that happens before the shooting. The first step is to make a proposal for the film. This means to come up with a suggestion, do needed basic research, write the proposal with an estimate of costs included, discuss the matter with the company managers, and win project approval. Permanently employed at SVT, Häger and Villius had good chances of getting a proposal accepted, but if they wanted to make a more expensive production there would always be a period of negotiating. A detail vital to discuss in a proposal is timing. Some programmes are made for broadcasting on a certain date and in the case of others the season of the year will affect the filming and thus the completion date. As part of the argument for making a particular programme, an analysis of audience interest in the subject may be made part of the proposal, or a part may be a definition of the general composition of the audience. Häger and Villius worked for a public service broadcasting company and therefore by definition made programmes for “everyone.” Nevertheless, because different segments of the population have different interests, assumptions regarding audiences might induce a filmmaker to propose a particular perspective on a subject.

The research stage can be broken down into components. The producer starts by reading as much as possible to obtain a firm grasp on the subject. Unless he or she is the ultimate expert of the subject chosen, expert help is needed in finding materials of suitable depth and complexity. Being trained historians, Häger and Villius had an advantage over many other makers of historical documentaries. Both had good general knowledge of the past and were trained to read original documents, and if they needed guidance they had personal contacts to resort to among professional historians at the universities. Usually they would spend a number of weeks researching a subject before delivering a proposal to superiors.

The particular need at the research stage of a historical documentary is for image research. Even if the producer is able to accumulate a mass of printed material there may still be insufficient visual materials. For example, a filmmaker may wish to make a film on a person only to discover it is someone who never or only rarely was caught in a picture.¹⁴⁰ Convention dictates that if there

¹³⁹ The description is based on my interviews with Häger and Villius and with other makers of historical documentary films. For a more thorough introduction, see Rosenthal, Alan, 1990.

¹⁴⁰ At times a filmmaker start out with only one or two pictures. This was the case when Björn Fontander made his film on Mors lilla Olle; interview with Björn Fontander, 2001.02.26. Olle Häger once made a programme about a woman who was never photographed; instead he used a photo of her daughter; *Svart på vitt: För evigt adjö tecknar Carolina* (1985).

is no picture materials there can be no programme.¹⁴¹ Häger and Villius revolted against this view with their series *Svart på vitt*, where each programme was made from just one photograph, but these were five-minute programmes and not full-length documentaries. Depending on what the aesthetic idea for a programme was, they could spend much time searching pictures. It can be added that film archives have turned into businesses, which means that the producer of a historical programme often has to reserve a large budget sum to cover archival rights. Thus, the question is not only “are there visual materials covering the subject,” but also it is “can we afford them.” Häger and Villius and their SVT colleagues were fortunate in having a very large film and stills archive at their home base, which proved to be a goldmine for pictures for a large number of their programmes.

Depending on the subject picked, the producer will need to do location research and interviews. Preparing for *Rosie the Riveter*, the filmmakers interviewed several hundred women before choosing five to feature in the film. For *Hundra svenska år* Olle Häger made filmed interviews of some two hundred elderly Swedes who were witnesses or participants in various historical events and processes.¹⁴² Finding those people took its time. Producers like Marianne Söderberg and Jan Bergman try to use music and sound effects characteristic for the period depicted and this requires its time for research. Häger and Villius usually entrusted their co-workers with finding suitable musical pieces and sound effects, which was often part of post-production work.

Only a fraction of the material accumulated normally makes its way into the finished film, and it is tempting to limit research to what is near to hand. To do so would be especially tempting when tight economic limits face the producer, or if for some reason the producer is short of time. Even though such problems are more certain to affect the freelance producer working on a shoestring budget, they are a factor that also influenced Häger and Villius.¹⁴³

The third step, after proposal and research, is making the synopsis or script structure. Not the same as writing the definitive script, the synopsis lays the ground for the production phase. Formally, the programme can be planned as an investigative essay or as a narrative. In the former analytical discourse is predominant, while in the latter the discourse has the form of narrative. In addition to analysis and narrative there may also be descriptive elements. Even if one form is the essential structure, elements of the other forms may be included. For example, Häger and Villius's *Ett satans år* is a narrative about a famine year, which in interludes includes descriptive and analytical portions where the filmmakers discuss the new society that developed beside the growing

¹⁴¹ For example, *The World at War* was to include an episode on the Big Three, but the plan was abandoned because of lack of film footage of Stalin; Chapman, James, 2001, p. 134. Rosenstone, Robert A., 1995a, p. 34, writes that documentary bows to the “tyranny” of the necessary image.

¹⁴² Chamorand, Elisabeth, 1993, p. 186; on the production of *Hundra svenska år*, see Chapter 6.

¹⁴³ Häger says that the economic framework was “never a straightjacket” but something they adjusted to; interview with Häger, 2003.06.03.

lumber industry. Concretely, making the script structure means to construct a number of sequences and determine a logical order for them to follow. With some subjects a logic of progression is built in, for example, the chronological type of progression, the most common logic in historical documentaries. However, other structures are known and used. For example, in programmes on the disappearance of ancient civilisations, the progression could be that described as the mystery search. In the travel programmes that Häger and Villius made late in their career, movement in space rather than movement in time sets the logic of the progression. Making a script structure thus can be characterised as a search for a structure, for the progressive logic that viewers will accept. Häger says he and Villius wrote rather detailed synopses for their early programmes, but gradually the synopses were shortened and much was decided instead during editing.¹⁴⁴

When the filmmaker has finished research and preliminary script the project enters the late pre-production phase, which is preparing for the intensive and expensive period of production. The filmmaker selects crew and equipment, reviews shooting locations, and draws up a shooting schedule. At SVT crews would be chosen from among people working at the company, a policy that explains why producers like Häger and Villius came to have more or less stable production teams. Once they had found a cameraman or editor they trusted, they tried to hold on to the person.¹⁴⁵ Regarding locations there could be need for permission to enter a palace or go to a foreign location, and under Swedish laws the locations were to be declared free of possible dangers for the workers. A production assistant would often assist the producer with such practical matters. Häger was director for most Häger & Villius productions and would have instructed actors if actors were used. On a production such as *Sammanväringningen* where there was a separate director, it would be important to have talked through these kinds of matters with the director beforehand, so the production phase of such a film could run as the producers intended.

The production phase, the period of shooting, is only a small part of the filmmaking process. Commenting on the making of *Ett satans år*, Häger declares it took weeks to prepare for five days of location shooting. From this shooting, five and a half minutes of what was shot went into the film.¹⁴⁶ At the shooting, a good crew is the key to a successful production, as crew members in fact make many crucial on-spot decisions.

The cameraman (in Häger and Villius's films normally Jan-Hugo Norman) is the expert on shot selection, lighting style, and camera movements. Norman or his equivalent thus has great importance for the style of the finished film. Once the producer/director and the cameraman are used to working together,

¹⁴⁴ Interview with Häger, 2003.06.03.

¹⁴⁵ Häger says that in his opinion, Norman and Tunegård were probably the best cameraman and editor at SVT, which further explains his willingness to continue to work with them; interview with Häger, 2003.06.03.

¹⁴⁶ Häger, Olle, 1977, p. 8.

the cameraman understands more readily what point a scene is to have and what mood the producer wants from the images. When filming an interview, the appearance a particular interviewee has depends only partly on personal looks and complexion and on clothing. Rather, the way the cameraman's "framing" of the image works will begin to set up the desired impression in the audience.¹⁴⁷ His framing is a matter both of angle and of distance, of whether the subject is shot from a high angle (from above) or from a low angle (from below), whether the same subject looks directly at the camera or not, and whether the shot is a close-up or not. The impression made by an interviewee can depend almost exclusively on such camera arrangements. The sound recording has to accurately duplicate the sound source, that is, the speaker or event concerned, and also capture something of the sound environment. Among the most difficult tasks the recordist has, is that of enhancing or neutralising background noise. Subtle differences in lighting and sound recording make enormous differences, and for success with these features Häger and Villius just as other producers were very much in the hands of the crew.

The production phase can run a long time, especially if shots must be taken at different seasons or in locations in other parts of the world. But this phase only nets the raw materials for the programme. It is during post-production that the film is edited and definitively put together.

Most of Häger and Villius's historical documentaries utilise a voice-over narrator. At times, as in *Ett satans år*, Häger and Villius alternate as narrator, whereas in the later programmes Villius alone would read the speaker text. In the interplay between narration and other factors of production the greatest differences between different documentarists show up. Ethnographic documentaries depend heavily on interviews and interactive techniques, while with historical documentaries the historical record is set before the producer takes on the materials, and therefore the narration might come in relatively early in the process. If the producer has a very clear idea of what is to be told, he or she might write a narration script already during the pre-production phase. Herman Lindqvist, who appeared as on-screen presenter in his own programmes, reports that he writes the narration script and then travels with the crew to locations chosen where he then speaks the words to the camera. The narration is locked before production starts in such a case.¹⁴⁸ In the case of Ken Burns's *The Civil War*, a first narration script was written early in the process but was then continuously revised.¹⁴⁹ Other producers will not write the narration until far into the editing phase, when they know what shots and sequences will actually make up the programme. This does not mean that there is no script until that time; the producer will have used scripts all along, first the outline and then a shooting script, and perhaps even an editing script. But the final version of the

¹⁴⁷ Frame refers to the rectangle that contains the image.

¹⁴⁸ Interview with Herman Lindqvist, 2001.02.22. Note that Lindqvist is a scriptwriter, whereas Peter Lundvall as producer has been responsible for the later stages of production.

¹⁴⁹ On the production process of *The Civil War*, see Chapter 9.

narration script is rarely written before late in the editing. During their early years, Häger and Villius wrote the narration script and then started to look for imagery. In *Svart på vitt* they instead chose the pictures first, and then took up the narration. In later productions this was also their preferred method.

As Chapter 3 indicates, narration as a tool has been criticised, but it continues to be a central tool for most producers of historical documentaries. Narration can clarify the image and more than communicate hard facts can also add emotions. Words such as “here” or “now” add a sense of immediacy. But because words spoken on television are orally delivered and not written, the narration text cannot carry too much information and must include pauses, so viewers have time to digest and reflect. If a shot is say fifteen seconds long only about ten seconds can be used for narration; British historian-filmmaker Jerome Kuehl argues that commentary should actually take up no more than a third of the running time.¹⁵⁰ This means that in a one-hour documentary the spoken words equal as a matter of length no more than an article, and this will naturally limit the number of ideas that can be dealt with.

When the editing phase starts, there is often much more film than will be used in the finished programme. The editor may have begun with five hours of footage for a programme of one hour. The editor’s job starts with an assembly cut, where the objective is to put the shots in some kind of order. After that, when the rough cut takes place (if not before), the programme is given its definitive structure. The editor (normally Kjell Tunegård in Häger and Villius’s films) looks for an effective ordering of shots and sequences, one that forms a structure and gives the programme some kind of rhythm. After the rough cut, Tunegård would sit down with Häger and Villius, and possibly other co-workers, screen through the programme, and discuss with them what seems to be working and what does not. Final changes are made during the fine cut. During editing, not just images but also sound and words are synchronised. As music can give rhythm and beat to a programme, music will often influence the way the image flow is edited. Häger says that the search for music often took incredibly long periods of time; music advisor Hans Arnbom might suggest pieces, then Tunegård would choose something else, and finally they would watch and discuss what would work.¹⁵¹ Sound effects are not added until the images are in place. Much in the editing work has changed in recent years, as now computers make possible new advanced editing techniques. When everything else is in place the images get what will be their final lighting, a crucial matter when old archival footage is used, and be cut to the right size if need be.

When the editor is given great freedom, one can say the editor is the creator of the film as much as the producer/scriptwriter is. In the case of a programme where Villius travelled in the Kalmar region there was no evident geographic plan or time chronology to be followed, and then Tunegård had free hand in

¹⁵⁰ Kuehl, Jerry, 1976, p. 178.

¹⁵¹ Interview with Häger, 2003.06.03.

assembling the footage into a functioning whole.¹⁵² That they so freely left the job to him indicates that Häger and Villius fully trusted Tunegård's ability. Occasionally editors get credit for their work, as happened when Tunegård shared the prestigious Ikaros award for *Hundra svenska år* with producer Olle Häger. The editor sees the images with a fresh eye and, having a different emotional relationship to the script, might well make different judgements than the producer. It is thus often during the process of editing that the programme obtains its form. In the process Häger could write and rewrite the narration script several times.

Post-production includes scheduling the transmission, being interviewed, taking care of promotions of the programme, and eventually transmission itself. Sometimes Häger and Villius would show the film to a test audience to be sure that it worked. While it was difficult to make late changes, test showings nevertheless provided a safety check and in some cases could lead to small amendments.¹⁵³ To promote an individual programme Häger and Villius would often write an article for the SR/SVT magazine, *Röster i Radio/TV*. When programmes were set in Häger's home region of Hälsingland, which happened several times, Häger wrote articles for the local paper as well. Greater promotional efforts were made if the production was a series, as when SVT prepared to launch Häger's *Hundra svenska år* in 1999. This was one of the biggest channel ventures of the season, and as Häger and Villius were a well-known producer team much energy went to promotions.

The description here is a broad view of how Häger and Villius made their programmes, and of the negotiations between cognitive, moral and aesthetic considerations that were an integral part of every production. These negotiations are the subject in the following three chapters. Finally, while it is plain from the description that an individual producer makes many free choices when making a programme, training and ideals limit in some ways the freedom of choice. To be precise, a sociological interpretation would have it that a filmmaker's considerations are based on social circumstances such as what the filmmaker's colleagues' view is on matters of research and dramaturgy. The relationships a historical documentarist has to historians and media workers will affect choices made.

6. Representation stylistics

Here discussion turns to the typical features of Häger and Villius's historical films in terms of style. On a technical level, the programmes that meet the

¹⁵² Interview with Häger, 2003.06.03. Concerning the structure of the time and space journey, see T21, F1, 63, *Där farlig sunnan går*. In the shooting plan (which the author saw in 1999 but which seems to have disappeared from the collection) it was explicitly stated that there was no synopsis for the programme but that the editing would determine the form used; author's notes.

¹⁵³ Interview with Villius, 2003.06.02; interview with Häger, 2003.06.03.

viewer are products of general media aesthetics. However they are also products of specific techniques. Put as questions we can ask: What salient uses of film techniques are characteristic of Häger and Villius's films? What constitutes their style? And how did their style develop and change over time?

At first glance many of the programmes appear to be stylistically conventional, made normally in the expository mode with a voice-over narrator and with a mixture of narrative and non-narrative elements. The producers appear to be content-oriented craftsmen rather than in any way stylistically avant-garde.¹⁵⁴ But Häger and Villius learned to consider the full repertoire of documentary stylistics when fashioning their programmes. While in the first years they tended to illustrate the pre-written narration with archival footage (Häger calls the footage in these programmes "wallpaper"),¹⁵⁵ they gradually made more conscious use of the image materials. They also early used interviews. In the 1970s they experimented with re-enactments and in some drama-documentary productions they even brought in stylistics by convention thought to belong more to the fictional domain. Thus, in addition to the expository mode they also worked in the participatory and observational modes. But these stylistic features are not unique to Häger and Villius.

Looking closer, some quite particular stylistic devices come into view. First is the reflexive use of archival footage. Already in early programmes, the narrator sometimes commented on the images saying they misrepresented the past. Thus, he reminded the audience not always to believe what we see. In the years to come the producers developed several ways of indexing the image materials they used. In *Hundra svenska år*, notes on the screen tell viewers that certain images are from such and such a town in such and such year. When the film shows the police moving in on a detention camp with soldiers who fled the Red army to Sweden in 1945, and the camera is about to cut to an interviewee, the narrator points out that the images are from another camp than where the interviewee was stationed.¹⁵⁶ Thus, both screen and narrator are used for comments on the footage. Discussion of this continues in the following chapters, but there is need here to emphasise that conscious reflexivity as a stylistic device is more often used by Häger and Villius than by other historical documentarists.

Another characteristic is the inventive creation of historical footage. Dealing with pre-photographic times, Häger and Villius realised they had stories about people to tell, but no images. In order to bring people into the picture, they used re-enactments, that is, people acting and dressed as in past times. Many other documentarists used re-enactments but Häger and Villius consciously used *silent re-enactments*, or action without dialogue. And notably enough,

¹⁵⁴ By contrast historical documentaries such as Kevin Rafferty's *The Atomic Café* (1982) play with the medium. On *The Atomic Café*, see Eitzen, Dirk, 1994, pp. 131–152.

¹⁵⁵ Häger in conversation with the author, 2000.

¹⁵⁶ *Hundra svenska år: Vi och världen* (1999). Similarly, in *Hundra svenska år: I ditt anletes svett*, the narrator says that Oswald Bernström worked "in another office."

rather than choosing professional actors they preferred people who were experts on the particular task to be filmed, such as to fell a tree or slaughter a pig. Furthermore, by using still photos of re-enactments they developed a means of creating images. Such invention of non-authentic footage comes up again later in this study.

A third stylistic technique they developed was a method of making the image the starting point in the programmes. This particular device is used in the *Svart på vitt* programmes. These make a single photograph the starting point, and in fact they worked in the same manner in other later programmes. When the narrator says, “Sweden smelled like a cowshed” (*Hundra svenska år*), the sentence is read over footage that shows peasants and cows. Often, they let a photo remain in view much longer than the modern viewer would expect. By then having narrator and camera pinpoint some detail in the image, attention is directed to that point – and from there on to whatever next one the narrator is to move to.

A fourth characteristic stylistic device is that of the narration, which Villius has suggested is as important as the image.¹⁵⁷ As mentioned just above, the interplay between word and image is very special, the words often starting, landing on, or alluding to phenomena in the image. But the narration in itself consciously moves the programme along. For example, in *Svart på vitt* the narrator makes frequent use of anachrony, that is, he treats events in another order than they actually happened.¹⁵⁸ A typical formulation would be that the people in a photograph taken in 1913 “do not know that there will soon be a storm of fire,” this, an allusion to the war about to break out. In later years, the narration script often became remarkably lyrical in its tone, consciously evoking excitement or a certain mood, as in the example here, and often making inter-textual allusions. Speech in the form of direct address added to the personal tone.¹⁵⁹ In 2000, Häger was given an award for his treatment of the Swedish language.¹⁶⁰

Finally, the effective narration is not the result just of Häger’s pen, but also of narrator Villius’s distinct way of reading. Although a self-taught speaker,¹⁶¹ Villius developed thorough mastery of accentuation and pauses, which helped make him “the voice of history” in Sweden. It has been suggested that Villius could say just about anything, even rattle off a commuter-train timetable, and people would be glad to listen.¹⁶²

It is difficult to trace seminal influences on Häger and Villius. In interviews, they claim they did not often watch other documentaries but rather found their

¹⁵⁷ Villius quoted in Olofsson, Ken, 1982.

¹⁵⁸ The word is from Genette, Gérard, 1980 (1972), pp. 35 ff. Anachrony can be of two types, namely prolepsis, which points ahead, and analepsis, which points back (p. 40).

¹⁵⁹ Other characteristics are the use of animation, biblical style, anaphora, and reiteration.

¹⁶⁰ [anonymous], 2000a. Villius has stated that he thinks Häger’s narration scripts are very well written; interview with Villius, 2003.06.02.

¹⁶¹ Villius at a seminar at Stockholm University, 2000.04.04.

¹⁶² Wennman, 1998.

own way. Häger says they did not go to festivals to see films by other producers and that they never consciously tried to freshen themselves.¹⁶³ The claim is interesting; calling themselves historians yet self-taught filmmakers they created a kind of mythology about themselves. Although they learned much through trial and error, it goes without saying that certain films and filmmakers exerted influence on them. A few such cases can be traced. For example, Villius was the Swedish speaker on imports such as *The World at War*, and has named one of the episodes in that series his favourite programme.¹⁶⁴ The British fashion of including both newly-filmed interviews and archival footage is likely to have been an important influence. Häger once said that the haircutting scene in *Shoah* aroused strong emotions in him, and made him think that the powerful detail is necessary as a means of reaching the viewer.¹⁶⁵ In an article on drama-documentary Villius referred to American and British debate on the subject,¹⁶⁶ which shows he followed what was produced in Anglo-Saxon countries with interest. In certain ways then they were plainly influenced by other documentarists.

Häger has related that in the late 1980s there was much talk of the necessity of making clear to viewers who the responsible sender was. One of the SVT superiors, Hannes Oljelund, spoke often of this.¹⁶⁷ When Häger and Villius decided to make their travel programmes in the early 1990s, with Villius the on-screen narrator instead of off-screen as he usually was, this was no doubt partly the result of these suggestions. But the programmes were made shortly after David Attenborough's popular travel programmes, and exactly what the influences were is uncertain.

It is difficult too to point out what particular films or filmmakers influenced the stylistics that are here designated emblematic for Häger and Villius. Perhaps reflexive use of archival footage was a result of their background as historians. The inventive creation of historical footage in the form of re-enactments may have been the result of discussions with co-producer and dramatist Carl Torell, or with cameraman Jan-Hugo Norman, who surely brought influences from his work on fiction films. Perhaps the technique of taking the image as starting point resulted from discussions between Häger, Villius and Norman, or maybe they had seen and admired films such as *City of Gold*. These are only a few of the possibilities. There can be much truth in Häger and Villius's claim that they found their own way.

¹⁶³ Interview with Häger, 2003.06.03. Svensson, Gary, 1992a, p. 20.

¹⁶⁴ Jacobsson, Pelle, 1999; interview with Villius, 2003.06.02 (the episode in question was on the siege of Leningrad).

¹⁶⁵ Häger, during lunch with the author, 2001.

¹⁶⁶ Villius, Hans, 1985b.

¹⁶⁷ Interview with Häger, 2003.06.03.

7. Reception

Reception is needless to say a complicated process. As explained in Chapter 3, documentary constitutes a particular kind of reading through its indexing as non-fiction. But it is the viewer who ultimately constructs meaning out of a programme. To understand a historical documentary, the viewer must perceive the codes of the programme, comprehend them, and interpret them. The reaction of an individual viewer is conditioned by factors such as cognition, assumptions, and cultural models, and further on more individual factors such as psychological pre-dispositions and purpose of viewing. These dispositions have their basis in both social and psychological practices.¹⁶⁸ It will suffice to simply mention such theoretical underpinnings here. But there is a related matter that is worth considering further, namely, the television viewer's viewing situation at home in the easy chair in front of the set. Perhaps the viewer watches relaxed and is attentive to the programme, but perhaps conditions are not so at all conducive, the telephone ringing, the children noisy, and the coffee-pot boiling over. Perhaps all the family members sit together, watching and commenting on what they see.¹⁶⁹ An audience at home watching one of Häger and Villius's historical documentaries might have tuned into that particular programme on purpose, or it might have just happened upon the programme. The viewing situation can be expected to influence the response to the programme of anyone watching.

Through SVT Häger and Villius communicated history to practically Sweden's entire population.¹⁷⁰ Usually a documentary was first broadcast at prime time for television, with one or two repeat broadcasts falling elsewhere in the schedule later in the week. Many of the programmes would then be rebroadcast a few years later. The size of the audience depended much on what time of day the broadcast came. As a general rule, the programmes that reached the largest audience were those broadcast in the late 1960s when there was only one television channel in Sweden. When competition between channels began, and the audience could choose between light entertainment and more serious programming such as documentaries, the latter would often come out the losing in the choice. The most popular television events in the 1970s or 80s, such as the Eurovision Song Contest or the World Cup finals in ice-hockey, might reach audiences numbering as high as seventy or eighty percent of the population,¹⁷¹ but a successful documentary on the other hand is one that reaches perhaps fifteen percent, or a little over a million Swedes.

Most of Häger and Villius's programmes reached an audience of between five

¹⁶⁸ Persson, Per, 2000.

¹⁶⁹ Sjöberg, Ulrika, 2002, p. 148, offers statistics on the frequency of Swedish teenagers watching television with family or friends.

¹⁷⁰ A few programmes were sold on foreign television markets but here this is not discussed further, as the programmes were normally made for the Swedish audience and it was in Sweden that they had a substantial influence.

¹⁷¹ Hadenius, Stig, 1998, pp. 264, 280.

and ten percent. In 1971, a statistical audience survey was made that included Häger and Villius's three-part series *Sverige i det kalla kriget* on the Cold War. The programmes were shown at SVT2 three evenings in a row in September of that year. The study showed that around nine percent of the total television audience watched the episodes. During the first two evenings the series had as many viewers as the competing programmes at SVT1, but the third evening was a Friday evening and SVT1 then showed a feature film that drew thirty-three percent of the audience. Notably, while more than twenty percent of the total television audience saw at least one programme, only around three percent saw all three episodes of the series. More men than women saw the programmes, but there were few notable differences from one age group to the next.¹⁷² The audience watching *Sverige i det kalla kriget* was evenly distributed among the population, except for its being somewhat male-dominated, and the audience was not particularly stable. The 1971 survey is the only audience study that has looked specifically into a Häger & Villius production. Although the survey does not indicate a stable audience, it is likely that as Häger & Villius became a more established producer-name the team won a more steady following.

That the size of the audience depended on the time of broadcast is confirmed by the surprise success of the series of five-minute episodes *Svart på vitt*, which was shown at SVT2 in the 1980s at 7.25 p.m. Broadcasts came directly following the soap opera *Varuhuset* and just before Sweden's most popular news programme *Rapport*. Partly thanks to this prime television time, the little *Svart på vitt* programmes gathered audiences of 7–800.000, or close to ten percent of the population.¹⁷³ By contrast, Häger has related that one of his spy programmes in the early 1990s was broadcast first opposite an ice-hockey game, which always draws a huge audience, and when repeated opposite another ice-hockey game. This combined to net a very small audience for the documentary.¹⁷⁴ In the 1990s, the two SVT channels lost audience shares to commercial challengers such as TV4 or TV3. This made the success even more impressive when the series *Hundra svenska år* (1999) was seen by around 15 percent of the Swedish television audience. On October 26, an estimated 1.6 million viewers tuned in on the episode on the royal family.¹⁷⁵ Furthermore, the series was sold as home video which brought sales of more than a hundred thousand VHS cassettes – an impressive figure by Swedish standards – not to mention the later DVD version.¹⁷⁶ Shortly afterwards, historian and journalist Håkan Holmberg wrote that “many [Swedes] probably receive the main part of their knowledge

¹⁷² DA. H07, F1, vol. 67, 134/71, pp. 1, 5, 9.

¹⁷³ Fahlin, Lars, 1988. The *Svart på vitt* series had different broadcast times in different years depending on what suited the schedule.

¹⁷⁴ Interview with Häger, 2003.06.03.

¹⁷⁵ DA. T21, [Hundra svenska år. Pressklipp 2: Recensioner, E, Tittarsiffror].

¹⁷⁶ Sales figures according to Häger, at the Stockholm conference “Att gestalta det förflutna”, 4–6 April 2002. Author's notes.

of Swedish history” from Häger and Villius’s programmes.¹⁷⁷ Holmberg’s estimate is a sign that many critics felt Häger and Villius were of great significance to the history culture. With regard to the multifaceted history culture described in Chapter 2, it does not seem prudent to claim the primacy of television histories, and for that matter there were other history producers at SVT than just Häger and Villius. In the 1990s, the lighter history programmes made by Herman Lindqvist and Jan Bergman had audiences as large as those of Häger and Villius’s programmes.¹⁷⁸ But there can be no doubt that the team reached very large audiences.

Response to Häger and Villius’s films came from four different quarters, from (1) SVT colleagues and company managers, (2) historians, (3) reviewers, and (4) the broader viewing public. A successful producer-pair, they received much acclaim over the years but also a quantity of criticism. Following next is an assessment of the response from the four different quarters. Certain examples are discussed in more detail in chapters that follow.

The relationships between Häger and Villius and their company superiors are worth noting in that the two claim to have had a free role and that their superiors trusted them to do their job. Over the years they worked under several various managers. One of these, Ingvar Bengtsson, sent encouraging notes to them on at least two occasions following programmes he liked.¹⁷⁹ Company managers also manifested trust through the occasional support they gave for expensive productions such as *1000 år* (1980), *Sammansvärjningen* (1986), and *Hundra svenska år* (1999), all of which required more money than the usual documentary budget allowed.¹⁸⁰ That there was a limit to this generosity was shown when in the late 1980s a manager halted an expensive docudramatic project that was well under way, thinking that it was too much history and not enough “Wild West.”¹⁸¹

As already noted, Häger and Villius did not often co-operate with producer colleagues on programmes. But it is highly likely their work had the full support of their colleagues. SVT colleagues manifested their appreciation of Häger and Villius’s work by awarding them the Ikaros award both in 1986 and in 2000,

¹⁷⁷ Holmberg, Håkan, 2000, p. 12.

¹⁷⁸ Bergman’s programmes had an audience of between 4 and 6 percent, while individual programmes reached more than 15 percent; Johansson, Marika, 1997. Lindqvist reached audiences of more than 10 percent; letter from Lindqvist to the author, 2001.01.28.

¹⁷⁹ DA. T21, F1, 46, Fyra dagar, 25, letter from Ingvar Bengtsson to Olle [Häger], undated [January 1988]; DA. T21, F1, 60, Jag ser underbara ting, 21, letter from Ingvar Bengtsson to Häger, 1993.01.04. See also DA. T21, F1, 5, XYZ. Letter from Örjan Wallqvist to Villius, Häger and J-H Norman, 1980.12.02. Former head Carlson, John Sune, 1994, p. 148, says the competence of Häger and Villius was never questioned.

¹⁸⁰ Two SVT producers of cultural history programmes, Katarina Dunér and Christian Stannow, have stated that superiors consistently supported their cultural history ventures; interview with Katarina Dunér, 2001.05.02; interview with Christian Stannow, 2003.06.27. This indicates that (some) SVT superiors supported the history programme as a genre.

¹⁸¹ Interview with Villius, 2003.06.02; interview with Villius, 2001.05.09. Villius says that three episodes were already written when the series (*Tre bröders tjänare*) was stopped. Cf. [anonymous], 1992, and Hansson, Bosse, 1991.

and the Club 100 award in 2000, which was public acknowledgement that they made programmes of high quality. It can be added that at SVT, many (and all major) productions were evaluated following broadcast. At evaluation sessions, all personnel in the section would be present. Productions then had to stand the criticism (and enjoy the praise) of other filmmakers, and the reception of a historical documentary would thus function both as the end of the filmmaking process and as the beginning of a new process. An example of post-transmission evaluation was the occasion when filmmaker and Professor of dramatic storytelling Per Lysander was invited to give his view on Häger's *Hundra svenska år*. Lysander was impressed with the series. On the occasion the full production team was present to meet the response of Lysander and of their colleagues.¹⁸²

Häger and Villius only rarely received response from historians. If they received response at all¹⁸³ it was either critical of details or positive in its assessment, which was then a consequence of their histories being up-to-date with research and their personal policy of being open to discussions with academia. They regularly engaged historians as consultants and researchers, several examples of which are discussed in following chapters. On occasion they also reported to the scholarly community concerning their work,¹⁸⁴ this way retaining an accepted position in the field of history production. Thus, meeting and discussing with the scholarly community was a recurrent event. That they received the Hertig Karls pris award in 1995 is proof that they were accepted figures in the field of history production, as a professional historian was a member of the awards committee and would be in a position to argue effectively for the recipient of his choice. Häger and Villius accordingly retained their professional identity as historians. Although their personal ties with the academic world gradually loosened they continued to call themselves "historians,"¹⁸⁵ a word that in Swedish has a strongly professional sound. As shown below, some historians criticised them for misrepresenting the past. Even so, Häger and Villius made more than two hundred programmes, of which historians criticised only a handful. As a rule then they enjoyed the respect of the scholarly community.

Frequently, the films elicited strong emotional or intellectual reactions. It is impossible to know in qualitative terms just how the audience reacted, but a hint can be found in newspaper reviews. To fully cover these sources would require looking through thousands of rolls of microfilmed newspapers, and no attempt at this has been made in this study. However, search was made of the Häger & Villius clipping collections at SVT and at one additional clipping archive.¹⁸⁶ A large number of clippings and other related documents are pre-

¹⁸² Evaluation seminar at the Section for documentaries, SVT, 2000.03.03. Author's notes.

¹⁸³ Both Häger and Villius say they rarely heard from historians; interview with Villius, 2003.06.02; interview with Häger, 2003.06.03.

¹⁸⁴ They reported in writing and at seminars and conferences; see Chapter 6.

¹⁸⁵ DA. T21, F1, 69, All slags information, Pressdag (Villius quoted: "Vi är ju yrkeshistoriker, Olle och jag"); DA. T21, F1, 68, Inledande research, 4, Information om projekt Hundra år (Häger: "Hans och jag är yrkeshistoriker").

¹⁸⁶ The clipping collection at Sigtunastiftelsen contains relatively little material on the subject.

served as well in the Häger & Villius collection at Dokumentarkivet at SR/SVT in Stockholm. From these materials, and from articles found through database searches, a picture has been constructed of the reception through the years and it follows.

The programmes drew many excellent reviews. The good reviews may be a result of Häger and Villius's already having a name for making reliable, credible programmes; it was recognised that historians would accept their versions of history. The reviews never question the credibility of the programmes, which is important because the reviews help establish a shared assumption amongst the audience of the films' documentary soundness. But the enthusiasm in the response of many reviewers cannot be explained only by thinking of the opinion of historians. It has to indicate that many reviewers actually liked the programmes. For example, a programme on the history of the Kalmar Sound area was lauded as "one of the most beautiful documentaries" broadcast for a long time.¹⁸⁷ The overwhelming majority of reviews were positive. Occasionally reviewers voiced criticism, and a number of cases where they do come up in the following chapters. Here it can suffice to say that particularly strong criticism was directed against an episode in the series *Hundra svenska år* (1999) for being an election film for the Social Democrats.¹⁸⁸

Direct response from the public came in the form of supportive and critical letters and telephone calls,¹⁸⁹ as awards, and in some cases as charges filed with the Radio Board. Instances of threatening letters are to be found, though they are few.¹⁹⁰ Häger and Villius's implied viewer was an adult rather than a youngster. Both claim that they did not make programmes for any special audience, but admit that certain background knowledge could be required of viewers because not every historical figure could be thoroughly introduced.¹⁹¹ Häger said that *Hundra svenska år* was mainly for people over forty years of age, but that he did not intend it to be so from the beginning.¹⁹² It is certain that many young people saw their programmes, and in the case of *1000 år* the filmmakers received a lot of response from school-children.¹⁹³ On one occasion Häger and Villius made programmes directly for educational use, but then Villius said that narration was written differently because the audience would be younger than usual.¹⁹⁴

Sometimes the public would contact Häger or Villius to suggest subjects for new programmes.¹⁹⁵ The five coloured *Svart på vitt* programmes that dealt with

¹⁸⁷ Törnander, Gunnel, 1994.

¹⁸⁸ See Chapter 7.

¹⁸⁹ Villius says they rarely received direct response from the public, whereas Häger says he always had direct response and increasingly so over the years; interview with Villius, 2003.06.02; interview with Häger, 2003.06.03.

¹⁹⁰ Interview with Häger, 2003.06.03.

¹⁹¹ Interview with Villius, 2003.06.02; interview with Häger, 2003.06.03.

¹⁹² Häger at a seminar at Stockholm University, 2000.04.04.

¹⁹³ DA. T21, F1, 5, XYZ. Letters from school children.

¹⁹⁴ Villius quoted in Palmgren, Nils, 1989.

¹⁹⁵ Cf. DA. T21, E1, 3.

Norway during World War II were the result of a private person's hint that led Häger and Villius to a unique collection of photographs. One documentary on the smuggling of arms to the Danish resistance during the war was also the result of a suggestion from a private person who had researched the subject.¹⁹⁶ In 1969, a viewer suggested a new form for future programmes, namely, fictitious interviews with historical personalities.¹⁹⁷ Häger and Villius did not leap at that suggestion, but it is interesting to note that the filmmakers received suggestions not just for content but also regarding matters of form. The suggestions indicate that many Swedish viewers felt SVT was "their" television company, and Häger and Villius were their history documentarists. Perhaps some saw them simply as historians. One viewer wrote to Villius suggesting he publish a reference book on the world wars,¹⁹⁸ and Häger was contacted one time to help with a book about the Holocaust.¹⁹⁹

Although most viewers were happy with Häger and Villius's programmes, the programmes were also criticised. Some viewers who were critical wrote directly to the producers delivering their complaints. On other occasions complaints were filed with the Radio Board. In 1969, SVT broadcast a Häger-Villius programme on the conflict in the Middle East, and afterwards two charges were filed with the Radio Board charging that the programme was too positively disposed towards the Arabs; one of the complaints came from a rabbi. Häger and Villius rejected the charges on every point, explaining that they had tried to act as historians and had no preconceived ideas about the conflict.²⁰⁰ The Radio Board wrote that the programme showed "aspiration for objectivity" and ruled it free of the charges.²⁰¹ It is hardly surprising that a programme dealing with the Middle East conflict is subject to criticism. What is interesting is rather that Häger and Villius expressed a desire to hold a neutral position, that they had no preconceived ideas.

Several programmes that met with serious criticism were portraits of famous Swedish men. In the following chapters the matter of how Häger and Villius's portraits of Sven Hedin, Ivar Kreuger, and King Gustav III could arouse such strong reactions is taken up. Here it is sufficient remark only that the filmmakers did not defend these great (conservative) men.²⁰² A portrait they made of UN secretary general Dag Hammarskjöld – another Swedish hero – was criticised for being incomplete.²⁰³ Yet another programme that was reported to the Radio Board dealt with the founding of Sweden. It provoked viewers who refused to

¹⁹⁶ Interview with Häger, 2003.06.03; *Danmarks hemliga vapen* (1978).

¹⁹⁷ DA. E1, 1, Korrespondens 67–70, H, letter from Lennart Hauschildt to Villius, 1969.02.18.

¹⁹⁸ DA. E1, 1, Korrespondens 67–70, J, letter from Karl-Gustaf Jonner to Villius, 1968.09.22.

¹⁹⁹ See Chapter 7.

²⁰⁰ Radio Board 83/69 and 85/69. See DA. E1, 1, Korrespondens 67–70, R.

²⁰¹ DA. A12 (Radionämnden), F2, 2, Prot. nr 32, 1969.06.17, ärenden 83/69 and 85/69.

²⁰² On Hedin and Kreuger, see Chapter 7. On King Gustav III, see Chapter 8.

²⁰³ Villius defended the portrait saying it was difficult to work from conventional images; DA. E1, 1, Korrespondens 67–70, E, letter from [Villius] to Henrik Enander, 1967.04.04.

believe the Swedish state was founded in the area near Stockholm. The charges should be seen in relation to the debate over Dag Stålsjö's programmes.²⁰⁴ The programme was freed of the charge.

Viewers could be upset over portrayals of their (more or less unknown) relatives. In one programme an old interviewee told a story and in passing mentioned that a (deceased) man had been a lazy worker. The worker's daughter complained to SVT. Häger wrote back with apologies, regretting her hard feelings and saying the tales were not meant to be harmful, but the woman later filed charges against the programme. The Radio Board eventually deemed the programme free of the charges.²⁰⁵ A different programme was charged by the son of a deceased man portrayed, whom an interviewee called "much too unintelligent to perform any spying work." The son asked for a clarification, but the programme was freed from any charge.²⁰⁶ In a third case, the narrator in a *Svart på vitt* episode offered a critical portrait of an estate owner. A relative of the late estate owner filed charges against the programme, but it was freed on grounds that the portrayal was well documented.²⁰⁷ Although all the three programmes were freed as charged, the cases are plain proof that individuals may not like how they or friends or relatives are portrayed on television.²⁰⁸ Häger and Villius were not insensitive to the issue; Villius says he sometimes chose not to mention the names of people in the picture.²⁰⁹

Some viewers wrote directly to Häger and Villius complaining about details they felt had been put wrongly. One person objected to certain details in one of the programmes on the Russian revolution, including the narrator's pronunciation of a couple of place names "not to mention other pronunciation faults." Villius wrote back, acknowledging some of the objections as well founded, but adding "it was kind of You to place a veil of mercy over other faults, but unless it is too much to ask of You I would be grateful to know what other faults You recall."²¹⁰ The twist of irony in this wording may speak for Villius's oft-mentioned heated temper. Among other critical viewers was a man who suggested that dry pike, which was delivered as tax payment in a programme on the sixteenth century, should have been "flat, with the head taken off." Another protested the narrator's rather poetic statement that Zanzibar smelled of cloves the year a Swedish priest travelled past; instead, the viewer argued, cloves came

²⁰⁴ GR. E2, vol. 364, TV 254/85-I; GR. E2, vol. 367, TV 317/85-I.

²⁰⁵ DA. T21, F1, 59, Sjön där Fride Magnusson drunknade, letter from Sylvia Peterson to SVT1, 1992.03.20; letter from Häger to Sylvia Peterson, 1992.03.26; GR. E2, vol. 515, 57/93 (SVT 211/92).

²⁰⁶ GR. E2, SVT 17/94-21 (formerly SVT 25/94). Letter from Rune Larsson to Radionämnden, 1994.01.26. Decision 1994.09.19.

²⁰⁷ GR. E2, vol. 448, TV 431/88-I. Cf. Chapter 8.

²⁰⁸ Paget, Derek, 1998, pp. 36–60 discusses this problem in relation to the legal aspects of making drama-documentaries in Britain.

²⁰⁹ Villius quoted in Mannberg, Gittan, 1986.

²¹⁰ DA. E1, 1, Korrespondens 67–70, G, letter from C. Gripenberg to Villius, 1967.11.05; letter from Villius to Gripenberg, 1967.11.08.

to Zanzibar only some years later than events pictured.²¹¹ A third viewer noticed that when a film showed a steamboat in the Gothenburg harbour and the steam winch was heard, no steam was actually visible coming from the steam horn.²¹² The latter two details are interesting because they should be seen as aesthetic details. The sound of the steam winch added to the atmosphere of a port, while the expression “odour of cloves” similarly added to the atmosphere and was to arouse the fantasy of the viewer.

In sum, Häger and Villius were successful producers, whose programmes would reach between five and ten percent of the Swedish population and at times as much as fifteen percent. They received mostly positive reactions from superiors, colleagues, historians, reviewers, and at-large viewers. Viewers could be upset by parts of programmes and there were occasions when programmes were reported to the Radio Board. These however were exceptions, and no charges ever resulted in serious censure by the Board.

8. Conclusions

Olle Häger and Hans Villius started working at SVT in the 1960s and remained a producer-team for three decades. Villius was a professional historian trained at Lund University who also taught history at the universities in Uppsala and Stockholm. Häger trained at Uppsala University to become a historian, although he did not obtain an academic position as Villius did. They both worked for some years at the radio (SR), before forming the Section for historical documentaries at SVT. For three decades thereafter they produced more than two hundred historical documentaries. The producer-name of Häger & Villius became a household name in Sweden and narrator Hans Villius’s characteristic voice became known as the “voice of history.”

Häger and Villius are known primarily as television producers, but in fact they played many roles in the history culture. As SVT’s own historians they had responsibilities in connection with the SVT film archives, and they were at times entrusted with checking what foreign-made historical programmes should be bought for broadcast. In connection with some of their programmes they wrote books about the past, and they were also involved in writing a school textbook in history. There are indications that they functioned as gatekeepers within SVT, that they tried to make sure that only historically reliable history programmes were produced at the company.

The period of Häger & Villius productions can be divided into three phases. In the first phase, 1967–1976, a large share of the programmes were on topics from international political history. In the second and third phases most pro-

²¹¹ DA. T21, F1, 5, XYZ, letter from Olof Filipsson to Villius, 1981.02.06; letter from Gunnar Rydström to Villius & Häger, 1980.11.12. Rydström (presumably jokingly) addresses his letter to “Honoured historians!”

²¹² DA. T21, F1, 69, All slags info, 23, letter from Jan-Olov Molin to Häger, 1999.10.31.

grammes dealt with Swedish history, and a large share of that was social history. In the third phase, 1991–2001, Häger was the principal maker of programmes. Most programmes dealt with the twentieth century and with the later nineteenth century. Class, rather than race or gender, was a key word. In terms of form, most programmes are relatively conventional, usually made in the expository mode. But Häger and Villius developed at least five particular stylistic devices namely (1) narration that was advanced in a linguistic sense and also (2) very consciously read aloud, (3) a close relationship between image and words where the image was the starting point for narration, (4) inventive creation of historic footage, and (5) reflexive use of archival footage.

Over the years they developed different roles in the filmmaking process. Häger was the one most interested in imagery and he became gradually more and more active in the various parts of the process. A very stable team of co-workers was established, the foremost being cameraman Jan-Hugo Norman, editor Kjell Tunegård, and sound recordist Gunnar Nilsson, all of whom contributed much to the programmes. The production time of a historical documentary would be around four months. In the first years Häger and Villius wrote a narration script before looking for imagery, but in later years narration would typically come in much later in the process.

Häger and Villius had the full support of SVT managers and were allowed to make programmes as they wanted, albeit within definite economic limits. Colleagues showed their esteem by several times awarding Häger and Villius prestigious television awards. Historians rarely offered response to the programmes. The programmes reached an audience of between five and ten percent of the Swedish television viewing audience, successful programmes reaching perhaps fifteen percent. This means that over the years they had a steady audience of about one million people. Reviewers and viewers usually responded positively to programmes, but a few programmes met with criticism from individual viewers.

Cognitive Considerations

1. Cognitive considerations in historical documentaries

The cognitive considerations that the television filmmaker makes are presented as such first in this chapter, together with a brief survey of the cognitive considerations which influenced Häger and Villius's historical documentaries. Then four of the team's programmes are analysed to show in more certain terms how cognitive considerations can work as factors of influence. The filmmakers did not just make cognitive considerations, but also moral and aesthetic ones. However, the four works chosen for analysis here show the influence of cognitive considerations especially clearly and were chosen for that specific reason.

When cognitive considerations guide the filmmaker in decision-making, it is the case that the filmmaker's chief concern is to convey knowledge or information. The case is in principle so with respect to either content or form. Content is a matter of what range and quality the knowledge has that is conveyed, whereas form is a matter of the process of communicating that knowledge and of particulars that apply to television as a medium. The filmmaker makes cognitive considerations as a part of both (1) identifying the body of knowledge in question, and (2) deciding how to present that knowledge in a televised form.

Because the historical documentary is an informative type of programme, cognitive considerations naturally play an important part in the filmmaking process, especially in the research phase. Many makers of historical documentaries go to great lengths to find out what specific knowledge is currently being acquired and has been acquired in recent years. They both read extensively and interview professional historians to learn of their research results. A historical documentarist talks with academic researchers as is common procedure in most countries. But there are some who go a step further. Katarina Dunér brought in experts to lecture to her production crew, as a means of establishing uniform acquaintance with the knowledge in question.¹ *Blackside in Boston* made the same cognitive choice working with *The Great Depression* (1993); twenty-eight historians and certain participants in the historical events covered were brought

¹ Interview with Katarina Dunér, 2001.05.02.

in to lecture to the filmmakers for six days.² Of course not all documentarists are so thorough when obtaining up-to-date information, but many historical documentarists do work very hard at the task.

Conveying a certain body of knowledge or information is the clearest cognitive function of a historical documentary. Indeed, communications scholars such as Marshall McLuhan have declared that television is a good medium for educating the population. Because television provides equal access to the same information, television assures democracy has a healthy life and development. McLuhan even regarded television a metonym for a democratic society.³ Most scholars support the general notion that television programmes can have meaningful content and thus contribute to the spread of knowledge.⁴ But there are those who have been sceptical of the quality of the content in television and have even suggested that television has generic problems making a good selection of knowledge.⁵ Gary Edgerton writes that made-for-television histories are “never conceived according to the standards of professional history” and are not intended to debate, challenge, or create new perspectives.⁶ It is not difficult to disagree with Edgerton on this issue, and the view presented further on in this chapter registers dissent. Made-for-television histories, at least those made for Swedish public service television, are often based on extensive knowledge – and at times they do dispense radical messages.

The filmmaker’s cognitive considerations are not only manifested in content, but also in the programme’s form. The narrator’s words are an important means of communicating information, but even the image-track and other sounds fulfil a cognitive function. As pointed out by neo-formalist film scholars, the strategy used to structure a film is also a result of cognitive considerations. An argument or a line of action can be communicated through the structure of the film itself. One need only consider how important it is with which argument, image, or musical piece a film opens or closes. The formal analysis of examples below is intended to further understanding of the cognitive aspects of film.

Some critics argue that there are limits to what knowledge can be communicated through a documentary, and in particular they point out that the formal possibilities are limited by television’s emphasis on images and its tendency to resort to heavy use of narration. Locked in the limited visual possibilities of the small screen, television realism tends to utilise close-up shots. This gives the impression of concreteness, although in fact it presents only a surface reality. Less tangible parts of reality such as power relationships are far more difficult to

² Green, James, 1994, p. 4.

³ McLuhan, Marshall, 1964.

⁴ Generally speaking all television programmes modify our knowledge and experience. Here I refer to television’s capacity to communicate a particular body of knowledge.

⁵ Corner, John, 1999, pp. 108 f., says critics argue that selection is the function of either market structures or bureaucratic control.

⁶ Edgerton, Gary, 2001, p. 19. Calvert, Pamela, 1995, p. 31, says historical documentaries are governed by “priorities foreign to the practices of scholarly historicizing.”

represent.⁷ Television's limited capacity to convey knowledge has made some critics draw the drastic conclusion that television is a medium not well suited at all to furthering cognitive goals. Their argument is that television is fundamentally anti-intellectual and thus hostile to the very knowledge-processing capability of the audience.⁸ Joshua Meyrowitz, who argues that television does much good when experiences can become shared across national borders, like many other critics says that whereas written words emphasise ideas, electronic media emphasise feelings. And, he continues, as television and other electronic media become more pervasive in a culture, the entire culture changes. In Meyrowitz's opinion, there is a "decline in the salience of the straight line [...] a retreat from distant analysis and a dive into emotional and sensory involvement. The major questions are no longer 'Is it true?' 'Is it false?' Instead we more often ask, 'How does it look?' 'How does it feel?'"⁹

The new heavier focus on emotions noticed by Meyrowitz has been recognised by many television scholars, and it is likely the trend extends to historical documentaries as well as to other programming genres. But it is well to note that emotional involvement can function as a means of gaining understanding, as a complex complement to the intellect. The emotions felt by a film viewer can start cognitive processes in that viewer. In consequence, a historical documentary that puts emphasis on emotions can be successful in communicating certain historical insights. While emotional insights are not the same as knowledge communicated by a more traditional, intellectually oriented documentary, both emotions and intellect can serve a cognitive function.

There is an additional point of importance regarding cognitive considerations, namely, that some documentarists communicate reflections on the nature of our knowledge and on the possibilities we have of acquiring knowledge. They suggest that we reflect on what the limitations to our knowledge of the past are. Accordingly, a distinction needs to be made between cognitive considerations concerned with (a) efforts to communicate knowledge, and those concerned with (b) meta-reflections on historical documentaries and our knowledge about ancient times. Ian Jarvie has emphasised that a weakness of the screen is that on it one cannot evaluate sources, make logical arguments, or systematically weigh evidence. In simple words, historical documentaries (and other films) necessarily display a "poor information load."¹⁰ But Jarvie's pessimistic view needs to be checked against examples that can be tested, and carrying out such an exercise will show that audio-visual media offer significantly better possibilities than Jarvie believed.

⁷ Thompson, John B., 1990.

⁸ Postman, Neil, 1985.

⁹ Meyrowitz, Joshua, 1994, p. 58.

¹⁰ Jarvie, Ian, 1978, p. 378.

2. Häger and Villius's cognitive considerations

Häger and Villius manifested great concern for the content of their programmes, and they maintained relatively close connections with the scholarly community, which was of crucial importance for keeping up with historical research. Villius in particular had well-established contacts ever since his years of study and teaching at the universities in Lund, Uppsala, and Stockholm. The best contact in academia the two had was with Sven A. Nilsson in Uppsala, who was Villius's close friend as well as Häger's old teacher. Häger says that they almost always turned to Nilsson when they needed help with a programme. Villius adds that Erik Lönnroth was another consulting source they often used. However, both Häger and Villius say that overall they had rather few contacts with academia. Villius says that they "failed" to stay in touch with the research front, and Häger calls it "strange" that they had so few contacts with academic historians.¹¹ Nevertheless, it is clear they maintained personal contact with historians and were also themselves trained to work with sources and academic literature. They had ample qualifications for the task of interpreting events from the past.

To an extent, Häger and Villius functioned as intermediaries, conveying to a broad audience the findings of other professional historians. In the early 1970s they based several programmes on recent, partly unpublished research,¹² and such was the case too with *1000 år* (1980), which I shall treat in detail below. But these examples must not conceal the fact that Häger and Villius did not attempt systematically to communicate new findings from the scholarly community. Rather, they chose their own subjects and performed most of the necessary research themselves. Most periods of research for a programme were short, but on occasion a surprising amount of time went into research. On occasion they consulted with other historians or hired persons to do research for a programme or a series. In a series about Sweden in the Cold War period, historian Erik Lönnroth was interviewed on screen. Working on the 1990 production on Raoul Wallenberg, they co-operated with historian Helene Carlbäck-Isotalo. There are other examples. From the foregoing overview of Häger and Villius's programmes it is clear that, with regard to knowledge, their interests changed over time. While in the first years many programmes dealt with international political subjects, during the 1980s and 90s they placed more emphasis on Swedish social history. In this change in interest from political to social history, Häger and Villius were following a broad trend in Swedish historical scholarship.¹³ If among themselves the two preferred different kinds of knowledge, this may have its basis in the fact, as Häger reminds, that Villius was more the journalist and Häger more the adult educator.¹⁴ Villius has also

¹¹ Interview with Villius, 2003.06.02; interview with Häger, 2003.06.03.

¹² *Sverige 1917–1918* (1972); *J för Jude* (1973); *Danmarks hemliga vapen* (1978).

¹³ The breakthrough of social perspectives in Swedish historical research came in the 1960s.

¹⁴ Interview with Häger, 2003.06.03.

pointed out that he himself preferred depicting dramatic events whereas Häger's interests lay in broad surveys.¹⁵

Although rare in occurrence, Häger and Villius were open to discussing their work with academia throughout their career. In one instance in 1970 they reported on the production process of a film through an article in the leading Swedish historical journal, *Historisk tidskrift*. Three years later Villius took part in the Nordic historians' conference on methodology, where he gave a talk and debated with the Danish historian Niels Skyum-Nielsen, who had recently finished a book on film and history.¹⁶ In the early 1970s, then, Häger and Villius took active part in historians' discussion of film and history. At least Villius, still teaching at Stockholm University, was recognised as a historian by the community at that time. Häger's status is perhaps less certain, but likely by most he was recognised a qualified historian. The two remained in contact with the scholarly community, visiting the Historical Association in Uppsala in 1981 to speak on the recent *1000 år* series. A few years later, at a seminar with art historian Lena Johannesson, they discussed their series *Svart på vitt*, and discussed the same series at the Nordic historians' congress in Umeå 1991. In 2000, shortly after the broadcast of the series *Hundra svenska år*, they met and discussed the work with historians at Stockholm University.¹⁷ Häger also sent copies of programmes to a Norwegian historian to be used at a historical conference.¹⁸ Häger and Villius thus carefully maintained their identity as professional historians, even after ties with the academic world had gradually loosened, calling themselves all along "historians."¹⁹ As late as in 2000, at age seventy-seven, Villius wrote an article criticising a younger historian for dubious handling of source materials,²⁰ thus still a member of the professional community.

To communicate their programmes' content, Häger and Villius needed functioning forms, and the chief formal device they found was the voice-over narrator. In the 1960s and 70s SVT bore a rather educational stamp, and Häger and Villius's programmes were formally quite simple and "closed." For them the intellectual word had primacy over the visual image, and they rarely used music or other sound effects. In fact, they wrote the narration script in advance and illustrated it with footage suited to the subject afterwards. The narration had a heavy didactic thrust and tone. Some early programmes have

¹⁵ Interview with Villius, 2003.06.02.

¹⁶ Häger, Olle & Hans Villius, 1970; Skyum-Nielsen, Niels, 1972; Villius, Hans, 1974; Skyum-Nielsen, Niels, 1974.

¹⁷ UUB, Historiska föreningen, AI:5, 1981.03.06; Johannesson, Lena, 1991, p. 22; seminar at Stockholm University, 2000.04.04, author's notes.

¹⁸ DA. T21, F1, 39, Svart på vitt 84–1?, 15, letter from Elin Ström to Häger, 1989.08.17.

¹⁹ DA. T21, F1, 69, All slags information, Pressdag (Villius quoted: "Vi är ju yrkeshistoriker, Olle och jag"); DA. T21, F1, 68, Inledande research, 4, Information om projekt Hundra år (Häger: "Hans och jag är yrkeshistoriker").

²⁰ Villius, Hans, 2000. The subject was the Swedish-Danish war of the 1650s, which Villius had treated in several articles in the 1950s. In the 1980s Villius reviewed historical works extensively in the press.

the character of lectures with slides. In a programme about the French revolution the narrator remarks on the image only a few times, and then in general terms. Between words and image there existed only a general affinity.²¹ There were however certain occasions when narration and image worked more intimately together in early programmes. In one about the Russian revolution, made in 1967 for the fifty-year jubilee, they used imagery from Eisenstein's *October*. The narrator says:

In history paintings, but especially in film, the November coup, which was less noted in the street than many other events in Petrograd of 1917, has been transformed into the heroic final act in a drama of freedom. It is hard to imagine that only around twenty [people] were killed or wounded, when in Eisenstein's film about the revolution one can see the assault and listen to the machine gun fire.²²

The long complicated sentences are typical for narration in Häger and Villius's early programmes. They had content they wanted to communicate, but as yet no effective prose. Interesting in this particular case is that the narration speaks directly of problems with the visual representation, points out the difference between dramatisation and authentic event. Thus, if not directly naming particular visible details, the narrator does emphasise the historically misleading nature of the images. The case indicates Häger and Villius were well aware of the often problematic nature and truth status of images. In a radio interview from that time, Häger spoke of "reckless" films that mixed staged footage with footage of documentary character and explained that he and Villius were forced to both date images so correct chronology was maintained, and verify that images were indeed documentary. The "troublesome" problem with the Russian revolution, said Häger, was that the event was not recorded by any authentic film.²³ Häger's talk of authentic film prompts questions. The interview suggests that he thought authentic film was not problematic in an epistemological sense. This is not to be seen as naivety, because five years later, in another interview, he acknowledged that newsreels were "seldom honest."²⁴ Still, his complaint that authentic footage was wanting indicates a positivist epistemology and gives a reliable impression of how at the time historical content rather than problems regarding form were uppermost in Häger and Villius's thinking.

A characteristic of Häger and Villius's films is that the viewer is given information about materials used. Frequently, the narrator or a graphic note on the screen tells when and where the archival footage was taken. When Häger and Villius used re-enactments, the scenes often opened with the narrator remarking that "this is how we have imagined that it looked." The most didactic indexing of re-enactments are found in the four-part miniseries *Sverige 1917–1918 [Sweden 1917–1918]* (1972), which was the first production where

²¹ *Revolt – revolution. Frihet, jämlikhet, broderskap?* (1968).

²² *Herren är med eder. Ryska revolutionen 1917* (1967).

²³ Häger quoted in Furhammar, Leif, 1968, pp. 44 f.; the interview was broadcast by SR 1967.10.19 but is not preserved.

²⁴ Häger quoted in Heurling, Bo, 1972.

Häger and Villius used regular actors.²⁵ All four episodes open with the on-screen host, actor Erland Josephson, explaining reconstructions that follow:

What happened in Sweden in 1917 and 1918? What do we know about what happened then? How can we form an idea of what did? Well, most of our knowledge must build on documents from that time and on tales told by people who experienced those dramatic years themselves, years when Sweden stood on the verge of revolution. It happened not so long ago. Many [people] who were then fully active are still alive, others have images before their eyes from their childhood or their youth. We have made a selection of mainly contemporary documents. By the way, one document is the melody you hear in the background. [...] It is a fragment of the reality that we shall mirror. We have tried to be respectful of the different types of documents and treat them cautiously, whether they be cabaret songs, police protocols, letters, or memoirs. And we decided to try to breathe life into them by re-enacting the various roles, reconstructing the scenes, and arranging them for television viewing. The actors will help us [actors are named and shown on screen]. We have cast what can be called the player-parts of the old game disregarding the age or even the sex of the actors. The illusion created by the actors is not to compete with the filmed contemporary documents. As for myself, my name is Erland Josephson and I give the running commentary.²⁶

The host's speech of welcome is quite remarkable for its factualness. His appearance sets up a *genre agreement* with the audience that makes all crystal clear, leaves no one in doubt that the reconstructed scenes are present-day re-enactments. Particularly interesting is that actors were not look-alikes but were chosen for having appearances contrasting with those of characters from the past. As Josephson indicated there are even females in one or two male roles. The only reasonable explanation for women playing roles of men is that it was an intentional underlining of the fact that the scenes were reconstructions and not authentic recordings of events. It appears the producers were sceptical of re-enactments, and so decided in every way to guard themselves against charges of misleading viewers. Meta-reflections such as these come up again in the next chapter, but it is well to note here that to a large extent meta-reflections manifest knowledge interests. Also to be noted is that the film on 1917–18 is another clear example of how Häger and Villius co-operated with professional historians.²⁷

A different early film, Häger's and Carl Torell's *Skotten i Sandarne* (1973) begins with the following rolling on-screen caption: "This is a reconstruction of case number 249 at Söderhamn law court, 1932. The proceedings went on for four days and involved primarily written pleas. What we will show here is a

²⁵ The series was made by Häger, Villius and their new partner Carl Torell. Häger says he co-wrote the script but that otherwise the programme was very much the work of Torell; interview with Häger, 2003.06.03.

²⁶ *Sverige 1917–1918. 1. På lindblomté och blåbärskrämm* (1972).

²⁷ In the credits list they thank Carl Göran Andrae for consultation; Andrae, Agne Gustafsson and Steve Koblik are thanked for providing unpublished materials; Lars Furuland among others is named for helping with research.



Figure 5. Historian-filmmakers at work. Olle Häger and Hans Villius on location with the famous Rök-stone. In the film (1976) they interpret the stone's puzzling runic inscription and also discuss the nature of our knowledge of ancient times. *Photo: Jan-Hugo Norman. Courtesy of Olle Häger.*

selection from the court's protocols and an interpretation of matters." Together with the production about 1917–18, *Skotten i Sandarne* shows clearly that in the early 1970s producers were careful to express the genre agreement.

Häger and Villius's programmes tell not just of past events, but display as well a scientific attitude towards historical issues. The three-part *Raoul Wallenberg – fänge i Sovjet* (1990) deals with the disappearance of diplomat Raoul Wallenberg at the end of World War II. As noted above, the fate of Wallenberg had intrigued Villius at least since the 1960s, when he made a television programme on the subject and did a book-length study on Wallenberg. Now, partly in response to a romantic American docudrama starring Richard Chamberlain as Wallenberg, Häger and Villius took up the subject again. They read through the numerous white books on Wallenberg issued by the Ministry of

Foreign Affairs,²⁸ and formed their analysis around a “what if” trial where key actors and witnesses deliver their evidence before a judge. The prisoners who had been cellmates or believed that they had been neighbours of Wallenberg in the Moscow prisons give their testimony, as do politicians who were involved in the case. A prosecutor and a defence counsel argue over the trustworthiness of the testimonies and the documents presented by the Soviet authorities, and viewers are left to draw their own conclusion. In a remarkably open form, this staged analysis communicates not just the facts of the case and supplies an interpretation, but it also demonstrates use of the method of source-criticism.²⁹

The rest of the chapter consists of a close look at a group of programmes by Häger and Villius that are particularly interesting from a cognitive point of view. First up is the six-part series *1000 år* (1980) on life in Sweden from the Middle Ages to the present. The series was several years in the making, and during pre-production Häger and Villius communicated with other historians and hired several young researchers to each do one programme. The producers used re-enactments to communicate knowledge about conditions of life in the past. A close analysis of one of the episodes in the series, namely, that dealing with the seventeenth century, comes first. Next, two programmes are examined where Villius acted as on-screen presenter, namely, *Jag ser underbara ting* (1993) about Egypt, and *Moses, Aron och Karl XII* (1994) featuring events from Norwegian history and Swedish-Norwegian relations. Especially interesting in each programme is the cognitive function fulfilled by the on-screen presenter, whose effect is to bring historical reflection into the programmes. Discussed finally is an episode from the series *Hundra svenska år* (1999). The series was made using archival footage and interviews, and special focus is placed on the cognitive use of interviews. The programme analyses offer a close view of Häger and Villius at work finding knowledge to convey about the past, and then tackling the matter of presenting that knowledge.

3. Depicting one thousand years

In 1980, SVT broadcast a six-part series by Häger and Villius called *1000 år* [*1000 Years*], which told the story of Sweden from the Middle Ages to the present. The prehistory of *1000 år* is worth telling at length. It was in the late 1960s that Häger and Villius planned a series that would cover a thousand years of Swedish history. The project was a challenge in several respects. They had already made a few programmes, but nothing this large. Furthermore, a

²⁸ Interview with Häger, 2003.06.03. Häger wrote an article on the naive views of Östen Undén, the first Swedish Minister of Foreign Affairs to handle the case; Häger, Olle, 1993c.

²⁹ Shortly after the programme was broadcast Sweden's Ministry for Foreign Affairs approached Moscow about a key document in the Wallenberg case. In a letter Häger speculates that the programme led to the action. DA. T21, F1, 58, Sista båten [...] 2505, 24, letter from Häger to Mikhail Skupov, 1990.05.14. See also Carlbäck-Isotalo, Helene, Olle Häger, Bernt Schiller & Hans Villius, 1990.

good part of the series would deal with pre-photographic times, which meant that they would have to struggle with the problem of a lack of visual materials.³⁰ But not least, they were effectively lacking the dramatic unities of time, space and story. One thousand years was an enormous time span. There was no space unity except for the Swedish realm in its diversity. Moreover, there was no predetermined story. At the same time SVT split into two channels, and Häger and Villius were placed at SVT2. In a letter to their new head at SVT2, Örjan Wallqvist, they characterised the series as “an answer to the charge that TV is completely preoccupied with individuals and contemporary history.” Instead, in this series Swedish history would be represented in a “totally new way,” with focus on the “masses” of people, and with a periodisation taken from the most recent American research on developing countries.³¹ This “new way” of looking at history was quite typical of its time because in the 1960s, social history influenced historical research in Sweden. By choosing to focus on the history of the masses, Häger and Villius showed that they were aware of new perspectives.

True to their training as historians, Häger and Villius started working with content. In the autumn of 1968 they met with a number of established historians to discuss the series. Their ambition was to tell an up to date, authoritative version of Sweden’s history, beginning in ancient times and proceeding to the present day. The millennium was divided into chronological periods, with each (male) expert writing a synopsis for his period. With the project rolling and a few months into production, one of the authorities, historian Stig Boberg, delivered a synopsis for a programme covering the period 1500–1830.³² Originally, the plan was for the series to be broadcast in 1970, but somehow problems arose. Häger and Villius decided to complete one pilot episode concerning the most ancient period before moving on to other episodes. In November 1969, Villius wrote that 80 percent of the filming for the first episode had been accomplished, which indicated that the project was still on track.³³ In 1970, Häger and Villius turned their attention to programmes about international spies and about Stalin, but still the experts of Swedish history continue their screenplays. In May 1971, Boberg reported to Villius that he and co-worker Erik Lönnroth had tried to weave their efforts together, to accomplish a coherent outline of the period 800 to the late 1800s.³⁴ Although the project had been delayed, they still continued the work. A month later Villius wrote to one of the documentary historians about his decision to discontinue the work alto-

³⁰ Their only earlier programmes about pre-photographic times were *Frihet, jämlikhet, broderskap* (1968) about the French Revolution and *Renässansfursten* (1967), a small portrait of the sixteenth century King Erik XIV made by Villius and Arne Arnbom.

³¹ DA. T21, E1, file “Intern korr. TV2 1968–80”, flap V. Letter from Häger & Villius to Örjan Wallqvist, 1969.02.27.

³² DA. T21, F1, 33, 1000 år. Och hans namn var döden, YZ, utkast till synopsis.

³³ DA. T21, [Programlista & målsättning, Dokumentärhistoriska gruppen (Villius/Häger) förslag till produktioner 1970, 1969.11.19].

³⁴ DA. T21, F1, 11, Sveriges historia, M, letter from Stig [Boberg] to Villius, 1971.05.12.

gether. Villius was saddened by the decision but explained that the project “ran out of steam [...] the difficulties were great.”³⁵

A decade later, after *1000 år* was successfully completed, Häger and Villius occasionally commented on the failed first attempt. They declared: “The experts pulled in different directions.” They also pointed to the need for respectful working relationships between producers and authorities.³⁶ Moreover they identified the problem as the writers’ synopses veering in different directions. Also, Häger and Villius focused on the fact that television is a visual medium that needs strong images. It was not only “those [expert] historians” who lacked experience of representing history through images, “we ourselves had too little experience.”³⁷ Sadly, the project failed. Häger and Villius were not experienced television producers; neither were their co-operating senior historians. Alas, Häger and Villius could not find an effective way to deliver their intellectual content. Their failure was a difficult setback for Häger and Villius. Yet, it gave them thoughts for future projects, and probably convinced them that a television programme could not be made without a powerful visual idea.

In the late 1970s Häger and Villius returned to the idea of making a series about Sweden from the Middle Ages to the present.³⁸ With the help of Torell, Häger and Villius created a few productions complete with mixed images, historical re-enactments, and newly-filmed scenery. Häger, Villius and Torell, were now ready to tackle the abandoned project.

Torell had many ideas about how to make the series. In 1978 he proposed titles for different episodes. At this stage the series was composed of six episodes ordered chronologically, one episode about the Middle Ages followed by an episode for each century. Torell disagreed with the plan. He referred to theorists who believed that synthetic history-writing must begin with the present. One must “draw lines, and these lines shall end up here and now – some even say in the future.” Thus, Torell’s suggestion was to not set the scene chronologically, but to wander “back and forth through the past six hundred years.” Torell’s vision pairs contradictory terms to achieve unity: life-death, health-sickness, work-free time, war-peace, individual-group, and freedom-lack of freedom.³⁹ The mention of the long view in history suggested that Torell was familiar with the ideas of the French *Annales* historians. Further, his idea for the programmes

³⁵ DA. T21, F1, 11, Sveriges historia, CD, letter from Villius to Carl-Axel Moberg, 1971.06.22.

³⁶ DA. T21, [“Programlista & målsättning” (Heading *Svearikets vagga 17/2 22,15*), undated [perhaps 1981].]

³⁷ DA. T21, [“Programlista & målsättning”. Script from visit to the Historical Society [Historiska föreningen] in Uppsala, 1981.03.26.] Cf. interview with Häger, 2003.06.03. Perhaps one could see the failure as symptomatic considering that Swedish historians in these days hardly ever used images.

³⁸ Before that their colleague Kristian Romare tried to make a series about Sweden from the Middle Ages until the present. However, as I told in Chapter 4 only the first two episodes of his *Folkets historia i bild* (1974) were completed. Romare co-operated with a group of young, radical historians (Janken Myrdal, Maths Isacson, Johan Söderberg).

³⁹ DA. T21, F1, 33, 1000 år. Och hans namn var döden, YZ, letter from Torell [to Häger and Villius], 1978.01.23.

was based on the didactical notion that history only has meaning if it relates to the present. He even wrote that the Middle Ages were of little importance, except by offering a backdrop for later changes.⁴⁰ Torell was not a trained historian, which perhaps made it easier for him to look upon history in unconventional ways. But as historians, Häger and Villius were not always ready to agree. They were more likely to think that the past was important in itself, and the outcome of their discussions was to keep the chronological division. When asked about the three-producers-period, Häger recalls that it was sometimes difficult to co-operate. It was often “two against one.” Regarding Torell’s fascination with the long-term perspectives of the French *Annales* historians, according to Häger, Villius was not ready to accept this suggestion.⁴¹ Perhaps Häger theorises Torell’s view in hindsight. We cannot be certain that Torell was the one who discovered the *Annales* analysis, although it appears that he argued for such a perspective. It can be added that Villius was educated among Weibull historians, and was trained to assess the value of extant documents. His training may have been the reason he preferred singular events to long sweeps in history.

During the spring and summer of 1978, the producers worked together with a number of historians discussing possible views of Swedish history. These scholars influenced at least three of the six episodes. The key advisor in this and other productions was Professor Sven A. Nilsson of Uppsala. In addition to offering his own opinion on different subjects, he had an extensive network of contacts with Swedish historians. Thus Nilsson could direct Häger and Villius to various specialists.⁴² Häger says in retrospect that Nilsson was always on board, giving advice and offering moral support.⁴³ Nilsson gave suggestions for the programmes concerning the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Nilsson’s research focused on the effects of war on the Swedish state and society. The seventeenth-century Swedish state was almost constantly at war, which placed an enormous strain upon society. In addition to offering his perspective, he introduced Häger and Villius to one of his Ph.D. students Jan Lindegren, whose research concerned the conscription of soldiers. Nilsson suggested another contact, Professor Lars Herlitz at Gothenburg University, whose research focused on eighteenth-century farmers.⁴⁴ Fortunately working with Herlitz at the time was a Ph.D. student named Carl-Johan Gadd, whose research of eighteenth-century agricultural changes added positively to the mix. Gadd emphasised how farmers gradually improved their situation, another perspective included in the documentary.⁴⁵ Similarly, Jan Lindegren’s views on

⁴⁰ DA. T21, F1, 33, 1000 år. Och hans namn var döden, YZ, letter from Torell [to Häger and Villius], 1978.01.23.

⁴¹ Interview with Häger, 2000.08.04.

⁴² DA. T21, F1, 4, Sveriges historia 1978–80, 25. For his assistance in this case Nilsson was paid a fee.

⁴³ Interview with Häger, 2000.08.04. For a presentation of Sven A. Nilsson as a historian, see Torstendahl, Rolf, 1998.

⁴⁴ DA. T21, F1, 4, Sveriges historia 1978–80, 25.

⁴⁵ Cf. Gadd, Carl-Johan, 1983.

conscription also made an impact on the seventeenth-century programme. The sixteenth-century programme required Häger and Villius to contact Professor Ingrid Hammarström of Stockholm University who offered her view on King Gustav Vasa. Under his reign, taxes were imposed and royal power was extended into most parts of society. Hammarström suggested that they look closely into materials from the royal castle of Tavastehus and advised them of an historian working with the National Archives who might be of assistance.⁴⁶ In the final version of the sixteenth-century programme, life in the Tavastehus area was in much evidence.

The overreaching cognitive interest of the series was the living conditions of ordinary people. To a large extent, it investigated the shifts in the relation between the Swedish state and its subjects/citizens. The different episodes were produced as independent essays, each leaning toward a particular aspect of that relationship. At this time, Swedish historical research had been state-centred with a focus on official affairs of state. Having been brought up in this historical tradition, producers had little to challenge this perspective. The decision to tell the history of ordinary people was an important shift in direction and demanded a new creativity. While there are portraits that show kings, queens, noblemen, and the like, plus writings, letters and diaries from the elite, there are few pictures of poor people from the Middle Ages or the centuries that follow. The masses literally lack faces. Therefore, re-enactments were necessary, to add authenticity.

As the pieces fell into place, producers wrote to their superiors at SVT for monetary support. The proposal stated that the idea behind the series was “to describe the conditions of the many people.” Each programme would focus on a specific aspect, central to the past and also of concern to contemporary audiences. The subject’s relevance to modern audiences was a central feature in Torell’s ideas, but as I stated previously Häger and Villius presented similar thoughts ten years earlier, which may have been essential for getting support for the project. The proposal stated that the series would avoid purely political history but rather concentrate on social and economic issues. By examining source materials, the aim was to view closely “small communities” and ordinary people and thereby provide the audience with moments of identification.⁴⁷

It was decided that the project should move on.⁴⁸ The producers felt only two or three months would be sufficient for writing scripts. The scripts were written, complete with image solutions frequently in the form of re-enactments, now an established formal element in Häger and Villius’s tool-box. Sometime during the first autumn, Carl Torell left the project. It was Torell’s decision to leave. According to Villius Torell wanted to direct actors rather than produce a documentary his and Häger’s way.⁴⁹ Whether this is correct or not,

⁴⁶ DA. T21, F1, 33, 1000 år. Och hans namn var döden, ÅÄ, Ingrid Hammarström, 1978.05.23.

⁴⁷ DA. T21, F1, 4, Sveriges historia 1978–80.

⁴⁸ DA. T21, F1, 4, Sveriges historia 1978–80 (decision taken 1978.09.05).

⁴⁹ Interview with Hans Villius, 2001.05.09.



Figure 6. Inventive filmmakers. Medieval peasants coming home from the hunt in 1000 år. The medieval village in the background consists of small models of houses that were placed in front of the camera. Smoke from the chimneys was made by smoke bombs detonated at a safe distance from the tiny village. *Photo: Jan-Hugo Norman. Courtesy of Olle Häger.*⁵¹

the producers must have pulled in different directions. The breach was unavoidable. Now, Häger and Villius were the sole producers. Filming began during the winter and continued through 1979. Some of the scenery was modern, some of castles or forests that managed to represent the past, and some was staged reconstructions. For example, the scenery of the Middle Ages was of the medieval ring-wall of Visby. There was also a re-enactment of the mythical “rider of death” (from the Revelation) who rides face covered through a deserted village.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ When riders appear in the empty landscape by the sea it reminds of a Swedish film classic, Ingmar Bergman’s *The Seventh Seal* (1956), which also was set against a medieval plague.

⁵¹ Magnusson, Bengt, 1980; Schön, Bosse, 1980.

Häger recalls discussing with cameraman Jan-Hugo Norman the effect of making the earth a larger part of the image, instead of the (beautiful) sky as Norman knew was needed for aesthetic reasons.⁵² The producers had a conscious idea of what content that an image could transmit. Instead of depending on beautiful images the priority was to produce a content-oriented aesthetics. Editing took place the next year, and the series broadcast in the late autumn of 1980, three years after the project began. Berndt Egerbladh composed the theme music for the series, which consisted of slow, rather melancholy, folk music.

Now my discussion will focus on the seventeenth-century episode. Häger and Villius benefited greatly from the contacts with historians Sven A. Nilsson and Jan Lindegren. Nilsson and Lindegren's research on Sweden in the seventeenth century represented a society under siege, and a state always at war. Lindegren told of the state sending unthinkable numbers of young men to fight in the long wars.⁵³ This story added nicely to the overall theme of the series. It offered a "real life" perspective on the relationship between state and subjects. The soldiers were ordinary people who most viewers could understand.

Lindegren's research on conscription had led him to detailed studies of life in Bygdeå parish in northern Sweden from 1620 to 1640, when Sweden was at war.⁵⁴ Häger and Villius asked him to write a story about a group of soldiers giving strict instructions regarding the issue of space. After watching one of Häger and Villius's previous programmes, *Ett satans år*, to get perspective on the two producers' instruction,⁵⁵ Lindegren wrote the factual story of seven men from Andersvattnet, a small village in Bygdeå, who were sent to war, with only one of the men returning home. This story would intertwine with the essay in the programme, supporting the general information about the war. A few locals at an old farm were employed to dress in period costumes giving the needed visual authenticity. Like many other re-enactments in *1000 år*, the shots were taken near Häger's home village.⁵⁶ The programme is segmented as follows:

- A. Title sequence. Re-enactments and newly-filmed scenery. Theme music. 14 shots.
- B. Sequences 2–4. Introduction about the war and the Andersvattnet population. Alternating newly-filmed scenery (forests) and re-enactments from Andersvattnet village and Vaxholm castle. 13 shots.

⁵² Interview with Häger, 2003.06.03.

⁵³ In a recent article, Lindegren, Jan, 2000, p. 140, estimates that during the period 1620–1719, 30 percent of all Swedish men died in wars.

⁵⁴ Lindegren's dissertation was published the same year that the series was broadcast. Lindegren, Jan, 1980.

⁵⁵ Information from Jan Lindegren, 2003.02.06. Author's notes.

⁵⁶ Häger interviewed in [anonymous], 1993. Häger confirms that many re-enactments were filmed near Söderhamn, that there is winter imagery from Bergvik, lumberyard work in Rengsjö, the Holy Communion in Trönö, the boat in the Tavastehus scene in Svansjön near Gullgruva, the deserted house of the emigrants in Ina, and much of the twentieth-century episode filmed in Ljusne.

- C. Sequences 5–6. War economy. Newly-filmed milieus in Amsterdam, the Falun mine, modern iron works, Germany. Water-colour drawings show work in a mine. Details from seventeenth-century warship Vasa. Quote from the Swedish chancellor Axel Oxenstierna. 60 shots.
- D. Sequences 7–10. The war and death of soldiers. Alternating re-enactments and newly-filmed milieus, Sweden and Germany. Seventeenth-century drawings, re-enactments in still shots. Quote from the Swedish King Gustavus Adolphus. 62 shots.
- E. Sequences 11–12. The survivor. Re-enactments from Andersvattnet, list of credits roll. 3 shots.

The programme is set in the expository mode. An essay is read by a voice-over narrator, which aids in bringing the action forward. Apart from brief quotes taken from the letters of King Gustavus Adolphus and Chancellor Axel Oxenstierna, no other individuals are cited in the programme. Another characteristic of the soundtrack is silence. The screen is silent except for the narration (and very little music and other sound effects). The cognitive strategy keeps the reader at centre stage. The re-enactments feature synchronised sound but no dialogues. The most notable characteristic of the image-track is the unusually long shots. Except for the title sequence, the programme lasts 37 minutes and is made up of only 138 shots, making an average of 16 seconds per shot. Some shots are as long as a minute. This results in a relatively slow pace, designed to transmit a feeling of the gradual movement of history.⁵⁷ But this sluggish flow lessens the images' strength as the programme's driving force. Taken together, several of the formal devices merge to create a distance between spectator and the pictured past. The programme provides a sober discourse, and the spectator becomes not a participant in but a witness to history.

After the title sequence (A), the programme consists of four more segments. The first segment sets the scene (B), the second gives an account of society (C), the third portrays the war (D) and the last concludes the film (E). The programme opens with a man wandering through the grounds. A few snowflakes are falling. The narrator tells us this is a soldier on his way home from the great war to the village of Andersvattnet in Bygdeå. The (re-enacted) opening scene is followed by aerial shots of Sweden's north, rugged and forested landscape. The camera focuses on the Andersvattnet Lake and farms, with slow, heavy theme music adding to the tension. The narrator signals the arrival, "*This is Andersvattnet,*" then reveals that the old farms were "down *here*" (my italics). Further, the narrator informs us that in 1617, when the first man was sent to the war, only nineteen people lived at Andersvattnet. The next sequence brings another mimetic reconstruction. The voice-over tells of the Andersvattnet population, which gather in three family groups in front of an unpainted, wooden

⁵⁷ Ström, Sven, 1980.



Figure 7. The greater Andersvattnet household. An image used at both start and end of the seventeenth-century episode of *1000 år*. The camera pans slowly over the image as the narrator gives people's names. *Photo: Jan-Hugo Norman. Courtesy of Jan-Hugo Norman.*

house. A one-minute, slow shot pans over the people, who stand still while the narrator recites their names. There are sixteen people, ten men and boys and six women and girls. The camera cuts to life in Andersvattnet. The silent peasants carry hay from the fields then thresh the hay by hand in a barn. The actors know their business, comfortably waving their flails. The camera picks out a young man called Sakarias, whom the narrator says is the first conscript from the village. The following shots show Sakarias at a drill-ground with other soldiers.

The programme moves on to newly-filmed images of Amsterdam, which was the European financial centre of the time, the Swedish copper mine at Falun and iron works where a cannon is founded (C). Through this journey the narrator explains how the Swedish wars were part of a larger economic system. The programme turns to Germany and its thirty years war (D), but not to list all the battles. Instead, the narrator talks of the economy and the social consequences of war. He explains that Sweden became a "military state" where war rather than peace was the natural condition. The war was fought on credit,

which meant that the state could hardly afford to make peace. Toward the end of the segment, the narrator reminds us of the soldiers from Andersvattnet. One died here, another one died there. In a long sequence (10) of still shots, the (re-enacted) dead and dying soldiers are seen aboard war ships – “ships of death” – or in garrisons on the continent. The theme music fades in for some time and plays its slow, heavy rhythm, conducive to the pictures’ atmosphere of despair. To conclude (E), the image of the village population in Andersvattnet is shown again. The narrator notes that by 1638, six of the ten men in the image had disappeared in the war. Only one, “the seventh soldier from Andersvattnet,” did return. The programme ends by showing the last, surviving soldier on his way home. The images thus brings the audience back to the film’s opening.

The programme is an example of how the producers tried to achieve dramatic unities. In terms of space, the film does move from Sweden to different parts of the continent, but it begins and ends in the same village. At several intervals during the programme, the narrator reminds of the Andersvattnet village by saying, “There was a world dividing the little village in Västerbotten [i.e. Andersvattnet] from the pulsating world city [of Amsterdam]” (C), or “Here, Jöns Nilsson died. He was the third soldier from Andersvattnet” (D). Thus, attempts are made to hold the space together. In terms of time, the account of the seventeenth century concentrated on a couple of decades. This is a long period if one wishes to speak of unity of time (in classical drama the unity of time would usually mean no more than one day), but it is a clear effort to concentrate the experience of a century. The subject of the essay (unity of action) is the war itself. The years chosen are those of extreme experiences, because war rarely dominated Sweden as it did during that time.⁵⁸ These intense moments in history contrast past times with contemporary, peaceful Sweden.

What I find particularly interesting about the programme is the cognitive function of the Andersvattnet population. The exact time span from 1617 to 1638 was set by their war experience. The massive conscription in Andersvattnet, illustrated by the shot showing the entire population of the village, offered a human face to balance the narrator’s abstract reasoning about war financing. The use of the Andersvattnet population indicates that Häger and Villius thought that an abstract essay would not portray well on television, but that the audience needed to meet people as well. The soldiers have a cognitive function in that their deaths are used to make the audience understand the scale of what happened. They explain the human costs of the war. I would argue that the group picture in Andersvattnet, used in the beginning and the end of the film, offered a conceptual breakthrough. It can be added that when Häger and Villius followed the research of Nilsson and Lindegren they chose a male perspec-

⁵⁸ It can be added that the episode on the Middle Ages dealt with the mid-1300s, when the disastrous Black Death struck Sweden. That helped make the episode part of the trope of Dark Middle Ages, which strengthened the contrast to the present.



Figure 8. The historian-filmmakers and the issue of re-enactments. Cartoonist MaS interprets Häger and Villius's new relationship with "stuffed Dalecarlians." In fact, Häger and Villius avoided awkward-appearing actors and instead enlisted locals who knew how to do traditional tasks like fell a tree and slaughter a pig. Source: *Dagens Nyheter*, 1973.05.06. Courtesy of *Dagens Nyheter*.

tive on the hardships of the village population. Another possibility would have been to focus on the women's lives in Andersvattnet after the men had left for battle.

In the re-enactments no professional actors were used. Instead, experts of the old crafts re-enacted the roles. The avoidance of professional actors may have been a result of economic considerations; simply a way to lower the costs of production. But I would like to believe that cognitive considerations influenced the decision to choose amateur actors for the important reason that the actors, like real people, would perform tasks such as chop wood or produce crops. Aware of the awkwardness it could cause if actors were not skilled in the old crafts, Häger and Villius wanted to avoid the "stuffed Dalecarlian."⁵⁹ The peasants in the Andersvattnet scenes were skilled workers from Häger's home area. Because the re-enactments feature no dialogue they were very different from those in drama-documentaries and dramatic historical films. Rather than allowing the spectator to enter the scene, the silent actors maintained distance. Effectively, the silent re-enactments remain a part of the sober discourse. It is possible that the creative idea of silent peasants and soldiers was a result of a conscious striving to depict the nameless people, who rarely left individual testimonies. But in any case, it was a useful device in helping the viewer remain a spectator.

⁵⁹ The expression is sometimes used in relation to Swedish feature films of the past, where the Dalecarlian peasant was a frequent figure. The actors rarely had the skills to look natural when performing peasant work.

According to Nilsson and Lindegren, war should be seen as dependent on war financing, but this idea created a problem of form. Häger and Villius tried to solve this problem by filming the milieus where trade and armaments took place. There is footage showing the financial centre of Amsterdam, the important copper mine in Falun and the fields and rivers in Germany where corn was grown and transported. Notably, modern vehicles come and go in this newly shot footage. There are a few images that take a middle-position between modern milieus and re-enactments. First there are images from an iron works (C, seq. 5), where on Häger and Villius's commission was cast a seventeenth-century cannon. These images were shot as early as November 1978. Originally the plan was to show the entire process of cannon making.⁶⁰ However, in the finished programme the creation of the cannon is only a small part. Other images show the magnificent seventeenth-century palace of Läckö (9) and golden details from the famous warship Vasa (6), which was salvaged from the waters of Stockholm after 300 years on the bottom. Both Läckö and Vasa carry the sign of authenticity, as they are linked to the seventeenth century. In both cases the images are accompanied by proud music, which has a cognitive function. Music is otherwise shunned in the programme, and this music is strongly associated with not only the period but also with the ruling classes. It creates the illusion that the music is diegetic and thus makes the images come alive. In other words the soundtrack joins the images in transmitting the message of a boasting, martial Sweden.

Representing the war itself also caused problems. A large part of the images are newly shot at the actual war sites in Germany. In some of these sites nothing remains of the 1620s and 30s. The narrator does not point out any details that give the spectator a special sense of reference. There are three kinds of images that help transmit the cognitive insights of what the war was like. The first is the symbolic image of a fire burning. Like the war it burns and destroys (D, seq. 7). Second, a series of drawings by French artist Jacques Callot helps to illustrate the miseries of war (8), and third, the most powerful device is the recurrent references to the soldiers from *Andersvattnet*. The end of the programme uses these oral references accompanied by re-enactments, and colour stills that portray men dying. A quote from the Swedish king Gustavus Adolphus authenticates the re-enactments. The king complains that his men die from sicknesses [*dö som hundar sin kos*]. The theme music enters and adds emphasis to the sequence of the dying soldiers. Probably, those latter images come closest to touching the audience's emotions, thus communicating the message of the costly war.

While a traditional military-political perspective on the war would have paid attention to the king and his generals, Häger and Villius chose a different cognitive angle where they focus on poor peasants. Both the opening and the closing sequences are loaded with the experiences of the peasant population. It

⁶⁰ Perman, Irving, 1978.

is only the peasants that we meet on their home ground and whose fortunes and misfortunes we follow through the programme. They rather than the generals, the burghers, the priests, or the nobility, are the people chosen for identification.⁶¹ When the narrator speaks of the nobility, he talks of them as the ones who profited financially from the war. Obviously, because it was the Andersvattnet villagers who suffered, dramatic logic transforms those who gain from war into evil men. The difficulties of the poor are accentuated through contrasts, where the new-built palaces of the nobility are called “boast palaces.” Furthermore, the narrator offers a perspective on struggle between the classes that is biased toward the poor, and was popular in the 1970s when *1000 år* was made. He states that “the [Swedish] peasants’ freedom was in danger,” but concludes that in the end “the peasants had power enough to defend themselves [against the nobility]” (9). Interestingly, in the 1960s and 70s the research group around Sven A. Nilsson had re-evaluated the role of the nobility and played down the threat that they posed to the peasants.⁶² Häger and Villius did not choose this more nuanced perspective, but instead emphasised the conflict between peasantry and nobility.

To sum up, the analysis indicates that cognitive considerations were important to Häger and Villius throughout the production of *1000 år*, which is demonstrated by the producers’ efforts to find current information about the past, and the advanced analytical perspective adopted in the programmes. Their ambition to describe the lives of ordinary people in the past presented them the problem of a lack of authentic imagery, which spectators would desire in order to believe the film’s message. To an extent, they compensated for what was lacking by basing the script on recent scholarly perspectives. There can be no doubt that Häger and Villius engaged some of the best researchers in the field. It is noteworthy that they co-operated with two Ph.D. candidates, Lindegren and Gadd. I suspect that this was not only because Lindegren and Gadd provided the most interesting research about the subject, but also because Häger and Villius assumed that these young men would be more flexible co-workers than the older historians involved with the failed attempt ten years earlier.

They used a range of formal devices that were a part of the cognitive strategies designed to communicate knowledge about the past. Then what was the cognitive function of the voice-over narrator and the re-enactments, the two most conspicuous stylistic devices used in *1000 år*? First, the narrator provided factual information and analysis about the past. Second, there is a tendency for the narrator to use a moral tone with his choice of words. For example, the nobility’s “boast palaces,” offered a moral perspective. The re-enactments provided imagery for the Andersvattnet story. This served a particular cognitive

⁶¹ The narrator points out that the priests were in a difficult middle-position between the people and the authorities (D).

⁶² I think of the work by Kurt Ågren, Eibert Ernby and Margareta Revera, who were all students of Sven A. Nilsson.

function in that the device communicated the movements and experiences of working people. The producers preferred amateur actors who could work the land. Thus, the narrator and the re-enactments create different and complementary cognitive contributions to the programme. The soldiers from Andersvattnet give insight into the proportion of the population that perished in the wars. This was further emphasised with the final image of the lone survivor on his way home. There are times when the producers make moral and aesthetic judgements, for example in the treatment of the nobility and in the efforts to achieve the dramatic unities. But it appears that cognitive considerations were particularly conspicuous in the production.

The series received a fair amount of attention even before it was broadcast. The local press observed the crew filming in the neighbourhood, and Häger and Villius gave interviews on such occasions. Several newspapers showed interest in the fact that the series would be about the history of the people, rather than about kings. The documentary was one of the most expensive projects at SVT thus far, plus its most expensive history series. In combination with the respected producer team of Häger and Villius, this raised expectations.

When broadcast, the series was hailed in the press as “a pioneer achievement, unique in the world,” “suggestive,” and “one of the finest history series made.”⁶³ SVT2 boss Örjan Wallqvist sent word that it was the first history series that he had seen which spoke “through living image” about the course of events.⁶⁴ Although a couple of critics argued that the series was impersonal and lacked life,⁶⁵ as a whole it was a success. Twenty percent of the population or about 1.6 million Swedes saw the final episode,⁶⁶ which was a good result for a documentary in the days of two television channels. At the time, Häger and Villius said that a documentary would usually gather an audience of between one and ten percent, while in the most successful cases such as *The World at War* spectators could number between twenty and thirty percent.⁶⁷ The series was popular with historians. Lars-Olof Larsson thought that it should be broadcast again and also be shown on school television. A couple of other historians especially hailed the episode on the seventeenth century.⁶⁸ Many years after the broadcast, and commenting on a different issue, historian Jarl Torbacke reminded Olle Häger of the picture of the Andersvattnet families. Torbacke thought it a “suggestive and poignant illustration” and put forward the idea that a similar device be used in a series about the twentieth century.⁶⁹ For years, the series was widely used in teaching.

⁶³ Ström, Sven, 1980; Wähländer, Nenne, 1980; Åhrén, Lars, 1980.

⁶⁴ DA. T21, F1, 5, XYZ, letter from Örjan Wallqvist to Villius, Häger and J-H Norman, 1980.12.02.

⁶⁵ Waern, Carina, 1980; Brunius, Clas B., 1980.

⁶⁶ DA. T21, F1, 5, XYZ, Audience statistics from 1980.11.25.

⁶⁷ DA. T21, [Programlista & målsättning, Script for visit at Historiska föreningen i Uppsala, 1981.03.26].

⁶⁸ DA. T21, F1, 5, XYZ, letter from Lars-Olof Larsson [to Häger & Villius] 1980.11.24. Broberg, Gunnar, 1981; Norborg, Lars-Arne, 1980.

⁶⁹ DA. T21, F1, 68, Inledande research, 9, letter from Jarl Torbacke to Häger, 1995.09.16.

Some reactions were moral in tone. The series gave vent to the rhetoric of the struggle between the classes. This was probably felt by a viewer who wrote to Häger and Villius that he had just been to America, and that he believed that a series such as *1000 år* never could have been made there. He wrote that the series made him feel strongly for “this working, exploited, and nameless people.”⁷⁰ But the rhetoric of struggle of the classes is not dominant in the series. Historian Lars-Arne Norborg even thought that the Swedish tradition of revolts was too much in the background. Instead, he thought that Häger and Villius indicated a “Folkhem” understanding of “harmony,” although that was not clearly articulated.⁷¹

The newly-filmed footage featuring modern machines met with opposition from viewers. Letters arrived from a group of eleven year-old school children who had talked about the series in class. They argued that images of past and present should be kept apart.⁷² Perhaps adult spectators were more tolerant of those images, but in fact, Häger and Villius later thought that the inclusion of “ultra-modern” features may have been a mistake.⁷³ A few years later, when Kjell Tunegård re-edited the four-hour (six-part) series into two hour-long episodes, the modern images were cut out.⁷⁴ That also meant that much of the abstract narration about the war economy disappeared. In the re-edited version, the focus is more on the soldiers from Andersvattnet and the tempo is much quicker than in the original programme.

4. The historian on screen I: Egypt

In addition to communicating knowledge about the past, Häger and Villius used some programmes to demonstrate a scientific approach to historical issues. One such film was *Raoul Wallenberg – fånge i Sovjet* (1990) that I touched upon above, which was done as an exercise in source-criticism. Another kind of film that is interesting from the perspective of meta-reflection is that which features an on-screen *presenter*. In the early 1990s, Häger and Villius made four programmes that featured the eloquent Villius on screen travelling to sites of historical interest that were also tied to his own reminiscences. In these programmes he travelled to Egypt, Norway, his boyhood home area around Kalmar and finally to Skåne, the region of his university years in Lund.⁷⁵ In the programmes, Villius is the presenter or on-camera narrator who explores re-

⁷⁰ DA. T21, F1, 5, XYZ, letter from Kjell-Arne Johansson to Häger & Villius, 1980.11.25.

⁷¹ Norborg, Lars-Arne, 1980. Norborg primarily commented on the accompanying book.

⁷² DA. T21, F1, 5, XYZ, letters from class 5c at Kärna school, Linköping (Magdalena L, Kerstin Andersson and others).

⁷³ DA. T21, [Programlista och målsättning, Script for visit at Historiska föreningen i Uppsala, 1981.03.26].

⁷⁴ See *1000 år på 2 timmar* (1993).

mains of the past and guides the spectator on a journey into the past. His personal experiences help connect historic places to a narrative. A few years later, after Villius retired, Olle Häger made a programme casting himself as the on-screen narrator, and visited his home region in Hälsingland.⁷⁶ These journey films comprised a group of programmes. Next I will analyse two of them, asking how is the on-screen presenter used?

In a narrative, technical sense the on-screen presenter can perform important cognitive functions such as directing the spectator's attention. The presenter relieves the rush of imagery and thus gives the spectator time to breathe and think about the information given. The presenter can also fill an aesthetic function by representing the human dimension in the full audio-visual sense, which is important especially in programmes about historical subjects that lack extant images of people.⁷⁷ In addition to these functions, the on-screen presenter brings a personal authority to the programme. If the presenter is a recognised historian that adds something more. I would argue that the historian as presenter is perhaps the optimal audio-visual mark of quality, because he or she is a visible guarantee of authenticity.

Both Häger and Villius occasionally were featured on screen in previous programmes, but not as "personal" presenters and mostly just for a few moments.⁷⁸ Thus the programmes in the 1990s were the first in which the on-screen presenter played a formal role in binding the programme together. As I wrote above, there were people at SVT who argued that the producers should make it clear to the audience their ideological stance. Häger says that in the 1970s the on-screen presenter was condemned ideologically, but later there appeared a demand that documentaries should speak more subjectively, that is, viewers should feel "a heart beating."⁷⁹ Thus, the presenter can be seen as part of an aesthetic trend. Häger and Villius tried it because the latter was recognised as an efficient story-teller and a well-known personality whom people might enjoy watching.⁸⁰ In these programmes the presenter is not simply visible for a few moments, which would be enough to establish a sender, but is the cement of the programme and thus an element with an important cognitive function.

⁷⁵ *Jag ser underbara ting* (1993); *Moses, Aron och Karl XII* (1994); *Där farlig sunnan går* (1994); *Bland storkar och slott* (1996). Villius had ideas for a travel programme set in England, but that was never realised; interview with Villius, 2003.06.02. Partly inspired by the novels of Tony Hillerman, Häger planned a travel programme to the south-western part of the United States, but that programme was not realised either; interview with Häger, 2003.06.03. Cf. Lidén, Svante, 1993.

⁷⁶ *Minns du det landet* (2002). Cf. *Sjön där Fride Magnusson drunknade* (1992). However, neither of the two programmes featured Häger in as active a presenter role as that played by Villius in the aforementioned programmes.

⁷⁷ Champion, Justin, 2002.

⁷⁸ Both Häger and Villius appeared as the on-screen commentators in the series about Sweden during the Cold War (1971) and Sweden in the 1950s (1974). Villius was on screen also in *Sverige Sverige fosterland* (1985).

⁷⁹ Interview with Häger, 2003.06.03. Häger even suggests that if the eight-hour series *Hundra svenska år* (1999) had been made a few years earlier it might have been done with Villius as the on-screen presenter.

⁸⁰ Häger points to these reasons; interview with Häger, 2003.06.03.

Interestingly, Villius appears in the programmes not only as a presenter. He consciously establishes himself as a professional historian, talking about source-criticism and legends. Thus, his commentary forces us to use the distinction that I suggested above between (a) the communication of knowledge about the past, and (b) the meta-reflections on our knowledge about the past.

The first programme, *Jag ser underbara ting. Med Hans Villius längs Nilen* [*I see wonderful things. Accompanying Hans Villius along the Nile*] (1993), was made on Villius's retirement from SVT, and it was announced as his goodbye to television. The original idea was that Villius would talk about the warrior king Karl XII, whose wars he had treated in his doctoral dissertation forty years earlier. The programme called for him to travel to the battlefields of Poltava and Bender in the Soviet Union.⁸¹ However, because of the practical difficulties of arranging the filming of the programme, it was decided instead for Villius to travel to Egypt. Villius's boyhood dream had been to become an archaeologist, and he started his university studies in the 1940s taking classical studies. Thus, he had knowledge of the classical world that could be used in the programme and which he had in fact already used to create historical documentaries about the pyramids, Crete, Akrotiri, and Petra.⁸²

Planning began in early 1992. In the proposal, Häger wrote that the programme would look for the hidden treasures of Tutanchamon that Villius had dreamed of as a boy. "We want to make a film that takes advantage of not just the mystique and the beauty in the world that fell many thousand years ago, but also the fascination for treasure seeking, the boyhood dream that becomes true."⁸³ Eventually, the programme developed into less of a biography, less of boyhood dreams, and more of the aged historian's reflections about the past. The change of focus was clear during the spring when Häger wrote to the crewmembers about the trip:

[This is] a documentary about the fascination with history. Protagonist: Hans Villius. [...] Egypt supplies the imagery, Hans supplies the talking. Probably, also the actual filming shall be shown, or it might be difficult to establish the thought with Hans as the consequent narrator. The talk will not only be about Egypt, it will be about history in general. But of course, the exciting places that we pass through must be commented on.⁸⁴

⁸¹ Poltava, where Karl XII's army was defeated by the Russian army of Peter the Great, had re-entered the historical consciousness of the Swedes through Peter Englund's bestselling book of 1988. In the early 1990s King Karl XII became a hero for Swedish neo-Nazis. In DA. T21, F1, 63, Moses, Aron och Karl XII, H, Då var vintern inte grön, are nine pages about the Swedish army trying to survive the winter in Ukraine. Possibly, the text was written for the programme that never was made. Cf. interview with Häger, 2003.06.03.

⁸² *Men spåren finns kvar. 2 Pyramiderna* (1975); *Mitt ute på blånande djupet: Kreta* (1981); *När världen gick under* (1986); *Petra – den försvunna staden* (1990). Häger and Villius's colleague at SVT Hans Furuhausen acted as historical consultant on at least one of the productions.

⁸³ DA. T21, F1, 60, Jag ser underbara ting, 6, Hans Villius på jakt efter den försvunna skatten, undated [early 1992].

⁸⁴ DA. T21, F1, 60, Jag ser underbara ting, 4, Hans Villius på jakt efter den försvunna skatten, 1992.05.26.

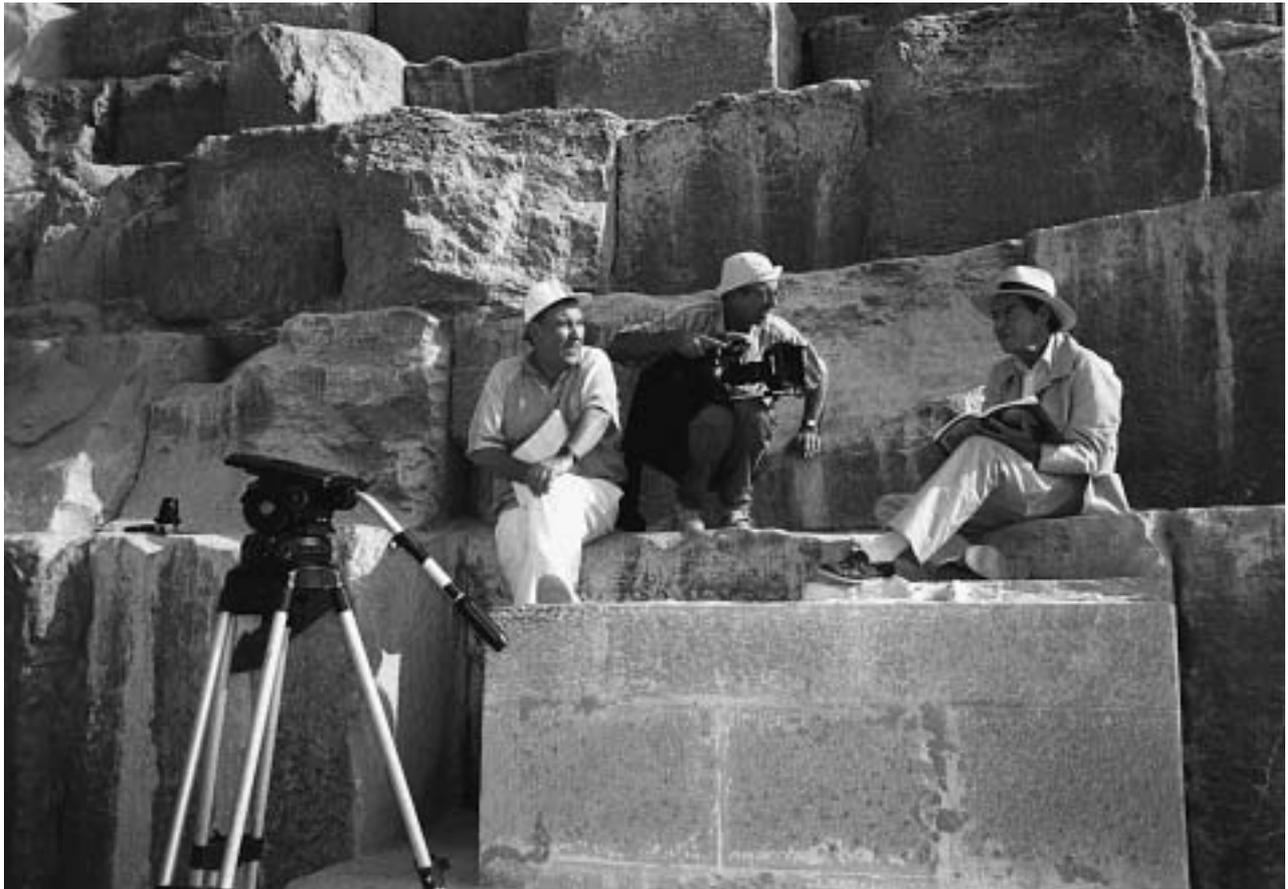


Figure 9. Olle Häger, Jan-Hugo Norman, and Hans Villius on location, the pyramids of Egypt. *Courtesy of Olle Häger.*

Elsewhere, Häger described the programme further:

The idea is to concentrate [...on] the period that is widely thought of as Hans's speciality, i.e. the Second World War, [...and on] the treasure that fascinated him early and that he has touched upon both in radio programmes and in books, namely the discovery of Tutanchamon's grave. Between the two [geographical] poles of El Alamein and Luxor, fascination with history will itself be the theme. Images from Egypt will constitute an exciting, often activating background to the tall stories and the historic discussions that have been prepared.⁸⁵

One interesting detail in the above is that Häger proposed to film the filming, which is a reflexive device. It should be noted that Villius had more than his classical studies at the university to prepare him for the programme. He also used his knowledge about the battle of El Alamein, which he had featured both in a radio lecture in the 1950s and in a *Svart på vitt* episode in 1989.⁸⁶ Villius wrote his own on-screen commentary while Häger wrote the voice-over.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ DA. T21, F1, 60, Jag ser underbara ting, 14, fax from Häger to Jan Ståhl, 1992.06.01, p. 2.

⁸⁶ The radio lecture was reprinted in Villius, Hans, 1959, pp. 75–91; *Bilder från ett krig. 5. El Alamein* (1989).

⁸⁷ Interview with Villius, 2003.06.02; interview with Häger, 2003.06.03.

A rather large group accompanied Häger and Villius on the two-week trip to historical sites in Egypt, in September 1992. Apart from the technical crew, the group included a few people who paid for the trip themselves, namely two young women who wanted to learn about filmmaking and a journalist and a photographer from a weekly magazine who wrote about the filming.⁸⁸ Visually, a large part of the programme is taken with attractive imagery of the Nile and the golden treasure of Tutanchamon's grave. The filming demonstrated the skills of cameraman Jan-Hugo Norman, which were crucial in creating the visual beauty of the programme. Häger noted that Villius was impatient when the deliberate Norman prepared his camera, and stayed inside the air-conditioned bus by the pyramids until the photographer was ready to shoot. "[Villius] was not interested in the place. Not a bit. He threw a glance [getöga] at the pyramids." For Villius, claims Häger, the story was the important thing, not the image nor the historical site.⁸⁹ The filming in Egypt raised a number of practical difficulties. Häger put a great effort into arranging permits beforehand,⁹⁰ yet once in Egypt some of the site authorities were not content with the pre-arranged permits. As a result, the filming at Cairo Museum was delayed for half a day and it took another half day in Luxor before the team was allowed to film in the Valley of the Kings.⁹¹ A hand-written note among the production materials indicates that money was used for "permits and bribes."⁹² While the problems were solved along the way the delays frustrated the crew.

It was easier to get hold of complementary footage available in Western countries. The producers traced photos from Carter's excavations in the Valley of the Kings to archives in Great Britain and America and bought them for the film. Footage of German general Rommel's funeral was found in Germany.⁹³ Hans Arnbom composed music that helps create the air of mystique and beauty that Häger suggested in the proposal for the film. In a final detail from the post-production process, it was discovered during the editing that Villius made an error in an on-screen scene in Alexandria when he talked about the seven wonders of the ancient world. Through Kjell Tunegård's careful editing, the error was cut out without Villius seeming to move. Still there is a glitch in the (edited) shot because far in the background of the picture can be seen a man "beating the long-jump world record."⁹⁴ The finished programme is segmented as follow:

⁸⁸ Interview with Maria Gratte, 2002.10.28; Westman, Lars, 1992.

⁸⁹ Häger, Olle, 1992, p. 157.

⁹⁰ DA. T21, F1, 60, Jag ser underbara ting, 14, various correspondence, 1992.

⁹¹ DA. T21, F1, 60, Jag ser underbara ting, 14, letter from Häger to Abu-Elmagd A Omar, 1992.09.18; Nilsson, Gunnar, 1992.

⁹² DA. T21, F1, 60, Jag ser underbara ting, 18, Produktionskalkyl, p. 3, 1992.06.16.

⁹³ DA. T21, F1, 60, Jag ser underbara ting, 6, fax from Rolf Fredriksson to Frau Wolf, Bundesarchiv Koblenz, 1992.09.27; DA. T21, F1, 60, Jag ser underbara ting, 10, correspondence between Häger and Berit Hookway, Sept. 1992; DA. T21, F1, 60, Jag ser underbara ting, 10, correspondence between Häger and Elisabeth Johansson, June 1992.

⁹⁴ Villius at press conference 2001.05.15, author's notes.

- A. Sequences 1–2. Introduction, title.
- B. Sequences 3–6. Villius visits El Alamein and tells about the 1942 battle.
- C. Sequences 7–8. Villius onboard a bus in Egypt, recalls the war and Rommel's death.
- D. Sequences 9–10. Villius in Alexandria, talks of the lighthouse at Faros and visits the pyramids.
- E. Sequences 11–17. Villius travels by boat along the Nile and visits a couple of temples.
- F. Sequences 18–22. Villius at the Valley of the Kings, imagery of the gold from the grave of Tutanchamon.

Formally, the film is made in several modes. A large part is made in the expository mode, with Villius either the voice-over narrator or the on-screen presenter. The imagery consists of newly-filmed scenery, archival footage from the Second World War, and still photographs of the archaeologist Carter who found the grave of Tutanchamon. There are also a couple of sequences that feature the film crew with one that comically intercuts the on-screen Villius with scenes from the fiction film *Death on the Nile*. The latter sequences all function to remind the audience of the constructed character of the film, and thus are in the reflexive mode. Finally, the beautiful camerawork, evocative music, and sometimes lyrical commentary combine to create sequences that are in a poetic mode. Thus, formally the film is not just a straight-on story with a presenter reciting facts to the camera, but rather a complex weave.

The film follows both a time and a journey chronology. The geographical journey goes first to El Alamein in north-western Egypt (B), from there east to Alexandria and the pyramids (D), and then southwards up along the Nile (E, F). It is also a journey in time, beginning with World War II (at El Alamein) and returning to the distant past, finally ending at the graves of the Pharaohs. However, the programme and thus the journeys in time and space both start and end in the present during an evening on the Nile. There is Villius in the dark, first posing the rhetorical question “What shall I tell?” and ending the programme with “What did I learn from this?” Thus, through the framing sequences the narrator brings the audience with him into the past and then brings it back again.

The presenter Villius talks about the past, but also, like a true historian, he quotes a number of historical sources. At El Alamein he quotes documents written by participants in the battle; first a British officer, then German General Rommel and finally the report from a surrounded German army unit (B). Later, when relating the story of Rommel's death in Germany, he quotes the telegram that Hitler sent to the general's widow (C). Travelling along the Nile he cites a Greek writer who wrote “he who drinks of water from the Nile loses his native land” (E). Finally, relating about Carter's excavations in the Valley of the Kings, he quotes the classic words that Carter uttered when he first saw the treasures in Tutanchamon's funeral chamber: “I see wonderful things” (F). In

addition to these quotes, Villius relates much information about classical history and mythology, including the names of several ancient gods. In the expository parts of the programme Villius is not simply a glib storytelling presenter, but a learned authority.

In regard to the images and information about the past, the narrator is reflexive. When the image-track shows wartime footage of German and British soldiers and tanks during World War II in North Africa, he points out that it is propaganda. "It is hard to know exactly where the images are from, and when they were taken" (B). He then says that while the footage gives an indication of what kind of war it was and what arms were used, it does not reveal that the British outnumbered the Germans two to one. Nor does it tell us how bloody the fighting actually was. After the latter remark, the on-screen Villius visits a desert war cemetery. My main point here is that the narrator problematises the footage, developing its explicit and implicit meanings. On another occasion the on-screen Villius speaks of the difficulties of knowing the beliefs and attitudes of people in the past, that is understanding their mentalities (E). He points out the limits of his own and our knowledge about the past. In sum, the reflexive historian is an important feature of the programme.

There are a few other sequences that formally are made in the reflexive mode and that also serve cognitive purposes. One example occurs early in the film when the on-screen Villius sits among the film crew on the bus between El Alamein and Alexandria and talks of the sense of distance that one feels to events that happened before one's birth (C). One shot in the sequence focuses on cameraman Norman, who films himself in the driver's mirror, and thus definitely establishes the constructed character of the film. Villius's talk becomes a dialogue when he rhetorically asks what happened fifty years before one's birth and Häger, who sits next to him, tentatively suggests the Punic wars. The scene then dissolves into laughter and creates more informal mood. The audience is invited to laugh and relax with the crew. But Villius's talk still reflects his insight about the difficulties of relating personally to the past. Thus, the reflexive mode helps to transmit insights about the past. This reflexivity continues when the bus arrives in Alexandria and the crew is seen leaving the bus to view the harbour.

Another reflexive, amusing scene takes place during the trip southwards along the Nile, when creative editing brings Villius into the Agatha Christie film *Death on the Nile*. There is Villius walking in the temple ruins of Karnak. Then the film cuts to a scene in *Death on the Nile* set in the same place. A huge rock is pushed down from the top of a pillar, almost killing Christie's protagonists. The camera cuts to Villius who sits on the ground by a pillar talking to sound recordist Gunnar Nilsson who is holding the microphone – until the sound of the falling rock is heard and they throw themselves forward to avoid it. The fall of the rock is completed in the scene from *Death on the Nile* before the camera again cuts to Villius who, wearing a straw hat that might have appeared in the other film, disappears behind a pillar. The intercutting between

Villius and *Death on the Nile* brings laughter but has a larger purpose. For Villius then begins a lengthy monologue about the task of the professional historian, in which he compares the historian to a detective (E):

Acumen is useful not least when one works with source-criticism and values different historical sources [...] To pursue source-criticism is to use those little grey cells, like [detective] Hercule Poirot, although of course one will never reach the neat conclusions that he does...or did. But in principle one uses the same method, and the police do too or should at least do so. For example, one makes a distinction between the remains of a course and what is called narrative sources. For example, if we take a murder mystery then the fingerprint on the weapon is a remnant of the past, [or] the footprint in the flower bed where the murderer jumped out, those are remains, while narrative sources are the murderer's tale where he says that no, I was watching television. And then, of course, the narrative sources can always be marred by certain weaknesses, as in this case when they are biased. [...] and this is what source-criticism at least partly is about. Source-criticism is exciting and fascinating.

The above monologue resembles a manifesto, the ageing historian Villius's testament to the world. He calls the historian's task "exciting and fascinating," and with enough "acumen" the historical truth can be found. Thus, the historian-presenter allows himself to promote his profession. It is interesting that Villius promotes source-criticism, which to him appears to be a goal in itself. That situates him firmly in the methodology of the Weibulls, which suggested that the mysteries of the past could be solved through source-critical examination.⁹⁵ In the eyes of modern historians, the scientific ideal is about posing interesting questions, or understanding data in a theoretical context, which makes source-criticism a means but not an end in itself. In other words, the quote suggests that Villius is tied to a more traditional ideal.

But the presenter in the film does not only play the role of historian, for a human dimension enters the programme through his reflections. He is the person who reacts to the images and stories of the film. The on-screen Villius shows moral judgement, voicing his distaste of Hitler's telegram to Rommel's wife after he had had her husband murdered (C); at that instance he is less an objective historian and more a subjective presenter. When visiting Alexandria he observes that the city "smells Mediterranean" (D), again a poetic formulation that talks to the senses. When a photo shows archaeologist Howard Carter dressed in a dark suit under the Egyptian sun Villius says that Carter "pretends that it is not thirty degrees [Celsius] hot" (F). He does not say that Carter wears a dark suit "in spite of the heat," but instead lets the audience smile at Carter who "pretends" not to feel the heat. Thus, the presenter is at the sites and shares his impressions and physical experience with the audience. In a lively way he invites the audience to feel what he does.

⁹⁵ Narrator Villius spoke extensively about source-criticism also in *Sverige Sverige fosterland: När Sverige blev Sverige* (1985). In *Raoul Wallenberg – fånge i Sovjet* (1990) the actors talk about sources and source-criticism.



Figure 10. The historian in thought. Hans Villius on a cruiser on the Nile. In the programme he spoke on screen about the historian's task. *Courtesy of Olle Häger.*

Villius demonstrates the third role of the presenter when he shares a memory from his youth, thus adding a very personal touch to the programme. The episode is about an oral exam in classical studies when Villius's professor mistakenly thought that he brilliantly mastered *The Iliad* (E). The funny anecdote connects well to the theme of the programme, which is about the classical world, but also reveals the personality of the presenter, which adds warmth to the programme.

One striking aspect of the film is its aesthetic beauty which also has a cognitive function because the poetic commentary, imagery and music combine to suggest that the past is fascinating yet not completely within reach. Recurrent imagery of fishermen in small boats on the Nile makes us feel that the river means life and that life on the river is similar now to what it was several thousand years ago. Not far away is the desert, a fact that the narrator emphasises by observing that the line is razor sharp between life and death. The narrator's factual language sometimes has a poetic touch to it, evoking the exotic Egyptian past, as when he reads an inscription in Tutanchamon's grave: "I have seen the past [gårdagen], I know the future [morgondagen]." After these lines he concludes: "What did I learn from this? Well, that it is beautiful along the Nile. [...] Oh, Death, where is your sting?" Thus, beauty serves to express a fascination for the past.

In sum, information on the past, reflections on the task of the historian, and more evocative devices join to form the film. But before drawing conclusions in principle about the function of the presenter it is necessary to examine one more programme.

5. The historian on screen II: Norway

Jag ser underbara ting was well received and led directly to the scheduling of new programmes. SVT1 head Ingvar Bengtsson wrote to Häger that the concept was much too good to let it be the final programme for Villius.⁹⁶ Shortly after the broadcast, Häger wrote a proposal for a new travel programme. He stated that the form suited Villius's style of narrating perfectly and "on the suggestion of Ingvar [Bengtsson]," they planned to make a few more programmes.⁹⁷ In the next programme, Villius travelled to Norway, where Villius would speak about King Karl XII, who died in a war there. Furthermore, Häger and Villius had recently made a series of five-minute programmes about World War II in Norway,⁹⁸ and thus the Norwegian experience was fresh in their minds.

During 1993 Häger was busy making three programmes about Swedish spies, but he and Villius started to prepare for the programme about Norway – or really, about Swedish-Norwegian relations through the centuries. As usual, they began with research. One of their aims was to tell of King Karl XII who was killed at the siege of a Norwegian castle in 1718, and accordingly they gathered scholarly articles about the king's death. Furthermore, they gathered information about the German attack on Oslo on 9 April 1940.⁹⁹ Among their working materials are some articles about the Norwegian writer Björnsterne Björnsson. One of them contained a funny quotation that narrator Villius would cite in the programme.¹⁰⁰

Villius, who had formally retired and was ill, did not work much on the spy programmes,¹⁰¹ but because the Norway programme would depend on his commentary, he was very deeply involved in deciding what would be included. He proposed that the film crew travel northwards through Norway, first by bus from the border castles near Oslo to Trondheim in central Norway, and from there by aeroplane to Narvik in the far north. The main emphasis of the programme would be the 1718 war of King Karl XII and the Second World War,

⁹⁶ DA. T21, F1, 60, *Jag ser underbara ting*, 21, letter from Ingvar Bengtsson to Häger, 1993.01.04. Cf. Vogel, Viveka, 1993.

⁹⁷ DA. T21, F1, 63, Moses, Aron och Karl XII, CD, Produktionsbeskrivning, 1993.09.14.

⁹⁸ One of these programmes will be analysed in Chapter 7.

⁹⁹ DA. T21, F1, 63, F, scholarly articles about the king's death; K, information about Blücher and Oscarsborg castle.

¹⁰⁰ DA. T21, F1, 63, Moses, Aron och Karl XII, G, articles about Björnsterne Björnsson.

¹⁰¹ In an interview, Ternblad, Mats, 1994, Villius told that he almost died from asthma in France during the past summer.

both of them specialities of Villius.¹⁰² The focus was manifested in the name of the programme, *Moses, Aron och Karl XII*, where the first two names referred to the cannons south of Oslo that had fired upon invading German warships in 1940. In addition to the sites connected with his expertise, Villius suggested visiting a few other sites such as the Viking ship museum in Oslo. He also proposed to talk about his personal contacts with Norwegian refugees during the war, an oral exam in his university years, and historical interpretations of King Karl XII, specifically whether or not he was murdered.¹⁰³ This mixture of historical episodes, personal memories and reflections about history closely resembles the Egypt programme. Villius referred to the previous programme when suggesting the mixture of ingredients.¹⁰⁴

The programme's structure was developed in a synopsis, which kept the trip from the border region in the south and northwards to Trondheim, but cut out Narvik and the Viking ship museum. The synopsis contains a tentative narration script complete with ideas about photographic images. For example, the film would include a photo of the Norwegian king and crown prince on board a British cruiser in 1940, escaping the Germans. There were also a series of Villius's memories from his student years at Uppsala University, concerning his participation in a demonstration against the German occupation of Norway and an anecdote about an eccentric Norwegian historian who came to Uppsala and joked with the chancellor. The final image of the programme, illustrating the retreat of Karl XII's Swedish army, was of a famous painting of soldiers carrying the dead king.¹⁰⁵ The synopsis formed the basis for the programme but it would change in several respects.

Practical arrangements for the filming included getting permits to film on a train in the Norwegian mountains and contacting key persons at various sites who could help. For example, they arranged to film at the Oscarsborg fortress outside Oslo, with the commanding officer present on the jetty. Villius made phone-calls and, with help from staff at Norwegian television (NRK), made many of the arrangements.¹⁰⁶ In late August a letter from the tourist office in Tydal had already arrived asking exactly when in November the film team would arrive?¹⁰⁷ Probably, the reason for taking the trip in November was that

¹⁰² DA. T21, F1, 63, Moses, Aron och Karl XII, B, Norge: Att diskutera. [undated, probably summer 1993]. In 1968 Villius worked with the death of Karl XII; DA. T21, E1, 1, Korr 67–70, N, letter from Villius to Fredrik Fostvedt (NRK), 1968.11.26; letter from Villius to Hartvig Kiran (NRK), 1968.12.09.

¹⁰³ DA. T21, F1, 63, Moses, Aron och Karl XII, B, Norge: Att diskutera. [undated, probably summer 1993]

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ DA. T21, F1, 63, Moses, Aron och Karl XII, 17, Första synops Norge [undated, perhaps September 1993].

¹⁰⁶ DA. T21, F1, 63, Moses, Aron och Karl XII, B, Olle! [letter from Villius to Häger, undated, perhaps October 1993]; DA. T21, F1, 63, Moses, Aron och Karl XII, B, Färdplan Norge, p. 2 [undated, perhaps September 1993].

¹⁰⁷ DA. T21, F1, 63, Moses, Aron och Karl XII, H, letter from Johanna M. Østby to NRK, 1993.08.23.

Karl XII had been killed at that time of the year. Although much of the trip had been planned in advance, the producers were conscious that weather could delay the filming.¹⁰⁸ Their preparations ensured that the production trip was relatively short, only nine days in November plus one day of filming in Stockholm. The production group was small, consisting of Häger and Villius, cameraman Norman, sound recordist Nilsson and light technician Bo Eriksson, which meant that they could travel from Stockholm in a van.

In addition to the film shot during the trip, archival footage was used in the programme. Footage was sought that illustrated the break-up of the union between Sweden and Norway in 1905 and events during World War II. Thanks to the SVT archive and co-operation with NRK, costs were kept low; NRK was made co-producer of the programme.¹⁰⁹ In comparison with the synopsis, a greater unity of space was created by changing or cutting out some of the proposed episodes: the photo of the Norwegian king onboard a British cruiser was exchanged for a photo of the king on the run in Norway (which also is a more dramatic image); the anecdote about the Norwegian scholar Schreiner visiting Uppsala was dropped; the demonstration in which Villius took part was cut out; and a discussion of Swedish aloofness toward Norway during the early war years was exchanged for imagery of German soldiers travelling by railroad (which could be in Norway or in Sweden).¹¹⁰ The latter three changes might have been caused by a lack of suitable imagery,¹¹¹ but the result was a programme united in space. On the occasions that Villius related stories of his youth, the camera focused on Norway. Hans Arnbom wrote theme music for the programme, but Norwegian music such as the national anthem and the well known Nidelven song were used to add mood to particular scenes.¹¹² Editing started in January and was finished in March of 1994. In January, Häger discovered that there was underwater footage of the German cruiser *Blücher* (which the Norwegians sank on 9 April 1940) and arranged to include some of it in the programme. Technically, because the programme was shot on Super 16 film, the *Blücher* footage had to be copied in another format and electronically edited into the programme.¹¹³ The programme was broadcast on 17 May, the national day of Norway. It is segmented as follow:

¹⁰⁸ DA. T21, F1, 63, Moses, Aron och Karl XII, B, Färdplan Norge [undated, perhaps September 1993].

¹⁰⁹ DA. T21, F1, 63, Moses, Aron och Karl XII, N & O; the notes indicate that the footage was from the SVT archive, but it is possible that some imagery was bought from Norway. DA. T21, F1, 63, Moses, Aron och Karl XII, PQ. Cf. DA. T21, F1, 63, Moses, Aron och Karl XII, B, fax from Boel Rosenlund to Marit Baardsgaard, 1994.06.23.

¹¹⁰ Cf. DA. T21, F1, 63, Moses, Aron och Karl XII, 17, Första synops Norge [undated, perhaps September 1993].

¹¹¹ It could be that on-screen talks by Villius did not “work” when examined back in the editing room.

¹¹² Information about the music used, see DA. T21, F1, 63, Moses, Aron och Karl XII, M.

¹¹³ DA. T21, F1, 63, Moses, Aron och Karl XII, O, correspondence between Häger and Jeanette Berg, January–February 1994, esp. “Jeanette, hej!” A curiosity is that the cost of the *Blücher* footage was negotiated after the broadcast; DA. T21, F1, 63, Moses, Aron och Karl XII, B, fax from Boel Rosenlund to Marit Baardsgaard, 1994.06.23.

- A. Sequences 1–2. Pre-title sequences, painting of the dead Swedish king Karl XII carried home from Norway. Title.
- B. Sequences 3–4. Villius in Bohus castle and talks of medieval history.
- C. Sequences 5–7. Villius in coastal town, archive footage about the border region ca 1900.
- D. Sequences 8–13. Villius in the Fredriksten castle and tells of the death of Karl XII.
- E. Sequences 14–20. Villius in World War II sites in southern Norway; he tells of the German attack in April 1940 and of the train traffic between Norway and Sweden during the war.
- F. Sequences 21–23. Villius in Eidsvoll and Aulestad, places of national significance to Norwegians.
- G. Sequences 24–26. Villius takes the train north to Trondheim, talking both of ancient history and of World War II.
- H. Sequences 27–29. Villius in the border mountains near Sweden and tells of the catastrophe of 1718–19 when 3000 soldiers died in a snowstorm.
- I. Sequence 30. Villius in Oslo contemplating the past.

Formally, the film is made in the expository mode with Villius as voice-over narrator and on-screen presenter. He is on screen more frequently than he was in *Jag ser underbara ting*. The imagery consists mainly of newly-filmed scenery but there is also some archival footage from the turn of the century and World War II. There is a reflexive element in the film in that Villius is travelling in a van that has an SVT insignia. It is also apparent when he sits on a train talking and looks to the side as if conversing with someone other than the audience, which may also remind viewers of the constructed character of the programme. But the reflexive element is not as obvious as it was in the previous programme. When archival footage is used, no graphic index tells when or where it was shot.¹¹⁴

Both imagery and sound effects help set the mood. Darkness, rain, and snow communicate the feeling of cold weather. The diegetic sound of a cold wind blowing accompanies the painting of the dead Karl XII (A) as well as the image of a snowy mountain side where Villius tells how a Swedish army was caught in a snow-storm (H). The sound adds to the feeling of cold. The musical score creates a serious mood for the programme as a whole, while other musical pieces are added for specific effects. For example, music in a minor key accompanies the black and white archival footage from the war years (D, E), thus loading the images with a sad, grave mood. Elsewhere, imagery of the Norwegian landscape is accompanied by the national anthem, which creates a romantic mood (F), and a church song accompanies the image of the cathedral in Trondheim (G). When Villius travels by railway northwards through the

¹¹⁴The filmmakers had such knowledge via content description cards; DA. T21, F1, 63, Moses, Aron och Karl XII, N & O.

mountains, and he tells of the fierce fighting in the area during World War II, the dark mountains themselves become a dramatisation of the war (G). Leaving the mountains and entering the town of Trondheim, a cheerful song (about the Nidelven River that runs through the town) frames the images of colourful houses and contrasts strongly with the grave mood of the mountain journey. The music effectively contrasts wartime Norway and peacetime Trondheim (G).

The programme moves geographically from south to north and thus is spatially logical, although it returns to Oslo in the last scene. At the same time, it does not follow a historical chronology. It begins and ends in the present, with Villius on screen thinking about the past. In between, the programme moves back and forth in history. In terms of content, it is a personal story about Norway and Sweden. The 1718 campaign of King Karl XII features in the opening sequence (A), during the journey (D) and at the end of the programme (H). By contrast, many historical events and relations are not covered. Notably, the hundred years of political union between Norway and Sweden, including the dramatic separation in 1905, is covered only briefly and catalogued with the portrait of Norwegian nationalist and author Björnsterne Björnsson. In other words, the programme could certainly have been constructed with a different selection of historical facts.

The programme opens with Villius standing in Sweden's National Museum of Art in front of the famous historical painting that portrays the transport home of the dead Karl XII (A). In the synopsis, the painting was designated as the last image of the programme, but instead it became the hook. Villius's voice-over commentary starts with a question, "Why did he go to Norway," and then with the camera focusing on the dead king:

Here he is carried home and almost nothing is correct, as far as I understand. He was not brought back to Sweden like this, on an open bier. It has very little to do with historical reality, but it is a magnificent painting indeed. [...] History: Sentimentality, romance and warm blood that drips down in the snow from a shot capercaillie. That is how it is with history, it easily becomes stories.

In this scene, Villius immediately establishes himself as a historian with some authority. Stating that the painting has little to do with historical reality, he lays claim to superior knowledge about the past. The painting is used to initiate reflections about the past. Villius's words about romance and warm blood are accompanied by an enlargement of a detail in the painting, where blood is dripping from a newly-shot capercaillie, the big, beautiful bird itself becoming a metaphor for the romantic past.¹¹⁵ In the midst of the rather analytical open-

¹¹⁵ As pointed out by Nodin, Anders, 1997, p. 100, the capercaillie is king among the birds in the forest and thus in the context of the painting a metaphor for the king. In fact, Nodin's thesis can be taken even further. Tillhagen, Carl-Herman, 1978, p. 264, relates the popular belief that a capercaillie could only be killed by a silver bullet. There was a legend that King Karl XII could only die from a silver bullet, which gives a particular significance to the capercaillie as metaphor for King Karl XII.



Figure 11. Gustaf Cederström's *Karl XII:s likfärd*. In the programme presenter Villius points out several historical errors in the painting and says its view of history is romantic. At bottom left the capercaillie that parallels the king. Photo: Nationalmuseum, Stockholm. Courtesy of Nationalmuseum.

ing sequence, a part of a well-known song is heard that describes how a girl dusts this very painting (which is famous).¹¹⁶ The song anchors the painting in Swedish cultural history but it also serves a cognitive function in reminding us that the painting is just a painting, a construction, and not reality.

Villius starts on his journey and at the first stop at the old Bohus castle he continues as historian, quoting source materials that prove the importance of the castle in the fourteenth century (B). He reminds the audience of the thousand years-old legend that nearby, a woman named Sigrid Storråda refused Christianity from the Norwegian king. Back in the van, Villius watches out of the window and (in voice-over) reflects on the tale:

Stories that engrave themselves [in memory] are interesting, as the one about Sigrid Storråda. Many people absolutely want to believe that such stories are true. I want to keep my heroes, they say, I don't want people to tamper with them. But why cannot fairy heroes be fairy heroes? What does it matter that it is not true? The stories are still there – isn't that enough?

¹¹⁶The song "Frida i vårstädningen" was published by Birger Sjöberg in 1922 and has been popular ever since.

In this inner monologue, Villius continues his reflections about the nature of our knowledge about the past. The reflections can be seen as comments in the lively debate about history in the early 1990s and must be understood as criticism of popular historian Herman Lindqvist. About a year before Häger and Villius made the programme, Lindqvist published a book on medieval Swedish history in which he related many legends including the one about Sigrîd Storråda and the king. Some critics were very upset and argued that Lindqvist failed to distinguish clearly between history and legend.¹¹⁷ The legendary status of Storråda had already been discussed by Lauritz Weibull in a classic work in 1911,¹¹⁸ and because Villius was trained in the Weibull seminar he was probably wild with fury that the Storråda episode could be considered history. Thus, Villius's reflections should be seen in the context of the history debate that raged in these years, and especially in response to Lindqvist's writings.¹¹⁹

The key segment of the programme occurs when Villius visits the border castle where Karl XII was killed (D). First, Villius climbs the fortifications and walks by a monument commemorating the site where the king fell. The historian Villius announces in voice-over that it is a controversial issue in Swedish history, whether the king died from a bullet fired randomly by a Norwegian or was deliberately murdered. The camera glides around, showing the different fortifications from where the fatal shot may have been fired, and Villius suggests that the shot was probably fired from one of these. The film cuts to images of the castle at night, the voice-over narrator observing that it is easy to imagine the thunder and smoke of the siege during a November night. Then Villius appears on screen below the castle (in the dark of night), presumably at the site where the king fell, and during a two-minute shot he describes the event, quoting from three different diaries. One of the quotations is particularly lengthy, which indicates how important the scene was deemed by the filmmakers. The scene offers vivid testimony but is not an analytical discussion. The segment ends with the remark that "this is where the Great era of Sweden ended," thus pointing to the significance of the place. Toward the end of the programme, Villius again comments on the 1718 campaign and the disastrous retreat of the northern army (H). He reads a quotation from a priest who was among the soldiers on the march. He also points out that Karl XII's army fought against the cold ten years earlier in Ukraine, and offers a quote from a diary about that. Villius had analysed a number of the soldiers' diaries in his dissertation forty years earlier, and this latter quotation appeared in another of his books as late as 1992.¹²⁰ The death of Karl XII and the retreat of his army again show that

¹¹⁷ Lindqvist, Herman, 1992, pp. 230 f. Lindqvist writes that the stories about Sigrîd Storråda are fictitious, but nevertheless he includes them in the book. On the criticism against the book, see Ludvigsson, David, 1997, and Zander, Ulf, 2001, pp. 436 ff.

¹¹⁸ Weibull, Lauritz, 1911, pp. 107–110.

¹¹⁹ Much of the debate dealt with the history expositions that were arranged at Swedish museums in 1993. Häger and Villius made a short history programme, *Kärnhuset i riksäpplet* (1993) for a local exposition that was part of that programme.

¹²⁰ Villius, Hans, 1951; Villius, Hans, 1992, p. 46.



Figure 12. Presenter Hans Villius on location where King Karl XII was killed. Villius reads lengthy quotations into the camera, marking the importance of the event. The November darkness parallels the hour when the king was shot. *Courtesy of Olle Häger.*

quoting sources and suggesting the non-romantic solution to a historical mystery is a hallmark of the historian Villius.

The second central component of the programme is the Norwegian experience of World War II and especially the German attack on April 9, 1940 (E). Presenter Villius accounts for the fighting from its beginning south of Oslo and then follows it northward, on the heels of the fleeing king and government. The first sequence deals with the sinking of the German cruiser *Blücher* in the sound south of Oslo. Villius gives a detailed account of the event, which is illustrated with photos from 1940 and by newly-shot underwater film. When the *Blücher* went down (with a thousand men onboard) the narrator says it sunk in ninety metres of “ice-cold water,” thus speaking to the spectator’s senses.¹²¹ Other authentic footage and photos are used to illustrate the attack, showing the Norwegian Nazi leader Quisling as well as the bombed ruins of the town of Elverum. Like the images of the *Blücher*, this footage is accompanied by slow, somber music. At this instance, Villius relinquishes the role of historian and becomes a witness. His own memories of the war offer a Swedish

¹²¹ In the synopsis, the expression ice-cold water was missing. DA. T21, F1, 63, 17, Första synops.

perspective and an emotional response to the events in Norway. He remembers that he and his friends were sent home from school when Norway was attacked (E), and recalls meeting Norwegian refugees at the university (G). Among his sad memories there is also a humorous one, when he recalls that one refugee had coloured his hair white which made him look like an ermine (G). Villius returns as historian when he comments on archival footage of German soldiers on a train (E):

Train imagery from the past usually means idyll, but not here, because these are German soldiers in Sweden during the war. It has been estimated that two million Germans [who were] stationed in Norway went on leave in this fashion through Sweden to Germany and back. Why did we allow this? Well, because the Swedish government felt hard pressed, that is the answer to be had. Hitler was successful and deadly dangerous and Sweden did not dare stick out its neck, so the leave trains rolled for three long years.

With these words the narrator does not only provide information from the past, but also problematises it. First, he complicates the meaning of the extant imagery by saying that it is “not” idyllic. Second he poses a morally important question to the audience, asking how could “we” allow something so morally questionable to happen. He does not give a moral opinion about the deviation from neutrality, but presents the audience with the problem.¹²² Most important, he makes the audience feel that this is about “us.” Although the narrator presents a cognitive answer to the question, the moral problem stays with the audience.

On some occasions, presenter Villius takes a more personal role. Telling of how Norwegians had gathered at Eidsvoll in 1814 to establish a constitution, he walks on the bridge above a waterfall a stone’s throw from the building and suggests that “the enthusiastic cheering was probably heard all the way out here to the bridge” (F).¹²³ As in the Egypt programme the presenter becomes the vicarious tourist who provides spatial authenticity. But then Villius reveals that he has a very personal relation with Eidsvoll, because as a student he failed an exam due to the fact that he did not remember what had happened there. The professor asked him about his age – he was eighteen years old – and then exclaimed “damn it, the undergraduate [Sw. kandidaten] is young, come back in two weeks.” This entertaining little anecdote serves a cognitive function in pointing out that Eidsvoll was an important place, as well as providing some space in between fact-packed parts of the programme. Villius’s student years are alluded to several times in the programme.¹²⁴ There are more examples of how the presenter represents the spectator, which serves as an agent of presence and

¹²² Häger and Villius’s *Fyra dagar som skakade Sverige* (1988), which will be discussed in Chapter 8, dealt exclusively with the issue of transit of German soldiers through Sweden.

¹²³ In an early synopsis the 1814 events at Eidsvoll was described in a much more detailed way, and with imagery from both outside and inside the building. There was also to be footage from the jubilee of 1914. DA. T21, F1, 63, 17, Första synops, p. 6.

¹²⁴ For example, indirectly when Villius visits the home of Björnsterne Björnsson. Compared with the synopsis version, the programme’s treatment of Björnsson includes much less about nationalism and more anecdotes; DA. T21, F1, 63, 17, Första synops.

communicates sensory information. When he stands on the mountain slope in a fur hat we can feel the cold (H). Commenting on archival footage from the seaside resort of Marstrand a hundred years ago Villius says that it smells of Swedish punch and whisky with salt water (C). He also interprets the feelings of characters in the images, suggesting that you can see that King Oscar II likes Marstrand (C).

After scenes of the Swedish army in 1718–19 retreating over the mountains in a snowstorm, the programme ends with Villius sitting on the stairs of the royal palace in Oslo. The voice-over reflects over times long gone. His final words articulate the rather positive memory of the young Villius inviting a Norwegian girl to tea. Thus, the final image emphasises friendship instead of armed hostility between Sweden and Norway, which would have been the case had the film ended with the retreating and dying Swedish army as was first suggested in the synopsis.

Then how did Häger and Villius use the presenter? What cognitive function did the presenter perform in the above programmes? In relation to *1000 år* I discussed the cognitive function of the voice-over narrator, who provided information and analysis about the past, and sometimes offered a moral perspective. The presenter serves the same functions but is able to do more. Regarding information: if the narrator can offer exterior readings of events, then the presenter can be more personal in response and information, thereby opening up an *interior perspective* of events and places. By playing the role of visitor present on a site he or she can also communicate personal impressions and feelings, that is *experience-based* information. Because of the personal, subjective character of the role, the presenter can also offer moral reflections and standpoints with more pathos than can the implicitly objective voice-over narrator. In the above programmes about Egypt and Norway, presenter Villius performed these functions, both narrating past events and suggesting observations that were based on actually being there. Interestingly, Villius served two more functions. First, in his on-screen reflections on historical knowledge, legends and source-criticism, he played the *role of professional historian* rather than history-narrator and took the analytic dimension further than the narrator normally would. Second he played himself as a *private person*, telling stories from his own life that related to the subjects presented, thus providing another dimension to the subjects. He served as a mediator between the pictures presented and the understanding of the spectator, a cognitive function of at least two dimensions. He is both teacher and fellow human being.

The use of a presenter released the travel programmes from the limitations imposed when only extant images are available. Thus, aesthetic considerations had little influence on what was actually treated in the programme. Aesthetic considerations came via editing. Moral considerations can be traced to the choice of ending the Norway film with a reconciliatory mood. Elsewhere it is clear that cognitive considerations had a very strong influence on the programmes.

Häger and Villius's personal travel programmes exemplify the need to use a flexible definition of historical documentary: a creative treatment that asserts a belief that the given objects, states of affairs or events occurred or existed in the actual world as portrayed. These are formally unorthodox programmes that mix different modes of representation, and because Villius partly speaks about his personal past, we cannot know for sure whether the episodes did happen or if they are just the creation of an inventive storyteller. But with a definition that combines the *assertion* with *creativity*, the programmes continue to be historical documentaries. As the Egypt programme had been well received, so was the Norway film. One reviewer was particularly impressed and wrote that Villius "slips knowledge onto us [...] while we sit watching."¹²⁵

5. Archival footage and oral-historical documents

In the mid-1990s, Olle Häger and his production team, the retired Villius now a consulting member, began planning for the series *Hundra svenska år* [*One Hundred Swedish Years*] that would depict Sweden during the twentieth century. The series was made from hours of rarely seen archival footage as well as interviews with aged witnesses, which made it a collage of collective memory. The series scheduled to appear at the turn of the century and was a central part in SVT's celebrations of that event. Many other television companies made similar efforts to celebrate the turn of the century and take advantage of the audience's interest in historical flashbacks. Originally, *Hundra svenska år* was to include ten episodes, but only eight one-hour episodes were made. These were broadcast in the autumn of 1999 on eight consecutive Tuesdays, starting September 14. The series received both a large audience and massive acclaim from the critics.¹²⁶

Work on the series began in 1995.¹²⁷ In an early internal document, Häger wrote that in making the series the filmmakers would not be primarily "adult educators" and should not try to cover everything, but rather choose subjects that could suit "this kind of documentaries." The main thing, he stated, was that they make good programmes.¹²⁸ Elsewhere he wrote that the series should be both history and "entertainment."¹²⁹ Thus, the series was planned as an entertaining rather than as an educational production. However, cognitive considerations were still important in the production, and from the start Häger

¹²⁵ DA. T21, F1, 63, R, article by Carl-Otto Werkelid; cf. postcard from Bjarne Logstein to Häger, 1995.05.19.

¹²⁶ The series also received some criticism, which I will discuss in Chapter 7.

¹²⁷ Maria Gratte says that Häger spoke of the series already in 1992. Interview with Maria Gratte, 2002.10.28.

¹²⁸ DA. T21, F1, 68, Inledande research, 4, Diskuterande underlag för BOKSLUT, p. 2, 1995.06.06.

¹²⁹ DA. T21, F1, 68, Inledande research, first, Programbeskrivning, p. 1, 1997.05.21. When the series was finished Häger told the press that the filmmakers wanted the audience to "laugh and cry, and learn things;" quoted in Johansson, Marika, 1999.

planned to confer with historians and social scientists in order to find “new perspectives on twentieth-century history.”¹³⁰ Thus, cognitive considerations were important.

The production process can be closely reconstructed. First, a production group was assembled. On most productions Häger and Villius performed the research themselves, but this time the production group was much larger. Apart from the core group consisting of Norman, Nilsson and Tunegård, researchers Jan Lindenbaum, Maria Gratte, and Cecilia Vejlens were recruited for the project. Additional researchers were engaged for individual programmes. Because filming was done sporadically over several years, different cameramen participated in the production.¹³¹ Initially, the group decided that each episode would run from 1900 to 2000 rather than each episode treating a decade of the century, as was the obvious alternative. Next, they discussed possible themes for the individual episodes. Having selected approximately twenty-five themes, Häger checked with the SVT film archive to see what themes could be covered with extant footage. The formal idea was to show the treasures of the film archive and complement that with newly-filmed interviews. The archive search resulted in the exclusion of half of the themes originally suggested. One particular problem that was noticed at the early stage was a general lack of images from the period 1950–1963.¹³² What remained in the end were eight themes that “felt reasonably important,” and for which the image supply was guaranteed.¹³³ The themes were domestic politics, childhood, fashion, work, leisure, the royals, technology, and foreign affairs. Later, Häger expressed regret about not being able to make programmes about religion or violence, which could not be covered by available imagery. Two subjects that were chosen but dropped when time ran short included heroes and idols, and Stockholm.¹³⁴

Häger contacted a number of historians for suggestions for the series.¹³⁵ In a letter, Jarl Torbacke argued that Swedish business [näringslivet] “must get a good share of the honour” of the country overcoming the economic crisis in the 1930s.¹³⁶ Häger underlined these words and was certainly aware of Torbacke’s point, which is of some interest, because the series would be criticised for giving

¹³⁰ DA. T21, [Programlista, flap 40, övergripande programplanering, (about 1900-talet i Sverige)].

¹³¹ Jan Lindenbaum was based in the film archive and was responsible for the image research. Maria Gratte and Cecilia Vejlens previously worked with Häger and Villius on *Jag ser underbara ting* (1993). Among the additional researchers were two other young women, Charlotte Hellström and Susanna Mehmedi. For a full list of the staff involved, see DA. T21, F1, 69, Ögonvittnen, 29.

¹³² DA. T21, F1, 68, Inledande research, 5, Formidéer [undated, 1995 or 1996].

¹³³ DA. T21, F1, 69, All slags information, 20, Ulf Zander: Film [undated, August or September 1999], p. 1; [Programlista, flap 40 övergripande programplanering, (about 1900-talet i Sverige)].

¹³⁴ DA. T21, F1, 68, Inledande research, first, Programbeskrivning, p. 3, 1997.05.21; Lindh, Kristina, 1999; Häger at seminar at Stockholm University, 2000.04.04. Author’s notes.

¹³⁵ DA. T21, F1, 68, Inledande research, 4, Hundra år mellan nitton och tjugo (arbetstitel), 1995.09.13; *ibid.*, flap 9, Hundra år... i utskick till.

¹³⁶ DA. T21, F1, 68, Inledande research, 9, letter from Jarl Torbacke to Häger, 1995.09.16.

too little space to business and industry. In another letter Carl Göran Andrae wrote that the series should include an episode about the changed position and new roles of women, a suggestion that was also underlined by Häger.¹³⁷ Regarding women's history, Häger and Villius had previously spoken of their "dream" to make a series about women.¹³⁸ Now, the suggestion to focus on women again surfaced. In the end no programme was made about women, but the female experience was integrated into all the programmes. It should be noted that the production group that planned and made *Hundra svenska år* included several women.

After themes were chosen, the production group gathered materials for the series. On the basis of content description cards, Häger and his assistants looked through about 2.000 of the SVT film archive's 65.000 hours of film.¹³⁹ From these were selected two hundred hours to form the core of the programmes, which provided around twenty-five hours per episode.¹⁴⁰ They especially tried to find fresh, rarely seen footage about ordinary people.¹⁴¹ It was their aim to show unique imagery from the archive, and when they discovered that most footage from the 1970s, 80s and 90s was of poor aesthetic quality¹⁴² they decided to focus on the first half of the century.¹⁴³ To supplement the archival footage Häger looked for witnesses, people who had been part of the events and processes caught on film. Ideally, he wanted the witnesses to be visible in the footage so that by cutting from film to interview a link would be provided between then and now, "reminders that the reality of archival footage has to do with real people."¹⁴⁴ Häger interviewed 195 people, sitting "a couple of hours in 180 Swedish kitchens," thus adding many hours of interviews to the historic footage. About half the interviewees were featured in the series, mostly in clips shorter than forty seconds.¹⁴⁵

The search for witnesses was performed in various ways. Inquiries were published in local papers. The historical event that Häger began with was the Ådalen shootings of 1931. In September 1995, he wrote to the newspaper *Nya Norrland* and asked for help in finding witnesses to the event. Häger had already spoken with two men who took part in the demonstration that was fired upon, but he was anxious to contact people who appeared in photographs from

¹³⁷ DA. T21, F1, 68, Inledande research, 9, fax from Carl Göran [Andrae] to Olle [Häger], 1995.11.30.

¹³⁸ Ström, Sven, 1980.

¹³⁹ Jan Lindenbaum, who worked in the archive, was crucial during this work.

¹⁴⁰ Häger's description at seminar at Stockholm University, 2000.04.04. Author's notes.

¹⁴¹ Brunnberg, Knut, 1999. Cf. Sima, Jonas, 1999.

¹⁴² Interview with Häger, 2003.06.03; Häger at evaluation seminar at SVT, 2000.03.03; Häger at seminar at Stockholm University, 2000.04.04.

¹⁴³ Häger also says that it is difficult to evaluate the last few decades; interview with Häger, 2003.06.03.

¹⁴⁴ DA. T21, F1, 69, All slags information, 20, Ulf Zander: Film [undated, August or September 1999], p. 2; T21, F1, 68, Inledande research, 4, Information om projekt "100 år mellan 19 och 20" (arbetstitel), p. 1, 1995.09.08.

¹⁴⁵ DA. T21, F1, 69, All slags information, 20, Ulf Zander: Film [undated, August or September 1999].

the event.¹⁴⁶ That Häger was so anxious to find witnesses featured in extant pictures of the event is telling of his aesthetic idea for the series; that there should be a tight connection between the archival materials and the interviews. Inquiries for witnesses were also carried in short television programmes, which were made from film shots that he wanted to use in the series.¹⁴⁷ In the inquiries, first the film shot was shown and then Häger and Villius appeared on screen asking people to call if they had recognised somebody in the film or even were pictured themselves. A handful of such televised inquiries were made, sometimes with amazing results. The first inquiry found an audience of 700.000 people.¹⁴⁸ Another inquiry film was broadcast at 8.50 p.m. on Christmas Eve, 1998. At 9.30 the same evening, according to Häger, sixty people had called and claimed to recognise all of those seen in the film.¹⁴⁹ The search for witnesses also carried out in calls to homes for old people, where the staff suggested elderly people who could be interviewed.¹⁵⁰ Although more men than women were interviewed, and male interviewees predominated in the film, the filmmakers chose to feature most of the women and fewer of the men. Häger searched for witnesses from different parts of the country. Most interviewees had had ordinary jobs and were thus representative of the broader population. He did not actively seek out the influential or entrepreneurs. Häger claims that his priority was to find exciting people rather than to find representatives of any particular group.¹⁵¹

The interviews were used to link viewers immediately with the stories of people who were caught up in historical events and the modernisation process. As compared with other sources, interviews may communicate the experience of persons who do not have the time or the literary talent to write their memoirs. Thus, interviews can be valuable sources for social history. But in some ways interviews are problematic. For one thing, memory is a treacherous thing, which is why it is necessary for the interviewer to cross-examine some of the claims made by the interviewee. In addition, the interviewer and the interviewee affect each other during the interview. The interviewer's age, appearance and manner of speech, preparations, and credentials are all factors that determine how he is perceived by the interviewee.¹⁵² Therefore, it is of some interest that when making the interviews for *Hundra svenska år* Häger was over sixty

¹⁴⁶ DA. T21, F1, 68, Inledande research, 9, letter from Häger to Märilt Nilsson, 1995.09.14; [anonymous], 1995. DA. T21, F2, 1, (5) letter from Märilt Nilsson to Häger, 1995.09.27. The newspaper published the photographs and a call for people who were in them, and Nilsson writes of a tremendous response to the publication.

¹⁴⁷ DA. T21, F1, 68, Inledande research, 4, Information om projekt "100 år mellan 19 och 20" p. 6, 1995.09.08.

¹⁴⁸ DA. T21, F1, 68, Inledande research, first, Programbeskrivning, p. 3, 1997.05.21.

¹⁴⁹ Häger at seminar at Stockholm University, 2000.04.04. Author's notes. See also Johansson, Marika, 1999; Holmin, Maria, 1999. No matter if Häger's claim was exactly true or exaggerated, there can be little doubt that some of the televised inquiries met with much response.

¹⁵⁰ DA. T21, F1, 69, Ögonvittnen, includes a lot of notes and correspondence about the search for witnesses.

¹⁵¹ Interview with Häger, 2003.06.03.

¹⁵² Cf. Friedlander, Peter, (1975) 1996.



Figure 13. The team behind *Hundra svenska år*. Producer Olle Häger, editor Kjell Tunegård, and narrator Hans Villius in the editing room. Editing was performed in Lightworks. *Photo: Jan Håkan Dahlström. Courtesy of Jan Håkan Dahlström.*

years old, as were sound recordist Nilsson and cameraman Norman who assisted during the interviews.¹⁵³ Although we cannot know what impression they made it is likely that they signalled professionalism. Furthermore, Häger had his roots in rural Sweden as did many of the old interviewees, and he would have been able to talk with them on their own terms. A few interviewees wrote to Häger afterwards, trying to help with the production, which indicates that they appreciated him and his efforts.¹⁵⁴ Of the close to two hundred interviews conducted, Häger saved thirty in their entirety and donated them to the SVT archive.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³ Different cameramen worked on different interviews.

¹⁵⁴ DA. T21, 69, Ögonvittnen, 31.

¹⁵⁵ Conversation with Häger, 2002. It should be noted that the donation of selected taped interviews was made to the company archive, where they can be used for future programmes, and not to a public archive, where they could have served future researchers.

Two people who had key roles in the making of *Hundra svenska år* were editor Kjell Tunegård and sound recordist Gunnar Nilsson. Tunegård had free rein to edit archival footage and interview segments that Häger had picked. He also added music. When there was a rough cut, Häger would sit down with a VHS copy of the programme and write a narration text.¹⁵⁶ As imagery and music coalesced, the narration text was repeatedly rewritten to fit the whole.¹⁵⁷ Sound recordist Nilsson's job was crucial because the old archival footage often lacked a soundtrack. If original sound recordings existed, they often included a narrator's voice, which made them difficult to use. Nilsson found substitute sounds in the SVT archive and in some cases created new sounds to make the imagery come alive.¹⁵⁸ Tunegård then edited the new sounds into the soundscape to fit with music and narration. When everything else was in place, the images were checked for lighting and were cut to the desired format, which meant that about twenty-five percent of the image was cut out, up or down. The re-framing process allowed the footage to take on more attractive aesthetic proportions,¹⁵⁹ and let the filmmakers focus on the part of the archival image that most interested them. In other words, the re-framing had a cognitive as well as an aesthetic function.¹⁶⁰

After years of work Häger was eager for a good broadcasting time. Especially, he was worried that the series would be perceived as a postscript to the twenty-six part *People's Century*, which SVT bought from BBC and broadcast shortly before *Hundra svenska år*.¹⁶¹ In the end, the last episode of *People's Century* was broadcast almost a full year before *Hundra svenska år* began. With the turn of the century approaching, the audience was ready for a new series about the twentieth century.

In the following I will look closely into one of the episodes in *Hundra svenska år*,¹⁶² namely the episode which dealt with work and working life and was called *I ditt anletes svett* [*By the sweat of your brow*], an expression from the Bible (Genesis 3:19).¹⁶³ At a press conference, Häger stated that this was the best

¹⁵⁶ Häger says that he hardly ever differed about the editing. DA. T21, F1, 69, Ögonvittnen, 29, Historia, p. 5.

¹⁵⁷ Häger at seminar at Stockholm University, 2000.04.04. Häger said he re-wrote the narration text five-six-seven times.

¹⁵⁸ Nilsson says that the sounds should create not atmosphere but rather a feeling of presence; interview with Gunnar Nilsson, 2002.12.05.

¹⁵⁹ The format was used at SVT Drama and was brought to Häger by Norman; letter from Häger to the author, 2003.07.20.

¹⁶⁰ Häger describes this process in DA. T21, F1, 69, Ögonvittnen, 29, Historia, p. 6. At a seminar at Stockholm University, 2000.04.04, the producers' cutting of archive footage was criticised by film scholar Pelle Snickars, who argued that they should rather have tried to preserve the original cutting as well as include information about the film and the photographer. Häger argued that they gained something from cutting archive footage, but admitted that test audience response made them include more information about the archival footage in later episodes.

¹⁶¹ DA. T21, F1, 68, Inledande research, 4, letter from Häger to Hans Bonnevier, 1997.08.18.

¹⁶² Two other episodes will be treated in the next chapter.

¹⁶³ The production group for this episode included Jan Lindenbaum, Maria Gratte, Cecilia Vej-lens and Susanna Mehmedi.

documentary that he and Villius had ever made, that it was about an important subject, and that it was ambitious and resilient.¹⁶⁴ If it was their best film it was for a number of reasons. In part, Häger's assessment was probably based on his enjoyment of the subject matter. But not least it was a result of the crewmembers' remarkable expertise in making an aesthetically fine programme. In all, the fifty-eight minutes programme consists of forty-six sequences, which I have assembled into ten segments:

- A. Sequences 1–3. Introduction, Sweden at the turn of the century 1900, film from town, peasant countryside and nomadic Sami culture. One interview.
- B. Sequences 4–9. Early 1900s, industrial workers. Three interviews.
- C. Sequences 10–16. Early 1900s, various kinds of work. Two interviews.
- D. Sequences 17–21. Maids, navvies, fishermen and farmers. Six interviews.
- E. Sequences 22–25. Industrial work. Three interviews.
- F. Sequences 26–32. Professions after World War II, women's and men's work. One interview.
- G. Sequence 33. Changes in peasant Sweden. Two interviews.
- H. Sequences 34–41. 1960s and 70s, problems in the industrial sector, strikes etc.
- I. Sequences 42–45. 1980s and 90s, new professions and new inhabitants. Several short interview clips.
- J. Sequence 46. Song from the early 1900s (while the programme ends).

Formally, the programme was made in the expository and the participatory modes, the archival footage being intercut with filmed interviews. Most archival film clips are only a few seconds long, but the fragmented imagery is tied together by the narrator's commentary, read by Hans Villius, which names people, places, shops, and smaller articles and details that are visible in the imagery. Sometimes the narrator anchors the imagery by naming time and place, but on other occasions that information is offered through graphics on screen. To name time and place is a strategy that convinces the spectator that the narrator (or implied author) has expertise. In addition to the narrator's commentary, key commentary is delivered through the eighteen interview clips that I will look into more closely below.

The programme moves chronologically through the century from 1900 to 2000, in the final sequence returning to the early 1900s. The century is not evenly covered, but three-quarters of the programme (A–F) deal with the first half of the century, and these are the years that most of the interviewees discuss. By contrast, the latter half of the century is covered only in two segments (H–I), which include only a few, brief interview clips. In other words, the focus of the programme is on the first half of the century, on times and a society that are relatively distant from our own. A few times the programme touches upon

¹⁶⁴ Häger 2001.05.15, author's notes. See also interview with Häger, 2003.06.03.

specific events, but mostly it deals with conditions or the gradual process of change and thus exact dates are rarely important. There is no definitive dramatic arch, although there is a tendency to show happy faces shortly after World War II. Then the narrator suggests (over the image of a well-functioning factory) that this is “the image of working Sweden in the twentieth century” (24). While this indicates that times were especially good in the decades following the war, the programme depicts good and bad times throughout the century. The cycle of boom and bust is even thematised in the opening segment when there is footage of the nomadic Sami people and the narrator remarks that to them, life was similar whether the year was 1900 or 1800 (A). The end of the programme is complex in that it features interviews with women who are about to lose their jobs, but then in the last sequence there appears a young immigrant girl who seems hopeful on her way to a job interview (I). Thus, while the programme ends in an upbeat mood it is conditioned by the pessimistic voices from just before.

Häger has said many times that *Hundra svenska år* was to be a “tribute to common people.”¹⁶⁵ While the theme of this particular episode is labour it mostly portrays the work of common people who were peasants or industrial workers and who performed various kinds of hard physical work. The rise and fall of industrial Sweden, with its labour unions and strikes, is a significant sub-narrative in the programme. But it is not so much the structures of society that are in focus as the people and the practicalities of work and life in general. The programme links the spectators immediately with the stories of Swedes who were caught in the modernisation process. Strikingly, it is not the famous entrepreneurs but the unknown citizens who appear both in the archival footage and in the interviews.

As usual in Häger and Villius’s programmes, narration is a key communicative device. Interestingly, narration is not just informative but also stylised and associational. The opening sequence portrays a town in the early 1900s and the narrator begins the story as if it were a fairy-tale, “Once upon a time there was a land that smelled from sweat, and horse dung, and perhaps a few sprays of perfume, where the streets were there to walk on, and where work was about pulling and moving and lugging and dragging” (1). Thus, the narrator calls on the spectator to use all senses, describing how difficult life was and what it smelled like. He states that the home transport of the dead Kreuger in the early 1930s was like a “black-edged letter” (22), creating a metaphor for the emerging economic depression. Speaking of Sweden’s 600.000 horses, the narrator comments in passing that the horse in the picture is named Patrick (15). This is that kind of unnecessary detail that creates a reality effect, convincing the spectator that the narrator has a superior knowledge of the subject he is talking about.¹⁶⁶ Using the narratological device of analeps he comments on past times

¹⁶⁵ Häger quoted in DA. T21, F1, 69, All slags information, 14, Pressdag.

¹⁶⁶ Häger says he “assumed” that the horse was called Patrick, which makes clear that the name of the horse serves a narrational function; conversation with Häger, 2000.

and predicts in the present tense things that will happen, such as, decades remain until the workday will be eight hours long (9). On another occasion the narrator remarks that today's young men would have been farmhands a hundred years ago (44). Just as in *1000 år* twenty years before, the narrator provides the main story line. But clearly, there is a difference between the two productions, that is the narration has become increasingly inventive and playful, using more reflections and associations than earlier. One result is that narration and programme require more of the viewer's imagination and is open to individual readings.

To a large extent, the archival footage in this episode of *Hundra svenska år* serves the same function as did the peasant re-enactments in *1000 år*, namely to show how the physical movements of long-gone tasks were carried out. We get to see how people struggled with heavy work, such as, pushing wagons loaded with rocks (4), felling trees in the snowy forest (20), and lying on the ground when planting potatoes (21). We actually see a peasant family walking through the forest on its way to summer pasture (2), the expertise of workers tanning skins (13), and farmers cutting hay with a scythe (20). These film sequences transmit visual knowledge of what work in the past was like.

It is a cognitive problem that some footage was staged, because people will not act in a normal fashion when they know a camera is focused on them.¹⁶⁷ In the opening sequence, people who walk in the street look into the camera, many of them waving (1). Soon after, when the camera tracks a peasant family walking through the forest, none of the people on screen signal that they are aware of the presence of the camera (2), but it is impossible to believe that they were not. This provokes the questions, to what extent did a photographer arrange these scenes, and to what extent do people in other archival footage perform their actions? Later in the programme we see lumberjacks who work in the deep, snowy forest (10) and who must have been aware that they were acting in front of the camera. Later again, the film shows workers digging potatoes. Nobody looks towards the camera (21). Several scholars have pointed out that in the early years of film, the distinction between fiction and non-fiction was unclear and not considered very important.¹⁶⁸ But in view of the distinctions in our own time it is problematic that the narrator does not comment on the staged nature of the footage.

In fact, there are also some commercials used (18), but because the original soundtrack has been exchanged for a modern one with Hans Villius's narration the use of the original film becomes unclear. It would have been possible to give graphic on-screen information about the footage used, because there is much available in the card catalogue at SVT. In the *Svart på vitt* programmes Häger and Villius always offered the information that they had, but in this pro-

¹⁶⁷ The on-lookers' interest in the camera is thematised in *Hundra svenska år: De gamla och kloka må le, fallera* (1999).

¹⁶⁸ Snickars, Pelle, 2000, pp. 191 f.; Keil, Charlie, 1991. Garnert, Jan, 1998, p. 247, writes of a Nordiska museet photographer that he staged scenes in front of his camera.

gramme they fall short. Therefore, the audience might think that all the footage is documentary. Perhaps, the reason for not offering such information in *Hundra svenska år* was that the programmes were made as a flow of images, that it is a story rather than a situation in focus, and meta-information could distract the spectator from the story. Or perhaps the filmmakers simply thought that no matter what was the character of the footage it held a dimension of authenticity. The main point being, there are programmes where Häger and Villius discuss the authenticity of the imagery and there are also cases when they do not.

As I mentioned above, new soundtracks were provided for most old archival film, the new soundtrack being a combination of narrator, music, and synchronous sound effects, which help to deepen the cognitive function of the imagery. The footage is brought to life by the simulated realism of synchronous sounds, such as, crowd noises, the clip-clop of horses' hooves and the ringing of street-car bells. Synchronous sound effects are also used as a means to direct the spectator's attention to certain details in the picture, for example, chain clattering when the lumberjacks pull the chain around a log (10). *The International* (9, 41) always accompanies leftist demonstrations, in this episode as in other parts of *Hundra svenska år*. But mostly, music is used to add connotations and mood to the images. Piano music accompanies images from towns (1), whereas national-romantic music or folk music accompanies images of agriculture (20) and log-drivers working on the river (10). This music adds a romantic air to the images, although that air is sometimes problematised by the narrator or an interviewee. Good times are conveyed with jazz, which accompanies the imagery of women shopping (27) and the popular job of car mechanic (31). The music has a cognitive function, signalling that times were good and dreams were coming true. When the programme deals with the migration from the north countryside to the industrial towns in the south, the soundtrack uses a folk music inspired piece in a minor key (34), suggesting feelings of loss and sadness. Popular protests against conditions in society are accompanied by a radical song (35). Toward the end of the programme, disco music accompanies images from a bar, which symbolises hectic, modern life (42), while a traditional song in the final sequence brings the spectator's mind back to the old rural society. Taken together, archival footage and the soundtrack – even without the voice-over – creates a narrative where the spectator might learn by watching and listening.

The interviews perform a host of different functions and make different kinds of contributions to the programme as a whole. Whereas the narrator can offer general overviews of events and processes, interviews with participants open up an interior perspective of those same events. From a cognitive perspective, the filmed interview can be a rich source, communicating an event complete with gesture and intonation. Sometimes, anecdotes can provide deep insights about difficult subjects, on occasion the “inner reality” of a complex process. Colourful expressions stay with the spectator.¹⁶⁹



Figure 14. Interviewer before interviewee. Olle Häger conducting an interview of Hild Akre, 104 years old, in her Karlstad home. Interviews were a crucial part of *Hundra svenska år*. Photo: Gunnar Nilsson. Courtesy of Gunnar Nilsson.

The filmmaker selects and arranges interview excerpts for specific purposes, and creates four types of interview content. All in different ways fill a cognitive function that supplements the narration. First, *information* interviews communicate the interviewee's personal knowledge of specific events. Second, *experience* interviews are focused on the interviewee's personal experience and identity, and involve recollections about everyday activities. Third, *viewpoint* interviews express moral perspectives, often developing a social conflict.¹⁷⁰ Fourth, *analytic* interviews include general commentary that helps advance the analysis of the film.

Do we hear the interviewees' own stories or their answers to interviewer Häger's invisible questions? Occasionally Häger's questions are included in the programme, and although it is hard to evaluate his participation in structuring the stories it seems reasonable to think that he strongly influences the inter-

¹⁶⁹ In *Hundra svenska år: Vi och världen* (1999), an old woman remembers that in 1905, when everyone thought there would be a war between Sweden and Norway, her father "sharpened the sabres."

¹⁷⁰ The information, experience and viewpoint interviews are named by Corner, John, 1999, pp. 42 f.

viewees' selection of memories. The testimonies are never questioned in the programme but rather treated as a direct window onto past experience. This elevates the testimonies to historical authority. Because some interviewees return again and again throughout the series, they almost become characters who create affective viewing relationships. This was especially the case with the interview with 108 year-old Hilma Samuelsson, which was of such quality that almost all of it was used in the series.¹⁷¹ Oral historian Michael Frisch suggests that we should examine the use of testimonies in a historical programme through the frame of a sub-textual organising grid. He proposes that what an interviewee says in a programme is not only dependent on what that person can say, but on the social position of the interviewee. In his analysis of *Vietnam: A Television History* (1983), he finds that interviewees with high social status are those who ultimately are given the opportunity to venture historical reflection and analysis.¹⁷² Because Häger wanted *Hundra svenska år* to tell the history of common people, and avoided interviewing famous people, this is not an extenuating factor. Gender is also not an intervening variable.

A few interviewees offer their recollections as proof that an event occurred, or in other words their scenes function as information interviews. One aged man remembers a conflict between Swedish strikers and British strikebreakers early in the century and says that he recalls that there was "a great stir" (7). An old businessman relates how he arrived in Paris only two days after the death of Kreuger in the early 1930s and, responding to Häger's question, confirms that he was ruined as a consequence of the following crash (22). A retired army officer tells of the intense feelings against soldiers in the years following the Ådalen shootings in 1931, when demonstrators were shot dead (23).¹⁷³ All three events are well known and belong to the grand narrative of Sweden. The witnesses offer proof of what happened and particularly of the atmosphere at the times.

But most interview clips in the film are of the experience type and are used to deepen our understanding of work and working conditions in the past. A woman who once made cigars describes the work in detail and laughingly tells of the songs that the workers once sang (4). In connection with footage of lumberjacks, a former lumberjack tells how they tried to dry wet clothes over the fire, adding that there was "not much hygiene" (10). At times, the narrator suggests that the imagery reveals only part of the truth. Experience interviews make explicit what problems lie below the surface. In one case, after we see footage from a telephone switchboard, a former employee relates how vermin thrived among the dry wires and how he would be covered with lice at the end of the day (5). Second, after the programme shows imagery of happy farmers in sunny weather working with hay, an old peasant clarifies that it was a tremen-

¹⁷¹ DA. T21, F1, 78, *Hundra svenska år*, 8. Häger suggested that Hilma be called "Miss Sweden;" Johansson, Marika, 1999.

¹⁷² Frisch, Michael, 1990, p. 175.

¹⁷³ The interviewees are Julius Thorning, Carl Fridolf Lidén and Dag Stiernspetz.

dously heavy work (20). Thus, the experience interviews offer critical insights about social history. An important interview that provides both information and personal experience is with a woman who tells about navvies and relates how one of them, who was “immensely strong,” came back to marry her (18). Responding to the interviewer’s questions and (implicit) gaze, the woman blushes and laughs. A romantic mood is established with music. Asked about the scene, Häger says that he could not help adding the romantic music.¹⁷⁴ Certainly, the music helps to move the audience and to create an affective viewing relationship.

Most anecdotal testimonies are subordinate to the expository discourse that is sustained by the narrator’s commentary, but occasionally the testimonies constitute important discursive elements themselves. These viewpoint interviews emphasise that the old society was class conscious and sharply hierarchical. For example, a former nurse’s assistant (in a rather hot tone) describes the hierarchies in hospitals, where she had to use titles when addressing nurses – and the doctor was “a god” (26). In fact, this comment was made in response to the interviewer’s insistent questions about class divisions in hospitals. Thus, the interviewer elicited the comment, something the spectator cannot know because the questions are not included in the programme.¹⁷⁵

The most powerful viewpoint interview appears in a sequence that deals with maids (17). The sequence consists of four parts. First the voice-over narration characterises the work of maids, which is made explicit in an experience interview with a former maid who describes how she started working the day after she left school and was put to the task of sawing huge logs of timber for firewood. Then follows the idyllic footage of a family gathered for supper on Christmas Eve, the maid smiles while serving them food, which is in contrast to the narrator’s critical remark that the maid must eat in the kitchen. The narrator’s comment, which suggests a less romantic side of the maids’ situations, then is authenticated in a viewpoint interview with a former maid who lends experiential support to the emerging truth:

And when I arrive [sic] at this flat where I was to live, then being polite I extended my hand to shake hands, and deliberately she put her hands behind her. She would not touch me, my hand [...] I shook inside, I got so angry. Only I saw her [människan]. I had no value and that is what provokes me, you had not a bit of value if you were a servant girl, nothing, and then you see that I cannot bear that they talk about maids, I don’t do that, now you know that.¹⁷⁶

The filmmaker’s choice to include this interview, which manifests moral indignation, arguably reflects the filmmaker’s view of class hierarchies. However, the reality of class struggle is complicated by another interview that discusses poor

¹⁷⁴ Häger at seminar, Stockholm University 2000.04.04.

¹⁷⁵ DA. T21, F1, 66, intervjuer i utskrift 128–178, 6, Anna-Lisa Sjögren, pp. 2 f.

¹⁷⁶ The interviewee is Alva Rökländer.

families being evicted from their homes (21).¹⁷⁷ First there is archival footage showing the eviction of a poor family in Möre in south-east Sweden. In fact, Häger admits that the origin of those images is unreliable. A note on the footage sets it in Dalarna, but a witness in Möre claimed to recognise people in the footage. Häger trusted the witness and used the footage. Still, he realised that he should have gone to Möre and verified the site, which he did not.¹⁷⁸ The case is one where cognitive considerations lost the negotiations with economic considerations. In the programme we find an interviewer who urges the interviewee to give emotional testimony:

Labourer: I remember when they evicted us [...] it came down in buckets all day. And they carried out our furniture and put it outside the house and there were no gutters on the labourers' houses but it poured right down and those who carried out the furniture put some mats and other things over the furniture [...].

Häger: How did your parents react then?

Labourer: Well, what should they do? They couldn't do anything against the authorities. The farmers got permission from the county administrative board in Kalmar that they could evict the workers [if] they did not want to work.

Häger: Did you feel hatred?

Labourer: No, I did not precisely [...] you had no use of that [...] it did not matter if you were angry or happy.

What is most interesting about this is the interviewer's questions of the old agricultural labourer: how did his parents react and did he himself feel hatred? The questions, especially the word "hatred" [hatisk], show that Häger sought an emotional response. However, the inclusion of the slightly surprising answer that the worker did not feel hate indicates cognitive considerations. The filmmaker did not want simply to make a moral point but include the old man's full story. Elsewhere in the series, an interviewee relates how he was abandoned by his mother and had a miserable childhood. Häger commented about this interviewee that "bitterness never took root in him."¹⁷⁹ It appears that he wanted to transmit both the outrageous experiences that the poor had experienced and the lack of bitterness that they felt.

The programme also contains a couple of analytic interviews. As a finale on the treatment of the traditional society, two aged farmers describe the changes, providing general overviews (33). There is also an Italian immigrant who offers an analysis as he explains how he came to be assimilated in the new land (24).¹⁸⁰ But these are exceptions. Mostly, the testimonies of witnesses add to the narrator's own assessment of the historical process or state of the country.

¹⁷⁷ Workers who were evicted from their homes is a recurring subject in Häger's programmes. Cf. *Svart på vitt. Mackmyravräkningarna* (1986). Häger found a similar story when preparing another *Svart på vitt* episode, but then did not use it. See DA. T21, F2, 1, 7.

¹⁷⁸ Interview with Olle Häger, 2000.03.02.

¹⁷⁹ Häger quoted in Westman, Lars, 1999, p. 60. The scene is in *Hundra svenska år: De gamla och kloka må le, fallera*. Cf. DA. T21, F1, 66, intervjuer i utskrift 45–106, O, Julius Thorning.

¹⁸⁰ The three analytical interviews are with men, but there are too few cases to suggest that the filmmakers favoured men in venturing historical analysis.

This is particularly true at the end of the film when a number of female assistant nurses say they are losing their jobs.

In sum, in addition to the narrator who provides both information and analysis, both archival footage and interviews serve important cognitive functions in the programme. The archival footage offers a period look at the past and enables us to see what work was like. Regarding the interviews I propose that we distinguish between information, experience, viewpoint, and analytic interviews, which all serve different cognitive functions. In this episode in *Hundra svenska år* the experience interview seems to be the most important. Still, the other interview types are employed and I have pointed especially to a couple of cases where viewpoint interviews add to the overall interpretation of the past. The re-framing of archival footage serves both cognitive and aesthetic functions. The viewpoint interviews on the status of the maid and the eviction of the poor serve both cognitive and moral functions, suggesting that society was once very hierarchical. In sum, cognitive considerations had a strong influence on the programme.

The series found a huge audience and most reviewers thought it magnificent. Several of the critics suggested that it would serve as a basic book in history classes into the next century.¹⁸¹ One reviewer was particularly impressed by the synchronised sounds that were added to the old footage, thinking them authentic, while another pointed to the narration that she described as remarkable.¹⁸² Tom Alandh, a documentarist colleague of Häger, hailed the series and said that when compared to a fine history series from the BBC Häger's series was "more personal in the lyrics. He has allowed himself more. A great achievement. So this autumn I felt proud of SVT."¹⁸³ The series gained overwhelming acclaim at SVT,¹⁸⁴ and was awarded the Ikaros award, the SVT employees own award. It also was a best-seller on home video.¹⁸⁵ Among the few critical responses were two letters from spectators who thought that the loss of Swedish sailors during World War II should have been covered in the series.¹⁸⁶ Also, a woman objected to the statement that the Swede only works twenty percent of the time that he is awake, suggesting it to be a male perspective. It ignored the fact people (and especially women) work many hours outside the labour mar-

¹⁸¹ Olsson, Jörgen, 1999; Lundberg, Börje, 1999; Kalitzki, Jörgen, 1999.

¹⁸² Lundgren, Peter, 1999; Hallert, Kerstin, 1999. Cf. Törnander, Gunnel, 1999.

¹⁸³ Alandh quoted in Lahger, Håkan, 1999, p. 55.

¹⁸⁴ The author was present at SVT at many occasions when various people came up to congratulate Häger and his crew.

¹⁸⁵ There were early talks about producing ancillary products. DA. T21, F1, 68, Inledande research, 13, letter from Bengt Berg to Häger, 1994.06.20. Note that it was not SVT but a private company that made *Hundra svenska år* a home video for sale.

¹⁸⁶ DA. T21, F1, 69, All slags information, 23, letter from Olof Jönsson to Häger, 1999.11.04; All slags information, 23, letter from Olle Ålander to Häger, 1999.11.15. A similar charge came six years earlier to the programme *1000 år på två timmar* (1993) when an acting historian was upset because peasant soldiers from Dalarna were not treated; DA. T21, F1, 60, 1000 år på två timmar, En ovanligt futtig historia [letter to Häger & Villius] from Ture Heed, undated [1993].

ket.¹⁸⁷ One reviewer who was very positive about the series argued that the narrator was wrong when suggesting that Sweden was a small isolated country. She pointed to the large emigration as well as the state of anxiety that ruled Sweden during World War II as examples of the series' failure to emphasise the closeness of the surrounding world. She also thought that television's impact should have been addressed.¹⁸⁸ Some pointed criticism was made about the programme on domestic politics, which I will treat in the next chapter.

7. Conclusions

In this study cognitive considerations are said to guide the filmmaker in making a film when knowledge or information is of paramount importance in any choice the filmmaker makes. For Häger and Villius it was an important principle that a programme be founded on knowledge and transmit some form of knowledge of the past. This is manifested in three ways. First, they strove to communicate knowledge of the past. Second, they displayed scientific ambition in using their contacts in academia when searching for interesting new perspectives and for knowledge of the past. And third, through meta-reflections and genre agreement they attempted to remind the viewer that our knowledge has limits. It is particularly interesting that they had firm ideas about what was acceptable as knowledge. In connection with several programmes they contacted professional historians whom they trusted to give good advice, and at times they hired historians to do research. Thanks to good connections with academia, they were often entrusted with results that were not yet published, as was the case with *1000 år* (1980). Through careful image research, they worked to achieve historically correct images of the past.

Häger and Villius's key device for communicating knowledge was the narrator, whose spoken words provided information and evaluations. In a few programmes, a presenter was used to offer an inside perspective on events and to transmit experience-based knowledge. In *Hundra svenska år*, interviews were used to fulfil certain cognitive functions, of which it is possible to distinguish types such as information, experience, viewpoint, and analytical interviews. In addition to these word-based cognitive devices, there are devices based on images and sound. Both archival film and re-enactments are used to illustrate how people went about performing specific historical tasks. In *1000 år* the image of a village population posing for the camera was a representation that clarified the content of the war. In other instances the music or the sound of the wind was used to transmit knowledge.

The goal of communicating knowledge also requires that the filmmaker reflects on the past and on our knowledge of the past. Häger and Villius were

¹⁸⁷ DA. T21, F1, [Hundra svenska år. Pressklipp 2: Recensioner, flap B, fax from Birgitta Carlsson to Redaktionen för Hundra svenska år, 1999.10.22].

¹⁸⁸ Hallert, Kerstin, 1999.

careful to announce genre agreement in their films. Especially in early films, whenever a scene was re-enacted there was a verbal announcement of the fact. In 2000, Häger said that audiences consist of gifted people.¹⁸⁹ It seems he no longer believed the viewer was in need of signposts. Instead he had come to the conclusion that the viewer would understand that a historical documentary is always a negotiation between past reality and interpretation.

In some of their programmes Häger and Villius have the narrator deliver cognitive meta-reflections, or reflections on how knowledge is obtained and on the nature of our knowledge of the past. Especially when Hans Villius appears as on-screen presenter he plays this historian's role and reflects on our knowledge of the past. There are instances where the narrator points out that imagery does not exactly represent the actual historical scene, or that the imagery is biased or reconstructed and thus not to be mistaken for the real event. Occasionally, graphics inform of the time and place of a scene. When on screen, Villius often mentions sources and comments critically on the value of them.

Gary Edgerton relates that histories made for television are "never conceived according to the standards of professional history."¹⁹⁰ Proceeding from the example of the team Häger and Villius this would be worded differently. When the filmmakers are trained historians, and possibly even identify themselves as historians (as actors in the field of history production), it is only reasonable to believe they will strive to follow the rules of historians. At all times part of negotiating the historical representation with other demands, cognitive considerations play a decidedly influential role in the making of historical documentaries.

¹⁸⁹ *Rapport Morgon*, SVT2 2000.06.19.

¹⁹⁰ Edgerton, Gary, 2001, p. 166.

Moral Considerations

1. Moral considerations in historical documentaries

The moral considerations taken by Häger and Villius come under examination in this chapter. First the moral considerations the television filmmaker makes as such are presented, and then brief mention is made of the moral considerations that influenced Häger and Villius's historical documentaries. Lastly detailed analyses are made of a number of their individual programmes. The analyses show Häger and Villius made cognitive and aesthetic considerations as well, but the films analysed here were chosen because they show the influence of moral considerations particularly clearly.

In the broadest sense of the word, morals means to take serious things seriously,¹ and in this sense morals form the foundation of politics. Moral considerations compel the historical documentarist to examine issues of value and often to address the normative question: what is right? There are always moral implications in a historical documentary but the interesting and important question is, which ones? Three kinds of moral stances the filmmaker can take may be distinguished, the human-brotherly, the political, and the party-political. In certain cases, the historical documentarist will make strong political judgements, which can be characterised either as a political moral stance, or (if they involve a distinction among party interests) as a party-political one. In other cases, moral considerations will lead to more open-end inquiries into the historical and psychological foundations of moral phenomena, which can then be characterised as human-brotherly moral.

Moral considerations greatly influence first of all what questions we pose regarding the past, or phrased for purposes here, what subjects are treated in historical documentaries. Jörn Rüsen argued that the moral (in his words, political) aspect is present everywhere in the history culture, but particularly so when people express their needs and begin to form questions.² Thus, in the very act of choosing a subject for a television programme there is a moral-

¹ Ofstad, Harald, 1982. Ofstad's point is actually that everyone has to take responsibility for their actions.

² Rüsen, Jörn, 1997, p. 86.

political-ideological stance taken. The producer has the power to decide what programmes will be made and consequently what programmes (and values) the audience will be able to choose from. Therefore, the producer bears moral responsibility for the programmes.

Moral considerations moreover manifest themselves in interpretations. A key moral question is whether a historical event or process can have an intrinsic meaning. The American theorist Hayden White answers, no. He argues that any set of real events can be “emplotted” in a number of ways and that we give the events meaning by putting them into a sequence and making a story out of that sequence.³ Although this is a rather atypical way of speaking of history-writings, it is in principle correct. The meaning of an event is dependent on the interpretation or story the event is taken to be a part of. As a concrete example, when Ken Burns made *The Civil War* he was free to interpret the war as either good, because it freed slaves, or bad, because it cost people their lives. The meaning of an event also depends on the value-laden words used to name or describe it. However, many would be disturbed to hear it claimed that an event such as the Holocaust does not have an intrinsic meaning, that it was not in every way a tragedy. Even Hayden White retreats on this point.⁴ Most agree that genocide has an intrinsic meaning, and it is that genocide is a tragedy. But this opinion is based on values. While our instincts tell us that certain events do have intrinsic meanings, such instinctive reactions and meanings we assign are always the product of our morals. Morals thus bear influence on how we think about the past, on the words we use about the past, and on how we organise historical facts into narratives.

If morals influence the choice of subjects as well as the treatment of them, then what are the subjects and interpretations selected for historical programmes? Some critics argue that television histories are effectively restricted by political forces in society and therefore rarely make radical interpretations. They also point out that abstract realities such as power relations are difficult to visualise on television, a circumstance that in itself leads television to be a conservative force.⁵ The most radical critics argue that because traditional forms carry an implicit bourgeois message about society, the only way for a programme to transmit another kind of message is by altering form radically and breaking with conventions.⁶ Except in the case of the most radical of these ideas, it is not at all incorrect for critics to emphasise that moral interpretations are manifested not just in content but also in form.

All historical events and processes are interpreted through use of stories, symbols, and key concepts, and (whether implicitly or explicitly) such interpretations express ideas about the world, and about ourselves, and may even contain suggestions for the future. Some of the “messages for today” are morally or

³ White, Hayden, 1978, p. 84; White, Hayden, 1987, p. 44.

⁴ White, Hayden, 1992.

⁵ Thompson, John B., 1990.

⁶ McArthur, Colin, 1978.

politically mainstream thoughts and as a consequence are hardly noticed, while others lead to discursive battles. Many historical documentaries deal with war, which not only offers the dramatic unities of time, space, and action and so is well suited the television medium, but often has defining value with regard to national identity. Stories about war tend to stress how “we” are the good and “they” are the bad people. When moral war images are challenged, any new interpretation given is likely to be contested. Television has a strong impact on society, and television histories make critics quick to run for battle.

It comes as a challenge to viewers any time a documentary so much as suggests that “we” are not better than “they.” A familiar example is *Le Chagrin et la Pitié*, which was halted in its French broadcast for years because it implied that many Frenchmen had collaborated with the Nazis during the occupation years. In the case of *Vietnam: A Television History* (1983), American critics and Vietnamese expatriates alike were enraged when to them the production was far from sufficiently anti-Communist.⁷ Similarly, conservative American columnists attacked CNN’s series *Cold War* (1998) feeling it suggested “moral equality” between America and the Soviet Union during the Cold War years.⁸ In Canada, *The Valour and the Horror* (1992) offered a critical perspective on Canadian military efforts in World War II and was fiercely criticised for doing so. Writer-producer Brian McKenna was even called to testify before a subcommittee of the Senate of Canada.⁹ In these cases and others like them, the moral interpretations given by historical documentaries challenged audiences. But if new interpretations are often criticised, they are also of value as a means of leading to new understanding. Historian Daniel Walkowitz attacked consensus histories for being spiced up with folksy anecdotes and “languid sunsets,” and for their tendency to romanticise historical subjects.¹⁰ And when Daniel Leab condemned *With Babies and Banners* as bad history, he still hailed it as a “consciousness-raising document of the first order” and said that anyone would benefit from seeing it.¹¹ Thus, new moral interpretations in historical documentaries may cause strong reactions, but they can also be useful in opening ways to new readings of the past.

Hollywood films characteristically extolled capitalist society, and in parallel fashion Swedish public service television supported the political and economic systems on which it depended. The Radio Board decided which moral interpretations were acceptable in television documentaries. The agreement between

⁷ Hung, Nguyen Manh, 1984; Banerian, James, 1985; for a different view on the series, see Vlastos, Stephen, 1986; Frisch, Michael, 1990, pp. 159–181, 268 f. Peter Rollins produced *Vietnam: The Real Story* (1984) as a response to the above series. A parallel case is *Korea: The Unknown War*, which was produced by Britain’s Thames Television and then was re-edited by WGBH in order to suit the American audience; Jacobsen, Kurt, 1993.

⁸ Beichman, Arnold, 2000.

⁹ Bercuson, David J. & S. F. Wise, 1994; Dick, Ernest J., 1993. For an analysis of the debate, see Carr, Graham (unpublished).

¹⁰ Walkowitz, Daniel, 1991, p. 94.

¹¹ Leab, Daniel, 1980a, p. 112.

SVT and the state has changed over the years, but an important part was and remains that SVT programming has to be “objective” and “impartial.” As noted in Chapter 4, in both the 1970s and the 1980s there were cases of historical programmes being cited for overstepping legal provisions. The rules specified that producers not load their programmes with political arguments any way they please, but that they always aim for impartial presentations. Beyond it being generally so that SVT supported the Swedish political system, moral and political factors were an influence on programmes in quite definite ways. If changes in the spirit of the times are traced, the 1970s would be said to be more politically radical than the 1980s. When radicalism returned in the 1990s it was in the shape of demands that documentarists recognise the diversity of society. Maja Hagerman wrote of the difficulty of making programmes that fulfil all demands: “[The programmes] must not be male dominated but must convey the perspectives of women and children too, they must not be racist, or too much western, they must be open to the third world and to other religions, ideologies, and value systems, but offer at the same time a complex image of capitalism with its advantages and disadvantages.”¹²

2. Häger and Villius’s moral considerations

Social differences effect the ways individuals act in various situations, and so the life stories of Häger and Villius are important to consider in coming to understand their moral choices and interpretations. Social dispositions are determined by such things as sex, age, and family background, but also by education, work, and other social involvements. Already noted is the importance of the academic training of both Häger and Villius, and of their continually maintaining close ties to academia. In Sweden, as in many other countries, historians have viewed it a professional responsibility to deconstruct national myths. Because they were trained historians we can safely assume Häger and Villius would seek to give objective accounts of historical events. In interviews they have also voiced such intentions.¹³ On several occasions they argued that history is important because it can make us think critically about issues. Häger has identified as an example knowing about King Karl XII as a means of preventing the abuse of history (as by neo-Nazis, who see Karl XII as a national hero).¹⁴ As noted before, Villius was critical of the politicised histories by certain filmmaker colleagues. But even if Häger and Villius argued against political interpretations of the past, that they themselves have clear moral and political positions is sometimes evident in their programmes.

What were the moral and political positions of Häger and Villius? The two lived and worked in the same intellectual environment, and seem to have en-

¹² Hagerman, Maja, 2002, p. 90.

¹³ Häger and Villius quoted in Kalfjäll, Birgitta, 1990; Ingelman-Sundberg, Catharina, 1990; Hedberg, Tove, 1996.

¹⁴ Häger quoted in Sima, Jonas, 1999; and in Hedberg, Tove, 1996.

joyed working together. This suggests they shared much the same values, but of course they were two different persons, and at that held different kinds of positions. We can only assume that Villius, at the university in the 1940s and 50s and with a dentist father, became by such background more conservative politically than Häger, who was of a younger generation and came from a worker-farmer background.¹⁵ But this assumption remains an assumption, as neither one was a member of a political party or openly commented on his position.¹⁶ Villius is a known opponent of the death penalty,¹⁷ but most Swedes take that position. Villius together with his wife also wrote several newspaper articles pleading for investigation of the death of a man held in police custody,¹⁸ a gesture that indicates a strong moral pathos but otherwise does not pin down a political position. Häger, on the other hand, has spoken out against racism.¹⁹ Thus, both Häger and Villius showed moral stature. Villius has suggested that Häger had the greater interest in moral issues and was the more radical of the two.²⁰ Häger says he thought it important to “give space and voice to the people who did not have someone who gave them that voice.”²¹ With regard to the analyses that follow, the interesting factor is less what the real persons stood for than what moral stances they took on the occasion of producing programmes, and what taken as authors Häger and Villius were perceived to represent. Part of how audiences viewed the implied authors is revealed by their response to the programmes over the years. While Häger and Villius’s programmes have enjoyed mostly positive response, there have been occasions when they were said to contain political bias.

The late 1960s and early 70s were years of left-wing radicalism in Sweden as in other western countries, and it is interesting to note that in those years Häger and Villius made several programmes about highly charged political issues. For example, one programme was on the conflict in the Middle East, and another supplied a historical background for the important events in Czechoslovakia in 1968. The team also made a number of programmes on revolts, among them one on the revolution in Cuba and the events that followed.²² Häger went to Cuba in search of footage for the programme.²³ That

¹⁵ Häger confirms that politically he stood further to the left than Villius; interview with Häger, 2003.06.03.

¹⁶ Villius says he was never keen on Communism nor on rightist extremism; quoted in Dimming, Lars, 1999. He also wrote that his entire life he was “an avowed enemy of the Soviet regime and what it stood for;” Villius, Hans, 1992a.

¹⁷ [anonymous], 1974; Olofsson, Ken, 1982.

¹⁸ Villius, Elsa & Hans Villius, 1985; also see *Dagens Nyheter* 1985.04.09, 1985.04.19, 1985.05.10. Their moral engagement here can be compared with that in the case of Jane Horney, see Villius, Elsa & Hans Villius, 1987. Cf. Dimming, Lars, 1995. Villius engaged in public debate also in the foreign-submarines-in-Swedish-waters affair; Villius, Hans, 1985.

¹⁹ Häger, Olle, 1997; Häger, Olle, 1997a.

²⁰ Interview with Villius, 2003.06.02.

²¹ Interview with Häger, 2003.06.03.

²² Hatte Furuhausen made a programme on the Spartacus rebellion that with the other programmes form a trilogy.

²³ Interview with Häger, 2003.06.03.

he did so is no indication that he or Villius had any particular kind of relations with Cuba, but rather Häger's going is evidence that in the years of de-colonisation and anti-war demonstrations Sweden and SVT had good contacts with large parts of the world, both East and West. Still, political reasons might have kept some people from going to Cuba, but Häger chose to go. Although the revolt programmes were balanced and show a clear effort to objectivity, the decision to make programmes on the subject shows Häger and Villius responded to the radical charge in the atmosphere at SVT at the time. Confirming this is criticism levelled against some other early programmes they made.²⁴ In a book about Swedish leftism, a conservative journalist took up their programme on Stalin saying that, although Häger and Villius provided a critical portrait of Stalin, they "hid away facts that were uncomfortable to the Soviet Union."²⁵ There is no proof that facts were consciously concealed – rather, the criticism merely indicates the filmmakers did not make a moralising film (as would have pleased the critic).

A programme that drew strong opposition from certain quarters portrayed the political activities of Swedish explorer Sven Hedin, a national hero of the early part of the twentieth century. Hedin had been a Conservative, and the programme took note of both his contacts with Nazi Germany and of how he supported King Gustav V in 1914, when the king gave a political speech that led to the fall of the Liberal government. The critical perspective the film offered did not pass unnoticed. One anonymous viewer wrote that by treating the "brave" and the "Incredibly Competent" as it did the programme made itself ridiculous. The writer claimed the programme used archival film in a way that more than anything else harmed Hedin, and Häger and Villius were called "the dullest of dullards" [urtråkiga torrbollar]. Finally, the anonymous writer suggested that in the rugged places Hedin had visited and traversed no "hares" [Harpaltar] would live to old age.²⁶ The film aroused great irritation at the Sven Hedin Foundation, whose archive had been used. In response to its verbal criticism, Villius addressed a letter to the Foundation where he argued that the programme was fair and reasonable and had "objectively" sketched background elements important for understanding Hedin's political attitudes. Furthermore, Villius said that complying with the request of the Foundation, and with respect for family-members and relatives, he had excluded the names of persons filmed in circumstances that could be sensitive.²⁷ The Foundation responded that it found it little informative to present the images the film did, which it termed "ridiculous," with no rational or otherwise fuller explanation of Hedin's

²⁴ Häger says in retrospect that their perspectives were indeed affected by the times; interview with Häger, 2003.06.03.

²⁵ Jolin, Christopher, 1972, p. 295. See also Jolin, Christopher, 1970. Furhammar, Leif, 1995, pp. 145 f., calls the portrait of Stalin "terrifying" [förfärande] and suggests that a contrapuntal tension between words and image was typical of Häger and Villius.

²⁶ DA. T21, F1, 13, En röst [...], 31, letter from Tack för ordet [anonymous] to Sveriges Radio, 1971.08.09.

²⁷ DA. T21, F1, 13, En röst [...], 31, letter from Villius to Eric Wennerholm, 1972.01.25.

relationship to Germany. It insisted that the programme failed to properly acknowledge Hedin's achievements as an explorer.²⁸ All in all, however, no question was raised concerning the facts the programme presented about Hedin. Plainly it was the film's moral assessment of Hedin that was under attack, those critical preferring to see emphasis on the successful explorer rather than on the compromised politician.²⁹

Häger and Villius portrayed another conservative great man, the financial tycoon Ivar Kreuger,³⁰ in *Högt spel i tändstickor* (1969), and in an article they described the process leading to its production. They had first planned a dramatic co-production with BBC, but later decided to work independently and make a regular documentary comprising archival footage and interviews.³¹ Kreuger built up a financial empire in the 1920s but lost everything (and ruined numerous others as well) when the stock market crash came in the early 1930s. Just as his empire collapsed, he died, and the programme suggests (as did the official record) that his death was by suicide. However, surviving Kreuger brother Torsten published his version of the crash and denied his brother had committed suicide. Torsten Kreuger telephoned Häger and Villius prior to the broadcast and threatened them with a lawsuit, and in advertisements in the press he levelled charges at the programme.³² Another person who doubted Kreuger had committed suicide claimed the fault of the programme was chargeable to the Radio Board. Häger and Villius repudiated the charge but the Radio Board did not fully exonerate the programme but instead directed its own (milder) criticism against it, declaring it would have been better to devote "some space" to those of the opinion that Kreuger was no criminal.³³ As a result, when its repeat transmission came the following year, the film opened with this oral clarification: "The financial genius Ivar Kreuger is a controversial person and there are those who offer another picture of him than the one presented in this programme." The programme came under criticism once again, but this time it was acquitted on the basis of the clarifying introductory statement.³⁴ The case of the films of Sven Hedin and Ivar Kreuger show neither Häger nor Villius were particularly sentimental over the nation's great men of the past.

In 1973 a real bomb detonated in the Swedish Folkhem when two journal-

²⁸ DA. T21, F1, 13, En röst [...], 40, letter from Eric Wennerholm to Villius, 1972.02.16.

²⁹ Villius claims the programme did not treat Hedin in the role of explorer because that was the theme of another production at SVT, which was in the making at the same time. DA. T21, F1, 13, En röst [...], 31, letter from Villius to Eric Wennerholm, 1972.01.25.

³⁰ Kreuger was admittedly controversial also in the conservative camp, but he was a hero in the sense that he managed to build a business empire.

³¹ They consulted with an economist who commented on the content-matter of economics in the 1930s in their script.

³² Häger, Olle and Hans Villius, 1970, pp. 222 f., 226. Interview with Häger, 2003.06.03; Kreuger, Torsten, 1968 (1965). Cf. DA. A12, F2, 14, ärende 184/69, aktbilaga 3, where Häger and Villius characterise Torsten Kreuger's writings as heavily biased. Villius says that Torsten Kreuger "wanted to sue us;" interview with Villius, 2003.06.02.

³³ GR. E2, vol. 17, 184/69, aktbilagor 3 and 6.

ists exposed a secret spy organisation they discovered was tied to the Social Democratic Party. One of the bosses at SVT set Häger and Villius on the track of the truth, which led to their interviewing many key persons and making a programme about the organisation.³⁵ The programme is characterised by an informative tone. Nevertheless, it is of moral interest because it took a high degree of integrity for the filmmakers to dare to take on such a politically sensitive subject, even with the support it appears that they had from company superiors.

A few programmes that Häger and Villius made from the late 1970s onwards are particularly interesting from a moral point of view, and in the following six of them are closely analysed. Several programmes make a theme of class conflict and thus present the perspective of history from the bottom. Two of these deal with the last year of famine and starvation in Swedish history, *Ett satans år* (1977) and *Isgraven* (1977), and were influenced by moral debate in Sweden over aid to third world countries. Demonstrators were asking by what right Western countries kept so firm a grip on their riches when people in the third world were starving, and Häger and Villius joined in the debate with the two films. Another morally charged issue was that of World War II and Swedish neutrality.³⁶ In the series *Svart på vitt*, several segments deal with the German occupation of Norway and one taken up for analysis here, *Herrefolket* (1990), depicts German soldiers interestingly enough more as human beings than monsters. Also analysed is a film that follows a Holocaust survivor on a return visit to Auschwitz, *Tur retur helvetet* (1996). This film was made in part in reaction to the Swedish neo-Nazism movement, and is thus a further example of film influenced by contemporary political issues.

Coming under analysis last are two episodes from Häger's series *Hundra svenska år* (1999), namely, one on domestic politics and one on the royal family. The first is on domestic politics in the twentieth century, and it was attacked in editorials in Sweden's largest liberal newspaper *Dagens Nyheter*, later also by other liberals in editorials, all parties alleging the programme had a political bias that favoured the Social Democratic Party. I give my own reading of the programme and discuss the critical voices. Another episode from the *Hundra svenska år* series deal with the monarchy and the royal family. Häger and Villius rarely portrayed the royal family, which is not so surprising since during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries Sweden's monarchs have had

³⁴ GR. E2, vol. 27, 228/70; interview with Villius, 2001.05.09. Häger and Villius made a programme in the *Svart på vitt* series about Kreuger; and after it was broadcast Villius received a letter strongly criticising the portrait. DA. T21, F2, 1, nr 2–24, 25, letter from F. Karlsson to Villius, 1985.02.28. It should be noted Villius's father was one who lost money in the Kreuger crash; Jacobsson, Pelle, 1999.

³⁵ *Folkhemmets hemligfolk: Om IB-affären* (1974). Häger says it was the sole time they agreed to make a programme that a company superior (in this case Magnus Faxén) suggested; interview with Häger, 2003.06.03. In a State Commission several decades later, interviews from the programme were used as source materials. Lampers, Lars Olof, 2002, p. 43.

³⁶ Häger and Villius examined the nation's dilemma in *Fyra dagar som skakade Sverige* (1988); see Chapter 8.

little political influence. Interestingly, and as also noted in the foregoing chapter, the monarchs remained largely invisible even as Häger and Villius made their *1000 år*. Other historical documentarists, notably Herman Lindqvist, devoted extensive coverage to the royal family. Lindqvist for one was awarded a royal medal as thanks.³⁷ Thinking of the possibility that portraits of past royalty might convey political messages for today, it is of interest to observe how Häger and Villius handle royalty – the rare times when they do. I see the programme in question as quite critical of the monarchy as an institution. A critical stance towards royalty is expressed as well in two other programmes by Häger and Villius.³⁸ Although it may be a matter of coincidence, in 1996 when the government awarded Häger and Villius each the title of professor, the two were also invited to a royal dinner party. Neither accepted the invitation, Häger telling the press it would have been too expensive to rent coat and tails.³⁹ In view of the sceptical attitude towards the royal family displayed in the team's programmes, Häger's excuse may be a bit too convenient, and more likely the excuse disguises a political attitude of little sympathy for the monarchy.

3. The famine and a message for today

For their objective in 1968, Häger and Villius stated that they wanted to make programmes about subjects that were important currently. In the 1970s, the Swedish public was much concerned with moral aspects of the relationship between the industrialised countries and the Third World. Not least, the issue of a developmental assistance policy was a matter of debate. Noticing this, Häger and Villius designed a project about the famine year of 1867 that gave them the opportunity to deal with aid to Sweden. In the description for the project they wrote that 1867 was

the last year that Sweden was a developing country.

In this year we saw [...] a possibility to get at and shed light upon the current problems of aid to developing countries. This is about our own background. And here [in Sweden's past] we found the same arguments that one hears today, arguments about our lazy, ignorant, and wasteful ancestors.⁴⁰

Clearly, Häger and Villius intended that their programme should contribute to the ongoing debate on Sweden's developing assistance policy. Their own moral position can be traced to the ironic formulation about aid recipients as "lazy, ignorant, and wasteful" – they were critical of the moralising donors. After a production process spanning almost two years, the project resulted in two pro-

³⁷ Kriisa, Lennart, 1997. The official motivation was "For successful and appreciated promotion of interest in history in Sweden."

³⁸ *Björnjägarna vid Korså* (1985). Cf. DA. T21, F2, 2, 14. See also the analysis of *Sammansvärjningen* (1986) in Chapter 8.

³⁹ Häger quoted in Sima, Jonas, 1996.

⁴⁰ DA. T21, F1, 31, Ett satans år. Manus, CD, Produktionsbeskrivning.

grammes about the famine. One of them was a documentary called *Ett satans år* [*One Year of Satan*] while the other, made by Häger and film director Carl Torell, was a docudrama called *Isgraven* [*The Ice Grave*]. Both programmes dealt with the famine years of 1867–68 in the northern part of Sweden,⁴¹ and they were broadcast over two consecutive days in late December 1977. Probably, the time of broadcast was chosen deliberately, because in late December the Swedes would be at home digesting Christmas dinner, remaining indoors, warm and protected from winter's cold and dark days. This created effective contrasts and similarities between the spectator's world and the story world of the programmes.

The famine years of 1867–68 occurred in a country that was in a significant transition. Sweden was still a pre-industrial agricultural country, but new industries such as lumbering and the sawmill industry were expanding. Meanwhile, the number of property-less people in the countryside grew rapidly. In search of work, people migrated from the countryside into towns, from the south to the north and from Sweden to America. From 1851 to 1930 an estimated 1.2 million Swedes emigrated, a fifth of the population, and most of them were young people.⁴² Emigration peaked in the late 1860s, which were years of severe crop failures.⁴³ There were important governmental reforms, but the vote was still restricted on the basis of wealth, income, and gender. On a spiritual level, the church still held people's souls in a tight grip. In northern Sweden in the 1860s, grain cultivation was the major source of livelihood. Harvests were poor throughout the decade, especially in 1867 when large amounts of grain were imported in to help avoid starvation. But morality and individualism placed restraints upon the access to food, and as a result many peasants lived in misery.⁴⁴

A society struck by famine is a society in crisis, where conflicts easily come to the surface. People will inquire into the cause of the crisis and question where the fault lies. Thus, the subject matter of famine takes on moral and political dimensions. In Ireland, the Great Famine of the 1840s became a symbol of British oppression and Irish sufferings. As in the Irish saw, "God sent the potato-blight, but the English caused the Famine."⁴⁵ There is no comparable national mythology related to the Swedish famine, but because the subject is morally loaded it seems wise to look closely at Häger and Villius's famine films.

Häger and Villius, with their companion Torell, began the project with only a general idea of what the end product would be.⁴⁶ Because very little research

⁴¹ For an outline of the famine, and of Norrland of the 1860s, see Nelson, Marie C., 1988.

⁴² For exact numbers, see Carlsson, Sten, 1976, p. 119.

⁴³ In the film *Oxen* (1991), featuring actors Max von Sydow and Stellan Skarsgård, filmmaker Sven Nykvist told a story set in the famine-stricken south-eastern part of Sweden.

⁴⁴ The outline of Norrland in the famine years is based on Nelson, Marie C., 1988, especially pp. 38–53.

⁴⁵ Cf. Daly, Mary, 1996. Quotation from Kiberd, Declan, 1996, p. 21.

⁴⁶ Villius says that it was Häger's idea to make the programme; interview with Villius, 2003.06.02.

had been done on the famine, they had to go to primary sources, such as court records and newspapers. For guidance, they initially discussed the famine with a number of academic historians, finding contacts as early as 1974.⁴⁷ In an interview published in early 1976 Villius said, “We do not yet know what programme will come out of this material [...] We only just started our research work.”⁴⁸ They researched the programmes during the first half of 1976 with very little assistance.⁴⁹ However, at their request, one of the staff members at the Skellefteå museum worked long hours locating, reading, choosing, and copying original documents from the museum’s collection. This was the years before copying machines so the job was very time-consuming.⁵⁰ What is interesting about this detail is that it shows that Häger and Villius let somebody else decide what information could be of use. When they received the materials from Skellefteå, it was somebody else’s selection. After the research was done, they wrote scripts during the autumn, filmed during the winter, and then edited the films during 1977. Parts of *Ett satans år* were filmed also during the summer of 1977. In addition to the programmes, the producers wrote a book about the famine.⁵¹

From early drafts it is possible to reconstruct part of the creative process, leading from Häger and Villius’s original conceptions to the final products of *Isgraven* and *Ett satans år*. In the following I will examine *Ett satans år*. In an early draft there are twelve paragraphs that analyse the essentials of what happened during the famine, which form an outline for the documentary. The headings of the paragraphs are:

1. Founding web: the poor Sweden
2. The particular strain: crop failure in successive years
3. Summer’s hope
4. Those forced to leave the village with its meagre security
5. The speculators
6. The first night of frost
7. The society struck by crop failure, late autumn 1867
8. Fund-raising begins
9. The manner of aid
10. People who benefited from the calamity
11. The starving people huddled under fate
12. Thousands of victims⁵²

⁴⁷ DA. T21, F1, 31, *Ett satans år*, TU, Sune Åkerman 9.12.74.

⁴⁸ Gynnå, Håkan, 1976.

⁴⁹ The project was financed from late 1975 onwards. DA. T21, F1, 31, *Ett satans år*. Manus, CD, letter from Lena W to Calle, Hans, & Olle [Torell, Villius, and Häger], 1975.11.04. At the end of the programme are listed twenty-two museums, local folklore societies and archives where illustrations and properties had been found.

⁵⁰ Interview with Stig-Henrik Viklund, 2002.08.28.

⁵¹ Häger, Olle, Carl Torell, and Hans Villius, 1978. For reactions, see Frick, Lennart, 1978.

⁵² DA. T21, F1, 31, *Ett satans år*. Manus, TU, 1867–68 [undated].

The draft shows that the filmmakers' ambition was to deliver a general account of the society struck by famine. The draft also indicates a basic narrative structure of the circumstance which lead to the famine and its results. *Ett satans år* follows the above outline quite closely. Thus, it follows the chronological cycle of the famine year, and comments on society. However, paragraphs ten and eleven were left out of the finished product. The short eleventh paragraph is worth quoting:

The starving people normally did not demand anything from the society. They crouched under their fate and their authorities, and hoped to survive. It was only certain utopians and odd academics who formulated a criticism, coloured by socialism, against the unjust society.⁵³

From the last sentence, it seems that Häger and Villius knew voices that criticised society, perhaps from a socialist point of view. But the programme mentions no such voices. We cannot be certain why they were left out. Perhaps it was because the producers expected to find such voices in their research but none were found. But dramatic conventions say that if you want to make a convincing case, you should leave out the dissonant voices. In any case, the deletion of questioning voices is an example of how the story was simplified.

The draft says nothing of formal techniques, but instead content dominates. But *Ett satans år* is interesting because it is an early example of how Häger and Villius worked with re-enactments. When re-enactments entered into the first script, they were in relation to the story of a young boy named Nils Petter Wallgren, whom the producers had found in court records dated during the famine year and whose experiences would nicely link the different parts of the programme.⁵⁴

Häger went to great pains preparing re-enactment scenes. He tried to find out exactly where the home of Nils Petter Wallgren had been, so that filming could be done at the right spot,⁵⁵ and he struggled to find the old tools needed. Parts of the filming were difficult to arrange. When preparing an important scene with a sleigh disappearing in the darkening evening, Häger made a deal with hunters in the neighbourhood that no-one would fire a rifle that day to secure silence. Unfortunately, a power saw began its work somewhere in the forest, and the noise ruined the scene. The film crew felt discouraged. Finally, the team decided to film the scene anyway, and in the end the sound of the power saw was not heard in the film.⁵⁶ The producers also had trouble finding a young actor who would play Wallgren. Finally, Villius stumbled upon a boy that he felt suited the part perfectly – in his home, a friend of his daughter.⁵⁷

⁵³ DA. T21, F1, 31, *Ett satans år*. Manus, TU, 1867–68.

⁵⁴ DA. T21, F1, 31, *Ett satans år*. Manus, S.

⁵⁵ Interview with Göran Green, 2003.07.20.

⁵⁶ Häger, Olle, 1977. In *Sommar*, SR P1 2000.07.29, Häger relates another detail from the production story: Hoping to be able to film ravens, which symbolise death, the team went into the snowy forest with the head of a pig. After hours of waiting they gave up because no ravens turned up.

⁵⁷ Interview with Villius, 2003.06.02.



Figure 15. Filming in the snow. Cameraman Jan-Hugo Norman and producer Olle Häger in deep snow during the making of *Ett satans år*. Courtesy of Olle Häger.

After a number of rewrites the script was simplified and the story concentrated in terms of dramatic unities. An analytic sequence about country shopkeepers was deleted, and a sequence about changes in farming was shortened. Furthermore, the first script included one sequence on the industrialisation in Great Britain, and one on the land of dreams, America. The imagery for the latter sequence is described “with the wheat and the buffalo, and the high, pure waterfalls [...] stills from earliest times of settlers.”⁵⁸ These sequences were deleted and the programme achieved more unity in the spatial dimension. America was kept in the programme but was told via pictures of the lead character Nils Petter Wallgren dreaming of America, and by a photograph that showed a Swedish emigrant surrounded by friends. Both brought in individuals and emotions. Most importantly they kept the unity of space. Three early-script sequences played with the temporal extension by showing modern milieus; an ice-breaker at sea, an old sawmill still working, and modern pulp-mills.⁵⁹ In the final script only the old sawmill was used, which enhanced the unity of time. The finished programme consists of thirty sequences, which I have divided into ten segments (A–J):

⁵⁸ DA. T21, F1, 31, Manus & Adm, R, script, seq. 14, 21, 30–31, 34–35.

⁵⁹ DA. T21, F1, 31, Manus & Adm, R, script, seq. 4, 16, 44–45.

- A. Sequences 1–2. Opening words and the tale of Erik Gideonsson.
- B. Sequences 3–5. The hard winter of 1867. Re-enactment introduces Nils Petter Wallgren.
- C. Sequences 6–7. The wintry forest land. Photograph from 1867 proves the late spring.
- D. Sequences 8–11. The short spring. Re-enactment shows a peasant at work. Re-enacted stills show Nils Petter Wallgren looking for work. Wealthy farms portrayed.
- E. Sequences 12–16. Saw-summer. The sawmill industry, its workers and owners. Nils Petter Wallgren works at a lumberyard.
- F. Sequences 17–18. Robber economy in the forests. Re-enactment stills, story of timber theft.
- G. Sequences 19–21. Railroads and emigration. Nils Petter Wallgren dreams of America.
- H. Sequences 22–24. Autumn of hunger. The tale of Josefina Eliasson. Re-enactment of people trying to find food in the forest.
- I. Sequences 25–29. Relief work. Aid is gathered and distributed. Letter from bishop is quoted.
- J. Sequence 30. Nils Petter Wallgren works, falls sick, is transported home, and dies. Re-enactment. Credits roll.

The programme has a narrative structure that follows the rhythm of a year. It starts during the long winter (A–C), continues through the short spring (D) and the intense summer (E–G), then ends with the desperate autumn (H–I) and the early winter (J). A few on-screen titles keep the audience oriented chronologically and thematically; there are titles such as “Saw-Summer” and “Autumn of Hunger.” The programme is concentrated on how people struggled to get food, but three segments during the summer part of the programme break the narrative, two dealing with the growth of the sawmill industry (E–F) and one with emigration (G). The digressions allow the filmmakers to depict society in the 1860s, and they also survey the (im)possible ways out of the vicious years of bad crops. In narratological terms the digressions make possible the delay of the peripeteia, that is the climax of the story and the definite change of fortune. All spectators know that the tragedy of famine is about to happen, but by dealing with other subjects the filmmakers reinforce the effect of the reversal from hopeful summer to desperate autumn. We are invited to feel people’s hope during the summer months. Then, the first frost (H) means a complete shift from light colours to dark greyish ones on the screen, from life to death.

In formal terms, *Ett satans år* is made in the expository mode. Häger and Villius alternate as voice-over narrators, Häger speaking on more dramatic parts while Villius speaks in relatively matter-of-fact sequences. On the soundtrack there is little music. On the image-track, there are a few actual pictures from the famine years, such as photographs and lithographs. In addition there

is newly-taken footage of nature, such as aerial shots of snow-covered forests and shots of old wooden houses without paint, all devoid of human figures. The cognitive function of these pictures is to signify nature's power over human life. The bitter wind howls, establishing the hostile character of the surroundings. In the absence of people, nature itself becomes a major character in the story.⁶⁰ The plot in *Ett satans år* is really that nature (the character) causes failure of the crops (the event). Thus, one cognitive message of the programme is that nature determines human life. The moral message is different, which the analysis will show.

The most interesting image material is the re-enactments, which are of two types. First, there are re-enactments done in coloured moving pictures that show people who perform tasks such as slaughtering a pig (B), ploughing and sowing (D) or cutting down a tree (H). All these acts were typical work in the old, rural society, and the actors clearly know their task. Second, and perhaps most interesting, are re-enactments shown in still photographs. These are used in the story about Nils Petter Wallgren (B, D, E, G, J) and in the re-enactment of a theft of timber (F). Both types of re-enactments are performed without dialogue. I will look more closely into the Nils Petter Wallgren story, which is interesting also from a moral perspective.

Wallgren is presented via a careful genre agreement. He first appears in a re-enacted sequence in coloured moving images; at home on the family's farm, among people slaughtering a pig (B). The narrator says that the court records of Bygdeå parish tell of the poor boy, Nils Petter Wallgren. The camera focuses on a thin boy and the narrator states that "this is how we have imagined him to be." He continues, "we will meet him again during the year." The image freezes to a black-and-white photograph, accompanied by the musical theme of the programme, a vivid melody by Sibelius. The narrator finally adds that within the year the boy will be dead, thus foreshadowing the tragedy. Importantly, the reference to the court records and the formulation "this is how we have imagined him to be" establish the epistemological status of the Wallgren story and the image materials. Later in the programme, when Wallgren appears it is always in black-and-white photographs, accompanied by the musical theme, which thus reminds the spectator of this particular "story within the story."

We meet Wallgren throughout the programme. He is out on the road, looking for work (D) and finally finding it in a lumberyard (E). Sometimes when his picture is shown, the narrator tells not specifically of Wallgren, but of the poor in general. Thus, he functions as a representative of the nameless poor and his picture is used as a substitute for missing authentic imagery to illustrate the many faceless people. Notably, a huge cap shadows Wallgren's face, which allows room for the spectator's imagination. At one point in the programme, we are told that Wallgren dreamt of America (G). It is quite possible that he had

⁶⁰ Cf. Sorlin, Pierre, 1990, pp. 48 f.



Figure 16. The poor dreaming of going to America. The image of Nils Petter Wallgren reading a romantic story of American Indians is used to represent the dream of the poor to escape harsh conditions in Sweden. *Photo: Jan-Hugo Norman. Courtesy of Olle Häger.*

such dreams, but this cannot be verified in written sources,⁶¹ and therefore must be the invention of Häger and Villius. On the other hand, if we see Wallgren as a representative of the famine-stricken population, there can be no doubt that parts of that population shared dreams of migrating to America. At the end of the programme the narrator tells of the thousands who died in the famine (I), and directly afterwards Wallgren falls sick and tragically dies (J). The music that has accompanied him through the programme symbolically ends. Thus, Wallgren is used to give a face to the many people who died.⁶² His life-story also parallels nature's year, where summer brings life and winter brings death. The programme ends with the deathly-sick Wallgren being carried in a horse-drawn sleigh through the snowy landscape. It is dark, quiet, cold and the land is deserted of people.

The story of young Wallgren fulfils a host of different functions in the programme. It provides detailed images that illustrate what certain milieus may have looked like in 1867, thus playing both a cognitive and an aesthetic func-

⁶¹ The only written documents about Wallgren are the pages in the court records. DA. T21, F1, 30, Ett satans år. 1867, XYZ, copies (21 pages) of court records.

⁶² In the words of White, Hayden, 1978, p. 70, Wallgren is an example of synecdoche, the part that represents the whole.

tion. In a cognitive sense, Wallgren's fate makes it easier to understand the unknown lives of the poor. The story gave the filmmakers an opportunity to work with the techniques of exemplification, concreteness, and identification. But not least, the Wallgren story fulfils a moral function. The poor boy passes by the closed villages of more substantial peasants, which emphasises the theme of class antagonism. He has to work hard and the employer beats him, which also gives emphasis to the appalling conditions of the poor. Thus, through Wallgren we get to see the injustices in society. Finally, he is left dying alone (J):

He laid down very sick for 35 days. Nobody cared about him. Snow came through a broken window. He had gangrene in both his feet, bedsores on his right hip, a wound four inches long, and the iliac crest was bare to the bone. He was completely emaciated. In the middle of February 1868, Nils Petter Wallgren's mother came wandering to Sikeå to fetch him [...] Two weeks after his homecoming, on 29 February 1868, Nils Petter Wallgren died. He died from negligence and typhoid caused by hunger. A pauper, a name among all the nameless, one year of Satan.

The narrator's words are spoken over the re-enacted black-and-white images of Wallgren lying down looking sick, and then in moving colour footage being transported in a sleigh. Checking the sources proves that there is a reliable basis for the account in the programme. Wallgren was sick for 35 days, his mother came to take him home, and he died on 29 February 1868. A doctor even used the word "negligence," and witnesses said that there was a broken window near Wallgren's sickbed. Wallgren himself testified that his employer had beaten him.⁶³

Although the facts are correct, the representation emphasises only a select few. Three facts would have changed the story, had they been included. First, when the black and white photographs show Wallgren alone, the impression is that he was completely isolated. But even if nobody cared about him, his sickbed was in the kitchen near the family circle. According to the court records there were other people sleeping in that room, which suggests that even though Wallgren's bed was the closest to the broken window, other people also suffered from the wind and cold. This does not minimise Wallgren's own physical sufferings, but indicates that others shared the same working and living conditions. Whether or not it really had snowed through the broken window remains an assumption by the filmmakers. Images of a group of people around Wallgren's sickbed could have created the feeling of solidarity. Instead, the filmmakers offer images of a sad young boy, which created an atmosphere of loneliness and vulnerability. Second, in the end the boy's mother took him home when he was sick. What the narrator does not mention is that according to the sources, Wallgren visited his parents' home at Epiphany, shortly before he fell sick. That little piece of information proves that Wallgren had some connections with his family when he was still well. If they could not afford to keep

⁶³ DA. T21, F1, 30, Ett satans år. 1867, XYZ, copies (21 pages) of court records.



Figure 17. The suffering boy. The image of the sick Nils Petter Wallgren shows him all alone, perhaps in an outbuilding. Photo: Jan-Hugo Norman. Courtesy of Olle Häger.

him home over the winter, at least they could meet during holidays. Because this information is withheld from the audience, it leaves the impression that Wallgren was alone in the world.

A third piece of information that the narrator fails to mention is that the employer and his wife were sentenced by the court to pay one hundred *riksdaler* for the negligence of the sick boy. This was a considerable sum. Thus, the society punished employers who treated the poor as badly as Wallgren was treated. In a sense, the exclusion of this fact is rather serious. Had it been included in the programme, the court's decision would have increased the audience's understanding of the past. By suppressing that information, the filmmakers created a morally indignant tale about poor people who lacked rights. Clearly, Wallgren's function in the programme was to be a representative of the suffering poor, and in order to give maximum moral punch, the story of his suffering was simplified. When the narrator calls Wallgren's death "a name amongst all the nameless," the remark links the part to the whole and reminds us of the extent of the tragedy.



Figure 18. The ship *Föreningen* is launched in Härnösand, June 1867. The narrator points out that there are no extant photographs that show the famine, but instead, the details of the long winter are traced in this photo taken in the town of Härnösand in early June, 1867. The photo was taken in June when it should be summer, but the narrator remarks that snow is yet on the ground and that people in the foreground have on winter clothing – “because it is still winter-time” (C). Thus, visual sources are used to demonstrate the cause for the famine to come. *Courtesy of Länsmuseet Västernorrland.*

Two sequences that were added to the programme rather late in the process are the eyewitness accounts of Erik Gideonsson, who told of the terrible winter (A), and of Josefina Eliasson, who told of the first frost night (H). The narrator reads both tales while the imagery shows milieus devoid of people. On the soundtrack, Gideonsson’s tale is accompanied by the cold wind blowing, while Eliasson’s tale is accompanied by a quiet, sorrowful piece of music. The stories add emotions and vivid expressions to the programme. Thus, the fact-laden, early draft developed into a programme well supplied with personal experiences on which the audience could linger.

When the narrator reads the tales of Gideonsson and Eliasson, the source is provided in graphics on the screen: “The tale of Josefina Eliasson from Avaträsk.” But while the visual footnotes indicate that the tales are from actual witnesses, we are not told how their testimonies were taken and that is a critical problem. In Häger, Villius, and Torell’s book we learn that Erik Gideonsson was nine years old during the famine and that he told his reminiscences seventy years later, in a 1937 interview, as part of a larger ethnological campaign.

Knowing this, we may suspect that Josefina Eliasson (who was ten years old at the time of the famine) gave her testimony in similar circumstances, interviewed years later as an old woman.⁶⁴ The problem is that memories change, and may be influenced by other people's stories. In the instructions for an ethnological study of the famine, these problems are acknowledged: "In many areas, the memory of the famine years survive in expressions and locutions, or in stories, more or less fantastic."⁶⁵ The interviewer who wrote down Gideonsson's testimony followed a list of ethnological questions.⁶⁶ Possibly both structured the testimony and influenced the choice of words.

Gideonsson's tale is truly terrifying. He relates how his starving family was forced to eat anything in order to survive. They finally ate their only cow, the skin of the cow, and even an old pair of shoes. In the original recording, when telling of how they ate the cow, he adds: "It was not pleasant, but we were forced by our own distress. We were hoping the spring would come [...]" Likewise, when telling that they ate the shoes, he adds: "But we were so hungry, we had to eat something." In these sentences the old Gideonsson tries to explain, and perhaps apologise, for doing the unthinkable. Interestingly, the filmmakers omitted these explanatory sentences. The narrator Häger (who takes the role of Gideonsson) tells what happened matter-of-factly, but with an angry tone. The testimony is performed with intensity; a man claiming his moral right to eat, asks the audience indirectly to identify with the poor.

A major problem of the filmmakers was how to show the faces of the people who could never afford to have their photographs taken. Photos that had no direct relation with the famine provided part of the answer. When dealing with the sawmill industry (E) the programme includes photos of sawmill factories, workers, and sawmill squires. Although the photos may have been taken years other than 1867, they nevertheless give an idea about how people appeared during the famine years. Interestingly, the narrator comments about a photo with the words "the beginnings of a working class," and then contrasts this with the comment that northern Sweden was gaining an "upper class." The latter words are illustrated with shots of a beautiful yellow mansion, piano playing inside the house adding to the twitter of birds.

The use of the theoretical and politically loaded term "class" indicates that the filmmakers saw conflicting interests within the society. That impression is accentuated when the camera glides over the endless forests (F), the sound-

⁶⁴ DA. T21, F1, 30, A, holds the testimonies of Eliasson and Gideonsson. Häger, Olle, Carl Torell and Hans Villius, 1978, pp. 21, 68.

⁶⁵ DA. T21 [Ett satans år, Frågelista 73: Nödår, Etnologiska undersökningen, Nordiska museets arkiv]. It seems likely that the interview with Erik Gideonsson was made in 1943 as a part of this study. However, Häger et al. write 1937.

⁶⁶ A copy of the recording can be found in DA. T21, F1, 30, Ett satans år. 1867, A, Surrogat i människoföda. One may suspect that even the information transmitted is limited to what the interviewer wanted to know. For example, Gideonsson's account is detailed when it comes to how the food was prepared. Quite likely, this is a result of the question list, which demanded that information.

track starts playing lively music and the narrator says: “What a time it was! The squires that bought huge forest areas [Sw. kvadratmil] from peasants who hardly knew their boundaries or how much forest they owned. The squires that came driving on the narrow village roads with money in bulging leather cases. A Klondike, an Eldorado of speculators and forest thieves.” By association, the word “squires” is tied to “forest thieves” that has an unpleasant ring. The interpretation is based on facts, but another way to present squires could be as entrepreneurs, which carry a more positive image. The peasants, by contrast, “hardly knew” what they owned and therefore, again by association, would be fooled by the rich buyers. I do not deny that the squires were brutal capitalists, or that peasants were fooled into selling their forests, but I think that the simplistic interpretation of the filmmakers should be challenged.⁶⁷ In this case moral and dramatic considerations won out over the more balanced cognitive considerations.

The critical perspective on the ruling classes is especially obvious when the “Autumn of Hunger” is dealt with. After the harvest was destroyed by the early frost, desperation for food became great. But according to the narrator, the ruling classes did not handle the relief as one may have hoped:

Finally even the authorities understood [...] that a real famine winter was approaching. [...] Charity cleared the conscience of the rich [...] there was both private and state relief. But much never got there in time [before the sea became ice]. Only half of the money was used for grain. The rest remained in Stockholm. [...] Somewhere far away it had been decided in detail how the relief was to be used [...] when the Tåsjö people asked for permission to mix bark and straw in the bread, the authorities said no. It should be fir lichen, for that had been decided. And so the old and the feeble had to plod out into the forest to collect fir lichen [...] the relief was left for weeks and months in Kramfors and Härnösand, before it was collected and distributed. [...] This winter the black fever came to Tåsjö, typhoid fever in the tracks of hunger. The famine made every illness deadly dangerous. Thousands of people succumbed around Norrland. (H, I)

The narration is factual, but still the criticism of how aid was handled is in the forefront. Finally “even” the authorities understood, and charity “cleared the conscience” of the rich. These words show an interpretation that the self-centred rich sent aid more for their own sake than to really help the poor. Further, the narrator uses a host of verbs that signal passivity, such as half of the money “remained” in Stockholm – the implicit suggestion being that the rich benefited from the money also. Further, the food was “left” for months before it was distributed, and the distribution was connected with foolish stipulations. The result, obvious after the above description, was that “thousands of people” died. While the devastating first frost is accompanied by sorrowful music, the account of the reactions of the rich is accompanied by a light waltz. On screen the

⁶⁷ Ericsson-Treanter, Anna & Bo Persson, 2002, suggest a more complex interplay between peasants and lumber companies. From their discussion it appears that the peasants quickly learned to get paid well.

rich are dancing at an elegant party. Thus, both image and music help to emphasise the contrast between rich and poor.

Ett satans år focuses on the problems with relief rather than on what was in fact accomplished.⁶⁸ Thereby, the effect reminds us of the Irish saw: God sent the bad crops, but the authorities brought the famine. Two examples show that the past was actually more complex. First, the narrator stated that neither bark nor straw but only fir lichen was allowed as an ingredient in bread. But as he mentions in passing, the famine relief came from both private and state sources. Relief was organised along different lines depending on its source. Accordingly, when the narrator claims that "the authorities" would not allow the use of bark or straw in bread, may have been a stipulation by a particular relief organisation, and as a consequence, the detail probably is historically correct but also misleading. Second, the only individual living at the time to comment on the famine in the programme is the bishop of Härnösand (I) who wrote in a pastoral letter "the poor cry out with presumption for support, after they have thoughtlessly squandered the rich profits of summer." This moralising, authoritarian voice from the past, no matter how singular or typical it was, fits well with the argument that the authorities failed to protect the lives of their poor subjects. The narrator reads the bishop's letter while we see the quiet, pale faces of some old people in a church, who represent the parishioners who received the message from the bishop. Like the rules about fir lichen, the bishop's letter is historically accurate but also misleading, for the bishop probably was quite singular in his condemning attitude. These simplifications add to the overall interpretation that the authorities did a bad job trying to help the poor. Thus, they serve the moral function of increasing the viewer's indignation.

In conclusion, the programme is characterised by a politically moral stance. To be sure, the filmmakers took careful cognitive considerations, both by extensive research and by including descriptive and analytical elements in the programme. We have seen also that they took aesthetic considerations, taking out sequences that threatened dramatic unities. It is possible also that the inclusion of problematic sources such as Gideonsson's tale and the simplification of Wallgren's fate were the result of aesthetic considerations, because they were interesting stories. They also served a cognitive function because they communicated experiential knowledge of the difficulties that people had in 1867. But clearly, the choice of subject was motivated by politically moral issues. The producers announced their objective to "shed light upon the current problems of aid." There is reason to suspect that this aim influenced what facts were used, as well as the moral tone of the narration. Second, the famine is not just depicted as a human tragedy, but the result of (the absence of) political action. The filmmakers avoided opposing details in order to sharpen the story. Throughout the programme the authorities are depicted as a monolithic power,

⁶⁸ In recent research, Nelson, Marie C., 1988, has found that the relief was a success and that with the exception of Västerbotten death rates were actually not exceptionally high. See especially p. 82, table 5.2.

which could be questioned on the basis of the organisation of relief. The deletion of the information that Nils Petter Wallgren's employer was sentenced to pay a heavy fine adds to the impression of the authorities as uninterested in their subjects. Taken together, I find that the politically moral considerations greatly influenced the programme.

4. Representing the famine: the dramatised version

In addition to *Ett satans år*, Häger and co-producer Carl Torell made the dramatic film *Isgraven* [*The Ice Grave*] that also dealt with the famine. In an early document, Häger and Villius wrote that the SVT2 planning group gave priority to this re-enacted documentary of a "feature film character."⁶⁹ This characterisation of *Isgraven* raises the question of what kind of film it would actually be. The work of historian-filmmakers, was made from their knowledge of the famine, but while the story is set against the background of real events and refers to historical processes, the story line is invented. Professional actors starred in the film. In other words, *Isgraven* is a film that could be placed somewhere along the spectrum of drama-documentaries, docudramas or historical fiction films. Because it is a film that is based on the (true) past, but uses a dramatic lens to bring moral clarity to that past, we may characterise it as a docudrama. The reason for my focus on this film is that it has some strong, documentary elements, and further it sheds light on Häger's moral position.

As I related above, *Isgraven* was made during 1976 and 1977. Häger and Torell co-wrote the script, and Torell directed the shootings. Hans Villius did not work on the film, but since he and Häger produced *Ett satans år* which parallels *Isgraven* I assume Villius must have been involved in discussions about the docudrama. The film tells the intertwined stories of two young men, the rich Reime and the poor Frånberg. Such an approach makes history personal, portraying it through the experiences of people,⁷⁰ giving the audience an opportunity to identify itself with the characters. Although *Isgraven* tells a fictitious story it also includes elements of a documentary. It was shot in historic milieus, one of them an old deserted farm and another the historic quarters of Härnösand, where the buildings were of the nineteenth century.⁷¹ Because it was broadcast in relation with *Ett satans år* it is likely that the audience made a connection between the two films, which also may have strengthened the documentary status of *Isgraven*. The fact that the well-known historian-filmmaker

⁶⁹ DA. T21, F1, 31, *Ett satans år*. Manus, CD, Produktionsbeskrivning. One reason for the channel's support may have been that *Isgraven* was perceived as an experiment in entertaining documentary. Another reason perhaps was that SVT also produced the dramatic series *Raskens*, which was set in the south of Sweden. Because *Isgraven* was set in the north, SVT offered something to both north and south.

⁷⁰ On filmmakers' tendency to focus on the exploits of one or two individuals, cf. Toplin, Robert Brent, 1996, pp. 20 f., 179–223.

⁷¹ Håte, 1976; Sörenson, Elisabeth, 1977. Other newspaper clips in DA. T21, F1, 31.

Olle Häger was one of the film's creators may or may not have convinced viewers that there was a firm historical basis for the story.⁷² The film is segmented as follows:

- A. Sequences 1–13. Relief handouts to the poor. Young entrepreneur Herman Reime tries to convince a farmer to sell land so he can build a sawmill. A crofter tries to steal grain and is slain by the farmer. The crofter's son, Jon Frånberg, is hurt and flees.
- B. Sequences 14–23. Frånberg hides in town. Reime gets involved in a relief organisation. Reime recognises Frånberg and finds out about the murder.
- C. Sequences 24–28. The dead crofter is found under the ice in a creek. Reime contemplates naming the killer but chooses not to, and instead strikes a deal to buy the farmer's land.
- D. Sequences 29–36. Reime promises Frånberg that he will help him get to America. He puts Frånberg in a secret grain storehouse in the forest. Starving beggars come to the storehouse.
- E. Sequences 37–45. The poor have a party in the storehouse. Reime appears and chases them out. When he tries to beat Frånberg, the house is set on fire and Reime's grain is burned. Frånberg flees and Reime is left on the scene.

The film follows a chronological narrative but cuts between the stories of Frånberg and Reime. The story of Frånberg is that of the poor man on the run, trying to survive. The story of Reime, by contrast, is the entrepreneur who has come to the area to buy land and build a sawmill. Reime is the main character in the film and his is the moral conflict. He has the means to help Frånberg, and the grain to the starving poor. But his vision is to build the sawmill that will solve the long-term problems of the area and make himself rich. Therefore, helping Frånberg and the poor becomes his second objective. The film centres around Frånberg and Reime. They are the main characters with about ten other actors in supporting roles.

Formally, the film is made in the observational mode and there is no voice-over narrator. It is the characters' external behaviour that is presented, their appearance and the conditions in which they live. The film's vantage point is not with any of the characters, or in other words the story is one of external focalisation.⁷³ Another formal characteristic of the film is that music is used frequently to set the mood in various scenes. One odd character is a storytelling vagabond who wears glasses and walks with a limp. He is the actor who brings ill fortune just when the story seems to have found new balance. His arrival in the storehouse causes the party that leads to the confrontation with Reime, and he is also responsible for setting the storehouse on fire. Both his actions and his

⁷² Häger had made historical documentaries with Villius for around ten years, but he had also recently made a dramatic historical film with Torell, *Embargo* (1976).

⁷³ Focalisation, meaning "who sees," defines the centre of perception; Genette, Gérard, 1980 (1972).

appearance make him seem almost mythical. Taken together, aesthetic conventions inform the audience that the film tells a fictitious story.

However, there are some documentary elements in the film. In fact, some sequences in *Isgraven* feel as if taken out of a history book. For example, the opening sequence shows how relief is handed out to the poor and includes a talk by a rich man about the rules attached to the handouts (A). The sequence also features people who talk of the ideas to mix lichen in the bread, as a means to make it last longer. This sequence could have been used as a dramatised illustration in a documentary. Later in the film (C), the county governor gives a speech and a relief convoy loaded with flour travels through the land. These sequences are only loosely tied to the story of Reime and Frånberg, and also the sequence about the relief convoy could have been used in a historical documentary. There are other scenes in the film that evoke the mood and conflict of the time. There is a trader who refuses to sell flour in order to force up the price (B); there are beggars who send their children to find food (B); there are women who carry heavy buckets of water (B), and who melt snow in a kettle over the fire (D); and there is the mentioning of the large number of funerals (D). The link to a specific historical context is marked with a few details. In the beginning of the film a caption informs the audience that it is set in the province of Ångermanland in 1868. Later, the famous sawmill owner Dickson is mentioned in passing. Thus, the film signals that much of it is based on fact. But the main characters of the film are historically unknown, and the viewer has no idea which characters are invented and which are not.⁷⁴

Set in a famine year, *Isgraven* ultimately lets its characters struggle with questions about life and death. The moral question of the wealthy people's responsibilities is a central theme in the film. The question is presented in the first scene of the film, and continues to be present throughout, with the rich discussing the situation. In one sequence the problem is thematised in a play, where the rich townpeople see an actress play a poor beggar-girl (B, seq. 17). Elsewhere, the arrangement of a dinner table is contrasted with the sound of church bells ringing and the words "there were eleven funerals today" (D, seq. 36) which remind the wealthy that there are people dying of starvation.

The moral conflict is especially centred in the main character Herman Reime, whose first name could be read as herr man, "Mr Man," or herreman, "Master." He is torn between idealism and realism, between giving precedence to communal or to personal gains. First is the question of relief to the hungry. Officially Reime is an outspoken advocate of aid, so he helps the relief committee put pressure on a local businessman to sell grain instead of saving it for a higher price. But while the relief committee struggles to collect grain for the starving, Reime hides grain in his storehouse. Second, there is the murder and the question of whether he should help Frånberg or conceal the identity of the

⁷⁴ At least a few characters were based on real people. The Frånberg family appears also in *Svart på vitt: För evigt adjö tecknar Carolina* (1985).



Figure 19. Rich man faces moral conflict. Herman Reime (Ingemar Carlehed) hesitating to unmask the murderer. *Photo: Kenneth Thorén. Courtesy of SVT/Bild.*

murderer. This is the most difficult conflict for Reime, who is tormented by his knowledge about who committed the crime. Either he unmasks the killer, or signs a contract with the accused to buy land so he can build his sawmill. His doubts are communicated through the dialogue with his capitalistic father-in-law and his pregnant wife, while the camera shoots close-ups of his agonised expression. In one scene, his inner torments are communicated in a more theatrical way with dramatic music at the moment when he must decide to speak or not (C, seq. 27); it is a kind of internal focalisation. Reime's speech is as a moral man, but ultimately he betrays his ideals and signs the contract. Feeling remorse, he tries to escape his guilt by helping Frånberg start a new life. In the final scene, after he realises that the poor have stolen from him, Reime tries to beat Frånberg. The scene parallels the scene earlier in the film when the farmer killed Frånberg's father, proving that Reime is no better than any wealthy man. When fire ravages the storehouse it is symbolic of Reime's decision to compromise his ideals.

If Reime personifies the capitalist, the poor adolescent Frånberg personifies the famine victims. His first name, Jon, is symbolic due to the fact it sounds like *hjon*, which means servant or person in need.⁷⁵ He certainly is in need of help.

⁷⁵ *Ordbok över svenska språket (SAOB)*, vol. XI, H985.

Although a non-assertive young man he gets into trouble because of his father, the rebellious crofter who first argues with the farmer about the distribution of relief and then attempts to steal grain. Class antagonism is present not only in the father's actions, but in his words. In the cabin, before attempting the theft, the crofter talks of wealth and has his son feel the strength of his muscles: "Did you feel this fist [...] we shall show them!" (A, seq. 3) When his father is killed Frånberg flees, and thus becomes one of those forced to leave home, who struggle against the cold and the hunger, and dream of a better world. His dream of security is made real by the word "America," a hint at the ongoing emigration, but it is a dream that for economic reasons is impossible for him – as to the other members of the proletariat. Frånberg is very afraid, and says little and represents the faceless masses, who lack education and the right to vote. This, at the same time, contrasts him with Reime, who acts with great self-confidence and is an articulate man. While the rich man is tall and strong, Frånberg is small and weak, with a pale blue-frozen face. Thus, both in manners, name, and physical appearance it is clear who is strong and who is weak.

At the end of the film, Frånberg becomes an active agent who must handle his own moral conflict. Starving beggars assemble in Reime's storehouse where Frånberg hides, forcing him to decide whether he should help steal grain from Reime or see the beggars starve. Frånberg voices his doubts about the justice in taking the grain, but a young girl answers him rhetorically: "You cannot let the food remain uneaten when people die. Do you think so? Do you think that that is more Christian? There is enough for everybody" (D, seq. 34). To Frånberg, stealing grain from Reime is difficult because it means not only breaking the law, but betraying Reime's confidence. Indirectly, it means that Frånberg will not get a ticket to America. Still, when he takes his moral stance, he follows his father's example and takes from the rich. Not only does he allow the grain to be eaten, but he gets ready with gun in hand to save the grain for the poor. In the final scene, although Reime simply snatches the gun from his hands and Frånberg must flee, he remains the morally superior of the two.

The film relates both emotions and historical insights. The conflict between those who have and those who do not is clearly related in *Isgraven*. One can sometimes feel the agony of the starving poor, as well as the fear of the rich that the poor will disobey society's rules. As a representation of history, the method of telling the story of a few symbolic people has its strengths and weaknesses. By necessity, Reime and Frånberg are simplified representatives of society. During the famine most people probably stayed in their villages, but we do not see them in the film. From a gender perspective, a film about two men cannot reflect the entire society. There are two important female voices in the film, one of them is a girl who tells Frånberg to help feed the poor. The other is Reime's wife who urges him to think about themselves instead of poor Frånberg.⁷⁶ A

⁷⁶ In an early script version Reime's wife Maria suggested that he give up his grain to the poor. DA. T21, M1, 5, Svältens år, scene no. 34.



Figure 20. Flames of revolt. Matilda Lind (Jonna Arb) goes out for a pail of water. She convinces the male character Jon Frånberg that they must take the rich man's food to feed the poor. Inside – the fire that will destroy all. *Photo: Bengt Steiner. Courtesy of SVT/Bild.*

third female character is Frånberg's mother. In an early script she argued against her husband in the scene where he decides to steal grain, but this was rewritten and in the final version the woman does not utter a word.⁷⁷ Because the scene

⁷⁷ DA. T21, M1, 5, Isgraven, Svältens år, scene no 6.

only introduces the stealing of grain, the argument would have drawn attention from the main story. Nevertheless, this change in the script shows how a possible female character disappeared from the story.

The film can be read as an allegory about aid to development countries in recent times, especially with regard to the protagonist Herman Reime. He represents new thinking and capitalist progress, having come north to establish a sawmill. His family name has a foreign ring, and his conscience is that of the newcomer, the guest from the outside world who seeks to make his new home better. But ultimately he fails to understand the people and their conflicts or at least he is a benefactor who refuses to see the full implications of his ideas. Read as criticism of modern aid, Reime represents the westerner who has come to help. Frånberg adds to the moral dilemma when he twice listens to people (his father and the rebellious girl) who make moral claims about the poor people's right to food in these hard times. Seen against the backdrop of debate in Sweden during the 1970s, the issue of aid to developing countries clearly is a motif in the story. As is clear from the reviews, this was also evident to audiences at the time. For example, one reviewer writes of a "dizzying reminder of the resemblance between the Swedish poverty yesterday, and the developing countries today."⁷⁸

Like *Ett satans år*, *Isgraven* champions a political-moral stance. Not only do the protagonists live through moral choices, but they voice strong opinions directly to the audience. Clearly, *Isgraven* bears traces of the 1970s, years which were politically radical. Like *Ett satans år* it suggests that the poor had no rights, that Sweden in those days was a country of economic extremes. Aesthetic considerations led to dramatic scenes, including the intense final scene where all is burned, and cognitive considerations played a part not just in the preparations that were in common with *Ett satans år*, but especially in the scenes that illustrated how society handled aid. The strongest impression of the film is its political-moral message.

5. Portraying German soldiers of the Second World War

During the 1980s, Häger and Villius made more than one hundred five-minute programmes in the *Svart på vitt* series. The *Svart på vitt* episodes usually built on one single black-and-white photograph, which was used to open a window onto the past. I will discuss the series thoroughly in the next chapter, but now will look into an episode that is separate from the rest of the series. It is one of five programmes about Norway during the Second World War, and visually it is based on several colour photographs. Häger and Villius made the five programmes after a woman in northern Norway told them that she had tracked down a stack of colour photographs that German soldiers had taken

⁷⁸ Quote Hjertén, Hanserik, 1977; Vejde, Eva, 1977; Sjöström, Ernst, 1977.

during the war. The photos were virtually unknown. What was particularly interesting about these photos was not just that they were unique colour photos,⁷⁹ but that German soldiers had taken them for their private collections.⁸⁰ Thus, they represented a German perspective on events that Scandinavians would understand far differently. Häger and Villius decided that the photographs must be shown to a wider audience and made five *Svart på vitt* episodes from them.⁸¹

The production process was quite simple. World War II is part of the grand historical narrative and Häger and Villius were well acquainted with the events in Norway. As I indicated in the previous chapter, Villius had personal impressions because as a young student in Uppsala he met war refugees from Norway. Nevertheless, they received help from a couple of Norwegians who sent detailed information about particular episodes that occurred during the war.⁸² Thus, we can assume that Häger and Villius looked at the photos, discussed what stories could be told, sorted them, read through the information sent from Norway, wrote narration scripts, and went to the studio. Four of the episodes dealt with particular events and places, but the episode that I will discuss portrays generally the German soldiers who came to Norway during the years of occupation, 1940–1945. It is called *Herrefolket* [*The Master Race*] (1990).⁸³

The content of the programme is easily summarised; it deals with German soldiers and their relationship to Norway and the Norwegians. In formal terms, the five-minute programme is an expository documentary, made visually from fourteen still photographs. Of these, five make up the fifteen-seconds title sequence that is the same in all the five episodes. The remaining nine photos make up the actual programme, each photo shown in a single shot with an average length of about half a minute. Thus, the camera rests on each photo for a long time, although there are camera movements within the photos. There is a narrator who speaks matter-of-factly. Except for the music that accompanies the title sequence, a piece by Norwegian composer Edvard Grieg that would make the Swedish audience think of Norway, there is neither music nor sound effects in the programme. Both the absence of music and the matter-of-fact narration are formal devices that signal seriousness. Furthermore, the well-known narrator voice of Hans Villius adds to the spectator's impression of objective expert knowledge.

⁷⁹ The Second World War was almost always broadcast in black and white footage; the first major exception was TWI / Carlton Television's *The Second World War in Colour* (1999). Wood, Adrian, 2001, p. 52, writes that some colour film from Nazi concentration camps has been shown in black and white, but thinks that the reason for this was economic rather than moral or aesthetic.

⁸⁰ DA. T21, F1, 41, Svart på vitt – i färg, 1, Produktionsbeskrivning; DA. T21, F1, 41, Svart på vitt – i färg, 2, Ingress I.

⁸¹ The five programmes are actually called *Svart på vitt – i färg*. The credits name Ida Nyström, Nordkap, for archive and research.

⁸² DA. T21, F1, 41, Svart på vitt – i färg.

⁸³ The programme was produced by Häger, Villius and Carl Göran Odell.

The nine photos show soldiers in informal situations. They are (1) soldiers building a bridge; (2) soldiers working on the ground in a sunny glade in the forest; (3) a soldier shaving on a sunny morning; (4) an empty barracks; (5) soldiers and a girl; (6) a soldier with a child and a dog; (7) soldiers in a street with a Sami male in the foreground; (8) soldiers celebrating Christmas; and (9) a group of laughing officers. As the narrator points out, those are the kind of photos that were taken because “as long as the fighting went on the camera remained in the back-pack.” The words are a little bit deceptive, because the German army did indeed take photographs of the fighting, but in this context the remark is primarily a way of introducing the audience to the face of the off-duty soldier.

The first part of the programme establishes German soldiers as human beings. While some of them are war criminals, says the narrator, others are “private soldiers who just don’t want to die.” The third photo is especially intimate and powerful. The camera zooms in on a soldier who “just shaved, because he is trying to put on a plaster [on his neck].” Both comments enable the spectator to identify with the soldiers. Every man knows how easy it is to cut himself when shaving, and of course, nobody wants to die. When the photo of the soldiers and the (smiling) girl is shown, the narrator says that many Germans liked the years in Norway and points out that more than ten thousand children were born to German fathers. The photo and the remark work together to suggest that the soldiers dreamt of romance and sometimes found it. In all, the pictures and the narration emphasise that the soldiers are humans. The fourth photo is of a barracks. Having noted that this is how the soldiers lived the narrator goes on to tell a funny anecdote of how a receptionist at a hotel in Narvik let the Germans sign in as regular guests before showing them the rooms (that they had commandeered). This little anecdote has an aesthetic function in that it accentuates the light tone of the early part of the programme.

Gradually, there is a change in the kind of the information served. The narrator suggests that perhaps, the photos showing soldiers with a smiling girl or with children and dogs were part of a strategy, an attempt by the occupiers to appear as friends. When the seventh photo shows a Sami male, the narrator says that the soldiers thought the Sami exciting, “they could hardly be Germanic, but they are something completely different from the Jews.” Interestingly, in this the narrator glides into indirect address, a narrating mode that suggests that the words and the photo come from a German point of view. While the camera zooms out from the Sami male to let the image include a few German soldiers in the street, the narrator observes that the surviving twelve Norwegian Jews (out of six hundred sent to concentration camps) returned “when there were no Germans still in the streets.” Thus, the words tie into what is in the image. Furthermore, by using the image in an associative way the filmmakers raise the moral problem of the Holocaust.

The narrator continues talking matter-of-factly, but there is an immense

contrast between the light anecdote about the hotel in Narvik and the mentioning of the six hundred Norwegian Jews who perished in the concentration camps. The contrast is further underlined by the last two photographs, which both show happy German soldiers, celebrating Christmas or just laughing in a garden. While the image-track is light, the voice-over narrator summarises the costs of the war in Norway:

More than five thousand German soldiers die in Norway, as do ten thousand Norwegians [...] a number of Norwegian villages and town bombed and burned to pieces [...] The Master Race, the victors, the occupants. And on the other side a thousand teachers arrested and brought to Grini, the concentration camp outside Oslo. Seven hundred students to Grini. Maltreatment, forced labour. Two thousand civilians killed [...] That is the war in Norway. That is the Master Race, and those that they made themselves the masters of.

The contrast between words and image is especially marked when the camera zooms in on two laughing officers in the last photograph. The spectator's reaction to that contrast must be that the image lies, that the photographs only offer part of the whole.

The narrator never raises his voice, and the narration does not make any value judgements, except for the expression "the Master Race," which is used in an ironic but also a matter-of-fact way. Instead, the filmmakers trust that the contrast and the content will transmit the moral message. From the detailed account of the costs of war there can be no doubt as to their message that the war was terrible. But perhaps the most interesting aspect of the programme is that it treats the German soldiers as humans rather than monsters or the "others." When we see the photo of the soldiers celebrating Christmas, the narrator suggests that they "surely long for home." Thus, and as I suggested above, the portrayal of the soldiers is complex and not one-sided. Because they were humans, their deeds must be seen as moral problems relevant to all, rather than a purely German issue. The narrator gives a particularly moral hint to the Swedish audience when he notes that many of the German soldiers who went to Norway travelled on Swedish railroads. The Swedes themselves have at least an indirect culpability for the war in Norway.⁸⁴

In conclusion, the little five-minute programme was framed by different considerations. It was filled with historical information, which indicates cognitive considerations. Aesthetic considerations influenced the programme by setting a time limit of five minutes (which was the format of the series) and it was made use of a close interplay between words and images. Narration typically starts inside the image – and often returns there.⁸⁵ When the narrator told the anecdote about the hotel in Narvik, the image still showed a room where sol-

⁸⁴ The same point was made in *Moses, Aron och Karl XII* (1994). Häger pointed to Sweden's wartime export of iron ore in *Hundra svenska år: Vi och världen* (1999) and in *Fy fan, ett så'n't land!* (2000).

⁸⁵ I will discuss this more thoroughly in Chapter 8 in relation to my analysis of the *Svart på vitt* series.

diers lived. When he made the jump from the Sami to the Jews, he nevertheless returned to the image with a remark about Germans in the streets. The hidden side of this narrative technique is that the possibility to tell about what is not visible in extant pictures is limited. Thus, aesthetic considerations limit the words. Most important, the programme dealt with a morally complex subject, and the filmmakers did not choose simply to condemn the German soldiers. Instead, and while pointing to the terrible things that happened during the war, they took a humane moral stance, suggesting that the perpetrators were ordinary men. The dramatic structure of the programme communicates moral complexity.

6. Handling the Holocaust

In the early 1990s Olle Häger was contacted by the son of Holocaust survivor Benny Grünfeld, who asked if Häger could assist in the publication of a book that he was writing about his experiences in Auschwitz. The book would be illustrated by Grünfeld's own drawings. Häger agreed to assist in the matter and wrote a historical background chapter for the book, which became a bestseller. In addition, he decided that he wanted to make a television programme about Grünfeld's time in Auschwitz.⁸⁶ What resulted was the documentary *Tur retur helvetet. Med Benny Grünfeld i Auschwitz* [*Return to Hell. With Benny Grünfeld in Auschwitz*] (1996), which was broadcast several times with high audience numbers.⁸⁷ After it was broadcast on SVT it was shown in hundreds of schools around Sweden, accompanying Benny Grünfeld on his Holocaust lecture tours, which made it possibly the most talked-about of Häger and Villius's productions. The fate of Grünfeld and his family was also used in a state-run information campaign against racism.⁸⁸

The Second World War was a long-time interest of both Häger and Villius, and it was the foundation for several of their programmes. Although their focus was usually on the armed conflict (which Villius explored in numerous radio lectures in the 1950s) or on the Swedish war experience, the Holocaust loomed in the background and it can be noted that they visited Auschwitz in 1980.⁸⁹ Their first programme on a related subject dealt with the Swedish refugee policy in the years around 1939 (*J för Jude*, 1973).⁹⁰ They continued to discuss

⁸⁶ DA. T21, F1, 65, *Tur retur helvetet*, A., Kort bakgrund, 1996.07.04; Grünfeld, Benny, with Magnus Henrekson & Olle Häger, 1995.

⁸⁷ The programme was broadcast on SVT at least five times: 1996.10.10, 1996.10.12, 1996.10.16, 1997.07.04, 1997.11.11, 1997.11.16. About audience size, see DA. T21, F1, 65, *Tur retur helvetet*, A., document dated 1996.10.14.

⁸⁸ The project was called *Hur är läget?*, and was part of 1997, European year against racism. Cf. DA. T21, F1, 65, *Tur retur helvetet*, N. The film was offered continuously to schools by the Swedish AV-centraler (audio-visual centres) and was still used frequently in 2001; information from Ewa Lundström, Utbildningsradion, 2001.11.20.

⁸⁹ They said afterwards that it was a strongly moving experience; Olofsson, Ken, 1982.

⁹⁰ Häger received threatening letters after the programme; interview with Häger, 2003.06.03.

Sweden's morally questionable war policies in *Fyra dagar som skakade Sverige* (1988), which I will treat in the next chapter. In the late 1980s they made a number of *Svart på vitt* programmes about the war, one of them the aforementioned programme about German soldiers in Norway. Another episode portrayed six Swedes who were officers in the Waffen SS.⁹¹ In 1989 they made ten five-minute programmes about the Second World War to use for educational purposes. One of the episodes focused on the concentration camps, which was the first time Häger and Villius dealt explicitly with the Holocaust. Similar to the programme on German soldiers in Norway, the film was made from nine photographs, most of them showing perpetrators such as Adolf Eichmann. When the narrator described the killing process in the death camps a photograph of a group of Jews by a railway track was used to illustrate the horror.⁹² Surely the producers discussed how to portray the Holocaust, which Häger would continue to struggle with in the film about Benny Grünfeld. Finally, it should be mentioned that in the early 1990s Häger and Villius planned a production about Nazis in Sweden that was never produced.⁹³ When the Benny Grünfeld story came to Häger, he clearly knew it was time to make a programme about the Holocaust. In a written note he suggests that a historical documentarist should deal with the Holocaust at least once.⁹⁴ The 1990s experienced a boom in Holocaust interest in general.⁹⁵ Although there was no immediate relationship between Steven Spielberg's film *Schindler's List* (1993) and Häger's film about Benny Grünfeld, the latter film did indeed appear at a time when interest in the Holocaust was on the rise.

In producing *Tur retur helvetet*, Häger had to struggle with the question of how to represent that which many documentarists and theoreticians claim cannot be represented. The unique problem is not that the Holocaust was never caught on film, instead, the problem is a moral one; whether it is possible to represent something as horrible as the Holocaust. As I mentioned in Chapter 3, documentarists have attempted to solve the problem in different ways. Alain Resnais used extant imagery but added poetic commentary. Claude Lanzmann found that the extant images did not work to communicate the horrors, and used newly-filmed interviews to perform the task. Others, such as Peter Cohen, avoided the death camps and instead depicted other aspects of the Holocaust (in the case of Cohen, the ghetto).⁹⁶ The doubts concerning the representation of the Holocaust had to do with problematic aspects of the extant imagery. One aspect is that most authentic footage of the Holocaust came from German

⁹¹ *Svart på vitt. De sex från Narva* (1985).

⁹² *Bilder från ett krig. Koncentrationslägren* (1989).

⁹³ DA. T21, F1, 78, Programlista, 34 Nazismen i Sverige, letter from Anna-Lena Lodenius to Häger and Villius, 1991.06.26.

⁹⁴ DA. T21, F1, 65, Tur retur helvetet, A., Kort bakgrund, 1996.07.04.

⁹⁵ Loshitzky, Yosefa, 1997, p. 5; Karlsson, Klas-Göran and Ulf Zander, 2003; Petersen, Judith, 2001.

⁹⁶ Wilcox, Larry, 2002, p. 6, writes of a "growing interest in representing aspects of the Holocaust beyond the camps."

cameras. As a result, while many of the victims elicit sympathy only a few are defiant enough to command respect.⁹⁷ Whether re-framing the images offers a solution is a question of debate.⁹⁸ Another problem is that some of the strongest imagery has been used so widely that the affect has been diffused, in the sense that many people recognise the images and perhaps will not be affected by them. Further, the wide reproduction of only a handful of photographs of the Holocaust has simplified our depiction of the event.⁹⁹ To conclude, it is certainly difficult to make the Holocaust visible and render it meaningful.

Häger was aware of imagery that has been used too often, which in his view made it necessary to find “fresh” images. Benny Grünfeld offered a solution. In his desire to bear witness about the Holocaust he was ready to appear on-screen, and in addition his own paintings could represent the original scenes.¹⁰⁰ Planning for the film began in 1994, but it would be two years before its completion. In the proposal, Häger wrote that it was an important subject, “a film to push down the VAM-ers’ [Swedish neo-Nazis] throats.” His aesthetic vision was “a journey from Hungary to Auschwitz, the paintings [by Grünfeld] and the airport [where Grünfeld was employed in Sweden] and Kjell Tunegård’s talented editing.” Häger estimated that the programme would be rather inexpensive.¹⁰¹ Thus, the project was motivated by a moral need but aesthetically it was made possible by Grünfeld’s paintings. From the book, Häger knew the strong testimony Grünfeld could deliver and thus he planned the trip and wrote a script.

The power of the programme was to come from only one person’s recollection. However, Häger did not know how Grünfeld would react when he returned to Auschwitz.¹⁰² As it turned out, once in Auschwitz (in April 1995) Grünfeld did not speak to the camera in the fashion that was anticipated. This created a huge problem for the filmmakers. Grünfeld relates the problem thus that he had a tremendous need to talk. For instance, once in a barracks where Häger just wanted him to walk in silence, he could not stop talking.¹⁰³ Häger felt that Grünfeld’s words seemed too mechanical, which could interfere with the level of sympathy an audience may feel toward Grünfeld.¹⁰⁴ The problem

⁹⁷ Insdorf, Annette, 1983, p. 148.

⁹⁸ Concerning re-framing of Nazi images, see Guerin, Frances, 2000.

⁹⁹ Zelizer, Barbie, 1998. Brian Crawford made the same point at the History in Words and Images conference in Turku, September 2002.

¹⁰⁰ At first Grünfeld was doubtful about making the film, because he had no prior experience of being in front of a camera. However, because he thought the subject was important, and he trusted Häger and Villius, so agreed to participate. Interview with Benny Grünfeld, 2003.02.19.

¹⁰¹ DA. T21, F1, 65, Tur retur helvetet, F, Programförslag 94.11.25; T21, F1, 78, Programlista, 40, Jag heter...

¹⁰² The concept of accompanying a survivor back to the concentration camp, to record that person’s recollection, was used also in Peter Morley’s *Kitty: Return to Auschwitz* (1980), made for Yorkshire Television in Britain. Insdorf, Annette, 1983, pp. 193 f., relates the filmmaker’s uncertainty about how Kitty would react when returning to the camp.

¹⁰³ Interview with Benny Grünfeld, 2003.02.19.

¹⁰⁴ DA. T21, F1, 65, Tur retur helvetet, A., Kort bakgrund, 1996.07.04. Tunegård has given the same comment; interview with Kjell Tunegård, 2002.10.10.

meant that the project had run into trouble. Because their survivor failed on screen, the filmmakers had to find an aesthetic solution for the programme. Some time after the journey, they filmed Grünfeld in his Swedish home, finding that, in a more relaxed environment, he spoke well.¹⁰⁵ In the programme, the images from the interview in Sweden are interpolated with the images shot at Auschwitz.

The problem with a witness is not only that of audience appeal, but that of an uncertain memory. Grünfeld remembered his own experiences well. However, after the filming in Auschwitz Häger wrote a letter to a guide there, writing that Grünfeld was pleased to “get help to find places. He even hade [sic] the opportunity to get some of his statements corrected.”¹⁰⁶ The letter suggests that fifty years after his time in Auschwitz, and with the place much changed, Grünfeld was no longer sure of how to orientate, also, he needed help to get his “statements corrected.” Probably, the corrections had to do with general statements concerning Auschwitz. Nevertheless, the note reminds us that a witness testimony is not always correct in its detail. Errors must be avoided because they could make Grünfeld and the entire programme subject to questioning.

One idea for the film was to contrast the Holocaust and the Grünfeld story with wartime civilian German life, or sandwich the Grünfeld story with archival footage. This idea was abandoned and the only archival footage that was used depicted survivors at the Dora-Mittelbau camp. The footage was bought from an American archive,¹⁰⁷ another example of Häger’s efforts to avoid over-used images and instead find images that the Swedish audience had not seen before. Eventually, editing was delayed a full year because Kjell Tunegård was busy working on other programmes. After the editing was performed, the programme was shown to Villius, who thought that the end did not work. As a result, the programme was partly re-edited¹⁰⁸ and it was then broadcast in October 1996, about two years after preparations began. It was segmented as follow:

- A. Sequences 1–3. Introduction. Benny Grünfeld is presented.
- B. Sequences 4–7. Life in Cluj, departure and arrival in Auschwitz.
- C. Sequences 8–13. Matter-of-fact narration about meeting the horrors of Auschwitz.
- D. Sequences 14–16. Work and the horrors of Auschwitz.
- E. Sequences 17–19. Departure from Auschwitz, moved to other camps, rescue.
- F. Sequence 20. Benny Grünfeld returns to Cluj.

¹⁰⁵ DA. T21, F1, 65, Tur retur helvetet, A., Kort bakgrund, 1996.07.04.

¹⁰⁶ DA. T21, F1, 65, Tur retur helvetet, H, letter from Häger to Piotr Setkiewicz, undated [1995].

¹⁰⁷ DA. T21, F1, 65, Tur retur helvetet, A., Kort bakgrund, 1996.07.04.

¹⁰⁸ Interview with Häger, 2002.01.10.

The programme's structure is rather simple. It begins with a presentation of Holocaust survivor Benny Grünfeld, who both introduces himself to the camera and is introduced by the voice-over narrator (A). The programme then moves from Grünfeld's hometown Cluj, formerly Kolozsvár in Hungary but now in Romania, on to Auschwitz (B, C, D), where he lost his family. The journey continues from Auschwitz to Dora-Mittelbau and Bergen-Belsen, where Benny Grünfeld was saved with the war's end (E). The final sequence is again set in Cluj (F). With the exception of the final sequence, the programme follows a chronological and spatial journey, which makes it easy to follow. There are two time frames, namely the present and the war years of 1944 and 1945. Formally, the programme is done in the expository mode, Grünfeld being the on-screen presenter-witness as well as speaking voice-over, while Villius is an additional voice-over narrator. Notably, the narrator refers to Grünfeld as "Benny," which makes him more familiar and less a stranger. There is also a reflexive element in that we see Grünfeld paint an image of an orchestra, that later appears in the film (B, seq. 7; D, seq. 14). While the narrative about Grünfeld ties the programme together, there are sequences where the narrator provides general commentary about the Holocaust. But the narrator's commentary is not over-loaded with information. For example, he never talks about who the prisoners were, except that many were Jews, and he does not list the names of death camps. Rather, the commentary is characterised by expressive metaphors such as Auschwitz "swallowed" Grünfeld, "Death went the rounds [gick rond] every day," and in the local archive "Hell is mapped." Another formal characteristic of the film is the frequent use of music, which I will discuss more in detail below.

An aim of the programme was to bear witness to the Holocaust. Grünfeld makes this clear in the opening segment when he looks straight into the camera and says that it will be difficult for him to tell the story, but must as a duty to his family (A). His special role is defined the moment that he enters Auschwitz and is chosen for work and life, not for death. The narrator says, "Death to the left. He stood there one morning, a sixteen-year old by a railway track in Auschwitz-Birkenau [...] he is a witness" (B, seq. 7). The film then catalogues the details to prove the story. As Roland Barthes pointed out, "unnecessary" details will not be doubted and therefore help to persuade the readers of a story's authenticity.¹⁰⁹ Notably, Grünfeld's testimony includes a number of precise details. He describes how (the infamous) doctor Mengele asked if he and his brother were twins, which they were not, and adds that he later learned that twins were used for medical experiments (B, seq. 6). He then tells how he saw holy Torah scrolls laying on the ground at Auschwitz, and explains how shocked he was at the sight (C, seq. 8). Thus, he points to their desecration as the definitive proof that this place was evil. Further, he tells exactly how people were hanged in Dora-Mittelbau (E, seq. 18). Grünfeld is also very precise in

¹⁰⁹ Barthes, Roland, 1968, pp. 87 f.



Figure 21. The record shows he was there. Benny Grünfeld finds his name in the Auschwitz archive. *Photo: Gunnar Nilsson. Courtesy of Gunnar Nilsson.*

describing the trip to Auschwitz and the trip from there west to the other camps. He remembers how he stood with his back against the wall of the railway truck; how there was no water; how he slept for a few minutes while walking as two friends half-carried him along; how he would have given an arm for two hours of rest; and how he finally climbed a birch tree in Bergen-Belsen to eat leaves in order to survive (B, seq. 5; E, seq. 17, 19). The details help to authenticate the account. When Grünfeld does not speak, his body becomes proof. In the Auschwitz archive, his register card is located. While the archivist announces the number on the card Grünfeld rolls up his sleeve and the camera zooms in, showing the same number tattooed on his arm (C, seq. 10). He is the living proof of what happened.

The emotional centre of the film is Benny Grünfeld's reaction during the journey. He returns to the milieu where he once suffered terribly and where his family perished. Grünfeld's most visible emotional reaction occurs when he stands by the gas chamber where his parents and his little brother were killed. He starts to cry (D, seq. 16). His family was killed just after their arrival in Auschwitz, but in the film this is dealt with in the last of the eleven sequences set in Auschwitz, after the account of his life in the camp. Thus, the film does not follow the actual wartime chronology. Instead the deeply emotional scene is delayed, perhaps because it is then that Grünfeld expresses his feelings most openly, which makes it function as a kind of catharsis, where

tensions finally are released. The camera cuts from the shot where Grünfeld cries to see him hasten across the grounds, three stones in one hand and the other hand holding his kipah on his head. Sad music rather than synchronous sound accompanies his flight, thus filling it with emotion. Because of the feelings that he manifested before the cut, the metaphoric implication is that he flees from the camera and the microphone. These scenes convey the trauma of witnessing from the victim to the public.¹¹⁰ Another example of how cinematic devices were used to express emotions is when Grünfeld enters a dark and empty hall where the prisoners slept, and freeze frames replace the normal moving footage. Suggestively, a dramatic editing of the photos is combined with haunting voices on the soundtrack, which creates a scene of intense emotions. The aesthetic arrangement makes the impression of an emotional reaction in Grünfeld (C, seq. 11). Even if he did not reveal his feelings, the camera and the music transmit the impression that he had relived the horrors of long ago.¹¹¹

The absence of people is a striking feature when Grünfeld walks through Auschwitz. He is always the only one present. This appears to have been a conscious artistic device, possibly meant to convey an impression of emptiness for those who died. Grünfeld becomes the lone survivor. In the shots that feature Grünfeld talking in his Swedish home, he appears against the background of a painting that features the now lost Jewish population of Cluj. Symbolically, they stand silent while he tells his story of the Holocaust. The final image of the film also works as a reminder of those who disappeared. Back in Cluj, Grünfeld repeatedly knocks on a closed door, but nobody comes to open it. The narrator ends by saying that there was nobody left waiting for him.¹¹² Thus, absence, emptiness, is the final impression of the film.

Benny Grünfeld is reliable when he tells his own story. However, when he makes more general statements about the Holocaust he is no longer a witness and as a consequence he becomes less of an authority. For example, standing by the gas chamber he says that prisoners about to be executed were told by the guards to remember where they put their clothes and shoes (D, seq. 16). That is something that he must have learned from others, and possibly much later.¹¹³ Saying this he is no longer an eyewitness but rather a presenter. Perhaps the reason to use Grünfeld's commentary here was because this was where he started to cry. This was the only time that Grünfeld's shield against the trau-

¹¹⁰ The trauma of witnessing is repeatedly present in *Shoah* (1985). On trauma and Holocaust documentary, see Hirsch, Joshua, 2002.

¹¹¹ Probably, the freeze frames or still photos were an aesthetic solution to solve the difficult filming situation that I related above, when Grünfeld kept talking.

¹¹² The door led to Grünfeld's grandmother's flat, but that we are not told.

¹¹³ Grünfeld says that it was while he was at Auschwitz-Birkenau that he learned what happened in the gas chamber; interview with Benny Grünfeld, 2003.02.19. However, my point is that no matter if he learned it then or later he is a second-hand source to this particular information. (He could be an eyewitness only if it had been his assignment to assist by the gas chamber, but this is never suggested.)



Figure 22. Benny Grünfeld at Auschwitz. A camp now empty of people sends its message: He is the lone survivor. Photo: Gunnar Nilsson. Courtesy of Gunnar Nilsson.

matic events seemed to crack. The scene was vital to the programme. Otherwise, the voice-over narrator Villius offered most of the general commentary about the Holocaust.

The audience will not have seen most of the imagery in the film, but there are a few well known images. One such image is of the entrance to Auschwitz, famous from many books and films, which helps anchor the story (B, E). The sign “Arbeit Macht Frei” above the entrance to the work camp serves to fill the same purpose (D). Thirdly, toward the end of the programme there is some black and white archival footage that shows starving, liberated camp prisoners accompanied by the narrator’s words that “it might as well have been Benny Grünfeld before the camera” (E, seq. 18). Like the tattoo on Grünfeld’s arm, these images function as cues to the past. But few well-known images will be powerful enough to achieve an emotional impact. Instead, if there is one image in the film that has the power to achieve such a result, it is one showing mounds of knives and forks confiscated from the arriving Jews (D, seq. 16). Because the knives and forks are so closely associated with everyday life, they may truly affect the audience and prepare the ground for the film’s climax when Grünfeld cries.

A few times, imagery and sound effects combine to produce the illusion of presence in the past. When Benny Grünfeld relates how he was transported to Auschwitz and the image shows the entrance of the camp, the soundtrack features the sound of a train (B). Later, when the programme deals with his time in the work camp, that segment begins with images of barbed wire fences, a watchtower, and a dark rain falling. The soundtrack records the sound of rain, meshing past and present, and creates the illusion that suddenly it is 1944 again. The sequence shows newly-filmed footage of the site, and the narrator says: “There is still a factory here, with the same chimney, but a village has grown up where the prison camp used to be. Here were the camp roads and the barracks. Here, twenty or perhaps thirty thousand people died from starvation and maltreatment.” The next image shows one of Grünfeld’s paintings of a prisoners’ orchestra, and is accompanied on the soundtrack by march music that brings us back to the war years. The narrator talks of the music playing every morning and evening, while the workers walked along the road (D, seq. 14). In this sequence, music, words, and images combine to create a feeling of unity between past and present.

Music is used frequently in the programme. Interestingly it is used in three ways. First there is music inspired by the Holocaust which accompanies key sequences in the film and helps to bring out the tragedy. Music accompanies Benny Grünfeld on screen when he walks from his family’s old house in Cluj to the street, where they were assembled for the trip to Auschwitz. The camera cuts to one of Grünfeld’s paintings that shows the Jews gathered in the street, and thus the music helps to bridge the gap between present and past (B, seq. 4). Similarly, music accompanies Grünfeld’s painting of the death march from Auschwitz, when many prisoners were brutally killed (E, seq. 17). Second, there is the use of diegetic sound of music that helps create the illusion of being present when it was once played. Thus, and as I indicated above, when the narrator relates that an orchestra played while the Auschwitz prisoners walked to the factory every day, music from an orchestra is heard (D, seq. 14). Third, and the boldest use, cheerful wartime German popular music is used to contrast with particularly frightening imagery. This is done twice in the film, when Grünfeld enters the Auschwitz showers (C, seq. 9) and when the camera focuses on heaps of rusty knives, forks, and spoons (D, seq. 16). The contrast between music and image is strong, and will affect the audience. The narrator explains the music by asking how could many people listen to happy music while the Holocaust took place. According to Häger’s notes, the popular song was featured to contrast the horror of the Holocaust with normal German life.¹¹⁴ Notably, it is sung by Swedish star Zarah Leander, who would be recognised by many Swedes.

¹¹⁴ DA. T21, F1, 65, Tur retur helvetet, A., Kort bakgrund, 1996.07.04. In B, seq. 7, the narrator speaks about the evil and indifference “walking around” in Europe; this is contrasted with the music of an orchestra.

From a moral point of view it is important to see how the programme situates the Holocaust in relation to the audience. In the opening sequence, Benny Grünfeld appears as a Swedish air-mechanic dressed in an SAS uniform. This is of some importance when trying to assess the moral message, because the sequence establishes Grünfeld as a citizen of the audience's country, Sweden.¹¹⁵ He thus becomes one with the audience, someone with whom they share a national identity. The distance from the perpetrators is never emphasised. Grünfeld never mentions the "Germans" or "Hungarians" but only SS-men.¹¹⁶ The narrator mentions Germany, the Germans, and Hitler but only a few times (C, seq. 9; E, seq. 18). Instead, in trying to explain how the Holocaust could happen he observes that "the road to the Holocaust was filled with thousands of bureaucratic decisions, one and each rather innocent" but "millions of Europeans [...] just let it happen" (D, seq. 16).¹¹⁷ Pointing to "Europeans" as those responsible handily includes not just Germans and Austrians but also other nationalities that assisted or stood by when the Holocaust took place. Thus, the audience is not comforted by their distance from events. Rather, the inclusion of Zarah Leander's song suggests that Swedes were part of the Europe where the Holocaust took place.¹¹⁸

While the programme talks about the Holocaust using the experiences of Benny Grünfeld, there is much about him that we do not learn. We do see a photograph of his parents and a couple of others of the happy family in Cluj, photographs which are accompanied by music and function to contrast the tragedy to come (B, seq. 4). But there is no comment about how the Jews fared in Cluj until the day of deportation in May 1944.¹¹⁹ In the opening sequence we learn that Grünfeld worked as an air-mechanic for forty years, and in one scene he is sitting in his home drawing a picture. The narrator also briefly remarks that some of his pictures are in a museum in Israel. But apart from these disparate pieces, we learn nothing about the years that passed after his time in the concentration camp. He does not relate how he handled his experiences, or the fact that he stayed silent for many years.¹²⁰ Neither do we learn that he returned to Cluj in the 1960s, or that he visited an aunt in a nearby

¹¹⁵ Häger says that he would not have made the programme if Grünfeld had not been a Swede; interview with Häger, 2003.06.03. In fact, in order to establish him as a Swedish air-mechanic, Häger arranged a scene at an airport where Grünfeld appears in blue SAS clothes; by then he had already retired.

¹¹⁶ In retrospective, Grünfeld says that he would have liked to include commentary in the film on the Hungarians' responsibility for the fate of the Jews; interview with Grünfeld, 2003.02.19.

¹¹⁷ The observation does not exclude anti-Semitism as the root of the Holocaust, but complicates the picture.

¹¹⁸ In his essay about the Holocaust Häger points out that in 1939, Swedish students protested against the immigration of Jewish doctors to Sweden. Grünfeld, Benny, with Magnus Henrekson & Olle Häger, 1995, p. 84.

¹¹⁹ Braham, Randolph L., 1994, argues that the treatment of the Holocaust in Transylvania has become intertwined with the rivalry of Hungary and Romania. From this perspective he discusses the shortcomings of a Romanian documentary about rescue efforts during the Holocaust.

¹²⁰ There is a small hint in the remark that he started drawing pictures of Auschwitz long after the camp period.

town on several occasions,¹²¹ or that he went to Israel to fight in the war of 1948–49.¹²² The inclusion of the last experience would have strongly complicated the image of Grünfeld. In other words, while the film tells the story of Benny Grünfeld, it is his Holocaust story, with only a few references to his childhood and his half-century in Sweden. It is the Grünfeld of the Holocaust that Häger tries to depict. The film is very focused in terms of dramatic unities.

In sum, the programme seems an expression of human-brotherly moral values. The subject itself is heavily loaded morally, and Häger made the project a political-moral argument. The interpretation of the Holocaust as a tragedy is emphasised through the use of music played in a minor key. The exclusion of Benny Grünfeld's life story after 1945 serves both an aesthetic function, because it created a unity in time, and a moral function, because his later life perhaps would have made the audience see him less as a victim. The narration is informative and essentially serves a cognitive function. Moral considerations played an important part in the making of the programme.

The programme was first broadcast at a time when neo-Nazi violence was growing in Sweden, and many people found the programme important. One reviewer wrote that it was the most important television programme of the year, and another reviewer suggested that it be repeated every year.¹²³ The Zarah Leander song was particularly recognised. One reviewer wrote that she felt ashamed when she heard Leander sing bright songs in the background – because she was Swedish.¹²⁴ Several people approached Benny Grünfeld in the street and said that they cried because of the film.¹²⁵ Hans Villius seems to have been moved as well. A week after the broadcast he wrote in a newspaper that in regard to growing nationalism and attempts to simplify the Holocaust, “perhaps we must return to being didactic and nurturing. It seems to me that we cannot abstain from transmitting the indignation that we feel over the terrible that happened during the century that now comes to an end, even if the guiding-star should be to clarify the causes of what happened, as objectively as possible.”¹²⁶ Interest in the Holocaust grew in Sweden, and the year after, Sweden's Prime Minister Göran Persson initiated a national information campaign about the Holocaust.¹²⁷

7. Interpreting the Welfare State

In the following section we shall return to the eight-hour series *Hundra svenska år* (1999), which discussed twentieth-century Sweden. In the previous chapter I dealt with the production process of the series and analysed an episode that

¹²¹ Interview with Benny Grünfeld, 2003.02.19.

¹²² Ander, Johan, 2000.

¹²³ Eriksson, Åke, 1996; Lund, Sverker, 1996.

¹²⁴ Ekstrand, Ingegerd, 1996.

¹²⁵ Interview with Benny Grünfeld, 2003.02.19.

¹²⁶ Villius, Hans, 1996.

¹²⁷ Ludvigsson, David, 2001.

portrayed work. I especially studied the cognitive function of archival footage and interviews. In the following I shall deal with two other episodes of the series, first *Folkhemmet tur och retur* [*The Welfare State Round-trip*], which is about domestic politics, and then *Åh, dyre prins* [*Oh, Dear Prince*], which is about the Swedish royals. In a sense both episodes are about equality, and therefore they are very interesting from a politically-moral perspective.

First, I will discuss the domestic politics episode *Folkhemmet tur och retur*. This was the first episode to be produced and also the first of the series to be broadcast. As with the other episodes it was produced by Häger, edited by Kjell Tunegård and narrated by Villius. Originally, when editing the programme, Tunegård experimented with improvised editing. Because this did not work he had to fall back on traditional chronology as the structuring principle.¹²⁸ Thus, this episode, just as the other seven of the series, is a chronological journey through the twentieth century, beginning about 1900 and moving to the present. The programme is segmented as follows:

- A. Sequences 1–3. Song about past dreams. Three interviews about class-distinctions.
- B. Sequences 4–22. The early century and the struggle for the right to vote. Four interviews.
- C. Sequences 23–27. The turbulent 1920s until the Ådalen shootings in 1931. Five interviews.
- D. Sequences 28–34. The Welfare State from 1930s until 1960s. Three interviews.
- E. Sequences 35–41. Cracks in the Welfare State, 1968 until 1990s. One interview.
- F. Sequences 42–43. Conclusion. Three interviews.

Formally, and like the other episodes of *Hundra svenska år*, the programme is made in the expository and participatory modes. Archival footage with new sound and a voice-over narrator makes up the bulk of the programme, but there are also nineteen interview clips that provide comments about times and events. Regarding content a few general points can be made. First, the major part of the programme deals with the first three decades of the century (B, C) while the last seven decades are not given as much attention (D, E). In sequence 32 (out of 43 sequences) the programme remains in the 1930s. Second, the programme singles out a few issues as central in domestic politics. It deals extensively with voting rights (B) and the Ådalen shootings (C, seq. 27), ignoring many other political issues and events. It names only a few of the twenty-six prime ministers of the century. Third, the programme suggests a period of calm and success during mid-century (D). Because the programme depicts Sweden as an unstable, less successful society both in the beginning (B, C) and the end of the century (E), the result is a circular movement from bad times to good

¹²⁸ Interview with Kjell Tunegård, 1999.11.24.

times and then to uncertain (or bad) times again. This is also suggested in the title of the episode – the Welfare State Round-trip.¹²⁹ Fourth, no interviews are used to interpret events and phenomena in the 1970s and 80s (E). Fifth, the programme begins and ends with interviews where people evaluate present society articulating and adding a personal perspective to the programme.

The starting point of the programme is expressed in the opening sequence where the jazz singer Monica Zetterlund sings a song with the lyrics “where did you go, sweet dreams about a more reasonable world?” (2). Those dreams of a more equal world are the essence of the Swedish Folkhem, and in three interviews that follow, different people validate the assumption of the song that the present society is not equal. From this beginning the programme moves into the story that began a hundred years ago. First, there is imagery and music from the Stockholm restaurant of Berns (4), illustrating the untroubled life of rich men. Then, contrasting these images there is footage of begging women and the narrator’s opening sentence: “Once upon a time there was a land where women in long aprons had learned to curtsy, where poor relief was spelled charity, and where citizen rights were called money.” Thus, both narration and imagery suggest inequality as the basic condition of society a hundred years ago.

The first issue extensively covered in the programme is the struggle for voting rights, gradually introduced in Sweden in a process that ended just after the First World War (B).¹³⁰ Images of rich men dressed in big coats and top-hats personify the class-ridden society and the narrator remarks that one could see who had the right to vote in the early years of the century (seq. 7, 10). The account moves on with recurring images of demonstrations, accompanied by the sound of *The International* (seq. 13, 18, 20), and finally settles with images of two of the first female members of parliament who took their seats in 1921. Thus, pictorially the story goes from men to women, which also illustrates the expanded right to vote. The struggle for voting rights is tied in with the shortage of food during the war. The narrator mentions that Prime Minister Hammarskjöld was nicknamed Hunger-skjöld (seq. 16), and two interviewees testify to the shortage of food. The female experience is noticed specifically. The narrator points out that women demonstrated for bread and universal suffrage and he makes a point of the fact that women’s voices were needed at telephone switchboards but were not allowed to be heard at the polls. The new female rights are qualified when an interviewee testifies that when at last she was allowed to vote her father decided what party she was to support (22). The filmmakers make cognitive use of music throughout the segment. *The International* signals that the labourers were on the offensive, and the images of hungry people are accompanied by music in a minor key (15). Finally, when the right to vote had been achieved, the feeling of victory is transmitted via images and sound from an evening of dance (21).

¹²⁹ Häger says that the “roundtrip” indicates the influence and confidence of ordinary people in politicians and politics; quoted in Johansson, Marika, 1999.

¹³⁰ Cf. DA. T21, F1, 71, Inrikespolitik, 21, Hundra år:1.

One interesting aspect of the account about voting rights is that it is depicted as a struggle between left and right. Because of the recurring imagery of demonstrators and of the Social Democratic leader Branting, a portion of whose speech after the final reform is heard in the programme, the impression is that the struggle for voting rights was mainly a struggle performed by the workers and their political leaders. This impression is confirmed by the only interviewee who remembers the struggle and says that he heard Branting and a female Socialist activist speak.¹³¹ However, the Liberals also struggled for universal suffrage, which is not clearly acknowledged in the programme.¹³² There is also an error in the narrator's story when he says that the king and the government had to accept the voting reform. Hammarskjöld's government had opposed the reform, but now the government was Liberal and had supported universal suffrage.¹³³ Thus, in emphasising the role of the Social Democrats and their leader the programme overlooks the role of the Liberals as allies in the struggle.

The programme skims the 1920s very quickly. There is footage showing the rise and fall of one government after another, the editing making the sequence rather comical. All is accompanied by a quick piece of schlager music until the narrator says "and then it is 1932."

The second major issue in the programme is the labour conflicts of the early 1930s, which culminated in the Ådalen shootings in 1931 where four demonstrators and an innocent bystander were killed. It seems that Ådalen and the other labour conflicts were central to Häger's vision of the twentieth century in Sweden. In fact, he has said that the Ådalen events were "the most dramatic [event] that happened during the twentieth century."¹³⁴ It was intense conflicts in Häger's home area that eventually led to the confrontations in Ådalen and he dealt with the conflicts in *Skotten i Sandarne* (1973) as well as in his first novel (1991). Further, in his first episode for the *Svart på vitt* series (1984)¹³⁵ he depicted events that took place the day before the shootings, when strikers clashed with strikebreakers; then Häger avoided value-laden words and sided with neither strikers nor strikebreakers.¹³⁶

The Ådalen sequence (C, seq. 27) in *Folkhemmet tur och retur* is special in

¹³¹ The photo of the female agitator Kata Dahlström was used also in *Svart på vitt: Kata vid Fejan* (1984).

¹³² Holmberg, Håkan and Anders Johnson, 2000, criticised the programme for this. See further below.

¹³³ The error was corrected for the DVD version of the programme. In the episode *Åb, dyre prins* it is noted that a leftist government [Sw. vänsterregering] introduced universal suffrage. This is more correct but does not clarify the role of the Liberals.

¹³⁴ Interview with Häger, 2003.06.03.

¹³⁵ It was broadcast as episode two. DA. T21, F2, 1, nr 2–24 (first). There are few production materials, but the notes indicate that Häger put a lot of effort into this programme. Possibly, production materials disappeared from this particular programme because Häger reused the event in later programmes.

¹³⁶ A parallel case is *Svart på vitt: Sömmerskorna och striden* (1985), about striking sewer workers in Falun, where the narrator mentions that a worker's paper was anti-Semitic in its critique of the sewers' employer. While today's spectator would side with the under-paid sewer workers, anti-Semitism complicates the conflict.



Figure 23. The demonstrators encounter soldiers, Ådalen 1931. An image from Bo Widerberg's film *Ådalen 31*. That Olle Häger chose to include re-enacted footage shows how important the event was in his vision of twentieth-century Swedish history. Still photo: Rolf Lundström. © 1969 AB Svensk Filmindustri. Courtesy of SF

several respects, and I shall look at it in more detail. Five minutes long, it consists of four parts namely (1) the build-up, (2) the shooting, (3) the reaction to one of the deaths, and (4) the funeral. Each part consists of several shots. Hans Villius has made the general claim that if there were no footage, *Hundra svenska år* would not tell the story,¹³⁷ but an exception was made for the Ådalen events, where only the funeral was caught on film. Instead, the first three parts are made from still photographs, three interviews, newly-filmed scenes, and clips from Bo Widerberg's dramatic film *Ådalen 31* (1969).¹³⁸ It is the only occasion in the series when re-enacted shots are used to illustrate an historic event, and it is the only newly-filmed scenery. As mentioned above, when Häger and his team started preparing the series, their first move was to look for witnesses from the Ådalen shootings.¹³⁹ Clearly, Ådalen was seen as a focal point in the series and a key to the century.¹⁴⁰

The introductory part of the sequence consists of a still photograph of a demonstration and colourful newly-filmed scenes, devoid of people, accompanied by a lone trumpet rag. The narrator says that the demonstrators were after

¹³⁷ Villius quoted in DA. T21, F1, 69, All slags information, 14, press releases. Häger has confirmed this general rule, but admitted that they were not completely compliant; Häger at seminar at Stockholm University, 2000.04.04. Author's notes.

¹³⁸ Widerberg's film is analysed in Johansson, Roger, 2001, pp. 373–402; Mörner, Cecilia, 2000, pp. 211–219.

¹³⁹ Interview with Häger, 2002.01.10. Cf. Chapter 6. Before the planning group met in 1995 Häger had already contacted a trumpeter who was part of the demonstration, but the man died before he could be interviewed; Hansson, Bosse, 1995.

the strikebreakers who the employers had hired. The scenic imagery implies stillness and the lone trumpet adds a mood of liveliness. Newly-filmed footage of a road dissolves into a historical photo that shows that same road, which authenticates the new footage. We then meet an interviewee who was present in the historic photo watching the demonstration. He relates that he and the other spectators were worried because they had never seen so many people before. The interview is intercut with a clip from Widerberg's film that shows a re-enactment of the demonstration, complete with *The International* on the soundtrack. Then the interviewee begins to describe the scene of the shooting. The camera cuts to a second interviewee who relates how the shooting began, and we see footage of the shooting in the feature film, the soundtrack mixing the sound of the shooting with continued commentary by the interviewee. The interviewee re-appears on screen, now telling of the death of a girl bystander, complete with a red bullet hole in her white dress, whom we see in a clip from the feature film. The mixing of interviews and feature film footage is both effective and problematic. On-screen graphics announce that imagery (and sound) are from Widerberg's film, but because it appears in the context of a documentary film and is mixed with interviews and other extant footage it all blends in the spectators' minds. Being included in *Hundra svenska år* sanctions the Widerberg footage as historical.

The immediate aftermath of the shootings is related through a third interview and in footage of the funerals. The interview is especially interesting. Whereas the two previous interviews offered information about the event, the third interview provides a personal link because the female interviewee's fiancé was killed; she was the first witness that Häger had interviewed for the series.¹⁴¹ The relationship with her fiancé is established via a photo of them while a bird sang on the soundtrack. When describing the event, the interviewee begins to cry. Through her, the tragedy is personalised and viewers identify with the victims. The camera zooms in on the face of the dead man in yet another photo and sorrowful music confirms the tragedy. The music leads into the funeral scene that ends the Ådalen sequence. The narrator interprets the scene, made from archival footage, observing that militant communists carried some of the coffins and that despair, rage, and class hatred "walked there under a red sky."

Taken together, the Ådalen events are treated in a complex mixture of footage, commentary, music, and sound effects. The narrator's conclusion is that

¹⁴⁰ When BBC made *People's Century* (1996) producers went to Sweden to interview Ådalen witnesses. It is likely that Häger influenced their view on what happened. A BBC producer even borrowed one of Häger's books about Ådalen. DA. T21, F1, 68, *Hundra svenska år*. Inledande research, 9, letter from Sarah Wallis to Häger, 1994.01.31. Häger suggests that his decision to begin work on *Hundra svenska år* in Ådalen might have had a connection with *People's Century*; interview with Häger, 2003.06.03. Further proof of Ådalen's centrality in Häger's vision of the century was that demonstration images from Widerberg's film were included in the title sequence that opened every programme of the series. The title sequence was made by Carolina Norbro and Artur Zonabend, Image Research, from film images that Häger suggested; letter from Häger to the author, 2003.07.20. The accompanying music was composed by Hans Arnbohm.

¹⁴¹ Johansson, Marika, 1999; the witness is Astrid Söderberg.

“in the long run the Ådalen shooting and the struggle against mass unemployment led, it seems, to the Social Democrats gaining a monopoly on government power.” Thus, Häger made Ådalen a key event in Swedish political history. He is not the first to give Ådalen so prominent a role in the story of the Folkhem. But, as pointed out by Roger Johansson, it is disputed what actually happened in Ådalen and who was to blame. Different interpretations have dominated at different times. Simplified, either revolutionary Communist demonstrators forced the military to shoot, or the rightist government’s troops shot at a peaceful demonstration, or the shootings were blamed on both the military and the demonstrators.¹⁴² In the version of *Hundra svenska år*, the demonstration resulted from anger at the strikebreakers, which blames the employers rather than the Communist activists.¹⁴³ But the film also acknowledges in the funeral scene the threat of militant Communists and thereby suggests that the victory of the Social Democrats was the only escape from further violence. In interpreting Ådalen as a tragedy provoked mainly by the employers, and ultimately leading to a positive future for Sweden under the Social Democrats, the film follows a tradition that grew influential after the appearance of a book by Birger Norman in 1968.¹⁴⁴

The fourth segment of the programme tells of the celebrated golden decades of the Swedish Folkhem (D). Immediately after the funeral scene in Ådalen there is lively music, a new prime minister walks smiling through the crowd and an excited speaker trumpets “Hurrah, Per Albin!” (D, seq. 28). What follows is a segment that tells of a calm, flourishing Sweden from the 1930s until the late 1960s. During these years, the Social Democrats under the leadership of first Per Albin Hansson and then Tage Erlander govern the country.¹⁴⁵ The segment is focused on the success of the welfare state and its leader Per Albin Hansson.¹⁴⁶ The self-image of the ruling party, and thus the ideology that built the Folkhem, is transmitted through the use of election films – which are indexed as such. The segment contains three interviews that celebrate the Folkhem and Per Albin Hansson, thus functioning to validate the election films.¹⁴⁷ There is also a clip from an American documentary that likewise celebrates the Swedish Folkhem.

¹⁴² Johansson, Roger, 2001; Johansson, Roger, 2002.

¹⁴³ There is no attempt to put the blame on the military. Note that a former military officer is interviewed about Ådalen in *Hundra svenska år: I ditt anletes svett*. Ådalen also features briefly in *Hundra svenska år: Kjolarna, hattarna och lite Watzins keratin*.

¹⁴⁴ Häger had read Norman’s book and even lent it to a colleague at BBC; DA. T21, F1, 68, *Hundra svenska år*. Inledande research, 9, letter from Sarah Wallis to Häger, 1994.01.31.

¹⁴⁵ Per Albin Hansson became Prime Minister in 1932 and stayed in the post until 1946, when he was succeeded by Tage Erlander who stayed until 1969. Only during a few months in 1936 was there another prime minister.

¹⁴⁶ Häger and Villius provided a more complex portrait of Per Albin Hansson in *Fyra dagar som skakade Sverige* (1988) which I treat in the next chapter. Already in 1969 did Häger and Villius plan to make a programme on Hansson; DA. T21, E1, 1, Intern korr., V, letter [from Häger and Villius] to Örjan Wallqvist, 1969.02.27.

¹⁴⁷ Per Albin Hansson’s portrait featured in the title sequence, further underlines his importance in Häger’s eyes.

The pre-determined focus on the first half of the century meant that the programme would not analyse the various political issues that dominated the 1960s, 70s, 80s or 90s. For example, as an illustration of the 1968 movement, the programme has a few shots of singing hippies, but there is no further explication to what they protested against and the narrator does not indicate whether it was a legitimate protest.¹⁴⁸ Although there are interviewees in both the opening and the closing segments who comment upon the present state of Sweden, none of the interviewees discuss issues such as the student revolt or the environmental movement. Instead, the issue that is stressed is the evolution of the Folkhem. A visionary speech by Prime Minister Palme in 1973 is contrasted with an informational film about the right of everyone to apply for a housing allowance, which seems absurd in the light of later economic crises. To a modern Swede, the tone of the commentary in the informational film has a degree of comic force. Then a clip is shown from a British documentary that is highly critical of the Swedish school system (E, seq. 37). When the programme moves through the 1970s and 90s there is footage of politicians who try to explain the cuts in popular programmes to angered citizens, but no politician with vision is seen.¹⁴⁹ There is a sequence that portrays non-Socialist Prime Minister Torbjörn Fälldin, but the narrator states that he had little impact. This is followed on the image-track by Conservative politician Gösta Bohman who plays *The International* on a musical box, claiming not to know what piece it is (38). The latter scene serves a legitimate cognitive function, in a comical, metaphoric fashion arguing that politics remained the same. But it also demonstrates how the programme does not let people of the 1970s and 80s speak for themselves.

Even if Häger said that the audience understands that a programme has a perspective,¹⁵⁰ the title of the series carried an implied claim to completeness. But the programmes did not fulfil that promise. The aesthetic decision to base the film on archival footage from the first half of the century led to a lop-sided version of Swedish domestic politics.¹⁵¹ Still, not all the major political incidents of the early century are dealt with in this episode. Perhaps most notably, the famous Courtyard crisis [Sw. Borggårdskrisen] in 1914, when the king publicly criticised the government and caused it to fall, was saved for the episode *Åh, dyre prins* that deals with the royals. Certainly, the Courtyard crisis was a major event in Swedish domestic politics and therefore one could argue that

¹⁴⁸ Martin Wiklund pointed out this particular example.

¹⁴⁹ The exception is a clip from an interview with Tage Erlander that was actually made by Häger and Villius, see *Makten och ärligheten. Tage Erlander intervjuas* (1970). But Erlander belonged to an earlier decade.

¹⁵⁰ Häger in *Rapport Morgon*, SVT2 2000.06.19.

¹⁵¹ Häger admitted before the series was broadcast that the formal decision to work from archival film was grounds for criticism: "there are things missing, but it is not our intention to offer history lessons." Quoted in Holmin, Maria, 1999. It is a striking comment. Häger must have realised the power of television histories, but nevertheless he argued as if he (and SVT) were free entertainers.

it should have been part of the domestic politics programme. But with the formal decision to deal with an entire century in only one hour, choices had to be made on what to include. Because the king was a central actor in the Court-yard crisis the event fit well with the royals episode. Similarly, World War II was not dealt with in the domestic politics episode but was saved for the royals and the foreign politics episodes. It is possible that lack of extant footage was a reason that Liberal leader Karl Staaff was hardly featured, although it is as likely that he was excluded because he did not take a central role in the story of the Folkhem. The decision to focus on the Folkhem story had political implications beyond Staaff, and it definitely put the stress on the Social Democrats.¹⁵² Conservative politicians did not have central roles in the story of the Folkhem and instead appeared responsible for the food shortages during the First World War, opposition to the extension of voting rights, and as inadequate leaders during the economic crisis of the 1990s. Interestingly, conservative politicians are also used for comic relief first, when the narrator points out that resigning members of a conservative government in the 1920s dressed in funny hats and second, when conservative leader Gösta Bohman failed to recognise *The International*.

In all, the selection of historical episodes with added commentary bring about a politically moral interpretation of domestic politics in Sweden,¹⁵³ making the programme essentially the story of the rise and fall of the Folkhem. The programme is firmly founded on historical knowledge. But it strongly emphasises the role of the Social Democratic Party, and does not give credit to the Liberals in the context of suffrage reforms, nor to the Communists who hammered their agenda of economic reforms, and ironically uses conservative politicians for comic effect. Thus, one could argue that the interpretation is biased in a party political way. Aesthetic considerations played an important role because this frames the programme, both in the sense that Häger had decided to deal with extant footage, and that domestic politics must be included in the one-hour frame.

As I emphasised in the previous chapter, the series was received with great acclaim. While one reviewer wrote that it was unlikely that the series would provoke political debate,¹⁵⁴ the episode about domestic politics was indeed the subject of critical reviews in the Stockholm newspapers. In the conservative *Svenska Dagbladet*, the reviewer wrote that the programme was as “boring as a slide show,” hinting at the interpretation of Sweden’s political past.¹⁵⁵ The editor-in-chief of the Liberal *Dagens Nyheter*, Hans Bergström, was political explicit in his criticism and called the programme “Socialist” and “propaganda,”

¹⁵² One could add: good and bad to the Social Democrats. At the end of the programme the narrator suggests that the Folkhem did not attend to everyone’s needs, thus hinting at the critical interpretations that developed in the 1990s.

¹⁵³ Häger said in an interview that when he saw the programme it struck him how “politically radical” it was; quoted in Tidholm, Po, 1999.

¹⁵⁴ Zander, Ulf, 1999, p. 94. Zander traced a bit of nostalgia in the series (p. 96).

¹⁵⁵ Wikström-Lindgren, Inger, 1999.

claiming that it was “a consequent and skilful erasing of all Liberal traces in Swedish history.”¹⁵⁶ This harsh criticism did not immediately reach the public and stir debate. A few months later, Bergström’s successor, Anders Johnson teamed up with historian and Liberal politician Håkan Holmberg (with support from a Liberal society) publishing a critical pamphlet expressing the same criticism. The pamphlet was titled *Man märker avsikten – om historieförfälskarna på Sveriges Television*,¹⁵⁷ in which the startling subheading indicated that the filmmakers were “falsifiers of history.” This vocabulary is remarkable in regard to Häger and Villius whose sterling reputation has been built in decades of work. While they were sometimes criticised, a publication calling them falsifiers of history was unique.

The criticism was twofold. Holmberg argued in his essay that the account of the voting rights struggle in the early century was biased, because it did not acknowledge the role of the Liberals and their leader Karl Staaff. In particular, he pointed to the factual error in the commentary that the 1918 government had opposed universal suffrage. This was mentioned only in a subordinate clause, but it was incorrect because it was the conservatives in the parliament’s first chamber and not the government that had opposed the reform. The error provoked the Liberals who had been in control of the government at the time. In Holmberg’s case, the error was symptomatic of a political perspective which all focused on the labour movement and the Social Democratic Party. He also criticised the fact that the Courtyard crisis of 1914, which caused a Liberal government to resign, was not included in the programme but was instead placed in the episode about the royals. In the next essay, Johnson argued that the series distorted history because it did not take into account the role of entrepreneurs and inventors in Sweden’s recent development. According to Johnson, the few entrepreneurs who were represented (he mentioned Ivar Kreuger) were portrayed negatively.

The pamphlet was published during the summer, and competing with little other news it received much attention. Häger met Johnson in a ten-minute debate on one of the television news programmes.¹⁵⁸ On the programme, Häger admitted that there was a factual error concerning voting rights. But he rejected other criticisms. He stated that he thought there should be more about Liberals in Swedish history-writings generally but he emphasised that his programme was a story about the Folkhem and not an all-encompassing story about domestic politics. As a result he rejected the criticism. His response to Johnson’s criticism about excluding entrepreneurs was that *Hundra svenska år* did not focus on them because it had already been done in another SVT series (*Svenska ljus*, 1997). He also said that *Hundra svenska år* was about “ordinary

¹⁵⁶ Bergström, Hans, 1999.

¹⁵⁷ Holmberg, Håkan & Anders Johnson, 2000. Throughout, Holmberg and Johnson write about Häger & Villius as a team, although Häger was in fact the sole producer of the series. While a trained historian, Holmberg at this time was involved in journalism.

¹⁵⁸ *Rapport Morgon*, SVT2 2000.06.19, 6.47–6.59 a.m.

people” rather than famous people. Johnson insisted that the story of democratisation in Sweden was false.¹⁵⁹ It is striking that Häger did not argue that his story was more reasonable than Johnson’s, but rather that both could be true. That position might seem logical, considering that *Hundra svenska år* proposed eight different journeys through the century. If eight journeys were possible, a ninth journey would be possible also. But a historian would be expected to argue on cognitive grounds that his own story was the most plausible. Instead, Häger’s argument based on aesthetic grounds was that there are limits to any story.

The critical pamphlet was reviewed widely in the Liberal press, and Häger wrote at least two articles defending the series against charges of being a Social Democratic version of Swedish history.¹⁶⁰ Some critics looked at these issues from other perspectives. Historian Håkan Arvidsson wrote that it had indeed become popular to make the Social Democrats heroes of twentieth century Sweden, but he suggested that the political tendency in *Hundra svenska år* was probably a result of “routine and thoughtlessness.” He argued that it would take strong reflection to break from the usual view of Social Democratic Sweden.¹⁶¹ Häger’s former colleague at SVT, Jan Bergman, criticised the indexing of the series for not clearly stating whether it was an objective or a personal account of Sweden’s past. He wrote that if Häger had openly declared his Social Democratic view it would not have been a problem, at least if other versions of the past were produced as well.¹⁶² The last point suggests that Bergman wanted to make more programmes. The author also participated in the debate, maintaining that television forced the filmmaker to choose between perspectives on past events.¹⁶³

8. A critical story about the Swedish royals

If the domestic politics episode caused debate, the episode about the monarchy and the royal family, *Åh, dyre prins [Oh, dear Prince]*, scored the highest audience numbers. Given that *Hundra svenska år* was made from what footage could be found in the SVT film archive, it was inevitable that one of the programmes should deal with the royals. The archive simply contained immense quantities of film showing the royals.¹⁶⁴ Like the other programmes, this episode was made from archival footage and contemporary interviews. The

¹⁵⁹ *Rapport Morgon*, SVT2 2000.06.19.

¹⁶⁰ Sandberg, Nils-Eric, 2000; Häger, Olle, 2000; Danell, Josef, 2000; Häger, Olle, 2000a.

¹⁶¹ Arvidsson, Håkan, 2000. On the hegemony of the Social Democratic version of Swedish history, see Linderborg, Åsa, 2001. See also [anonymous], 2000, who sides with Johnson but plays down the criticism against Häger and Villius specifically.

¹⁶² Bergman, Jan, 2000.

¹⁶³ Ludvigsson, David, 2000.

¹⁶⁴ Häger made this point when interviewed by Åsa Garnert in *Vetenskapsradion Historia*, SR P1, 2003.05.15.

present king declined to be interviewed for the programme,¹⁶⁵ and instead, the story of the royals was told with the help of commoners who had been in contact with them and via interviews with two former members of the royal family, Lennart and Sigvard Bernadotte. The resulting programme is much different from the yearly, rather submissive programmes that SVT make about the royal family. In Häger's words the programme was meant to "describe the royal family without glorifying it."¹⁶⁶ The portrait of King Gustav V especially would have a political agenda. Because the programme takes a critical approach to the institution of monarchy there is reason to look at it closely. The programme is segmented as follow:

- A. Sequence 1. The royal family, late 1990s.
- B. Sequences 2–7. King Oscar II, around 1900.
- C. Sequences 8–13. King Gustav V and his family in the prewar years.
- D. Sequences 14–18. King Gustav V's political activities around 1915.
- E. Sequences 19–29. The royal family in the inter-war period.
- F. Sequences 30–31. King Gustav V's political role during the Second World War.
- G. Sequences 32–36. The last years of King Gustav V.
- H. Sequences 37–44. King Gustav VI Adolf and the transformation of the monarchy.
- I. Sequences 45–49. The monarchy of King Carl XVI Gustaf.
- J. Sequences 49–50. Conclusion.

Formally, the programme is made in the expository and participatory modes and it moves chronologically through the century from 1900 to 2000. The main emphasis is on the first half of the century and particularly on the reign of King Gustav V, who was king from 1907 until 1950 (C–G). Much less time is devoted on the reigns of the other three kings, Oscar II (B), Gustav VI Adolf (H) and Carl XVI Gustaf (I). While the programme formally resembles the other episodes of the series, it is strikingly different in terms of content. Because it deals with a limited number of people, the tendency towards biography and family history is quite strong; thus birthdays, weddings and funerals are featured.¹⁶⁷ Further, it was a limited group of witnesses that were needed for the programme – namely people who had been in contact with the royals. Whereas every Swede could relate a working experience or talk about fashion or leisure activities, necessary for the other episodes of the series, few people could claim a personal relationship to the royals or, for example, comment on King Gustav V as an employer or grandfather. As a consequence, among the interviewees are two former members of the royal family, a former servant, a

¹⁶⁵ Interview with Häger, 2003.06.03.

¹⁶⁶ Interview with Häger, 2003.06.03.

¹⁶⁷ Not least the arrival to Sweden of foreign princesses is noted, for example the arrival of a tsarist princess from Russia.

bodyguard, and several lawyers. Only two of the twenty interview clips feature women, which makes the episode much less gender balanced compared to other parts of the series. The former members of the royal family Sigvard and Lennart Bernadotte feature in three clips each.¹⁶⁸ The aged prince Sigvard, who married a commoner in the 1930s and then was banished from the royal house, is an especially important witness.

The opening sequence shows imagery of the present royal family singing the national anthem and then the young crown princess meeting with crowds of people. Commenting about these ceremonial images and accompanied by the symbolic national anthem, the narrator sets the tone for the programme (A):

Once upon a time there was a country where the very highest office was held by the offspring, the lineal descendants, of the Prince of Pontecorvo, who immigrated to Sweden in 1810. There were those who wrote books and articles and argued that that sort of government [Sw. statskick] was undemocratic and blunted the intellect. But the audience did not care a bit about that. They bowed and curtsayed as they had always done, and the crown princess was eighteen.

In these opening words the narrator situates the well-known Swedish royals at a distance from the audience, speaking of their world as “once upon a time.” While not taking a definitive political stance, the narrator presents the monarchy as a problematic issue. He does not say “I think this form of government is undemocratic” but instead “there were those” who held the opinion that it was undemocratic. Because the narrator talks of viewers as “they” rather than as “you,” spectators are asked to regard themselves as “they” rather than “us.” In other words, viewers are urged to step back and look at the imagery a little more critically.

The critical, deconstructive strategy continues in the next segment (B). The official footage of King Oscar II shows a bearded, imposing old man.¹⁶⁹ Then the camera cuts to a famous painting of the royal family at the turn of the twentieth century, the camera zooming out from the king’s face to include his family. The narrator points out that there could have been more individuals in the picture, a point that is proven in the following interview when a woman tells of her mother-in-law who was an illegitimate child of King Oscar II. She relates how they would go together once a month to get the older woman’s life annuity; the king “did not like that,” he was “stern” and said that he was not used to having his illegitimate children make their presence known, but the royal court agreed to pay a maintenance. The interview adds complexity to the previous images, and suggests a dimension of hierarchy and inequality in the relationship of royals and subjects.

¹⁶⁸ Lennart Bernadotte does not wear the same clothes in all the clips, because they originate from different interviews found in the SVT archive; letter from Häger to the author, 2003.07.20.

¹⁶⁹ Häger and Villius used some of the footage in *Moses, Aron och Karl XII* (1994). Later in the programme they reused imagery of King Gustav V with the spy Stig Wennerström; from *Svart på vitt: En katt bland hermelinerna* (1988).

The major part of the programme deals with the reign of King Gustav V, 1907–1950, and it provides a many-dimensional portrait of the monarch. Most importantly, it shows the king as a political actor. The first example occurs shortly before the First World War when the king took a decisive political stance supporting the decision of private interests to build an armoured ship (D, seq. 14). Second, the film emphasises the king's role in the Courtyard crisis of 1914 when his unlawful act of speaking about politics to tens of thousands of demonstrators led to the fall of the government (D, seq. 15).¹⁷⁰ The narrator mentions that the queen had a “will of steel when it came to defending the personal power of the royals [personliga kungamakten]” and that she was a staunch supporter of her native Germany.¹⁷¹ Thus, the characterisation of the queen also supports the general idea of the royal family as a political actor during the war years.

That the royals were never apolitical is indicated through creative readings of archival footage, as in the interwar period at the queen's funeral when the narrator points out that Mussolini was present (E). In the same segment, the hereditary prince celebrated his wedding surrounded by Nazi symbols in a German town “where Hitler had been made honorary citizen” (E).¹⁷² While the narrator does not claim a close relationship between the Swedish royals and Mussolini and Hitler, by mentioning the dictators in connection with the royals he emphasises that in a sense the king and his family always played a political role. Admittedly, the narrator points out that the Swedish crown prince looked supremely civilian or out of place among the German soldiers, but to a degree the examples establish an unpleasant association between the royals and the dictators. The narrator makes one more strong point regarding the king's political role, namely that during the Second World War the king threatened to abdicate unless Sweden let a division of armed German soldiers pass through the country.¹⁷³ The narrator remarks about this that it was a “relapse into personal wielding of power,” and a moral statement is delivered through archival footage where a politician condemns the king's threat (F). Archival footage is used for articulating criticism at several points in the programme. Another occasion is when labour agitator Hinke Berggren makes the crowds laugh at the “madmen” who celebrate the royals (E).

King Gustav V is portrayed also in less official situations, both in archival footage and in the testimonies of interviewees who provide more personal impressions of the king and his court. Frequently, there is imagery of the king

¹⁷⁰ Häger and Villius treated the courtyard crisis from the perspective of Sven Hedin in *En röst ur det förgångna. Om politikern Sven Hedin* (1971).

¹⁷¹ Häger and Villius portrayed the queen also in *Svart på vitt: Victoria och invaliderna* (1988).

¹⁷² Marianne Söderberg made the same remark about the same pictures in the Queen Louise episode of *Drottning av Sverige* (1997). Naturally, because there is limited footage from the pre-war decades, much that was used in *Hundra svenska år* had been used before, not least in Jan Bergman's compilation films.

¹⁷³ Häger and Villius treated this event in *Fyra dagar som skakade Sverige* (1988) which I will analyse in the next chapter.

laughing, and he jokes with women on a couple of occasions, as when he throws cones at the young Belgian queen (E). The testimonies of Lennart and Sigvard Bernadotte (C) indicate that the king did not have a close relationship to his grandchildren. It becomes almost metaphoric of the distance between them when Sigvard recalls that in his childhood, when he tried to kiss the king on the cheek, he was pricked by the king's waxed moustache. Lennart Bernadotte adds another perspective when he remembers that there was constant mourning at court in Sweden because there was always some German relative who had died: "They loved to burst into court mourning." There is a hint at a political interpretation also in the parts that portray King Gustav V in his daily life. The narrator mentions that when a politician came to inform the king of a national strike that was to occur in 1909, the king told him to hurry because he was going to play tennis (E). The anecdote could be read as proof of his passion for tennis as well as criticism for not taking his responsibilities as head of state seriously. An interviewee who used to play tennis with the king says that he was not a good player but that he always won. In the sequence after, the king is portrayed as a moose hunter (E).¹⁷⁴ In a matter of fact way, an interviewee describes the effort to drive moose toward the king so that he could shoot some game. Both the tennis player and the moose hunt witness deliver matter of fact testimonies, but they add to the impression of the king's exalted position in a sharply hierarchical society.¹⁷⁵ One of the king's former servants offers a complementary impression (E):

Häger: What about the king, did he have any interest at all in employees such as you?

Interviewee: I hardly think so. He probably noticed that you were new, but not more than that, you could not say that.

Häger: Did he say hello to you?

Interviewee: Yes he did, the first times he nodded like this. Then he said you are new here. Then you knew that he had noticed that someone had arrived, at least. No, the king was on a totally different level.

Häger: When you spoke to the king, then what did you say?

Interviewee: Then it was Your Majesty. The few times when there was occasion to do it. It was not so common.

Häger: And if he said something to you. Did he know your name?

Interviewee: He probably did not. I hardly think so.

When compared to other interview clips used in *Hundra svenska år*, this one is remarkable in two respects. First, its forty-seven seconds make it unusually long. Second, in most cases the interviewer is invisible and we only hear the interviewee who voluntarily tells of experiences in the past. In this case, Häger constantly puts new questions to his subject. Both aspects signal that the inter-

¹⁷⁴ Häger and Villius told of another hunting adventure of crown prince Gustav (who would become Gustav V) in *Svart på vitt: Björnjägarna vid Korså* (1985).

¹⁷⁵ The examples also offer intertextual connotations for cultural history, namely a very famous sketch where comedians Hasse & Tage pretended to play King Gustav V and shouted: Where is the moose?

viewer-filmmaker thinks that this is a key interview, that it offers important information and that if the source will not give information voluntarily he must be urged. The interview reveals that the king did not have a close relationship with his servants and represented a hierarchical institution. As in the interview in the work-episode with the man whose family was evicted, Häger's questions betray his personal stake in the film. His insistent questions about the old king raise the class dimension, which was already present in the narrator's opening words. While the interviewee responds as in an experience interview, describing the employee's relationship to the king, the character of the questions indicates that the interviewer encouraged viewpoint remarks from the interviewee.

The end of the king's life is treated first in the positive memories of three interviewees who took part in the celebration of the king's ninetieth birthday or played with the young princesses who were his great-grandchildren (G): There is also a more critical discussion. When King Gustav V died, says the narrator, "the nineteenth century ended in Sweden." Thus, it is again emphasised that the king represented a traditional world. The programme maintains its focus on Gustav V after treating his funeral, by considering the Haijby affair.¹⁷⁶ This great scandal in the early 1950s concerned a man named Haijby who was bribed to keep silent about his homosexual relationship with the king. Subsequently he was confined to a mental hospital. The narrator relates the story and says that after the secret was exposed and Haijby was sentenced to prison for blackmail, "what was still most startling about the affair was how oppressively official Sweden had guarded Gustav V." Two interviewees testify to the latter verdict, one of them quite cynically saying that the sum that the royal court paid to Haijby was a sum that "a prince can pay to his mistress" (H).¹⁷⁷ Thus, the incident suggested that in fact the royals cheated the law and that other citizens might be sacrificed to its needs.

The latter part of the programme includes a rather positive portrait of King Gustav VI Adolf as well as imagery of the present King Carl XVI Gustaf and his family. The narrator emphasises that Gustav VI Adolf took his duties seriously (H), and the wedding between Carl XVI Gustaf and his bride Silvia is depicted through images of smiling, well-dressed people and the sound of ABBA's classic song *Dancing Queen* that helps create a positive mood. But there are also a few critical points suggesting that the story of the monarchy is a serious matter, and a concern to all. One is the inclusion of a clip where Prime Minister Olof Palme discusses the monarchy in terms of democracy (41). Another is when the imagery shows the young princesses in the 1940s and the narrator remarks that only a male is allowed to ascend the Swedish throne (G, seq. 33). Although the narrator points out that it later was permissible with a female heir to the throne (I), the information itself functions as a reminder of the biases associated with

¹⁷⁶ Häger and Villius discussed the Haijby affair in *50-tal. 1. Rättsaffärerna* (1974).

¹⁷⁷ The words are uttered by lawyer Henning Sjöström, who is known to a wider audience of Swedes.

the monarchy. The serious nature of monarchy is further emphasised by an interview with one of the king's bodyguards who confirms that he is always armed (42). It is also apparent in the sorrowful scene where the aged Prince Bertil is regretful about not having brought any children into the world; the reason being that he and his life-companion remained unmarried in order to secure that there was an heir to the throne (I, seq. 46).¹⁷⁸ For the sake of the monarchy, the prince sacrificed the possibility of having children.

The programme ends with some general comments on the institution of monarchy (J). The critical question is posed to former Prince Sigvard: "Is monarchy a good thing?" Sigvard responds "That is a matter of conscience I actually cannot answer. Or rather, I don't want to answer that question. I don't know." He then says a few words about his isolation and how a nurse was never more harsh than to say "Oh, dear prince, don't do that." Finally, while the image-track shows different images of child princes on horseback, the narrator concludes (J):

That time, at the dawn of the century, princes were brought up to become sovereigns, little children in sailor caps were taught that the world revolved around the park of the palace, and that commonness was only meant for other people. Another palace, another park, another prince. The role of prince has been re-written. But the play remains confusingly much like the other one, with actors who were born into the action and who became prisoners of the play, of their own choice and on the expressed request of the audience.

The imagery that accompanies these last thoughts shows the present king, Carl XVI Gustaf, running by the side of a horse in an indoor hall with a child, presumably the young prince, in the saddle. The footage of the horse in an indoor hall suggests a circus, and in combination with the narrator's words "prisoners of the play" the implication is that the royals do in fact play a role to entertain their subjects.

What political conclusion should be drawn from the programme? Obviously, the programme includes a critical discussion of the monarchy and the Swedish royal family, but it also provides a number of human portraits. King Oscar II and King Gustav V are criticised for playing politics and for their sense of superiority. Still King Gustav V is portrayed as a human being of diverse interests and with a sense of humour. Most interesting, the programme begins and ends urging the audience to think critically about the institution. The producer takes a political moral stance. This is apparent in the narrator's commentary and the choice of interviewees – most of the testimonies reveal the royals as representatives of a highly hierarchic and unequal system. Still, Maria Gratte, who researched the programme, thought the programme much less biting than it could have been.¹⁷⁹ In sum, moral considerations played an im-

¹⁷⁸ Prince Bertil's female friend was not of royal birth, and therefore they thought that if they married he would be banished from the royal house.

¹⁷⁹ Interview with Maria Gratte, 2002.10.28.

portant role in the programme. Aesthetic considerations are figured in, not least since the programme was based on extant imagery.

The programme did not raise a public debate. One spectator who did not like the perspective of the programme wrote to SVT that she thought the series “offensive.” She wrote that she suffered for the sake of “our beloved royal family, who must endure so much scorn and mockery [Sw. *hån och spe*] because of stupid and heartless journalists.”¹⁸⁰ At the same time, another reviewer thought the programme “like a glass of fresh water,” and suggested that it was enough to see footage of Oscar II to become an active republican. Interestingly, while she found that the programme influenced her, she argued that the narrator was not lecturing, exaggerating, or expressing meddlesome opinions: “It has been up to us the spectators to watch, ponder upon it and draw the conclusions that we want.”¹⁸¹ In other words, she thought that the programme was presented in an open voice that made alternative readings possible.

9. Conclusions

Moral considerations are the implicit or explicit arguments that tell *why* something is important. The choice of subject for a historical documentary often is based in moral considerations, but moral considerations can also be a part of choices made that affect the representation process. Examined in this chapter are the moral tendencies and implications of Häger and Villius’s documentaries. A distinction is made between moral considerations that are human-brotherly moral, politically moral, or party-politically moral. The distinction is determined according to how normative or how open-ended the arguments are that are made by the films.

In their early productions it would seem Häger and Villius attempted only to work with purely objective accounts. However, in two films portraying the famine years of 1867–68 the filmmakers took a politically moral position, claiming the greediness of the rich lead to starvation among the poor. *Ett satans år* (1977) tells of a young boy who left home in search of work and eventually, and after maltreatment, died of ill health. While the story is true, the filmmakers chose not to mention that the boy’s last employer was in fact brought to trial and punished for not properly caring for the boy. The film’s indignant version of the boy’s fate is consequently based on political morals as much as on historical fact. The docudrama *Isgraven* (1977) can be read as an allegory of modern aid for developing countries, where a wealthy visitor puts aside his ideals in order to achieve personal gains. Both films on famine take politically moral stances.

¹⁸⁰ DA. T21, [Hundra svenska år. Pressklipp 2: Recensioner, flap B, letter from Gerd Knutsdotter to SVT, 1999.11.01]; cf. T21, F1, 69. All slags info, 23, letter from Hans Garell to Villius, 1999.11.02.

¹⁸¹ Törnander, Gunnel, 1999.

World War II German soldiers portrayed in *Svart på vitt – i färg: Herrefolket* (1990), Häger and Villius describe as ordinary men with dreams, fears, and everyday duties, before they discuss their involvement in the terrible deeds that befell the population of occupied Norway. The filmmakers create a brotherly kind of sympathy for the soldiers in this way, while at the same time they strongly condemn the evils of war. A documentary featuring a Holocaust survivor, *Tur retur helvetet* (1996), tells of devastating loss of life in the death camp at Auschwitz. The programme speaks of the Holocaust in humanly moral terms rather than in more narrowly political ones. Each programme hinted that the Swedish nation was in some way involved and indirectly responsible for events during the war.

Near the turn of the century, Häger's series *Hundra svenska år* (1999) was criticised by Liberal observers for picturing domestic problems in twentieth-century Sweden as though the labour movement were the chief issue. Although Häger had reasonable arguments for not placing the story focus on entrepreneurs, the series had a political profile. This is visible not only by means of the film's frequent images of labour demonstrations, to the accompaniment of *The International*, but in its treatment of the monarchy. Both the narrator's commentary and included interviews suggest the monarchy and the royal family is a fundamentally undemocratic element. In sum, whereas Häger and Villius based most of their programmes on a human moral code, there are cases where they took a politically moral stance. In rare cases, political issues are treated in a way that can be characterised as party-politically moral.

Finally, it has to be emphasised that not every treatment of a moral issue was the result of moral considerations. Indeed a drift occurs towards the cognitive dimension when Häger and Villius attempt to tell of the value-systems of past societies. When they picture hierarchical relationships in famine-stricken Sweden, the values they present are of course their interpretation of how people of the time looked upon the world. And when Häger used commercials or Social Democratic election films in *Hundra svenska år*, it is only reasonable to think he did so wishing to communicate a sense of the value-system shared by many, and that it was not solely his preferential use of film clips that expressed his own values.

Aesthetic Considerations

1. Aesthetic considerations in historical documentaries

The aesthetic considerations that influenced Häger and Villius come under examination in this chapter. Before taking up their programmes directly, aesthetic considerations in televised historical documentaries as such are briefly discussed. The aesthetic considerations of Häger and Villius are then treated generally and with the entirety of their production of televised programmes in mind. Lastly detailed analyses are made of a number of the team's individual programmes. Häger and Villius made cognitive and moral considerations too, but the particular films chosen for analysis in this chapter show the influence of aesthetic considerations particularly clearly.

The filmmaker is influenced by ideas and notions – conventions – of *how* certain subjects can and should be represented. Considerations based on these aesthetic ideas guide the filmmaker in making decisions in making a film when representational ideals are of foremost priority. Aesthetic considerations can influence the choice of subject for a documentary, and when the documentarist spends a great deal of time looking for imagery for example, they affect the research process. Always, however, the matter of chief concern is representation. Television conventions in Sweden grew out of the communications traditions of cinema, radio, journalism, and adult education, and have continued to evolve under influence of television programming in other parts of the world. Individual, creative producers such as Häger and Villius borrow from and recast conventions as they feel they need to. Even so, the conventions of television affect ways of recounting history. Outlined next below are four different matters that call upon the historical documentarist to make aesthetic considerations, namely, (a) television conventions in general, (b) the relationship between word and image, (c) the matter of realism, and (d) the rules of drama.

In historical documentaries as in all historiography the problem of aesthetic form is an inescapable one.¹ What makes historical documentaries different from written historiography, on the other hand, is the interplay between words,

¹ This is an old notion, but thanks to the linguistic turn one that has gained new topicality.

images, and sounds that is always a part of film. How texts or tracks are constructed and combined is partly shaped by television conventions, simply and bluntly by what works on television. By one convention abstract non-pictorial subjects are to be avoided, and accordingly television programme producers tend to pick concrete subjects, which are plainly easier to portray and also easier for viewers to recognise as subjects as such. When subjects are nevertheless abstract, personal stories can be used to give them tangible form. Most common is to work wherever possible with observable activity and acting agents, and to keep purely structural properties to a minimum. One scholar has remarked that history on television “gravitates toward the portrayal of individuals from the past as tangible embodiments of much larger [...] concerns.”² In practice, the way the historical documentarist discovers if a subject will work on television is by searching for and testing extant imagery that might be used, or by considering whether new imagery can be composed to adequately cover the subject.

Television conventions differ considerably from cinema conventions. Because of the small screen, television producers tend more than cinematic filmmakers to prefer intimate shots with close-up and medium-range camera work. In fact, intimacy and immediacy have been recognised as inherent properties of the small screen.³ The televised programme’s verbal soundtrack offers possibilities for effects of its own, few of which follow the conventional notions of cinema aesthetics.⁴ The soundtrack becomes more important because of the difficulty of seeing details on the small screen. But it should be emphasised that the verbal soundtrack has more limited possibilities than written words in a book. The television viewer is in a weak reader position and does not control the pace of reading. The circumstance of weak reader/viewer limits freedom in the use of words and forces the scriptwriter to find a language that is both engaging and easy to follow. The tendency to prefer activity and actor to structure is not just a question of what can be visualised but is also a consequence of television’s verbal text having oral rather than written form.

The relationship between word and image is a classic theoretical problem in art studies.⁵ It is often argued that word and image have different functions, that the diachronic structure of language makes words particularly suitable for analysis and commentary, while the synchronic structure of images gives images the capacity to concretise and intensify.⁶ Thus, the word is interpreted as rational and scientific, while the image is irrational and emotional. But word and image can have a more mutually beneficial relationship and both contribute meaning to assertions that are made. Roland Barthes has identified two

² Edgerton, Gary, 2001, p. 100. McCarthy, Patrick, 1987, writes of the tendency of documentarists to create “giant” men.

³ Allen, Robert C., 1992.

⁴ Seiter, Ellen, 1992, p. 45; Corner, John, 1999, p. 116, writes that television’s knowledge profile is “speech led at the level of description and explanation.”

⁵ This has evolved into the field of intermediality studies.

⁶ Hård af Segerstad, Thomas, 1974, pp. 28 f.

functions that verbal language has in combination with images: anchorage and *relai*. Anchorage refers to the capacity of words to identify and interpret what is in the image, to point out the most significant meaning (out of several possibilities) and thus *anchor* the image in terms of meaning. *Relai* refers to the capacity of words to say things that the image does not say and thus *add* a new element of meaning to the whole.⁷ In both cases, the words dominate. But in fact, the relationship is of dialectic importance because the image also anchors the words, or shapes our idea of the words.⁸ Meanings therefore are created by the interaction of words and images, and sound effects and music contribute additional elements to the created meaning.

The conventions and norms for audio-visual representation called realism apply to most historical documentaries. These require things be represented as they appear when we experience them and see them. In principle, the demand for realism extends to everything, from political structures to the clothing and behaviour of the actors. Realism is a common mode both in fact and fiction but, as Bill Nichols suggests, aesthetics in documentaries and aesthetics in fiction films are different matters. In fictional realism, spatial contiguity or the orientation of an individuated character dominates continuity. The sense of continuity in a documentary is set largely by the internal logic of the accompanying commentary, which means that documentary realism allows relatively great leaps in time and space.⁹

Most historical documentarists work to achieve factual and realistically accurate accounts of the past. To this end they use extant imagery such as photographs and archive footage as well as stage re-enactments where present-day actors imitate past reality. As noted in Chapter 3, there are critics who argue that photographs only depict a surface reality, and one that moreover has been arranged or “distorted” for the filming. Re-enacted mimetic¹⁰ scenes are even more problematic. To be sure, they can be rich in information, and can provide us with replicas of the real scenes, which are otherwise impossible to capture. But while many artists including filmmakers have struggled to achieve realist works of art, other artists (and scholars) have denied it is possible to fashion “true” mimetic representations.¹¹ Instead, they have developed anti-mimetic techniques to remind the reader/viewer that the representation can never be more than just the representation it is. In analysing re-enactments in historical documentaries one must take into account that there exist two separate ways of

⁷ Barthes, Roland, 1984a (1977).

⁸ Andén-Papadopoulos, Kari, 2000.

⁹ Nichols, Bill, 1991. Nichols distinguishes between three types of realism: empirical realism guarantees historically accurate details but not accuracy at the level of interpretation; psychological realism conveys to representation a sense of being believable by giving us access to the emotional reality of characters and situations; historical realism vivifies the social complexity of the historical world, seeking to involve rather than amuse.

¹⁰ Mimesis comes from the Greek and signifies the imitation of or striving for realism in the representation of reality.

¹¹ Rosenstone, Robert A., 1995a, p. 60, warns of a “false historicity” and of the notion that history can be reduced to just a “period look.”

satisfying demands for realism, one that enlists the reality effect and another that utilises the distancing effect.

In the case of the *reality effect*, the producer's aim is to convince the viewer that the televised world is real. As a means of making the viewer confident in that world's reality, the producer includes "unnecessary" details in the representation. The logic is that unnecessary details are included simply because they are inescapable parts of the world. Viewed in another way, the narrator or cameraman abdicates his function of choosing and directing and instead allows himself to be governed by reality as it is found. Unnecessary details create the illusion of reference to what is real, hence, the "reality effect." Details that do not appear to fulfil any function strike and convince the viewer: if they are in view and real, then everything else in view must be just as real. The viewer's feeling that "this is real" is strengthened.¹² Details are used this way also in written historiography, there to convince readers of the truthfulness of a text. Both historians and writers of historical fiction have declared they use details as a means of creating a sense of presence, of the reader's being there.¹³ In historical documentaries, the focus on details in a photograph is an example of how a producer tries to achieve the reality effect.

Through the *distancing effects* the filmmaker tries to bring about a realistic viewing of the film, by reminding the viewer that what is seen is a representation and that someone created it. What is used are devices that problematise the relationship between a given representation on the one hand and the historical reality beyond the representation on the other. Distancing effects violate traditional conventions regarding realism, which argue that language should be invisible. In literary history there are many examples of reader distancing, for example in dramas by Bertold Brecht, or in historical novels by the Swedish writer Eyvind Johnson.¹⁴ In the audio-visual sphere, filmmakers in the French New Wave tradition as well as the Swedish filmmaker Jan Troell have adopted unconventional techniques to achieve distancing effects.¹⁵ These writers and filmmakers use various devices to draw viewer attention to the representation itself, such as repetition and variation, remarks by the narrator, an unusually mobile camera, frozen frames, discontinuous editing, and a composition that breaks with conventional structuring. Extensive use of distancing effects indicates an awareness of the problem of representation, and of realisation that a perfectly true copy of reality cannot be achieved.¹⁶ In historical documentaries, filmmakers use distancing effects to ensure that the viewer does not mistake re-enactments or extant propaganda footage for the actual past.

¹² Barthes, Roland, 1968, pp. 87 f. Cf. Culler, Jonathan, 1975, pp. 193 ff.; Ankersmit, Frank, 1994, esp. p. 140.

¹³ Sjöberg, Mats, 1989, p. 50; Öhman, Christer, 1991, p. 65.

¹⁴ Jansson, Bo G., 1990; Hutcheon, Linda, 1984 (1980).

¹⁵ Dunås, Jon, 2001.

¹⁶ The great modernist writers tried to come to terms with the discrepancy between representation and the real world by creating psychological realism. By contrast, post-modern writers affirm the artificial element, exposing the disparity between representation and the external world.

Even if historical documentarists strive to correctly depict reality they also tend to follow dramatic rules and especially, as indicated in foregoing chapters, the demands of the dramatic unities of time, space, and action.¹⁷ Real stories rarely observe the dramatic unities; instead they have complex pre-histories and involve more actors and actions than there is room to show in a film. Because television conventions demand there be some kind of “whole,” television histories tend to be little faithful to the real past. Related is the issue of dramaturgy or dramatic structure, which plays a role, to be sure of varying size, also in shaping a historical documentary. Dramatic rules suggest, for example, that a film should start with something that at once catches the audience and end on a well-defined closing note. Another example is the historical documentaries’ way of sandwiching in newly-filmed interviews and old archival footage, giving new voices and changes in tempo to prevent wandering viewer attention and wake new interest.

2. Häger and Villius’s aesthetic considerations

Aesthetic considerations influenced Häger and Villius’s programmes in a number of ways. First following, the producers’ general views on television conventions and aesthetic demands are reviewed. In the mid-1980s, after a couple of decades at SVT, Häger and Villius made important statements. Villius said to work as a historian is different than to work with television: “As a historian you generalise. In television you must individualise, let feelings appear, make people experience with their hearts, and identify.”¹⁸ Thus, he emphasised the need for emotions. Häger voiced similar thoughts, saying that in television “you must deal with individuals or groups [rather than the abstract or general]. Then history comes alive and becomes intelligible. Numbers of [...] dead in a war are useless. They become comprehensible only when applied to a single human.”¹⁹ Taken together, Häger and Villius seem fully in agreement that the medium required the focus be on individuals.

Häger and Villius continued to think as historians in the sense that they were solidly based and operating in the traditions of realism, which is to say that their work made direct reference to the real world. Some of their representations indicate a naive realism, namely, the notion that through images one can access the past. For such reason it is all the more striking that they also make frequent use of distancing effects. In an interesting variation on the realism theme there are occasions when the production history of an image is related as part of the programme.²⁰ Perhaps this should be seen also in the context of the demand for indexing and genre agreement. Chapter 4 made reference to the

¹⁷ The dramatic unities lead back to the poetics of Aristotle.

¹⁸ Villius quoted in Vogel, Viveka, 1985.

¹⁹ Häger quoted in Malgefors, Lars, 1984.

²⁰ There are several examples in *Svart på vitt*, see further below.

debate at SVT in 1968, when documentary head Ehrenborg argued that SVT must give the audience unambiguous information about what kind of programme they were viewing. That debate indicates there was pressure on the producers to index their programmes.

Words were always a primary tool for Häger and Villius, but as they learned to work with the television medium the image-track and the additional soundtracks gradually took much of their attention. In the first years their method was to write narration first and then add imagery, which meant that words only rarely tied to the images. Häger has suggested that they used the images as “wallpaper,”²¹ which indicates that they cared little about the images as such and did not think of them as carrying meaning. As a consequence they were liberal when deciding what imagery to use to illustrate historical events. While they avoided re-enactments, they thought archival footage was acceptable provided it reasonably illustrated what was narrated. In their article on the Ivar Kreuger film they explained the feeling they had of needing to be practical. For the film they wanted imagery to accompany words about New York City in the 1920s, and footage of the boat *Ile de France* leaving New York (carrying Kreuger to France) in 1932. The footage they used actually showed New York in 1911 and *Ile de France* leaving the quay in 1930. Häger and Villius declared they would “ruthlessly ignore the demand that the image cover exactly what the text describes,” and further admitted that there is a “constant wavering between exactly correlating images and texts and vicarious images.”²² But this liberal attitude was questioned when Villius made a programme about UN general secretary Dag Hammarskjöld. In response to the programme journalist Sven Öste complained that commentary on Congolese soldiers was accompanied by images of soldiers, but the wrong ones. Villius defended the use of the images, arguing that images can have symbolic value and therefore used in “associative ways.”²³ But Öste’s criticism indicates that not everyone accepted Villius’s liberal view. In the early 1970s the Danish historian Niels Skyum-Nielsen published a book where he championed very strict rules concerning how archival images should be used. Villius met Skyum-Nielsen at a conference and proposed a more pragmatic stance.²⁴ Nevertheless, Häger says in retrospect that it is likely that Skyum-Nielsen’s critique led them to be more careful about how they used imagery.²⁵ Whether caused by criticism or a result of their gradually becoming accustomed to thinking as workers with television, Häger and Villius’s use of images underwent change. In the 1980s and 90s, they tended to use extant images not as mere illustrations but instead as the starting point for work with narration.

²¹ Häger in conversation with the author, 2000.

²² Häger, Olle and Hans Villius, 1970, pp. 225 f. Cf. Furhammar, Leif, 1968.

²³ *I nödfall med våld* (1971). Villius, Hans, 1974, pp. 96 f.; interview with Villius, 2001.05.09; interview with Villius, 2003.06.02.

²⁴ Villius, Hans, 1974.

²⁵ Interview with Häger, 2003.06.03.

They were intensely conscious of the importance of the dramatic unities. In radio lectures and early television programmes, Villius preferred to work with dramatic events. He explains by saying “you start on the plus side,” but suggests that Häger was more interested in all-embracing subjects, of the type treated in programmes such as *Hundra svenska år*.²⁶ But regardless what subject they treated, they always felt a need for rhetorical devices such as would enable them to represent the general, for example, a person in his times. In foregoing chapters both *Ett satans år* and *Tur retur helvetet* are shown to exemplify such a strategy. There the year of the famine and the Holocaust were mirrored in the experiences of the young boys, Nils Petter Wallgren and Benny Grünfeld, respectively. Similarly, in *1000 år* the soldiers of Andersvattnet came to constitute the part that represented the whole. Further on, *Sista båten till Jurkalne* will be shown to provide another example of Häger and Villius identifying and using an individual subject through whom history could be told, and of how they used that subject to stimulate feelings of intimacy in the viewer. With few exceptions they did not make biographies but told about the past through individuals, which is quite a different matter. So little use of biography in their production could be the result of their working in Sweden, where biography was not a popular genre in the radical decades.²⁷ It could also be that they as trained historians were hesitant to grant too large a role to individuals in history. On the two occasions they focused on a small group of individuals, in the dramatic *Isgraven* and *Sammansvärjningen*, these films were complemented by documentaries of the type that offer broader explanations.

At times aesthetic considerations could collide with cognitive considerations. An example of this is an occurrence from the early 1990s when Häger was making a programme about Swedish mathematician Arne Beurling who managed to crack the secret telegraph codes of the Germans during World War II and thus give the Swedish secret service a powerful weapon. Villius recalls that Häger and editor Kjell Tunegård planned to include a scene where an interviewee played down the importance of Beurling’s achievement. Villius claims to have convinced the others that it would be “journalistic suicide” to include such a passage and detract from Beurling’s impressive and interesting feat.²⁸ Häger claims to have another recollection of the event.²⁹ The point of course is not whether Villius remembers the particular case correctly, but rather that balanced historian that he is, he is nonetheless ready to work up the journalistic

²⁶ Interview with Villius, 2001.05.09; interview with Villius, 2003.06.02.

²⁷ Ambjörnsson, Ronny et al, 1997, p. 7. It can be argued that biography pays homage to individualisation and therefore suits capitalism; it has certainly been more popular in Anglo-Saxon countries such as the United States than in Sweden, where a revival was seen in the 1990s. Furhammar, Leif, 1995, p. 226, notes that portrait documentaries had a revival at SVT in the 1980s.

²⁸ Interview with Villius 2001.05.09; interview with Villius, 2003.06.02. The programme in question was *G som i hemlig* (1994).

²⁹ Although Häger refutes much in the version Villius told, he confirms that a witness might have said that Beurling’s achievement was not so important; interview with Häger, 2003.06.03.

and dramatic sides of the story. The incident is tangible proof that aesthetic considerations could influence a programme.

Häger and Villius's most famous series *Svart på vitt* (1984–1992) consists of five-minute episodes, each of which tells about the past from one single photograph. The series is an interesting example of the interaction between words and image, and below is a detailed analysis of four *Svart på vitt* episodes. In the series Häger and Villius violated television conventions by letting the camera rest on the same image for minutes, panning and zooming within the frame; the convention is to cut after four to five seconds. Villius has argued that the photographs greatly extended possibilities for telling about the past in a television documentary.³⁰ At the same time, to speak about a past in a way traceable in a photo assured that the producers would not tell anything they liked. The extant photos limited significantly the subjects that could be dealt with. Häger used the same aesthetic line of thought in the late 1990s when preparing the series *Hundra svenska år*. As mentioned, he wanted to make a documentary about violence in Sweden during the twentieth century – but because footage was missing the programme was not made.³¹ Thus, Häger and Villius here let aesthetic considerations influence their choice of subject matters. They could have treated other (non-filmed or non-photographed) subjects by using a presenter, or filmed interviews, historic milieus, or re-enactments, but in the cases of *Svart på vitt* and *Hundra svenska år* they chose not to.

In the 1980s, and parallel with work on *Svart på vitt*, Häger and Villius were involved with drama-documentaries and there struggled with how to handle reconstructions of the past. Drama-documentaries were often controversial,³² because aesthetic considerations frequently collided with the need to communicate knowledge. Villius commented on the drama-documentary genre in an article in 1985, referring to the British and American debate and especially mentioning the work of Leslie Woodhead.³³ Villius pointed out that although Woodhead had done thorough preparations, he could never escape subjectivity in selection and never create exactly the actual conversations, and Villius added:

When it comes to history the concrete is rarely as interesting as the abstract. What was the meaning of that which happened? What were the motives of those involved? What was their world of ideas like and what were the consequences, etc? It is not just a question of reconstructing the sequence of events and the external milieu, but one must also strive to get to a deeper reality.³⁴

³⁰ Interview with Villius, 2003.06.02.

³¹ Häger at seminar at Stockholm University, 2000.04.04. Author's notes.

³² There was much discussion in Britain. A feeling of what is was like is given by British historian-filmmaker Jerry Kuehl who wrote in 1978 (quoted in Paget, Derek, 1998, p. 128) that factual claims were "compromised by the very existence of the dramatic elements," but who suggested that when re-enactments must nevertheless be used "precise descriptions of the sources for each scene and each line of dialogue" should be made available.

³³ Woodhead was famous not least for his drama-documentary *Invasion* (1982), where he recreated the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia.

³⁴ Villius, Hans, 1985b.

This is an interesting statement, because it expresses ambition with regard to interpretation. Furthermore, what is implicit is that Villius thought that concrete looks of scenes and persons acting in them were uninteresting.³⁵ Häger and Villius did some serious drama-documentary work in the 1980s, the first attempt being a drama-documentary about Swedish inventor Alfred Nobel. This was planned as a series but only a single programme was made, because they discovered that Nobel was so little interesting that a series could never be a success. Villius explains: “We thought it too difficult to make an attractive series. [...] There must be some drawing force [Sw. sug] in the persons [...] if they are such dead-pan bores [träkmånsar] I do not think anyone should make programmes about them.”³⁶

Villius had a pragmatic view on how documentary and drama could be mixed, although clearly he sought to reach the “meaning” of events. When he and his wife were engaged as researchers for the controversial docudrama on Jane Horney, which caused such debate in Denmark, Villius claims he acted to prevent dramaturgical changes that would have assigned responsibility for the murder differently.³⁷ He interpreted the facts of the murder as beyond the range of what could be negotiated. He had a more liberal opinion in the 1990s when assessing a docudrama on Ivar Kreuger.³⁸ After Villius commented on the production on a television talk show, film-reviewer Leif Furhammar criticised Villius’s liberal attitude. Furhammar thought the series was excessively free in its depiction of Kreuger, especially in depicting Kreuger’s personality. He noted ironically that Villius had been pleased by the actor’s physical likeness to Kreuger. Finally Furhammar asked rhetorically, were there any demands for truth left to put to documentary dramas?³⁹ Responding, Villius admitted his “respect for dramatic freedom” might have taken him too far, but remarked on the difficulty in docudrama of drawing lines between things acceptable and things not. He took the important guideline to be always to follow reality to its comprehensible limits, but then create from there. He argued further that, true to its intrinsic form, reality too often loses out when dramas are constructed “according to dramaturgical rules.” But he also defended by right of artistic creativity forms that mix documentary and drama, declaring that the usual problem was that the filmmaker was forced for lack of source materials to create dialogues and scenes that had no basis in extant sources.⁴⁰

Analysed below, in addition to *Svart på vitt*, are three films where Häger and Villius incorporated re-enactments. The first, the drama-documentary *Sammansvärjningen* (1986), about the 1792 murder of King Gustav III, was an ambitious costume drama that closely followed extant sources. In words match-

³⁵ This is consistent with the general impression that Villius was not so interested in images.

³⁶ Interview with Villius, 2003.06.02. The programme is *Mr Dynamite* (1983).

³⁷ Interview with Villius, 2001.05.09.

³⁸ Lars Molin directed the series. The cameraman was Jan-Hugo Norman, who often worked with Häger and Villius.

³⁹ Furhammar, Leif, 1998a.

⁴⁰ Villius, Hans, 1999.

ing in spirit those quoted above, Villius maintained that no laxity in meeting demands for truth was involved: “Lines might be invented, but the most important thing is the ideas they are to express. And the greater the authenticity [äkthetsprägel] given a milieu, the better.”⁴¹ However, Häger and Villius engaged another person to direct the production and thus lost much control; actors and director alike came between the producer-team and what became the finished scenes. The second analysis below is of *Fyra dagar som skakade Sverige* (1988), which dealt with the controversial decision in 1941 to permit transit through Sweden to an armed German division, amounting to a flagrant violation of principles of Swedish neutrality. The programme re-enacted political negotiations leading up to the decision, making it an interesting example of an aesthetic construction that has cognitive aims. The third film analysed, *Sista båten till Jurkalne* (1991), combines silent re-enactments with interviews to create a historical documentary about spy and refugee traffic between Sweden and Latvia at the end of World War II. It is an example of how the filmmakers emotionalised and dramatised a portion of the past.

3. Telling about the past by help of a photograph

In the 1970s and early 1980s, Häger and Villius stumbled upon many old photographs, some of which they used as image elements in the programmes. In 1983, they proposed to produce a series of five-minute programmes where the concept was to make each episode from one black-and-white photo, where individual photographs would be the keys to the past: “What is needed [from us] is just to help, to point out details, [...] to describe, offer background, and surprise. We also know that there is an abundance of photographs that are not so worn and known, especially in regional museums and private collections around the country.”⁴² The concept worked and the *Svart på vitt* series eventually grew to include 127 episodes, broadcast between 1984 and 1992.⁴³ In 1986, Häger and Villius were awarded both the television producers’ Ikaros award and Sweden’s Great Journalism award for the series. Doubtless, *Svart på vitt* is their most unique contribution to Swedish television. Episodes from the series were shown at scholarly conferences.⁴⁴ In addition to the main series,

⁴¹ Villius quoted in Mellbourn, Anders, 1986.

⁴² DA. T21, F1, 39, Svart på vitt 84–91?, 7, Historia i bild 1983.09.

⁴³ The episodes are listed in Appendix 1. One reason why the series continued for so many years may have been that the programmes were very cheap to make. See DA. T21, F1, 39, Svart på vitt 84–91?, 7, Produktionsbeskrivning & Programbudget, 1988.08.29. Häger and Villius have explained that they liked to make *Svart på vitt* episodes after a period with a big project, because it was tiring to start again with big projects; Kalfjäll, Birgitta, 1990.

⁴⁴ *Svart på vitt* featured in the following conferences: Kungälv 1989, Västerås 1989, Umeå 1991. DA. T21, F1, 39, Svart på vitt 84–91?, 15, letter from Elin Ström to Häger, 1989.08.17. Two student essays about the series are Lundgren, Nils et al, 1987, in journalism, and Svensson, Gary, 1992a, in communication studies.

Häger and Villius used the same format and technique in a series of ten episodes (*Bilder från ett krig*, 1989) about World War II and in the five programmes about Norway during World War II (*Svart på vitt – i färg*, 1990), although these programmes were based on several photos per episode rather than just one. As I showed in the previous chapter, in the Norway programmes the photographs were in colour.

The original idea for the series was to choose photographs that showed important events and processes which taken together offered a broad picture of the period from 1850 to the present. Several of the first episodes portrayed dramatic political events and thus followed the original idea. But soon, according to Häger and Villius, the photographs “took over.” They found that many photos were irresistible and had to be utilised whether they illustrated “important” events or not. Social and cultural history came to the fore while political history was set in the background.⁴⁵ A large share of the photographs chosen dealt with Sweden in the decades around 1900, which were years when amateur photographers roamed the country. In the words of Häger and Villius, these photographers and their photos made ordinary people visible for the first time and therefore they are part of the democratic breakthrough.⁴⁶

Häger and Villius worked apart from each other when preparing the *Svart på vitt* programmes. They have described the search for photographs with Häger travelling north (where he came from) and Villius south (where he came from). The one who found a photo was responsible for researching, writing, and narrating that episode. It is striking that the archive contains much less in production materials about the programmes narrated by Villius than those by Häger. This may suggest that Villius did not work as intently when preparing his programmes. Perhaps he was simply less efficient at saving his working materials.⁴⁷ Although the names of Häger and Villius are attached to all of the programmes, the two producers clearly were responsible for different episodes.

In their proposal of 1983, they suggested that the new series would be first broadcast in the autumn of the following year. Surprisingly, the first episodes were aired in the spring of 1984. According to Häger, they accelerated their schedule because another documentarist, Jan Lindqvist, was preparing a major film production based on photographs from the late nineteenth century. Thus,

⁴⁵ Häger, Olle, 1995, p. 5, wrote that the photos should be a springboard to memory.

⁴⁶ Häger, Olle & Hans Villius, 1990, p. 5 f.; DA. T21, F1, 39, Svart på vitt 84–91?, 7, Svart på vitt. Tagg, John, 1988, p. 20, argues that the advent of mass photographic practice should not be seen as a triumph of democracy, because amateur photography was a subordinate part of a hierarchical structure. Tagg points especially to the fact that photography was used as an instrument of power, cataloguing the faces of criminals. Lundgren, Frans, 2003, p. 118–131, discusses this in a Swedish context.

⁴⁷ For example, see DA. T21, F2, 1, nr 2–24, 8 (Catalinan); 31 (Hammar skjöld), which Villius made. That Häger and Villius made episodes separately has been confirmed in interviews. They also confirm that Häger was more anxious to save working materials than was Villius. Quoted in Mannberg, Gittan, 1986, Villius says that he could not be patient enough to do as solid research as Häger.

Svart på vitt appeared early because Häger and Villius wanted to be first to use the cinematic concept of telling history from old photographs.⁴⁸ Meanwhile, Lindqvist's film *Tiden är en dröm* was much delayed and not seen in the cinemas until 1999.

What is especially interesting about *Svart på vitt* is that Häger and Villius began with extant photos rather than pre-chosen stories. This strategy meant that narration was closely tied to the image, and limited their choice of stories. In the series they developed an inventive re-framing technique that opened up the single photograph so that it could be turned into a story. Häger has described the process. He or Villius would write the script while studying the photo. Then they went to the studio and filmed the photo. First an enlarged copy of the photo was made. Then the camera re-framed the image in different ways, panning and zooming within the frame. There would be close-ups of particular details, complementing the narration. If the filming did not work well with the narration they reworked the filming, not the script.⁴⁹ They worked with various image producers during the nine years that the series was made. The first of them, Rolf Olson, said that he would make a detailed scenario that the camera followed.⁵⁰ This indicates that the image producer had a significant influence on the programmes. Certainly, Häger and Villius used re-framing techniques in *Ett satans år* and in other productions prior to *Svart på vitt*, but the technique was further developed in the new series.

In *Svart på vitt* the producers reused a large number of historical episodes that they had already dealt with in other programmes. In 1967 Villius made a programme about two Swedish aeroplanes that disappeared in the Baltic Sea in 1952. At least one of the planes was shot down by the Soviet air force,⁵¹ but a German ship rescued the airmen. Villius went to Germany to interview the widow of the ship's captain and found out that she had both the vessel's log-book and a few photographs from the incident. These photos were reused in one of the first *Svart på vitt* episodes.⁵² Another early episode showed the photograph of a ship in Härnösand in 1867. That photo appeared in *Ett satans år*, and it was now employed to consider the late spring and the looming famine.⁵³ In some cases, Häger and Villius tried out new ideas in *Svart på vitt* that returned in later productions. One such episode dealt with Swedish volunteer airmen who fought on the Finnish side in the war against the Soviet Union, which was later developed into a one-hour documentary.⁵⁴ Other photographs, such as one of the Socialist agitator Kata Dahlström, returned in *Hundra sven-*

⁴⁸ Interview with Häger, 2003.06.03.

⁴⁹ Svensson, Gary, 1992.

⁵⁰ Olson is interviewed in Heijl, Mårten, 1987.

⁵¹ We now know that both planes were shot down by the Soviet air force.

⁵² Because the Swedish airmen said very little about the incident, Villius's finding was a real discovery. *Frågetecken över Östersjön* (1967); *Svart på vitt: Catalinan* (1984). Cf. Björkman, Leif, 1971.

⁵³ *Svart på vitt: Föreningen löper ut* (1985).

⁵⁴ *Svart på vitt: Elldopet över Sallavägen* (1987); *Elldopet över Sallavägen* (1988).



Figure 24. Bolsheviks on Vasa Street. A *Svart på vitt* episode from 1984 pictures Lenin and friends on a Stockholm street on their way to Russia in 1917. Lenin (with the umbrella) talks with Swedish socialist Ture Nerman. The narrator ends the scene remarking on what was to happen to them; many would soon be dead. Photo: Axel Malmström. Courtesy of Åke Malmström.⁵⁷

ska år.⁵⁵ The episode featuring Kata Dahlström was one of a number of *Svart på vitt* episodes that focused on women and their experiences.⁵⁶

Formally, the programmes are characterised by very close links between words and image, and as a rule the narrator takes the perspective of the people in the photograph, speaking in the present tense about events. But the narrator also demonstrates his superior knowledge by sometimes pointing to future events, as at the end of the episode about the ship in Härnösand when the narrator says that in twenty years, the ship will “spring a leak.” An episode about a demonstration in Ådalen in 1931 ends with “tomorrow the shots fall in Ådalen,” which certainly adds an air of fatal drama to the demonstration image.⁵⁸ In the following I will closely examine four of the episodes in the series.

One of the first *Svart på vitt* episodes was *Spetälskesjukhuset* [*The Leper Hospital*] (1984). When preparing the films about the famine years, Häger and Villius had found that a leper hospital was built in the village of Järvsö in 1868. They also found a photo where staff and patients posed in front of it.⁵⁹ Häger,

⁵⁵ *Svart på vitt: Kata vid Fejan* (1984). The photo of Kata Dahlström appeared already in *1000 år* (1980).

⁵⁶ *Kata vid Fejan* (1984); *Sömmerskorna och striden* (1985); *Ängeln i Limehouse* (1988); *Victoria och invaliderna* (1988); *Drottning per annons* (1988).

⁵⁷ *Bolsjevikerna på Vasagatan* (1984).

⁵⁸ The episodes in question are *Föreningen löper ut* (1985) and *Ådalen 31* (1984).

⁵⁹ DA. T21, F2, 1, 7, letter [from Häger] to Annasara Svanteson, undated [mid-1990s].

whose home region was not far from Järvsö, worked hard to find out when the photo was taken and who the people in the picture were. People's clothing indicated that it was taken in the late nineteenth century. He sent for materials from the regional archive, such as patient lists, diaries, and casebooks from the years before and after 1900, and made long lists of people who had worked in the hospital or been there as patients. Noticing a telephone-wire in the photo, he determined that the photo was taken in or after 1902, when the telephone was installed at the hospital. Focusing on the picture, Häger believed that it was taken in early autumn. Comparing patient lists with the people in the photo, he fixed the date as the autumn of 1906. Comparisons with other photos and an interview with a former employee made it possible to determine the names and professions of some of the staff in the photo.⁶⁰ Discovering these facts was true detective's work.

During preparation of the film, Häger learnt about leper and the hospital. Also important, he identified the only young girl in the picture. Her name was Engla Maria Flygare [Angel Mary Aviator], a strange and truly poetic name that offered a particular entre to the picture. Looking into her family history, Häger found that both her mother and five brothers died in leper, as she would herself after the photo was taken.⁶¹ He used her fate as the personalising example in the five-minute programme. In the following tables I indicate what is on the image-track (I) and the soundtrack (S) respectively:

- A. I: Still over the (re-framed) photo, people in front of a house. S: Narrator describes the scene, birds singing.
- B. I: Pan from left to right, medium shot on the patients. S: Narrator talks of leper and the hospital.
- C. I: Camera rests on the women to the right. S: Narrator explains when the photo was taken.
- D. I: Camera zooms in on Engla Maria. S: Narrator tells of Engla Maria and her family.

The entire programme builds on two still shots, one slow pan, and one zoom. The opening still shot (A) is more than one minute long and shows a huge hospital building with staff and patients standing in front. First, the narrator characterises the scene, "Thirty-nine people one summer afternoon on a gravel garden path. A skylark in the distance. And a smooth wind that makes the leaves whisper to themselves, where they are mirrored in the windows. The thirty-nine look into the camera. The men [stand] to one side dressed in black costumes. The women in long skirts, cotton dresses and bright aprons." In these words, the narrator both describes and interprets the scene. He mentions the people, the gravel garden path, and the windows of the house. He notes

⁶⁰ DA. T21, F2, 1, 7, library receipt KB/Landsarkivet i Härnösand, 1983.12.07; 12-page list Personal; and various other notes.

⁶¹ DA. T21, F2, 1, 7, Larsson, Per Erik = Flygare (3 pages of notes about the Flygare family).

how the men and women are dressed, points out that they stand in two groups, and that they look our way. In these details the narrator *anchors* the scene. The addition of a singing bird on the soundtrack also functions to anchor the photo, because although we cannot see it the bird serves to heighten the summery atmosphere. A rather idyllic atmosphere is also created by the narrator's poetic comment that animates the leaves to "whisper" and "mirror."⁶² Leaves can be seen in the picture and therefore when the narrator points to them he ultimately tries to anchor the scene, although we of course cannot see the movement or sound of the leaves.

After the opening characterisation of the scene the narrator reveals that the house is the last leper hospital in Sweden (he also names the place) and he tells how leper deforms people's bodies (B). While the camera pans over the deformed faces of the male patients we are told how people were physically marked by the disease. The camera pans over the female staff and we are told how it smelled in the hospital, and "if you listen carefully you can hear the steps from the assistant nurses who rustles [frasar] on the wooden floors [...]." Completing the pass over the female patients, the narrator specifies what kind of people contracted the disease. Thus, in this segment the narrator provides much general information about leper, but strikingly the information is structured so that it will tie into the image. For example, at one point the narrator says that the disease attacks "the eyes with irritating inflammation. Many have difficulty seeing." Then the image holds a male who has obvious problems seeing. While the narrator *adds* information to the image, the image now and again helps to anchor that information.

For a brief moment, the narrator ends his discussion of the disease to investigate when the photograph was taken (C). He says that the people's clothes reveal information but that it is "treacherous" because they were poor and isolated and thus their clothes were worn and old-fashioned. Noting the telephone wire in the corner of the picture, he dates the scene as after 1902, because that was when Järvsö was connected by telephone. Finally, it must be late summer 1906 because "only then were there two boys and a girl on the patient lists." Thus, Häger relates his journey of discovery about the photograph. There is a close relation between image and words; in the picture are the phone wire and the girl and some women whose clothes are perhaps old. The narrator does not point the audience to the dress of someone special nor does he indicate where in the picture are the phone wire or the girl. The audience is left to discover those things for itself.

Finally, the programme's journey that began on an idyllic summer day ends as an individual human tragedy, when the narrator and the camera focuses on Engla Maria who stands at the end of the long row of patients (D). While the camera zooms in on the girl, we are told that both her mother and her brothers died in the hospital from leper. The camera still, the narrator says "this is her

⁶² A pleasant atmosphere is created also by speaking of "summer" rather than "early autumn."



Figure 25. Engla Maria, face scarred by leprosy. A detail from the original photo, the young girl lends a personal touch to the story of the lepers hospital. Courtesy of Börje Björklund.

second summer in the hospital. She has five summers left until a black cross shall be drawn by her name in the patient book – and soldier no. 124 at Folkare Company, Per-Erik Flygare, no longer has a family.” The detailed information about Engla Maria’s family and her fate – we learn their place of origin, the dates when they died, and that her brother Johan was ten years old when he passed away – is information *added* to the image. The image of Engla Maria

provides a connection but does not reveal all the things that we learn. The ending is especially dramatic. Not only does the narrator tell us that Engla Maria will die, but we suddenly find out that her father lived on, scarred by the experience of having lost both wife and all of his children to the disease.

Another episode from the first *Svart på vitt* season was *Livet på Oringsjö skog* [*Life in Oringsjö Forest*] (1984), which was based on a photo of twenty-four lumberjacks crammed into a wooden cabin. During the summer of 1984 there was an article in a Hälsingland newspaper about lumberjack life in the wintry forests in the early part of the century. The article made its way to Olle Häger, who had a summer cottage in Hälsingland and whose grandparents had lived in the forestlands.⁶³ It is possible that it was then that Häger started thinking of a *Svart på vitt* programme about lumberjack life; or perhaps he had already found the fine photo but was further inspired to make the programme. Starting with the photograph but knowing little about its origin, Häger contacted a number of people who lived in the area where the photo was taken. With their help, he determined that the photo was taken in 1909 in a little cabin in the Oringsjö forest. After an initial telephone conversation, one of the elderly informants answered a sheet with twenty-three questions about life in the lumberjack cabin. Häger posed several precise questions such as what was in the sacks and cans in the picture? From which shopkeeper did the lumberjacks buy food?⁶⁴ At an archive in the area, he obtained the logging company's lists of workers and other information about the lumber trade in Oringsjö forest in 1909.⁶⁵ Thus, both an archive and witness testimonies were used in the search for information. The programme, made from two photographs (ph1 and ph2), can be divided into seven parts:

- A. I: Still over photo (ph1). S: Short description, the sources are mentioned.
- B. I: Close-up shots (ph1). S: Names of individuals.
- C. I: Still over photo (ph2). S: Broader presentation of the logging business of Strömnäs.
- D. I: Close-ups (ph1). S: The food, drinks, and cooking habits of the lumberjacks in the cabin.
- E. I: Zoom out to full photo (ph1). S: The horses and the work transporting logs down-stream.
- F. I: Pan over faces, left to right (ph1). S: Evening activities; card-playing, music, clothes drying.
- G. I: Still close-up to the right (ph1). S: Song about life in the forests while the programme ends.

⁶³ DA. T21, F2, 1, 24, Örjan Jonsson, "Livet i skogen, före motorsågen," 1984.07.10; interview with Häger, 2003.06.03.

⁶⁴ DA. T21, F2, 1, 24, Skogskojan, note suggesting letters being sent 20 July and phone calls 27 July; question sheet letter from Häger to Kalle [Johansson], undated (probably August 1984). While I write of lumberjacks, the programme talks of various kinds of work and makes a point that lumberjacks were hired by those who transported the logs away from the forest.

⁶⁵ DA. T21, F2, 1, 24, letter from Jan R. Åsberg to Häger, 1984.08.24 (plus other materials).

Formally, the programme is more complicated than the previous one; there are stills, close-ups, zoom and pan movements, and while most of the programme is made from one photo there is a second photo used as well (C). The narrator starts by anchoring the scene in time and place and giving a brief description: “A winter evening seventy-five years ago. Twenty-four men in a cabin in Oringsjö forest in Ångermanland.” With time and place established, the narrator moves to the simulated discovery of the identities of those in the photo. He says that the cabin is now gone but that those who were children when it existed think that they recognise some of the lumberjacks (A). The camera becomes the eyes of a spectator and wanders over the faces, while the narrator shifts to direct speech, thus pretending to be a witness (B): “Him with the moustache. That must be Per Löwengren, the lumberjack foreman [stubbknekt] who became administrator in Näsåker for Strömnäs. [...] And isn’t that Nicke Sundström from Björnbäck?” The last identification is accompanied by a quick turn of the camera, which thus works as the witness’s eyes.⁶⁶ One peculiar detail in the above identification is that one man is called a lumberjack foreman or “stubbknekt” in Swedish. The Swedish word has a very specialised meaning⁶⁷ and is virtually unknown to modern Swedes. It does not explain as much as it signals that the narrator has mastered the story that he is telling, and thus emphasises his authority. While not necessary, it convinces the spectator to trust the programme as a whole.

Most of the programme is devoted to the lives of the lumberjacks. When the scene is initially set, there is a brief factual account of the logging business during the winter of 1909 (C, illustrated by an outdoor photograph). Interestingly, the narrator refers to source materials, which adds to his authority. Then he returns to the men in the cabin, talking of their food, drinks, and cooking habits (D), their work (E) and evening activities in the cabin (F). There is a close relationship between words and image where the camera follows the commentary of the narrator to the corners of the cabin (D). When the narrator speaks of the nine coffee-pots, the camera zooms in on the fireplace, and with comments about the sacks and tins with food the camera finds them. But the narrator also offers creative readings of the milieu, for example suggesting, “surely, there is some bottle of snaps [brännvin] put away so the camera won’t find it” (D).

The narrator leaves the cabin twice during the programme. The first time is when he talks of the lumber company that organises the logging, which is illustrated with an outdoor photo (C). The unspoken assumption is that the photo illustrates the site in Oringsjö forest. The second time the narrator speaks of horses and the transport of timber (E), but the camera remains with the men in the cabin. The narrator suggests that “if you listen, you can hear the

⁶⁶ The technique of letting witnesses identify people in the picture occurs in several episodes, for example *Svart på vitt: När positivhalaren kom till byn* (1985) where the narrator plays out a dialogue with an old informant.

⁶⁷ *Ordbok över svenska språket (SAOB)*, vol. 31, S 13127.



Figure 26. Lumberjacks in the cabin in Oringsjö forest. The camera pans over faces and pauses on details such as the coffee-pots. *Courtesy of SCA's photographic archive.*

horses move on the creaky, split logs of the stable-floor.” Although we do not see the horses, the excursion is tied to the work of the men and thus the comment emphasises the connection between the men and work.

The programme ends with an account of evening activities and includes the playing of accordion and the fiddle (G). The narrator stresses that a wooden cabin at Alnö Mere means “no romance at all” and adds that nostalgia would later enter. Then the camera lands on two men who play the fiddle and the accordion. An old romantic song follows on the soundtrack and confirms the narrator’s words about nostalgia. It also creates a contrast or dramatic effect because the main message of the programme is that it was a hard life in the forest during the winter. The final image of the men with instruments together with music heard on the soundtrack anchor the programme inside the cabin.

In the autumn of 1983, Häger began preparing a *Svart på vitt* programme about Swedish Communists who were interned during World War II.⁶⁸ It was during the Finnish-Soviet war of 1939–40 that the Swedish military was wor-

⁶⁸ Related subjects were dealt with in two other *Svart på vitt* episodes: *Desertörerna i Pajala* (1985) and *När Flamman brann* (1992).

ried that Communists in the northern-most part of the country would side with the Soviet Union. Thus, it decided to confine several hundred Communists in isolated detention camps. This piece of history remained relatively unknown, although it was the subject of two articles in the newspaper *Aftonbladet* in 1980. The articles were illustrated by two photographs that would form the visual basis for the *Svart på vitt* episode *De 12 i Storsien* [*The twelve in Storsien*] (1985).⁶⁹ One of the photos showed twelve men at the camp of Storsien. Häger contacted writer Gunnar Kieri, whose father had been detained in the camp, and received an informative letter with names, dates, and stories about some of the men in the picture.⁷⁰ One of those who Kieri mentioned was Helmer Persson, who was still alive. Häger wrote a letter to Persson and posed a number of questions about the photograph:

Who are [the men] in the picture? Why did they get there. Did they do military service before? What were their professions? How active were they as Communists? How did they [the military] know that they were Communists? Which buildings are in the picture? More exactly when could the picture have been taken? Who took it? Could the photographer have more pictures, perhaps even of better quality. What kind of camera did he use? Afterwards, what happened to the twelve [men] in the picture?⁷¹

The letter illustrates well what kind of questions Häger and Villius would pose to their informants. They tried to find as much information about the photos as possible, such as the names of people and the function of buildings, and what happened after the photo was taken. In this case Häger received a letter that answered several of the questions, for example pointing out that a building in the background was a bakehouse.⁷² A letter from one of the other detained men told how he was brought to the camp and mentioned a colonel who, with his hand on a gun, shouted that they would never get away alive.⁷³ Among the production notes there are phone numbers for approximately fifty people, mostly living in northern Sweden. There is also the phone number of historian Karl Molin who had written a book about how the Swedish armed forces handled Communists during the war.⁷⁴ Thus, it is clear that Häger contacted a large number of people who had knowledge of the detention camps. The resulting programme rested on the photo of the twelve men (ph1), and made brief use of a second photo (ph2):

⁶⁹ DA. T21, F2, 1, 30, articles by Ronnie Olsson in *Aftonbladet* 1980.10.08 and 1980.10.09. The detention camps were not completely forgotten; many Swedes learned about them in Olsson, Jan Olof [Jolo], 1974.

⁷⁰ DA. T21, F2, 1, 30, letter from Gunnar Kieri to Häger, 1983.11.05.

⁷¹ DA. T21, F2, 1, 30, letter from Häger to Helmer Persson, undated.

⁷² DA. T21, F2, 1, nr 2–24, 30, letter from Helmer Persson to Häger, undated (perhaps late 1983).

⁷³ DA. T21, F2, 1, nr 2–24, 30, letter from Sten Sture Henriksson [to Häger], 1984.01. Henriksson calls Storsien a “concentration camp.”

⁷⁴ DA. T21, F2, 1, nr 2–24, 30, notepapers; Molin, Karl, 1982.



Figure 27. The twelve internees at Storsien. The narrator names several of the men and informs us that the one in fur, Helmer Persson (in front of the tall man), was to become a member of parliament, while the man second from the lower left corner, Conny Enbuske, was a veteran of the Spanish Civil War. *Courtesy of Gunnar Kieri.*

- A. I: Still of the full photo (ph1). S: Historical context; interned Communists during WWII.
- B. I: Camera tilts and pans through the photo (ph1). S: Narrator presents a few of the men.
- C. I: Still of photo (ph2) that shows a man with jute cloth sacks around his feet. S: The men's work.
- D. I: Still of photo (ph1). S: The fear of the internees; the arrangement was against the law.

The camera work is rather simple; first the camera is still for two minutes (A), then it zooms and tilts, stopping at three places in the picture (B), then the camera cuts to the still of a second photo (C) and finally it cuts back to the original still (D). The first transition between the two photos is smoothed in that the same man is featured both before and after the cut. The main photo is slightly re-framed around the twelve men, which makes them come more definitely to the fore.

The narrator opens (A) by describing what is in the photo: "Twelve men in uniform on a blurred photograph from the war years [beredskapsåren]." There is snow in the picture and the sound of wind on the soundtrack creates atmosphere and helps to anchor the story in cold winter. The narrator continues, it is

the cold winter of 1940, “somewhere in Sweden” [någonstans i Sverige]⁷⁵ and then says it is “not anywhere” but Storsien, “thirteen kilometres south of the Vitvattnet station” in the north. With the time and place established he talks of the men who are “isolated, disarmed and degraded” because they are internees at a detention camp. The narrator comments briefly on the war between Finland and the Soviet Union and reads actual quotes from two newspapers, one Communist and one Social Democratic, that offer contrasting views about the Communists and the war. All of this information is added to the still picture, with the narrator connecting directly to it a few times by saying “the twelve [men].”

Next, the camera moves three times (B); first it zooms in on a man in the bottom of the picture, then it tilts to a group of three men in the upper right corner, and finally it moves to the two men in the lower left corner. The narrator names the six men and comments on their civilian crafts.⁷⁶ This presentation is important because it humanises the men who previously were just “Communists.” The narrator presents four of the men as workers and small farmers, identifies one as a former volunteer in the Spanish Civil War and one as a future member of the Swedish parliament. The information about the latter men is interesting. They had not been either a civil war volunteer or a parliament member during the war. They must have had other jobs. Reflexively, however, most Swedish spectators would deem a veteran from the Spanish Civil War and a member of parliament as worthy of respect. By adding this information, the narrator has strengthened the audience’s empathy for the men in the picture.

The photo of the twelve men enables us to see a number of internees, but it is blurred and relatively empty of other objects that could serve as openings for story-elements. Probably this is why a second photo was used (C). The second photo was also taken outdoors and features the veteran Enbuske from the Spanish Civil War, who was the last figure that the camera showed in the first picture. The narrator points out that Enbuske wears jute sacks around his feet against the cold and he also suggests that the internee has fastened the axe to the chopping-block somewhere in the background of the picture. Both these details help anchor the narrator’s message that it is cold and that the internees had to struggle to stay warm.

In the last segment of the programme (D) the camera returns to the photo of the twelve men and the narrator offers both a psychological and a historical interpretation of their situation. First, he says that the men “will never forget” the months in the camp. Their fear is transmitted in the suggestive words that their camp commander “likes to walk around with his hand on the holster,”

⁷⁵ The formulation was part of a wartime song about soldiers who were stationed at secret camps, and it was also the name of a television series in the 1970s that dealt with that subject. See Chapter 4.

⁷⁶ Häger knew more names of people in the picture but chose to identify only six. The reason was probably aesthetic. DA. T21, F2, 1, 30, note on photocopy of picture.

implying that death could come any day. The narrator further takes the internee perspective by gliding into indirect speech: “And what happens if the war comes?” Finally, he becomes the all-knowing narrator and ends the programme by saying that it is against the law, but “This is how harsh it is in Sweden in the cold winter of 1940. This is how harsh it is to the twelve political prisoners in Otto Persson’s bake-house in Storsien.” These sentences are interesting in several respects. Their effect is rhetorically secured by repetition; both sentences begin “This is how harsh it is [...]” The exact information in the last sentence, that it is the bake-house of Otto Persson, like the quotations from contemporary newspapers suggests that the author/narrator is especially knowledgeable about the subject. The talk of the “harsh” and “cold” winter is literal but also works as a metaphor because it was an uncomfortable climate politically. Most striking is the expression “political prisoners.” The expression is not used until the last sentence of the programme. Then it reveals the full meaning of what has been told, there were political prisoners in Sweden. Possibly, that insight would arouse moral indignation in the audience.

In dramatic terms, the programme increases in intensity toward the end, when the narrator tells of the internees’ fear for their lives and ends with the loaded expression, “political prisoners.” What is rather striking is that the narrator anchors the words to the photo only minimally and then mainly by mentioning “the twelve.” The second photo, which is seen only for a few seconds, is used more actively. Here, the story is added to the image. It appears that Häger was caught by the historical drama rather than by the photo itself. The dramatic potential was there, but could not easily be seen in the picture itself. In this case Häger allowed himself to stray relatively far from the actual image of the photo.

One of the 1988 episodes was *Under Nådan på Glimmingehus* [*Under Her Ladyship at Glimmingehus*]. Glimmingehus is a famous castle in the south of Sweden and the programme was about the estate and its people in the early years of the twentieth century. Villius made the programme, of which there are no extant production materials, saying that information came from a man in Skåne who often helped him with programmes.⁷⁷ Thrice in the programme the narrator calls on the authority of Nils Olsson, who is a boy in the group picture and who “will remember” the names of almost everyone still “seventy years” after it was taken. Because the photo was taken in 1917, it is clear that Villius or his informant in Skåne spoke to Olsson in 1987 or 1988. At the end of the programme, the informant’s name appears in the credits. Pictorially the programme is made from two photos, a group photo showing sixty-nine people (ph1) and a photo of a woman (ph2). The programme is segmented as follow:

⁷⁷ The manuscript is at DA. T21, F2, 6, 21. Villius was helped by Lars Jarlsbo; interview with Villius, 2003.06.02.

- A. I: Still of picture (ph1). S: Description of place and motif, presentation of photographer.
- B. I: Camera tilts and pans through the photo (ph1). S: Narrator names several of the people.
- C. I: Still picture and then zoom in (ph2). S: Presentation of the female owner.
- D. I: Camera wanders through the photo (ph1). S: Narrator tells of work and life at the estate.

The programme rests on the photo of sixty-nine people, which is shown first as a full still (A) and then is explored through camera movements (B, D); for a brief moment the camera cuts to explore a photo of the owner of the estate (C). The narrator begins by giving the time, the situation, and the place of the photo. "It is one evening in July 1917, it is half past six and work at the estate is over for today [...] Glimmingehus." Next, the narrator reveals whose eye arranged the scene: "Emma Nordahl from Löderup photo studio has arrived in a Model-T Ford, dressed in a leather suit and a leather hat [...]." Although we are not allowed to see her, we are told what she wore and what vehicle she drove and thus viewers are offered an image to create in their own minds.

In the second segment of the programme (B) the camera wanders around the photo and the narrator names a few of the people. He begins by pointing out Nils Olsson and explains that he is the source of information. He continues throughout the programme to refer to Olsson's memories, as when the camera finds the farm foreman and the narrator observes that he was "a fair and honest man, remembers Nils Olsson." Thus, to a degree the programme becomes Nils Olsson's reminiscence. Another aspect of this wandering through the photo is that the narrator explains the female photographer's part in carefully composing the picture and points out her efforts to make the scene look more natural. The camera stops twice to let the narrator show how people carry objects or offer snuff to a neighbour. Thus, the narrator problematises the constructed character of the picture. He ends the tour of the photo by noticing the manager's child, whose presence is used to reveal that the more prestigious on the estate are not pictured.

The camera cuts to a picture of the female owner of the estate, a lady known as "Her Ladyship" (C). After a brief description of the photo, which anchors the lady in the estate of Glimmingehus, the camera zooms in and the narrator says that the courts had ruled her incapable of handling her own affairs, "But she can rule still. Nils Olsson well remembers [...] how Her Ladyship gave him a box on the ear [...]." Thus, the peaceful image of the lady is contrasted with words that make her seem disagreeable. The experiences of Nils Olsson, who is not visible in the photo, perform a metaphorical function when we hear that he received a box on the ear by the owner. The anecdote serves both a cognitive and a political moral function in that it demonstrates the hierarchical system at the estate. Since we already had met Olsson, and because he was only a boy at the time, we identify with him rather than with the abusive owner. The polarity



Figure 28. The workers at Glimmingehus. The young boy Nils Olsson is seated sixth from the bottom right. The narrator points out details that indicate ways the photographer arranged the picture. *Photo: Emma Nordahl.*

between the owner and Olsson is further emphasised by aesthetic means, the owner is alone – isolated – in her photo, while Nils Olsson sits in the midst of the large group of working people.

The programme ends with the camera wandering through the group photo and the narrator discusses working conditions at Glimmingehus (D). He relates Nils Olsson's long working hours and small salary – as the camera passes over Olsson. The narrator emphasises the hierarchical situation in Glimmingehus, remarking that while the workers do not earn much, most have no choice other than to stay at the estate.

Taken together, there are several interesting things about the programme. First, an individual is used as an opening to the world of the group, just as in the case of the girl Engla Maria at the leper hospital. Second, the narrator's emphasis on the role of the photographer indicates an interest in the constructed character of the photo. Third, through the use of *Her Ladyship*, Villius hints at potential class conflict. A fourth detail fixes this glimpse at the Glimmingehus estate in 1917. While this could be coincidental, the very name of Glimmingehus might make the audience think of traditional society and hierarchies. The year 1917 functions symbolically for it marked the onset of the Bolshevik revolution in Russia and a turbulent year in an ongoing world war. There is no hint of the outside world in the programme, but the connotations of "1917" – twice mentioned – are so strong that it is certainly possible that

Villius strove subtly to establish the contrast between the rapidly-changing outside world and the slow, immutable estate in the south Swedish countryside. Finally, the account is anchored by details in the photo, but Olsson's remembrances are added as is the information on Her Ladyship.

Under Nädan på Glimmingehus was broadcast on December 10, 1988 and a few days later a condemning letter was sent to the Radio Board. A member of the Rosencrantz family and a descendant of Her Ladyship at Glimmingehus wrote that the programme was a great shock, because it slandered his grandmother. The person responsible for the programme, he concluded, should not be allowed to do such work in the future.⁷⁸ Yet, while negative, the portrait of Her Ladyship was factual, and Villius's employer Ingvar Bengtsson, head of SVT1, defended the programme. In a statement to the Radio Board, he wrote that the information about Her Ladyship was important to understanding completely working conditions at Glimmingehus. He also emphasised that the programme was not a personal account but considered her only in her role as the ruler of the estate.⁷⁹ The programme was absolved of the charge.

As is evident from the above episodes, Häger and Villius worked hard on the preparation of a *Svart på vitt* programme. Häger has related how he once read in a peasant's diary from 1903 that an American millionaire was travelling north through Sweden, planning to be the first to cross the Arctic Circle by car. Certain that there would be a photo of the Arctic Circle-crossing, he began to track the car through the northern newspapers. After two years, he located the photo in Ohio and was able to make the programme.⁸⁰ While they often worked hard to research the photos they used, or occasionally tried to find a photo for a certain story, intensive effort was not always necessary. Once the series became popular, many people wrote and suggested subjects for new programmes. It happened that people sent photographs and did the needed research. Furthermore, historian colleagues or friends sometimes gave them help with local cases.⁸¹ In those instances Häger and Villius saved much in production time and could concentrate on writing narration and thinking about how the camera should move across the picture.

They drew meaning from the photographs because they revealed social, economic and political realities. Photographs have been attacked for fragmentising historical reality, and failing to expose social injustice and the entrenched

⁷⁸ GR. E2, vol. 448, TV 431/88-I. Letter from Hans Henrik Rosencrantz to Ansvarsnämnden.

⁷⁹ GR. E2, vol. 448, TV 431/88-I. Letter from Ingvar Bengtsson to Radionämnden.

⁸⁰ *Med 16 hästar till polcirkeln* (1988); Fahlin, Lars, 1988. Häger also told about the car in *Sommar*, SR P1 2000.07.29. Cf. Mannberg, Gittan, 1986.

⁸¹ Some historians are identified in the credits of various episodes. Britt-Marie Lundbäck, who worked at the military record office, is named for research on several episodes about the armed forces. Emigration expert Ulf Beijbom helped with the episode about gold-digger Lucky Swede, *En misslyckad inmutning* (1984). Preparing the episode *För evigt adjö tecknar Carolina* (1985) Häger talked with and also read an article of Marja Taussi Sjöberg who was researching divorce in northern Sweden in the 1800s; DA. T21, F2, 2, A; Interview with Häger, 2003.06.03. Note that Villius wrote a review of Sjöberg's book a few years later and referred the case of Carolina Fränberg; Villius, Hans, 1988.

power structures,⁸² but the criticism ignores the fact that photographs are often displayed in a context, as part of a story or as illustration of a written text. *Svart på vitt* proves that when anchored by another text, the photograph has the potential to say things about the real world. Through the camera work, Häger and Villius tried to cull attitudes and actions from the photographs, using them as starting points for thick descriptions of the past. *Svart på vitt* imparted a new appreciation to many spectators of still photographs, proving that they could be used to tell a story. Häger and Villius also encouraged people to write down information on the backs of photographs so that in the future, their stories could be told.⁸³

As a rule, Häger and Villius treated photographs as visual transcriptions of reality, or in other words, as proof that the event depicted did take place. By contrast, some scholars insist that photographs must be recognised as cultural artefacts, because conventions or aesthetic ideals as well as the technical limitations of the camera influence how photographers compose their pictures.⁸⁴ Alan Trachtenberg has written about photographers during the American Civil War who carefully arranged scenes for their photographs, even moving corpses or making living soldiers play dead to get the images that they wanted.⁸⁵ Thus, photographs are part of an iconographic tradition based upon symbols and rhetorical devices. In part, they also reveal the prejudices of the photographer's culture.⁸⁶ Häger and Villius problematised the situation of photography, as in the Glimmingehus episode. In a *Svart på vitt* episode about an organ grinder who visits a little village, the narrator notes how the photographer let the children stand in two groups around the organ. That episode even includes two photos of the photographer,⁸⁷ and there is another episode where the narrator reveals what next happened to the invisible photographer.⁸⁸ Thus, while they did not perform rhetorical analyses of the photographs, Häger and Villius did manifest an interest in the photographers. When they found out who the photographer was, identification was conveyed by the narrator or in the credits list at the end of the programme.

In sum, aesthetic considerations were very important in the *Svart på vitt* programmes. Häger and Villius chose the subjects for programmes on the basis of what pictures were available and the stories that they told were closely anchored to the photos. The five-minute format created additional aesthetic limitations. But as I have shown, the filmmakers carefully prepared the programmes and situated the stories in a historical context, thus indicating cogni-

⁸² Benjamin, Walter, 1969.

⁸³ Kalfjäll, Birgitta, 1990; Häger, Olle, 1993a, p. 66; Häger, Olle, 1995, p. 5.

⁸⁴ Tagg, John, 1988; Snickars, Pelle, 2001, p. 21.

⁸⁵ Trachtenberg, Alan, 1989.

⁸⁶ Tagg, John, 1988, p. 4.

⁸⁷ *När positivhalaren kom till byn* (1985); Villius made this episode. In another episode, *Hjonen på sal 26* (1985), the narrator likewise points out that the photographer arranged the people in the picture.

⁸⁸ *Med 16 hästar till polcirkeln* (1988).

tive considerations. In some cases, such as the Glimmingehus episode, there was an evident political-moral touch to the programmes, which indicates that moral considerations played a part in the programme's making.

4. Re-enacting the murder of King Gustav III

In late February 1986, Sweden's Prime Minister Olof Palme was murdered. While the murder still sent shock waves through Sweden, SVT broadcast *Sammansvärjningen* [*The Conspiracy*], a three-part drama-documentary by Häger and Villius about the 1792 murder of King Gustav III. The broadcast had been long planned but the closeness to the Palme murder led to heightened publicity. The film was different from Häger and Villius's other work. In formal terms *Sammansvärjningen* was a kind of costume drama and professional actors played all major roles; Häger and Villius called it a "dramatised television documentary,"⁸⁹ which could be translated drama-documentary. It was not the first time that they dramatised history. Häger and Torell made two historical dramatic films in the 1970s, one of them *Isgraven* that I treated previously, and the other, the Sandarne film, which re-enacted a historical court trial in realist fashion but also documentary-like, including archival footage and voice-over narration. But *Sammansvärjningen* was something new. For the first time, Häger and Villius attempted a realist re-enactment of a well-known historical event, where the actors must imitate as closely as possible the famous original characters.

As I discussed in Chapter 3, there is a difference between a drama-documentary and a dramatisation "based" on a true story. While the latter freely draws inspiration from real events, drama-documentaries try to replace the missing, authentic images with quasi-indexical images. The drama-documentary insists on its validity by mirroring reality. The argument is accomplished by analogy with the people, places, and action of the film strongly resembling the actual referents. The 1970s and 80s are considered the golden age of drama-documentary, the time when the ring of authenticity was loud and distinct. *Sammansvärjningen* (1986) should be seen in this context, as a careful re-enactment of historical events. It is also an example of how Häger and Villius explored the boundaries between documentary and drama, between fact and fiction.

Villius, in discussing the murder of King Gustav III, said that it was the perfect historical event to dramatise.⁹⁰ If we were to theorise the statement, he probably meant that this piece of the past perfected the dramatic unities of space, time and action. In terms of space, the events took place in localities that

⁸⁹ Häger, Olle and Hans Villius, 1986, p. 5.

⁹⁰ Villius says that the dramatic moment gives the filmmaker a "plus-handicap;" interview with Villius, 2003.06.02. He also said that no murder in world history has a greater loading than this one, quoted in Vogel, Viveka, 1985.

were close to each other, mostly in central Stockholm. In terms of time, the central events took place within hours of one another. Finally, in terms of story there was a clear line of action – first a conspiracy, then a murder at the masquerade ball, and finally a murder investigation. There was a limited group of characters involved (the king, the murderer, and the conspirators), and thanks to the police investigation much was known about their whereabouts. In addition to the dramatic unities, the marvellous costumes of the late eighteenth century added colour to the setting. Thus, from an aesthetic point of view it was a wonderful visual event. From a cognitive point of view, research had mapped the event but it was not dramatised previously on Swedish television. From a moral point of view, the murder of the king actualised the ideological question, “Is it is moral to kill a tyrant?”⁹¹ The story was set in a time of extreme social tension where a number of young noblemen, spurred by Enlightenment ideas and angered by the king’s politics, hoped that the murder would lead to a new political order.

Preparations for the film began as early as 1982, when Häger and Villius first presented the idea to their superiors at SVT. Probably they had already produced a rough draft for the film. In the summer of 1982 Häger contacted an historian of law to learn the legal framework around a particular execution that would be the subject of the first scene.⁹² The proposed mini-series was more expensive than a regular documentary and so was delayed for some years. Per hour, drama costs were about ten times as much as a documentary;⁹³ therefore SVT could not afford a failed production. But Häger and Villius raised support for the project and in 1984 began working intensely on the film. As always, they busied themselves in the research, gathering literature about King Gustav III. The key work was an unfinished dissertation about the murder and the conspiracy, which (after the death of the author) was published by Häger and Villius’s friend Sven A. Nilsson.⁹⁴ It is likely that they were aware of the book already in the early 1960s, and possibly they read it already then. It can be noted also that their colleague at the SVT archive, Gardar Sahlberg, wrote a popular version of the dissertation.⁹⁵ Further, they used primary sources –

⁹¹ DA. T21, F1, 43, Bakom Sammansvärjningen, S, En spännande [...]. Cf. Mellbourn, Anders, 1986. It can be added that the era of Gustav III was popular in Swedish television drama, see for example *Maclean* (1993) and *Gustaf III:s äktenskap* (2001); the latter film won the fiction category award at Prix Europa in Berlin, 2000. On *Maclean*, see Gustafsson, Annika, 1993; Kaldo, Malin, 1993.

⁹² DA. N55, B1, 1, 1986, TV2 dialog, no. 3, p. 5[–6], Marianne B: “Inför Sammansvärjningen”; DA. T21, F1, 43, Bakom [...], A, letter from Kjell Å. Modéer to Häger, 1982.07.02. Cf. DA. T21, F1, 42, Sammansvärjningen, Guns inledande [probably March 1986].

⁹³ In this case, the three-part dramatic series cost around nine million kronor, while an accompanying one-hour documentary cost a little more than 300.000 kronor. DA. N55, B1, 1, 1986, TV2 dialog, no. 3, p. 6; DA. T21, F1, 42, Gustavianskt, 26, Produktionsbeskrivning, 1985.07.16.

⁹⁴ Larson, Anders, 1959. The book was used in a course at Uppsala in the early 1960s. Cf. Häger, Olle & Hans Villius, 1986, p. 99.

⁹⁵ In the foreword, Sahlberg says that his book is a popularised version of Larson’s work. Sahlberg, Gardar, 1969, p. 5. Cf. Häger, Olle & Hans Villius, 1986, p. 99.



Figure 29. Sammansvärjningen. Cameraman Jan-Hugo Norman and assistant Martha Dahlborg shooting on location at Drottningholm in severe cold. Photo: Lars Wiklund. Courtesy of SVT/Bild.

among them, the testimony given by the murderer Anckarström.⁹⁶ Villius also talked to historian Erik Lönnroth, who was completing a book on Gustav III.⁹⁷

Scriptwriting was done successively. After Häger and Villius wrote the first synopsis they enrolled in a drama course where they learned a dramatic formula, from which they rewrote the synopsis. The film was made in three parts, which told (1) the story of the conspiracy, (2) the murder at the masquerade ball, and (3) the police investigations that rounded up the conspirators. The script was balanced between known facts and re-enactment needs. Dialogue was invented⁹⁸ and two characters among the conspirators were merged into one. The latter is a notable example of aesthetic considerations at work; the presence of the two von Engeström brothers could have confused the audience, and so they were merged. The sentimentality of the late eighteenth century was abandoned because Häger and Villius thought that it would seem unnatural to the modern audience and hinder understanding.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ Type-written copies of testimonies from the police investigation are in DA. T21, F1, 43, Bakom sammansvärjningen.

⁹⁷ Lönnroth confirmed the contact in a letter to [Jacob] Demitz, 1986.04.05; GR. E2, vol. 415, SB 241/87 (TV 245/86), *Innan skottet föll*, p. 115.

⁹⁸ Dialogues in Gardar Sahlberg's book may have inspired some of the dialogue in the film.

⁹⁹ DA. T21, F1, 42, *Sammansvärjningen, Guns inledande* [probably notes for press meeting, March 1986]; DA. T21, F1, 43, *Bakom Sammansvärjningen, S, Vad vi valt bort*.

There is evidence that the producers strove for authentic looks. For example, much filming was performed during the wintry nights when the original events took place. In fact, they were extremely fortunate because the winter of 1985 brought both snow and terrible cold, just as had the winter of 1792. To a large degree, the filming was done in authentic milieus such as the royal palace in Stockholm and the Haga Park just north of the city, where the king spent much of his time. The actor playing the king was chosen with care; Thomas Hellberg was the same age as the king at the time of the murder, and with the help of make-up he even resembled the king.¹⁰⁰ The appearances of other historic people were less widely known, nevertheless actors were chosen that had a general physical likeness to those people. In the case of the old conspirator Pechlin and police commissioner Lillienparre, a comparison with contemporary paintings indicate that the filmmakers worked hard with costume, wigs, and make-up to insure the actors resembled the historic models.¹⁰¹

Shooting was done during the late winter and spring of 1985. In comparison with most of Häger and Villius's productions, *Sammansvärjningen* was a huge project. Historic milieus had to be reconstructed, and about sixty actors plus between five hundred and six hundred extras played in the film.¹⁰² A notable detail is that both Häger and Villius cast themselves in small roles. Villius plays the officer who is executed in the opening scene, while Häger has a less prominent role as a jailer. The film was directed not by Häger, who had handled only minor re-enactments before, but by director Per Sjöstrand. This is an important point, because it means that both actors and director came between the producers and the text. Thus Häger and Villius lost some control. If the producers wanted to intervene on the set to correct or to insist on particular matters, they were not formally in charge of the filming.¹⁰³ The film was edited during the autumn. Sound recordist Gunnar Nilsson recalls that he worked hard to include water dropping into the soundscape in a scene where the murderer Anckarström was in jail. The sound was needed to create an atmosphere of misery, but because it was not effective aesthetically to reuse an old recording, Nilsson had to add each drop separately to the soundtrack.¹⁰⁴ Finally, after about two years of work, the film was broadcast in March 1986, at the same time that the historic events had taken place.

At the same time of the shooting and editing of *Sammansvärjningen*, Häger and Villius made a documentary about the society where the murder took

¹⁰⁰ Thanks to the king's death-mask it is possible to know his exact features at the time of his death.

¹⁰¹ Paintings are reproduced in Sahlberg, Gardar, 1969, and Häger, Olle and Hans Villius, 1986.

¹⁰² DA. T21, F1, 42, *Sammansvärjningen*, Hushagen, Susanne, 1985, "Konspirationen mot Gustav III blir ny svensk TV-serie," from *Radio & TV-Time* [probably end of February].

¹⁰³ In an interview in 1986 Häger and Villius say that while they did not take part in the shooting, they closely co-operated with the director. If there was trouble during shooting the director would phone and they would re-write the problematic scenes. DA. N55, B1, 1, 1986, TV2 dialog, no. 3, p. 5[-6], Marianne B: "Inför *Sammansvärjningen*."

¹⁰⁴ Interview with Gunnar Nilsson, 2002.12.05.

place, and also published a book with original documents along with the story of the murder.¹⁰⁵ The documentary was broadcast the week before the series began. The relationship between the documentary and the drama-documentary was similar to that of *Ett satans år* and *Isgraven*, or the 1990 drama-documentary and documentary about Raoul Wallenberg. In the following I will discuss the three-hour *Sammansvärjningen*, which was segmented as follow:

- A. Sequences 1–6. Presentation of actors; Anckarström, Gustav III and the conspirators.
- B. Sequences 7–11. Gustav III becomes aware of the conspiracy.
- C. Sequences 12–16. Conspiracy makes its first attempt.
- D. Sequences 17–26. Conspiracy, the second attempt.
- E. Sequences 27–46. Conspiracy, the third attempt.
- F. Sequences 47–53. The masquerade ball; the king receives a warning letter and is then shot.
- G. Sequences 54–68. Police commissioner Lilliensparre begins to track down the conspirators.
- H. Sequences 69–80. The success of Lilliensparre.
- I. Sequences 81–92. Handling the situation; Gustav III dies, Anckarström is executed, and the conspirators are banished.

Sammansvärjningen is a thoroughly narrative film, which makes it different from Häger and Villius's documentaries which usually mix narrative with analytic and descriptive elements. The structure of the film follows a time chronology. Except for the prologue (A, seq. 1), which is set two years before the other action, the bulk of the film takes place in the late winter of 1792. After the presentation of the central actors (A) there are a number of attempts to assassinate the king (C, D) until Anckarström finally shoots him at the masquerade ball (F). While the king still lives, police commissioner Lilliensparre tracks down the conspirators (G, H). After the death of the king and the execution of Anckarström, the conspirators are banished (I).

The film is a conscious aesthetic construct, which is demonstrated in the parallel opening and closing scenes, which depict executions. Within the film, several narrative devices are used to heighten tension. One is the frequent juxtaposition of sequences, where the king's and the conspirators' whereabouts are displayed on screen at the same time. One example is when the king and two of the conspirators leave their respective locations. Then, the film makes several cuts between the king and the conspirators giving the audience the feeling that they might incidentally meet – which they do (B). A gradual increase in tension is accomplished through the failed attempts to assassinate the king (D, E). The increasing tension is demonstrated by the nervousness of the conspirators prior to the third and final attempt, as when the murderer Anckarström cuts his

¹⁰⁵ Häger, Olle and Hans Villius, 1986.



Figure 30. King meets turncoat. Lieutenant-colonel Lilliehorn (Tomas Bolme) kisses the hand of Gustav III (Thomas Hellberg) in a very early *Sammansvärjningen* scene. Later Lilliehorn both helps in the conspiracy and betrays it by a letter warning the king. Photo: Lars Wiklund. Courtesy of SVT/Bild.

finger on his knife before going to the masquerade (E, seq. 34). Several times the camera focuses on a clock, which functions as a metaphoric reminder that the time of the murder is approaching. Once the film arrives at the masquerade, the peripeteia is delayed – and the anxiety among the conspirators is prolonged – by the king’s dinner and also when the king receives a warning letter. The tension is finally heightened by the king’s comment “I know what I will do” and the remark by one of the conspirators “he won’t come” (F).

Other aesthetic devices include, shooting in varied tempo, lighting, and the occasional addition of music. In the early part of the film, as in the end, there are rather long shots and sequences. By contrast, during the climax before the assassination attempts (D, E) the tempo is much quicker. After the murder, when the police begin the search for the conspirators (G), sequences are extremely short and full of rough, shouting people, which combine to create a sense of high speed. Thus, tempo is an effective dramatic device. Regarding



Figure 31. The king on horseback. King Gustav III sits symbolically on horseback above police commissioner Lilliensparre, soon to be on the track of a king's murderer. *Photo: Lars Wiklund. Courtesy of SVT/Bild.*

lighting, most of the film is set during winter with short days and long dark nights. The secrecy of the conspiracy is accentuated by men surrounded by darkness with only a few flickering candles (E, seq. 30). Although infrequent, music helps to create a mood. For example, when the king learns that there will be a masquerade, in spite of severely cold temperatures, he begins to dance with one of his male officials – and light music adds to the playfulness of the scene (E, seq. 38). The limited use of music is perhaps a sign of the intellectual ambitions of the drama-documentary. Most surprising from an aesthetic point of view is the inclusion of a number of the conspirators' rather lengthy ideological discussions (A, I). These discussions require much intellectual concentration from the audience and thus break narrative conventions. But the discussions also function morally and aesthetically as a contrast to King Gustav III, who is portrayed as autocratic, and never reflecting intellectually about the distribution of power in society. When Gustav III first appears in the film, a man asks him to free a prisoner. He is indifferent, which suggests the amorality of his authority (A).

The film contains a broad gallery of characters that either are part of the king's circle or grouped with the conspirators. The leading characters are Gustav III, the conspirator, Count Ribbing, and the murderer Anckarström.¹⁰⁶ The king is presented as a complex figure, constantly acting, and often hysterical, but also determined to stay in power. His worst enemy is the young and passionate Count Ribbing, who insists that the king must die (A). When the king visits a fortune-teller, he is told that he should be aware of a man dressed in red – who is Ribbing (B). The red coat symbolises Ribbing's passion, which is accentuated by his speech and actions. Ribbing's intensity is obvious from his first entrance. He is seen aggressively fencing, and later, using a pistol. Further, his passion is apparent when he is the only character in the film to have a love affair. The conflict between Ribbing and the king is emphasised by sequences alternating between the two men. For example, they incidentally meet just after Ribbing had announced his conviction that the king must die. Consequently, the king had just learned to be aware of a dangerous man in red (B). The adversarial relationship between the king and Ribbing is also apparent before the second assassination attempt, when the camera crosscuts between them. First we see the king in the theatre, followed by Ribbing arriving at his mistress's home, then back to the king in a scene that implies homosexual lust, ending with Ribbing making love to his mistress (D, seq. 19–22). Music accompanies Ribbing's arrival to his mistress, but ends as the king's meeting with a young man is interrupted by people intruding into the room.

If there is a moral hero in the film it is the murderer Anckarström. He appears in the first scene, where he witnesses the execution of a revolting officer, and he is executed in the parallel scene at the end of the film. Whenever he is asked how he could kill the king, he refers to that first execution and says that it was unlawful – and the king was responsible. While the film portrays Anckarström as a rough and violent man (several times he fights rats in his house), he is kind to his daughter, making sure she has his money before he is arrested (G). In jail he refuses to tell the names of his accomplices, even after he is severely lashed, he continues to claim the righteousness of his action (H, I). Among Häger's notes prepared for his meeting with the press, he has written that Anckarström was the natural hero of the film.¹⁰⁷ Interestingly, Häger has the small role as the jailer who guards Anckarström. The jailer does not say or do much, but he does not treat Anckarström badly.

The film follows the records in detail. The red coat that Ribbing wore and his meeting with the king can be found in the original sources.¹⁰⁸ The frequent comments about and the appearance of spies are additional details that are known of that time. Dialogue had to be created, but much commentary imitates the records closely. This is the case with Anckarström, many of whose

¹⁰⁶ The actors were Thomas Hellberg, Stefan Sauk and Allan Svensson.

¹⁰⁷ DA. T21, F1, 42, Sammansvärjningen, Guns inledande. Cf. Sandström, Bosse, 1986, who writes that Häger "cannot hide his sympathy for Anckarström."

¹⁰⁸ Larson, Anders, 1959, p. 131.



Figure 32. The assassin on way to his execution. Anckarström (Allan Svensson) faces the axe. *Photo: Lillemor Mårtensson. Courtesy of SVT/Bild.*

comments are quotations from his confessions, which were written in a colloquial manner suggesting that the words closely followed Anckarström's.¹⁰⁹ One interesting detail is that a detail shot magnifies the nails of one of Anckarström's pistols and we learn that that is what hit the king. Because it is unnecessary, this is the kind of detail that helps create a reality effect. Of course, the filmmakers must have done their research to be able to portray that detail.

While the 1792 murder was surely dramatic, and had it all “from the beginning,” it is important to examine the naturalness of the dramatic unities. In what ways did Häger and Villius create them? Regarding the time frame, the story takes place over a short period. The discontent with the king had grown for years, but the long rise of the opposition groups is only suggested in the opening sequence, which serves to give Anckarström a motive for the murder. The film suggests that the conspirators contacted Anckarström relatively late, whereas sources indicate that he was involved for a long time. The film does not discuss the political effects of the murder, but concludes by relating something

¹⁰⁹ In DA. T21, F1, 42, Gustavianskt, 23, is an article about Anckarström's confessions.

about the fate of the main characters. Thus, the unity of time was a simplification of past events. Within the given time frame the Riksdag of 1792, which took place shortly before the masquerade ball, is missing. The Riksdag met not in Stockholm but in Gävle, and gathered both the oppositional nobility and the peasants who were loyal to the king. Anckarström was present, along with Ribbing and many other conspirators. Scholars have suggested that tensions at the Riksdag were very strong. By not including the Riksdag, Häger and Villius managed to keep the unity of space, and also simplified action.¹¹⁰

In the case of the characters, the film contains a more limited number of people than were truly involved. This is part of filmmaking logic. A few central persons were chosen who the audience would recognise. To a large degree, the characters are simplified. Ribbing is portrayed as the passionate, aggressive type, Horn is the hesitant man, Pechlin is the intellectual leader, and so on. Another striking feature of the film is the small number of women; the wives of the conspirators are all absent. Anckarström's daughter appears several times in the film, with him as the caring father, but his wife and other children are never seen. Apart from Ribbing's mistress there are few women in the film.¹¹¹ This is not to say that more women should have been featured in the conspiracy. Rather, it shows that the focus of the scriptwriters was on the conspiracy itself, and that the private lives of the characters were kept to a minimum. The unity of action dictated that only scenes relevant to the main story were included. Anckarström's daughter and Ribbing's mistress are featured because they help to create an impression of the men's characters.

In sum, *Sammansvärjningen* was the result of conscious aesthetic considerations. Several examples show that the filmmakers simplified the history of the murder of Gustav III. In some ways the efforts to hold the film together, which I have treated in terms of the dramatic unities of time, space and action, led them to simplify the past. One important political event (the Riksdag in Gävle) that took place during the time period in question was not dealt with in the film, and there are examples of actors who were dropped or merged into one. The editing, with the juxtaposition of scenes and the varying of tempo, dramatise the past. Cognitive considerations played a part, as is evident from the careful preparations that included talking to researchers as well as seeking primary sources. They are also apparent in the intellectual scenes that break against aesthetic conventions. Moral considerations were important in the choice of subject and for a perspective that conveyed respect for the murderer Anckarström. Nevertheless, it appears that aesthetic considerations were of the most significance in this production.

The reviewers were very positive about the series. In particular, many review-

¹¹⁰ In the film it is mentioned that hundreds of people were involved in the conspiracy. Had the Riksdag been included in the film it would have been necessary to include many of these other conspirators.

¹¹¹ One exception is Pechlin's housekeeper, who is present at the conspirators' dinners and also at the masquerade ball when the king was shot. However, she is not a major character.



Figure 33. The king has been shot. Gustav III (Thomas Hellberg) is carried off by soldiers after the fatal event at the masquerade ball. Not everyone liked the portrait of the king. *Photo: Pelle Nordwall. Courtesy of SVT/Bild.*

ers hailed the actor Thomas Hellberg who played King Gustav III, calling him “brilliant,” and “genial.” On the other hand, some reviewers did not like Hellberg’s Gustav III. They thought that his limping walk, which was based on historical sources, made the king laughable. Further, they complained that his famous charm was not apparent. Some criticism was directed at Häger and

Villius because the dialogues did not sound natural and were too dramatic or intellectual. As a whole, however, the reviews were positive – one critic even claimed that the mini-series was one of the best dramatic works to appear on Swedish television in years.¹¹² In 1987, *Sammansvärjningen* won the award for the best historical reconstruction at the Teleconfronto festival in Italy.¹¹³

The series received some serious criticism. Historian Sten Carlsson argued that the film's King Gustav III was not credible. He pointed out that the historic Gustav III was an eloquent speaker, and thought the televised fool was not an accurate image. Furthermore, he complained that the film did not say enough about the motives of the conspirators and about conditions in society.¹¹⁴ Both director Per Sjöstrand and scriptwriters Häger and Villius responded to Carlsson's critique. Sjöstrand said that the idea was to create a multi-faceted portrait of the king, and he emphasised that the film took place during the last few weeks of the king's life, at a point when he was under tremendous stress and had failed as king.¹¹⁵ Häger and Villius wrote that the documentary broadcast prior to the dramatic series was thought to provide the societal conditions that Carlsson demanded. In addition, they argued rather firmly that in *Sammansvärjningen* demands of the genre forced them to simplify: "We gave a short account of the course of events and emphasised certain features in the different people."¹¹⁶

It is interesting that Häger and Villius used genre as an excuse to escape the demands of the historical discipline, because that indicates the belief that form gives a license to simplify history. Elsewhere, Villius stated that when choosing between absolute truth and dramaturgy, dramaturgy will always win.¹¹⁷ Or in other words, the priority was aesthetic considerations. But it does not mean that Häger and Villius thought the genre-driving mixture of fact and fiction was not important. Unlike the historian-scriptwriters, director Sjöstrand spoke of *Sammansvärjningen* as a "feature film" [spelfilm]. He also hailed Häger and Villius for some of the invented dialogue, even stating that "Shakespeare would have envied them."¹¹⁸ From this it appears that Sjöstrand's frame of reference was drama rather than history. Years later, both Häger and Villius claimed that they had lost control when they left the project to the director. In fact, the king

¹¹² GR. E2, vol. 415, SB 241/87 (TV 245/86), p. 101 f., article by Hanserik Hjertén.

¹¹³ DA. T21, F1, 43, *Sammansvärjningen*, Pris till TV2Teatern, 1987.06.02.

¹¹⁴ Carlsson, Sten, 1986. Interestingly, Carlsson writes that he had suggested to Villius to make a series about the murder of Gustav III. Carlsson's criticism against the portrayal of the king should be seen in the light of his overall view of Gustav III. Häger and Villius based their King on Erik Lönnroth's portrait; Lönnroth's book was published 1986. In 1952, Carlsson wrote in a letter that if Lönnroth published his ideas about Gustav III he should "scrutinise that reassessment critically." KB. L69, 217, letter from Sten Carlsson to Nils Ahnlund, 1952.05.29.

¹¹⁵ Sjöstrand quoted in Sörenson, Elisabeth, 1986.

¹¹⁶ DA. T21, F1, 42, *Sammansvärjningen*, Rolf [...], undated. Häger and Villius's response was sent to Rolf Fällström, editor at *Svenska Dagbladet* where Carlsson's criticism was published. However, I have not found that their response was published.

¹¹⁷ DA. N55, B1, 1, 1986, TV2 dialog, no. 3, p. 6.

¹¹⁸ Sjöstrand quoted in Sörenson, Elisabeth, 1986.

they visualised was not projected. Instead of “dangerous,” as intended, they thought that the king appeared ridiculous.¹¹⁹ Even though Häger and Villius defended the production at the time, it is possible that they were disappointed in the interpretation made by Hellberg and perhaps by some other actors.

The most sensational reaction *Sammansvärjningen* received was a 177 page critique to the Radio Board about the three-part film and documentary. It included close readings of the programmes with comments on many of the scenes.¹²⁰ The complaint was that Gustav III was represented as much less attractive than he actually was, and that by contrast the conspirators were falsely portrayed as honest people. For support, the group submitting the report included the results of a questionnaire that had been completed by 70 people, about their perception of King Gustav III as he was represented in the programmes. Among the questions were, was the king represented as a “dirty old man” [snuskhummer], a tyrant, a homosexual, pouting his lips in a ridiculous way, treating his subjects with “harshness,” “mercilessness,” or “impoliteness?” Further, some historians were contacted to give their view on Gustav III. Finally, members of the group had phoned a number of people, among them Olle Häger, and reviewers at various newspapers. In the report, these phone calls were also related; Häger had been verbally attacked with the suggestion that he should have the experience of being depicted as a homosexual king, and a reviewer who insisted that she thought the film “brilliant” likewise was criticised. Copies were distributed to a large number of important people, among them the current king, the prime minister, editors-in-chief at various newspapers and some historians.¹²¹

To conclude, the report is quite astonishing. While *Sammansvärjningen* was absolved of all charges,¹²² the report reveals the strong feelings that portrayals of the past could awake in Sweden. To a degree, it was the moral interpretation that provoked the critics, that the film was not sufficiently royalist. But the aesthetics also caused criticism. The portrait of the king was realistic when it accentuated his theatricality, which is known and was not unnatural in the eighteenth century. But if that was realism, it was too realistic for those who desired Gustav III to be another kind of man. Because filmic conventions had

¹¹⁹ Interview with Villius, 2003.06.02; Häger at seminar, 2002.04.04. Author’s notes. In 1985, Häger called Gustav III “complex” and “a dangerous son of a bitch” [farlig djävel]; quoted in Vogel, Viveka, 1985.

¹²⁰ While some remarks are reasonable complaints, other seem doubtful. At one stage in the documentary we see a painting of the king. The camera zooms out and comes to include many other people and also a nude male statue. The report’s charge against this scene is that the king in the painting is gazing toward the statue’s genitals, which is interpreted as an advanced allusion to the king’s alleged homosexuality. GR. E2, vol. 415, SB 241/87 (TV 245/86), p. 36, see P2 and A2ff. I find this an unreasonable reading of the scene.

¹²¹ GR. E2, vol. 415, SB 241/87 (TV 245/86), pp. 109, 119 f., 177. The charge was signed Arbetsgruppen i Historiska Frågor and the names Jacob Demitz, Stefan Ridderstedt, Jan Skoglund and Kjell Ringius.

¹²² GR. E2, vol. 415, SB 241/87 (TV 245/86), verdict 1987.06.05, the report was received 1986.09.09.

established anachronistic behaviours as normal, when *Sammansvärjningen* attempted to portray the king non-anachronistically the audience had difficulties.¹²³ In a way, the aesthetic representation turned out to be provocative.

5. Meta-reflections integrated: Staging the Midsummer crisis of 1941

In September 1985, with *Sammansvärjningen* well under way, Häger and Villius proposed to make a new drama-documentary. This time the subject was the Midsummer crisis of 1941, caused by the attack of Nazi Germany on Soviet Russia. Within hours of the attack, the Swedish government was approached by a German envoy who delivered certain demands, most importantly that an armed division of German soldiers be allowed to pass on railroads through Sweden, en route from Norway to Finland. Sweden was officially neutral during the Second World War but followed a pragmatic course as a means to stay out of the war. Accordingly, after intense negotiations, the Swedish government decided to meet the German demand, deviating from the neutrality line. The incident is well known among Swedish historians and is called the Midsummer crisis.¹²⁴ As Häger and Villius wrote in the proposal:

Much has been written about the actions of the political leadership during the critical Midsummer of 1941. This is because there are a number of diaries and memoirs that shine light on the decision-making process. But the subject remains extraordinarily interesting from a source-critical perspective. In particular it is a splendid subject for a historical drama-documentary. Especially now, when the question of Sweden's neutrality is again a focus.

We believe that, with relatively simple means, we could make a mainly dramatised account of the Midsummer crisis, a programme where the problems are emotionally anchored, and where the historical inquiry itself shall be the backbone of the representation.¹²⁵

Thus, they presented several arguments for the project. First, there is the cognitive argument that they thought it interesting from a source-critical perspective. Second, there is the aesthetic argument that the subject was “splendid for a historical drama-documentary,” which is another way of saying that the subject was held together by the dramatic unities of time, space, and action. Third,

¹²³ Cf. Burke, Peter, 2001, p. 161, who suggests that anachronisms can be (1) necessary, (2) deliberate, or the result of (3) carelessness or of a (4) failure to realise how things have changed.

¹²⁴ Among the writings about the Midsummer crisis are a number of articles in *Historisk tidskrift* in 1971, 1973 and 1974. Johansson, Alf W., 1985, also dealt with the event. Several teachers in source-criticism used the Midsummer crisis as an exercise; one version is Nilsson, Torbjörn, 1996. Another deviation from the neutrality line, which was mentioned in *Hundra svenska år: Vi och världen* (1999), was the Swedish export of iron ore to Germany. Pekkala, Leo, 1999, pp. 188 f., 207, writes that the latter deviation has been frequently mentioned in English history textbooks.

¹²⁵ DA. T21, F1, 46, Fyra dagar, flap 25, Programförslag, 1985.09.26.

and a moral argument, Sweden's neutrality was under debate and therefore the subject had immediate importance. Fourth, when saying that the film could be produced with "simple means" they suggested that it was affordable. The latter was probably an important argument because *Sammansvärjningen* was such a costly production, and perhaps Häger and Villius felt that it would be difficult to raise support for another expensive project. What argument they found most important is unknown. But it is interesting that they mentioned Sweden's neutrality; there was a series of articles about neutrality published in *Svenska Dagbladet* in the autumn of 1984 and there would be another series published in *Dagens Nyheter* in 1986.¹²⁶ To deal with a current subject indicates receptivity on the part of the producers, and that they were aware of the public's interests. It may also be interpreted as a consequence of the public educational principles executed in 1968.

Häger and Villius were well prepared for a programme about the Midsummer crisis. In the 1970s Villius had a part-time job at the Department of History at Stockholm University, where many scholars were involved in a large research project about Sweden during the Second World War.¹²⁷ No later than 1976, they created an educational game about the Midsummer crisis.¹²⁸ Because the crisis was debated in *Historisk tidskrift* in the early 70s, it is certain that Villius and probably also Häger were well aware of the event. It can be noted also that in 1984 Villius wrote a review of a book about Operation Barbarossa (the German attack on the Soviet Union) where he discussed German-Swedish contacts prior to the attack. In the spring of 1985 he reviewed a book by Swedish historian Alf W. Johansson that concerned the foreign policy of the wartime government, and in the review Villius dealt with the Midsummer crisis.¹²⁹ It was only a few months later that Häger and Villius proposed to make a drama-documentary about the Midsummer crisis.

After they completed *Sammansvärjningen* and its accompanying documentary they then made a number of *Svart på vitt* episodes, plus another documentary, before beginning the investigation that would result in the new film that was titled *Fyra dagar som skakade Sverige* [*Four days that shook Sweden*]. In addition to Johansson's book, in 1985 there was a biography published about the wartime Prime Minister Per Albin Hansson.¹³⁰ Whether the books directly inspired the film or not, Häger and Villius certainly benefited from the insights of these and other publications. They contacted Johansson who wrote a memorandum about the Midsummer crisis.¹³¹ Possibly, beginning with this and the

¹²⁶ Häger and Villius collected articles from the debates in DA. T21, F1, 46, *Fyra dagar*, 15.

¹²⁷ The SUAV project, which resulted in more than twenty books, is the largest historical research project ever in Sweden.

¹²⁸ A copy is in DA. T21, F1, 45, *Midsommarkrisen: Litteratur, Källmaterial till utbildningsspelet* [...]. Cf. Nilsson, Göran B., 1971, p. 478, footnote no. 1.

¹²⁹ Villius, Hans, 1984; Villius, Hans, 1984a; Villius, Hans, 1985a.

¹³⁰ Johansson, Alf W., 1985; Isaksson, Anders, 1985. Hansson was Sweden's Prime Minister 1932–1946.

¹³¹ DA. T21, F1, 46, *Fyra dagar*, 16, *Ljus över Günther och Per Albin inför operation Barbarossa*.

articles from the early 1970s,¹³² Häger and Villius researched the primary sources. Among their production materials there are copies of diaries and memoirs of politicians telling their perspective of the Midsummer of 1941.¹³³ They also contacted people who had been involved in the Swedish secret service during the war, to find what they knew at the time of the German attack on the Soviet Union.¹³⁴ From this the producers reconstructed the event and wrote the script. In an article, Villius acknowledged the difficulties of telling exactly what had happened, and he also stated that because of the nature of the drama-documentary it was not possible to discuss differing interpretations, for dramaturgy forced them to choose the solution that was “the most well-founded and plausible.”¹³⁵ Nevertheless, as we shall see the film was made in a fashion that emphasised the uncertainty of the sources.

Häger directed the film and hence kept control of the production, which is marked by the ambitious attempt of achieving an authentic look. *Fyra dagar som skakade Sverige* was shot at the same time of year that the Midsummer events had taken place forty-six years earlier. Thus, the filmmakers tried to achieve the right lighting and vegetation; unfortunately they did not get the warm sunny weather of June 1941. To a large extent they used authentic milieus inside and around the royal palace and the government buildings in central Stockholm, and also in the suburb of Ålsten where the Prime Minister lived. Further, they tried to find actors who physically resembled the original ministers of government.¹³⁶ This was noted in the press, which particularly praised the actor Ernst-Hugo Järegård who resembled Prime Minister Per Albin Hansson so closely that Hansson’s old neighbours in Ålsten could swear that he had returned from the dead. Järegård said that he watched films and reviewed photos as well as read books in order to understand how to represent Hansson, his movements, and accent. The greatest trouble, said Järegård, was to get his lips right. Putting on the make-up, which included creating large eyebrows and a bald head, took three hours each day.¹³⁷ Actors were put under contract in the months before the shooting; two actors were replaced rather late.¹³⁸ Uniforms for German soldiers could not be found in Sweden but were hired from Nor-

¹³² Villius says that they closely followed an article by Göran B. Nilsson; interview with Villius, 2003.06.02. He also leaned on Nilsson in Villius, Hans, 1985a.

¹³³ DA. T21, F1, 45.

¹³⁴ DA. T21, F1, 46, *Fyra dagar*, 18, notes from talk with Sven Wäsström, 1986.10.01, and Carl-Axel Moberg, 1986.10.06.

¹³⁵ Villius, Hans, 1988a.

¹³⁶ Per Albin Hansson was played by Ernst-Hugo Järegård, Christian Günther by Sven Lindberg, Per Edvin Sköld by Carl Billquist, and Ernst Wigforss by Helge Skoog. Several of the actors were veterans from *Sammansvärjningen*; Allan Svensson (Anckarström) now appeared as K. G. Westman, Stefan Sauk (Ribbing) became a secret service man, and Tomas Bolme who was the military officer Lilliehorn now played an interviewer. The director of *Sammansvärjningen*, Per Sjöstrand, became Gösta Bagge.

¹³⁷ Sandström, Bosse, 1987; Nohrborg, Kaj, 1987; Nordenankar, Agneta, 1987.

¹³⁸ DA. T21, F1, 46, *Fyra dagar*, 3, letter from Häger to Göran Alm, 1987.04.03; 5, Medverkande. Ingvar Hirdvall was to play Wigforss, and Torsten Flinck was to play the conscript academic at FRA/Secret service.

way.¹³⁹ Other details from the production process include the filmmakers planning a scene where Villius and “the interviewer” (who is featured throughout the programme) would speak with Sverker Åström, the grand old man of Swedish foreign affairs,¹⁴⁰ but this was not accomplished. Further, leading Social Democratic politician Sten Andersson declined the offer to participate in the film.¹⁴¹ Editing was done during the autumn of 1987. Kjell Tunegård said that it was quite complicated because many extras did not behave naturally, and therefore were edited out of the film.¹⁴² For one scene, editing proved that complementary shooting was needed. The desired milieu was no longer available, but the producers got around this by slightly blurring the picture.¹⁴³ When the one-hour film was finished it was first shown to an audience of historians,¹⁴⁴ and then was broadcast by SVT in January of 1988. The film was well received and has been rebroadcast on a couple of occasions.¹⁴⁵ The film was structured as follows:

- A. Sequences 1–2. Boy watching German soldiers at railway station (1940s). Villius and actor Tomas Bolme at SVT discuss the reconstruction and Bolme’s mission to enter history as a reporter (1980s). Title.
- B. Sequences 3–5. Prime Minister Per Albin Hansson at home playing bridge, June 1941.
- C. Sequences 6–15. Outbreak of German-Soviet war. Sweden and government learn of the news.
- D. Sequences 16–21. German demands are presented. The king’s abdication threat is presented.
- E. Sequences 22–31. The important government discussions begin.
- F. Sequences 32–38. Wartime footage; German activities, Swedish secret service.
- G. Sequences 39–40. The conflict among the Social Democrats. The government decides to meet German demands.
- H. Sequences 41–44. The decision is presented to the public. Narrator’s summary. Boy at railway station.

Formally, the programme is made in the expository, observational, and reflexive modes. Most imagery consists of re-enactments of the events in Stockholm, which are complemented by archival footage, some of which shows German soldiers on the march. The re-enactment scenes are realistic, but although they are made mainly in the observational mode, recurrent remarks from the voice-

¹³⁹ DA. T21, F1, 46, *Fyra dagar*, 7, Produktionsbeskrivning, 1987.05.15.

¹⁴⁰ DA. T21, F1, 46, *Fyra dagar*, paper listing 55 sequences (the one with Åström is no. 50).

¹⁴¹ DA. T21, F1, 46, *Fyra dagar*, 4, letter from Lena Näslund to Häger & Villius, 1987.02.20.

¹⁴² Information from Kjell Tunegård, 1999.11.24.

¹⁴³ Interview with Olle Häger, 2002.11.25. The pictures in question show interviewer Tomas Bolme talking to Stefan Sauk’s secret service man.

¹⁴⁴ Appelgren, Bengt, 1988.

¹⁴⁵ Before the second re-cast in 1995, Kjell Tunegård re-edited the film and shortened it around nine minutes.

over narrator (expository mode) prevent the spectator from fully engaging with the story. The most remarkable distancing device in the film is the presence in the re-enacted world of a reporter from the spectators' world. He asks questions of the acting politicians and thus effectively breaks the illusion of past reality and reveals the constructed character of the film (reflexive mode). The reflexive level is itself framed by the pictures of a boy in a railway station who watches armed German soldiers (A, H), presumably the reporter as a boy.

Chronology is the structuring logic of the programme and the basic narrative follows the events on Midsummer 1941. We meet the Prime Minister at home, playing bridge with friends during the night between 21 and 22 June (B). Then follows the outbreak of the German-Soviet war the next morning (C), the presentation of German demands (D), the Swedish discussions (E) and finally on 25 June the government makes its decision (G). It can be noted that the *peripeteia* or moment of decision is delayed by the interspersing of a segment of wartime footage and commentary on the period (F).

The re-enacted scenes offer several examples of how the producers moulded the past to represent it on film. In terms of the dramatic unities, the story was set in central Stockholm and occurred over a few days. The story began much earlier than Midsummer, with research showing that there were contacts between German officials and the Swedish foreign and prime ministers during the spring. The producers, however, eliminated this circumstance. They concentrated action also by lessening the number of actors. In the government meetings only a few people are allowed to speak, although sources reveal that there were many Social Democrats as well as non-Socialist members of government who spoke and actively took part in the negotiations. By contrast, in the film only three Social Democrats, two non-Socialists, plus the apolitical minister of foreign affairs state their positions. For example, the oppositional Social Democrat Möller is silenced although the narrator quotes Hansson's response to Möller (G), and a couple of important non-Socialist politicians likewise are silenced.¹⁴⁶ The film instead focuses on the conflict between Prime Minister Hansson and his Social Democratic opponents Sköld and Wigforss. This is made clear not only at the meetings, but when the three men leave a party gathering and head for the meeting with the government, they walk quickly side by side (G) in an arrangement that underlines the power struggle between them. Because there were six Social Democrats in the government they all should be walking together, including the powerful Möller, but three are erased from the scene. In the following shot, when they enter the government meeting, there are more than three persons from the group.

While the programme closely follows the record in terms of what was said, there are several examples that show how aesthetic considerations made Häger and Villius modify the original settings. One example of this is the placing of members of government in the meetings. In order to be able to pan with the

¹⁴⁶ For example, the Liberal leader Gustaf Andersson i Rasjön.

camera from face to face, Häger and Villius made some of the ministers swap seats, which was “necessary so as to make the talks easier to depict on television.” According to Villius, the real table would have had the ministers “shouting to each other from a distance,”¹⁴⁷ but the physical arrangement was

uninteresting, it was the dialogue that was the important thing. To the television audience it was uninteresting how they actually sat [...] even if it was correct it hindered the filming. Even in drama-documentaries, the film prevails over reality sometimes. One must be able to ignore it to make it enjoyable. If you were rigid, the programmes would be more boring, more correct but more boring. [...] Here you weigh it, is it important or is it not important.¹⁴⁸

Asked how the government meeting scenes were arranged, Häger says that they could not film in the actual room and instead had to build a room for the scene, which detracted from the film’s authenticity from the start. He also points out that the table that they used was equipped with modern lights, which they hid under lots of books. How the actual table looked, he did not know.¹⁴⁹ Thus, it is clear that both the seating of the ministers and the actual milieu of the meeting room was consciously arranged and re-arranged to meet aesthetic demands.

Another example of a changed physical setting was in the re-enactment of a discussion that took place after a meeting with the advisory council on foreign affairs (E). Some members of the council disagreed strongly on the issue of what decision to take. According to the sources, they continued their discussion outside in the open, but when it is re-enacted in the programme it is set indoors just above the stairs.¹⁵⁰ Asked about the change in spatial setting, Häger declared that “we don’t give a damn about that. Totally. Such things don’t matter at all. I would say that you can never find such exactness anywhere in our productions, but if it is more effective that they stand on the stairs rather than out in the yard [...] I don’t care a bit about that. Or if they sit on a bench in the Kungsträdgården Park, or if they are in a boat out in the Värtan, that I don’t care about.”¹⁵¹ The picture that emerges from these comments is that Häger and Villius did not feel restricted by physical details, but instead were prepared to change the setting of a scene to create more effective milieus for communicating content.

The film provides a complex portrait of Prime Minister Per Albin Hansson. The story literally begins and ends in his home. First, we meet Hansson playing bridge with his friends, smoking and drinking, the night before the crisis

¹⁴⁷ Interview with Hans Villius, 2001.05.09.

¹⁴⁸ Interview with Villius, 2003.06.02. Villius takes a stance similar to that of Daniel Walkowitz, quoted in Abrash, Barbara and Janet Sternburg, 1983, p. 13, “I am less concerned with the authenticity of the details in a scene [...] than with the pattern of a set of social relationships that exists in a period of time.”

¹⁴⁹ Interview with Häger, 2003.06.03.

¹⁵⁰ DA. T21, F1, 45, *Fyra dagar* [...] underlag, 6, p. 31, Ivar Andersson quotation (underlined).

¹⁵¹ Interview with Häger, 2003.06.03.



Figure 34. Four days that shook Sweden. Prime Minister Per Albin Hansson (Ernst-Hugo Järegård) was the pragmatic politician who induced the government to permit armed German troops to pass through Sweden in June 1941. Standing about him are Per Edvin Sköld (Carl Billquist), who opposed the decision, Gösta Bagge (Per Sjöstrand), and Minister of Foreign Affairs Christian Günther (Sven Lindberg), who recommended that Sweden give in to the German demands. *Photo: Lars Wiklund. Courtesy of SVT/Bild.*

(B). A central point in the programme is that Hansson's pragmatic politics influenced the government's decision, and that he was hard and shrewd in his tactics pushing his own agenda. By the end of the programme we return to Hansson's home where he is reclining on his bed listening to the radio broadcast that announces the decision allowing the passage of German soldiers. The voice-over narrator summarises the Prime Minister's achievement the previous days as tough and undemocratic. But Hansson is not just portrayed as a tough politician, for we also see him in a most intimate way. We see him without bodyguards on his way to the tram, and having breakfast at a restaurant (C), scenes that function to portray the atmosphere of the times and help to contrast peaceful Sweden with the war-torn Europe.¹⁵² The scenes of his private life also meet television's demands for realism. Not only does Hansson appear

¹⁵² Häger calls it "irresistible" to depict Hansson in these scenes; interview with Häger, 2003.06.03.

playing cards and having a drink in the evening, but he is used for dramatic effect when the telephone wakes him on the morning that Germany attacked the Soviet Union (C). In another scene he secretly visits his mistress just before a meeting (E), which helps create a contrast in the programme between the tense political situation and everyday life, adding to the complexity of the portrait of the Prime Minister.

Other devices in the film help provide the sense of authenticity and presence in the past. The narrator frequently mentions the exact times of events, and also refers to sources, such as the diary of the Prime Minister. Several times we hear authentic German and Swedish radio broadcasts, which announce news or, in the case of Today's Poem (E), just add the flavour of the times. Other remains of the past include the popular Swedish song *En tapper liten krigare*, "A brave little soldier" (F), which adds atmosphere and also gives an ironic twist to the film, where the government perhaps did not act as a brave little soldier. Finally, the use of archival footage, complete with German speaker and music, adds to the sense of authenticity.

One of the most interesting aspects of the film is the means by which the producers perform the historical inquiry that they mentioned in the proposal. First, there is the usual voice-over narrator, who accompanies large parts of the film. At one point the narrator tells us that Hansson went to bed at two o'clock the night before the crisis began. He reveals that the information comes from Hansson's diary and continues: "[Prime Minister] Per Albin Hansson's diary is one of the sources that create the foundation for this film. But it was not only the Prime Minister who kept a diary. Many of the other participants did also. In addition, there are many other documents that shed light on the Midsummer crisis." (B) Later in the programme the narrator again mentions the "rich source materials" (E). Thus, the audience is informed of the basis of the programme. Interestingly, on a number of occasions he refers to a source but adds that we cannot know if it is truthful. For example, when Hansson wrote in his diary that discussion about the German trains went "without hard words" the narrator says that other sources disagree (E). Thus, he makes us aware of source-critical problems.

The second and most inventive device for performing the historical inquiry is that the producers plant a reporter or investigator in the midst of the action. The reporter's presence is explained in the first segment of the film where the well-known actor Thomas Bolme talks on screen with Hans Villius on the SVT premises (A). The conversation is about Bolme's role in the programme:

Bolme: You're saying 'enter history,' what do you mean by that?

Villius: Well, it's nothing strange at all, it's just a device to get at the agents. You shall be History or Future or whatever we should call you. You are to enter into any situation and ask questions to people in direct relation to the course of events.

Bolme: So the idea is to reconstruct these days around Midsummer 1941, with the help of actors.

Villius: Exactly.

The above conversation makes the genre agreement of the programme perfectly clear, signalling to the audience that what follows is not authentic film but a reconstruction. Next, Bolme and Villius enter a make-up room where they meet the actor who is to play the wartime minister of foreign affairs (the actual minister is seen in a photo in the picture) and who repeatedly utters the famous sentence “Sweden’s neutrality line is steady” (A). The scene with the actor in the make-up room adds to the reflexive atmosphere of the programme. The words that he utters are particularly noteworthy because the programme will refute the position that the neutrality line was steady.

Bolme enters the re-enactments and performs four informal interviews. First he meets with the minister of foreign affairs and his under-secretary of state, who give an account of the German demands. They argue that Sweden should meet German conditions (D).¹⁵³ Later he meets with the Prime Minister who comments on the negotiations and refuses to say what decision will be taken (E). Third, after the government decided to let the German soldiers through the country, Bolme talks with the minister of finance, Wigforss, who argued against the decision and who is morally upset (G). Thus, four key actors express their thoughts about the affair directly to Bolme. Bolme also meets with a government agent who explains how the Swedish secret service managed to decode German telegram messages and actually knew beforehand that the German attack on the Soviet Union would take place (F). Thus, Bolme appears in various scenes and asks questions for posterity of the central actors who are deliberate in their answers.

Bolme’s unconventional appearance breaks the illusion of past reality and reminds of the film’s constructed nature. The distancing effect is further emphasised by his distinctively modern clothes, which differ from those worn by other actors.¹⁵⁴ Finally, we should note the re-enacted scene that opens the programme, where a boy (who by implication is Bolme as a child) watches German soldiers in a train station. The scene functions as flashback. Also, it provides the crucial images of the foreign army in Sweden that is the outcome of the Midsummer negotiations.

In conclusion, aesthetic considerations greatly influenced the film. A major reason why it was made a drama-documentary was that the subject well fulfilled the dramatic unities. But as I have pointed out, they partly created unities, for example by silencing a few members of government. In addition, the filmmakers arranged several scenes in a way that made them easier to film, although this distanced them from the historical original. Cognitive considerations also played a part in the arrangement to make the film an investigation, with an investigating reporter and the narrator’s discussion of the validity of sources.

The film reviews indicate that the Swedes were enchanted, for the first time

¹⁵³ The interview is actually in two parts, where Bolme meets only the under-secretary of State in the second part.

¹⁵⁴ Villius says that perhaps Bolme should have worn other clothes in the film; interview with Villius, 2003.06.02.

seeing a lengthy television portrait of Per Albin Hansson.¹⁵⁵ The film made the Swedes aware of the Midsummer crisis, known to historians but less well known outside academia.¹⁵⁶ Among the critical voices was one that thought the reporter (Bolme) ruined the dramatic atmosphere, and another who complained of the lack of women in the programme.¹⁵⁷ The most critical response came from a political commentator who thought that the programme delivered a disrespectful portrait of Hansson. He criticised the interpretation of Hansson's political role, and also the intimate portrait of the Prime Minister drinking and playing cards, and meeting with his mistress, instead of seriously tending to the country's affairs.¹⁵⁸ Häger and Villius defended themselves by noting that all of this was in Hansson's diary.¹⁵⁹ One could argue that what the critic found provocative was the realism of the scenes. This reaction could be compared with those after *Sammansvärjningen*, when some royalists were provoked by the realistic portrait of King Gustav III. They did not relish television realism.

One unusual response to the film was that SVT1 head Ingvar Bengtsson wrote a letter of praise. He wrote that *Fyra dagar som skakade Sverige* was the best yet of Häger and Villius's programmes and he encouraged them to make more programmes that mixed documentary and dramatised scenes.¹⁶⁰

Looking back, Villius has related that his friend Sven A. Nilsson was highly critical of the programme. One of his objections regarded the placing of members of government in the meeting scenes. Nilsson did not accept Villius's aesthetic argument and thought the solution dishonest.¹⁶¹ Nilsson also criticised Häger and Villius for including some possibly tendentious words from the diary of the Minister of Justice K. G. Westman. Westman's diary is one of the most detailed sources of the crisis, but perhaps not completely trustworthy. Villius claims that he realised at the time that the words were tendentious, but chose to include them for dramaturgical reasons. However, he says in retrospect that it was a concession that he might regret because it was a content issue.¹⁶² Like Villius, Häger admits that it was complicated to use Westman but says that they tried to handle him cautiously.¹⁶³ A positive response from academic quarters came from the Danish historian Carsten Tage Nielsen who thought the film exemplary in its serious treatment of a complex historical episode.¹⁶⁴

¹⁵⁵ Admittedly, Gunnar Möllerstedt provided a portrait of Hansson in *Landsfadern* (SVT 1984).

¹⁵⁶ The film was later used for education purposes at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; interview with Häger, 2003.06.03.

¹⁵⁷ Moberg, Åsa, 1988; Kullenberg, Annette, 1988.

¹⁵⁸ Santesson, Olof, 1988.

¹⁵⁹ Häger and Villius quoted in Appelgren, Bengt, 1988.

¹⁶⁰ DA. T21, F1, 46, *Fyra dagar*, 25, letter from Ingvar Bengtsson to Olle [Häger], undated [January 1988].

¹⁶¹ Interview with Hans Villius, 2001.05.09.

¹⁶² Interview with Villius, 2003.06.02.

¹⁶³ Interview with Häger, 2003.06.03.

¹⁶⁴ Nielsen, Carsten Tage, 1993, p. 106–108.

6. Tragic romance: The last boat to Jurkalne

At the end of the cold war, formerly closed archives opened and former members of secret services began to talk. These circumstances led historians to new investigations. Historical documentarists also took advantage of the new openness, not least with regard to histories that concerned the Soviet Union.¹⁶⁵ Häger and Villius sensed the possibilities and made a number of programmes about Sweden's secret past. Around 1970, they made several programmes about spies and secret affairs,¹⁶⁶ and in the late 1980s and early 90s, when the Iron Curtain fell down, they returned to the field. They made four programmes about Raoul Wallenberg, the diplomat who disappeared in the Soviet prison system; a film about spy and refugee traffic between Sweden and Latvia during the 1940s; a programme about Soviet history; and four programmes about Swedish secret service operations. Häger made the last ones after Villius retired.¹⁶⁷

In the following section I will look closely at *Sista båten till Jurkalne* [*Last Boat to Jurkalne*] (1991), which dealt both with Swedish secret service operations¹⁶⁸ and Latvian refugees coming to Sweden at the end of the Second World War. The link between the two topics was that the secret service and certain Latvian refugee groups co-operated to operate "lifeline" boats that went secretly between the Swedish isle of Gotland and the Latvian coast in the 1940s. While Häger and Villius had dealt with spies and secret services before, they had not worked with the Baltic States. However, they were well aware of aspects of the refugee traffic. First, although they were both young in 1945 it is possible that they remembered the 1945 events when Sweden handed over German and Baltic deserters to the Soviet Union. Furthermore, in the 1960s and 70s there was first a famous documentary novel and then a film that dealt with that matter.¹⁶⁹ Thus, there can be no doubt that Häger and Villius were acquainted with the subject.

The opening up of the Soviet Union was a general stimulus for making the programme, but more directly a woman at SR in Gotland conceived the idea to

¹⁶⁵ The most monumental series is CNN's *The Cold War* (1998): Beichman, Arnold, 2000; Downing, Taylor, 1998; Lowinsky, Benjamin D., 1999. One formally interesting film about the Gulag is Tõmas Gislason's *Maximum Penalty* (2001).

¹⁶⁶ At least one of the programmes, *Folkhemmets hemligfolk* (1974), treaded on people's toes. See Häger, Olle and Hans Villius, 1974.

¹⁶⁷ *Igår röd* (1991); *Spionen som kom hem till kylan* (1993); *Spionjägaren* (1994); *G som i hemlig* (1994); *Operation Stella Polaris* (1995). Sometimes the interviewees were hesitant about making the programme; cf. DA. T21, F1, 60, Jag ser underbara ting, 21, fax from Villius to Häger, 1993.01.04. One episode in *Svart på vitt* can be noted, *En katt bland hermelinerna* (1988) which showed a photo where known spy Stig Wennerström could be seen standing behind the king and crown prince at an airforce show. In *Igår röd*, about Soviet history, Häger and Villius reused parts of programmes that they made in 1967 and 1970.

¹⁶⁸ Historian Peter Englund wrote the script for *Ramona* (SVT 2003), which dealt with Swedish secret service operations in the Baltic areas of the Soviet Union.

¹⁶⁹ The novel by P. O. Enquist. About the film *Baltutlämningen*, see Mörner, Cecilia, 2000, pp. 219–227.

interview a former district police superintendent who had helped refugees during the war. In 1988 she suggested that Häger and Villius make a programme about the man's tale. Because they were busy working on two other programmes, the Baltic refugee story had to wait until 1990, but fearing that the old man might fall ill or die they took a few days off to do a thorough interview.¹⁷⁰ Häger and Villius were approached by other people who wanted them to co-operate on a film about Estonian refugees to Sweden during the war, but they decided against it.¹⁷¹ Instead they chose to work with a Latvian woman, Valentine Lasmane, who fled to Sweden at the end of the war and wrote a book about the flight. In June 1989 they spoke about the possibilities of making a programme, and during the spring of 1990 the producers had additional contacts with Lasmane.¹⁷² In addition, they interviewed several other people who had been involved in refugee and spy activities.¹⁷³ Häger and Villius also had contacts with historians, Karlis Kangaris and Heléne Lööw, who had done research on related issues.¹⁷⁴ But in essence they went to the primary sources themselves, guided by the witnesses' testimony. In particular, they read the report from the Sandler commission. The commission was established in 1944 and performed an official investigation into refugee issues and secret service operations.¹⁷⁵ Häger made lists of people who had been involved while Villius tried to find out what was the role of the Swedish church in conveying money to refugees from the Baltic States.¹⁷⁶

Among the research findings was information that the entire crew of a boat that crossed to Latvia in the autumn of 1945 was captured by the Soviets. While most of the crew was sent to the Gulag, a young man named Edvards Andersons disappeared from the records. Häger interviewed people who met Andersons in Sweden, including his sister and his former girlfriend. In production notes Häger wrote that Andersons's sister "cried [...] and asked me to find out what happened to him."¹⁷⁷

In mid-May, Häger wrote a five-page memorandum about the planned programme. Perhaps the memorandum was written for Villius who was getting older and was less active in the production process. According to the memoran-

¹⁷⁰ DA. T21, F1, 58, Sista båten [...] 2505, 21, correspondence between Clary Winberg-Hammerin and Häger & Villius, 1988; letter from Villius to [Berthil] Bonde, 1988.10.03; Sista båten [...] 2505, 25, Produktionsbeskrivning, 1988.10.10.

¹⁷¹ DA. T21, F1, 58, Sista båten [...] 2505, 29, various correspondence in 1989.

¹⁷² DA. T21, F1, 58, Sista båten [...] 91, 43, Valentine Lasmane 1989.06.09; April 1990; 1990.05.10.

¹⁷³ DA. T21, F1, 58, Sista båten [...] 91, 53, interview transcripts.

¹⁷⁴ DA. T21, F1, 58, Sista båten [...] 2505, 15, notes from talk with Lööw 1990.04.18; essay "from Heléne Lööw;" notes from talk with Kangaris 1989.09.27; cf. letter from historian Britt-Marie [Lundbäck] to Häger, 1990.02.16, which shows that Lundbäck also helped with the programme.

¹⁷⁵ DA. T21, F1, 58, Sista båten [...] 2505, 4, loan forms from Riksarkivet, 1990.04.20.

¹⁷⁶ DA. T21, F1, 58, Sista båten [...] 2505, 3, lists of names; Sista båten [...] 8.3.91, 3, letter from Villius to bishop Kastlund, 1990.08.31.

¹⁷⁷ DA. T21, F1, 58, Sista båten [...] 91, 45, De första båtflyktningarna, p. 5, [mid-May 1990]; Sista båten [...] 8.3.91, 13, Janis Lukins [notes], 1990.05.29.

dum, initial efforts were focused on discerning what had happened [around the lifeline traffic]. Häger noted that many people who had information were being secretive. Further, he wrote that he had not yet thought much about the form of the programme, and that he was uncertain if there should be reconstructed scenes. One suggestion was to concentrate on Valentine Lasmane's story. Another was that Edvards Andersons, the man who had disappeared, should be the main character. Filming was to be completed in June and in the autumn, but exactly when depended on cameraman Jan-Hugo Norman's schedule. Both summer and a "nasty" autumn was needed for the programme.¹⁷⁸

During the summer Häger, his wife, and a small crew (not counting Villius) went to Latvia with Valentine Lasmane. The concept for the filming, that of the witness (Lasmane) returning, would be used more thoroughly in the Benny Grünfeld film a few years later. They went to some of the resistance sites on the Latvian coast, and guided by Lasmane they met with old resistance members and filmed.¹⁷⁹ Häger's production notes indicate that several of the old Latvian people were uncertain about how much they dared reveal.¹⁸⁰ Clearly, the old people feared that it might be dangerous to speak of their wartime activities. After the trip to Latvia, the formal decision was made to move forward with the project.¹⁸¹ One man who was located and interviewed in Latvia had been with Andersons when they were caught by the Soviets. Research was now directed onto the circumstances of the journeys from Gotland. In a letter to one of the surviving Latvian lifeline leaders in Sweden, Häger asked for help obtaining detailed information about the number of journeys made and the number of refugees brought to Sweden from Latvia. He also asked permission to film private photos that showed boats and members of the resistance. Further, Häger said that a large part of the programme would deal with Edvards Andersons and asked for specific information about the trip on which Andersons disappeared.¹⁸²

Aesthetic conventions demanded that the Andersons story be told through pictures. Because there were very few photos of him and none showing him on a boat, re-enactments were needed. Costs were kept low because only two actors were hired, to play Andersons and his Swedish girlfriend.¹⁸³ Extras for a flight scene were picked among the inhabitants of Fårö Island on the northern

¹⁷⁸ DA. T21, F1, 58, Sista båten [...] 91, 45, De första båtflyktingarna, p. 5, [mid-May 1990].

¹⁷⁹ DA. T21, F1, 58, Sista båten [...] 8.3.91, 26, Inbjudan till förhandsvisning, undated [around 1 March 1991]. Only days before the trip it was uncertain if the crew would receive permission to visit certain of the sites. DA. T21, F1, 58, Sista båten [...] 2505, 24, fax from Andris Trautmanis to Margareta Malmberg, 1990.06.07.

¹⁸⁰ DA. T21, F1, 58, Sista båten [...] 91, 53, Filmning i Lettland juni 1990. Very likely, the trip inspired Chapters 15–17 in Häger's novel about the refugee traffic; Häger, Olle, 1993.

¹⁸¹ DA. T21, F1, 58, Sista båten [...] 8.3.91, 22, Produktionsbeskrivning 1990.09.20 [decision 1990.09.27]. Note that the decision was taken several months after preparations began and two years after the first interview was conducted.

¹⁸² DA. T21, F1, 58, Sista båten [...] 8.3.91, 13, letter from Häger to Leonid Silins, 1990.09.05.

¹⁸³ Ulrika Hansson and Christer Olsson. Christer Olsson acted also the Beurling part in *G som i hemlig* (1994).

tip of Gotland, some of whom were used as extras in summer resident Ingmar Bergman's films.¹⁸⁴ Interviews for the film were made in carefully arranged milieus. Laimons Petersons and Peteris Jansons, who went on the boats to Latvia, were interviewed by the sea. Andersons's girlfriend Gun Tvärne, who worked in a restaurant at the time when they met, was interviewed in that same restaurant. There are notes suggesting that a woman named Inga should be interviewed "where the clothes line milieu can be recognised;" the interview does not feature in the film but there is a re-enacted scene where Andersons speaks to a woman by a clothes line. It is clear that the re-enactment originally was planned to match the interview. For filming one day a note asks, "could rain be arranged?"¹⁸⁵ The rain was needed for a re-enactment scene where Andersons and his girlfriend escaped into a bathing-hut. There is no such scene in the film, which might indicate that no rain came and therefore the scene had been cut.

Häger was anxious to find out what happened to Andersons. For aesthetic reasons it was important to bring the story to closure, one that answered the audience's questions. But it is also possible that Häger felt a moral need to find out what had happened, because it seems that his meeting with Andersons's sister touched him. In a letter of late November 1990, he wrote that he need to know the fate of Andersons before Christmas in order to include it in the programme, which was scheduled for broadcast early the following year.¹⁸⁶ Archival footage from the war years, including Riga in ruins, was acquired from Latvian television. One of the employees there finally got the information that Häger wanted from the KGB. Sources revealed that Andersons had been executed.¹⁸⁷ When the information arrived, the programme had been finished but not yet broadcast, so a written note on Andersons's fate was included as a closing line in the programme.

As Kjell Tunegård was busy on other projects, someone else edited the film.¹⁸⁸ Hans Arnbom composed special theme music for the programme. Additional musical pieces were chosen to convey the flavour of the times, for example the traditional Russian "Soldatskij Perepljas," a Swedish jazz piece from 1940, and a piece from a collection of espionage music.¹⁸⁹ The film was actively promoted. Publicity handouts were sent to thirty-three journals whose readership was thought to have an interest in the subject matter.¹⁹⁰ The forty-eight-minute film, broadcast in March 1991, was structured as follow:

¹⁸⁴ Körner, Helene, 1991.

¹⁸⁵ DA. T21, F1, 58, Sista båten [...] 8.3.91, 22, production notes.

¹⁸⁶ DA. T21, F1, 58, Sista båten [...] 8.3.91, 3, letter from Häger to Nikolaj Nejlands, 1990.10.19; letter from Häger to Andris Slapinch, 1990.11.29.

¹⁸⁷ DA. T21, F1, 58, Sista båten [...] 8.3.91, 23, correspondence between Häger and Ligita Lukstraupe, 1990–1991.

¹⁸⁸ Notably a female; Birgitta Nordin.

¹⁸⁹ DA. T21, F1, 58, Sista båten [...] 8.3.91, 25, papers on music.

¹⁹⁰ DA. T21, F1, 58, Sista båten [...] 8.3.91, 26, Specialutskick. Among the journals were *Hemvärnet*, *Sjömannen* and *Gotlands Allehanda*.

- A. Sequences 1–3. Dark sea; introduction about the disappeared Edvards Andersons.
- B. Sequences 4–7. Riga today; events in Latvia in the early 1940s.
- C. Sequences 8–14. Edvards Andersons’s flight to Sweden and his life in Gotland.
- D. Sequences 15–22. The Swedish secret service and its leaders during the war.
- E. Sequences 23–29. The Latvian refugee traffic.
- F. Sequences 30–34. Veterans from the refugee traffic meet in Latvia in 1990 and speak of past events.
- G. Sequences 35–41. Re-enactment of flight scene. Refugee remembrances. Wartime images.
- H. Sequences 42–45. Re-enactment: Edvards Andersons and his girlfriend Gun, romantic scenes.
- I. Sequences 46–48. Former district police superintendent in Gotland relates how he saved a group of Latvian soldiers.
- J. Sequences 49–54. The fate of the Latvian refugee organisers who remained in Latvia.
- K. Sequences 55–65. Edvards Andersons’s last journey and disappearance.

In formal terms it is a complex programme that is made in the participatory, observational, reflexive,¹⁹¹ and expository modes. It uses interviews, re-enactments, archival footage,¹⁹² authentic photographs, and newly-filmed scenery. The programme ties four stories together. There is World War II history with the fight between Germany and the Soviet Union (B, G, I), there is the story of the Swedish secret service activities (D, J), there is the Latvian refugee traffic (E, F, G, J) and there is the story of Edvards Andersons (A, C, H, K). The programme is held together by the voice-over narrator. While there is a historical chronology it is only a vague underlying structuring principle. Interviewees refer back to events that took place during the 1940s but neither they nor the narrator puts the emphasis on specific happenings. Refugees fled on many occasions, the Swedish secret service worked over a long period, and Andersons’s life in Gotland likewise lasted for some time. A basic chronology is provided by the world war in Latvia, but those events are not the focus of the programme.

One important element in the programme is Latvia today. A key comment from the narrator is that “now” it has at last become possible to “remember” and “show solidarity” with those who were deported in 1941 (B). In a newly-filmed sequence where veterans from the refugee traffic talk of the past and walk through a forest down to the sea, the narrator notes that this was a closed

¹⁹¹ An interview was conducted in a yellow KWD car and the witness says this was just the kind of car that the secret service had during the war; we also see (the actor playing) Edvards Andersons step out of the car, thus tying the re-enacted world to the present.

¹⁹² Some of the footage is graphically indexed on-screen as “Soviet propaganda film, 1940” and “Nazi propaganda film, 1941” (B).

area ever since the war (F). Valentine Lasmane's return to Latvia is the means by which the audience can experience wartime Latvia. Thanks to her reliability, several witnesses gave their testimonies. Taken together, and a bit like Lanzmann's *Shoah*, the testimonies gather so many details about places and incidents that they become reliable proof of what took place – although no extant images exist. A Latvian-born concert pianist in Sweden declares that it took 44 years until she could return to Latvia (G). Her feelings are communicated through a scene in which she plays the piano. The music continues as the camera cuts to images of Latvian cornfields, an image of the homeland of dreams, full of life. The scene is suddenly contrasted with black-and-white archival footage and the thunder of guns, which brings the film back to the reality of the 1940s.

Edwards Andersons personifies the lifeline men. When other lifeline men talk about the refugee traffic they also recall memories of him. We learn where he came from, how he fled to Sweden, and that he began to ride the boats between Gotland and Latvia. The interviewees tell us that he was a central figure in the traffic and thus authenticate the narrator's story. Re-enactments without dialogue provide imagery for the story about Andersons. Many times in the programme his face fills the screen as he travels by boat on the rolling sea, as an illustration to the narrator's words about the traffic. The theme music establishes itself in the opening scene when it accompanies a sea in darkness. Later when it returns, it always accompanies scenes of the dark, rough sea, and the story of Andersons.

Most interestingly, Andersons is seen in a number of scenes with his girlfriend Gun in Gotland, stroking her hair (C), biking, and dancing (H). These scenes are introduced by interviews with Gun Tvärne who is now 62 years old and smiles and admits that, "as a seventeen-year-old" she was in love with him. Gun Tvärne's appearance is bound to make the audience sympathetic toward the young couple and Andersons. When the film cuts from her smiling face to the re-enactment, jazz music is added and effectively adds to the romantic mood.¹⁹³ The good-looking young couple, him dark-haired and her blond and in a light summer dress, adds colour and beauty to the film and offers the possibility for audience identification. The film opens with a scene in which young Gun wakes up in bed, thinking that she saw Andersons by the door but then realising that he must be dead (A). At the end of the film, when the narrator says that Andersons perished in Riga, the information is delivered against the images of the young girl going down to the pier in cold and greyish weather, waiting but sensing that he will not come back (K). Thus, the tragedy of Andersons becomes her tragedy. To a Swedish television audience she is important because it can relate to her both as a human being and a fellow citizen. If the other interviewees authenticate the refugee story, Gun authenticates the love story that makes Andersons human. Her faithful depiction of

¹⁹³ Melodramatic use of music occurred also in *Hundra svenska år*, cf. Chapter 6.

him as altruistic, claiming that he made the journeys for a higher purpose than money, defines him as an exemplary person (K).

A portion of the film is devoted to the Swedish secret service, which was established during the war. Espionage music accompanies the presentation of some key figures (D). The programme raises a critical question: What was the responsibility of the Swedish secret service in regard to the refugee traffic? One aged Latvian who was caught after he crossed from Gotland says that he was confined in the Gulag for fifteen years (J). The narrator observes that the secret service did not take responsibility for its agents. In the next sequence, the interviewer puts a somewhat leading question to Lyberg, a former secret service man. Should those employed by Sweden and held in the Gulag be eligible for a Swedish pension? Lyberg answers in the affirmative. While the old Latvian does not offer an opinion, the filmmakers' editing confronts the audience with the morality of the secret service's decision to abandon him.

The issue of moral responsibility is made very clear through the interview with the former district police superintendent Bonde in Gotland. Bonde remembers a group of Latvian soldiers who arrived at the end of the war, and how international agreements provided that they be sent back to be tried by the Soviets. Instead, he took them to a local tailor who dressed them in civilian clothes (I). The narrator adds that Bonde did not know that one of the soldiers had been with the secret German field police. He then adds that this did not automatically make Bonde a Nazi-collaborator. Some of the Latvian refugees to Sweden were pro-German and fascist sympathisers, but the programme does not attempt to resolve the motives and backgrounds of the people who fled and worked on the lifeline boats. That is not the important moral problem for Häger and Villius. Instead, their moral issue was a Swedish one in regard to the unspoken issue of the large-scale Swedish return of German and Baltic soldiers in 1945.¹⁹⁴ Therefore, the district police superintendent who broke the law is someone to respect. He took his stand in regard to the moral problem and acted accordingly.

In conclusion, *Sista båten till Jurkalne* is a good example of how Häger and Villius focused materials to fit the frame of a television documentary. First, they chose to focus on the fate of an individual. Second, both images and music were used to create a romantic atmosphere. The re-enactments featuring Andersons and his girlfriend were drawn to the melodramatic. Moral considerations played a part in the decision not to problematise the ideological motives of the Latvians, or develop the suggestion that the Swedish secret service did not take responsibility for its spies.

Some of those who had been involved in these events responded to the programme and in particular to the portrayal of Edvards Andersons. Gun Tvärne said that her Edvards was "as good-looking" as the actor in the film.

¹⁹⁴ The repatriation episode is treated also in *Hundra svenska år: Vi och världen* (1999). Then, the accompanying music on the soundtrack goes in a minor key, thus suggesting that it was a sad chapter in Swedish history.

Andersons's friend Peteris Jansons objected, saying that the real Andersons could not ride a bicycle, which he did in the film, but apart from that the actor in the film really "is" Andersons.¹⁹⁵ After the film was broadcast the former secret service man, Lyberg, called Häger. In Häger's notes from the conversation, Lyberg was not content with the way that his testimony was used in the programme. He argued that the Latvian resistance fighters were the active part in the lifeline traffic and that the Swedish secret service mostly tried to support them. In his view, the programme unfairly made Swedish authorities, including the secret service, appear as dark forces. Lyberg claimed that what he said in the programme was only a part of what he wanted to say, and he thought the programme was "romantic in a negative way." Häger concludes the notes from the talk that Lyberg felt surprised and manipulated.¹⁹⁶ Lyberg's response is a reminder that what an interviewee says in a programme might sometimes be taken out of context. The spectator tends to think that she meets the interviewee and hears that person's story. But the interview is always arranged and edited, and sometimes the clip(s) that the filmmaker chooses do not mirror the interviewee's main point. Lyberg's response suggests that this may be a significant issue.

Journalist Per Nygren criticised the programme on grounds similar to Lyberg. Nygren complained that the programme did not pose any complicated questions but rather tended to romanticise events and people. He was especially critical about Häger and Villius's co-operation with a Latvian leader who was considered untrustworthy in the 1940s and possibly linked to the German Gestapo. Nygren also quoted a Swedish secret service man who suggested that the Latvians used the journeys to smuggle gold and exchange money.¹⁹⁷ Häger and Villius responded to the critique and wrote that while it was known that collaborators came on the refugee boats to Sweden, in the film they "chose to concentrate on the secret service activities and the main lines in the refugee traffic." Further, they argued that a television programme, "which is not an academic essay," requires simplification. Regarding their co-operation with a Latvian who Nygren targeted, they indicated that he had helped them get unique photographs.¹⁹⁸

Lyberg's and Nygren's criticism regarded the moral interpretation made in *Sista båten till Jurkalne*. They were critical of who was portrayed negatively and positively. Whether right or wrong, it should be noted that the response from Häger and Villius was in terms of form. The producers claimed that aesthetic considerations forced them to simplify and cut out certain aspects of the content. In their view (or in Häger's view, as he was the one who did most of the work) the varying motives and records of the Latvians was not part of the main

¹⁹⁵ Gun Tvärne quoted in Körner, Helene, 1991a; DA. T21, F1, 58, Sista båten [...] 8.3.91, 12, Efter pressvisningen [notes], undated [5 March 1991].

¹⁹⁶ DA. T21, F1, 58, Sista båten [...] 91, 41, 6.3 ringer Bengt Lyberg.

¹⁹⁷ Nygren, Per, 1991.

¹⁹⁸ Häger, Olle and Hans Villius, 1991.

theme. I would suggest that this was a consequence of the aesthetic considerations and more precisely of the decision to make Andersons the lead. Andersons had two things in his favour, namely Gun Tvärne's happy memories and the fact that he perished at the hands of the Soviet secret police. Both circumstances would make the audience regard him positively. Because some Latvians who Andersons had worked with and whom we met in the film were sent to the Gulag they also gained sympathy. According to Häger's production notes, few Latvians would speak freely about the wartime events. Without strong testimonies claiming the reverse, the lifeline men must remain heroes. From an aesthetic viewpoint this worked well. Finally, if the programme was truly to interest a Swedish audience, Swedes had to be part of the story. A stronger moral statement was made by questioning Sweden's past. Häger and Villius did that in the film about the Midsummer crisis and repeated it here.

7. Conclusions

In making aesthetic considerations the filmmaker is guided in decisions by aesthetic values, which give priority to ideas and notions – conventions – of *how* certain subjects can and should be represented. Matters of representation become the ruling principle. Aesthetic considerations were always of influence when Häger and Villius made their programmes, but certain programmes show such influence far more clearly than others.

By using photographs creatively in the series *Svart på vitt* (1984–92) Häger and Villius made programmes about subjects previously considered impossible to treat for lack of extant imagery. In the series they developed a technique of close interaction between image and words. However, this placed an aesthetic restraint on the programmes, as the two were then able to mention only briefly anything that was not plainly visible in the photos.

The standard demands for dramatic unity led Häger and Villius to work more often with events than with processes, and it seems they often strove to heighten unity in terms of time, space, and action. In the drama-documentary *Sammansvärjningen* (1986) about the murder of King Gustav III, the film compressed events into a short period of time, while in fact the conspiracy leading to the murder was a very long story. The drama-documentary *Fyra dagar som skakade Sverige* (1988) tells of the Swedish government coming to decide in 1941 to give in to Germany's demands for transit of its armed soldiers through the country. That this event could be made into a drama-documentary depended on dramatic unity already being present, the event consisting of a small number of people gathered in a small area for a very few days. In this case the filmmakers accentuated the unities there already before. In *Sista båten till Jurskalne* (1991), which dealt with refugee traffic from the Baltic states to Sweden in the 1940s, Häger and Villius told of the past through the experiences of involved individuals. One strikingly romantic re-enactment in the film shows a

Latvian sailor and his Swedish girlfriend dancing together to the accompaniment of soft jazz music. The scene was clearly meant to arouse sympathy in the audience for the sailor who later perished in the Soviet Union.

Aesthetic considerations became in my view steadily more important to the two as they became more experienced as filmmakers. There are cases where they created dramatic structures, for example an intentional delay of the peripeteia coming in a given film. On several occasions Häger and Villius argued that televised documentaries need to simplify history. This indicates that they had accepted the primacy of the aesthetic conventions of the medium. In fact, Häger and Villius's tendency to favour working with events and individuals, relatively easy to portray in images, meant they imposed a restriction on what histories they themselves would be able to tell.

Concluding Discussion

1. Häger and Villius's work in comparison with Ken Burns's *The Civil War*

Opening this study was a discussion of the history culture and its concern with how history is put to use in modern society. Jörn Rüsen was cited saying that professional historians play a key role in the history culture, especially well suited as they are to performing the task of investigating and conveying aspects of the past to the public. These special concepts, the history culture's concern with history's use and Rüsen's view of the professional's role, inform analyses in this study.

A number of issues have been considered in connection with the question *how history is used in historical documentary films*. Left now is the task of presenting an answer to this basic question. The television histories of Olle Häger and Hans Villius, having been presented and analysed under the three thematic headings, cognitive, moral, and aesthetic considerations, I can now set in comparison with a historical documentary made in a different context, namely, Ken Burns's *The Civil War* (1990). The comparison, made first in this chapter, is intended to clarify what in Häger and Villius's historical documentaries we must conclude is peculiar to just those works, versus what in the same works lead off in the direction of conclusions of a general type.

The results of the comparison in hand, I return, in the second section here, to relationships between the three different kinds of considerations, and again generalise. In a third section I come back to the Swedish history culture, make some concluding remarks on the development of Häger and Villius's works and on their position in that culture, and offer a concluding statement on the role of professional historians in historical filmmaking. I close, last in this chapter, by supplying certain theoretical conclusions regarding historical documentaries.

Ken Burns's *The Civil War* came up briefly in Chapter 3, but now a deeper look into the production process of the series is in order. The reason for choosing *The Civil War* for comparison is that it was made in a different history culture, and under other production conditions, and that as an internationally

well-known documentary it should be a familiar point of reference. Like many of Häger and Villius's productions the film by Burns deals with a topic from national history. However, despite Burns's using techniques for representing the past similar to those Häger and Villius use, differences are to be found that are striking

Each of the documentaries emerges out of its own history culture. *The Civil War* was made in the history culture of the United States, a country which, to point out one important difference between it and Sweden, is characterised by ethnic diversity.¹ This diversity has sparked interest in multicultural perspectives on history and challenged the position long held by the white male story as the sole American story of importance. There is proof of ethnic minorities such as African Americans and Native Americans failing to identify with the official history-writings and in reply constructing their own counter-narratives. With the formation of a women's history perspective came a further challenge to traditional history.² History as the key to American national identity has been the source of controversies from that over the Enola Gay exposition (about how to remember Hiroshima) to that over negotiations for common history standards.³ The public debate in the 1990s in Sweden (Chapter 2) indicates that in the post-Cold War period national histories became controversial there as well. The public discussion of historical issues made historians into players on a public stage. But once their influence was felt in the public sphere, their work also became "contested (and detested) terrain, material for editorialists to condemn, politicians to denounce, and citizens to complain about."⁴ Thus, in both Sweden and America there have been occasions when the roles and services of historians have come under discussion.

In America, with its relatively short history as an independent country, much historical interest has been directed toward the conflicts that proved formative for the nation, not least the Civil War.⁵ The war is not only a topic for professional historians, but in the formerly war-ravaged parts of the country Civil War sites dot the map, make popular tourist attractions, and have become favourite spots for meetings of Civil War buffs and re-enactment players and fans. The war is now a central focal point of popular history in America, attracting both writers and filmmakers.⁶ By comparison, Sweden has had a very different past, because the nation has for two hundred years managed to stay out of armed conflict. Whereas the American experience is such that the history culture naturally seeks out memories of violence, in Sweden the typical focal points are rather the class conflict, moral conflicts, and social issues. Through their historical documentaries Häger and Villius often point us to social history.

¹ It is only in the most recent decades that Sweden has become multicultural.

² Rosenzweig, Roy & David Thelen, 1998, esp. Chapter 6.

³ Linenthal, Edward T. & Tom Engelhardt, 1996; Nash, Gary B., et al, 2000.

⁴ Linenthal, Edward T. & Tom Engelhardt, 1996, quote p. 5. On the nation as a frame of memory, see Gillis, John R., 1994.

⁵ Surprisingly little historical research has been done on pre-Columbian American history.

⁶ On filmic representations of the American civil war, see Chadwick, Bruce, 2001.

Producer and production-team leader Ken Burns was born in 1953, studied filmmaking at Hampshire College in the early 1970s, and together with student friends formed the independent company Florentine Films, where he produced all his major films.⁷ Lacking academic training as a historian himself (his sole college history course having been in Russian history), he engaged historians as consultants. Burns obtained the help of best-selling historian David McCullough with the script for his first major documentary, the award-winning *Brooklyn Bridge* (1982), and also had McCullough do the narration. During the mid-1980s Burns had success with several more historical documentaries, seemingly having developed an effective working model for the historical documentary. The work he did placed him in contact with historians and gave him experience with the public service television system.⁸ He widened his network of collaborators, which came to include award-winning editor Paul Barnes and a former editor of *American Heritage*, Geoffrey C. Ward, who joined him as a scriptwriter.⁹ As indicated in the discussion of Häger and Villius, a well-functioning team is the key to successful production. This holds not least for *The Civil War*, because although Burns as producer led the project, he was in fact working simultaneously on several documentaries and would have been forced to leave many matters arising during production up to his co-workers to decide. Burns himself has emphasised that everyone was in a position to influence the series.¹⁰

Many independent documentarists work on shoestring budgets and continue to raise funds all through the production period,¹¹ but though the young Burns shared these funding difficulties his earlier success allowed him in time to strike favourable deals with a number of financiers. In the case of *The Civil War*, PBS (and PBS's affiliate in Washington WETA-TV) covered only a small part of budget expenses. The bulk of what he needed came from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and from other sponsors, especially General Motors.¹² Planned as a five-hour series (that ended up eleven hours long), the programme cost a total of \$3.2 million. A few years later, Burns's eighteen-hour series *Jazz* (2001) cost all of \$14 million. In 1999 Burns signed a ten-year contract with General Motors, the company agreeing to pay 35 percent of Burns's future production budgets.¹³ Hardly another historical docu-

⁷ Florentine Films was later divided, so that Burns's part is now called Florentine Films/American Documentaries.

⁸ On Burns's contacts with PBS, see Edgerton, Gary, 2001, pp. 68 f.

⁹ On Burns's early productions, see Edgerton, Gary, 2001, pp. 27-84.

¹⁰ Burns, Ken, 1996, p. 167.

¹¹ The makers of *With Babies and Banners* for example obtained grants from twenty-five different sources; Leab, Daniel J., 1980a, p. 105.

¹² The National Endowment for the Humanities contributed \$1.3 million, GM \$1 million, PBS and WETA-TV \$350.000, the Arthur Vining Davis Foundation \$350.000, and the MacArthur Foundation \$200.000; Edgerton, Gary, 2001, p. 219.

¹³ Edgerton, Gary, 2001, on costs for *Jazz*, p. 189; on the deal with GM, p. 212. For a critical discussion of Burns's relationship to GM, see Bullert, B. J., 1997, pp. 178-182. *The Civil War*, *Baseball* (1994) and *Jazz* are said to form Burns's trilogy on America.

mentarist in the world could raise funds for a production on that scale, which makes Burns a very special case. But there are certain producers who like him obtain funds that allow work on films to go on for years. Budgets for Häger and Villius's regular documentaries have never been near those of Burns, and most of the programmes they made were just a few months in production. Special experience and an extremely competent team of co-workers enabled them to make good historical documentaries with budgets of medium size.¹⁴

Financing and employment security often determine the documentarist's independence. While Häger and Villius could focus on one project at the time, confident that SVT would provide new money for programmes to follow those in the production stage, Burns always had to work hard to find financing for new projects. Significantly, several of his programmes were made for jubilees,¹⁵ while Häger and Villius were always able to avoid jubilee programmes. For Burns a jubilee was an occasion where financiers could be expected to show up, a dependable route to financing. Here the question arises of who really determines the subject of a film. Both Burns and Häger and Villius had to convince financiers there was an audience for films they were proposing, Burns's financiers likely being much more interested if they thought a project would draw a large television audience. It is worth recalling that Häger and Villius reported that SVT officials would always accept their proposals.

Notable differences exist between Burns and the team Häger and Villius. Burns was for one thing of a younger generation than were the Swedes. He trained as a filmmaker while they originally trained as historians. While the American hired not only researchers but writers, a narrator, and sometimes co-producers, the Swedes did most of their work themselves. Burns's larger budgets account for some of the difference, permitting him to hire specialists for certain tasks. But it may be that Häger and Villius were keener on content control, were hesitant to see it be subject to choices made by others. Burns on the other hand seemed content to supervise projects and retain top executive control. Very likely he realised what his strengths and weaknesses were, and adapted strategies accordingly.

The Civil War was five years in the making, reckoning from Burns's delivery of a seventy-page proposal to the NEH in 1985, to PBS's broadcast of it in September 1990.¹⁶ A partial account of the production process follows. Neither Burns nor anyone on his team was a professional historian, but this he compensated for by bringing in historical advisors during production. In fact, the grant from the NEH included terms stipulating there be co-operation with historians. One member of his advisory group, C. Vann Woodward, has re-

¹⁴ Perhaps distinction can be made between (1) very cheap programming, (2) regular documentaries and (3) expensive documentaries. Programming budgets at SVT and at many other European public service companies would be in the "regular" rather than "expensive" category

¹⁵ Examples are *The Statue of Liberty* (1985), *Thomas Hart Benton* (1989) and *The Congress* (1989), while *Brooklyn Bridge* (1982) was first broadcast on the ninety-ninth anniversary of the bridge's opening.

¹⁶ UNC-CH, 20193, Box 17, Civil War. Proposal. Office copy [1985].

called unhappy reactions the first time a draft of the series came to the group. Certain younger historians were alarmed that the series might end up only another traditional military-centred war story. They argued that modern scholarship had brought out many new perspectives and these were missing.¹⁷ Although this early difficulty was overcome, the draft in time passing muster, the same criticism would be levelled again at the series in its final form.

There were numerous re-writings of the narration script – nearly twenty, Burns has said.¹⁸ Image materials were researched for years. Imagery from the battlefields was shot on location, Burns interviewed historians for material for talking-heads commentary, and new meetings were held with the historical advisors. The first version of the narration script was written at an early stage and talking-heads commentary was later added; Shelby Foote appeared first in 1987 in the third draft, and critical comments by Barbara Fields were added to the eighth.¹⁹ Narration was gradually simplified, circumstantial statements were rewritten. Finally, the film got its definitive shape in the editing room, where, as Burns says, his films are really made.²⁰ Comparing his production process with Häger and Villius's, it is striking that Burns (and his co-writers) wrote the narration at such an early stage. This shows that to Burns it was with the story rather than the images that one started. In earlier chapters it was noted that, except in the early films, Häger and Villius preferred to wait with narration until images were more or less in place.

The Civil War offered a chronological story of the war, but more interesting than this structure is how as an aesthetic matter the past is represented. The image-track consists of three kinds of material. First are thousands of authentic photographs, plus glimpses from other authentic sources such as paintings, letters, and newspapers.²¹ The camera scans the pictures, pausing on coming to specific elements, while music, other sounds, and words provide accent. The technique is reminiscent of that of the classic *City of Gold*, and in fact Burns identifies *City of Gold* as an important influence on his style. The re-framing technique has been recognised as the emblem of Burns's stylistic system.²² A second pictorial element in *The Civil War* are newly-filmed views of battlefields, all shot at the time of day corresponding to that of the original battle,²³ an imitation no less of the authentic. Third are on-screen remarks by commentators of the present day, and especially the talking heads of acting historian Shelby Foote and professional historian Barbara Fields, coming up repeatedly

¹⁷ Woodward, C. Vann, 1996. Cf. Burns, Ken, 1996, pp. 170 f.

¹⁸ Burns, Ken, 1996, p. 171.

¹⁹ UNC-CH, 20193, Box 22, Civil War. Script in progress April 1987, 3, pp. 40, 69; Box 21, Civil War. Draft 8. Ken [May 1988, Fields has entered].

²⁰ Burns quoted in Edgerton, Gary, 2001, p. 184.

²¹ Burns claims a small group conducted the effective research for images; see interview by David Thelen, 1994, p. 1036. Woodward, C. Vann, 1996, p. 9, says that much of the time-consuming search was performed by archivists.

²² Edgerton, Gary, 2001, pp. 30–36; Burns quoted on p. 34. On Burns's use of mobile framing, see Lancioni, Judith Ann, 1996. On Burns's stylistics, see Edgerton, Gary, 2001.

²³ Burns, Ken, 1996, p. 168.

and in contrast to or to complement one another. Re-enactments and excerpts from fiction films are noticeably absent. Apart from the principal musical theme, musical pieces heard are from Civil War times, adding more authentic flavour. Next to extensive use of historic quotations, most typical for Burns's style is his special fondness for beautiful scenery. Often to accompany quotations and voice-over narration there are images of a battlefield under a beautiful sunset or of a river with slowly running water.

The Civil War is cast in an expository mode, its parts held together by voice-over narration. However the narrator's authority is compromised by witnesses who appear and speak eloquently, and the structure is more open than closed. One can argue that because Shelby Foote and Barbara Fields are recurrent commentators there are in fact three narrators, namely, the voice-over narrator David McCullough, the critical narrator Fields, and the male experience-centred, anecdotal narrator Foote. Especially Fields's appearances add to the feeling of relative openness. Her words balance those of Foote, whose Tennessee accent almost makes an old Civil War veteran of him. The open feeling is still further enhanced by the abundance of quotations by individual soldiers and other people who lived through the war. Some voices are heard so often, become so like characters, that they acquire narrative authority of their own. The experiences of two soldiers, one Union and one Confederate, are related by still other recurring voices. But there is such a mass of quotations by eyewitnesses that the voice of the series, the one that remains the unifying glue throughout, is still the voice-over narrator's.²⁴

More than 900 quotations are incorporated into the eleven-hour series, making them occur at an average of over one per minute. Many who are quoted are military officers or politicians, but a large number are also ordinary people. In Burns's own description, the story is a symbiosis of the older type of top-down history and the newer bottom-up type. The most famous quotation in the series, often mentioned in audience reaction reports and in comments by scholars, is of the Sullivan Ballou letter. Shortly before his death at Bull Run, Major Sullivan Ballou wrote to his wife:

But, O Sarah! If the dead can come back to this earth and flit unseen around those they loved, I shall always be near to you; in the gladdest days and in the darkest nights ... always always, and if there be a soft breeze upon your cheek, it shall be my spirit passing by. Sarah do not mourn me dead, think I am gone and wait for thee, for we shall meet again. ...²⁵

The Sullivan Ballou letter quotation reflects certain typical characteristics of the series. It is eloquent, poetic, and packed with emotion. It tells us the war is no abstract problem, not primarily an ideological struggle, but a struggle that links the destinies of many plain people. In an early script version Ballou was pre-

²⁴ Cf. Lancioni, Judith Ann, 1994, esp. Ch. 4.

²⁵ *The Civil War*. 1., PBS, 1990.09.23.

sented as “former Congressman,” but the epithet was crossed out,²⁶ presumably to make Ballou more a man of the people, a soldier not a politician, somebody the audience could identify with. The letter was read over images that did not show Sullivan Ballou, but rather a number of soldiers with their sweethearts in a twilight battlefield scene. These images, accompanied by theme music with a lamenting note, hint of the tragic outcome of events to come. In Gary Edgerton’s words, the scene gives the programme a distinct “air of melancholy, romance, and higher purpose.”²⁷

Burns’s extensive use of historians as consultants is a cognitive matter, but in other ways too cognitive considerations he made are registered. Clearly, he wanted to find out and tell what had happened, explain to the audience how such a war could take place. He has complained that many documentaries come to an end already arrived-at, and added that his own team’s main strategy was “listening” to what the past wanted.²⁸ With such an intention and vision informing its use, history becomes educative. Burns says that more and more it is images that connect us to the past, and therefore “We must learn how to use it [television], make it speak our truths and tell our stories.” A suggestive metaphor he uses is that television will become “our new Homeric form (told around an electronic campfire).”²⁹ His re-framing technique makes possible the portrayal of persons or objects the original photographer did not actually intend to portray. Judith Lancioni regards *The Civil War* as consciously making such a portrayal when it treats slave individuals who have usually been invisible. She cites in particular an image where re-framing enabled a slave girl holding a book to come into sight.³⁰

Burns’s main cognitive device remains the informative voice-over narration, which he uses in ways similar to Häger and Villius. Other devices Burns uses are romantic scenery, music, and letters, such as the Sullivan Ballou letter. Burns’s defence of emotionality was on cognitive grounds, that if people’s emotions are called up, then even a complex event will stick in their minds.³¹ Thus, what was important to him was “the texture of emotion;” he even called himself “an emotional archaeologist.”³² Finally, his use of talking-heads historians in the film was an effective cognitive feature, as competing perspectives were then free to appear, open possibilities for broader interpretations of the entire documentary, and perhaps cue historical reflection in viewers. In sum, enlisting broad narrative and ample witnesses as it does, *The Civil War* served the cognitive function of factual and emotional interpretation.

One significant difference between Burns and Häger and Villius is that the latter co-operated with professional historians only to a limited degree, obvi-

²⁶ Florentine Films Archive, Box 15, *The Civil War*. Binder One, p. 38.

²⁷ Edgerton, Gary, 2001c (1992), p. 307.

²⁸ Burns, Ken, 1996, pp. 166 ff.

²⁹ Burns, Ken, 1996, p. 177.

³⁰ Lancioni, Judith Ann, 1996, p. 411.

³¹ Burns, Ken 1996, p. 160.

³² Burns quoted in Edgerton, Gary, 2001, pp. 13, 14, 164.

ously thinking themselves largely competent on their own. It might be that early on they realised that many historians do not understand the television medium and therefore the effective way to work was alone and at a safe distance from other historians. They used a minimum of talking-heads historians in their films as well,³³ though maybe this was for aesthetic reasons. As supports for representation, they used far fewer emotional devices than Burns. Instead, the attempts they made by a scientific approach to show the audience how historians think are noteworthy, as are their very precise “genre agreements” and distancing effects in cases when they used re-enactments.

Burns made moral considerations in forming his version of the war, some of which were inescapably deeply human in nature. War is a human tragedy, so the abundance of images of corpses lying on the battlefield tells us. In an interview Burns alleged that war is too often depicted as “bloodless myth,” and it is only right to characterise his own series as anti-war in attitude.³⁴ As Robert Brent Toplin notes, an anti-war attitude fits in well with feelings in post-Vietnam America.³⁵ At the same time a tendency to make war seem noble is noticeable. Certain script changes amount to the simple adding of a moral touch. The Union officer who termed one conflict “murder, not warfare” was silenced in one change,³⁶ the word “murder” likely felt as too strong. In one comment on the battle of Shiloh, the narrator first uses the blunt expression “men died,” and then it is replaced by a poetic “men fell.”³⁷ Seemingly minor changes like these when added together can make war a little less terrible and perhaps a more elevated matter. By implying war is noble the filmmaker credits soldiers on both sides. The intention was surely to supply such a human moral, though another part of the effect is an element of political morality that comes in with the message of reconciliation.

The way remarks appear in sequence in a film can be read as a sign of the particular political morality that informs the work. Gary Edgerton points to an instance where following two disturbing messages by commentators Fields and Symington, a remark by Oates softens the harsh effect of the previous voices and helps establish a liberal consensus history.³⁸ It would follow that the message of the series is less dependent on the substance of remarks than on editing strategy, where the testimony of the last witness sets the impression that sticks. Such a technique is used on several occasions when after disturbing interpretations by Fields more positive interpretations are given by Foote. Eric Foner has

³³ A rare exception is the early work *Sverige i det kalla kriget* (1971) where Erik Lönnroth is featured.

³⁴ Toplin, Robert Brent, 1996c, p. 27.

³⁵ Toplin, Robert Brent, 1996c, pp. 25ff.

³⁶ UNC-CH, 20193, Box 15, The Civil War. Binder Two. Script in Progress. February 1987, p. 162.

³⁷ UNC-CH, 20193, Box 15, The Civil War. Binder One, p. 2.

³⁸ Edgerton, Gary, 2001c (1992), pp. 310, 312; Edgerton, Gary, 2001, pp. 12 f. In the latter text, p. 65, Edgerton mentions how sequencing of shots in *The Statue of Liberty* (1985) softens another critique of racial injustice.

noticed that the impact of one of Fields's trenchant remarks (that the war has not yet ended) is diminished by accompanying visual images, which instead of introducing say a civil rights demonstration in support of Fields's remark, show reunions at Gettysburg. Her disturbing message is softened by images of reconciliation. Foner suggests that this example shows that the series' choice is not to be historically illuminating but to convey nostalgia.³⁹

From criticising the series for conveying a political message of reconciliation, it is just one step further to say that the series' intention should instead have been to focus light on persisting injustices in society and to encourage social action. Barbara Abrash and Daniel J. Walkowitz think of the healing reconciliation at the end of *The Civil War* as not pointing towards but away from social action. As a contrast they present their own films that tell how "the past continues to kick and live in the present, in our lives."⁴⁰ No need to say the reconciliation of white Americans with one another is the grand narrative of America, the one perceived by many to be under threat from ethnic, gender, and class narratives. Identifying the war as one that was waged among brothers, *The Civil War* suggested that reconciliation was what made the war morally useful.

Regarding how morals are involved, Burns and the team Häger and Villius worked in very different atmospheres. Like their American colleague, Häger and Villius manifested a human moral pathos. But with regard to political morals, they seem more willing to let the narrator make the crucial moral statements, as he does when they portray the great famine in *Ett satans år*. Perhaps the security afforded by their positions as trained historians and permanent employees of SVT let them feel they could express themselves in radical ways. But also the case is that at SVT the atmosphere did not discourage radical views of history. Unlike in some countries, class conflict was actively sought out and not shunned as a topic. Häger and Villius's occasional ironic treatment of royalty and sympathy for the labour movement was next to routine in dominant intellectual circles in Sweden and at SVT in the last decades of the twentieth century.

Like Häger and Villius, Burns has a penchant for making aesthetic considerations. Most clearly, he chose to tell a story about the war that could be supported with photographs. Extant photographs from the time of the Civil War cover certain subjects and areas better than others, and naturally this was of consequence in the actual telling of the story. Answering to criticism that the series omitted revolts among slaves in various parts of the South, scriptwriter Geoffrey C. Ward explains that it was the "special demands of documentary filmmaking" that prevented the team telling more about that struggle. He said also that because few Civil War cameramen went west, the series' focus had to remain on the east, with the armies and politicians in and around Washington and Richmond.⁴¹ The "special demands" that Ward mentions were determined

³⁹ Foner, Eric, 1996, p. 112.

⁴⁰ Abrash, Barbara & Daniel J. Walkowitz, 1994, p. 205.

⁴¹ Ward, Geoffrey C., 1996, pp. 146, 150.

special by a decision on the filmmakers' part. If Burns had wanted to tell more about the home front, slaves in revolt, or the western theatre of the war, he could have chosen other solutions to the problem of representation. He could have made up for any lack of photographs through alternative representational strategies, such as more extensive site filming or the filming of re-enactments, the latter a theoretical possibility only, because it would have forced Burns to depart further from his trademark stylistics than he would want. All in all, and visually attractiveness aside, his aesthetic choices strongly influenced the content of the series.

More evidence of the aesthetic considerations Burns made is a part of an interview where he says that he would have liked to include more on women and on additional aspects of the war, but "limitations of photographs or just time or rhythm or pacing, or whatever it is, conspired against those things. And they were there, but they were taken out to serve the demands of the ultimate master, which is narrative."⁴² The images were sometimes already there, but the problem was that telling the stories they belonged to in full would take the narrative far off what Burns wanted to be its main track, and so the images were dropped. The principle followed was not to make of the series a broad, scholarly, up-to-date interpretation of the war, although this was maybe an important part, but rather, to make an engaging narrative – full of eloquent soldiers.

A final note on Burns's use of photographs follows the remark above that Burns's photographs are consciously re-framed, with tilts and pans and zooms all creating a living imagery. Word and image stand in a carefully devised and executed relationship to one another in *The Civil War*, but it is not one where they are directly linked, unless it happens the narrator or an actor speak the words of someone pictured. Neither do the images lie for more than a few seconds. Burns has remarked on the relation between word and image as follows:

We wrote our script unconcerned with whether there were images to fill what we wanted to write about. We shot the old photographs unconcerned with whether there might be a scene in the script which these images could illustrate. In fact, we avoided illustration, preferring to take the harder, more time-consuming route of discovering the new and unique relationships that could be forged between the word and image when freed from the tyranny of doing it the quick and dirty and formulaic way. All of this liberated our filmmaking and liberated us. It allowed us to begin to tell the story of what happened during the war in a new [...] way [...].⁴³

It is clear from this description that Burns used photographs in a different way than Häger and Villius. The latter did not resort to the quick and dirty way of

⁴² Burns quoted in Edgerton, Gary, 2001c (1992), p. 306. In *Empire of the Air* (1992) Burns dealt with the birth of radio. In this production, his master the narrative made him focus on three American inventors, thus making the narrative national (rather than international). Edgerton, Gary, 2001, p. 100.

⁴³ Burns, Ken, 1996, pp. 168 f.

illustration either. But they did not start with narration, rather with image. Whether it was photographs they had, as in *Svart på vitt*, or archival footage, as in *Hundra svenska år*, they studied what the imagery actually showed before settling in their minds what it could be made to tell. Especially in *Svart på vitt* they developed a highly special relationship between word and image, where the two tie into one another in a way that lacks comparison in *The Civil War*. Perhaps Häger and Villius's way of working is possible only for a filmmaker with a great deal of fantasy on top of their ample historical knowledge.⁴⁴

A narrative is based on a selection of statements, but the arrangement of the statements decides much of the effect that they will have. The story is never neutral but always the product of an interpretation, be the interpretation consciously made or not. When Burns says he intends for his series to “emphasize *the story* in history, avoiding the contentions of analysis” (my italics),⁴⁵ he is really speaking of the story he has chosen to place in the limelight. He tells how he committed himself to making the series after reading a novel about the battle of Gettysburg where in midst of the action an interesting person called Chamberlain appeared. Further, he thought the “finest hour” of the war came when at the Confederate surrender Chamberlain made a conciliatory gesture.⁴⁶ It was likely from the beginning this story Burns wanted to tell, namely, of a bloody military conflict with a hope-inspiring, conciliatory ending. It is a perfectly legitimate and dramatically attractive story, but one must realise the story was a choice made over other stories that could conceivably interpret the drama. That little space is granted to Civil War women and their stories, or of African Americans and theirs, is less an act of denial of history than it is a consequence cued by the basic choice of story he made.⁴⁷

Following the rules for drama there must be heroes and villains in a story, and from production materials it is clear how Burns constructed such characters. The Confederate general Lee is one hero. We see Lee dropping into the mould when the narration script first reads the battle of Chancellorsville was an “expensive victory” for Lee, but is then changed to read as “Lee’s most brilliant victory, but also one of the most expensive.”⁴⁸ The addition of the word “brilliant” places Lee in far more attractive light. By contrast, Union commander McClellan “approached” Richmond first, but then what he did becomes a more passive “sat, just outside” Richmond.⁴⁹ The script change makes McClellan into a poor soldier, a sharp contrast to budding hero Lee. The Un-

⁴⁴ This is not to say that Burns lacked fantasy.

⁴⁵ Robert Hunto, 1990, quoted in Edgerton, Gary, 2001c (1992), p. 311.

⁴⁶ Burns, Ken, 1996, p. 157 f. Other books gave the idea for other films. Edgerton, Gary, 2001, pp. 168 f.

⁴⁷ Chadwick, Bruce, 2001, p. 292; See Edgerton, Gary, 2001. It should be added that slavery gets space in *The Civil War*. Burns terms the examination of America’s racial heritage the “connecting thread” in all his work; Burns quoted in Edgerton, Gary, 2001, p. 177. African Americans are given extensive treatment in Burns’s series *Baseball* (1994) and *Jazz* (2001), whereas *Not For Ourselves Alone* (1999) feature women on central stage.

⁴⁸ UNC-CH, 20193, Box 15, The Civil War. 2. Script in Progress. February 1987, p. 181.

⁴⁹ UNC-CH, 20193, Box 15, The Civil War. 3. Script in Progress. February 1987, p. 121.

ion leader just “sat,” failed to put an end to the war. This to Burns’s thinking was tragic, and McClellan becomes the film’s “bad guy.” When interviewing on-screen commentator Shelby Foote, Burns asked “What’s wrong with McClellan? What’s his problem?”⁵⁰ Burns obviously had long since decided to make McClellan a villain, and here his strategy was to provoke Foote to make deploring remarks about McClellan. Burns’s effort is the more remarkable as one historical advisor argued against so portraying McClellan.⁵¹ But the filmmaker let dramatic considerations rule, consciously choosing certain characters to be made heroes, others to be made villains.

Reviewers as well as individual viewers (in letters of response) praised the series for its success in prompting the feeling of emotional connection with the past. Scenes charged with sentiment like the one featuring the Sullivan Ballou letter were enormously popular. In his study on the series’ reception, Dirk Eitzen places *The Civil War* beside other popular historical documentaries recognised for generating “emotional involvement, excitement, and ‘entertainment.’” He notes that many reviewers had a penchant for narrativising and emotionalising images from the series; they saw characters in the faces and eyes of people in archival photographs, characters reflecting emotions.⁵²

The Civil War is to be regarded a major media event and part of the commercial media symbiosis. In 1990 it was broadcast at prime time on five successive nights, a broadcasting strategy to call attention. Much support for the promotional campaign came from corporate sponsor General Motors,⁵³ but the synergistic merchandising of ancillary products such as a book generated interest as well. Making the series had been an enormous job, and preparations for its first broadcast were elaborate. Close to 40 million people, or over 16 percent of the total U.S. television audience, saw the series or some part of it. The series has since been rebroadcast in America and shown overseas, and is now out on video cassette. So great was its success that it has since shaped viewer expectations of historical documentaries.⁵⁴ Gary Edgerton even argues that Burns became “the most recognizable and influential historian of his generation.”⁵⁵ As letters poured into the office of Florentine Films office, General Motors was designing and starting production of supplementary educational material, and since that time *The Civil War* has become a teaching support in classrooms. Burns was showered with awards, which after just a few years included two dozen honorary doctorates from colleges and universities.⁵⁶

⁵⁰ UNC-CH, 20193, Box 19, Civil War, Interview transcripts, Foote, p. 10.

⁵¹ Toplin, Robert Brent, 1996c, p. 34.

⁵² Eitzen, Dirk, 1995, pp. 111 ff.; on letters of response see Glassberg, David, 1996, p. 17.

⁵³ Toplin, Robert Brent, 1996, p. xvii f., gives the amount 1.5 million dollars. On Burns’s relationship to GM, see Bullert, B. J., 1997, pp. 178–182.

⁵⁴ Eitzen, Dirk, 1995, p. 111 f.; Edgerton, Gary, 2001, p. 6 f.

⁵⁵ Edgerton, Gary, 2001, p. 213.

⁵⁶ Edgerton, Gary, 2001c (1992), p. 304; Edgerton, Gary, 2001b, p. 169. At the Florentine Films web site are listed 43 awards given to *The Civil War*, <http://www.florentinefilms.com/ffpages/FCW.html> (2001.11.22).

While *The Civil War* was popular with audiences, a number of historians were soon questioning whether its Civil War stories were the ones that most needed telling and what conclusions were best to draw. Some argued that the experiences of African Americans and women had been largely left out (Catherine Clinton wondering where was Sarah Ballou?), while others were more concerned with what they saw as weaknesses in interpretation. Eric Foner, himself a consultant on the series, criticised the interpretative framework. He felt the series did not make it clear that racial injustice did not end in 1865 and thus both gave an inaccurate cause for the war and failed to capture much of the war's meaning.⁵⁷ Robert Toplin commented on what the series did do, suggesting that it reflected (1) a deeply emotional sense of the tragedy of war; (2) interest in slavery and racial injustice; and (3) the nationalism of a new America. He found all three of these concerns fit well with American sentiments at the end of the Vietnam War and after the civil rights movement. In the new, homogenised America people were crossing old boundaries and North-South antagonism was a thing of the past. Toplin concluded that *The Civil War* demonstrated the "relevance of the present for shaping an understanding of the past."⁵⁸ Gary Edgerton argued similarly that *The Civil War* was "meaningful and relevant" to the American public of the 1990s.⁵⁹

Unless in the case of *Hundra svenska år* (1999), no documentary by Häger and Villius stirred viewer reactions comparable to those elicited by *The Civil War*, either from the general audiences or from the historical community. One reason for such differences in response was that *The Civil War* was literally proclaimed a media event. By contrast, Häger and Villius's documentaries were announced in trailers on SVT and in printed announcements sent out to newspapers. No big money went into promotional efforts. I emphasise nonetheless that many of their films were very popular. In my view, their historical documentaries figure in an important way in the whole of Swedish cultural life, and have made an enormous contribution to the formation of a popular sense of the past. While critics may question Häger and Villius's historical interpretations, it is generally agreed that in aesthetic terms the documentaries they have produced are superb. True, the domestic politics episode in *Hundra svenska år* met with some negative response, but the episode is also very special in that it does not deal with an isolated historical subject but attempts to devise a synthesised history of modern Sweden. Because synthesised histories expose more of the examples and perspectives that have been chosen or dropped, they will always draw sharp criticism.

The comparison makes clear that both similarities and differences appear between Burns and Häger and Villius. Cognitive considerations were plainly

⁵⁷ On wanting perspectives, see Clinton, Catherine, 1996; Foner, Eric, 1996; Litwack, Leon, 1996; Blight, David W., 1993. On weak interpretations of military campaigns, see Gallagher, Gary W., 1996, and Boritt, Gabor S., 1996.

⁵⁸ Toplin, Robert Brent, 1996, quote p. 36.

⁵⁹ Edgerton, Gary, 2001c (1992), pp. 310, 312.

important to both. They prepared programmes carefully and enlisted informative narration as a complement to imagery. Both strove to search out and communicate a moral message and sought to make aesthetically attractive programmes. These are the fundamental ways they are similar. One important way they differ is that for Burns commercial considerations weighed far more heavily than for Häger and Villius. This dissimilarity is attributable to the production contexts that were involved in the two cases being largely different from one another. Dissimilarities in historical emphasis depend on each of the cases having originated in a separate history culture and being accordingly of different character, and depend too of course on the producers' different interests.

2. The relationship between cognitive, moral, and aesthetic considerations

From the comparison of Burns with Häger and Villius, and from the investigations in the previous chapters, conclusions can be drawn about historical documentaries and the development of the genre. To begin with the three categories of considerations, the cognitive, moral, and the aesthetic, these broad categories formed tools for analysis, finer nuances becoming added by distinguishing between moral sub-types, as for example, between types with human-brotherly bearing and types with political, even party-political, bearing.

Which of the three are most important to historical documentarists? Which are most important to Häger and Villius and to other documentarists treated? I have tried to show that not those of just one type determine the shape of a historical documentary. From the analyses it is clear that *different considerations compete and work together in the case of all – not just some – programmes*. Different categories figure at all stages of pre-production, production, and post-production.

While at any moment all are at work, *different considerations have particular influence at different stages in the production process*. During pre-production, moral considerations play a key role in deciding what subjects should and should not be treated. There must be an external reason for taking on a subject, and what is important at the moment is a question of values. What is important must seem so not just to the filmmaker but to those providing funding as well. Aesthetic considerations have their affect on what subjects become treated, not the least since having quality images for subjects treated in historical documentaries is of such high priority. Otherwise, cognitive considerations dominate during pre-production. Historical documentarists often put great effort into learning about their subjects. For example, they engage historians as advisors, and work long and hard interpreting visual source materials such as photographs.

The filmmaker negotiates between various considerations also during stages of actual production and post-production. Numerous examples show that cog-

nitive and moral considerations influence representational choices. Examples of such considerations would be whether the camera should bring in more earth or more sky, what music should accompany a sequence, what informative words, or what value-laden words the narrator should use, and what interviews should be put in powerful positions such as the beginning and end of the film. As Ken Burns states, emotional devices can fulfil knowledge functions. However, the empirical studies made here suggest it is especially aesthetic considerations that influence representational choices, due in part to co-workers being not primarily historians but rather cameramen, editors, and sound recordists.

Examples were provided that show especially well how Häger and Villius allow different considerations to rule. In *1000 år*, an exceptionally long shot of the population of the village of Andersvattnet violated aesthetic norms, yet helped convey a desired cognitive insight. In *Ett satans år*, excluding certain information made the story of Nils Petter Wallgren more shocking morally. In *Fyra dagar som skakade Sverige*, Häger and Villius consciously changed the setting of a number of episodes, which indicates aesthetic considerations prevailed over cognitive ones. This last instance is interesting because, although the producers strove for correctness in the representation of past events, they did not find it necessary to be correct in every single detail. Although friend and historian Sven A. Nilsson criticised one of their altered settings, challenging it on the grounds of correctness, I submit that it was their very backgrounds as professional historians that led them to decide the setting was of little importance, and see that the vital factor was instead the credibility of the scene's dialogue. Other documentarists confess to having tried to get every detail of a setting correct.⁶⁰ It is possible that Häger and Villius's pragmatic attitude towards properties and setting guided them so that they worked in another way than other documentarists.

A conclusion following from the empirical studies is that various considerations work constantly with and against one another, but more so that *considerations are more or less important depending on which part of the process the producer puts his emphasis on*. We saw that both Burns and Häger and Villius had high ambitions for their historical documentaries, wishing to produce only the most informative and interesting kinds. Nevertheless, they emphasised separate parts of the production process. Other producers would balance the same considerations in other ways; depending on the time and place of their work, different filmmakers utilise different strategies for representing the past. *In the public service television setting, the tendency to cognitive considerations is strong*. This study indicates that in the context of the Swedish history culture, and particularly until around 1990 when SVT began to have competitors, cognitive considerations tended to outweigh commercial considerations. This accounts for commercial factors receiving next to no focus in the study. Häger and Villius learned to make programmes on limited funds, and that was that.

⁶⁰ For example, an interview with Marianne Söderberg, 2001.02.08.

But commercial considerations tend to be strong also for makers of historical documentaries, not least for those working for independent companies where strict cost-control and the need to keep production time short rule. Recent changes in broadcasting structure, and the new trend to media symbiosis, may make still stronger commercial considerations necessary. If so, there would be important new factors to study. The influence aesthetic considerations have may also grow. At the world congress for history producers in 2002, representatives of the large corporations BBC and NOVA of WGBH declared they want future historical documentaries to follow a specific, dramatic model.⁶¹ The reason is probably that exciting dramas bring in bigger audiences. The genre has been rather open to formal innovation so far, but orders from the big agencies that everyone follow a specific model might change this.⁶² On the other hand, historical programming has become big business in the past few years, and many more innovations may be just around the corner.

3. Häger and Villius in the Swedish history culture

As for the Swedish history culture and the changing roles of Häger and Villius in that culture, I have conclusions to offer. The first is that Häger and Villius's predilection for social history was prompted largely by the Swedish history culture, where it is natural for historical consciousness to be defined by something other than a war from some past century. The producers' interest in non-events, displayed when they focus on details in photographs from everyday life, we should view in the Swedish context. Second, Häger and Villius began their filmmaking careers as adult educators and later turned attention to history entertainment. The shift depended on several factors. Their ties with academia gradually loosened, which we regard a cognitive matter. As a moral matter, the atmosphere at SVT changed in the 1980s and 90s and with it the producers' need to distance themselves from the radical, politicised history producers of the 1970s, so that in time they could allow themselves to be more subjective.⁶³ On the aesthetic front, Häger and Villius learned to work with the medium, and especially important is that they learned to see and work with images to the point they could construct histories from images as well as from words. Despite the appearance in it of certain inventive stylistic devices, their work remained relatively conventional in terms of form, history continuing to be cast in expository and participatory modes. It is possible that so long as Häger and Villius worked closely together they guarded one another from excessive play with the

⁶¹ The message was delivered at the seminar "Never Let the Facts Get In the Way for A Good Story;" interview with Mikael Agaton, 2003.07.07. One leading dramaturgist of the school is Robert McKee.

⁶² To my knowledge, demand for the Hollywood-inspired variety of dramaturgy has not yet made a norm of that type in Sweden or Germany.

⁶³ *Ett satans år* (1977) and *Isgraven* (1977) both have a distinct political flavour, but I would argue that objectivity was a characteristic goal of Häger and Villius in early programmes.

past. A combination of factors in the 1990s, first that Häger became the sole producer, and then that editor Kjell Tunegård acquired added influence, may have encouraged certain formal playfulness at that time. In later productions emotions was a greater concern than was informative narration. All these factors figure in the development that Häger and Villius's programming saw, which, I suggest, has three phases, a first lasting until 1976, a second running from the late 1970s to around 1990, and a third falling in the 1990s.⁶⁴

Häger and Villius figure variously in the history culture. They made successful films that for decades reached audiences of around a million viewers. Further, they wrote history books, worked for preservation of materials in the film archive at SVT, and functioned as history gatekeepers at SVT. On the sociological scale they lay at first closer to the pole of autonomy in the field of history production, laden with symbolic capital from the academic degrees they had in history and with social capital coming from friendships with powerful figures in the field such as Sven A. Nilsson. Of crucial importance, they retained a high degree of autonomy within SVT, and kept to the rules of the field of history production. They continued to call themselves historians, and (although they inclined towards more entertaining programmes) in general terms they did not tailor their films to audience demand but let themselves be guided by notions of knowledge communication. Their backgrounds as professional historians help explain that they reacted with sheer backbone to what they considered bad history production at SVT. I would argue SVT stands in a higher position in the field of history production in Sweden than most television channels in the world in the field of history in their own country, and this is to a large degree owing to their quality programmes and responsible gatekeeping activities. The team Häger and Villius set standards for history programming that other SVT producers have to respect.

In their early years Häger and Villius consciously or unconsciously based choices on the rules of the field of history production, only later becoming effectively influenced by the norms of the field of media production, one of which demanded they tell aesthetically attractive stories. In response to criticism from historians, they often argued that television programmes must simplify history, and by this they show that they had accepted the aesthetic conventions of the television medium. Influence exerted on their programmes by aesthetic considerations grew as they learned more about the medium, and so from the 1960s to the late 1990s Häger and Villius inched in the field of history production in the direction of its popular pole.

Noted in Chapter 2 was that professional historians in Sweden have communicated knowledge without interruption. As part of this tradition and in the role of communicators of history Häger and Villius were never an exception. But they became more important in the capacity of mediators when, owing to

⁶⁴ As seen in Chapter 5, an important difference between the first and second phases is that during the first they made many programmes on international political subjects, whereas later social history became important.

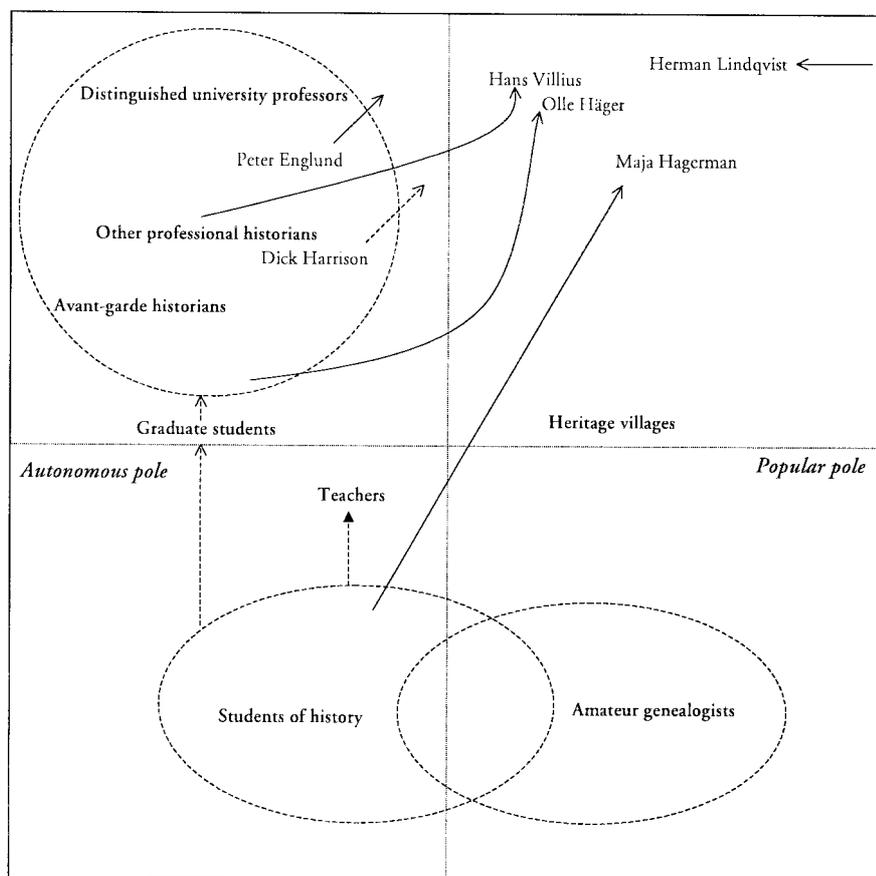


Figure 35. The Swedish field of history production, mid-1990s. The figure shows actors moving to new positions in the social field. Professional historians are close to the autonomous pole while acting historians are usually close to the popular pole. Their positions depend on the field-specific capital they have.

specialisation and increasing reliance on theory, historians' writings became less accessible to non-historians. This professionalising tendency among Swedish historians, combined with reduced public interest in history in the post-World War II decades, resulted in a general distancing of the academic discipline from the public. In the 1990s, few historians were involved in the popular history movements that gave rise to history festivals and reconstructed ancient villages. Acting historians occupied much more space in the public arena. A rough Bourdieu-inspired sketch of the field of history production in Sweden in the late 1990s based on the findings of this study appears above.⁶⁵ It takes into account two aspects, the vertical dimension marking the quantity of field-spe-

⁶⁵ Because the figure is not based on quantitative research it should be seen as preliminary in nature.

cific capital that an actor has assembled, and the horizontal dimension specifying his or her inclination towards academic demands versus popular demands.

Inclining towards the autonomous pole are professional historians with their varying amounts of field-specific capital, respected university professors naturally being more powerful than historians in training. Closer to the popular pole are acting historians who lack academic training, but some of whom even so have acquired measurable amounts of capital. In the mid-1990s acting historian Herman Lindqvist was very successful with books and popular television programmes. Involvement in the museum venture *Den Svenska Historien* also brought him symbolic capital. His lack of academic training in history, conflicts with professional historians, and his connections with such market actors as his publisher, placed him close to the popular pole. In the same place but with less capital are certain members of heritage societies, although these tend to appear closer to the middle of the field. Midway between poles come actors who try to follow the rules of the field but are willing to serve popular demands. In my view most successful with this combination in the late 1990s were best-selling historian Peter Englund and historical documentarists Olle Häger and Hans Villius. All had migrated towards the popular pole after first successfully communicating history to the broad public. Englund occupies his high position thanks to the symbolic capital that he received when consecrating instances gave him awards (including election in 2002 to the prestigious, Nobel Prize-awarding academy of learning, *Svenska Akademien*), and to social capital acquired through friendship with several leading professional historians. Häger and Villius enjoyed a strong position from a time many years earlier and managed to keep it despite the slide towards the popular pole that came with their leaning towards programmes that were less didactic and more entertaining. Less established in the field, but rising stars in the late 1990s, were young historian Dick Harrison, who published several very readable books, and history journalist Maja Hagerman. Hagerman is interesting as an example of the actor with only undergraduate studies in history who became successful on the popular level while not giving up the respect she had for professional historians. This combination of factors places her somewhere between the two poles. Lowest down, by a reckoning with field-specific capital, come yet unsuccessful individuals. Certain actors such as Peter Englund and Dick Harrison urged the rules be redefined so that it would be valuable to write readable history. This might make them seem *avant-garde* as historians. However, on the whole they accepted scholarly rules and norms and were themselves accepted by university professors. Their position on the horizontal scale is determined by the fact that they wrote extensively for commercial publishers.

Letting it stand approved that acting historians and among them historical documentarists play important roles in the history culture, we now recall Jörn Rüsen's idea of the particular function the professional historian has. Rüsen considered the professional historian especially well suited to helping the population relate to the past. Because historical documentaries communicate mes-

sages about the past to mass audiences, it would be only logical for professional historians to become involved in the production of documentaries. Stressed in Chapter 3 was the capacity of the historian to function in various ways in relation to historical programmes, and to a degree they have so functioned.⁶⁶ But does it matter that they are historian-filmmakers? Does historical knowledge become a part of programmes in any particular way when the documentarist is a professional historian?

We saw that two matters that require cognitive considerations are (1) determining and finding the knowledge the programme is to convey, and (2) designing the programme in a way that it can communicate the knowledge. Thinking of the first, by their training Häger and Villius had an advantage over documentarist colleagues, as it both prepared them for reading historical literature and primary source materials, and meant their historian advisors could be confident of their abilities. In regard to the second, it is possible that their training gave Häger and Villius the security of knowing they could distinguish what was important about the past. This in turn led to their becoming captivated more by the very events and stories of the past than by facts and details they could work out of settings. Ken Burns on the other hand managed well even with his lack of training as a historian. We must conclude it is not always important that the producer be a trained historian. What is crucial is that whoever is to succeed in making fine historical programmes must learn both history and filmmaking, must learn to balance the demands of content and form. Whether a person begins in history or in filmmaking is moot. Important is that *historians, in some capacity, should be inside the projects from their inception*. They can then be of help with fundamental interpretations, and not merely stand ready to check details and by no other way than that come to influence the picture being constructed.

4. The historical documentary: A theoretical perspective

In closing I offer a perspective on certain theoretical issues that have surfaced. Three scholars who have made general theoretical statements about historical documentaries are Dirk Eitzen, Gary Edgerton, and Robert Rosenstone.

One of the most important questions concerning historical documentary goes yet unanswered: What is the function of historical documentaries? Why bother with them in the first place? Dirk Eitzen, who studied reception, alleges that historical documentaries (1) provide “emotion-laden ‘experience’,” and (2) emphasise the connection between past and present, thereby generating emotional involvement and bringing the past to life in the spectator. Other elements, such as information, he says only support these primary functions.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ My overview of SVT historical documentaries shows some documentarists communicated extensively with historians whereas other producers had few such contacts.

⁶⁷ Eitzen, Dirk, 1994, p. 178.

Eitzen argues then that historical documentaries function as entertainment and as existential and practical orientation.

Gary Edgerton's analysis is similar. Historical television programmes (in his words, television as historian) serve essentially three functions: (1) they organise viewing constituencies into "a web of understandable relations;" (2) they affirm the values and beliefs held by the majority; and (3) they portray those parts of collective memory which are felt to be most relevant at a given time, thus helping society to negotiate with its "useable" past.⁶⁸ The first and the last of the three are close to the functions of Eitzen, but Edgerton adds the moral-political function of restoration. That orientation and restoration are essential functions of historical documentaries seems correct. But the present study suggests that historical documentaries have even more essential functions. The intentions of producers can be quite diverse, and these intentions will go together with other factors to form different kinds of documentaries.

I propose two additional functions, namely *interpretation* and *legitimation*. Gary Edgerton states that histories made for television are "never conceived according to the standards of professional history."⁶⁹ I want to put this differently. When filmmakers feel themselves to be historians, which they easily may if they make historical programmes continuously, and in particular if they are trained historians, then it is reasonable to believe they will strive to follow the rules of historians. One important additional function would then be that of interpreting or serious reflecting on historical issues. While the interpretative function is somewhat like the cognitive functions of existential and practical orientation, it is clearly a distinct category of its own.

The other function to add is legitimation, which is the radical equivalent of restoration. The difference between the two is that legitimation operates to argue for or legitimate a (political) moral position other than the one held by the majority. Seldom is the majority position in the capitalist world of broadcasters so challenged, and the case is the same in totalitarian states where television is under strict control and television histories will typically affirm the historical right of the ruling power. But in other distribution contexts such as public service television or independent cinema chains, and in the new media environment of narrowcasters, it is possible to offer versions of the past that are radically new and different. To certain documentarists it is enough to please only segments of the population and ignore the majority, and in such cases legitimation is as logical a function as is restoration. Thus, in addition to the functions Eitzen and Edgerton discuss, historical documentaries have the cognitive function of interpretation and the moral function of legitimation.

Another important question is what are the principal characteristics of a historical documentary in comparison with other kinds of historical representation? The question of characteristics has come up more than once in the course

⁶⁸ Edgerton, Gary, 2001a, p. 8.

⁶⁹ Edgerton, Gary, 2001, p. 166. Cf. Rosenstone, Robert A., 1995a, p. 11.

of this study. Here we collect them to formulate an answer. As mentioned in Chapter 1, Robert Rosenstone proposes six characteristics for the historical documentary. There are problems with his list for reasons we can give. Rosenstone's posited characteristics are these: (1) History is told as a story set in the framework of progress; (2) the story told must be one of individuals; (3) the story told is closed to alternative possibilities; (4) historical documentary emotionalises and dramatises history; (5) it provides a period-specific look of the past; and (6) history is seen through film to be an integrated process.⁷⁰ Rosenstone mentions there are "experimental" documentaries that do not follow these conventions and names as an example *Shoah*, which he says violates the period-specific rule.⁷¹ But his important claim is that even with exceptions, historical documentaries on the whole follow the six conventions. Thus, following Rosenstone historical documentaries constitute a genre where aesthetic rules impose limits for how history can be represented. Extending this to what history can be represented, limits apply there too.

How valid are Rosenstone's points? All of his characteristics are (unevenly) on display in the documentaries by Häger and Villius. They *may* be correct. But checking them against the documentary about working life that was part of the *Hundra svenska år* series discussed in Chapter 6, reveals ways they are inadequate. First, the programme has a kind of story (running from 1900 until 2000), but it does not hold, as Rosenstone requires it must, that we live in a world of progress. Rather, both at its beginning and at its end the programme supplies glimpses of life that suggest matters did not improve as years went by. Second, the twentieth century in Sweden is represented by a collective story and not by stories that feature individuals. Admittedly, individuals come to the fore in interviews. Third, the story is a closed one to the extent there is a single narrator who in their interpretations of events none of the witnesses contradict. However, the narrator's tone is not noticeably authoritarian, and as the programme does not spell out ways things got better (or worse), the question is left for the viewer to freely reflect on. Fourth, does the programme emotionalise the past? The narrator is informative, but romantic music added to a couple of scenes is a case of emotionalising. Fifth, yes, archival footage does provide period-specific glimpses of work in the past. And sixth, whether or not the past is depicted as an integrated whole depends on what we interpret to be the appropriate whole. The programme deals with a specific aspect of life in the past, but combined use of interviews and archival footage gives the past the appearance of a broad texture, perhaps the integrated whole sought. In sum, while the programme displays some of Rosenstone's characteristics, it also deviates in ways that call for discussion.

⁷⁰ Rosenstone, Robert A., 1995a, pp. 55–61. Rosenstone holds that the list is valid both for historical documentaries and dramatic films.

⁷¹ Rosenstone, Robert A., 1995a, p. 63. *Shoah* does not wholly violate the point regarding the period-specific look because, as noted further above, includes is footage of railways that represent the past.

Much speaks against a vision of a world in progress being the prevailing vision in historical documentaries. In some of their programmes Häger and Villius show a world in progress, one example being the series *1000 år*, where the Middle Ages and the seventeenth century are depicted as periods of hard life and cruel death, while the episode on the twentieth century pictures a good life. But the message of *Hundra svenska år*, and for that matter of many other programmes, is rather that even if material conditions are now different, people in the past lived much as we do and shared our win a few lose a few attitude. The programmes do not show clearly a world that progresses. Filmmakers who feel compelled to depict the lives of people in the past in fully credible fashion, would understandably not picture only its rosy sides if they themselves view the development of modern society with certain scepticism. It seems historical documentaries are apt not to express the notion that things get or have gotten better.

Another point to question is whether a historical documentary tends to speak in a closed voice or an open one. Rosenstone's argument is that even if different points of view are displayed in a film, they never leave the filmmaker's control and therefore no contrary ones will ever have any real impact. It is not that the typical narrator of a documentary speaks with hesitancy – the narrator usually retains authority – but elements such as interviewees or ironic musical scores can have a separate tone, one that even directly counters the narrator's. It is true that the choice of elements included in a programme is in the filmmaker's control, and he has the power to exclude elements that do not fit with his own aims. Häger and Villius's *Ett satans år* is an example where the story is such a closed type. But the additional "voices" give viewers the prospect of reading the programme in a creative way.⁷² Now that it is common to include many voices, it is difficult to say that historical documentaries characteristically tell a closed story. Ken Burns's *The Civil War* includes numerous interviews and by so doing offers an open structure for reading. But even the use of a sole narrator does not automatically preclude alternative readings. Häger and Villius were relatively conventional and always made a key device of narrative commentary. When the commentary became more poetic their programmes were opened to a wider range of possible viewer responses. Other documentarists actively use reflexive devices to communicate the multiplicity of past times. In the case of *Fyra dagar som skakade Sverige* or *Raoul Wallenberg – fånge i Sovjet*, Häger and Villius thematised the very uncertainty of the testimony of the past regarding what happened. The analytical mode of commentary invites the reader/viewer to listen to the argument and accept or reject it, and this in effect makes of a film an open form.

A third question for Rosenstone concerns his notion that film shows history as process and as an integrated whole. Richard Raack thinks of history on film

⁷² Of course viewers are more or less creative and may well reach the conclusion the producer intended for them.

as well able to represent the complexities of the world; Raack argues that by contrast word makes history linear.⁷³ It is true that in a televised interview we face a full human being, and that in footage of a particular milieu not only buildings and trees appear but also shown is how people live, move, and act. When the soundtrack is added to the images, film offers “total” impressions of the past. Nevertheless, historical documentaries do not always provide syntheses but, just as written histories, are prone to concentrate on some particular aspect of the past, discuss some single phenomenon or event. Perhaps it is dramatic historical films, more than documentaries, that allow viewers to encounter the past as an integrated whole.

In sum the check against *Hundra svenska år* shows Rosenstone’s six characteristics are every bit problematical. They might be valid for historical dramatic films, but not for historical documentaries. Frequently period-specific glimpses of the past are found in historical documentaries, individuals (and events) are given primary importance, and a tendency to emotionalise the past is plainly present. But it does not hold that historical documentaries make the past into a story of progress, tell closed stories without alternatives, or show the past as an integrated process. Points one and two of the three (progress and closed stories) might hold for historical documentaries that were made in specific periods, for example those made before 1980. Belief in steady progress vanished in many countries with the coming of harder economic times, and there are historical documentaries that make a topic of this. In any case, conventions are always time-bound, my own observations being made in the case of documentaries made in the Swedish context from around 1970 to 2000.

Based on the study here I submit that *one characteristic of historical documentaries is that they attempt to convey cognitive and moral insights about the past*. It appears that many historical documentarists search diligently for safe knowledge of the past, co-operate with professional historians in the course of their search, and end the search having come to a moral interpretation of some episode from the past. Historical documentaries are much involved with matters of content, not just any content, but content of the special variety which incorporates insight or perceived knowledge. In programmes for public service television this characteristic is particularly evident.

The historical documentary has been defined above as a “creative treatment that asserts a belief that the given objects, states of affairs or events occurred or existed in the actual world as portrayed.” In practice, as indicated by my analyses, the historical documentarist takes authentic materials, artefacts, and statements, and works them into a constructed context. This does not make the historical documentary different from other historical texts, but it may be special for the genre that filming authentic materials gives an air of authenticity. The resulting authentic feeling convinces the viewer that the film pictures the actual past, although of course all is a construct. The interesting question, and

⁷³ Raack, R. J., 1983, pp. 416, 418. See also Walkowitz, Daniel J., 1985, p. 57.

the one to emphasise, is how the documentarist relates to the past. Or in other words how the documentarist applies his or her own craftsmanship, supported by authentic materials capable of being filmed, to the task of conveying knowledge about the past. Inherent limitations and biases in audio-visual representations of the past occur also in written accounts, but especially problematic for film is that certain phenomena are not easy for it to represent, and that audio-visual representations of the past typically prefer concrete subjects to abstract ones. Multiple tracks, consisting of image, sound, word, and graphics, are an aid to audio-visual media when the past it is to convey is particularly complex. We agree therefore with critics who allege that history on film and television offers important ways for us to imagine the past.

Historical documentaries played a unique role in the television-saturated decades of the late twentieth century, being a popular form for communication of serious messages about the past. At home on a small screen a mass audience could watch and listen to human beings of the past, follow their body language and their reactions, and ponder their personal comments. In forming the film the historical documentarists weighed together cognitive, moral, and aesthetic considerations. Perhaps not aware that negotiations were taking place, the viewer would sit and watch, feel happy or irritated, or maybe bored, but in any event be entertained and learn about the past.

Audio-visual media offer great possibilities for representations of history, but also limitations that are just as great. These possibilities and limitations await identification and exploration. This study at best adds to what we know about the complex problems that are involved in the filmmaking process. We conclude it saying that making a historical documentary involves a process of negotiating between competing considerations, the work of Ken Burns and of Olle Häger and Hans Villius demonstrating clearly that cognitive considerations play an important part in that process.

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Appendix 1

Television productions by Häger and Villius

Information given: title, length, date of first broadcast.

- Nu är det snart slut på hela härligheten. Ryska revolutionen 1917. 0.35.30, 1967.11.04
Herren är med eder. Ryska revolutionen 1917. 0.34.47, 1967.11.05
Några kilo uran torde räcka. Om vägen till Hiroshima. 0.43.01, 1968.05.06
Solen går upp i väster. Vätebombens historia. 0.36.57, 1968.05.08
Brännpunkt Prag. Tjeckoslovakiens historia. 0.42.28, 1968.08.31
Revolt – revolution. Frihet, jämlikhet, broderskap. Om franska revolutionen. 0.24.47, 1968.12.10
Revolt – revolution. Rebellernas rike. Batistas och Castros Cuba. 0.44.35, 1968.12.18
Det bortförlovade landet. Om mellanösternkonflikten. 0.35.57, 1969.05.03.
Ett spel om en väg som till himla bar. Om raketforskningens historia. 0.27.37, 1969.07.16.
Högt spel i tändstickor. Ivar Kreuger och hans värld. 0.50.00, 1969.12.07.
Återblick. Ernst Wigforss. Ca 30 min, 1969.12.12.
Återblick. Per Edvin Sköld. Ca 30 min, 1969.12.19 (prod. Häger, Villius & Leif Furhammar)
Återblick. Jarl Hjalmarsson. Ca 30 min, 1969.12.27.
Återblick. Bertil Ohlin. Ca 30 min, 1970.01.06 (prod. Häger, Villius & Leif Furhammar).
Makten och ärligheten. Tage Erlander intervjuas. 1. 0.34.00, 1970.04.12.
Makten och ärligheten. Tage Erlander intervjuas. 2. 0.34.40, 1970.04.19.
Makten och ärligheten. Tage Erlander intervjuas. 3. 0.35.10, 1970.04.26.
För främmande makt. 1. Otto John, 1970.06.28.
För främmande makt. 2. Richard Sorge, 1970.07.03.
För främmande makt. 3. Pueblo, 1970.07.05.
För främmande makt. 4. Kim Philby, 1970.07.12.
Stalin. Porträtt av en diktator. 0.44.59, 1970.09.27.
Sovjet efter Stalin. 0.29.40, 1970.10.04.
Vart går Sovjet? 0.23.55, 1970.10.11.
En röst ur det förgångna. Om politikern Sven Hedin. 0.40.35, 1971.04.10.
Sverige i det kalla kriget. 1. För att aldrig mer draga ut. 0.37.59, 1971.09.08.
Sverige i det kalla kriget. 2. Det ska vara en cowboy. 0.32.50, 1971.09.09.
Sverige i det kalla kriget. 3. Den som inte är med oss. 0.27.46, 1971.09.10.
I nödfall med våld. Kongokrisen 1961. 0.26.51, 1971.09.17.

Sverige 1917–1918. 1. På lindblomt  och bl b rskr m. 0.58.57, 1972.09.03 (by H ger, Villius & Carl Torell).
 Sverige 1917–1918. 2. Polis polis potatisgris. 0.49.00, 1972.09.10 (by H ger, Villius & Carl Torell).
 Sverige 1917–1918. 3. Varf r skola m nniskor strida? 0.50.10, 1972.09.24 (by H ger, Villius & Carl Torell).
 Sverige 1917–1918. 4. Kl 8 b rjar revolusionen. 0.56.43, 1972.10.01 (by H ger, Villius & Carl Torell).
 Mussolini. 0.35.44, 1972.10.13.
 Skotten i Sandarne. 1.42.46, 1973.05.01 (by H ger, Villius & Carl Torell; prod. Carl Torell).
 J f r jude. 0.37.28, 1973.05.02 (by H ger & Villius; prod. M rten Andersson).
 50-tal. 1. R ttsaff rerna. 0.36.54, 1974.01.17.
 50-tal. 2. Sverige och Bomben. 0.45.20, 1974.01.18.
 50-tal. 3. ATP och regeringskrisen 1957. 0.36.36, 1974.01.20.
 Folkhemmets hemligfolk. Om IB-aff ren. 1.02.26, 1974.03.08.
 Men sp ren finns kvar. 1. P  jakt efter tiden. 0.28.00, 1975.12.25.
 Men sp ren finns kvar. 2. Pyramiderna. 0.29.33, 1975.12.30.
 Men sp ren finns kvar. 3. Stonehenge. 0.31.45, 1976.01.01.
 Men sp ren finns kvar. 4. R kstenen. 0.26.30, 1976.01.05.
 Ett satans  r. 0.43.43, 1977.12.28.
 Danmarks hemliga vapen. 0.33.00, 1978.08.27.
 1000  r. En svensk historia. 1. Och hans namn var d den. 0.38.15, 1980.10.21.
 1000  r. En svensk historia. 2. Oss och kronan till. 0.38.56, 1980.10.28.
 1000  r. En svensk historia. 3. D  som hundar sin kos. 0.39.23, 1980.11.04.
 1000  r. En svensk historia. 4. L ter dem se med klara  gon. 0.37.00, 1980.11.11.
 1000  r. En svensk historia. 5. Med en kraft av inre eld. 0.39.00, 1980.11.18.
 1000  r. En svensk historia. 6. Helig  r bruttonationalprodukten. 0.35.00, 1980.11.25.
 Svarta madonnans land. 0.28.00, 1980.12.22.
 Mitt ute p  bl nande djupet: Kreta. 0.48.12, 1981.12.30.
 Jag minns min gr na skog. 0.38.00, 1982.05.13.
 Mr Dynamite. 0.44.00, 1983.12.07.
 Sverige Sverige fosterland. 1. N r Sverige blev Sverige. 0.39.00, 1985.05.07.
 Sverige Sverige fosterland. 2. Land du v lsignade. 0.47.00, 1985.05.14.
 Sverige Sverige fosterland. 3. Bara man  r varlig. 0.48.00, 1985.05.16.
 Innan skottet f ll. 0.46.00, 1986.03.12.
 Sammansv rjningen. 1. Vi beh ver ett verktyg. 1.00.00, 1986.03.19.
 Sammansv rjningen. 2. Jag f r min maskerad. 1.00.00, 1986.03.26.
 Sammansv rjningen. 3. Gud bevare mina fiender. 1.00.00, 1986.04.02.
 Olof Palme. En stridens man. 0.48.00, 1986.03.14.
 N r v rlden gick under. 0.34.15, 1986.12.24.
 Fyra dagar som skakade Sverige. 1.05.00, 1988.01.03.
  lddopet  ver Sallav gen. 1.00.00, 1988.08.24.
 Raoul Wallenberg – f nge i Sovjet. 1. De togs till Moskva. 0.55.00, 1990.01.14.
 Raoul Wallenberg – f nge i Sovjet. 2. Jag fruktar att klarhet aldrig vinnes. 1.00.00, 1990.01.15.
 Raoul Wallenberg – f nge i Sovjet. 3. H danefter fick ingenting s gas. 1.00.00, 1990.01.16.
 Raoul Wallenberg – efter glasnost. 0.35.00, 1990.01.16.
 Petra – den f rsvunna staden. 0.38.37, 1990.04.16.
 Sista b ten till Jurkalne. 0.50.00, 1991.03.08.
 I g r r d. 1.00.00, 1991.09.01.

Productions by Olle Häger, with Hans Villius a member of the team

Sjön där Frida Magnusson drucknade. 0.50.00, 1992.03.09.
Jag ser underbara ting. Med Hans Villius längs Nilen. 0.41.55, 1993.01.03.
1000 år på 2 timmar: En svensk historia. 1. 0.56.00, 1993.06.18.
1000 år på 2 timmar: En svensk historia. 2. 0.55.33, 1993.06.25.
Spionen som kom hem till kylan. 0.40.00, 1993.11.11.
Spionjägaren. 0.46.21, 1994.01.06.
G som i hemlig. 0.43.17, 1994.03.03.
Moses, Aron och Karl XII. 0.40.45, 1994.05.17.
Där farlig solen går. 0.42.14, 1994.10.13.
Operation Stella Polaris. 0.36.53, 1995.11.23.
Bland storkar och slott. 0.49.00, 1996.05.02.
Tur retur helvetet. 0.40.35, 1996.10.10.
Hundra svenska år. 1. Folkhemmet tur och retur, 57 min, 1999.09.14.
Hundra svenska år. 2. Kjolarna, hattarna och lite Watzins Keratin, 57 min, 1999.09.21.
Hundra svenska år. 3. I ditt anletes svett, 57 min, 1999.09.28.
Hundra svenska år. 4. De gamla och kloka må le, fallera, 57 min, 1999.10.05.
Hundra svenska år. 5. Jag har varit med om allt som blivit nytt, 57 min, 1999.10.12.
Hundra svenska år. 6. Nu har jag kastat min blå overall, 57 min, 1999.10.19.
Hundra svenska år. 7. Å, dyre prins, 57 min, 1999.10.26.
Hundra svenska år. 8. Vi och världen, 57 min, 1999.11.02.

Productions by Hans Villius

Europa vid avgrunden – ett 20-årsminne. 1. Vägen till katastrofen. 0.49.20, 1959.08.24 (by Villius & Henry Christensson, prod. Ivar Ivre).
Europa vid avgrunden – ett 20-årsminne. 2. 0.43.36, 1959.08.31 (by Villius & Henry Christensson, prod. Ivar Ivre).
Ljubljanka – Lefortovskaja – Vladimir. Vad vi vet och inte vet om Raoul Wallenberg, redovisat av Hans Villius. 0.38.10, 1965.02.02 (prod. Villius & Staffan Lamm).
Endast ett mirakel. Vägen till Dunkerque 1940. 0.28.05, 1965.06.01 (by Villius, prod. Ivar Ivre).
Jag tar hela ansvaret. 0.22.28, 1966.08.21.
Richard Sorge – spion för Sovjet. 0.33.33, 1966.09.13 (by Villius & Lars Hansegård, prod. Villius & Marianne Olsson).
Skotten i Dallas. 0.30.05, 1966.11.20.
Mitt namn är Hammarskjöld. 0.37.53, 1967.03.27.
Renessansfursten. Erik XIV skildrad av hans samtida. 0.16.00, 1967.06.02 (by Villius & Arne Arnbom, prod. Villius).
Frågetecken över Östersjön. 0.28.03, 1967.06.13 (by Villius & Bengt Feldreich, prod. Villius).

Productions by Olle Häger

Båstad – reportage och verklighet. Ca 30 min, 1968.06.18.
Får en skola se ut hur som helst? 0.47.37, 1970.11.29.
Krig i fred. Om ekonomisk krigföring. 0.29.02, 1973.01.12.

Embargo. 1.34.35, 1976.01.06 (by Häger & Carl Torell).
Isgraven. 1.23.05, 1977.12.27 (by Häger & Carl Torell).
Hela kyrkan brinner, 1995.05.21 (prod. Bengt Gunnar Eriksson, script & speaker Häger).
Fy fan ett sånt land! 0.57.00, 2000.10.12.
Minns du det landet? 0.54.00, 2002.01.09.
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2. Trondheim, 1990.04.13.
3. Narvik, 1990.04.16.
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5. Kirkenes, 1990.04.27.

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1. Vägen till kriget, 1989.04.14.
2. Frankrikes fall, 1989.04.21.
3. Londonblitzen, 1989.04.26.
4. Pearl Harbor, 1989.05.05.
5. El Alamein, 1989.05.12.
6. Stalingrad, 1989.05.19.

7. Kriget i Stilla havet [Iwojima], 1989.05.26.
8. Koncentrationslägren, 1989.06.02.
9. Invasionen i Normandie, 1989.06.16.
10. Berlins fall, 1989.06.23.

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