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I you consider yourself an educated person, you are supposed to not like television. No mat-
ter how soothing watching a little bit of TV can be in the idle hours of the day, too much of it can make your brain go numb.

Though let’s not be so harsh. Pondering the matter beyond some justified prejudice, anyone who will recall countless moments in which television has provided entertainment, become a source of education, moved them, helped them bond with family and friends, connected them with thousands or millions of other viewers, or simply, kept them company. Television does undoubtedly contribute to the configuration of our memory.

In Spain, the first public broadcasting took place on October 28th, 1956. However, TV sets did not arrive at most Spanish homes until the late sixties or early seventies. The second channel of the Spanish television was not created until 1965 and though offering a culturally rich set of programs, was intended for a minority of view-
ers. There was no private television back then.

The type of television that we grew accustomed to in those early decades was generally simpler and maybe even more honest than to-

day’s. It needed neither “realities” into spectacles; neither did it manufacture it. When it looked at ordinary life, it approached it without distortions. One of the programs that I most vividly remem-
ber was the weekly Viv cada día (“Daily Life”), which Televisión Española (TVE) showed for over 10 years. The program, which was the last of the extraordinary characters portrayed in the program, showed the traditional life. Spain’s television discovered that life really was simpler and maybe even more honest than to-

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10 years since 1978. Thanks to the myriad of channels that we’ve had some extraordinary collaborators and the independent television board, it is the nation’s public television that now features over 40 different channels, both national and autonomous, and thus public television is always subdued by the political party in power. In the absence of an independent television board, it is the nation’s public television that now features over 40 different channels, both national and autonomous, and thus public television is always subdued by the political party in power. In the absence of an independent television board, it is the nation’s public television that now features over 40 different channels, both national and autonomous, and thus public television is always subdued by the political party in power.

Nevertheless, there is plenty of room for hope today. The big business of corporate television is being challenged by the ubiquitous capacity for social and cultural interaction that the Internet offers. The multiplicity of formulas, the creative and communicative freedom that the net offers, together with the immediacy with which we can all be not just receptors, but also producers of the contents, has made us remember what brought us here in the first place: the need to exchange our knowledge, experiences and stories, as we recognize ourselves in the reflection that the vi-

tsual media renders of us. That’s been the research ground for this is-

sue of más+menos devoted to television, which is also the introduction to the many debates we hope to maintain in the next few years through the new CIEE study program in Seville for Commu-
nication, New Media and Journalism. This eight-year-old magazine is the proud precursor of this new CIEE study program that aims to fully provide cultural, academic, professional and linguistic immersion for many students.

What We Owe to Television

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Congratulations to Kathryn ZARRILLI, author of “More than Background Noise,” for being elected to the committee of the new CIEE study program in Seville for Communication, New Media and Journalism. This eight-year-old magazine is the proud precursor of this new CIEE study program that aims to fully provide cultural, academic, professional and linguistic immersion for many students. The magazine has grown and matured, and digital creation, has talked to us about “re-

mixing” practices in a context of collective intelli-
gence. For the new transmedia format that the magazine is exploring, the idea is to make available for the free public to enjoy and contribute. Eduardo del Campo, the chief editor of the magazine, shares his thoughts and the new format of the magazine with the new readers.

W e’ve had some extraordinary collaborators to produce más+menos 16. With Antonio Orelli, writer and editor of some of the most celebrated TV series produced in Spain in recent years (Amar en Tiempos Revueltos or Padre Concha) we’ve ex-
l

plored how much television owes to history and what contribution it can make to the recupera-
tion of collective memory. Felipe Gil, member of the Zemo+M6 team for cultural management de la Fuentela, always broadcasted during prime-
time and still treasured by many Spaniards. Dur-
ing children’s TV hours, there was a program to promote classical music amongst the youngest, El Mundo de la música (“The World of Music”), in which kids pretended to be conductors. TV even told children when they could watch it and when to go to bed (because there was no Disney Channel then).

It is nevertheless puzzling that a medium cre-
ated and consolidated during the second half of a long dictatorship could make many people of my generation feel nostalgic. As I already said, television is also memory. Indeed, of course there was censorship in public television for as long as Franco lived, the dictatorship was not the only one to exert it. Right after the general’s death, TVE started the weekly broadcasting of one of the most remarkable debate programs in 55 years of Spanish television, La Clave (“They Key Point”), which combined a debate of social or political issues with a film that illustrated it. In 1985, after ten very successful years of broadcasting, the first socialist government of our democracy canceled it. The program’s director, José Luis Balbín, denounced it as an attack on freedom of speech. Spain was about to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the founding of Televisión Española (TVE) and the goal was to make “stories to keep you awake,” as Henry Jenkins defines it, knowledge and informa-
tion circulate as part of a flow from which we all need to nourish and to which we all contribute.

Eduardo del Campo, chief editor of the new CIEE study program in Seville for Communication, New Media and Journalism, has shared his insights on the new format of the magazine with the new readers.
She Found Love in “Tiempo Revueltos”

Hundreds of thousands of Spaniards died during the Spanish Civil War and dictatorship, and millions more endured nearly 40 years of oppression. Most experts agree it is time for society to acknowledge those who suffered. Politicians passed a law, but could a daytime soap opera be the answer?

“I hope that young people who are not familiar with the exiles’ situation, because that part of our history has been silenced and hidden, read my diary and understand the suffering that we underwent.”

“Hundreds of Spaniards died during the Spanish Civil War and dictatorship, and millions more endured nearly 40 years of oppression. Most experts agree it is time for society to acknowledge those who suffered. Politicians passed a law, but could a daytime soap opera be the answer?”

“She never fit in well, my husband. He never really figured out how to live his life without all that sadness and pain. I had to give him a lot of strength and encouragement,” says Conchita Ramírez, 86, of Seville. A thin smile stretches across her face as she remembers her husband, Gabriel “Gaby” Torralba, who died 20 years ago. “But I loved him, and he loved me, and in the middle of all that sadness, we were very happy,” Ramírez’s youth, much like the twisted storyline of one of her favorite television programs, “Amar en Tiempos Revueltos,” or “Love in Difficult Times,” was a complicated and dramatic mixture of joy and grief, love and misfortune.

She has happy memories of growing up during the Second Republic, a short period of democracy in Spain between 1931 and 1936. However, everything changed when dictator Francisco Franco took power in 1939 at the end of the Spanish Civil War. Franco’s army targeted her father, who was an officer in the “red” army of the Republic, and her family was displaced several times before moving to France, where they lived in exile.

The following years of Ramírez’s life were even more striking than an episode of “Amar en Tiempos Revueltos.” Gaby was sent to Auschwitz, a Nazi concentration and extermination camp in Poland, and weighed only 40 kilos when he returned. After their marriage in 1946, they lived in such poverty that Ramírez was forced to abort her second child.

Ramírez’s life is well documented in the diary she started at age 13. It is now published under the name Diario de una niña exiliada, or Diary of an Exiled Girl. She hopes it will help break the silence of what daily life was like for people like Ramírez and her husband.

The storyline begins in 1936, and each season reveals a few more years of history. Instead of exclusively focusing on executions and mass graves, however, it also explores what everyday life was like for people Ramírez and her husband.

“I hope that young people who are not familiar with the exiles’ situation, because that part of our history has been silenced and hidden, read my diary and understand the suffering that we underwent.”

“One of the critics is Cecilio Gordillo, the coordinator of the group Recuperando la Memoria de la Historia Social de Andalucía, or RMHSA (Recovering the Memory of the Social History of Andalucía). “These programs sugarcoat a really serious situation and do not reflect what truly occurred,” he says. Gordillo wishes to promote an accurate and comprehensive picture of the victims. He, along with the RMHSA, created the website Todolosciertosmires (All The Names), which provides free, easily accessible information about victims.

According to Gordillo, the Historical Memory Law is not as effective as the television series. Instead, he believes that politicians are using the law to satiate the public without making any real changes. “Nobody asked for a law. We wanted to modify existing laws, which is much easier than making a new one,” he explains. “It has not accomplished anything. It has created political problems and allowed politicians to take credit, which is what they truly looking for.”

While it gives people the right to request information about their family members, the Historical Memory Law offers little assistance to those who wish to open the mass graves. It is still up to groups like the RMHSA to actually exhume the graves and study the remains. According to Santos, “The state is saying, ‘Here, we wrote you a law, I’m giving you the right to open the graves. If you want to open them, you can, but I am not going to give you the money to do it.’”

“Only focus on the people who were killed, but we are getting there, with a lot of caution and with a lot of sensitivity.”

But for people like Ramírez, whose lives were altered greatly by the war, reclaiming history is not about money or legal jargon or television scripts. It is all about sharing their experiences and acknowledging the past. Even though she lived through many years of fear and oppression, she does not require laws or soap operas to remember her own episode of “Love in Difficult Times.” After all, at least one good thing came out of all the hardship.

“It was in those days that I met my first love,” she says. • • •
Four people recall how they lived 30 years ago through one of the most powerful moments in modern Spanish history and the role the media played to show and stop the attempt against democracy.

FEB. 23, 1981, was supposed to be a normal day for Adolfo Salvador and every other Spaniard. Salvador, a 24-year-old journalist, planned to eat dinner with his colleagues and return to headquarters to do obligatory military work in Burgos. Instead, Salvador entered a photo shop to pick up a developed photo when he heard on the radio that an attempted coup d’état was occurring in Madrid.

The troops weren’t directly notified, and they continued the rest of their day as usual. Yet Salvador, now the chief editor of the national, international and world sections of the Diario de Sevilla, spent the night with radio blaring and the television on to gain insight into what was happening.

“I had no idea that anything was going to happen,” Salvador says. “I did notice a little bit of tension in the air, and in fact in those few days before, we had done things that we hadn’t done in my entire year and two months of military service. For example, attacking a building.”

The attempted overthrow of the Spanish democracy, later coined 23-F, is remembered each year with videos, pictures, stories and chronicles from eyewitnesses of what happened in those 18 hours. Remnants of memories from that day still stain the minds of the Spaniards who were alive when it happened.

Political and economic tension had been growing for years in Spain, and on February 23, the unrest towards the Spanish democracy came to a head. At 18:23, 200 armed officers from the Civil Guard burst into the Spanish Congress of Deputies while members were in the process of electing a new Spanish president, Leopoldo Calvo Sotelo. As officers flooded the congress room, electing a new Spanish president, Leopoldo Calvo Sotelo, said that a colleague walked into his office at work and told him what had happened. After realizing that he was one of two people still in the building, he went to his English class. Only three students showed up and he began a discussion about the coup d’état.

“One student adopted an attitude of complete silence, and the student later became a politician in the Partido Popular, and the other student was a woman that had a little Spanish flag around her wrist and she began to justify the coup d’état,” he explains.

After class, Cruz Villafán listened to the radio with his family at home because the television transmission had been cut across the country. Even with the news on the radio, Cruz Villafán said he still felt unsure of what would happen.

“During the first few hours, it wasn’t clear if the generals from the top of the military were for or against the coup,” he says.

Magdalena Marfe, a CIEE Professor and for -

daily, the photographer, said that a colleague walked into his office at work and began a discussion about the coup d’état.

“During the day, it wasn’t clear if the generals from the top of the military were for or against the coup,” he says.

Magdalena Marfe, a CIEE Professor and former director of State University at New York University in New Paltz in Seville, had just finished working at the university and began to walk home when a taxi driver began yelling at her that there had been a war.

“I thought he was really overdriving it, but I got in the taxi and he said, ‘Where do you live?’ and started driving, and said ‘Blood is going to be everywhere in the street!’” Marfe recalls. “But I didn’t think it was going to be that extreme.”

Villalón, a law professor at the University of Se-

“Very few times does one have the opportu-

ty to re-broadcast live a coup d’etat where you can see a man entering in the congress and firing bullets,” Salvador says. “It has a huge impact, and every time the media repeats these images, for the people that were living it remains having a strong impact. That was the day in which every journalist dreamed to be right there. Nobody will forget those radio and television journalists who covered the event.”

At 1:00 on Feb. 24, King Juan Carlos I gave a speech which aired on TVE, denouncing the coup and declaring that the actions against the democratic process were intolerable. After watching the king’s speech, Martilla said she felt relieved, remembering how she felt as the cam-

eras rolled once more.

“When I think of that day, we all remember those images, and we have seen them dozens of times,” she said. “I think for these kinds of events, television makes you feel that they are more real, and there are not other things more direct than that. Things on television are much more impressive than what you can read.”

After the king’s speech aired, news flowed through the newspaper, television and radio me-

diums even though the coup was not over. Mili-

tary troops slowly stopped keeping vigil over key media locations. At approximately 12:00, jour-

nalists, military officers and congressional deputies were freed from congress. Meanwhile, journal-

ists kept working to retransmit images that much of the Spanish population had not seen earlier that morning. At 12:28, the military officers were forced to abandon the parliament.

Salvador believes that at media played an important role in 23-F. He gives the most credit to radio, as it functioned better than the other mediums, but he acknowledges that the televi-

sion affected people in a different way.

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LEFT: The morning of February 24th, the photographer

takes a picture of CIEE students who covered the coup.

RIGHT: Left: The morning of February 24th, the photographer

takes a picture of CIEE students who covered the coup.

A
dolfo Salvador, who began working as a jour-

nalist after he finished his military service on

February 27, 1981, interviewed several military of-

ficers who were inside the congress on February 23 about their experiences. He sent the article to Dia-

rio 16, a newspaper with a circulation of approxi-

mately 100,000 in Spain, which published it on the first anniversary of the coup. Controversy resulted from the article and Salvador, together with Direc-

tor of Diario 16, Pedro J. Ramírez, stood trial after

Captain Álvarez Arévalo, involved in the coup, sued them for libel. The case was finally overturned by the Spanish Constitutional Court on June 1982.

DH/AS-RENOS TV
Millions of spectators follow Trash TV, a genre of programs made of shouts, gossip and crude entertainment, with stars such as Belén Esteban. Many criticize it as a danger, but others say that shows like “Sálvame” are only a pastime.

“I don’t consider the term “television” for any program because there are many shows, including the informative ones that talk about horrible things and events,” he said. “What would we call them, then? Are they, too, “television”?”

But despite the shows’ constant criticisms Rossí says that if the public watches it and enjoys it, that show is just as valuable as any type of television.

“Belén Esteban is not a journalist, but she, like the rest of the world, has an opinion. It’s entertainment,” he said. “If it’s what the people want, it is not trash, and it’s not what they want, they should change the channel!”

But Telebasura doesn’t just affect Belén, the people who watch her, or the journalists who say the shows shouldn’t even have a spot in television. When it comes to what’s on television, many viewers are only a more impressionable people to consider.

Carmen Checa, sixth grade teacher at the primary school José Sebastián y Bande-rín in Bellavista, outside of Sevilla, says she worries most that her students will grow up and not have any idea that what they see on television is real life.

“I do activities with my kids every week and ask them about the news,” she said. “Some of them don’t know what’s happening in the world around them, but every single one knows who Belén Esteban is, and every single one watches “Sálvame.” I say there’s a problem here.”

But what exactly causes this problem? Checa says it’s the fact that shows like “Sálvame” and other Telebasura shows simply exist. Rossí says it’s the fault irresponsible people.

“There are hundreds of channels, so what happens when a child gets hold of the remote? It’s still the fault of the TV shows,” Rossí said. “Parents want to put the responsibility in some-one else’s hands. The shows aren’t the problem. This is the problem.”

But opponents like Checa and Waaasúl say Telebasura and its type of television do carry some element of reality, but it simply won’t solve itself.

“Most of the kids that I teach will grow up to be and will continue to watch shows, and they will continue to be around as long as people support it,” she said.

The difference between Dani’s real magic and television magic, is that this one is determined by the viewers. That power is what keeps this genre alive and flourishing. The audience has a role.

Today’s Good Day

According to Concha, today has the magic. His recipe is brown rice with chicken and cima-nas. So, she’s decided to sit and watch Dani’s show and follow along closely to write down all the ingredients. “I will probably try it tomorrow for dinner, but then I also love to cook fish too,” she adds. “But most of all, I love and watch these programs. It’s absolutely true,” he says, referring both to on the field and in the kitchen.

Boiled Vegetables, or Not

A discussion of how cooking shows have managed to stay afloat in an ever-changing society and a closer look at one of Andalusia’s very own, the program of chef Dani Álvarez in the morning program “Mira la vida” of Canal Sur TV.

A 19 years old, Dani Álvarez attempted his first knee: a mixed chicken dish that remained inedible because he forgot to boil the vegetables. Then, he walks behind the camera of Canal Sur, over his notes one last time, checking all of his ingredients before he hears “Action!” and then he starts his cooking show.

Family First

“I was always experimenting in my kitchen at home,” Dani says. At a young age, he was drawn to culinary art. His first official start was at age 17 when he worked as a waiter at his family’s restaurant in Granada called Restaurante Sevilla. This third-generation restaurant was opened in 1930 by Dani’s grandfather and still stands today as one of Andalusia’s finest. After working there, Dani studied at a hotel in Malaga before traveling all over Spain to better develop his understanding of the entire spectrum of Spanish cuisine.

One set of Eyes

As far as picking which cooking show she watches, Concha Mije has never re-ally had a preference. “Thirty years ago, I could even have watched “Sálvame” just to watch because there was only one,” she says. “Concha is a native of Sevilla in her early 60s, and she is a domestic chef both by hobby and by trade. She is an avid fan of chefs on television. If a cooking show is on and location permits, she is watching it. For her, it has never really been about the host. “The dish they are preparing is what most concerns me. I will ask “Is it good?” then, if avid fans and harsh critics, like Concha, co-exist as one package, how is it that cooking shows have lasted this long?”

In the Beginning

So when did the kitchen jump in front of the camera lens and seize the spotlight for a 35- or sometimes 50-minute period? Though they have been a programming staple since the early days of television broadcasting, there have been periods where the genre has been interrupted on the radio and then transitioned onto the television screen during the 1940s as an avenue to help ration recipes during World War II (specificly in the United States). These “live” shows offered an inexpensive, economic solution to odd space between programs, and they still do. The public’s appetite for this genre has stood the test of time, unlike the Westerns or other “classics” that seemingly faded away. Names like Julia Child in “The French Chef” and José Andrés kept the interest peak to really kick-start the evolu-tion that would turn into programs such as the reality show “Top Chef.” These one-time “flashes” are now main events on some stations’ evening rosters. Somehow, the culinary culture on television has managed to stay afloat, even amid an ever-changing society. Old legends live on and new faces join the game.

Just Dani

Dani Álvarez has become one of those new faces. In building the structure of this genre, it is easy to remember the big names and rave about those unforgettable recipes, but at what point does be-ing projected into millions of peoples’ living rooms change the way one cooks, or more specifically, change the way Dani cooked? A professional, he has his favorites to cook as well. His particular favorite is rice because of its wide range of cooking possibilities. “Black rice, rice a banda, rice with snails or anchovies… but then I also love to cook fish too,” he adds.

Andere...
Zapping through channels, one can see how television today has distanced itself from reality, which makes it difficult for viewers to associate with the medium. The Internet, however, is permitting the golden age of TV to make a rerun through the portrayal of extraordinarily ordinary people.

The television set has always been a mirror for its audiences and that’s the reason we like it so much. It’s a portal into the very lives of the people watching, and a way to monitor ourselves and our neighbors. The content that has graced the small screen has always reflected our own lives, not actors.

There is an uprising against this kind of deceit, however. The rise of new technology is allowing viewers to return to the essential human nature of television. The Internet is revolutionizing and democratizing TV, allowing for the production of programs reminiscent of “Vivir Cada Día.”

An example of this evolution is a short documentary entitled “Superheroes de Barrio,” which profiles the weekly flea market of Seville, in Cale Fera, known as “El Jueves” (because it is celebrated every Thursday).

The group who produced it, Intervenciones en Jueves, highlighted the everyday people that they consider heroes. The episode emphasizes the dynamics of the market and the characteristics that make it special. The segment shows Feria Street covered with anxious buyers and wandering eyes that make their way to the clothes, books, handbags and figurines. Then, a red and blue costumed superhero, Sarafín Zapico impersonating HeróinMan, interviews Señor Manuel.

Then, a red and blue costumed superhero, Sarafín Zapico, interviews Señor Manuel, 83, who has sold tools at the market for many years; a superhero talking to a real life hero.

Sarafín Zapico poses as HeróinMan in a photo session at a studio in calle Feria during the 12th edition of the Zemos98 International Festival, March 2010. / CELIA MACÍAS

The future format of television is uncertain. What is certain, however, is that because of new technology, we can expect a redirection to content that focuses on showcasing our actual persons, rather than those that were designed by a TV station. Naturally, what we want reflected in the stories we are told is the human nature we possess, and the one we expect others to possess as well. Shows that wear the docudrama mask will continue to exist until the medium evolves out of the slump it’s in. We are all ordinary, and that is always a good thing to remember.

To view complete audiovisual stories, visit: http://tv.zemos98.org/intervenciones-en-jueves and www.rtve.es/alacarta/web/archive
How do TV series influence Spain's youth? A group of teen girls explains it to us.

The Physics and Chemistry of Adolescents’ Relationship with Television

How do TV series influence Spain’s youth? A group of teen girls explains it to us.

The outsides of Seville, which has been left behind be- cause of its development, the controversy, the growth, and the lack of kids where I live grow up on their own and watching TV. They have to educate themselves. It’s a very young age that will do the best leaders to hold on to their boyfriends, even become pregnant with their babies.

High school headmaster, Julia Casarosa, who teaches English at the Ramón Carande institute, near the marginalized neighborhood of Núñez Toro, and knows Natalia, Cristina, and Irene, comments that TV creates a model for teenagers to emulate. After looking at the girls’ clothes, she adds: “But this was at the end, when they received so much criticism they had no choice but to dress like that.”

Perhaps one aspect that this group of girls agrees on is that adolescence is a period of stress and storm, ups and downs and rebellion. Natalia remarks, “I think back now to when I was 13 years old and wonder how could I have been so gullible at that age.” After looking at the girls’ friends and their friends’ friends, she says, “The girls come to terms with the fact that their character is not being portrayed accurately, with fictional charac- ters in the media is part of being an adolescent and finding one’s own identity.”

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Give TV a Chance

Television has been a part of family life in Spain for over 50 years, as in the homes of Juanita, Ángel, Carmen, Lola and Mariano.

The wind blows through the olive trees, the stars shine brightly overhead and in the quiet farmland just outside of Morón de la Frontera, people who have gathered here from cities far away enter into the country house. The living room is packed with relatives, friends, smiles and laughter. It’s Juana Regina’s 27th birthday, and as presents are passed to him and cake is dolled out to everyone, an important member of the household is thoughtlessly passed over; a large, glowing color television beneath a stack of party plates.

The guests chat with the people near them about everything and nothing in particular. When one person runs out of thoughts about the newest SEAT car model, the TV saves him from the awkward silence with a chef describing how to best cook a lamb chop. Someone exclaims “That guy always makes cooking look so much easier than it is!” which starts a new conversation. Half an hour later, when there is nothing left to say about the town fair that just ended, the TV is there with a captivating German fitness instructor and his five rules to getting buff. The conversation picks up again and the TV is ignored, but in the background, waiting for any full, murmurs romantic dialogue from a cheesy ‘80s movie.

Flash back 37 years: It is Friday night on channel TVE 1. Normally, 9:30 p.m. is late for a 15-year-old, but tonight Lola Fernández Viñuela is allowed to stay up for one special hour. Her parents sit together on the other end and every- one waits excitedly for her grandmother to bring a big plate of toast and pate. LolaStanescaptivated at the TV screen as music plays and people in crazy costumes assemble on the stage. In black and white, big letters flash “Un, dos, tres… responda otra vez” or “One, two, three… answer again.” For an hour, her whole family is together, cheering loudly or moaning disappointedly as contestants on the game show try and try to struggle to win big or go home empty handed.

For Ángel de Quinta, the show “Un, dos, tres…” was clever ways for curious children like him to learn more about the world. But Ángel’s major intellectual re-source became “Cine Club” on channel TVE 2, which played black-and-white movies from the ‘50s and ‘60s every week. Well-produced Italian and Spanish films with deep social and personal themes would gradually bore family members to their beds, leaving only 9-year-old Ángel and his father on the couch. Of course he wasn’t allowed to watch the more adult films, but some like “The Nights of Cabiria” from director Federico Fellini were good enough to make him appreciate the art and eventually love it. Thirty years later, Ángel is a uni-versity professor of history and cinema.

For the first decade of TV in Spain there was only one channel, TVE 1. From 1966 until 1990, there were two: TVE 1 and TVE 2. The Law of Pri-vate Television was passed in 1988, and rapidly two new channels were created, Antena 3 and Tele 5. With the development of satellite TV, many more private channels began broadcasting in Spain. In order to stay competitive, public television needed major reorganization, which included creating new thematic channels, such as Teledo-porte (sports coverage), Canal Clásico (classic cinema), and Canal 24 Horas (Spain’s first dedicated news station.) The public stations remain as the most viewed of Spanish television.

Returning from her classes at the University of Seville, Carmen Martín Ramos comes home to a silent house. Her parents eat for a few hours later, but the quiet is barely disturbed with them home. That is, until 10:30 p.m. when Carmen’s mother, the queen of the remote, turns to channel 24 to watch the debates on “La noche en 24 horas.” As Carmen says, “At home we don’t talk much, but this at least is a way to make con-versation.” The three surround the living room table, and for an hour and a half everyone is in constant discussion over the politics, economics and world events debated on the show.

But Carmen doesn’t watch much else on TV. “Most TV is trash,” she says.

For Mariana Marchena Vázquez wouldn’t dis-agree, but that doesn’t mean non-educational TV can’t have value. Thirty years ago, after separat-ing from his wife, he would pick up his 5-year-old son Raúl from preschool and take him home. Ev-ery day they had together they made adventures with Clicks (little action figures) and their Tente (the Spanish version of Lego). Raúl could be a messy eater, and at snack-time Mariana had a way to get him to learn his manners. “If you eat clearly like a big boy, we can go watch TV!” he coaxed. Needless to say, this worked. Every day they sat together on the small sofa to watch half an hour of the Japanese action cartoon “Mazinger Z.” As flashy heroes in giant robots fought explosive battles against the forces of evil, Raúl would go wild, jumping and yelling for his favorite robots to win the fight and save the day. With great nostalgia, Mariana remembers his child’s excited energy unleashed each afternoon.

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The excitement of the fiesta in Morón de la Frontera slowly calms. The country night sky has been dark for hours, and the house is a beacon of light, shining across the fields. Inside, used plates and coffee cups fill the table space and shiny wrapping paper is scattered across the floor. The chatting gradually dies down, goodbyes and kisses are shared, and friends and family trickle out to their vehicles. Soon, only the mother is left alone with the television in the living room. She turns out the light, casting shadows over the mess: shall we leave it where it is for tonight. With the remote in hand, her thumb instinctively reach-es for the big, red power button. The glow leaves the screen, the room is left silent, and an integral part of family life is turned off until tomorrow.
I t’s not just big decisions that affect one’s life, but a combination of small, modest, daily details. From political leaders to immigrants, individual stories represent the histories of diverse backgrounds that collectively impact our world. Acknowledging the power of personal stories, the growing genre of multimedia storytelling is no longer confined to written word. StoryCorps is an independent nonprofit project whose mission is to provide Americans of all backgrounds and beliefs with the opportunity to record, share, and preserve the stories of their lives in order to spread the mindset that every voice matters.

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With the same goal of StoryCorps, Betsy Lynch has undertaken the task of sharing and preserving millions of voices. To view complete audiovisual stories, visit: www.youtube.com/user/betsylynch

Santiago Martínez-Vares, Communications manager for mayoral candidate Juan Ignacio Zoido

It was just an ordinary visit to the Sevilla Este district for Juan Ignacio Zoido, the mayoral candidate for the Popular Party in the upcoming May elections. Neighbors and local media flooded the Canal de Ránillas in order to witness and document the anticipated proposal for improvement. Under the new proposal, the canal, currently filled with concrete and covered in ash es and glass, could soon become an expansive park home to orange blossoms and children’s toys. “In our team, we care about the light. We care so much about the site, about where the neighbors are. In these five years, I’ve learned that one must understand reality,” says Santiago Martínez-Vares, manager of the Zoido’s communication team. Connecting the candidate to the public, Martínez-Vares tells the story of Zoido’s campaign, its plan of action and its promise for the future.

Jorge Morillo, Social volunteer

Starting in the impoverished neighborhood of Himanjasur in Granada in 1985, Philanthropist Jorge Morillo developed the program Educar en la calle (Educating in the Streets). Today, it continues in Seville to teach values such as respect, responsibility and teamwork to children living in marginalized neighborhoods. “I discovered a reality that I didn’t know - of a very marginal world, different than my own. This environment was very complicated. I discovered my job through the children.” Though the rewards of serving the community continue to be evident, Jorge explains that his encounter with God is what encourages him to keep giving. “I think that he who believes in God believes in love. To know love is to know God. God loves. For me, this will be the summary of my whole life.”

Masin Khan, Iranian immigrant in Seville

I know that the future of mankind and of the world in general is always better, the world is always going to get better. These pains that we experience now are just a small part of the big picture,” explains Masin Khan, referring to the trials of his past and his hopes for the future. Born in 1920 in the small town of Jusf, Iran, Masin watched as his religious freedom was replaced with persecution and hatred in the years following the Iranian Revolution of 1979. Even after five years of suffering in prison because of his beliefs in the Baha’i faith, he continues to believe in the faithfulness of God, and the necessity of a savior.

Maria José Fernández, Primary school teacher

B ells are bouncing, children are screaming, and smiles spread wide across the faces of twenty children as their freedom is embraced. “I consider myself lucky, lucky to work in something that I love. A lot of people don’t enjoy where they work. This, I believe, is a luxury,” comments physical education teacher María José Fernández of Pedro Garfias Elementary School. María José also discusses the importance of education, both parental and academic, in a child’s life, and how both affect a child’s development “Above all, the problem that I see the most is the little time that parents spend with their children. Whether a family has money or not, both cases are equal.”

Daniel Mantas, Student

D aniel Manta Naikhi, a 19-year-old dietetics and nutrition student, is committed to his long-distance relationship; though, he comments, most people his age in Spain tend to change relationships frequently. “Because we don’t live in the same city, we hope to move together to a new place. We both want to keep studying and plan to attend the same university in the future.” Daniel says. Even apart, their relationship continues to grow. “My girlfriend’s mom has dreams. It’s happened before three or four times, and they always come true. Well about three weeks ago, she dreamt that I was going to marry her daughter.”

Primary school teacher

To view complete audiovisual stories, visit:
www.youtube.com/user/betsylynch
Who’s behind Minnie Mouse?

The art of dubbing foreign films and televised programs has become a critical part of Spanish culture, opening the door to a world of media not otherwise available due to language barriers.

And your love, it’s prohibited! A prohibited love, how romantic," says Minnie Mouse in Spanish, as she innocently sits on her sofa and eats her grapes, discussing Mickey Duck’s love life in the back of a horse-drawn carriage. With this last exclamation and childish giggles, the director cuts the take and Minnie Mouse is frozen on the screen. Nonia de la Gala takes off her headphones, stifling her lingering giggles so as not to interrupt the following scenes. She exits the recording room with her three colleagues, the voices of Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck and Daisy. The clock reads 2:30 p.m. and after six and a half hours of dubbing, the crew could use a lunch break. As they head downstairs to the cafeteria together, their chemistry is unmistakable. “We are like a family,” Nonia says with a smile. “A tight-knit group where everybody knows everybody. You learn to read at the same time as you listen to the original actor,” she says. The first attempt doesn’t work—it takes Nonia too long to complete the phrase in Spanish and Minnie has already finished moving her lips. Although the script has already been translated and adjusted so that word and sentence lengths in both languages match up as best as possible, Nonia needs to get it perfectly. “It facilitates the work of the actor, of course,” she notes. “If not, it would take us double the time to do our job and that wouldn’t be profitable for the company.” Nonia re-enters the set after a quick practice, you learn." She tries again, this time speeding up her speech just a little and successfully matching her words to the movement of the lips on screen. However, the director isn’t satisfied yet. Nonia is not cheerful enough, she didn’t start her line on time, she didn’t achieve the right sound. Finally, after a few more tries, she gets it right. They can move on.

The real work of dubbed media begins long before Nonia arrives at the studio. The agency must first buy rights to the original work before anything can be done to change the product. Once in possession of the script, the studio’s hired translator crafts a direct word-for-word translation. From this raw translation, the language is then tweaked in order to correctly convey the lip movements seen on screen, called synchronization. Spanish phrases take longer to complete than do many in English and so the number of words and phrases is adjusted in order to create an image of maximum authenticity. Colloquial jokes and references made in the original work also are changed to cater to the new audience. Spanish kids might not know Alex Rodriguez or Kobe Bryant, but they will certainly understand an allusion to Cristiano Ronaldo.

As soon as the new script is ready for the studio, the director must find a suitable voice actor for the job. Those actors who appear in multiple films, such as Colin Firth, are always dubbed by the same voice actor “in order to create authenticity,” says José Enrique García, an English language professor at the University of Seville. “He has a unique accent in Spanish, so it has to be the same actor.” As a veteran in the dubbing community, Nonia’s voice and style, perfectly for girls, is well known by directors, who come to her with appropriate roles. “A director of an audiovisual production calls to tell you that he wants you to play a role… if you’re available on that day, you have formalized your attendance,” she states. Others are not so lucky. If no current actors come to mind, the director must conduct castings, carefully selecting for gender, age and essence of the voice to best match the original.

For as long as she can remember, Nonia has wanted to be an actress, but her parents disapproved of her love of the arts. “They believed that it was not a promising career, and wished that she would find something a little more “normal.” To appease them, she studied journalism during her university years but began to work as a dubbing actress in 1988, just 18 years old then. “It’s fun, and they pay you. It was appealing, I wanted to be an actress, but if you’re shy, this is much better,” she says. Twenty-two years later, Nonia is still doing various films and series, but the amount of work has dwindled. “Nowadays very few productions are dubbed… even those for record publications for television and radio,” Nonia lamented. “It has occurred in Madrid and Barcelona, where they dub the majority of foreign media distributed in Spain, but also in Seville, where it has always been done on a much smaller scale.”

The act of dubbing foreign films into Spanish began during Franco Franco’s regime in the late 1930s, just after the start of World War II. Anything that reached the general population was monitored and heavily censored, including foreign films. Dubbing allowed Franco to control the information conveyed to the public, permit- ting him to change or cut various scenes that were deemed inappropriate during this time. Consequently, dubbed foreign films become an integral part of Spanish cinema and culture. However, with current technologies such as Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT), the viewer is able to choose the method in which they prefer to see a film or television show, whether original, with subtitles or dubbed. “In Spain, media is dubbed very well, with impressive technical quality…[and] one can view a film with ease,” says García. Conversely, this can also be seen as a disadvantage of dubbing in Spain.

She patiently waits her turn, blind to the character that she must become in just a few minutes. “You have no idea if you’re going to play a sweet young girl or a dreadful serial killer. You never memorize any lines.”

Danny Mantas, 10, is Sevillano through and through, but is part of the first generation in his family to be born outside of Iran. “The good thing is that my grandparents, who have not had the opportunity to learn English, can watch movies with ease. On the other hand… in other countries in which the peo- ple speak English… it comes from the fact that they only see movies in English. To see a movie is like listening to a conversation: if you practice, you learn.”

Back at the recording studio, Nonia re-enters the set after a quick bite to eat. All of a sudden, Minnie comes back to life, on screen and within Nonia herself. A childish goddess fills the room as she continues to embody her cartoon alias. “We work with our voices, that’s all.”

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More Than a Background Noise

Watching soccer games, news or Semana Santa coverage on television at bars is a particular way of bringing people together.

It's 9 p.m. on Wednesday night. The narrow streets in the center of Seville are quiet as people finish up at work and head home, and groups of students wander around recapuring the day's events. All is tranquil as the day winds down. In contrast, though, a loud sound is heard from Perejil, a small bar on a street corner. It sounds like roars from a crowd interrupted by occasional whistles.

The noise comes from the bar's television, as the Real Madrid soccer team takes on Hércules. Two men sit at the bar, beers in hand, talking to the owner and watching. Others sit at tables, occasionally peering up when the announcer gets excited, or the crowd starts to cheer. As time passes, more and more people enter. They first look to the television to check the score of the game and then head to the bar to order a drink and sit and watch.

The television is mounted up high on the wall. The 22-year-old bar looks its age, decorated with antiques and old pictures. The wooden tables and chairs appear to be aging. The sleek flat-screen doesn't exactly fit in with the look of the place, but it serves a purpose regardless.

While the bar is usually tuned in to the radio, bartender Agustín Yañez says that the television turns on and becomes more popular during soccer games, which are usually on Wednesday and Sunday, around 9 p.m.

"The television helps to bring people in," Yañez says. "When the games are those of Sevilla FC or Real Betis, the bar is full of people yelling, especially when there's a goal." These are the two league teams in Seville. Sevilla FC is in the first division, and Real Betis the second. Fans are either dedicated to one or the other; there's no in between, as a customer, José Luis Martínez, explains. "There's a rivalry between any two teams playing about 90 percent of the time. I'm a Sevilla fan, of course. Betis... is that even a team?"

Opposing Martínez, Betis fan Juan Carlos Gómez, a neighborhood local, spends about two to three days a week at El Mas Bar, in Triana, relying on the television to watch games. He stands at the end of a long line of men at the bar, all with their heads turned to the television, some occasionally yelling at it. To his right are tables of people eating dinner, all chairs turned towards the television and eyes glued to the game at hand. Gómez sees the television's role in bringing in the crowds. "Without that television, there would definitely be less people here," Gómez says of the bar. "And when there are games, there are always more."

The television at Perejil, in fact, was bought specifically because of last year's World Cup. The championship final match took place Sunday evening, July 11, 2010. Spain was tied with the Netherlands the entire game, and finally won when Andrés Iniesta scored in extra time. "The bar was packed," Yañez remembers. "Fans had brought flags and painted their faces with pride for Spain."

Bar Centro, located in Plaza del Salvador, has a similar story. At 6 p.m., the 3-month-old flat screen television is tuned to music as 14-year-old Angel Rodríguez sets up cups and plates for café con leche. Before the World Cup, the bar didn't even have a television. The game was broadcast on a small screen, and Rodríguez remembers Spanish patriotism from groups of 14- to 16-year-olds in the bar yelling the entire game. After the event, the bar purchased a new television, to show more games.

"Many times they come in alone to watch, with their breakfast. The television is their company."

The TV isn't free, however. Most televisions in bars are subscribed to platforms, like Canal+, a commercial television channel that plays the games. This gives bar customers the luxury of watching soccer for free, instead of paying per view at their houses. At Cien Montaditos in Triana, which subscribes to Canal+, mostly for the soccer games, employee Antonio Canale affirms that access to the bar's TV is a good deal. "Here, one jar of beer costs one euro, which can last you the entire game. And watching the game is free," he says. "It's great entertainment."

At 1 o'clock in the afternoon, the lights in the bar and the glare coming in from the sun make the television screen appear dim, and the sound is turned down so low it can barely be heard. But it's not turned off. It is tuned in to La Sexta, currently showing a program dedicated to Formula 1, the car-racing league. "People in Seville watch it because there are three drivers from Spain that everyone likes to support and keep up with," Canale explains. When not on sports, the television at Cien Montaditos is sometimes tuned to 24 Horas, a news network.

Café Bar Taquilla, because of its proximity to the bullring of La Maestranza, is entirely dedicated to the bulls. The walls inside are full of pictures of bullfighters old and young, and the television is mounted to the left of a bullhead. Interestingly, the television does not show bullfights. As the bar is a popular hangout spot before and after bullfights, the television mostly shows the news. "We keep the TV on five to six hours of the day," says employee Pepe Oliva Fariñas. "A lot of people come here to watch the news. Many people pass through the street, see the television turned to 'Telediario,' and come in. It's watched mostly at noon or during breakfast."

Another popular breakfast spot is Las Columnas, located on San Jacinto Street in Triana. Open at 7 am, this television brings Seville the morning news. Employee Pedro Clemente sees the television as more than a courier of information. "Many times they come in by themselves to watch, with their breakfast. The television is their company."

While this television shows the latest up-to-date information about life in Seville, some televisions work to keep old traditions alive. Four-year-old bar Refugio, located in the Plaza Jesús de la Pasión, is entirely dedicated to Semana Santa, the Holy Week. The traditional bar smells of incense, and is filled with pictures of Semana Santa celebrations, the Virgin Mary or Jesus Christ. The television shows videos of old processions during Semana Santa and its loud music can be heard in the street. Bar owner Antonio Marín has over 3,000 videos of the brotherhoods of Madrid, Seville and so on.

Frequent visitor Antonio Ruiz, and member of the brotherhood of Pasion, sits with his beer, watching the television, occasionally talking to Marín. "I love Semana Santa, and this bar is important to me. I love the television and the videos. It's nice to just come in, order a beer, sit alone, and watch," he says. As if this bar isn't popular during the year, the place is entirely full during the week of Semana Santa.

"It's craziness here," sums up the owner. "Just imagine it."

People in Seville don't just come to bars to eat tapas and drink beer. Whether arguing over which team is better, celebrating victories in any sport or discussing Seville's daily news, the television creates a community and a window to the world that brings people together.