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Tell the (hi)story to the nation. Two transcultural adaptations of the Spanish TV series *Cuéntame cómo pasó: Raccontami* and *Conta-me como foi*

Abstract

In September 2001, the Spanish public TV channel TVE1 introduced *Cuéntame cómo pasó*, a TV series that recounts the experiences of a family, the Alcántaras, during the last years of Francisco Franco in Spain. Born as an historical and popular production, aimed to a general audience, the success of the series led to its consolidation in prime time and to the international sale of the format. In December 2006, RAI –Radio Televisione Italiana–, transmitted *Raccontami*, the Italian version of *Cuéntame cómo pasó*. With the Ferruccis replacing the Alcántaras as the protagonist family of the story, *Raccontami* is the first case of adaptation of *Cuéntame*, but without the context of an historical dictatorship. In April 2007, also Rádio Televisión Portuguesa launched its own adaptation: *Conta-me como foi*. As with the Alcántaras, the Lopes represent a middle class family whose members are the witnesses of the last phase of the dictatorship of Salazar. Both adaptations have been telecast by public televisions, and they use a narrative structure that is similar to *Cuentame's* one, with the nostalgia of the past as a common starting point, but with their own tale embedded in the reality of each nation. Beyond the parallelisms and plot-interchanges with the original format, the present article offers an analysis of the two adaptations, with the goal of understanding the kind of historical representation that, from the concept of transtextuality and identity, lies in these new patrimonial fictions, which are awakening cultural memory.

Keywords

National history, TV-series, transcultural adaptations, Raccontami, Conta-me como foi, Cuéntame cómo pasó

1. Introduction

Based on the concept of nostalgia as *historical emotion* (Muller, 2006: 739), the television series *Cuéntame cómo pasó* (Televisión Española, 2001-) is a production with a distinct local flavor like *The Wonder Years*

(ABC, 1988–1993), *Heimat* (ARD, 1984, 1993, 2004) or *La Meglio Gioventù* (RAI, 2003), which despite their differences and specific aspects, reflect on the past and national identity through stories created in an audiovisual serial format.

Since its premiere on Televisión Española in September 2001, *Cuéntame cómo pasó* became a TV hit in Spain in terms of audience share and acceptance, making it a product that could be sold and exported to the international market. From the release of its second season in 2003, the series producer Grupo Ganga Producciones, together with Televisión Española, began to sell the show to Latin American and European countries. This expansion of the original show across different territories formalized the first sales of its format and scripts in 2005 with the first adaptations made in Italy and Portugal.

With a nostalgic approach and a product created for all audiences, *Raccontami* (RAI, 2006–2008) —the Italian version—, and *Conta-me como foi* (RTP, 2007–2011) —the Portuguese version—, both adopt the structural concept and narrative style of *Cuéntame cómo pasó* while offering two interesting exercises in transtextuality in the representation of each country's historical past. The iconic Alcántara family that represents the Spanish middle class, whose lives drive the narrative of the original series now become the Ferruccis in the Italian version and the Lopes in the Portuguese version; this was achieved by a reinterpretation process that makes the family the dramatic core, through which the past is reconstructed. On one hand, *Raccontami* leaves behind the tragic past of the fascist dictatorship to instead showcase the era of economic boom and prosperity of the 60s, thus avoiding the more troubled years; on the other, *Conta-me como foi* chooses to begin its story in 1968, the same year *Cuéntame cómo pasó* begins, heading towards their own happy end with the Carnation Revolution and the end of the Salazar Dictatorship.

We are thus faced with two apparently similar series in form and ideological positioning, but radically different in narrative styles. This, along with the fact that these were the first international adaptations of *Cuéntame cómo pasó*, prompt us to choose them as the subject of study so we can understand the historical meaning of their adaptations. Throughout the article we will analyze these two audiovisual products to try and understand how, based on a television creation process that looks into the very specific Spanish reality of the late 60s in Spain —with Franco and his dictatorship as context and subtext of the story—, both versions are able to recreate a recent past while being closely linked to the original series created by Eduardo Ladrón de Guevara and yet with sufficient self-identity to become relevant television productions in their countries of origin.

2. Methodology

Raccontami and *Conta-me como foi* are the Italian and Portuguese versions of *Cuéntame cómo pasó*, one of the most important series in the history of Spanish television, which after 15 years of telecast has become part of the country's cultural memory (Pousa, 2015: 248). Considered as television productions with characteristic Costumbrism and with a story based on notions of identity through the reconstruction of the recent past, the article presented below analyzes these two first adaptations and their historical and aesthetic links to the original work.

With a theoretical basis in television studies (Bignell, 2004; Mittel, 2015; Ellis, 2002; Thompson, 2003) and taking into account the different contributions made to narrative adaptation processes (Sanders, 2005; Fumagalli, 2004; Bruhn, Gjelsvik & Frisvold, 2013; Balló & Pérez, 2005), our objective is to understand the dramatic construction of *Raccontami* and *Conta-me como foi* as popular products that present a fictional discourse on inherited memory which, based on our understanding, are modern additions to new *fictions patrimoniales* as a new interpretive category (Beylot & Moine, 2009).

In this sense, we start by reviewing the extensive bibliography that has been published on *Cuéntame cómo pasó* in recent years. From the historiographical studies by Palacio (2012), Estrada (2004), López (2007) or Rey (2014); cultural ones by Smith (2004) or Pousa (2015); comparisons by Santana (2015), García (2011) or Rueda Laffond and Guerra (2009) or those that provide audiovisual analysis related to memory such as those by Corbalán (2009), Brémard (2005) or Cueto (2009), among some of the most prominent bodies of work. All this interesting research includes a reflection on the audiovisual representation of the past that we consider as a theoretical body of work. This will allow us to gain a new perspective into analyzing *Cuéntame cómo pasó* in a different way based on the reinterpretation done by the versions, thus filling in the existing gap in this topic.

The methodology we have chosen for the concrete analysis of each series—which make up the two parts in which this article is divided—is different. This is due in part not only to the audiovisual and historical characteristics of each country and the described time periods, but also the nature of each creation in relation to the type of production. The abundant presence of archive footage that we find in *Raccontami* and the many region-specific historical and cultural references have led us to carry out an explanatory analysis of the most important audiovisual contents; this lets us define its narrative function based on concepts that link nostalgia with the Italian audiovisual identity. To that end, we have turned to reference works in the television sphere such as Buonanno (1999, 2007, 2012) or Fumagalli (2004, 2007), and specifically others such as Lucherini (2010) and Casilio (2014). In contrast, in the case of *Conta-me como foi*, the plot similarity with that of the original version and a lesser presence of archive footage have led us to attempt an analysis based on transtextuality, by selecting the most notable sequences and those with greater dramatic weight in the whole series, as far as an adaptation is concerned. The analyses by Isabel Ferin Cunha, Catarina Duff Burnay and Fernanda Castilho (2011) have helped us contextualize the Portuguese audiovisual context, while publications such as Burnay & Lopes (2013) or Burnay & Rueda Laffond (2014) were fundamental in the understanding of new identity memories.

3. The Italian version

Raccontami (Paypermoon, 2006–2008) is yet another adaptation of a Spanish television show that, along with *Un Medico in famiglia* (Publispei 1998–), a version of *Médico de familia* (Globomedia, 1995–1999), or *I Cesaroni* (Publispei, 2006–2014), an adaptation of *Los Serrano* (Estudios Picasso, Globomedia, 2003–2008), have been made and telecast in Italy and become *prime time* television products for all audiences. As Fabrizio Lucherini says, Spanish formats dominate in Italy because the audiovisual market is closely linked to the Italian one. It is not just cultural proximity but also economic, since the cost of production of Spanish series is lower than that of other European productions (Lucherini 2010: 226). At the same time, the Italian public prefers domestic products, hence the need for adaptations based on the context of each country (Buonanno 2007: 41).

Raccontami is the first international adaptation of the Spanish series *Cuéntame cómo pasó*. Just like the aforementioned series, it describes the life of a middle class family, the Ferruccis and through them, the country's history during a part of the 60s, known as *favolosi anni '60*. *Raccontami* is part of a television trend that looks at the recent past, which in Italy begins in the early 2000s, bringing an end to 20 years of a process that Milly

¹ Directed by: Riccardo Donna – Tiziana Aristarco. Story Editor: Stefano Rulli. Series concept: Gloria Malatesta – Claudia Sbarigia. Scriptwriters: Gloria Malatesta – Claudia Sbarigia – Angelo Carbone – Chiara Cremaschi – Francesco Cenni – Roan Johnson – Antonia Paolini – Michele Pellegrini. Photography: Federico Schlatter in collaboration with Di Bruno Di Virgilio. Editing: Emanuele Foglietti (A.M.C.). Rai-Producers: Paola Leonardi – Monica Paolini. Produced by: Paypermoon Italia for Rai Fiction. Actors: Massimo Ghini, Lunetta Savino, Mariolina De Fano, Giorgia Cardaci, Ivano Marescotti, Carlotta Tesconi, Edoardo Natoli, Gianluca Greechi, Marco Marzocca.

Buonanno defines as "*presentificazione*." According to Buonanno, this new phenomenon of "*storicizzazione*" of fiction generated over a 100 titles during the first decade of this century (Buonanno 2012: 159); a phenomenon that also took place in other European countries such as Spain and Portugal, although in a minor way. That is to say, Italian television went from favoring the Risorgimento era as historical context for its stories during the early years of its telecasts, to content that captured the 20th century; this includes the representation of the significant 50s and 60s because as the author says, "*hanno visto la migrazione interna e internazionale di tanti italiani e il miracolo economico che ha trasformato una società contadina in una nazione industrializzata e affluente*" (2012: 160).

Unlike *Cuéntame cómo pasó* which focuses on a dictatorial historical period, the Italian series chooses to focus the action in a particularly happy period in the country's history: the time after fascism and World War II when the Italian people begin to look to the future with hope and optimism. In 1960 Rome is excited about the Olympics while the economy grows exponentially in a country that has been a republic for just fifteen years. There are emerging welfare societies, household appliances revolutionize the domestic environment and the role of women in society slowly begins to change. This is the moment chosen by *Raccontami*'s writers to introduce the Ferrucci family's story i.e. eight years before the Spanish version with the Alcántara family as protagonists.

The Ferruccis who live in a neighborhood in Rome are very similar to the Alcántaras: Luciano Ferrucci, a demanding father, a builder and entrepreneur by profession, is driven by ambition; his wife Elena, a loving mother and housewife; Andrea, the eldest son who prefers repairing motorbikes to getting a degree; Titti, the rebellious daughter who, unlike her brother, renounces marriage to enroll in college at a time when higher education is reserved almost exclusively for men; Aunt Anna, Elena's younger sister, spinster, naive, a dreamer and fascinated by modernity; the grandmother Innocenza, a very conservative and Catholic woman who struggles to understand progress and Carlo, the young son and narrator of the story. Three generations living together offer up different perspectives within the same family and extrapolate them to the country.

3. 1. Production

Produced by Paypermoon in collaboration with Rai Fiction, *Raccontami* was telecast by the public channel Rai 1, reaching an average audience of 6.1 million viewers during its first season, a 24.34% audience share. This first part of the story — telecast from December 10, 2006 to February 15, 2007— represented the years between 1960 and 1963, whereas its second and last season —telecast from October 12 to December 4, 2008— showed the period between 1964 and 1966, ending with the Florence flood. As opposed to the Spanish version that has 17 seasons and 310 episodes released so far, *Raccontami* consists of only two seasons that follow the standard format of *long running fiction* in Italy: 26 episodes per season, 50 minutes each, with a type of telecast called *doppio appuntamento*, a standard practice in prime time telecast in Italy that consists of premiering two episodes of a continuing series on the same day, on a weekly basis.

The lower audience numbers for the second season of the series — the number reached only 5 million viewers, a 19.26% share— seemed to be one of the reasons why the Italian public network cancelled the series after having signed a third season, which would have addressed the historical period between 1967 and 1970. This official explanation contrasted with the unofficial one by popular media, like the newspaper *La Stampa* which argued that dealing with those years would have forced *Raccontami* to change its nostalgic style in order to portray one of the most tragic facts in the country, the *anni di piombo*. We are talking about the years that saw the student revolt of '68 and the era of terrorism in Italy that began with attacks at Piazza Fontana in Milan in 1969 and continued throughout the

1970s culminating in 1978 with the killing of Aldo Moro. According to Professor Aldo Grasso, the significant decrease in the series' audience and subsequent cancellation are due, among other things, to *Raccontami*'s style of historical representation. In a way, this academic relates the fall in viewer numbers to the simplification in narrative terms of an era that, in reality, was much more complex than what was shown². The fact that the story unfolds during the years of development and prosperity means that the society's evolution is told only in positive terms, without historical questioning or a critical attitude. This is what Chiara Toffoletto defines as the "*effetto amarcord*" (Fumagalli & Toffoletto, 2007: 290), to describe an exercise in nostalgic review found in Federico Fellini's most autobiographical film *Amarcord* (1973), for its intense and melancholic evocation of a past that will never return.

The truth is that, despite low viewership, the producer Paypermoon got RAI's green light to develop a third season but finally decided to modify the contract with the channel and the team of writers, to develop a new series titled *Questo nostro amore* (Paypermoon Italia, 2012), thus putting an end to the story of the Ferruccis. In this series the production company portrayed Italian life in the 70s and although its dramatic style distanced itself from nostalgia, we can say that it had clear aesthetic and formal influences from *Raccontami*.

3. 2. Television in Italy

While *Cuéntame cómo pasó* chose 1968 to begin its story during the years of the country's social transformation and modernization after overcoming the tough post-war circumstances, *Raccontami* takes place in 1960. As mentioned earlier, at that time Italy was prospering economically; it was a period of boom and economic growth that, thanks to the help of the Marshall Plan, helped the country overcome the disasters of World War II. Moreover, in the domestic context, 1960 also marks the arrival of television to many Italian homes; a fact that enables an exploration of the country's history using the television itself to create an audiovisual journey, in such a way that the evolution of the medium is linked to each character's storyline (Pousa, 2015: 29).

In *Raccontami*, the voice-over of Carlo Ferrucci —the character equivalent of Carlos Alcántara in *Cuéntame cómo pasó*, narrating as his adult self and protagonist of the series— begins on January 3, 1954, the day of his birth and also the day the presenter Fulvia Colombo inaugurates RAI's first telecast. This historical event establishes a dramatic link between Carlo and television, determining the importance of television content in the creation of memory on one hand through the recollection of childhood and on the other, the representation of an era based on mediatized memory. In this sense, Silvia Casilio's definition of "*storiografia mediatica*" is interesting —a process of building social and collective memory through the popular collective imagery that helps define the role of audiovisual media through a process of selecting content that shows what should be remembered and omits what should be forgotten or censored (2014: 202).

3. 2. 1. Local references

In historical terms, the arrival of television symbolizes the transition from a provincial Italy to an Italy where the economic boom of the 60s changes everything. Devices are not just appliances but immediately become a source of inspiration for the Ferrucci family, allowing them to broaden their horizons. Collective memory appears through the images, sounds and music of the period filtered by the small screen. Some of the especially iconic archive

² Grasso, A. "Il Presepe Leccato di 'Raccontami'". *Corriere della Sera*, December 12, 2006.

footage was of the astronaut Gagarin's success in the episode 'L'eclissi' (S1E8); the publication of the encyclical letter "Mater et magistra" by Pope Giovanni XXIII; the death of Marilyn Monroe in 'Una domenica d'agosto' (S1E19); or the funeral of Togliatti in 'Pazzie d'amore e di calcina' (S2E2). This archive footage, like all others from that period that appear in the series, belongs to the Rai Archive or Luce Institute, acronym for L'Unione Cinematografica Educativa, a fundamental organization for the Mussolini regime's film propaganda that later became the state's official film body for educational and informative purposes. Some show us political events such as Moro's swearing-in, in 'Pazzie d'amore e di calcina' (S2E2); the Carabinieri parade for the 150th anniversary of l'Arma dei Carabinieri in 'I misteri di via Bodoni' (S2E1) or the Kennedy swearing-in in 'Super Sorpasso' (S1E7). But there are also other types of television references in which the archive footage, in addition to illustrating the era, aids the creation of plots that connect directly with the changes experienced in the heart of in the Italian middle class. For example, in the episode 'Un po' di istruzione' (S1E5), the plot revolves around the telecast of the program *Non è mai troppo tardi*, a symbol of Italian television that contributed to the education of thousands of illiterate Italians during the 60s. Like in other countries, television in Italy acquired a determining role in social integration through literacy. In this case, the grandmother Innocenza who is illiterate learns to write with Manzi, the elementary school teacher who headed the program. Another example in which the archive footage supports the plot is in 'I marziani a Roma' (S1E17) which covers the difficult migration from the South to the North that began in the 50s. In this case strangely, in his contemporary reflection of the past, Carlo's voice-over criticizes the fact that those years were not 'fabulous' for all Italians.

Just like in *Cuéntame cómo pasó*, television is used as a dramatic element that feeds young Carlo's imagination as he consumes popular content. At times these types of references are made in the Spanish version through interaction with fictional American protagonists, as in the case of Dr. Kimble from the television version of *The Fugitive*. Similarly in the Italian adaptation, an imaginary Italian television personality is used: Lieutenant Sheridan, a famous personality from the *Giallo Club. Invito al poliziesco* (RAI, 1959-1961). In addition to Sheridan or the teacher Manzi, we find other iconic personalities of the period who appear on the Ferrucci family television such as Sophia Loren, Abebe Bikila—the Ethiopian athlete famous for running marathons barefoot in the 1960 Rome Olympics—the singer and hostess Mina or Domenico Modugno, the famous Italian singer-songwriter who won the Festival di Sanremo in 1958. Of course, one also comes across personalities linked to the Catholic world, such as the Pope or Don Milani (S2E13 'Il viaggio') that are founding elements of the collective Italian identity (Buonanno 2007: 58) and reinforce the memory of identity.

There are also multiple important references to Italian television programs in *Raccontami* like the famous television game show *Lascia o raddoppia?* (RAI, 1955-1959) led by Mike Bongiorno, *Campanile sera* (RAI, 1959-1962) and *Il Musichiere* (RAI, 1957-1960), or the Kessler twins, predecessors of the modern showgirls, who often appeared in shows such as *Carosello* (RAI, 1957-1977), a typical Italian format consisting of small sketches followed by advertising content. In addition to these entertainment programs, we have the famous *sceneggiati all'italiana* that represented both television and theater—usually adaptations of great literary operas or classics such as *David Copperfield* (Charles Dickens, 1849)—, that we find in episodes like 'Il processo' (S1E24). To represent the era, *Raccontami* also looks to international television content and makes the Ferruccis watch live historical events which contrast with their reality, such as the construction of the Berlin Wall in 'Muri' (S1E11), the events of Bahia Cochinos in 'La bomba' (S1E22) or references to Franco's dictatorial Spain in 'Come mi pare e piace' (S1E14). This is one of the reflections about television made by Anna Manzato when she refers to the role of television as "*valorizzazione dell'identità nazionale*" (2003: 178). In other words, "*macchina narrativa e serbatoio di memoria, la televisione racconta*

la nazione a se stessa, conserva e rivitalizza il patrimonio della tradizione" (Giaccardi, Manzato & Simonelli, 2007: 8).

3. 3. Other cultural memories

Unlike *Cuéntame cómo pasó* where the stories of the Alcantaras and Spain are dramatically linked, in *Raccontami* Italian history forms the backdrop. The cultural and social climate of the era is what is truly relevant in the plots of the Ferrucci family; this consequently resulted in rare appearances of politicians and references to the historical conflict during the fascist regime on television. The only instances we find are: the reconstruction of protests against the Tambroni government that was accused of being fascist, in the episode 'Vacanze romane' (S1E3); Giuliano Andreotti's appearance during the Fiumicino airport scandal in 'Il silenzio è d'oro' (S1E15); the university riots after the death of the student Paolo Rossi on April 27, 1966, in 'E ritorna il sereno' (S2E26) and the aforementioned swearing-in of Aldo Moro's second government in 1964 in 'Pazzie d'amore e di calcina' (S2E2). Interestingly, and despite being one of the hallmarks of *Cuéntame cómo pasó*, there are fewer instances of digital compositing in postproduction that place characters in real historical contexts using archive footage and have no relevance in terms of building identity.

3. 3. 1. Cinema and radio

The characters' fascination with audiovisual content also extends to cinema, both Hollywood and Italian productions, and is part of the connection *Raccontami* establishes with existing cultural memory. The premiere of *La dolce vita* (Fellini, 1960) in 'Pace e guerra' (S1E2) and references to *Madame Sans-Gêne* (Christian-Jaque, 1961) in 'Un altro caso per il tenente Sheridan' (S1E10) or *Matrimonio all'italiana* (De Sica, 1964) in 'Il botto di Capodanno' (S2E8) are examples of this. In addition, the character Aunt Anna who works as a cinema usher serves as the dramatic excuse for mentioning titles ranging from *Revak, lo schiavo di Cartagine* (*The Barbarians*, Maté, 1960) to the Italian film *Totò, Fabrizi e i giovani d'oggi* (Mattoli, 1960) in the series. In this way, the contemporary viewer is acquainted with other cultural fictional characters such as those from the *commedia all'italiana* by Germi, Monicelli, Risi, —typically bright and satirical films that were produced in Italy in the early 50s and 60s, fusing elements of comedy about customs, comedy and drama, dealing with social and political issues of interest and with a clear educational and moralistic intention (Canova, 2009: 278)— or *La famiglia* di Ettore Scola (1986) and actors from that era, such as Sophia Loren, Marcello Mastroianni, Anita Ekberg or Brigitte Bardot. This gives the viewer the opportunity to connect with cultural models and classic icons by creating a mix of cross references that influence the representation of society in the 60s.

In this media context the radio occupies a prominent place in the life of the Ferrucci family who listen to radio-news and broadcasts of football matches and serials. In the same way, music plays a fundamental role in the reconstruction of collective imagery, beginning with the theme music: a version of *Pregherò* by Adriano Celentano, that is in turn an adaptation by Vince Tempera's orchestra of *Stand by me* by Ben E. King. Tempera created different versions of popular Italian songs of the time for different episodes of the series like *24.000 baci*, *Abbronzatissima* and *Una zebra a poi*. It should not be forgotten that the series also makes use of the RAI music archive which is used to illustrate the era through footage of the Sanremo Festival or different Saturday night television shows such as *Canzonissima* (RAI, 1956–1975) and *Studio Uno* (RAI, 1961–1966).

It should also be noted that in *Raccontami*, the country's history is shown through the interaction of the protagonists with objects, uses and customs: like promissory notes to buy appliances such as a portable sewing machine or a washing machine; the car Fiat 600; the first parties with a record player; the duplex phone; relationship advice from the women's

magazines (*rotocalchi*); newspapers like *Corriere della Sera*, *La Stampa*, *Il Giorno* or *L'Unità* that are read by the protagonists; new fashion trends like miniskirts or the Beatles haircut that Carlo wants in '48 ore' (S2E18).

It is important to point out the presence of story-editor Stefano Rulli (known, along with Sandro Petraglia, for the great Italian success *La meglio gioventù*, Marco Tullio Giordana, 2003) in *Raccontami*'s adaptation process and building of the nostalgic past told in realistic terms. According to Toffoletto, his personal touch is observed most of all in the compression of the theme and uniformity of inspiration in every episode (Fumagalli & Toffoletto, 2007: 291). For his part, Silvia Casilio compares Rulli's two series by defining *Raccontami* as the prequel and a sweeter version of *La meglio gioventù* (Casilio, 2014: 211). For Casilio, both series build a unique audiovisual memory, leaving aside multiple and unsettling memories while offering the new generations a historical audiovisual product that, despite working from memory, moves away from the evolution of historiographical reflection and thus adapts to the demands dictated by dominant thought (2014: 212).

4. The Portuguese version

If, as we pointed out above, the Italian version departs from the nostalgic idea and conceptual definition of *Cuéntame cómo pasó* by making an adaptation that modifies the year when the story began and most of its plots, the Portuguese version is more faithful to the original script. This reason makes *Conta-me como foi* —a series produced by Radiotevisão Portuguesa and telecast on RTP1 from 2007 to 2011—, an especially interesting case study because of the parallels with *Cuéntame cómo pasó* and at the same time, the multiple historical and cultural differences between Spain and Portugal that are present in this new story.³

Conta-me como foi has five seasons, in total 104 episodes that were well received by critics and the public. From the start, the series was presented as a story that looks at the country's history without aspiring to be a documentary, nor taking sides, solely aimed at entertainment and remembering⁴ the past. In this case, the middle class representatives of the late 60s are the Lopes, a Lisbon family similar to the Alcantaras from the Spanish version: the father, António Lopes, works for the Ministry of Finance; his wife, Margarida, is a housewife and sews pants with the help of his mother, the grandmother Herminia; Isabel is the oldest daughter who works in a hair salon; Toni is the son who is about to go to college and Carlitos, the younger son and narrator of a story that ends with the Carnation Revolution.

4. 1. Comparing *Cuéntame* and *Conta-me*

Although *Conta-me como foi* was conceived with the goal of narrating the country's recent past with historical accuracy, interestingly, the series is very dramatically similar to *Cuéntame cómo pasó*, using the same season narrative arcs, protagonist plots, domestic and daily conflicts and even titles based on Spanish cultural references. It is therefore easy to find the same dialogues, shots, camera movements and even the same character reactions and actions that appear in *Cuéntame cómo pasó* sequences. The Lopes thus become a

³Directed by: Fernando Ávila, Jorge Queiroga, Sérgio Graciano, Patrícia Sequeira, Gonçalo Penalva, Pedro Miguel Martins. Scriptwriters: Helena Amaral, Isabel Frausto, Fernando Heitor, Tiago Santos, Luis Filipe Borges, Nuno Duarte. Photography: Amílcar Carrajola, Rui Prates, Miguel Trabucho. Editing: Mário Simões, Manuel Matias. Sound: Mário Silva Márix. Produced by: SP Televisão and RTP1 Cast: Miguel Guilherme, Rita Blanco, Luis Ganito, Catarina Avelar, Rita Brütt e Fernando Pires.

⁴Ideas gathered in the promotional text of the series, which can be found on the RTP website.

mimetic family and social model contextualized in an age of conflict: the end of a dictatorship, in this case, the Salazarist.

It is true that the political regime centered on the personalities of Franco and Salazar in the Iberian countries (Burnay & Lopes, 2013: 143) makes it possible for the structure and historical plot of both series to have similar anchors, but it is precisely this narrative possibility that raises more doubts about the construction of a collective memory built from a nostalgic and transnational story. In this sense, the first thing that strikes us is that the narrator of the Portuguese story —the adult voice-over of Carlos Lopes— presents the year 1968 in the first episode of the series in exactly the same way as Carlos Alcántara in *Cuéntame cómo pasó*. “*En 1968 eu tinha oito anos. Às vezes as pessoas que o ano de 68 foi o princípio da mudança, mais foi pelo menos para mim. A verdade é que em 1968 eu não reparava nas coisas importantes que mudavam a minha volta. Tinha outras preocupações. Preocupava-me, por exemplo, com o destino do Fugitivo...*”. The text is an exact translation of the voice-over in the first episode of *Cuéntame cómo pasó*, in which the Alcántaras buy their first television and Massiel wins Eurovision. This information —which is logical from the perspective of an adaptation— takes on a new meaning when, at the end of the episode, Carlos Lopes takes great pride in seeing a pop singer win the *Grande Prémio TV da Canção Portuguesa* on television. This attempt to translate the feeling of national pride brought on by Massiel's victory in Franco's Spain to the Portuguese context feels forced since the significance it had to the original plot belongs to a different historical reality. That is to say that Portugal in 1968 was not the same as Spain. This is how the process of dramatic repetition begins and continues in *Conta-me como foi* throughout its seasons as it creates an audiovisual, domestic and vintage past, which until now had been overlooked in the Portuguese prime time and that, without any point of reference, is shown as an original representation of Portuguese reality. This fact could be defined as a conscious process of *indigenization* (Buonanno, 1999: 16), through which *Conta-me como foi* mimics the original by appropriating cultural meanings in order to repeat the Spanish version's success.

4. 2. Transtextuality

With awareness of this prevailing flow of content, it becomes interesting to look at some of the exercises in transtextuality —according to Genette: everything that puts text in relation, obviously or secretly, to other texts (1989: 9-10)— that *Conta-me como foi* carries out in the historical representation of the recent past.

Like in *Cuéntame cómo pasó*, on many occasions the archive footage is the narrative option used in the story to recall the past; either as an independent narrative resource that illustrates the era or through digital compositing in which we see the protagonists interacting with a mediatized reality, in the style of *Forrest Gump* (Robert Zemeckis, 1994). This resource —which became one of the aesthetic characteristics that define *Cuéntame cómo pasó* and which becomes more sophisticated as the seasons progress— is presented as a new aesthetic of repetition in the Portuguese version. In this way, the audiovisual adaptation feels like the result of a production process through a single mold, that is, like a structural mechanism for generating texts (Calabrese, 2008: 45-46). This standardization and creation of artistic prototypes also involve the transfer of storylines from one series to another, some of them directly related to the influence of foreign audiovisual content in Spain and Portugal. For example, in the first episode of the Portuguese version 'O novo Fugitivo', Carlos Lopes escapes from home and dreams that he has to flee like Dr. Kimble from the North American series, identical to the Spanish version in 'El retorno del Fugitivo' (S1E1); in 'Cromos de Bola' (S1E2), Carlos does not want to take communion and prefers to imitate Lawrence of Arabia imagining himself as the film character, similar to the Spanish episode 'Un cielo lleno de futbolines' (S1E2); or when he imagines himself as the protagonist

from Bonanza, in 'Monéquios e Capuletos' (S2E13), like in the Spanish episode 'Montescos y capuletos' (S1E22). On other occasions, the television references allude to the identity of the country itself like when Antonio Lopes dreams he is a Benfica player, while in the Spanish version Alcántara dreams of Real Madrid; or like when the presenter Artur Agostinho awards the highest prize to Antonio Lopes on the program *Grande poeta é o povo*, while in the Spanish version it is Matías Prats who awards it to Antonio Alcántara in *Un millón para el mejor* (TVE, 1968–1969).

Beyond the purposes of story, these simple exercises in transtextuality have a double function: on one hand they serve to contextualize the period historically, and on the other, they help to establish a link with the viewer by using popularly recognizable audiovisual content.

4. 2. 1. Cinematographic connections

Through the seasons of *Conta-me como foi* we can find other types of more subtle translations based on a set of cross references that are already present in the Spanish version and that involve small plot variations in the episodes they are part of. For example, in 'Mutilado y caballero' (S2E46) *Cuéntame cómo pasó* establishes a clear link with the Berlanga film *Plácido* (1961). The renowned actor José Luis López Vázquez plays Faustino, a Republic commander, member of POUM (Workers' Party of Marxist Unification). The character who lives like a beggar, shows up in the Alcántaras' neighborhood and after a series of circumstances ends up spending Christmas Eve with the family. The poor man is invited to dinner thus inverting the dramatic function of the character that the iconic Spanish actor José Luis López Vázquez plays in the movie where he is Gabino Quintanilla, the organizer of the campaign "Seat a poor person at your table". In the Portuguese case, in 'Ano Novo, Vida Nova' (S2E15), the character of Gabino Quintanilla is Mr. Samuel, a Jewish man who saved Antonio Lopes from drowning in a river when he was a child. The man narrates the tragic life of his family in Europe. In this way, the translation of the Christmas season and the cultural meaning of the film—which elevated the narrative in the *Cuéntame cómo pasó* episode, by confronting a possible idealization of the Spanish family with Berlanga's social critique (Pousa, 2015: 108)—is lost since it destroys the subtext and erases the film icon's impact. That is to say, the real dramatic meaning of the plot disappears in the adaptation process.

Another interesting case is found in *Cuéntame cómo pasó* in 'Pretérito imperfecto' (S1E15) when the grandmother Herminia's cousin, who everyone considered dead after the civil war—but in reality lived in hiding, fearing the death sentence—shows up at the family house. On this occasion, the actor chosen for the role is another representative of that era's Spanish cinema, Agustín González. In *Conta-me como foi* this takes place in the episode 'Ano Novo, Vida Nova' (S2E15) when the character of Teodoro reappears. In this case, his family had considered him dead after he fought in the Spanish war with the International Brigades. While in the Spanish version the drama of the national conflict is met with silence in the sequence, in *Conta-me como foi* the Spanish civil war is openly spoken about. The Portuguese militant communist character ideologically justifies his will to fight Franco and fascism. This verbalization provokes a reality-shock that makes Antonio Lopes come to terms with his lack of courage and political commitment, not only with regard to the Spanish situation, but also the Portuguese. Thus, the adaptation of the plot becomes an excuse for the characters to reflect and have historical awareness.

It should also be noted that, like in the previous example, the Portuguese version leaves out another interesting transtextual aspect from *Cuéntame cómo pasó*: the iconic relationship between Teodoro and the character played by Paco Martínez Soria in the movie *La ciudad no es para mí* (Pedro Lazaga, 1966). As part of the plot, Teodoro goes for a walk in

the city. In the Spanish case, the character's difficult history and the civil war are played down by portraying him as a *country bumpkin* —the stereotype from *comedias desarrrollistas*— who does not understand the world in which he lives and is lost among the streets of Madrid, thus establishing a link with Lazaga's film. In contrast, in the Portuguese case, the discovery of the modern city is simply a nostalgic walk through the streets of Lisbon to the rhythm of *fado*. Therefore, while the Spanish version uses the collective imagery of a typical audiovisual representation to soften the memory of the civil war, *Conta-me como foi*'s historical content is strengthened by a different narrative and ideological interest.

4. 3. The Dictatorship and the represented world

Like in *Cuéntame cómo pasó*, the dictatorship is a great conflict in the life of *Conta-me como foi*'s characters and is used as a dramatic engine to generate plots in the family: "removing the main figures from the foreground and focusing on anonymous citizens, the middle class and their lifestyles" (Burnay & Rueda Laffond, 2014: 96). Dictatorship implies authoritarianism, fear and a lack of freedom in the lives of both the Alcántaras and the Lopes; it represents a fear of politics, communism, Marxism, underground militancy and most of all, war. In the case of *Cuéntame cómo pasó*, Franco and Francoism conceptually represent the huge gap between winners and losers after the civil war, while in *Conta-me como foi*, Oliveira Salazar and his Estado Novo are linked to the Overseas War, the colonial war. Curiously, these conflicts that affect the protagonists in their day-to-day life, sometimes tragically, do not have a direct relation to the representation of dictators and their surroundings.

4. 3. 1. The antagonists: Franco and Salazar

In both, the Spanish and Portuguese versions, dictators don't appear a lot and when they do it is in an unrealistic, dreamlike and almost naive way. This can be seen in 'Los caudillos también se rascan' (S2E39) from *Cuéntame cómo pasó* and in 'A Caça' (S2CE28) from *Conta-me como foi*. In both, the domestic plot is connected to the historical one through the use of a lice infection. In the Spanish version, Antonio Alcántara is invited to a hunt with the dictator, represented in the story through the archive footage. Thus, just as Franco and his Francoist ideology enter the family's life daily through the television, the dictator brings Antonio Alcántara in to his audiovisual propaganda space through the use of digital compositing thus showing his human face, as Sánchez-Biosca says "leaving behind in his closet [...] his Generalissimo or admiral uniform and blue shirt to wear a modest civilian suit" (2011: 432). Carlos' lice infection is linked to this plot in such a way that the child infects the father and the father in turn infects Franco. Through this contact and lice infection, the dictator ends up becoming more of a character and breaks through the barrier of archive footage. Instead, while adapting this episode in *Conta-me como foi*, Antonio Lopes goes on a hunt with the President of the Republic, Admiral Americo Tomas passing on the lice to a delegate of the Estado Novo and the National Union, and not to the Salazarist head, who is retired at that moment from political and public life owing to health problems.

This fact makes us think of a fragmented and shared representation of Salazarism. Although it is Oliveira Salazar's photo that is present next to a crucifix in the children's classroom, Marcelo Caetano —Prime minister from November of 1968— and the admiral Americo Tomas, Head of the Republic President's Ministry of Defense are the ones who occupy the true media space in the series. That is why, in the examples we have described, the spectacularization of the television moment through the use of archive footage has less of an impact due to the distribution of antagonistic roles. Put another way, Salazar occupies the ideological space of the series and the life of the Portuguese, but paradoxically no one

infects him with lice because he isn't really the person who is present in the day-to-day life of the Lopes.

In addition to local historical news such as the academic crisis of Coimbra, the 1969 earthquake or the television programs such as *Conversas com família* by Caetano himself, the only times *Conta-me como foi* diverges from the original version is when the Portuguese colonies in Africa linked to the nationalist idea of the Salazar dictatorship, appear in the story. Through this theme, the series shows its own historical reality represented by the Portuguese who traveled to do business in Africa —like Antonio and his boss in 'Angola e Nossa' (S4E18)—; the citizens of Angola, Guinea or Mozambique who spent time in Portugal visiting relatives or for work and, finally, soldiers sent to war. These subtle references mentioned from the first episode of the series, end with the protagonists' critique of Marcelo Caetano's politics. Caetano's efforts to continue the war and his speeches at the National Assembly asserting that Portugal is "a nation dispersed across several continents" is shown as a direct reason for which Toni —the eldest Lopes son— is sent to fight in Mozambique in the last episodes of the series, coinciding with the days before the Carnation Revolution. But despite the interesting stakes, the story chooses to minimize the perspective of what happened in Africa by reducing Toni's plot to that of a soldier who writes letters to his family. Although *Conta-me como foi* was considered a television blockbuster in the Portuguese context, due to the narrative style it is likely that the plot limitations had to do with the budget. As Catarina Duff Burnay and Pedro Lopes explain: "*el pressupost de producció era cinc vegades inferior al de la versió espanyola i deu vegades inferior al de la versió produïda a Itàlia*" (2013:141) Likewise, we can say that this historical story that was shown in *prime time* paved the way for the appearance of another RTP production titled *Despois do Adeus* (SP Televisão, 2013), which describes the life of those who returned in the midst of the colonial war and was written by the *Conta-me como foi* screenwriter team.

4. 3. 2. The voice-over

In its definition as a historical series that looks to the past from the viewer's present, it is also important to point out the progressive disappearance of one of the most important narrative elements of the series, which in turn, is an identifying characteristic: Carlos' adult voiceover. In addition to dramatically focusing the story and establishing the point of view in the review of Portugal's past, we begin to find archive footage from its second season without the characteristic voice of the adult Carlos Lopes at the beginning and end of the episode. The absence of the narrator influences the series discourse, which was initially set out as a post-memory exercise, and the representation of the historical world takes on new forms.

His voice only reappears in dramatic and important moments. Undoubtedly, the most significant moment takes place on April 25, 1974, in the last episode of the series titled 'A Mudança' (S5E24), when the Carnation Revolution coincides with the Lopes' move from their Lisbon neighborhood. Using a more theatrical interpretation and staging than other times, the Lopes say goodbye to their neighbors on the night of April 24 while we extradiegetically begin to hear the recited verses of *Grandola Vila Morena* by José Afonso that end in song. Then, along with documentary images in black and white one can hear the Movimento das Forças Armadas' radio communication to the Lisbon people. The footage runs parallel to the story while highlighting the real images. The next day, on April 25, ending the story's diegesis, the neighbors help the family move. The radio in the moving truck that carries boxes with the Lopes belongings is switched on and we hear a speaker explain live, all that is happening in the country. All the neighbors embrace each other in silence. At this moment, Carlos Lopes' adult voice reappears briefly and precisely to end the series stating that, in addition to him and his family, "*Portugal inteiro estava a beira da mudança*". The episode and

Conta-me como foi end with a montage of audio-visual documentary fragments in black and white of the first emotional reactions after the revolution where we see real people on the streets of Lisbon while the Lopes, and their story, have already disappeared. This contained option, where the characters do not get to verbalize their feelings, helps to understand the distance *Conta-me como foi* has created throughout the seasons between the country's cultural and popular history and its political history.

Curiously this is a fundamental difference with respect to *Cuéntame cómo pasó*, where the characters verbalize everything they feel before the end of Francoism, from a narrative position that clearly defends the transition process and makes the Alcantaras representatives of a new history of Spain without Franco.

5. Conclusions

To conclude, it is interesting to look at the way Benedict Anderson defines a nation —as an imagined political community where the presentation of national identity becomes, we might say, a work of fiction. Communities should not be distinguished by their falsity or legitimacy, but by the way in which they are imagined, says Anderson (1993: 25). If we think of identity as the result of a system of cultural representation, we can say that *Cuéntame cómo pasó* imagines a documented past that can activate the viewer's memory by linking it emotionally through fiction.

The *Raccontami* and *Conta-me como foi* adaptations follow this conceptual premise and are presented as popular stories converted into audiovisual heritage and strengthened by the historical subtext and its relationship with the archive footage through the television sets in the Ferrucci and Lopez family houses. Although it is true that its generalist and *Costumbrista* stories are based on nostalgia about daily life experiences, routines or material culture of the middle classes (Rueda Laffond, 2010: 180), its translation to the two countries and eras is an exercise in narrative contextualization that, as we have seen, works differently in Italy and Portugal. While the Italian series assumes a different cultural identity thanks to the choice of a developmental era without great political conflicts and the abundant use of archive footage that makes it more similar to the more emotive and nostalgic spirit of the first seasons of *Cuéntame cómo pasó*, the development of the Portuguese version takes on a different tone. In this case, taking the plots from the Spanish version and transferring the dramatic conflicts experienced during the Francoist Spain to the Salazarist dictatorship in Portugal implies the creation of a new *status quo* that links the viewer's memories to the representation of a doubly mediatized memory. Therefore, we can say that the risks of adapting a work that recreates the local past based on a dramatic national and historical approach —and molded by the specific needs of a prime time product for all audiences—, makes the discourses greatly homogenized. As a result, new local audiovisual memories emerge which, despite their own qualities and virtues, are ideologically and aesthetically similar, making parts of the past that are represented in audiovisual material interchangeable.

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