

# Re-versioning History: National Narratives, Global Television and the Re-versioning of *Holocaust/Hitler's Holocaust*<sup>1</sup>

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## **Abstract**

This article suggests that memory studies should consider a transnational approach within the field of media industry studies to understand why memories change when they travel across borders. Comparing television programs from the 1960s and the early 2000s, the article first argues that documentaries about the past have become more transnational and attributes this narrative aspect to efforts to enhance sales in foreign markets. Secondly, the article analyzes different language versions of the documentary series *Hitler's Holocaust/Holocaust* to show that programs become re-nationalized through their adaption to a particular language market (re-versioning).

## **Keywords**

Television; documentary; history; transnational program exchange; re-nationalisation

## **Résumé**

Cet article montre que les études de mémoire devraient envisager une approche transnationale dans le domaine des études de l'industrie audiovisuelle, afin de comprendre les raisons pour lesquelles la mémoire change lorsqu'elle traverse les frontières. En comparant les émissions des années 1960 et celles du début des années 2000, cet article soutient d'abord que les documentaires sur le passé sont devenus plus transnationaux en raison des efforts pour améliorer les ventes sur les marchés étrangers. Par la suite, l'article analyse différentes versions linguistiques de la série documentaire *Hitler's Holocaust/Holocaust* afin de montrer que les émissions sur le passé, dans le même temps qu'elles deviennent plus transnationales, se re-nationalisent en s'adaptant à un marché linguistique particulier.

## **Mots clés**

Télévision; documentaire; histoire; programme d'échange transnational; re-nationalisation

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Cultural memory is becoming more and more transnational. Several scholars have emphasized the transcultural aspects of memory by convincingly arguing that memories travel across borders (Erll 2011), have become cosmopolitan (Levy/Sznaider 2006), are multidirectional (Rothberg 2009), and operate at multiple (local, national and transnational) scales (De Cesari/Rigney 2014, 6). While earlier work within memory studies had focused on national memory cultures and thereby adopted the underlying concept of a homogeneous culture,<sup>2</sup> these scholars are interested in the differences, dynamics and frictions of *transcultural* memories. The reasons for this shift are manifold and can be attributed to developments within academia and current research agendas.<sup>3</sup> The extension towards the transcultural may also be a result of the political and social changes that entail globalization: increasing activity across borders with worldwide effects and impact also on the global media landscape.

Scholars within memory studies have elaborated on the “fundamental mediatedness of all cultural memories” (Erll/Rigney 2009, 6) and therefore it is not surprising that approaches and concepts from media studies are part of this multidisciplinary field. Marianne Hirsch (2012a; 2012b), for example, explains the mediation of memory and the functioning of postmemory by referring to theories of photography. Alison Landsberg (2004) bases her concept of prosthetic memory on theories of cinematic spectatorship. Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney adapt Bolter and Grusin’s concept of remediation to memory studies (2009, 3), and Andrew Hoskins (2011) applies media theories dealing with networks, connectivity and participation to cultural memory. More empirical research into the distribution and circulation of media content, however, has so far not found its way into memory studies.

The discussion of transnational memory could benefit significantly from earlier transnational approaches within media studies. Historians of broadcasting, for example, describe radio and television as a cross-border phenomenon (Bignell/Fickers 2008; Hilmes 2012; Lommers 2012, 31) due to its technology, which allows programs to spill over national borders (Fickers 2016, 9). Secondly, they emphasize programming exchanges<sup>4</sup> and the production of international media events (Henrich-Frank 2010). Television events like the Olympics or the Eurovision Song Contest are rendered possible through the collaboration of national broadcasting institutions and create a shared space of communication. Such major media events foster memories on a transnational scale in different countries, despite the national perspective inherent in international competitions.<sup>5</sup>

The co-operation of television broadcasters also enables an exchange of programming content between different countries. A short time after their (re-)opening European television stations started to air sports and news programs from abroad (Ibid., 73; Hickethier 1998, 138); other genres followed a few years later. High production costs and the growing amount of broadcasting time have made buying or exchanging television content necessary, in order to fill expanding schedules. Viewers in several countries thus remember the same television programs, although in different national settings and languages. Comparative studies still have to explore how the meaning of different language versions varies due to their re-versioning (i.e. dubbing or subtitling).

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2 For more on the homogeneous concept of culture in memory studies’ second phase, see Erll (2011).

3 See the opening example of Rigney (2012).

4 Much of this literature is related to Cold War history, like Heimann (2006), Beutelschmidt/Oehmig/Yurtaeva (2013), Henrich-Franke/Immel (2013), Gumbert (2014).

5 The effect of media events on collective memory has been discussed by Dayan/Katz (1992, 211ff); however, in their study they emphasize how media events facilitate *national* integration.

Research into prevailing economic and industrial practices within the media industry could also help in understanding how media distribution affects the circulation of mediated memories. While British history programming has already been discussed in the context of an increasingly competitive television market (Gray/Bell 2013), most transnational approaches within media industry studies deal with television formats and their adaptation for local markets (cf. Moran 2009; Oren/Shahaf 2012).<sup>6</sup> Despite the fact that research into the global television market focuses on very different television genres (reality TV, soap operas), these studies provide valuable insights for discussing how cultural memories travel across borders.

In what follows I argue that the narratives of television documentaries about the past have changed significantly due to their production for international distribution. By comparing programs from the 1960s and the early 2000s, I will show that documentaries about World War II have become more transnational. These programs not only travel more easily across borders, but today also address a broader (transnational) television audience. By analyzing different language versions of the documentary series *Hitler's Holocaust/Holokaust*, I will furthermore point out how re-versioning a television program for a particular local market affects its content and argue that such differences result from cultural as well as technical factors (e.g., national television standards).

## 1. The National Memory of Television

Until recently, television documentaries about 20<sup>th</sup>-century history approached the past by and large from a national perspective. Regardless of their respective emphasis on political, military or social history, many of these programs depicted the events or the lives and experiences of the people within the framework of a nation-state. Given the national orientation that dominated both television broadcasting and the scholarly fields of history and memory, this is not remarkable in itself. On the one hand, television programs correspond with the “nation-centrism” (Iriye 2013, 3) that informed the study of modern history since its emergence in the 19th century. Nation-state, nationhood and national communities play a key role in the analysis of history - as world historians and post-colonial scholars have critically remarked (Manning 2003, 10). The nation is also a structuring principle of cultural memory that is fostered, for example, by monuments and official holidays Nora (1984-1992).

On the other hand, television programs' focus on national history is also linked to the institutional setup and the programming mandate of television. When television emerged as a new medium, it was organized, along with radio, as a national institution. Airwaves for broadcasting were allocated to nation-states, national commissions administered their use, and the licenses granted to broadcasters were effective within the national territory.

This national organization affects the content of radio and television, since broadcast licenses are subject to certain conditions. Amongst these is the requirement that (part of) the programming has to serve the interests of society (with ‘society’ defined as the citizens of the particular country).<sup>7</sup> Given this mandate, it is no wonder that radio and television programming often strives to contribute to national identity and a sense of community

<sup>6</sup> Analysis of media policy and global media conglomerates (cf. Holt 2011, Birkinbine/Gomez/Wasco 2017) are other important areas within media industry studies that deal with transnational aspects.

<sup>7</sup> This is not only true for public broadcasting but is also the basic premise for commercial broadcasters, as Michele Hilmes reminds us in her discussion of the Radio Act of 1927 (2013, 68ff.).

(de Leeuw 2008). Referring to the national ideology of public-service broadcasting, Jérôme Bourdon states that broadcast media has helped to “consolidate, build and transmit a national culture” (Bourdon 2012, 114).<sup>8</sup>

Both the organizational form of television and its programming were thus “central to the modernist intent of engineering a national identity” (Chalaby 2005, 1). Beyond fostering an imagined community of television viewers, individual programs also contribute to the construction of national identity through their content. The characters and locations of fictional television shows, the selection of events on which factual programs report, and the public issues that television selects and addresses in a variety of different programs, are by and large defined nationally.

In his discussion of news programs, Stuart Hall (1989) points out television’s function in integrating the different groups of a complex society and describes how the news explores and negotiates the views and opinions of its audience. Although his analysis dates back to the early 1970s,<sup>9</sup> it can be argued that television programs about contemporary history engage their viewers in a similar manner. These documentaries cater to the different experiences of their (national) audience and in doing so contribute to the negotiation of a society’s cultural memory.

Given the nation-centrism of history and the social function of television, the national perspective in documentaries about the past does not come as a surprise. These programs negotiate conceptions and memories of historical events that prevail within a particular society. Emma Hanna (2007, 94) describes for example the BBC series *The Great War* (1964) as a commemoration of World War One that, 50 years after the event, still was a “barely-healed national trauma”. According to Hanna (Ibid., 106), the series reacted to the position that the Great War held in British culture and at the same time served “as a repository for human memory”, since veterans shared their war experience with the audience and thereby contributed to Britain’s memory of World War One.

In the early 1960s several European television stations devoted big-budget documentary series to historical events that were key to their country’s national identity and central to its memory culture. While the BBC dealt in its 26-part series *The Great War with World War One*, the 21-part series *De Bezetting (The Occupation, 1960)* by Dutch broadcaster VARA described the German occupation of the Netherlands (1940-1945), and the West German 14-part series *Das Dritte Reich (The Third Reich, 1960/61)* depicted the Nazi era (1933-1945). These documentary series catered explicitly to the experience and memory of a national audience. In the case of *De Bezetting*, the series’ goal from the outset was to view the Second World War from a Dutch national perspective (“De Bezetting van Joe de Jong,” [anderetijden.nl](http://anderetijden.nl)). Accordingly, presenter Loe de Jong summarizes the wartime events from a Dutch point-of-view and numerous (Dutch) witnesses describe their personal experiences during the occupation. *Das Dritte Reich* addresses its German viewers even more directly. Identifying himself as German, an anonymous male narrator who summarizes the events in voice-over asks the audience why “we Germans” condoned the deportation of “our Jewish neighbors”.

Like *The Great War*, both the Dutch and the West German series intervened actively in the formation of a collective memory. While *De Bezetting* emphasized the occupation as a shared (Dutch) experience, *Das Dritte*

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<sup>8</sup> Due to the current transformations of television (niche programming, subscription etc.) this definition is highly contested (c.f. Katz/Scannell 2009).

<sup>9</sup> Hall’s study was first submitted as a paper for a UNESCO conference in 1973.

*Reich* reminded its (German) viewers of their responsibility and guilt which, in the early 1960s, they tended to deny.

## 2. Cross-Border Program Exchange

Although broadcasters produced television first and foremost for transmission within a particular national territory, their programs soon began to cross national borders. Research shows that, in the 1960s, the amount of television material of foreign origin grew rapidly (Henrich-Franke 2010, 73). Since developing and producing television programs is an expensive matter, television stations started to fill their schedules with imports from abroad. Foreign programs arrived on European television screens in different ways: broadcasters adapted entertainment ideas from abroad (Bourdon 2012, 114; Moran 2004, 262), bought ‘canned’ (i.e. recorded) television series from the US<sup>10</sup> (Henrich-Franke 2010, 77; Hickethier 1998, 233 and 236-237) or – fostered by their alliance within the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) – traded their television programs on a non-profit basis (Henrich-Franke 2010, 75).<sup>11</sup>

Based on his research on transnational activities within the EBU between the 1950s and 1970s, Christian Henrich-Franke points out two characteristic traits of imported programs. He states firstly that programs “which were marked by the lowest degree of national or cultural features were ... easiest to trade” (Ibid., 77) and, secondly, that documentaries were generally considered to be the most suitable genre for programming exchange (Ibid.).

The import of television programs often requires supplementary production steps. Due to language differences, foreign programs cannot simply be aired in their original version but first have to be translated into the respective language of the importing country. This process of re-versioning includes the translation of a program’s script<sup>12</sup> and subsequently the dubbing or subtitling of its soundtrack.<sup>13</sup> These additional operations explain the preference for importing documentaries. Due to their use of a voice-over commentary, the sound track could be decoupled from the images and dubbed more cost-efficiently than fictional TV-programs, whose re-versioning needed actors to lip-synch the translated dialogues.

However, not all documentaries travel easily across borders, despite the genre’s suitability for programming exchange. After all, it is the content and not the form that determines the “degree of national or cultural features” (Ibid.) of a television program. It can be assumed, for example, that documentaries about wildlife or

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10 In the case of West Germany in the 1960s, television imports from the U.S. included children’s programming such as *Flipper* and *Lassie*, and genre series such as *Bonanza*, *Perry Mason*, *77 Sunset Strip* and *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.* (cf. Hickethier 1998, 233 and 236f.). In the early 1970s UNESCO funded a survey of the international flow of television programming (Nordenstreng/Varis 1974); however, comparative research into the history of U.S. imports has still to be done. Focusing on television at present, Kuipers (2008) compares imports of U.S. programming in France, Italy, the Netherlands and Poland.

11 In the beginning this exchange took place on an “ad hoc, one-to-one basis”; only in the early 1960s did festivals and fairs emerge that facilitated a more organized way of trade programming (Moran/Keane 2006, 73).

12 Henrich-Franke mentions that producing a new voice-over commentary implied an opportunity “to nationalize” a program (2010, 78), i.e. to give it a national meaning (73).

13 The different cultures of dubbing and subtitling are related to the size (and budget) of the national media industry. While in the big (West) German film and television market all foreign imports are dubbed, the small Dutch market provides cost-efficient subtitles. A comparative study of translation traditions in European television history is still missing, but in her analysis of current programming Kuipers addresses some implications of dubbing and subtitling. She argues that subtitles (and single-voice translations by a reader as used on Eastern European television) bring out the ‘foreignness’ of imported programming, whereas dubbing ‘naturalizes’ them (2008, 186). This ‘naturalization’ also includes adaptations to suit the respective national culture.

technology were more likely to be traded than programs about history like *The Great War*, *De Bezetting* or *Das Dritte Reich*, whose content was shaped by national perspectives. Particularly in view of public broadcasting's programming requirements, it does not stand to reason that television stations would import documentaries whose narrative diverges from or is in conflict with their own (national) perspective. As mentioned above, series about the past cater to a particular (national) audience, and their narrative differs from the experiences and memories of viewers in other countries. This is particularly true for documentaries like *The Great War*, *De Bezetting* and *Das Dritte Reich* that depict war and occupation, since the perception of such events diverges enormously between former enemies. One would expect that programs produced to negotiate the cultural memory of a particular society were hardly suitable for programming exchange.

It is therefore remarkable that both *The Great War* and *De Bezetting* did cross borders and were broadcast on West-German television.<sup>14</sup> The reasons for importing British and Dutch wartime documentaries still have to be analysed, but most likely they are linked to the effort of coming to terms with the belligerent German past. The public German broadcasters not only produced self-critical programs, such as *Das Dritte Reich*,<sup>15</sup> but also raised awareness for the suffering caused by Germany during the war by presenting 'foreign' narratives of wartime events that highlighted how war and occupation were experienced on the other side of the frontline.

*The Great War* and *De Bezetting* were not broadcast in their original version but re-versioned for West German television. While no significant information has yet been found about the adaptation of *The Great War* (apart from its listing in the TV guide *Hör Zu* in 1965 under the title *Der Große Krieg: Die Geschichte des Ersten Weltkriegs*), there is some information available about *De Bezetting*. The 21-part series was cut down to four parts and complemented by a studio discussion ("De Bezetting van Loe de Jong"). An analysis of *Die Besatzung: Die Niederlande 1940-1945*, which aired in October and November 1966 on the regional channel WDR (Westdeutscher Rundfunk), comparing it with the Dutch original version still has to be carried out. It would be also interesting to learn more about the decisions made during the re-versioning process.<sup>16</sup> Henrich-Franke mentions that imported programs were 'nationalized' (2010, 78) and one wonders how a program that catered to the Dutch memory of war was adapted for German television.

In his introduction to *Die Besatzung*, presenter Heiner Lichtenstein explicitly states the reasons for broadcasting the documentary series. He explains that WDR felt sorrow and in the aftermath of the German occupation was seeking a better understanding of the events.<sup>17</sup> On the other hand he challenges the narrative of the Dutch resistance (emphasized in the original Dutch version) by asking De Jong (the creator of *De Bezetting*, who was also involved in its re-versioning) during the studio discussion how many people were actually involved in the resistance. German viewers who were ashamed of the small number of German resistance fighters might have been set at ease by De Jong's answer: "not more than 1-2%" (*Andere Tijden*,

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14 Although according to Henrich-Franke historical documentaries were not suitable for programming exchange, this import corresponds with his finding that programs were mostly traded within two separate regions, one of them being the "Anglo-Germanic" (2010, 77).

15 Other programs that dealt self-accusingly with the Nazi past include the documentary *Auf den Spuren des Henkers* (1961) or the first episode of the feature series *Am Grünen Rand der Spree* (1960) that visualizes a mass execution and whose protagonist agonizes over the fact that he did not help the victims.

16 Unfortunately WDR did not archive the production documents, but the footage itself can be purchased from the commercial subsidiary of the public service broadcaster WDR.

17 In German: "im Interesse einer besseren Verständigung" (*Andere Tijden*, film). Retrospectively Lichtenstein explains that, as neighbors, Germans and Dutch had to become friends and therefore needed to know each others' past (*Andere Tijden*, film).

film).

In the case of *De Bezetting*, it was the effort of a West German television station to support international understanding that enabled Dutch memories to travel across the border. It can be argued though, that the transnational project of *Die Besatzung* in the end served national interests. Fostering understanding and coming to terms with the past was in line with West Germany's attempt to re-establish the state and its people as a trustworthy partner in the international community. At the same time, it is doubtful whether Dutch experiences found their way into German cultural memory of the war. *Die Besatzung* had low ratings and its broadcasting was an isolated undertaking without the subsequent events that would have been necessary to incorporate Dutch experiences into German cultural memory.

### 3. Transnational Narratives

In terms of the production and distribution of television much has changed since the 1960s. Back then, programs were produced for local audiences and exchanged on a non-profit basis. Today television producers and license holders aim for export and international sales. In addition to showcasing and selling their programs at international television fairs (Moran 2009), producers try to generate attention for their programs in different national television markets, for example by casting actors from various countries. Additional income can also be secured by selling licenses for television formats whose program formulas are adapted and remade in other countries to suit the "mentality, taste and tradition" of the respective local audience (Bourdon 2012, 115).<sup>18</sup> Given this globalization of the television market and the multiplication of television channels, it is no surprise that contemporary historical documentaries are also distributed internationally. Due to the deregulation of telecommunication markets in the 1980s, the number of television channels grew rapidly, resulting in an increasing demand for content. In particular special interest channels like *The History Channel* (since 2008 *History*) have contributed to the international circulation of history-related programs.

The extended distribution of these programs becomes apparent in their marketing. The German broadcaster ZDF, for example, targets international clients with its presentation of programs at trade fairs or on sales websites. The titles of their historical documentary series are translated into English (e.g., *Hitler – A Profile*, *Last Secrets of the Third Reich* or *The Invasion: the Outbreak of WW II*), the programs are promoted in English-language trailers, and licensing offers are listed according to different language areas.

The transnational orientation of television also has an impact on content. Although broadcasters still produce programs about national history (Gray/Bell 2013, 19),<sup>19</sup> many historical documentaries shift away from national narratives and address topics that do not require a particular national perspective. For example, ZDF produces and sells biographies and documentaries about ancient or medieval history (the Roman Empire, the Celts or the Limes) that are usually devoid of national narratives.

Furthermore, programs increasingly integrate multiple perspectives, thereby also addressing viewers of other countries. ZDF had a particular 'foreign' audience in mind, beyond its German viewers, when it produced *The Invasion: The Outbreak of WWII* (2014, German title: *Zweiter Weltkrieg*). Developed in collaboration with

<sup>18</sup> For more about television format see Moran (2004) and Oren/Shahaf (2012).

<sup>19</sup> The emergence of history related television formats like *100 Greatest Britons/De Grooste Nederlander/Unsere Besten* caters to national narratives due to their local adaptation.

TVP Poland, the two-part documentary aimed at resonating with both German and Polish cultural memory. The program integrates Polish and German narratives of World War II and has witnesses from both countries talk about their experiences during the war.<sup>20</sup> Combining different perspectives, the program presents a variety of perceptions and memories of a historical event that are not necessarily determined by national belonging. The multiplication of narratives and perspectives also clearly serves an economic aim, since it increases the program's chances of international distribution.

ZDF's 6-part series *Hitler's Holocaust* (2000, German title: *Holocaust*) goes even a step further in presenting the event from a transnational perspective. The series combines interviews with witnesses, historical footage, contemporary images and a voice-over narrator to depict the systematic persecution and extermination of European Jews. The series does not create its transnational perspective by 'cosmopolitanizing' the Holocaust, i.e., combining national narratives with universal conceptions and de-contextualizing the historical event (Levy/Sznaider 2006). On the contrary: it describes historically specific events and presents them as the common destiny of the people who experienced them. On the one hand, the program brings out the transnational dimension of the Holocaust by interviewing contemporary witnesses who are located in different countries and speak in various languages about events that took place in a variety of places. On the other hand, these witnesses are set in scene more or less identically, regardless of their different backgrounds and experiences. They are all filmed in close-up against a black backdrop and illuminated from the side, highlighting every facial movement. This visual leveling of the witnesses corresponds to their narrative treatment, since the arrangement of fragments from their interviews constitutes a shared experience.

A short scene from the first episode with the title "Manhunt" exemplifies how *Hitler's Holocaust* combines excerpts from interviews and archival footage to create the impression of a shared experience. "Manhunt" summarizes the Liepāja massacres (1941) in which Nazi *Einsatzgruppen*, German soldiers and Latvian collaborators killed Jews, Romani and Communists in a series of mass executions between June and December 1941. Two witnesses remember the massacres: Fanny Segal, who is introduced by captions as a "Jew from Libau" and was still a child at the time, and Karl-Heinz Mangelsen, a German marine. In this scene, three fragments are used from each interview. Fanny Segal recalls in front of the camera how her father mentioned newly-dug graves, how he was arrested and gave his watch to her because he had an uneasy premonition of his own death, and how she found out about his death when she went to the prison to bring him a coat and learned from a policeman that her father did not need the coat anymore. Karl-Heinz Mangelsen describes the position from which he watched an execution, explains that the prisoners had to walk to a pit, and regrets that he did not report the shootings to his officer. His three statements are framed by Segal's memories and intercut with archival footage of an execution. The particular combination of the two witnesses whose testimonies are arranged in a somewhat chronological order (arrest, execution, information about death) intertwines their memories as if they were recalling the same event.<sup>21</sup> The black-and-white images intensify this unification,

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20 ZDF already experimented in the early 1990s with this form: *Der Verdammte Krieg* (*The Damned War*, 1991) and *Entscheidung Stalingrad* (*Decision Stalingrad*, 1993) were German-Russian co-productions that dealt with the suffering of soldiers and civilians on the Eastern Front of World War II, combining the memories of former enemies. By contrast, the documentary series *Die Deutschen im Zweiten Weltkrieg* (*The Germans in WW2*, 1985), co-produced in the mid 1980s by the West-German ARD and the Austrian broadcaster ORF, focused on memories of people who belonged to the Axis powers, and the title leaves no doubt about the program's focalized narrative.

21 Using a similar form of montage, other scenes from *Hitler's Holocaust* bring together residents and German administrative officers of the Warsaw Ghetto, or German soldiers and Jewish children whose parents were executed.

since they depict the very same executions that the voice-over commentary mentions.<sup>22</sup> By presenting film clips of an execution, “Manhunt” seems to show exactly what Mangelsen had witnessed and where Segal lost her father.<sup>23</sup> The documentary thus creates a community of ‘participants’ in history, a community in which national belonging seems to be irrelevant.<sup>24</sup>

By combining the personal experiences of witnesses with different nationalities, *Hitler’s Holocaust* sets national narratives aside. It refrains from arranging events according to countries and constitutes a community of witnesses, regardless of their national or religious identity. These features contribute significantly to the program’s transnational dimension, making it attractive for television stations in a variety of countries.

#### 4. Re-versioning the Holocaust: *Hitler’s Holocaust* and *Holokaust*

While *Hitler’s Holocaust* basically tells a transnational story, the program’s adaptation for a particular audience could easily re-nationalize the documentary. In Germany the program aired on ZDF under the title *Holokaust*. The producers explained the unusual spelling by stating that the letter K presents the Holocaust as a German crime (Knopp 2000, 22).<sup>25</sup> Broadly discussed in the press prior to its broadcasting, this very explicit ‘nationalization’ first and foremost promoted the series. However, it also points to the persistence of the national audience as a category that broadcasters target with their programs about a (presumably) shared past.

Re-versioning *Hitler’s Holocaust* for different national television markets affected not only the series’ title; the whole documentary series had to be translated into the language of the broadcasting country. Also the length of the episodes had to be adapted to the respective programming standard, leading to deleted sequences and a rearranging of the program’s order. While German television aired a 40-minute and 20-second version of the first episode “Manhunt”, the British version broadcast on Channel 4 was 49 minutes long and on Czech television the program lasted 50 minutes and 45 seconds.

Given the diverse languages of the interviews, not all accounts of witnesses had to be translated. The English adaptation of *Hitler’s Holocaust* kept English statements in their original version and translated only interviews with non-English-speaking witnesses; similarly, the German *Holokaust* translated only testimonies that were not in German. Usually the sound mixing allows the viewers to identify the witness’s language and hear his or her original voice before a voice-over starts to translate the statement. This voice-over differs from the voice of the narrator and corresponds with the interviewee’s gender, i.e. male and female dubbers lend their voices to the witnesses who testified in a ‘foreign’ language.

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22 “Manhunt” even insinuates that Mangelsen shot the short film. The voice-over identifies the images as filmed by a marine, captions introduce the witness as a ‘marine,’ and the combination of images and testimony emphasize that Mangelsen’s position corresponded with the camera’s point of view. However, it was Reinhard Wiener who filmed the shooting and later commented on the circumstances of the filming (see Kuball 1980, 115ff.; Ebbrecht-Hartmann 2016).

23 The film’s particular way of presenting turns viewers into secondary witnesses to the killings, see Hirsch 2001, 9.

24 For a more detailed analysis of this scene and of the transformation of German soldiers into victims of history see Keilbach (2003, 169-172). Wulf Kansteiner (2012, 339) argues that the German witness channels a widely used defensive strategy of the Nazi and post-Nazi years and that the editors of the program seized the opportunity to show the witness in tears.

25 The English title suggests in contrast Hitler’s responsibility, although in terms of content the program leaves no doubt that Germans were accountable for the murder of Jews. The Hitler title seems therefore mostly a marketing strategy; furthermore it continues the series of ZDF productions about the Third Reich (each 6 episodes) that were entitled *Hitler – A Profile* (*Hitler – Eine Bilanz*, 1995), *Hitler’s Henchmen I* and *Hitler’s Henchmen II* (*Hitlers Helfer*, 1996 and 1998), *Hitler’s Warriors* (*Hitlers Krieger*, 1998), *Hitler’s Children* (*Hitlers Kinder*, 2000), and *Hitler’s Women* (*Hitlers Frauen*, 2001).

The difference between ‘original’ and translated accounts is significant with respect to their meaning and affective impact. Interviewees communicate not only verbally, but also express themselves (and their emotions) bodily and vocally. In *Hitler’s Holocaust* a voice-over translates verbal utterances and lighting from the side makes facial expressions visible, but the vocal expressions of the witnesses are missing when their voices are replaced by a disembodied voice-over. Dubbing their statements strips witnesses of their expressiveness and reduces the emotional power of their testimonies.

In the above-mentioned Liepāja scene, the English translation of Karl-Heinz Mangelsen’s (originally German) statement excludes his short emotional loss of control. At the beginning of the third interview fragment, Mangelsen grimaces for a few seconds (presumably to hold back tears) and then starts sobbing. However, the voice-over begins right before Mangelsen’s audible expression of emotions. After a rather incomprehensible translation of his first words (“It’s got to happen”) which indicate an irritation, the voice-over continues as though nothing unusual had happened and says: “I should have done something much earlier. If I’d said something immediately perhaps it would had been cleared up”. By cutting off Mangelsen’s sobbing and intoning his statement as a passing remark, the English version of *Hitler’s Holocaust* deprives the witness of his emotions – which are, in contrast, virtually spotlighted in the German version.

The very same fragment is used in *Holokaust* to point to the suffering of German soldiers. The program takes the time to show Mangelsen’s loss of control and lets him formulate his strange remarks in his own words. In the original version, the first sentence is clearly understandable (“*Musste das sein?*”) while the second part of his statement is incoherent (“*Hätt’ich viel früher machen müssen. Wenn ich das gleich gemeldet hätte, vielleicht wär ‘aufgeräumt worden, nich’?*”).<sup>26</sup> This rather unintelligible interview fragment (what exactly should he have reported earlier and what does he mean by “clearing up”?) functions first and foremost as a display of emotions. The veteran’s torment is further emphasized by combining his statement with the calm utterances of a Holocaust survivor. As I have argued elsewhere (Keilbach 2008, 166), this image of afflicted German soldiers emerged during heated controversy about the role of the Wehrmacht sparked by a widely discussed exhibition about the Army’s systematic involvement in war crimes and the Holocaust. The television documentary *Holokaust* clearly took position in this national debate by depicting German soldiers as victims of history.

A comparison between the presentation and role of Mangelsen in the English and German versions of *Hitler’s Holocaust* illustrates the effects that translating and dubbing can have on a program’s content. Beyond the choice of words, the voice quality, intonation and particular sound mixing also account for a program’s substance. Mangelsen’s English dubber, for example, sometimes interprets his statements with a military intonation and sometimes in passing or as a throwaway remark, as if his words were not that important. In *Holokaust*, by contrast, the two dubbers who translate all non-German testimonies speak in sad, low, muted voices that sometimes even crack. There is a particular ‘nearness’ to these voices: the breathing is audible and every hesitation seems meaningful. The voice-over translations in the German *Holokaust* turn the witnesses’ statements into emotional accounts, whereas their interpretation in the English *Hitler’s Holocaust* wilfully diminishes emotions or even dismisses them. The quality and materiality of a voice can thus significantly contribute to a program’s argument.

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26 Translation: “Was this really necessary? I should have done it earlier. If I had reported it immediately, perhaps it would had been cleared up, wouldn’t it?”

This is also true for the voice of a documentary's narrator. The voice-over that leads through *Hitler's Holocaust* and *Holokaust*, bridges disconnected scenes, and contextualizes film footage and interview fragments differs significantly due to the (male) narrator's voice quality and intonation. While the British program is presented by an unobtrusive, matter-of-fact voice, the narrator of the German voice-over has a deep, sonorous voice. His intonation is unusual for a documentary, since he speaks slowly, lowers his voice at the end of each sentence and pauses meaningfully. The sad and sombre atmosphere that the voice-over creates is complemented by corresponding background music.<sup>27</sup> With its respective choice of certain narrators and dubbers and the particular style of staging their voices, the German version thus emphasizes emotional aspects, whereas the English version has a more 'objective' tone.

In terms of content, facts and figures are more important in the English than in the German version. The narrator of *Hitler's Holocaust* contextualizes events; the material (interviews and footage) is presented in more detail and in complete sentences. The text of the German voice-over commentary, by contrast, uses shorter sentences that function more like captions due to their brevity and missing verbs. The text sometimes alludes to events instead of naming and explaining them. This can be illustrated by comparing how the series's first episode begins in the two different versions.

The episode opens with the invasion of the Soviet Union. Referring to short witness statements and Nazi footage, the German narrator of *Holokaust* uses single words like "*Vernichtungskrieg*" or "*Verschwörungswahn*" to summarize its remark that Hitler blamed the Jews for the war. After the title sequence, the voice-over refers to a witness's mentioning "*Lebensraum*" and states that territorial space was not the only reason (without further clarification) and that the troops had orders to commit war crimes ("*Es geht nicht nur um Lebensraum. Die Truppe führt Befehle mit sich, die zu Kriegsverbrechen auffordern*"). Implicitly relating to the simultaneously displayed images, the narrator continues in the present tense that "this enemy" is to be annihilated ("*Dieser Gegner soll vernichtet werden*") and says (my translation): "Murders of captured political officers. Commissar's order. It is not carried out everywhere, but 30,000 fall victim to it" ("*Mord an gefangenen Politoffizieren. Kommissarbefehl. Nicht überall wird er befolgt, doch 30.000 fallen ihm zum Opfer*").

The English voice-over, by contrast, does not mention the war of extermination or a conspiracy against Jews. Instead, the narrator introduces the program by saying: "This is the story of his [Hitler's] Holocaust told through the eyes of perpetrators and victims". After the title sequence, the narrator continues: "Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union was known as operation Barbarossa. Its purpose was to extend German territory. But there were other motives. Hitler's aim was to destroy the Soviet system, which he believed to be run by Jewish communists".

Comparing the English and German language versions with regard to the narrator's voice and spoken text shows that *Hitler's Holocaust* and *Holokaust* differ in terms of their tone, atmosphere and viewer engagement. The two versions clearly address different audiences. While *Hitler's Holocaust* attaches value to providing its viewers with historical facts, *Holokaust* assumes an audience that is able to complement the voice-over's many hints. *Holokaust* not only brings the witnesses emotionally and acoustically closer, but also involves its viewers intellectually, moving them to engage with the past.

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<sup>27</sup> The use of different music in the German and the English version cannot be discussed within the framework of this article.

These examples show how easy it is to adapt even a television program with a transnational perspective to a national memory culture. Local producers of different language versions take into account what (they think) a particular audience knows about history (which determines the amount of historical information), and also consider an audience's relation to the interviewees (emotional nearness) as well as their reaction to national discussions about the past.

Although *Hitler's Holocaust* and *Holokaust* can be understood as two language versions of the same historical documentary series, they are at the same time two very different programs. In addition to the respective national re-versioning, their different lengths also affect their content. Interestingly the 10-minute longer version not only includes additional scenes but the composition of the scenes varies too. Interviews and footage were rearranged and their new combination changes the program's rationale.

The first episode of *Hitler's Holocaust* addresses the fact that Lithuanians massacred their Jewish neighbors by including two different sections of footage showing cruelties and the testimonies of perpetrators, German bystanders and survivors. The shorter German version also mentions the participation of local people (albeit in a different context), but the explicitness of the images and the intensity of witnesses who describe how the Jews were beaten to death add much more emphasis to the massacre in the English version. The latter is also more explicit regarding the knowledge and guilt of Germans. At the end of "Manhunt", the documentary presents several German witnesses who acknowledge that soldiers as well as people at home knew about the atrocities. They mention high-ranking officers in the Wehrmacht who did not stop the massacres, reflect on their dilemma as soldiers whose combat actions allowed the SS to continue with mass executions in the East, and plainly admit that the Germans did inhumane things. In the shorter version of *Holokaust* these statements are missing. Only the voice-over mentions that German soldiers were involved in killings, that they did not dare to intervene and that "Hitler's generals" did not protest. The witnesses just confirm that the Wehrmacht leaders adjusted to the crimes and mention others who boasted about killing people.

The longer English version of the program facilitates not only the presentation of additional aspects and more diverse viewpoints, but also makes a more complex argument. *Holokaust* concludes a scene about Soviet crimes in the Ukraine by immediately explaining that this massacre was blamed on the Jews and provoked the Lviv pogroms. However, the extended version is more multilayered. Before addressing the pogroms, *Hitler's Holocaust* explains that the Soviet massacre reinforced anti-Soviet sentiments among German soldiers and allowed them to justify the war against 'the Russians'. By adding a few film images and the statement of one witness, the program reveals that the Nazis capitalized twofold on the Soviet crime, and that German soldiers knew very well that the Jews were not responsible.

A final example illustrates how rearranging scenes affects their meaning. Both versions present a short amateur film that shows a number of middle-aged men in front of their military tents, busy with their morning rituals (washing their faces, shaving, brushing teeth). *Hitler's Holocaust* presents these images early in the film, after addressing the murderous activities of the Einsatzgruppen. The short film is preceded by testimonies of barbarity: first a German soldier, close to tears, describes the killing of a young boy, then another witness recounts how Jews were burned in a synagogue. "The next morning, soldiers of the 23rd infantry division carried on as usual," comments the voice-over narrator, the amateur footage thereby implying some sort of relation between the men and the preceding scenes. *Holokaust* shows the same amateur footage much later

and in the context of the German invasion of the Soviet Union. The ‘camping scene’ is followed by a witness stating that he was not aware of what happened to civilians in the conquered territory. Then *Holokaust* changes topic abruptly and focuses on everyday life in Berlin. Although the narrator asks in both versions if the soldiers depicted in the amateur film knew about the killing of the Jews, the particular positioning of the footage results in very different readings of the images. In *Holokaust* the footage show soldiers who are having fun during their advance into the Soviet Union, whereas in *Hitler’s Holocaust* we see the men responsible for the cruelties reported on a few seconds before. It is obvious that the placement of the short amateur film carries ideological implications; however, it is important to note that the scene was rearranged in the first place because of television programs’ varying standard lengths.

## 5. Conclusion

Historical television documentaries have travelled across borders since the 1960s – initially more on a European than a global scale. As programming exchange became more commercial and the television market more global, the content of these documentaries changed. Their perspectives on the past became more multifaceted, primarily because transnational narratives enhance sales in foreign markets.

However, the comparison of different language versions has shown that, despite their transnational content, documentaries about history are re-nationalized when they travel across national borders. Their re-versioning takes local needs into account (such as the state of historical knowledge) and corresponds with a nation’s historical discourse. Technology and a national media industry’s tradition of translating define the extent of a program’s adaptation. While the use of subtitles limits changes, dubbing facilitates unnoticed transformations with regard to content.

National and ideological considerations may play an important role in re-versioning historical television documentaries, as the controversy about the German Wehrmacht shows. But changes also result from different broadcasting conventions, such as a program’s standard length. To obtain a better understanding of the interplay of ideological, technological, commercial and customary considerations it is necessary to investigate on the one hand contractual arrangements and to explore on the others hand the workflow of re-versioning in more detail. What are buyers allowed to change? Do they consult with producers of the original program (as is the case when adapting a television format)? On what grounds does an editorial staff determine how to re-version a program? How are decisions made about the rearrangement of scenes, the substitution of music or the use of a particular voice?

As the analysis has shown there are good reasons to argue that historical television documentaries function as national sites of memory. However, this does not contradict the transcultural dimension of memory that scholars are recently exploring. It rather illuminates cultural conventions and how national media industries (are used to) make sense of the past. Furthermore the analysis shows that the different concepts mentioned at the beginning of this text are not exclusive. By evoking emotional viewing experiences the more recent programs discussed above clearly allow for prosthetic memories. They integrate multifaceted stories, can be connected with other histories and resonate multidirectionally. After all, television is just one of the many elements that produce, circulate and reflect (trans)cultural memory.

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