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Review paper

FROM 'NEWSREEL' TO 'TV NEWS' IN SERBIA

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Marija Vujović, Anka Mihajlov Prokopović

University of Niš, Faculty of Philosophy, Niš, Republic of Serbia

Abstract. Prior to becoming the most dominant cultural product of the modern age, the film began its history as a journalistic concept. The first films made by the brothers Auguste and Louis Lumière in the late 19th century were documentaries. The first film made at the beginning of the 20th century in Serbia was also a type of a newsreel, a documentary. Some of the first cinema owners and cinematographers were journalists. This paper explains the development of documentary film in Serbia, which, in addition to being a film genre, also became a television genre in the second half of the 20th century. The goal of this paper is to show the development path starting from the first feature film and newsreel, to television news - one of the most frequent TV programs of the moment – by using the example of Serbia.

Key words: documentary, newsreel, television, TV news

INTRODUCTION

Studies conducted worldwide show that television is still the most dominant mass medium¹. The combination of image and sound was and still is most appealing to audiences who believe more in what they see than what they read or hear. Danica Acimovic quotes scientific evidence and claims that, "... people remember longest what they see; more than what they feel and hear" (Acimović 2004, 9). Not only that images are more favourable because they evoke emotions and call to action more easily. "It is generally accepted that verbal communication acts primarily on the cognitive level, while visual communication acts

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Corresponding author: Marija Vujović University of Niš, Faculty of Philosophy E-mail: marija.vujovic@filfak.ni.ac.rs

Global Intelligence: 2018 The Year Ahead, available at: https://www.zenithmedia.com/wp-content /uploads/2018/01/Global-Intelligence-2018-The-Year-Ahead-email-version.pdf, visited on 16 July 2018.

¹ According to the research by Zenith Media ROI Agency, regarding the average time spent with media around the world during 2017, television watching is dominating that time with 170 minutes a day, followed by the Internet use with 140, radio with 52, and newspapers and magazines reading with 16 minutes a day. The Internet usage and film watching growth has been noted, as well as the overall time spent with the media - from 7 hours a day in 2012 to 7.6 in 2017.

on emotional, associative level (although visual level affects the cognitive through emotions, and verbal level affects the emotional through cognition)" (Plenković at al 2013, 130).

The forerunner of television was film, the world's first audio-visual medium². From the very beginning, film was accessible to people because, unlike the press and other media, it did not require literacy or preparation to decode messages. Film speaks a universal language, which can be understood by anyone regardless of linguistic and cultural boundaries.

Film is most often defined as art. Film is seen as "... the pinnacle of imperialist mass culture, the most democratic art of all ..." (Janković 2012, 302). Moreover, "Of all the arts or presentation modes, film seems to be one of the most realistic, being able to reproduce movement and duration, and to reconstruct the sound of a particular action or place" (Omon et al 2006, 123). Therein it lies on its "informative" potential.

"It is possible to define a film in two ways: as content that is massively communicated, and as an audio and visual medium of mass communication" (Obradovic and Vujovic 2017, 47). From this perspective, perceiving it as a message, that is, the content mediated through this medium, the film can be: documentary, informative (newsreel), performative (feature film) and animated film (cartoon), according to Radojković and Miletić 2005, 124.

In the history of film, the first genre was the documentary. In Paris on 28 December 1895, in the basement lounge of the Grand Café, Rue des Capucines, the Lumière brothers held the world's first ever commercial film screening³. Ten short films were shown, which lasted about one minute each, filmed in one take (one-shot)⁴.

Unlike television, which Serbia waited for more than two decades ⁵, the first film was shown in Belgrade, in the Terazije square, at the café *Kod zlatnog krsta (At the Golden Cross)* only half a year after its world premiere in Paris, on June 6, 1896. Several short documentaries were shown to the audience.

The first films were made in Belgrade the following year⁶, and the first cinemas would open soon after⁷.

² As a medium, film became possible only after technological inventions in the field of photography and film development in the late 19th century. The first devices that could make and also project movies, Kinetoscope or Cinematograph, were developed by Thomas Edison and brothers Auguste and Louis Lumière. Initially, film was just a visual medium – the silent film, but in the 1920s it got sound, thus becoming an audiovisual medium. In the following decade, it gets both colors and its final shape that it has had to this day (for a detailed historical evolution of the film, see: Parkinson 2014).

³ Anecdote related to the first film screening says that the audience was so scared by live images that they fell off their chairs or ran out of the cinemas (Tadić 2009).

⁴ The films were shown in the following order: Workers Leaving the Lumiere Factory, The Gardener, The disembarkment of the Congress of Photographers in Lyon, Horse Trick Riders, Fishing for goldfish, Blacksmiths, Baby's Breakfast, Jumping Onto the Blanket, Cordeliers Square in Lyon and The sea - bathing in the sea. These films are available at: https://web.archive.org/web/20050912104656/http://www.institut-lumiere.org/francais/films/1seance/accueil.html, visited on 16 July 2018.

⁵ Regular television program for the first time in history was broadcast by the BBC in the United Kingdom starting from 1936, while the regular television program started to be broadcast by the Television Belgrade in 1958.

⁶ Kalemegdan Promenade, Tramway Station at Terazije and Workers Coming out of the Tobacco Factory were the first films made in Serbia. Their author was the representative of Lumière brothers, Andrè Carrè. These films were not preserved, but the oldest movie preserved was The Coronation of King Petar I Karadjordjevic, made by the Englishmen Arnold Wilson and his cameraman Frank Mottershow in September 1904 in Belgrade. They also shot some scenes from Kraljevo, Novi Pazar and monastery Zica. It is also considered the oldest journalist film in Serbia (According to Norris 2009, 110; Kosanović 1995).

⁷ The first permanent cinema was opened in 1909 at the Paris Hotel in Belgrade.

DOCUMENTARY

The term 'documentary' refers to a document, fact or truth about something or someone. "The term did not stabilize for decades, however. Other people called their films: 'educationals', 'actualities', 'interest films' or perhaps referred to their subject matter—'travel films', for example. John Grierson, a Scot, decided to use this new form in the service of the British government and coined the term 'documentary' by applying it to the work of the great American filmmaker Robert Flaherty's Moana (1926), which chronicled daily life on a South Seas island. He defined the documentary as the 'artistic representation of actuality'—a definition that has proven durable probably because it is so very flexible" (Aufderheide, 2007: 3).

John Grierson, the creator of the term documentary and founder of the British Documentary Movement, was one of the first people to describe the characteristics of documentaries which are as follows: the possibility of opening up the screen on the real world, on real stories and real scenes, the original actor and the original (native) scene are better guides to a screen interpretation of the modern world, while the happenings in the real world and spontaneous gestures have a special value on the screen (Grierson 1998, 97).

Still another theorist, Paul Rotha, defined the first principles of documentary filmmaking in 1935: use of natural exterior in filming, avoiding artificial backgrounds and recording in the studio, use actual persons rather than actors and show images from the real world in raw form along with spontaneous gestures and actions (according to Acimović 2004, 17). All of the above characteristics were later adopted by the television news program.

Documentary film could be defined as..."... documentary, by implication and tradition, means true, real, realistic presentation, that is, the antithesis of artificially created or fantasy (Aćimović 2004, 10). Yet, the question arises, is the documentary really a film about real life? "That is precisely the problem; documentaries are about real life; they are not real life. They are not even windows onto real life. They are portraits of real life, using real life as their raw material, constructed by artists and technicians who make a myriad of decisions about what story to tell to whom, and for what purpose" (Aufderheide, 2007: 1-2). Documentary cannot be a mirror to reality. It is always a representation of reality. The documentary always contains the director's intentions, the ones who through the choice of topics, personnel, and interviewers create their own vision of reality. Nevertheless we do expect that a documentary will be a fair and honest representation of somebody's experience of reality.

When television appeared, documentary television film, as a very popular form, appeared alongside cinematic film. "It had branched out into a large number of genres (travelogues, biographies, popular science, political, music, archival, etc.) and hybrid sub-genres, whose basis would be filmed in the actual setting, but they would be more or less additionally scripted (docusoap, docu-reality, docufiction), including the docudrama and pseudo-documentaries" (Galić, 2016: 102).

Every serious television network fosters the documentary program. "Documentary genre is considered prestigious because it involves the most experienced, talented, hardworking and highly educated journalists, specialists in particular fields who are passionate about discovering the truth, discovering the secrets of human existence and the world around us" (Ilić, 2003: 76). These are the objectives of both the documentary and the informative program linked together by the newsreel.

NEWSREEL

Newsreel is a type of a news film, of film journalism that, according to Kosanovic, has evolved along with global trends (Kosanović, 1992: 83). In addition to newsreel, film journalism also included documentaries. First and foremost the newsreel played an informative role, and the aim was to inform the audience about the most current events in the country and all over the world. The news was gladly welcomed because, until the emergence and development of television, newsreel was the only audio-visual medium. As a combination of image, sound and sound effects, it had great potential for propaganda.

The first newsreel was shown in 1895 in France. It was a record of the holiday excursion of the Congress of the National Union of French Photographic Societies. The newsreel was very popular in Europe and the United States, so several newsreel production companies were founded in the early 20th century⁸ (Tadić, 2009: 51).

Newsreel became popular in Serbia as well. Before World War I, cinema owners in Belgrade, such as Svetozar Botoric, Aleksandar Lifka and the Savic brothers, professional journalists, hired cameramen from European countries and made newsreels about current capital events and country events, in line with foreign news films (Kosanović, 1995). The first domestic newsreel was the Ceremony of Handing over the Old and Receiving New Flags, which was produced and aired in 1911 at the Botorić's cinema *Paris*. Quite often cameramen were experienced photojournalists and journalists. Djoka Bogdanovic, the owner of the Belgrade Casino Cinema, hired Russian photojournalist Chernov to shoot for him. Many of the newsreels he filmed before World War I have been preserved (Kosanović, 1992: 84).

Newsreels were filmed both during the Balkan Wars in 1912 and 1913, and during World War I. During World War I, the military were in charge of filmmaking. The Supreme Command established a film section in 1916 in Corfu. "The main task of this military film service was to show soldiers the films received from the Allies, as well as to film the events on the Thessaloniki Front" (Kosanović, 1995).

After the war, in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, Belgrade became the film centre, with several private film companies producing feature films as well as documentaries and newsreels. Some of them were preserved and represent a valuable evidence of the past. Still, Serbian cinematography was limited and lacking, and the market was dominated by the French, German and the American film industry, while film was becoming a very popular medium.

"In addition to feature films, which were the backbone of cinema programs, foreign distributors also imported a number of newsreels into the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, or Yugoslavia. At first, it was the French Pathè and Gaumont newsreels, while later, especially after the appearance of the sound film in our country (1929), the American (Paramount, Fox, Metro-Goldwin-Mayer) and German (UFA) newsreels dominated the market" (Kosanović, 1992: 85-86). Kosanovic points out that Yugoslav production was poorer, yet, Novakovic newsreel, Miskovic newsreel, Yugoslav newsreel, Artistik film company still recorded current topics, court and political events, culture and sports before World War II... Cinematography was present in Serbia during World War II as well, and was featured in UFA newsreels and Nova Srbija [New Serbia] newsreels that were used for Nazi propaganda. In 1944, the Film Section was founded and headed by Rados Novakovic. "...This was, in fact, the beginning of organized and continuous cinema activity in Yugoslavia after World War II..." (Kosanović, 1995). Kosanovic states that the beginning of film activity

⁸ One of the most famous companies was founded in France in 1911 under the name Pathè.

started with *Cinema Chronicle 1*, filmed in 1945 with material shot in Belgrade and Niš. The shooting of the Chronicles continued, and since 1948 newsreels were filmed once a week.

Cinematography management was centralized. There was a Federal and Republican Committee on Cinematography, a federal film production company called "Zvezda Film", which has been called "Filmske Novosti" ["Newsreel"] since 1950 and whose task has been to produce documentaries and newsreels. Despite the many difficulties and poor working conditions, new issues of "Filmske Novosti" were aired once a week. Newsreel was a mandatory part of cinematic repertoire and it aired before a movie. The audience did not want to miss it because it was the only audio-visual form of news before the television appeared in the late 1950s. Newsreels existed until the late 1960s, and their production stopped in the 1970s (Tadić, 2009: 56).

Kosanovic states that "Filmske Novosti" were an encyclopaedia of everyday life for several decades. They reported on political life, statesmen and their activities, on country building, industry development, culture, sports and events abroad, and on topics that later on became the content of television news. Tadic also points out that the audience was happy to watch the newsreels, but they were also aware of the newsreel objectivity issue due to possible censorship, and the authenticity issue of the recorded material (Tadić, 2009: 56). These issues are linked to television news as well.

TELEVISION NEWS

Despite the fact that since the mid-20th century, television has assumed primacy over film, the film has not ceased to exist. On the contrary, film has undergone a transformation by adapting itself to television. Therefore, newsreel turned into daily news programs, such as TV news. Television news takes up the most time on public and commercial television networks¹⁰. "The central TV news program (*Dnevnik*) marks the beginning of the evening part of the program, which is the most watched. With its duration and generous use of predominantly news reporting techniques, as well as reportage, interviews, live broadcasts by journalists, this type of television show should present the overview of the day, and meet the interests and needs of the broadest possible audience" (Galić, 2016: 97). Television news is a type of information broadcasting program that is different from a documentary, however, both of these have at their core the information, news or facts, the universality of the topics covered, and visual communication.

Compared to other European countries, regular television program started rather late in Serbia¹¹, in the late 1950s, but there had been some experiments in the past. "In the fall of 1939, at the Belgrade Fair and the Zagreb Fair, the Dutch company "Philips" demonstrated television devices to the interested Yugoslav visitors for the first time" (Erdei, 2015: 407). At a certain time of the day, visitors could watch television programs with Belgrade theatre artists on screens set up for that purpose. Due to its immense global popularity, a group of engineers and enthusiasts worked to launch television in the following years in what used to

⁹ Kosanović, available at: http://www.filmskenovosti.rs/istorija.html

¹⁰ In 2017, television news was mostly represented on RTS 1 television, as well as on the commercial Pink television. Data available in the Annual Report on Television Programs with National Coverage in 2017, published by the RTS Center for Public Opinion, Programs and Audiences.

¹¹ According to the 1955 UNESCO report, among the European countries, only Yugoslavia did not foresee the introduction of television. Other European countries have already done it or were in the process of doing it (according to Erdei, 2015: 408-409).

be Yugoslavia. "Serbian television was formed primarily by professionals from radio, film, theatre and the press. These emissaries have gradually lost their attachments to their previous media... Even the film production of the programme, which was at the forefront at times, submitted itself to the peculiar mode of television (serials) and to the specific language of television which nourishes a different type of the word-picture relation than film does" (Savićević, 1995).

At that time, television was a federal concept, and each of the republics eventually received their own television program. Zagreb was the first to launch a regular television program in 1956, while Belgrade did the same in 1958¹². However, they had one thing in common, support for the television news program. Yugoslav television gave pride of place to news and current affairs programmes, which accounted for a sizeable proportion of domestic production from early on (Leandrov, 1986: 231).

Miloje Mića Orlović was the news presenter of the first Belgrade Television news program. The television news was broadcast at 7.30 pm and remains the central news program to this day. There was some negotiation over the concept of television news. One of the founders of the television program was considering the Italian news program (Telegiornale) where the focus was on the news, the American model, where the emphasis was on the news presenter, but he eventually decided upon the BBC's concept: "Television news program should pay the utmost attention to information and news which are especially important. But that does not mean limiting television news to "big" events and happenings only. Television news should also cover every day's topics, "small" stories about the weather, the seasons, interesting facts, the children, thus attracting new audiences" (Leandrov, 1986: 120). News program content has been expanded to include more topics than it was the case with newsreels.

Expansion of television happened in the 1960s, when newsreels were cancelled as unnecessary. More and more people owned television sets and spent their leisure time in front of their TVs. The advantage of television, including television news, over newsreels is the fact that it attracted a lot of people, as more people watched television at home than films shown at cinemas. Moreover, live broadcast was another advantage of television, but not of newsreels, which increased authenticity and speed of information.

"Direct televised broadcasts draw us into the actual events, cancelling out geographical distance, using the images to overcome language barriers, because we embrace the authenticity of the image and tone when grasping new events" (Mitić, 1992: 103). In addition to the limited duration of television news or newsreels, television offered the possibility to have programs on particular topics.

According to the 2017 National Television Ratings Survey conducted by the RTS Centre for Public Opinion, Programs and Audiences (Jovanovic, 2018), news shows, documentaries and short films are the most watched content on RTS 1 and RTS 2 (Table 1).

Table 1 The share of television genres (RTS 1, RTS 2, Pink, O2, Prva, Happy)

The program genre	RTS 1	RTS 2	Pink	O2	Prva	Happy
Information content	35,2	13,9	32,0	6,8	12,0	32,2
Documentary content and short films	4,1	10,1	0,0	4,2	4,2	0,0

 $^{^{12}}$ The first televised broadcast was on 23 August 1958, on Belgrade Television program. Around thirty television sets were set up in Belgrade, and passers-by enthusiastically watched the first televised broadcast.

According to their research, "television news programs include news shows and news magazines, news bulletins, interviews and duels, debates and roundtables, feuilletons, broadcasts and short recordings of parliament sessions, ceremonies, of other public meetings, services and advisory information, demonstration of processes and procedures, shows for a target audience, news shows discussing certain topics, public research and advertising, other and miscellaneous.

Documentaries and short films include travelogues, reportages, historiography shows, portraits and related socio-psychological shows, short films, etc...".

CONCLUSION

The reason¹³ why documentaries have risen in popularity could be the socio-political and economic context of the modern world. In a time when people lost trust in politicians and the media¹⁴, the audience tries to find answers in documentaries covering a wide range of topics, from politics to ecology.

Documentaries replace investigative journalism. The topics are analysed from various perspectives and include many details. With the development of new technologies, internet services and the possibilities provided by cable operators, these films are becoming increasingly available.

The most important feature that links newsreels, documentaries, and television news share is the information¹⁵. Both the newsreel and television news seek to inform viewers, to present facts about different events and people. Moreover, they also have in common the extensiveness of topics, as well as visual communication. Of course, in either case it is not a mirror to reality, but rather its representation which includes the author's intentions, context and mode of reception. The meaning is always both, open to interpretation and polysemantic.

The difference between newsreel and television news is in the reception mode. While television is a medium found at home and adjusted to individual viewers, film was a medium addressing an individual in the audience. While receiving messages from a certain film, the film viewer also receives messages from other audience members. Moreover, the advantage of television news over newsreels is the fact that it attracted a lot of people, as more people watched television at home than films at the cinema. Moreover, live broadcast was another advantage of television, but not of newsreels, which increased authenticity and speed of information.

Documentary as a genre has a future in both cinematography and television, as it is a good mix of a documentary and informative program. Furthermore, it is gaining popularity thanks to technical and technological development. Video has been digitized. It can be recorded on smartphones and uploaded to the Internet, via web blogs or websites, making it even more accessible and mass-produced. Such materials will also become part of news programs.

¹³ In 2013, The Economist magazine wrote about the growing production and distribution of documentaries at festivals around the world, available at: https://www.economist.com/prospero/2013/08/27/the-shocking-truth

¹⁴ Fake news is a new name for the old concept, since it used to be called a rumor or unverified information that began to be seen as news with the advent of social media. Then it would happen that traditional media believe such news and repost them (Georgijev, 2018).

¹⁵ Media theorists talk shout the rife of the control of the c

¹⁵ Media theorists talk about the informative, educational and entertainment function as the basic social functions of media. While film encompasses entertainment and educational aspects, television is dominated by informative and entertainment aspects (Radojković and Miletić 2005, 172-178).

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OD FILMSKIH NOVOSTI DO TELEVIZIJSKOG DNEVNIKA U SRBIJI

Pre nego što je postao najdominantniji kulturni proizvod savremenog doba, film je svoju istoriju započeo kao žurnalistička forma. Prvi snimljeni filmovi braće Auguste and Louis Lumière, krajem 19. veka, bili su dokumentarne prirode. I u Srbiji je prvi snimljeni film početkom 20. veka bio deo filmskih novosti, vrste dokumentarnog filma. Neki od prvih vlasnika bioskopa i snimatelja bili su novinari. U radu se prati razvojni put dokumentarnog filma u Srbiji koji je osim filmskog, postao i televizijski žanr u drugoj polovini XX veka. Ovaj rad ima za cilj da pokaže razvojni put od prvog filma i filmskih novosti do televizijskog dnevnika, jednog od najzastupljenijih programa današnjice, na primeru Srbije.

Ključne reči: dokumentarni film, filmske novosti, televizija, TV dnevnik