

## **A story about random memories and fragmented history on screens**

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On April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2011, Tim Berners-Lee and former British Prime Minister Gordon Brown discussed the future of the web at the University of Geneva<sup>1</sup>. Both of them agreed that web access remains a major problem in many parts of the world, especially Africa. Broadband would not be the ideal solution; better would be access *via* cell phones or *via* a voice-based technology. Who could have thought in 1989 that Berners-Lee had developed what he is now calling *a platform you can do everything with*? Who could have thought that two decades later that web access has become a potential question of democratic right?

So, when considering the rapid social, political and cultural evolutions of the last twenty years, becomes more and more complicated to understand the writing and making of history as well as the construction of collective memories. A great number of 'events', information and souvenirs appear and disappear daily on our screens (cell phones, laptops, television...). And, once again, the recent and ongoing changes of the last months, also called the *Arab Spring*, underline the importance and the potential of media technologies as performers of events and as potential history accelerators or platforms. Conferences and books are already announced, asking researchers to explain these events almost while they are occurring: how do new media technologies interfere with future or contemporary historical events or the construction of individual and collective memories? Of course, the relation between media, historical events and collective memories is not a new topic for researchers. Many studies in diverse scientific fields have shown that there is no history without media and no media without history (Crivellari, F. et al, 2004; Dijk, 2007; Hoskins, 2001; Ludes, 1999; Volkmer (ed.), 2006). At the same time, the digitization of memory has become a main topic in media studies underlining the potentials and limits of new storage possibilities and the difficulty to analyze the multiplication of fragmented stories and memories on the web (Casalegno, 2001; Donk, 2009; Hoskins, 2009). In this context, Hoskins argues that

The rapid emergence of digital media poses new conceptual and empirical challenges for our understanding of the nature of contemporary memory. This importantly includes the bridging of the personal and the collective. (Hoskins, 2009: 28)

Consequently, it could be taken for granted that media studies have to rethink methods and scientific patterns in view of the upcoming research objects associated to these

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<sup>1</sup> URL: <http://www.unige.ch/presse/archives/2011/web-tblgb.html> (last access: 2011/04/20).

technological transitions. Is it necessary to follow theoretically and methodologically what Tim Berners-Lee is proclaiming: ‘the web is not just like a sophisticated TV where you read information, it has to be participative’<sup>2</sup>? Given the rapid evolution of information technology, does it really mean that media studies (or other scientific fields) should be participative and as fast as the technologies they think about? I argue that television-analysis contributes to a better comprehension of new media technologies as memory and history makers because television is already *bridging the individual* (Bergson, 1978) *and the collective memory* (Halbwachs, 1950). For this reason and for a better contextualization of the so-called *Arab Spring*, it is worth looking back and reflecting on what preceded the challenges of today.

This paper discusses the importance of television, and in particular of television news, in contemporary history telling and making and also reflects on the construction of individual and collective memories. Two major televised events in contemporary history will be analyzed in this context: the fall of the Berlin wall and September 11. The moving pictures of these events firstly appeared on television in the ‘news’-genre. So, is it possible to consider television news as being a « first step » in the construction of collective memories or the beginning of the future historical work in a world dominated by what Hartog (2003) is calling *presentisme* or *history of the present time*? Is television news or television as a technological device (discourse and technique), a special actor of history? In what way does television news construct historical events during several years, including the eruption of an event (live-broadcast) and its commemoration? And, in the context of the chosen events, is it possible to say that September 11 represents a tragic end of a history which began after the end of the Cold War and which might be explained by geopolitical and technical evolutions in the nineties?

To explore these questions, it is interesting to take into consideration concepts developed by Paul Ricoeur (1983 and 2004). His work offers the possibility to articulate the problematic link of Halbwachs (sociology) and Bergson (phenomenology) *via* the concept of *récit* (story, narration). In order to discuss the possible relation of three authors who never directly refer to television, I will make different assumptions on three levels: memory, history and historiography. Of course, the separation of these levels is an artificial one, which helps in understanding their link with television (news). I will also present examples illustrating the main results of my research that is based on American, French and German television news (figure 1).

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<sup>2</sup> URL: <http://www.unige.ch/presse/archives/2011/web-tblgb.html> (last access: 2011/04/20).

THE ANALYZED TELEVISION NEWS (EVENING NEWS OR SPECIAL)					
DATE-EVENT/CHANNEL	ARD (GERMANY)	A2, F 2 (FRANCE)	TF1 (FRANCE)	ABC (USA)	CBS (USA)
FALL OF THE BERLIN WALL	11/9/1989, 11/10/1989, 11/11/1989	11/9/1989, 11/10/1989, 11/11/1989	11/9/1989, 11/10/1989, 11/11/1989	11/9/1989, 11/10/1989	11/9/1989, 11/10/1989
NOVEMBER 9TH 1990-2000	Complete	Complete	Not available: 1991 and 1997	Not available: 1991 et 1996	Not available: 1996
SEPTEMBER 11TH, 2001	15h30-23h00  (Also 9/12/2001 and 9/13/2001)	15h33- 19h30	15h30- 16h59	15h00- 16h00	Other analyzed channels  RTL 15h02-21h30 SAT 1 17h00 -19h00 ZDF 17h00-21h00 CNN, FOX News, NBC, CBS (8h31-10h36)
COMMEMORATION SEPTEMBER 11	11-9-2003 11-9-2006	11-9-2006			
TOTAL	87				

Figure 1

Transcriptions and print screens of the broadcasts (example, figure 2) offer the possibility to analyze the moving image in relation with the theoretical framework (media studies and philosophy of history).

Figure 2 – Example of a transcription

ARD 10-11-1989, - LISTE N°: ARD10111989vingt - Auteur: Katharina Niemeyer

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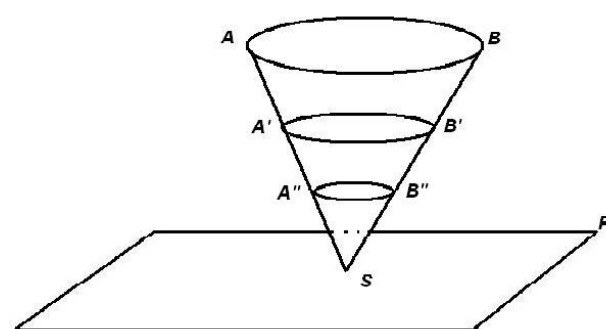
LISTE N°: ARD10111989vingt  
 Chaîne: ARD  
 Date de l'émission: 10-11-1989  
 Tagesschau, journal de 20h00

TIMECODE	Mots clés	N°	Texte	IMAGES (source: ARD DVD)
20:00:00- 20:00:17	Gesamte	1		Comme le 9-11-1989 (sauf l'horloge)
20:00:18- 20:00:31	Berlin	2	Berliner aus dem Ost- und Westteil der Stadt erklettern die Mauer. Volksfeststimmung beim Wiedersehen am Brandenburger Tor. In der Nacht war es geöffnet worden. Monopar: 23 Jahre lang, seit dem Bau der Mauer am 13. August 1961, leben wir diesen Tag herbeizuerwartend und heftig gehofft. Wir Deutschen sind jetzt das glücklichste Volk auf der Welt. (Applaus und Gejohle). ---	
20:00:32- 20:01:20	Grenze offen	3	„Guten Abend meine Damen und Herren. Die Grenze zwischen den beiden deutschen Staaten hat ihre Schrecken verloren. Wahrscheinlich mehr als 100 000 DDR Bürger haben bis zur Stunde die offene Grenze zu einem Besuch in Westberlin und im Bundesgebiet genutzt. Vor allem in Berlin spielen sich <u>spannende</u> Szenen ab. Dort wickelten sich der vergangenen Nacht Zehntausende Menschen in beide Richtungen über die Grenze. Manchmal entfielen die Kontrollen ganz. Die DDR hat inzwischen damit begonnen, Grenzbesichtigungen zu besätigen, um neue Übergänge in der Stadt einzurichten. Nach Angaben von DDR-Innenminister Dackel, werden auch neue Grenzübergänge zur Bundesrepublik in Erwägung gezogen.“	
20:01:21- 20:04:12	Berlin	4	(Christine Kolmar) (Hörsen) So einen Trübsal hat Berlin noch nicht erlebt. Noch immer kommen unzählige DDR Bürger ohne Visum nach Westberlin. Das Vorzeigen des Personalausweises genügt bisher. Mit Zahal und <u>Exzessivitäten</u> werden sie empfangen. Mindestens 1000 DDR Bürger wollen für immer im Westen bleiben, die Aufnahmehörsen sind überfüllt. Gewärtiger ist jedoch die Menge der Kurbesuche. Der Kurbesuchsdamm ist dicht von Menschen, die einfach nur einmal gucken kommen wollen. Lange Schlangen bilden sich an den Ausnahmsstellen für das Begrüßungsgeld, 100 Mark erhält jeder Besucher. Gleich zeheaus wird das Geld auch wieder ausgegeben. (Stimme Frau: Viele Sonderangebote...) Viele Kaufhäuser und Restaurants offerieren Sonderangebote und akzeptieren auch Ostmark, normalerweise zum Kurs von 1:10. Belagert werden aber auch die Wechselstuben. Weil so viele DDR Bürger so viel Ostmark im Westen gerichtet hatten, rutschte der Wechselkurs teilweise von 1:12 auf 1:8 so. Am Wochenende wurden allerdings auch große Mengen Ostmark, wahrscheinlich von Spekulanten gekauft, so daß der Kurs wieder stetig. Währenddessen feiern die Berliner das wohl freudigste und spontane Fest ihrer Geschichte. Zehntausende versammeln sich, vor und auf der Mauer	

As all archives cannot necessarily be consulted at home, the constructed homogeneous data permit to go back to decisive moments of the events and to document graphical changes diachronically *via* a semio-discursive approach (Lochard and Soulages, 1998).

### **Television news and memory**

As Deleuze (1983) argues for the cinema, Bergson's phenomenological conception of memory can also be of value for an analysis of television news, especially using the second cone of Bergson:



This amounts to saying that between the sensori-motor mechanisms figured by the point S and the totality of the memories disposed in AB there is room (...), for a thousand and thousand repetitions of our psychical life, figures by as many sections A'B', A''B'', etc., of the same cone. (Bergson, 1950, p. 211)

Figure 3: Second cone of Bergson (1950, p. 211)

Of course, television cannot be considered as a human being recording events of everyday life in order to allow them to coexist to the eternal present. Television is a technological and a human, cultural device (Wasko, 2005:2) and it is not like a human body perceiving the world surrounding us (figure 3). As a matter of fact, it is impossible to conceive Bergson's memory-pattern as a simple matrix, ready to be reconverted into a theoretical concept for television. This is the main obstacle. Meanwhile, considering television as a succession of images, Bergson's concept becomes fundamental for a comprehension of what is happening on the screen. Deleuze delivers the premises with his idea of the *time-image* (1985) in films. But already in 1939 (first edition of *Matière et Mémoire*), Bergson is indirectly preoccupied with the technical inventions of his time: photography and cinema. By talking about memory he evokes, for example, the 'faculty of mental photography' (1978: 101) or, concerning the search for a moment in our past, he compares it to 'a work of adjustment, something like the focusing of a camera' (1978: 171). Bergson's personal experiences and perceptions might have motivated him to propose a new dimension or as Carr says 'to think the time and to avoid especially the tendency of its de-temporalisation by a transformation into something which is analogue

to space' (1986: 334). The concept of the cone and its temporal dimension, its *accumulation of recollections* (Bergson, 1978: 196) becomes predominant here. The interest in Bergson's work is a double one. On the one hand, you can distinguish a concise conception of time (as duration and not as space). It is a question of sensation, of movement and action; a conception of experienced time by the individual whose body is related to matter. On the other hand, it is important to emphasize the role played by the images. Memory is linked with pictures or as Ricoeur says,

The presence in which the representation of the past seems to consist does indeed appear to be that of an image, [...], an image that can be either quasi visual or auditory" (Ricoeur, 2004: 5).

Memory comes to us or comes back into our mind in form of pictures. So one of my first assumptions is that the *memory-images* shown on the screen dominate the other *memory-images* that remain pure memory (souvenir) because they do not leave the archives to be actualized in a new context. In other words, some past pictures are shown and others not, so you can observe 'a discrimination in between memory and forgetting' (Luhmann, 1996: 76). But, these *memory-images* are not only an illustration of the past, but its re-actualization for the public, maintaining and reactivating collective memories (Niemeyer, 2010). Furthermore, these images are reread and put into a new montage, corresponding to what Bergson calls the thousands and thousands repetitions (figure 3, 1978: 211). In these terms, the individual aspect of Bergson's approach is not as individual as it first appears. *Memory-images* from the archives selected by journalists (who also remember) are put into an audiovisual récit (story) and reactivate, for different kinds of spectators, parts of collective memory. By analyzing the commemorations of the fall of the Berlin wall and September 11, different types of *memory-images* appear in the montage. They are used to illustrate the past or are introduced with the aim of reproducing the historical (media-) experience in an emotional capture mode (figure 4). *Memory-images* also serve as faked memory for testimony and work as a fictional element in television news (figure 5), which is contradiction to their initial task: informing. *Memory-images* shown on the screen mask other images and therefore remain consequently 'pure memory' (Bergson, 1978) because they do not leave the archives to be re-actualized in the news. At the same time, a lot of *memory-images* are reiterated and contribute to a sort of discrimination of the others that are hidden in the obscurity of the archives. Most of the time, the same images of an event appear on the screen and their symbolic character is amplified, for example: Rostropovich playing music in front of the

Berlin wall in 1989, caterpillars attacking the wall or the airplanes crashing into the Trade Center Towers in 2001.

Figure 4 – Memory-images as an emotional capture mode/historical experience (ARD, 11/9/1999)



Woman: May I visit my parents now? Yes?



People singing (voice over: « the wall is gone, the is gone... »)

Figure 5 – Memory-images as faked souvenirs (France 2, 11/9/2006)



Bruno Dellinger (who was inside the towers and not in front of the TV): « Today (1), I can remember everything ... (2)... the shock, the noise... (3) »

But of course, other media (including exhibitions, museums etc.) or television formats might use these forgotten images in another context. In fact, television news can be seen as being a media, a creator and a re-initiator of memories. Despite the pressure of time and the selectivity of the images, television news shares important commemorations, but it also remembers other events that are not necessarily integrated in a larger social commemorative process. The number of images used to reactivate social memories is large. The archives, in a certain way immobile, offer television the possibility of becoming a *lieu-de-memoire-in-motion* (Niemeyer, 2010). According to the work of Pierre Nora (1984), storage or archives of audiovisual material (and today the Internet) should be considered as being the basis of media content that remembers and that interferes with different types of publics. Television news constantly navigates between the present, the future and the past and the oscillation between these three times, so difficult to explain from a philosophical point of view, masks the power of television news: its importance for collective memories, but also its incapacity (lack of time) to take care of the

(historical) detail. Meanwhile, that memory-work in the present and ephemeral television-time becomes a major discussing subject when you consider *memory-images* as being actively involved in history telling and making.

### **Television news, history and historiography**

According to Paul Ricoeur (1983) and Paul Veyne (1978), all history is *récit* (story). I argue that television news also produces a kind of historical *récit* (story). If it produces historical *récit*, television news is a kind of audiovisual scripture but also an audiovisual writer of history. These aspects primarily concern audiovisual content itself. Analysis of different broadcasts between 1989 and 2006 shows that television news produces different forms of history, a special form of « historical *récit* », and I would like to provide illustrative example (figure 6). The report shown on CBS (November 10<sup>th</sup>, 1989) is referring to the past as well as to the news of the day. The Veterans march presents an occasion to talk about the Second World War, the iron curtain and the ongoing events in Berlin. *Memory-images* are shown to illustrate these ‘older’ events. The *past-present* travel is the quintessence of this *récit* including a *historical dimension*. The *memory-images* are put into a new context. CBS proceeds chronologically by mentioning all the countries that fell to soviet tanks (rhetoric style) and presents the construction of the Berlin wall. The channel is pointing out the relation between the US and Europe at this time: *they came home, any of them, from a war, which left Europe divided by an Iron Curtain*. CBS also underlines the confrontation between the East and the West: *good guys in the West, bad guys in the East*. From a grammatical point of view you can observe the use of the simple past which means that what happened is over now. And in the middle of the report, CBS announces: *but this year, just this short astounding year, everything changed*. This sentence is followed by a fast description (present tense) of what has happened this year. For the moment, the fall of the Berlin wall does not present a major event; it is one piece of the whole story.





Figure 6: CBS, 11/10/1989/ Vanderbilt Television News Archive

Veterans march today. They **came** home, any of them, from a war which left Europe divided by an Iron Curtain. Good guys in the West, bad guys in the East. (bombing, noise) Blood and iron **ruled** behind the curtain, Hungary **rose** in 1956 and **fell** to soviet tanks. Czechoslovakia **rose** in 1968 and fell to Soviet tanks. In Berlin the Communists **built** a wall to lock their people in. But this year, just this short astounding year, everything **changed** (dramatic music). Hungary, *May*. Imre Nagy who **led** that 1956 uprising is **acclaimed, reburied** with honour. Poland, *June*, the once illegal Union solidarity **clobbars** the communists in parliamentary elections. Poland, *August*, solidarity **names** a prime minister, **forms** a government, most of the members **have done** time in communist jails. Man: I am free, yeah, yes (shows victory sign with his hands)/ man: it's incredible. Hungary, *September*, troops **dismantle** the barbwire on the Austrian border; East Germans **pore** to the gap to freedom. (Applause) as the weeks **pass**, thousands **mass** in this Berlin church. Hundreds of thousands **march** in Leipzig. October 18th. Erich Honaker, the hard man **resigns**. October 23rd, Hungary **declares** itself an independent Republic. The communist party **has changed** its name. November 3rd. East Germany **says** its people can leave *via* Czechoslovakia. Thousands do. November 9th, the wall **comes** tumbling down. November 10th, Bulgaria's Todor Jivkov, the longest reigning strong man, **resigns**. (comic) ... "and covered". Generations of American kids **ducked** in fear of nuclear war, **grew up** now in this two sided world, us and them, that world **is** over now. The old Europe, the old world of red and west **has changed** forever. These kids **will** face a different world. We **have learned** this week that freedom **is** like crap grass, hard to **kill**. We **have learned** that a line of Robert Frost **applies** not just to **hiss** to England but to Poland and Hungary and East Germany and all the world. Something Frost **wrote**, something there **is** that **does** not love a wall. - Bruce Morton, CBS News, New York. (CBS, 11/10/1989, Vanderbilt Television News Archive)

The montage is interesting, because CBS inserts an extract of an animated cartoon (a monkey on a tree trying to throw a bomb on a turtle). The turtle protects itself by ducking and the voice-over is saying: '... and covered'. After this allegory of the Cold War, the channel shows a real simulation: *Generations of American kids ducked in fear of nuclear war, grew up now in this two sided world, us and them*. The hat of the child looks like the tortoise shell. In a way, history and fiction converge and even this is not so rare in classical history writing as Ricoeur emphasizes in his work (1983). For CBS, this imaginary explosion of a nuclear bomb has come to and end: *that world is over now. The old Europe, the old world of red and west has changed forever. These kids will face a different world*. And, the end of this récit is, once again, characterized by the use of fictional elements:

*We have learned that a line of Robert Frost applies not just to his to England but to Poland and Hungary and East Germany and all the world. Something Frost wrote, something there is that does not love a wall.* Meanwhile, this type of récit, which is just one example, cannot be classified as historical récit in terms of Ricoeur, but television news *makes and tells* history in another way than historians and they are not supposed to be rivals. Yet, the problematic question of récit (story) or storytelling is finally a blind alley. Television news is a storyteller, but this is not the answer to the question of history making, even if ‘television pre-empts the right of historians [...] to decide what should be labeled historic, how it should be told, and what it means’ (Dayan, Katz: 182). Combining these different récits leads to another, much more significant point: the historical experience of the present time. In other words, television news or its technological possibilities interfere sometimes with the (future) historical event and orientates its character. I do not talk about prepared media events (Dayan, Katz, 1996), but about live-broadcast which connects with concrete human action. The day Günther Schabowski announced on former GDR-television that free travel was valid, people in front of their screens took it for granted and left the living room to join the Berlin wall: ‘I saw the press conference on TV and took my car...’<sup>3</sup>. On French television, Rostropovich explains, ten years after the fall of the Berlin wall, that his friends told him to put on TV and when he saw what was going on in Germany, he reserved his plane from Paris to Berlin<sup>4</sup>. Of course, these examples do not justify the idea that television (news) is a direct actor of historical events even if it renders possible the virtual experience of it. But even this experience is always based on human action. So, as Donk (2009) suggests, I also argue that it is not a question of technical determinism or social action: both interact, interfere and should be seen as a common process. Of course, television news as well as media in general, cannot capture the whole event (Dayan, Katz, 1996) and this also impossible for historians. Meanwhile, television news informs us about not only about the past. It offers a certain capture of the event and also a capture of the media conditions that made this capture possible. Consequently, it is also interesting to take a look at the history making of television news.

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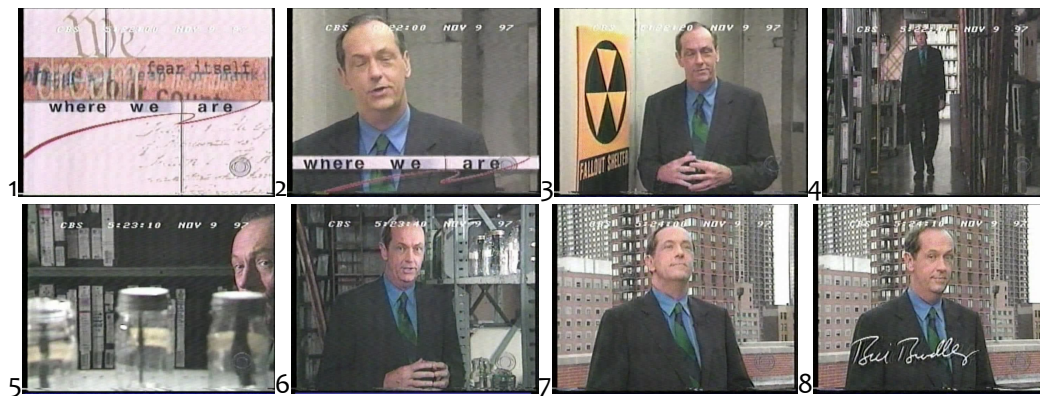
<sup>3</sup> An interviewed former GDR-citizen on the German channel ARD, 11/9/1989.

<sup>4</sup> Rostropovich interviewed by Olivier Lerner on the French channel, France 2, 11/9/1999, television news, 8. p.m.

### Television news as an indicator and accelerator of social, political and cultural changes

The analyzed period, especially the 1990's, permits confirmation of what Uricchio and Kinnebrock (2006) discuss in their introduction to *Media Cultures*. Firstly, the 'meta-narrative of good versus evil' (Uricchio, Kinnebrock, 2006: 3) remains omnipresent after the fall of the Berlin wall as this example illustrates (figure 7).

Figure 7, Bill Bradley (BB) on CBS, 11/9/1997 (source: Vanderbilt Television News Archive)



BB: (image 2) Like many of you I'm a child of the Cold War. When I was growing up in a small Missouri town on the banks of the Mississippi, a confrontation between the Soviets and the United States dominated a part of my imagination. (Image 3) The threat of nuclear war was a living possibility. I would have made a drawing of my private bomb shelter pen pouring where I keep my cat, my favourite books, my favourite food and my basketball. The premise was even after a nuclear holocaust there would be basketball. – Then in 1989, the Berlin Wall fell and the Cold War ended. (noise of the door opening) So what was the Cold War really all about? (image 4) High School students asked me. I told them the story of my 1994 visit to the headquarters of the Stasi, the German secret place. I remember walking into one vast room filled with surveillance reports on millions of East German citizens. In another room there were dossiers stacked from the floor to the ceiling. I walked into a third room and (image 5) saw glass jars lining the shelves attached to the wall. Just like these. Each jar had a felt strip extending into the jar. I asked our guide, what was that? He explained that when the Stasi agency picked up a citizen for interrogation, they forced each person to attach a felt strip to his or her pants or skirt. After the grilling, the interrogator removed the felt strip suspended it in a glass jar writing the subject's name on the outside of the jar. (image 6) That way if the Stasi ever needed to find the person, they could give the dogs the right sent. But I stepped outside the stone walls of the Stasi and instinctively took a deep breath, (showing it, image 7) but I wasn't just taking oxygen, but I was craving with freedom ... pure American freedom (image 8). CBS, 11/9/1997, source: Vanderbilt Television News Archive and Library of Congress.

Secondly, the results, more generally, of the television news analysis (especially of the 1990ies) endorse the idea that September 11 is not the beginning of a new era and that 'a series of transformations within the culture generally and the media in particular preceded the national tragedy' (Uricchio and Kinnebrock (ed), 2006: 2). During the 1990ies, 'classical' television news can be conceived, in parallel to the upcoming web-

information sites, as being on of the major platform of (live broadcasted) events; also underlining the potential of a shared global perception of simultaneity (The Gulf War is one example). The diachronic analysis of the mentioned broadcasts shows that the evolution of new media technologies and the globalization of news are incorporated in the audiovisual discourse. The personal computer, for example, becomes an everyday object (figure 8, 1), mobile phones are shown (figure 8, 2). The design of the trailer and other graphic elements changes and adopts esthetics of the digital, like pixels (figure 8, 3) or html-language patterns (figure 8, 1 et 4).

Figure 8



In this sense, television news tells us of the acceleration of information in a globalized world and at the same it tells its own history, which is the one of a changing 'habit-memory' (Bergson, 1978): the typical signs of the genre remain, but their form changes.

The results of the diachronic research also show how an event like September 11 can be explained from a media point of view. Of course, the relation between terrorism and media is not a recent phenomenon (Dayan 2006; Garcin-Marrou 2001). During the 1970ies and 1980's, oriental terrorism develops rapidly; in the beginning of the 1980's a lot of terrorist attacks can be linked with the Islamic Jihad or other Islamic extremist groups (Heisbourg et al., 2001). Of course, media cover these attacks. A content analysis of American television news (from 1980 to the end of 2007), realized via the database of the Vanderbilt Television News Archive<sup>5</sup>, reveals that terrorism has always been a major news

<sup>5</sup> <http://tvnews.vanderbilt.edu/> (last access : 4/16/2011).

topic (figure 9). Between 1980 and 1988, 5418 broadcasts refer directly to terrorism. Compared to the period in between September 11 and the end of 2007 (14 443 broadcasts are directly linked with terrorism) that does not seem to be a lot, but it is only in the 1990's that new channels come up and the word *terrorism* appears often as *communism* in the 1980's. But, between 1989 and 1992, American television news covers more issues linked with communism. This is no surprise because it is during the changing period of the fall of the Berlin wall and the end of the Soviet Union. Meanwhile, 1991 is a special year concerning the frequency of communism (165 broadcasts) and terrorism (269 broadcasts). In January 1991, 174 broadcasts refer to terrorism and it is in June, July and August that communism is predominant. In the beginning of 1991, 150 terrorism-topics are directly related to the Gulf War and it is in July of the same year that Bush and Gorbachev sign START (Strategic Arm Reduction Treaty). In 1993, terrorism will, once again, dominate television news in comparison to communism (figure 9).

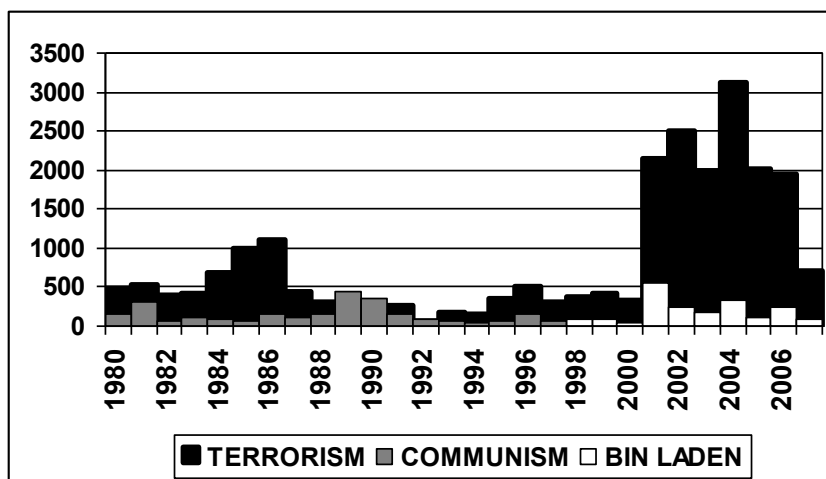


Figure 9 – The evolution of ‘terrorism’, ‘communism’ and ‘Ben Laden’ in American television news (1980 – 2007, source: Vanderbilt Television News Archive, author of the analysis: K. Niemeyer).

The terrorism of the 1980's was also linked to the indirect actions of the East-West conflict. One example is the war in Afghanistan and the implications of the CIA strategy (Heisbourgh et al, 2001) against the Soviet Union. With the end of the Cold War those particular forms of terrorism dominating the 1980's came to an end as revealed by the content analysis. The predominance of the communism-topics between 1989 and 1992 (figure 9) signals in a certain respect the end of the 1980's terrorism. In the 1990's, terrorism, influenced by globalization, reorganizes from a pyramidal, hierarchically organization to a more linear and less seizable one (Hoffman, 2000: 38). Consequently, the effects of globalization do not only reach economics, politics and media, but also

terrorism. The authors of the September 11 attacks could be sure of an immediate public media-reaction: the installation of cameras in Manhattan after the first crash. The most powerful part of television technology was used against itself: the possibility of the live-broadcast. This event, actually still continuing *via* its long-term consequences (such as the death of Ben Laden), could be perceived as being the tragic climax of media-technology progress and of a geopolitical evolution, the symbolic beginning of decentralized terrorism having also its origin in the 90ies (Heisbourgh et al., 2001). An evolution that is transformed and co-produced by the platform of television news that becomes a hostage of its own performances: the globalized live-broadcast. The historical experience of September 11 2001 points out the end of a decade and the end of a transformation that has begun even before 1989. This major event can finally be considered as a tragic, transitional event and not as the beginning of something completely new, as well as Ben Laden's death cannot signify the end of global terrorism.

### ***Transitions of memories and history***

History, memory and historiography cannot be separated from media (technology or content). As the resume of results shows (figure 10), an understanding of contemporary history and memory making is not possible without considering media contents and its users as well as the technologies that render this content possible. Television news, and henceforth the Internet, offer an access to the experience of history and they participate actively or passively in the event by seizing the historical moment which will later officially be labeled as a historical one. Television news is not only the platform of these historical experiences, it also records testimony of contemporary times, and of a history that is ours. The recent events, the *Arab Spring*, show that it is impossible to think the ongoing changes without referring to media, neither from a political or historical, nor from a journalistic point of view.

Finally, the link between media studies, television analysis and the philosophy of history is a way to reflect on current memory and history topics without falling into a trap of confusing all different possibilities of expression on the web where private and public issues are memorized, stored, erased and sometimes forgotten. Television already delivers theoretical and methodological patterns for future detailed studies on Internet, history and memory. Ricoeur can bridge the theoretical gap between Bergson and Halbwachs when he proposes to focus on *what* is remembered before answering *who* remembers (Ricoeur, 2004). Considering that individual memory essentially relies on the

basis of images (Bergson) and that contemporary collective memory (Halbwachs) cannot be thought without television (Hoskins 2001, Niemeyer 2010, Volkmer 2006), it is the concept of *recit* (Ricoeur) that brings together both of them, Bergson and Halbwachs.

Figure 10 – (author: K. Niemeyer)

<b>Television News, memory and history</b>		
<b>Dimension/ Level</b>	<b>Event-Level</b>	<b>Television News - Level</b>
<b>MEMORY</b>	<b>Television news produces memory-images</b>	
	These images are used: - to illustrate or to explain the past - as fictional testimony images (flash-back function) - for an emotional capture mode - to activate and maintain collective memories	These images can be described as being <i>habit-images</i> (referring to memory which is more a habit than true memory, Bergson). Their function: - permitting the recognition of the genre/format or an event Examples: trailer, weather forecast, ...
<b>HISTORY</b>	<b>Television news makes history</b>	
	- Television news produces <i>recit</i> with an historical dimension by using <i>memory-images</i> . Television shows and tells history differently than historians. - Television news/technologies can actively interfere with (historical) events. - Television news offers the possibility of experiencing the historical present time.	- Television news writes its own history and shows it, tells it via <i>habit-images</i> . - Television news realizes its own historiography (system inherent) and tells the story of its graphical and visual evolution.

Historical experience of the present time, simultaneously shared by different communities in front of their screens, creates individual as well as collective memory. The Internet is the best example for this co-existence of memory and story patterns: the death of Ben Laden appears first on Twitter, is then taken by 'traditional' media discourse and goes back to web-based communication where political analysis can lead to individual jokes (figure 11) about the confusion of 'Osama and Obama' (figure 12) or more serious comments. Which content will be stored in the archives is another question, but it is not all surrealistic to say that television or television-channel-content will remain one of the social remembrance-media, selecting and putting into a more precise *recit*/story what is going on in the world and what can be experienced as being historical. Not forgetting the role of social groups or other cultural media or classical institutions like schools, museums, theatres, cinema etc., which contribute to the diversity of memories and also to the concept of history in our contemporary times. There is no end to memory or

history, there is simply a transition finally pointing out the importance of cultural transmission in our globalized and localized (virtual and mediated) worlds.

Figure 11 – jokes about ‘Osama and Obama’ (source: Facebook, 1<sup>st</sup>, May 2011)



Figure 12 – confusion on BBC about ‘Osama and Obama’ (source: BBC webpage, 1<sup>st</sup> May 2011)



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