

TV, where are you?

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Since some time ago, with left and right wings mixed up, the public powers dismantle for their own sake; clean, disorganize, undo. In one word, they destroy all what the production and experimentation device of the public television once used to be, in the name—sometimes—of audience measurements—sometimes—of profitability. The creative teams are dissuaded from staying and encouraged to leave with tempting bonuses, something that was rarely done when Guisard was there, because his action, against the grain of successive administrations, was by itself a guarantee of a truthful ambition for research and creation.

The useful is now broken, irreparably in every side, even when they stand smiling with a “hurray for the independent production”. As if INA’s production had not been—by far—the most independent ever seen in this country! Two generations of filmmakers (Godard, Biberg, Bertozza, Labarthe, Kramer, Téchiné, Akerman, Mordillat, Philibert, Beuchot, Cabrera, Grandrieux) passed through the INA and made some of their most uncomfortable pieces; and even better, an entire generation of television professionals emerged from the group of producers encouraged by Guisard, sharing a conception of public service where the main mission was to bring closer to viewers the new creative forces of contemporary television. People—is often said—are not irreplaceable. Judging by the recruiting difficulty of public television—and the mediocrity of many of those responsible of T.V. stations—this might not be entirely true. In terms of research, creation, taste, arts; this is to say that the personality, the style and the passion of people are crucial and not interchangeable. We shall take two examples of our neighbours: we have seen what the research production of the British *Channel Four* has turned into after the forced departure of two of its producers, Alan Fountain and Rod Stoneman: it is a trivial matter. In the case of Germany, we know until what point the main program of ZDF, *Das kleine Fernsehspiel*, is faithful to Eckart Stein’s desire. A manager, an administrative can be replaced by another. But producers, in their own way, are artists, and when they stop producing, something is lost and never recovered—it is in this circumstance, the example stubbornly given by Claude Guisard: that creation and public television are not unworthy of one another.

[...] Television is like a membrane that encloses us. It simultaneously identifies us and enables contact between each other. It is a breath that exchanges what is ours with what is outside us. Such are the vital roles. We are not supposed to talk about culture, but about life, life together, in groups of friends and citizens, not desensitized nor fanaticized. Whether we want it or not, television has as a mission to deal with our common fortune, our collective destinies, the relationships inside our own bodies and between them. On that side (and not only in that of “new technologies”) is where it is always convenient to talk about research and creation. Television has been invented in order to manufacture new social modes of relationship. Manufacture? That is also saying in order to innovate, invent, renovate, face our present. How can we accept that the average three-and-a-half hours of television consumed by French audiences daily are filled with standardized, tamed, marketing-oriented products? Let’s dream of a television that makes us ream, and let’s fight for that dream! •