

Space in television historical fiction: the nation seen through the past in *Gritos de muerte y libertad*

El espacio en la ficción histórica televisiva: la nación vista a través del pasado en Gritos de muerte y libertad

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Abstract

*This work proposes to analyze and describe three particular forms of construction of the national space in the Mexican historical miniseries *Gritos de muerte y libertad*. Under the pretext of commemorating 200 years of Mexican independence in 2010, Televisa opted to build a narrative about the national heroes who participated in the War of Independence. On this historiographical perspective on the birth of the nation, the production revealed ways of articulating the person within time and space. Visual and auditory resources allowed assembling a cartography of the national, as well as different metaphors in which the historical moment is linked with the space of its representation. Understanding space as a narrative construction, the work describes three spatial forms in the miniseries: the space of the national, the private space as a reflection of the nation and space as a scenario of heroism.*

Keywords

Space, fiction, television, historiography, nation.

Resumen

Este trabajo propone analizar y describir tres formas particulares de construcción del espacio nacional en la miniserie histórica mexicana *Gritos de muerte y libertad*. Bajo el pretexto de conmemorar los 200 años de la independencia mexicana en 2010, Televisa apostó por construir una narrativa sobre los héroes nacionales que participaron en la Guerra de Independencia. Esta perspectiva historiográfica sobre el nacimiento de la nación en la producción reveló formas de articular personajes con el tiempo y el espacio. Recursos visuales y auditivos, permitieron armar una geografía de lo nacional, así como distintas metáforas donde se engranan el momento histórico con el espacio de su representación. Desde la comprensión del espacio como una construcción narrativa, el trabajo describe tres formas espaciales en la miniserie: el espacio de lo nacional, el espacio privado como reflejo de la nación y el espacio como escenario de heroicidad.

Palabras clave

Espacio, ficción, televisión, historiografía, nación.

1. Introduction

The category of space is one of the central axes for the historiographic tasks. It is a guiding coordinate in the discourse on the past, as well as a normative addition related to the identity of those who formulate it and constantly give it new meaning. Therefore, it is necessary to analyze its conformation via historiographic representation, understanding this as all construction on the past made in a specific present, regardless of format. In these discourses, in which the past becomes origin, space as a category acquires its most important dimension. The relationship between the narrated space and the conformation of an imagined community (Anderson, 1993) is key so that societies can think of themselves as possessors and constitutive part of a piece of the world.

The text proposed here analyzes the conformation of space via a historic discourse in Mexican TV fiction. Communication media that establish a proposal of meaning in terms of the past, are proposing a discourse of historic character, susceptible to an analysis that begins to understand the present of its formulation, as well as the historiographic traditions that it abbreviates. For such, the case of the commemorative TV series of the 200th year anniversary of Mexican Independence, *Gritos de muerte y libertad* (Suárez & Tort, 2010) is taken, via which three types of spatial construction are presented, linked to anarrative logic defined via a national hero.

Gritos de muerte y libertad was the production with which Televisa sought to join in on the bicentennial celebrations of Mexican independence. The paid, private TV network that operated as a monopoly from 1955 to 1993, decided to produce a 13-episode miniseries whose main plot is one of the national heroes. They were the elements via whose participation in the war created a version of the past that addresses the period from 1808 to 1823, from a commercial logic with commemorative spirit. Due to this, the TV network presented a historiographic discourse thought of from

the individual as driving force of the historic process.

For this work, 13 episodes of the series were analyzed in search of moments in which the space operates in function of the narrative logic of the individual. Three categories were detected: the possible national space, the domestic space as a mirror of the nation and the space as narrative condition of the heroism, of which a description will be made from specific cases.

2. Theoretical-Methodological Framework

The discussions on the relationships between audiovisual media and history go back as far as the beginnings of cinema. The debate has followed a more or less beaten path (Kracauer, 2004; Ferro, 1968; Sorlin, 1980, among others). This has brought about the formation of relatively coherent field of research, on which an endless number of empirical works have been performed showing the complexity of the phenomenon. Yet it was the work of Robert Rosenstone (1988, 1995 y 2006) who most greatly advanced the debate, by using the work of career historians which any creator had to do to carry the past to the big screen. Rosenstone proposed that both ways of telling about the past "refer to real events, moments and movements of the past and, likewise, both make up part of the surreal and the fictional, since they are made of combinations of conventions that have been developed to talk about where we come from as humans" (2006: 2). However, to analyze history in audiovisual terms, one has to understand that film language condenses processes and characters in archetypical subjects; that films taken events out of a time framework an organize them in order to fill them with meaning; that cinema alters real events and that it shapes it with a privileged version, in which the previous elements are condensed is the drama, or melodrama (Rosenstone, 2006: 8). De Authors like Marcia Landy (2001) and Marnie-Hughes Warrington (2007) used

this tradition, questioning the focus exclusively based on content and discourses to -from the contribution of communication studies- give certain weight to the contextualization of consumption, industrial dimensions, the relationship between narrated story and production technology, etc.

It was not until the turn of the 21st century that the academic world began to think of television as a space of representation for the possible past. The work of Bell and Gray (2010) and the proposals of Edgerton and Rollins (2001) opened a place for television. This concern had to do with the substantial increase of historical fiction productions for the small screen, which brought one to think that television had become the largest producer of historical representations today. Para Edgerton and Rollins (2001), you had to then consider the conditions of the medium, its capacity to create usable pasts, as well as 2 essential categories that, in a certain way, were already present in the proposals of Rosenstone: the preference for personalist representations and the sense of immediacy that causes the time rupture between narrated time and formulated horizon. In addition, you would have to appeal to categories like identity, nation, memory for the analysis (Sobchack, 1996).

The role of television proposed by Edgerton is complemented by Neiger, Meyers and Zandberg (2011) who, from memory studies, reaffirmed the condition of agents in the construction of the past of mass media, which had a dominating role in the selection and forgetting of processes and historical characters, in its plot and in a sense on the origin that is proposed from specific political and cultural contexts. In this way, television became a dominant platform of dispute on the past.

In Mexico, this review was performed based on two works. Firstly, that of Mendiola and Zermeno (1995), who from historiography proposed reviewing the soap opera *El Vuelo del Águila* (Televisa, 1994) and its role as generator of a type of identity. Secondly, was the work of Ro-

dríguez Cadena (2004), who for the first time proposed a categorization of the historic soap operas into two narrative models that reiterated the crucial moments of Mexican nationalist historiography. This tradition was continued in Mexico by Dorcé (2014), who analyzed the influence of the melodrama in the type of representation of the historical soap opera, work that, together with that of Charlois (2010), were the first to put the narrative condition of the story at the center, to analyze the realities built by the soap opera. Finally, it is important to mention the contribution that issue 31 of the Mexican journal *Comunicación y Sociedad* gave to the field, brought to debate the permanent relationships between communication media and the constitution of the cultural memory.

Recognizing this background, this paper seeks to return to the story told by television, in an attempt to continue the analysis via a central category in the historiography, which is space. For such, we return to the idea of Henri Lefebvre (1991), who focused on space as historic category. In his work, he extensively proposes the need to understand that space cannot be thought of as something given, but rather in terms of its use, its representation, and the associations of meaning that are elaborated around it. It is eminently dynamic and historical. He argued that space is a social construction and, therefore, its representation implies an infinite number of contextual elements existing at the same moment of its formulation. Therefore, it is evident that we have to pay attention to the meanings built around it, and the forms in which they translate in a specific type of representation. To analyze it, one had to then understand that space was structured in rhetorical and cultural terms, via a series of metaphoric ideas, symbols full of meaning, situated inside discourses (Stock, 2015).

The act of creating space then was linked to its naming, to specific geography and a national common identity. With it, we refer to the fact that its denomination establishes a relation of the subjects with the geography

they inhabit and that, to a certain degree, they form part of its identifying character. The procedure constitutes a social act that, if it is related with a perspective of the past, could be thought of as an act of memory, in which there is a connection between the subjects, their origin, and the named space. Here lies the importance of conceiving it in this way in the historiographic analysis, given that narrating and representing the space engrains a specific type of geography in the memory of the community that rules the behavior of the present. In the specific case of the historiography, the narratives of each event are in reality a replay between time, space, and action. For this reason, the historic stories are always anchored in a narrated place, which operates as coordinate of meaning in regards to what the humans do in it at a given moment.

Televised historical fictions do not make but rather replicate that essential mechanism. The search for veracity in the story makes the spatial situation necessary. It is no coincidence, in this sense, that historical soap operas were the first in Mexico in which space had a central presence, the first in situate the narrative in a specific and unmistakable space, since they could not narratively avoid the space-time coordinate, and its relation with the historic meaning. In them the space is the construction of the scene in which the expression of the characteristics of the nation are made viable. They built a national place, linked to relevant historical processes for the development of the political liberal project, which connected the Mexican geography to specific meanings on the "national's must be".

If we revisit the idea of Edgerton on the historiographic power of television, it is prudent to recognize its power to establish national spaces that are defined in terms of the recalling of specific processes. If we understand space as a social construction, anchored on cultural forms of meaning, the television takes on special relevance as meta-narrator of past imaginaries based on not only the interests of the industry, but rather the relations that establish

the production with narrative genres and with nuances of previous meaning, such as the melodrama or the national historiography.

This text appeals to the example that televised fiction of historiographic style did away with that which we refer to as any production that has a central purpose to narrate historic events, such as the soap operas or historic miniseries of the Mexican case. In particular, the case of the miniseries *Gritos de muerte y libertad*, produced by Televisa in 2010 to celebrate the bicentennial of Mexico's war of independence.

2.1. Where does Mexican historical fiction come from and how to address the case

In Mexico, there is a long tradition of TV historical fiction production. The industry created, maintained and developed their own formats to create stories for large audiences. From the first attempt during 1962-63, in which Ernesto Alonso depicted the life of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, until 1996, in which the same producer made *La antorcha encendida*, with which the Televisa network generated a narrative model of the past in the melodramatic format.

At the hand of a producer, and with the support of the federal government, cable television established a panorama of the past that was based on the essential events of nationalist history: the War of Independence, the Wars of Reform and the Mexican Revolution. Televisa ascribed to a version of the common past that formed part of the conceptualization of time-space of the liberal Mexican project, without complexities, lineal and linked to the heroic representation of the official history.

The model proved to be effective in attracting audiences and generating revenue, not only due to its own success, but rather for the government subsidies that facilitated the creation of a format –the soap opera– characterized for its poor connection with the time and space of

its essentialist, melodramatic and Manichean production. The historical soap opera could differentiate itself from the traditional soap opera model, that avoided any connection to reality to establish time passing and specific spatial contexts, all being taken from official historiography. It was the first on television to create national spaces linked to the past, but also with the very intimacy of the characters, whether real or fictitious. It began to name the time-space of the events portrayed, eliminating the possibility of being conceived as products of exportation.

At the end of the 21th century, the format was in decline. It could not adapt the changes of the TV industry, Televisa's financial crises and the deaths of Ernesto Alonso (only producer of the format) and Emilio Azcárraga Milmo, network owner -who always claimed to be nationalist- and closely associated to the same political party, which in the year 2000 lost the presidential elections for the first time in 60 years. The political environment also was changing, as well as the desires of the audience, and the crises obligated no resources to be lost on soap operas that cost more than a traditional soap opera.

It wasn't until 15 years after the last historical soap opera, that the top TV network returned to portraying the past with the pretext of joining in on the bicentennial celebrations of Mexico's independence. The network decided to break with the old model and attract another type of audience via a miniseries. This change came from the Televisa news department, at the hand of its General Director Leopoldo Gómez.

The original idea was to produce historic capsules directed by filmmaker Máfer Suárez, who already had TV experience producing the Mexican version of the Argentine *Mujeres asesinas* (Televisa, 2008). However, the search for high audience ratings brought them to propose the miniseries format as a new possibility of telling the past that is shorter and higher visual quality and more complex scripts. Thus, the idea of *Gritos de*

muerte y libertad came about and two directors (Suárez and Gerardo Tort) were hired, scriptwriters with previous film and series experience (Caitilin María Irwin, Carlos Pascual, Luis Mario Moncada), historic consultants (Úrsula Camba Ludlow), scenographers coming from the theater industry (Paula Arroio), etc. Important career historians were called in to build a first string of consultants that would establish the events and important characters that should be narrated¹.

They sought to make the story more complex, to establish characters of "flesh and blood"² to tell more human stories and establish a sequence of events "indispensable for building the historic, visual discourse depending on the editorial line that the company marque indicates, in this case, Televisa".³ However, despite the attempt at historiographical accuracy, the very director recognized that one could not lose sight of "the importance that the story and the official myths have had on the collective imaginary".⁴

The result was a miniseries, a TV special, of thirteen 22-minute self-containing episodes focused on a character or particular event during the historic moment. *Gritos de muerte y libertad* narrated the 1808 uprising in Mexico City, the Querétaro Conspiracy (1810), the Cry of Dolores (1810), La Toma de Guanajuato (1810), the Battle of Monte de las Cruces in 1810, the execution of Hidalgo (1811), Siege of Cuautla (1812), the execution of Morelos in 1815, the life of Leona Vicario, the Rebellion of Vicente Guerrero (1816-1821), his alliance with Agustín de Iturbide (1821), Guadalupe Victoria Movement (1815-1821) and the beginning of the First Republic (1823). It adhered to a historiographic logic that the Mexican State claimed as official, which avoided all conflict in the understanding of the event, seen as the beginning of the process of construction of the liberal nation.

Each episode focused on a topic and a particular character. However, the use of written prologues and epilogues helped contextualize the narration with the entire sequence and es-

establish connections with the time/space of the historiography on the topic. The use of intertexts and time markers also helped place the spectator in the fractured narrative, which established a geography and a time imaginary that reconstructed the national space/time via its relation with the heroes or with the process. This decision caused the character's intimacy to have a main role in the story. National geography was rebuilt in a mechanism between known and official public spaces and private spaces, in which other narrative elements could be included.

The analysis proposed here considers the narrated action as the main constructor of the spatial category of the past via three dimensions detected: the national space possible via written space-time markers, the domestic space of Josefa Ortíz de Domínguez as mirror of the nation and, finally, the space as narrative condition of the heroism. Space is understood not only in terms of scene, but as a place conditioned by the narrative existence of heroes that operate as core of the plot. Herein lies its triple existence: as place of processes considered national, as relation between representation of the hero and of the nation and, finally, as support to the quality of the individual hero.

In order to arrive at this categorization, work was first done on the historiographic analysis of the miniseries. The discourse was compared to classic Mexican historiography sources, classified into three large schematic categories: liberal historiography, conservative historiography and academic works of historiographic analysis. This work was proposed as part of a doctoral thesis exercise (Charlois-Allende, 2017), that allowed one to see the way in which the series made selective use of sources that enable focusing of the narrative in heroes and specific moments, that anchored the meaning on the past to the personal internal conflicts of the characters.

Based on this analysis, we sensed that space played a central role in establishing relationship between the time of the historic process

and the condition of heroism in the miniseries. Two specific examples were taken here from episode 2, "The conspirations of Josefa", and episode 7, "The triumph of the temple". In both, the relation of space with the main character was analyzed on two axes: the evident metaphor of the relation between the intimacy of the Josefa Ortiz's home with a countrymen nation project, and the use of a geographic space – Cuautla – to emphasize the military feats of José María Morelos. Beforehand, there was a viewing of the miniseries' thirteen episodes, to review the construction, via the space-time markers, of a map of the war, linked to the actions of the hero, that constitutes a space where the national origin has place. This exercise considered the dialogues of the plot, the visual presentation of the space and the captions, as empirical evidence of the existence of three ways of representing space in TV historical fiction.

3. The narrative past on television: the constitution of space of the Mexican nation

Based on this reflection, it seems pertinent to return to the space built in the historical TV fiction. *Gritos de muerte y libertad* works as a good example to consider the use that audiovisual media make of spatiality in order to narrate the national past. The proposal in this text is exemplify the logic of construction of space via the three cases presented.

3.1. The space of the nation

In the case of the miniseries, the most evident narrative resource to constitute a space of action are the space-time markers. The directors indicated the important changes of scene with markers that made the place and time evident in which the story occurs. We can see numerous examples in which space and time made the narrative comprehensible by situating the action. For example, in Figure 1, the marker "Outside Teleoloapan, southern region of the viceroyalty 1821" informs that the story does

not occur in a vague space, but in a specific place of the actual State of Guerrero, where the longest battles were fought in the War of Independence, at a time in which the war was coming to an end (1821). With it, the production of the series situated the process of a specific geography.

Figure 1: "The country comes first" episode.



Source: Televisa, Suárez and Tort, 2010.

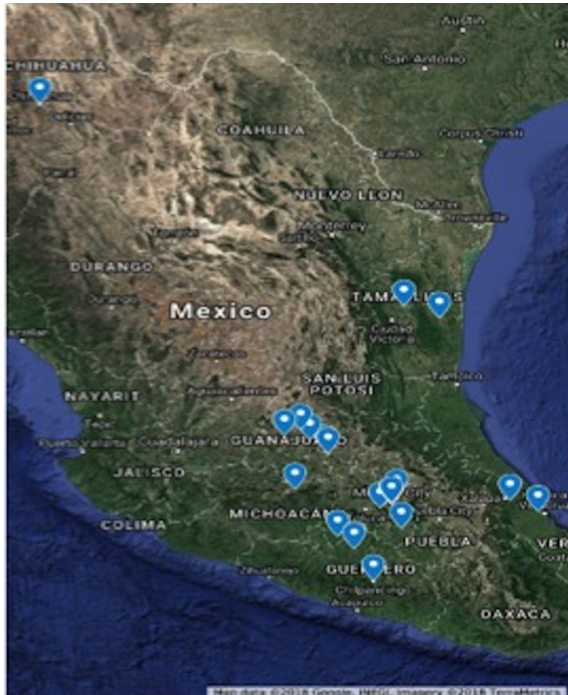
If we add together the markers established throughout the thirteen episodes of the miniseries, the production ended up building that geography in which the Mexican, in comparison to the Spanish, began to see as reality. The economic reality of the production obligated the reduction of action scenes to those which truly occurred in history. The fractured narrative in a series of specific events worked as a way of reducing spaces, linking them closely to the specific actions of seven main figures: Miguel Hidalgo, José María Morelos, Vicente Guerrero, Josefa Ortiz de Domínguez, Leona Vicario, Guadalupe Victoria and Agustín de Iturbide. They were not the only characters represented but they were the characters were put at the center of the narration of the 13 episodes.

The space created was thus the result of the relationship between individual and geography of action. The emerging nation was connected to a reduced spaced of what today is Mexico and Central America. A succession of named spaces made the audience understand that these were the most important scenes, thus reinforcing its character of geo-

graphic place instead of memory, filled with a specific meaning in regards to the birth of the liberal nation.

Thanks to the time markers, this geography can be easily identified in relation to the specific sites: Palacio Virreinal in Mexico City (episodes 1, 3, 7 and 10), Palacio del Ayuntamiento of Mexico City (episode 1), Mexico City (episodes 1, 8, 9 and 12), Querétaro (episodes 2 and 3), Cathedral of Dolores Hidalgo in the State of Guanajuato (episodes 2 and 3), San Miguel el Grande (today de Allende, episode 3), Headquarters of Querétaro (episode 3), Dolores Prison In Guanajuato (episode 3), Guanajuato (city, episode 4), Mount las Cruces in the State of Mexico (episode 5), Aqueduct of Chapultepec in Mexico City (episode 5), City of Chihuahua (episode 6), Cuautla de Amilpas in the State of Morelos (episode 7), Palace of the Inquisition in Mexico City (episode 8), Quarters of Hidalgo in Charo Michoacán (episode 8), Congress of Chilpancingo in the State of Guerrero (episodes 8, 9 and 10), San Cristóbal Ecatepec in the State of Mexico (episode 8), Colegio Belem de las Mochas in Mexico City (episode 9), Sierra de Tlatlaya in the State of Mexico (episode 9), Outside Teleoloapan in the State of Guerrero (episode 11), Acatempan in the State of Guerrero (episode 11), Santa Fe in Veracruz (episode 12), Casa del General Santa Anna in the State of Veracruz (episode 12), Soto la Marina in the State of Tamaulipas (episode 13) and Padilla in the State of Tamaulipas (episode 13). You can trace a map of the birth of a nation (Figure 2).

The map gives an idea of the nation anchored to specific processes and characters that coincide with the narratives proposed by the different texts of the official nationalist historiography. Then you add the complexity of the process, the multiplicity of the participating actors, and the different events to one route where the national center -the capital- predominates over the rest of the regions involved.

Figura 2. Map of México.

Source: made by author using Google Maps.

If we understand that the proposal of the past defined in *Gritos de muerte y libertad*, is based on the centrality of the individual (Charlois-Allende, 2017), the space created by the series does not stray from this logic. In this sense, heroism and space conform a unit of meaning, in which diversity is erased by the specific weight of certain moments chosen by the production. The nation, as geographic entity, is made possible by the actions of the individual countrymen. They anchor in the audience's memory certain places over others, via a meaning that is only explained by the relationship of the place with the character.

3.2. . The intimate space of the feminine nation

As we see, in the miniseries, the space is made by the individual action. This also occurs with other spaces represented, the private, home spaces. These are largely defined around the feminine presence in the series.

Although the nationalist historiography did not focus on the participation of women in the war, the representation of their role in the process was useful faced with the need to build particular elements of the citizen's must be. This privilege of existing in the master story has been given to some characters such as Leona Vicario or Josefa Ortiz, on whom *Gritos de muerte y libertad* devotes at least 2 episodes: "The conspirations of Josefa" and "Portrait of a Leona". Production decided to build another type of space, the private. Although the heroes also inhabit the private space in the series, they did not have a main character in the narrative, like there was in the case of the women, for whom the home was the center of action.

The central theme of the episode "The conspirations of Josefa" narrates the conspirations that occurred in September 1810 in the house of the Corregidor of the city of Querétaro, in which the main characters of the first uprising participated: Miguel Hidalgo, Ignacio Allende, Mariano Abasolo, etc. The large part of the action in this episode occur inside this house, separate from the political-administrative space in which the husband of Josefa operated as viceroynalty government mayor. In this double role of official and husband, the mayor is in the dilemma of participating in the meetings or acting as representative of the Spanish Empire. Thus, the domestic space is established as a place of political disputes that reflects the characters' stances, for both the rebelling countrymen and the officials in the government.

Josefa becomes the main character of the episode's narrative, but it would seem that the representation is more linked to the physical place than the specific stances of the heroine. She seems like a good hostess, a woman that dominates her space, who gives orders to the servants, who has a say in the concerns of her husband. She is a strong woman but conscient of her role in new Hispanic society.

The link between the domestic space and that of the nation occurs in a discursive plane. Early in the episode, Josefa states “those of us who were born in this land are just as important as Europeans. If someone is to govern the new nation, it is us, the countrymen”.⁵ When Ignacio Allende admires himself for his strength he blurts out “few are the women who participate in these meetings”, to which she responds “just as there are few men who believe that a woman can have her own opinion”.⁶ These phrases create a connection between power inside the home and inside the project of the nation. The home is no longer the only scene of the action, it is also the space of countrymen dominance, one in which she operates as a matriarch who decides who are and who are not part of the circle of criollo patriots.

When the mayor reprimands her on the fact that she participates in the conspiracy, Josefa closes the circle of representation: “in my house, Allende, Aldama, Hidalgo and all those who want to change this are welcome [...] the time has come for [the Spanish] to understand that we are just as important as they are. We will reclaim our right to govern in our own home”.⁷ The connection between the “we women” and the “we countrymen”, as well as the link between ruling the country and ruling the house, makes the private and domestic space acquire a new value. If it is not narratively allowed for women to openly participate in the fight against the oppressor, they are allowed to govern their own affairs. The heroine transfers the dominion of the desirable in the private sphere to the public sphere.

After the conspiracy is uncovered, the narrative is rife with tension between being governor of her family and participating in the public struggle. The sequence that reveals the betrayal of the conspiracy⁸ begins with images of Josefa taking care of her family peacefully (See Figure 3). Peace at home, dominion over the private space, is upset by the betrayal.

Figure 3: Episode 2 “The conspirations of Josefa”, *Gritos de muerte y libertad*.



Source: Televisa, Suárez and Tort, 2010.

The type of representation that links the intimate space with the feminine participation serves to reiterate the idea proposed by the liberal national historiography. The miniseries does not delve in other types of participation that the historiography discipline has proposed for several decades (García López, 2011). This inclusion was made from the consideration of the “lesser” role of the woman in the gesture. Thus, the home becomes an overlap between intimate space and nation.

3.3. The space that magnifies the heroic individual

The following form of space construction has to do specifically with the use of the camera in relation to the construction of the hero. The miniseries puts the heroic character at the center as driving force of the historic narration (Charlois-Allende, 2017). It is he that sets the rhythm and the visuality of the work based on his actions in the process. This aspect is not the only one, since Edgerton claimed it as a characteristic of audiovisual historic representation itself. In this effort by production to adhere the story to the difficulties of the recognizable figure, the space plays an important role as place of action, but also as frame of heroism. To exemplify this point, the episodes devoted to José María Morelos and Pavón,

Mexican hero considered founder of the liberal project of the nation, (“The triumph of the temple” and “The end of the campaigns”) are the most evident, given that, in some sequences, the replay between camera, character and space is notable.

The figure of the character is built on an opposition between his personality as strategist and his condition of priest. Therefore, both episodes focus on each one of these narrative conditions. In the case of “The triumph of temple”, the famous site of Cuautla was chosen, in which Morelos and his people withstood 72 days of siege of the royal army led by General Félix María Calleja. The place is a town without strategic importance, regardless of belonging tangentially to the commercial axis between Acapulco and Mexico City. Of all Morelos battles, the production of the series chose this for being that which shows, to the fullest extent, the strong personality of the character. It’s for that reason that, from the beginning, the space is built based on the relationship between resistance and heroism.

A sequence of open planes in sepia color, taken from the lens of Calleja’s spyglass, open the episode, making evident the opposition between the bands in dispute. Calleja, exuberant, exclaims “it wouldn’t cost us a thing to attack that miserable little town”.⁹ The words of the royalist soldier himself establish the conditions of possibility of heroism of Morelos and his conception of space. The “miserable little town” makes the hero’s feat even grander.

The same spyglass bears witness to the miserable condition of Cuautla, while at the same time, showing the space considered heroic in the nationalist historiography (See Figure 4). A high angle shot minimizes the town, highlighting the courage of the hero for having used it as a refuge. The time marker indicates to us that it is “Day 0” (of the 72 that the siege lasted). The sinister laugh of Calleja, main enemy of the insurgents, shows his little consideration of the military expertise of Morelos. With his own spyglass, from the refuge of a bush, Morelos witnesses the presence of the royalists. In

this visual replay, the conditions of the opposition are established, a royalist army, that sees the enemy and refuge with despite, will be humiliated by the rebels.

Figure 4: Cuautla seen from the catalejo de Calleja.



Source: Televisa, Suárez and Tort, 2010.

To date, Cuautla represents, in the nationalist Mexican symbology, evidence of the heroism of the people, materialized in the individual. *Gritos de muerte y libertad* chose to materialize in Morelos and in the town of Cuautla the tenacity and astuteness of the Mexican people, reiterating the TV conditions of exemplifying in the individual the historic processes. Using visual and narrative resources, the space used becomes an indispensable element to understand the relation between personality, action and symbolic constitution.

With long shots and high angles, the camera describes Morelos’s entrance into town. The hero accompanied by his flag rides towards a town that appears normal. The spatial marker “Cuautla de Amilpas” localizes the action. The hero is not afraid of the “miserable little town”, his assuredness in his cause makes him recognize the land he inhabits: “everything points to our victory: the climate, knowing the land and the strategy we have planned [...] I am willing to hole up in Cuautla”¹⁰, thus linking the man to his space. In this way the hero subsumes to the nation to be born. “We”, the criollos, the patriots, we know this land, it is our natural space, that which makes us heroes, regardless of the geographic location in which we face adversity.

In the end, the misery and hunger unleashed on the town after 72 days of siege will make Morelos become more reasonable, and he escapes in the night. However, the space glorifies him and his people. The town of Cuautla returns to become a historic landmark for the Mexican people via television, a space created based on the tenacity, astuteness and the bravery of its hero.

4. Conclusions

Production of *Gritos de muerte y libertad* named a space defined with the time of the events, thus connecting it to the dimension of the individual, filling it with meaning only in the existence, to the action, of it. The composition of the company as formulating agent of the past at a particular and favorable commemorative moment showed the importance of the analysis of the narrative construction of the past on television.

This research shows three basic forms in which the space of the historical fiction series takes shape. The first type of space is present throughout the complete production of the series. The establishing of captions builds a scene for the story. It creates a geography that connects individuals, processes, times and spaces that allow for making symbolic associations on the geographic space. The constitution of said cartography in the mini-series is understood as the space of the nation. In other words, space in which the imagination of a community operates that has its origin in the independence process.

The intimate space of the nation is a metaphor proposed by the production of the series, that enables connection of the heroine's space of action, linked to the idea of "we countrymen". If the space of a nation is a symbolic cartography, the space of the private constitutes a relation of our home and the place of the Spanish government officials. In this home, welcome are those who want to change the power structure. This metaphor

does not operate normally in the case of masculine heroes, due to the fact that the actions do not occur in the intimate space, but rather on the public battlefield.

Finally, the case of Morelos in Cuautla seemed relevant to exemplify the manner in which the replay of audiovisual techniques establishes a scale of dimensions between the action of the individual, its symbolic existence in the nationalist historiography as hero, and the space of battle. The visual replay operates on a melodramatic dynamic of opposition between hero and villain via the space that magnifies the first.

It is possible that more ways of creating space arise in TV historical fiction. The exercise invites you to rethink the historiographic analysis of the television from different categories to mere discourse. The relationship between plot and space built reveals possibilities to question the past narrated in communication media.

Notes

1. Interview with Úrsula Camba Ludlow, 20 October, 2014.
2. Interview with Juan Manuel Ortega Riquelme, 05 November, 2014.
3. Interview with Máfer Suárez, 15 February, 2016.
4. Interview with Máfer Suárez, 15 February, 2016.
5. "Las conspiraciones de Josefa" (Suárez and Tort, 2010), min.: 1:09-:3:35.
6. "Las conspiraciones de Josefa" (Suárez and Tort, 2010), min.: 1:09-:3:35.
7. "Las conspiraciones de Josefa" (Suárez and Tort, 2010), min.: 4:37-6:37.
8. "Las conspiraciones de Josefa" (Suárez and Tort, 2010), min.: 8:18-11:36.
9. "El triunfo del temple", (Suárez and Tort, 2010), mins.: 1:50-4:10.

10. "El triunfo del temple", (Suárez and Tort, 2010), mins.: 4:12-5:55.

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