

Albert Lichtblau, University of Salzburg, Austria
What Makes Oral History Different If We Can See What We Hear?

It's not my intention to rate audiovisual sources higher than audio sources. The specific qualities of these sources are obviously different and this influences our analytical responses to them. Since so many colleagues have started to film their interviews, it's necessary to reflect upon the impact of these differences on our research.

To make my point clear for those who don't work with audiovisual media, I'd like to discuss the specific quality of written sources first. It's a banal observation that the media of communication shape communication itself since it styles the structure of contents and messages and thus influences how communication is understood by readers. To illustrate this, let's take a look at letters. Handwritten letters differ essentially from letters that were written by typewriter or are printouts of computer files or just appear on screen. The character of one's personality is easier to recognize in handwritten letters by personal style than in typed ones, which are based on a small range of standardized typographic formats. But even in the form of typed letters, one can distinguish among various forms, such as the formal letter or the much more informal one. E-mail and SMS fundamentally changed the form and structures of typed communication into informality and often signal a less binding force. Both tend to a specific form of language, signs and codes.

I hope the reader agrees with me that there are essential divergences when the format of the communication media differs. The differences between audio-taped or videotaped interviews are essential also and these differences can be analyzed on various levels like form, structure, interview setting and interaction, intention, re/construction process, different kind of information and reception by the academic and non-academic audience.

The Power of Audiovisuality

As a participant in several oral history conferences, I have been astounded by the fact that I have heard hardly any audio presentations of our work, but I have seen

several documentary film presentations that were connected with oral history. For that reason, one of my first theses is that film makes it easier to communicate our interview-related research than purely audio sources. The reason for that is quite obvious. Audiences are not accustomed to only listen to edited or unedited audio sources; they are used to watching documentary films. Most of the audiovisual presentations at conferences show edited films and thus have also adopted film language and the structure of documentary films. However, I'm aware of the fact that oral history projects like the Oral History Research Office at Columbia University in New York have also issued audio sources¹ or CDs which are added to books,² or various projects published on the Internet. Nevertheless, it's obvious that even within our community of oral historians, film seems to be a more appropriate and therefore more powerful form to communicate our sources.

To give an example: Viewing an interview, we respond to moments of silence differently than if we "just" hear the interviews. Silence gives the viewers space for additional interpretations. It is a treasure for the audience, since it allows ones own fantasies to visualize a story. A facial expression is able to transmit the emotional struggle for the right word to appropriately articulate ones memory. I came across a touching example at the archive of the Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation in an interview with an Austrian-Jewish survivor, R. S. He and his brother were caught by Nazi troops during the so-called "*Kristallnacht*" in Vienna in November 1938. R S was 24 years old then. He recollects how he and his brother had to stand silently with others for hours, when his brother suddenly blurted out: "What did we Jews do wrong? Why do we have to suffer so much?" R S held his tongue and this saved his own life, but since then he has lived with a guilty conscience. Mr. S's brother was later killed by the Nazis. This sequence is also extremely impressive on a non-verbal level as Mr. S kept silent for a long time as he struggled to find the right way to express himself. Unintentionally, this gives the viewer a chance to visualize the situation and thereby to get into his indescribable struggle how to react in this moment. The sequence is also very impressive as transcribed text, but the drama of this moment is emphasized by Mr. S's facial expression and the timing of his language. The way Mr. S describes this scene and

¹ CD entitled Stories from the Collection. Columbia University Oral History Research Office, New York 1998.

² E.g. Werner *Hanak* & Niko *Wahl*, *Vom Grossvater vertrieben, vom Enkel erforscht? Zivildienst in New York, Vienna* 2002.

how he struggles is an example how “images in ones head” emerge. He was able to transmit this horrible moment by the unique way he verbalized it, but also by his body language.³

Different Levels, Codes and Messages

As I’m someone who has tried to present his research accompanied by audiovisual examples, I’d like to share some of my ideas. I’m convinced that it is enthralling and inspiring to see what we can hear because it opens up our minds to a wider range of both information and interpretations. It’s captivating to view our interviewees during the process of remembering. We can see at once how the body has its own language and sends messages, which may be different than the messages we can hear. Contents inscribe themselves into the terminology of bodies. Gestures and facial expression, body language, or the style of clothing add so much more information to what we can hear.⁴ And the filmed background can give the researcher another tool for interpretation.

Dancing with Memory – Case Studies

To show that my ideas are based on work with film, I want to give some examples before I get back to a more abstract level. This year’s oral history conference encouraged presentations investigating ‘dancing with memory’ which occurs between speaker and listener and between the performer or audiences. How can we represent “dancing with memory” in our work? Again: since dance is an physical form of expression, it is interesting to look for manifestations of traditions, past or memories that are inscribed in this. Visuality helps enormously. Two examples from my own work refer to dance.

My first example is a film about a group of migrants from the Austrian province of Burgenland, which was a rural, backward region with a high unemployment rate. These migrants in the 1920-30s and 1950s somehow ended up in the suburbs of New York City. The first generation has remained deeply rooted in the culture of their homeland, which means they love to drink wine, to eat high-cholesterol food and to listen and dance to folkloristic music. They founded clubs and organized dances,

³ Interview with RS (born in Gross-Siegharts, Austria in 1914), Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation Archive, Los Angeles.

⁴ About faces: Christa *Bluemlinger* & Karl *Sierek* (eds.), *Das Gesicht im Zeitalter des bewegten Bildes*, Vienna 2002.

which, until 2005, took place in a shabby restaurant in the Bronx called Castle Harbor Casino. It once was run by innkeepers from Burgenland. With my camera, I recorded the ritualized ceremonies which were opened with the American and Austrian national anthems and a song entitled “I Had a Comrade” [*“Ich hatte einen Kameraden”*]. For me, this was strange since in Austria this march is played at funerals of members of the Austrian veteran organization [*Kameradschaftsbund*] and therefore has a connotation with the *German Wehrmacht* and World War II. Some members of these Austrian immigrant clubs still lived in Austria during the Nazi era and therefore fought in the *German Wehrmacht* or were members of one of the Nazi-organizations like the Hitler Youth (*Hitlerjugend*). Others who emigrated before the Nazis took over fought in Allied armies, and some fought in later conflicts like the Korean War. Therefore, in this context, this song is one for veterans who fought on both sides, for the Third Reich and for the Allied too. As most of the members are elderly, it’s also a song of mourning for those who died in recent years. So the martial connotation of the song which I knew was still there but widened within the group for various individual mourning purposes. This is a good example how easily one could misinterpret non-verbal messages (given by music) and how important it was to ask the participants about the meaning of the music for them. In terms of acculturation, it was interesting to observe how proudly and fervently they sang the Star Spangled Banner, but hardly knew the words to the Austrian national anthem.

For me, it was also fascinating to find out that the so-called “oom-pah music”—a mixture of all sorts of traditional polka songs and marches from Austria and Germany—is attractive to the younger generations of New York Burgenlanders. In Austria, this kind of music is also popular, but is very often associated with culturally conservative attitudes, sexist and sentimental moods. In interviews with members of the younger generation who attended the ceremonies in the Bronx, I found out that they love the music since it’s the one they grew up with. They enjoy it like they enjoy modern pop music.⁵

The camera helped me later in my research since the film revealed many visual details and the interaction between the generations. It also showed how kids are

⁵ Albert *Lichtblau*, Knickerbocker und Schlauberger. Burgenländervereine in New York und ihre Musik. In: Ulrike *Kammerhofer-Aggermann* (ed.), *Ehrenamt und Leidenschaft. Vereine als gesellschaftliche Faktoren* (Salzburger Beiträge zur Volkskunde, Vol. 12), Salzburg 2002, 279 – 289; Albert *Lichtblau*, Mitten ins Herz: Musik und Migration. In: *kursiv, eine Kunstzeitschrift*, 10-1/2/03, 2003, 77 – 95.

integrated in the group when the audience danced with them to the oom-pah music. It also showed how everybody really enjoyed dancing, singing, chatting, eating and drinking. It also helped me as an insider (Austrian) /outsider (non-American) to understand the feelings of happiness, fun, roots-oriented rituals and nostalgia connected with oom-pah music and dance. For the younger generations, good food, entertainment and a happy family setting stand for something that, in the U.S., is called German *Gemuetlichkeit*. There are so-called Oktoberfests all over the U.S: nowadays, even in Alaska. And it is a typical fate of immigrants that, in their new homelands, people don't pay too much attention to national differences. Austrians certainly would claim to be a *gemueltliche* folk, but they definitely would not associate this mentality with the culture of everyday life in Germany. Nevertheless, the Austrian immigrants benefit from this, since it was precisely this perception that made possible the survival of oom-pah music bands in the U.S.

My second example refers to the film "Recapitulation of Memory" that observed three survivors of the Nazi's Mauthausen Concentration Camp near Linz in Upper Austria coming back with their children or spouse. One of the survivors we filmed was Mr..B., who took his daughters M and A to Mauthausen. He had been interviewed about his experiences in his home in Elizabeth, New Jersey and this interview is now shown at the Visitor's Center that opened in Mauthausen in 2003.⁶ One of my research questions was whether there is a difference between his interview given at home and his recollections at the "real place."

Although the former Mauthausen Concentration Camp is a "real place" of terror, it's also a place of various changes since 1945 and therefore a reshaped place of memory. Mauthausen was not a pure extermination camp, although it had a gas chamber to kill concentration camp prisoners. Most inmates were killed by work in the quarry or by work at one of Mauthausen's satellite camps [*Aussenlager*]. In Mauthausen's quarry, concentration camp inmates had to carry heavy stones up a hill, and they had to climb the so-called stairway of death which consists of 186 steps. In the interview he gave at his home, Mr. B described his arrival in Mauthausen. He and the others were taken to the shower room and shaved:

"Then we were formed there in groups, and they were taking down, a whole column of people, down to the quarry. We went down [to] the quarry, the 186

⁶ <http://www.mauthausen-memorial.at/> (April 4, 2006).

steps cut in the stone. We had to ..., barefoot on the bottom of the quarry—there were a lot of pebbles, sharp pebbles. You had to run fast ...”

We accompanied Mr. B and his daughters halfway down the stairway of death to do our final interview. When we stopped there, Mr. B retold this story for his daughters and for the camera. Since one of our questions for the film was how the survivors remember the place differently, I edited this sequence with Mr. B’s introduction:

“This didn’t look the way it is now.”

There are other former concentration camps like the one in Ravensbrueck north of Berlin, where the changes are part of the exhibitions. Not so in Mauthausen.⁷ Thus the film can help to make clear that the site nowadays is something utterly different than what it was when it was a concentration camp. Mr. B continued:

“Because you have everything overgrown with vegetation and trees. There was bare stone here, *very rock*. This was an active quarry. And at the bottom of the quarry there were piles of rocks, broken up into small rocks. And the entire bottom was covered with these sharp pebbles, sharp one, not this one. Sharp, you know, broken up from this splinted – from the breaking of stone, right.

So we, when we were walking down here the stairs, right, to the bottom of this – of the quarry. And we had few seconds time to grab a stone, put it on your shoulder and ... walk up the steps.”

In contrast to the classical “talking head” situation of his interview at home, he points at the pebbles and the quarry, which one can see behind him.

Before this, another incident occurred that also had something to do with the title of the conference “dancing with memory.” We filmed during the day of the annual liberation ceremony when survivors and groups from all over the world visit the former camp. Mr. B struck up a conversation with a group of Russians, and they asked if they could sing for us. In the middle of the stairway of death is a small platform, and there the Russian choir started to sing Pete Seeger’s “We Shall Overcome” followed by “Kalinka.” One of the young female singers invited 77-year-old Mr. B. to dance with her. I was worried that he could get hurt since the ground is very stony. On the level of symbolic communication there, conflicting things happened. How can one sing and dance at a place of horror and what does this mean? For me this was an important moment since it disturbs a familiar point of view

⁷ Austrian historian Bertram Perz analyzed the changes in Mauthausen in a detailed study: Bertram Perz, *Die KZ-Gedenkstätte Mauthausen bis zur Gegenwart*, Innsbruck – Vienna – Bozen 2006.

that reduces this place to one of only horror. There's no question that there is sadness and mourning, but there is also joy and hope—for example, the fact that someone was able to survive and to raise a new family.⁸

Would this have happened if we would have just audio-taped the recollections that day? Since we as filmmakers didn't encourage the choir to sing for us, the camera seemed to play an encouraging part. The camera helped to stage this very symbolic scene.⁹

It is intriguing to watch how the father and his two daughters interact and the way in which the daughters listen to their father's recollections. When Mr. B tells how one of the other inmates was shot by the SS, both Mr..B and one of his daughters imitate shooting a pistol at that moment. This is non-verbal visual information that his daughter knew this story already.

Another question I wanted to raise in the film had to do with inter-generational dialogue.

“Interviewer: “How did you know about your father's story? How did you get to know? Do you remember that?”

M: “Oh yes, I mean – my father was always telling me from the time I was a little girl. So I just remember all the stories from – Actually I was very obsessed with the Holocaust when I was growing up, almost in an effort to relive it. ...”

The answer helped to clarify the visual information. Now one could hear—“I just remember all the stories ...”—what one had seen before. Nevertheless, I presume that hardly anyone was in a position to perceive this gesture in the way that I did after having viewed this passage a number of times. Therefore, oral information remains very important even in audiovisual form. As interviewers, we should develop sensitivity towards non-verbal signals, and questions may then be derived from these signals.¹⁰

Listening – Viewing – See and Listen

⁸ C.D., one of the portrayed survivors, gave birth to a daughter some days before the liberation of the Mauthausen Concentration Camp. She visited the memorial together with her daughter who was born in Mauthausen in May 1945.

⁹ I (with my tape recorder in hand) also accompanied other interviewees returning to places of their youth, and this was fascinating too. One of them was Leo Glueckselig, an Austrian-Jewish émigré who lived in New York. I took him to the Viennese neighborhood of his childhood, and asked him to tell me whatever came into his mind. To identify the places later in the transcript, I noted from time to time where exactly we were. This was an intriguing experience, but it is very different since now I can't see him and cannot see, for example, the buildings he pointed at or his vivid glance looking back. His past is just a part of my memory.

¹⁰ “Recapitulation of Memory” can be viewed on the internet: www.unitv.org

In the third part of my paper, I'd like to come back to methodological issues about the different ways to analyze oral and audiovisual history. Initially, I'll discuss interviews only. What does it mean for our analysis if we can see what we can hear? I propose that we should discuss how to evaluate and analyze oral, visual and audiovisual messages. As in oral history, it would make sense to go back not only to transcripts, but also to the primary source and just listen to the interview without viewing it. This helps to understand what the interviewee expressed verbally and how the interaction of questions and answers influenced the contents.

In a second step, I would propose to just view the interview (like other videotaped material) without listening. So one gets a deeper sense of what is visually communicated. How do we as viewers respond to this? We also could focus on what else is shown—for example, an interior, furniture, artifacts, photographs and paintings. We also can take a closer look at our interviewees—for instance, sometimes they wear badges like the American flag or wear specific clothes for the interview (as often happens in interviews with immigrants).¹¹ A R, whom I interviewed (on audio tape) in a retirement home near Tel Aviv, had on a shawl with red-white-red stripes, which are the colors of the Austrian flag. References to ones origins can also be seen in rituals—for example, it very often happens that survivors from Austria invite the Austrian interviewees for *Kaffee* and *Kuchen*, or invite them to an Austrian-style restaurant. At this stage, we may look at the film several times and analyze, like in a film analysis, the camera positions and movements, the type of shot or the impact of artificial light.

In a third step, we can view and listen to the videotaped sources and hopefully have a better understanding of the interrelation between the spoken language and what we see. After that (and having taken notes and read through the transcript), we are thoroughly familiar with our source and can properly analyze the variety of visual and textual codes.

¹¹ In our documentary “Recapitulation of Memory” about the visit of survivors of the Mauthausen Concentration Camp, we show a sequence about the cap of French resistant fighter Jean Laurent Grey. In this sequence, he is sitting in the main courtyard when the annual liberation celebration is taking place. Suddenly he is looking for his cap:

“I lost my cap.
Oh, there it is!
That would have been a shame.
I bought it especially for this occasion.”

Analyzing Visuality – Learning How to View and Explore

Visual sources make it necessary for us to use new methodological approaches like iconography. We should open the discussion of how we can face audiovisual research in terms of critical methods concerning primary sources. Doing audiovisual history makes it possible to include a wider range of sources. The 20th century is a century of visuality and self-documentation. In the 1930s, people started to document their lives on film. Therefore, we can also look for homemade films and videos as sources of a person's past.¹² Similar to talking about photo albums during an oral history interview, audiovisual history invites us to view private films and videos together with the interviewees. This is another approach that may help to evoke unexpected memories.

An advantage of conducting an audiovisual history interview is that one can watch somebody remembering. This may help us understand the process of memory and its asynchrony. Changes in facial expression may indicate that at a certain point the interviewee is struck by a newly emerging story, insight or image about his or her past. Since this is embedded in the narrative process, someone has to finish the story before he or she can speak or not speak about the emerged memory. In viewing an interview afterwards, therefore, we ought to try to identify the moment of recollection that helped the interviewee get into the (e.g. associative) memory process. It's also fascinating to see how faces of elderly interviewees now and then change when they recollect their childhood or adolescence. Sometimes it seems as if their faces begin to look much younger than before.

A body language subtext goes along with the recollections, and this sometimes gives us different information, signals and messages than the spoken text. This becomes much more obvious in audiovisual media. And we can see, if we as interviewers have developed sensitivity towards these subtexts, then we are able to integrate them into our questions. Listening to the subtexts of body language can be thrilling since this specific information sometimes indicates that there are insecurities, incoherencies or contradictions to what we can hear. If we take these signals seriously, we as interviewers examine what we were told by raising pointed, prying questions and opening the room for deviating perspectives on the lives of our interviewees. This is a

¹² James M. Moran, *There's No Place Like Home Video*, Minneapolis – London 2002.

chance to facilitate the interviewee's process of entering the level of reflective memory.

I'm aware that we reach the limits of our professional background as oral (or audiovisual) historians if we try to integrate body language into our interpretations. What I suggest is not only working interdisciplinarily (e.g. together with experts in communication) but also going back to the interviewees and discussing our interpretations with them. As soon as we start becoming aware of the influence of body language and non-verbal messages on our questions and interpretations, we should also be aware that body language is not only socially and culturally shaped but is also highly individually coded. As in the case of different textual codes, it's necessary to learn the body language codes of someone we weren't previously acquainted with. We can ask the interviewees about their own interpretation of the taped memory process. Viewing the taped interviews together with the interviewees and confronting them with our interpretations gives them a chance to clarify their standpoints, to contradict or confirm them, or to come up with their own point of view. Who owns one's recollections—we, the ones who have the power of interpretation and the means to make them public; or they, the ones who did the recollecting? I would say it's serious analytical scholarship if we are able to communicate that our interpretations differ from the intentions of the interviewees.

If we edit audiovisual sources, we have to deal with the filmic expression, added music, comment, syntax, montage techniques as well. Although these are aspects that are investigated by film studies, we should be aware that our generated audiovisual documents refer to standards of film language.¹³ We then refer to the genre of documentary film like expository, observational, interactive, reflexive or performative documentary or event films like the ones by folklorists.¹⁴ We as interviewers and—if we also are in charge for the camera—videographers also have a responsibility for these aspects just as we do for the sound quality of oral history interviews. This means that we should be aware of the traditions and formats of documentary film and face our work as videographers or as directors in a way that

¹³ Werner *Faulstich*, Grundkurs Filmanalyse, Munich 2002; Helmut *Korte*, Einführung in die systematische Filmanalyse, Berlin² 2001.

¹⁴ Sharon R. *Sherman*, Documenting Ourselves. Film, Video, and Culture, Lexington, Kentucky 1998; Lewis *Jacobs*, The Documentary Tradition, New York – London 1979.

shows that we've given some thought to the process. We are responsible for the way an interviewee is portrayed on screen, and this shouldn't be left up to chance.

One of the specific methodological strengths of oral history is how we as interviewers cope with silence. Silence is a chance to open up the memory space for our interviewees. Sometimes we can see how new memories come up just by little facial expressions like a smile, how eyes suddenly get wet or when someone remains silent and looks up as if the past would be visible there in an imagined sky of memories. This also indicates to us how deep our interviewees dig within their memories and how overwhelmed they sometimes get when unexpected memories emerge. Silence sometimes is a very emotional moment and these emotions are visible too. If we just audiotape these sequences we may take notes, but it's tricky to transliterate these moments into interview transcripts.

As soon as we start to work with film, the aspect of authenticity and accuracy of an account changes, and we automatically approach the question of "fact and fiction".¹⁵ Film reminds us how intensely someone constructs his or her life story. One can see at once that interviews deal with memory. Maybe this is the most fascinating aspect of audiovisual history since it reminds us that we don't deal with history but with historicity, memory and therefore textual images about the past. The German language has an expression for this: *Geschichtsbilder*, which could be literally translated as "history images." As we know from communication science, an image is more than an image and therefore needs complex reading.¹⁶ Nevertheless, we should take the question concerning validity seriously. Films can't get corrected like transcripts. For this reason, I propose to add a list of mistakes and corrections (by the interviewee) to the transcript of audiovisual sources to make the source validated and authorized.¹⁷

In addition, audiovisual history investigates the question of staged memory and improvised memory. The presence of a camera sometimes has the astonishing effect that interviewees want to act and not just sit and speak.

¹⁵ See chapter "Fact and Fiction". In: Robert Coles, *Doing Documentary Work*, Oxford – New York 1997, 87-145. Michael Tobis (ed.), *The Search for Reality. The Art of Documentary Filmmaking*, Studio City, CA 1998.

¹⁶ Christian Doelker, *Ein Bild ist mehr als ein Bild. Visuelle Kompetenz in der Multimedia-Gesellschaft*, Stuttgart³ 2002.

¹⁷ Linda Williams, *Mirror without Memories. Truth, History, and the New Documentary*. In: *Film Quarterly*, Vol. 46, No. 3, 1993, 9-21.

Interviews are generated sources, shaped by the interaction of interviewee, interviewer and camera team. The interaction is more manifest in filmed interviews.¹⁸ To give an example: one can see if an interviewee just rests without movement as if the interaction between interviewee and interviewer seems to be of little relevance, or if the interviewee comes forward with his or her body to look for non-verbal affirmation from the interviewer.

What might the next steps be? First of all, there is a need for methodological and theoretical reflection, which we should start. Those who are already videotaping their interviews should share their experiences on various levels. Since the next generation of oral historians already works with cameras to tape their interviews, it is also necessary to design an audiovisual history curriculum so that they can acquire skills as audiovisual historians. How this curriculum will look depends on the integration of oral history into university education in different countries.¹⁹ The curriculum should give its attention not only to the otherness of the setting during the interview and its consequence for phrasing questions, but also to the different quality of the generated sources.²⁰ Cooperation with departments of communications seems to be helpful not only for technical skills but also for analytical ones.

Aside from this, previously archived audiovisual sources should be adequately analyzed. A good way to start out would be to analyze projects for which the interviews were videotaped and have already been archived—for example, the Holocaust-documentation projects of the Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation, the Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut, the Mauthausen Survivors Documentation Project, and the project on forced and slave labor by the Fernuniversitaet Hagen in Germany. It would be fascinating to compare testimonies of the same individuals that are archived in various audiovisual and oral history archives.

¹⁸ See the chapter “Re-visioning History: Contemporary Filmmakers and the Construction of the Past” in: Robert A. *Rosenstone*, *Visions of the Past. The Challenge of Film to our Idea of History*, Cambridge, Massachusetts – London 1995, 169-197.

¹⁹ There are examples of curricula for documentary filmmakers, e.g.: Klaus *Stanjek* & Renate *Gompper* (eds.), *Dokumentarfilmunterricht in Europa. Konzepte, Erfahrungen und das Modellprojekt VISIONS*, Berlin 1995;

²⁰ Barry *Hampe*, *Making Documentary Films and Reality Videos*, New York 1997; Alan *Rosenthal*, *Writing, Directing, and Producing Documentary Films and Videos*, Carbondale – Edwardsville 1990; Michael *Renov* & Erika *Sudenburg* (eds.), *Resolutions. Contemporary Video Practices*, Minneapolis – London 1996.

To sum up: It will be a big challenge to reflect what we as oral historians can contribute to the ongoing discussion about the meaning of moving images when we accept the fact that we should identify ourselves as audiovisual historians too. How does it change our perspective on memory if we can see what we hear? I assume that we may expect a wide variety of responses.

Audiovisual history may bring us back to the democracy-oriented starting point of the methodological approaches of oral history. Audiovisual media ignore ordinary people or show them for commercial reasons mainly in a weird way. Reality shows exploit this kind of social voyeurism globally now. Therefore, audiovisual history has a chance to take the life stories of ordinary people much more seriously treating the interviewees with respect without getting uncritical. Those stories would otherwise be ignored or transformed into products for the entertainment industry.

© A.o. Univ.Prof. Dr. Albert Lichtblau, Instiut fur Geschichte, Fachbereich
Geschichts- und Politikwissenschaft, Universitat Salzburg, Austria