

Resume

The aim of this essay is to compare the selected programmes presented by United Kingdom, Germany and Denmark for the last INPUT festivals in Aarhus 2003, Rotterdam 2002 and Cape Town 2001. This paper also seeks to prove how public broadcasters reflect the concept of quality television at the INPUT conferences.

I will be studying the diversity of genre and content of each country's programme within the framework of a discussion about quality television and the function of public broadcasters.

I also wish to draw conclusions concerning the particularity of each country's output.

The concept of quality television refers to four main issues: broadcasting system, programming, channel and programme. The huge diversity of discourses about quality television is based on these parameters.

Every year, Germany is one of the countries which presents the biggest number of programmes to INPUT conferences. Of the fifteen works chosen during the last three years there were nine documentaries, two movies and one drama dance performance.

The production capacity and the budget of the British public broadcaster is one of the biggest worldwide, although in the period from 2001 to 2003, the United Kingdom only presented fifteen programmes to the INPUT festivals, no more than Germany. Documentaries dominated the selection with eleven works, while there were three fiction programmes and one news-related programme.

A different case can be seen regarding the Denmark's public broadcaster. Although Denmark is a small country, it is one of the most active and creative participants of INPUT. During the same period, Denmark enlisted nine programmes to the festival, out of them seven were documentaries.

What are the characteristics of the presented programmes by each country? First of all, we have to take into consideration that each work presented at an INPUT festival has been pre-selected according to specific criteria by the INPUT organisers ("*shop-stewards*"). In this way, it is not possible to analyse the entire ensemble of programmes presented by the countries' public broadcasters. Nonetheless, as the United Kingdom and Germany are among the countries that present more programmes, an analysis of their output may emphasise their particularities, especially confronted to the output of a small producer such as Denmark.

Firstly, within the documentaries presented by United Kingdom, different formats can be distinguished. One of the most outstanding deals with the existence of radical groups living on the fringes of society such as skinheads, hooligans and criminals. In the last three years, three documentaries and one feature length fiction dealt with these issues.

Danish documentaries can typically be seen to deal with the stories of common people and specially, family relationships. It is also interesting to note that in three stories, the director plays also the main character, which also typifies the openness of their style.

Concerning Germany's output, the diversity of its programmes contrasts to the selection of the two other countries. An emphasis can nonetheless be observed on German post-war history, about which two documentaries and two feature length fiction films were made.

One similarity between the outputs of each country within the genre of documentary is the emphasis on social and international political conflicts. Furthermore, the theme of immigrants' integration is almost absent in each country's selection of programmes, which may be the consequence of the normalisation of such migratory practices.

Seeing the large numbers of documentaries within the selections of programmes, it can be deduced that this genre is synonymous with the concept of quality television. A 1990 study by the Independent Broadcasting Authority showed that the programmes that the viewers considered of the highest quality were news, reportage, sport, general interest and documentary programmes, although they were not, paradoxically, the ones that they enjoyed the most.

All in all, the main function of a public broadcaster is to preserve and to reflect the country's cultural identity, as can be seen in the selection of programmes of these three countries.