

The Use and Abuse of Global Telepoiesis: Of Human and Non-Human Bondages Entangled in Media Mobilities

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Introduction

Collective memory is not an archive that is concealed or defiant to any access. Rather, collective memory is open to re-interpretation. Also, collective memory is displayed in various forms: names, folk tales, old films, TV programs and Japanese cinema on the big screen, which Japanese migrant women watch again but this time with local audiences in foreign cities. Media audience studies and other studies on diasporic media consumption (Morley, 1974, 1990; Collins et al., 1986; Liebes & Katz, 1990; Ang, 1991; Livingstone, 1998; Moores, 1993; Ogawa, 1992) have been endeavoring to examine readings of specific media texts in relation to audience so far. On the contrary, more detailed analysis of collective memory will be required to understand the global media mobilities we encounter in the past decades (Zelizer, 1993; Gillespie, 1995; Fortier, 2000).

This paper will focus on recursivity by shifting the emphasis from meaning of the text itself to how collective memories in talks act as sites, namely time-spaces (Scannell, 1988, 1991; Gilroy et al., 2000). It is this type of media mobilities with which the Japanese women who live abroad try to locate themselves somewhere local amid the global upheavals they encounter (Ogawa, 1994, 1996; Urry, 2007; Elliot & Urry, 2010)¹. With emphasis on Japanese women, who are unfamiliar with war memories but are destined to recursively cope with them, diasporic experiences in relation with media, history and self-identity will be highlighted (Dower, 1986; Goodman, 1990; Clair et al., 2016).

Spivak (2000:352) formulates that “telepoesies” is “imaginative interruptions in structures of the past.” She does no longer see the contemporary world as postcolonial. Instead, she emphasizes the interaction between the past and the

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present, history and agency. This paper will re-appropriate Spivak's concept of "telepoesies" to describe the memory-work I observed when Japanese women abroad talked about media, history, and themselves. Here, although connotating the incessant process of negotiation through and of multiple time-spaces, I re-appropriate this word as "telepoiesis" in order to capture the recursive nature of negotiation, both mediated and co-present.

By the term of telepoiesis, what matters most is the imaginary and imaginative world-making made possible by global mobilities and mediated communication practices. This usage of the term is partly to complement the power of imagination that unbundles and re-unites the time-spaces of humans and non-humans in collective life forms (Ogawa Nishiaki, 2007, 2008). This idea is often dismissed in the concept of time-space distantiation, which Giddens (1991) suggests as stretching and deepening of global spheres where action occurs. In addition, I attempt to broaden the concept of autopoiesis which was introduced into social theory by Luhmann (1995). I share the same awareness of system reproduction and of the use of cognitive aspect in that process. However, in this paper the term, telepoiesis will also reveal the possibility of negotiation with the distant others, both humans and non-humans, in time and space.

Now, special attention will be paid to recursivity I find in the time-spaces of Japanese diaspora women when they confront forgotten war-memories in foreign cities². This recursivity is partly due to the locations where I watched episodes of the BBC war-time drama series *Tenko* (1981-1984) with other Japanese women in London and in San Diego, California: mostly, we watched, talked and ate together in the living rooms and/or in dining rooms of their own home abroad³. Usually in a casual atmosphere with tea and light meals before us, we had video screenings and interview or discussion sessions that lasted from two to eight hours in the different households I visited.

In retrospect, these time-space settings may have created arenas where everyday routines of talk and media consumption were more or less destabilized but still resisted to anyone or anything that may intrude into their migrant lives: the unknown past, the distant others and things, or whatever you may call it. I emphasize the various forms of recursivity I encountered in this process of telepoiesis. The Japanese women I interviewed may have been doing this work constantly by re-arranging multiple time-spaces while they were talking.

Thus, this paper mainly dwells on detailed but still partial description of global telepoiesis, that is recursive but leads to unintended consequences when agencies struggle with time-spaces in collective memory-work. Here, global telepoiesis is re-defined as the entanglements of human and non-human bondages (Ogawa Nishiaki, 2007, 2008). Due to the mobilities in both media and agencies, the use and abuse of global telepoiesis are most evident in the terrain of collective memories. Since it is almost impossible to explain this complex process by "linear" causalities (Ogawa

Nishiaki et al., 2010; Ito et al., 2013; Ogawa Nishiaki et al., 2016), I will therefore focus on two aspects of telepoiesis that I reconstruct with the support of my memory, field notes, and transcripts: the former is about our names, the latter is about cinema. Lastly, I will further touch upon the issues of media, mobilities and their use and abuse brought upon the diasporas and their world-makings in brief.

Mobile Names and Places: Attachment and Displacement

First, I would argue that names in time-spaces create new associations in global telepoiesis. Here let us pay a visit to specific sites of collective memory that Japanese migrant women always turned to. Enter two Japanese women I interviewed: Mrs. A in London and Mrs. B in San Diego⁴. I believe that the given name of Mrs. A and the family name of Mrs. B respectively give us perfect examples of mobile names in time-spaces.

However, I have no intention of contrasting “Japanese” national memories with their “British” and “American” counterparts. Although they served as context of the migrants’ talks, memories are not bound by national borders, nor are they totally homogenous within national territories. Instead, I will focus on more specified locations: for example, streets and communities in London and San Diego. At the same time, global networks of Japanese migrants’ knowledge will be highlighted.

You may feel dizzy when I change my discursive positions from one place to another, from global to local, from past to present. But please bear with my present discourse in this manner, because that is exactly how I felt while I was listening to Japanese women’s talk after viewing *Tenko*. Moreover, I will also follow the same routes as these women did. No matter how far I may go, I will always come back to the points of departure. That is how collective memory is referred to and re-worked recursively in global telepoiesis.

Names can travel across time-spaces. For example, in a focus discussion in London, Mrs. A in her fifties told us that she was named after her father’s memory. Her given name connotes “to go to war,” since she was born on the day when her father was recruited. Names are where memories reside. Each time Mrs. A writes down and pronounces her name, she may recall the origin of her name. Her name thus takes her back to fifty years ago, though she herself naturally does not remember what the day of her birth was like.

In *Les Lieux de Memoire*, Nora aptly explicates how memory-works are conducted through events, artefacts, monuments, and other social occasions (Nora, 1984, 1986, 1992). It is not a coincidence that “Noms de Lieu,” the title of an essay in Kristeva’s (1977:467-491) account, attracted my attention a long time ago. And this chapter was later translated into English and given the title “Place Names” (Kristeva, 1980:271-294). Presumably, Kristeva acknowledges the fact that both names and places are the sites of commemoration. Each time we call one’s name, we

may recall the past from oblivion. As we visit places, names resonate with the same kind of experiences, either sweet or poignant.

This memory-work, maintained by inscribed names and places, sometimes overlaps with times, too. Imagine that you are walking in the streets of Harlem, New York. What captures your eyes first would be green street signs, and you could soon find that flickering names in white are written on them: Martin Luther King, Jr. Street, W. E. B. du Bois Street, Frederick Douglass Street and thousands of others.

The street names in Harlem are taken from heroes in African-American history though it is regrettable that no heroine's name is found there. But you would somehow feel dislocated, since this site is too much saturated with collective memory. Each street is named after one specific figure from a certain historical event. Names are deployed, or seemingly scattered in the terrain, ignoring the chronological order. Thus, Harlem's time-topography would never correspond to its space-geography.

In this way, collective memory in Harlem takes the form of place names, and they conjure up the memory in a monstrous way (Law, 1991). No matter how close two streets may run side by side, two Black heroes whose names represent each street respectively may have lived their epic lives about a century apart. Nevertheless, Harlem creates a heterotopia often associated with a sense of hallucination (Foucault, 1986; Hetherington, 1997). Likewise, Mrs. A's first name may have had the same effect of another heterotopia, when her father's memories were recursively interpellated by the sights and the sounds of her name.

Next, I refer to Mrs. B, who I interviewed in the United States. In her case, names do travel but their mobilities result in different semantic outcomes. Let us move to San Diego, the city located near the U.S.-Mexico border. Most of the street and county names remind us of the city's colonial past. Many Japanese migrants, including myself, were destined to have addresses filled with names of Spanish-origins but with Latin American accents: Miramar Road, La Jolla, San Diego, for example.

One of the screening sessions of *Tenko* was conducted in a university condominium situated in Costa del Sol (Coast of the Sun). At the time, this resident place was regarded as one of the primary locations where Japanese researchers in medicine and other sciences preferred to temporarily stay with their families. Mrs. B was in her late twenties when I met her. She spent several years in the United States as a child. This time she moved to San Diego soon after her arranged marriage with a medical doctor who conducted research in a university located in one of the biggest metropolitan areas in Japan.

Coincidentally, Mr. B, who was also a doctor and the husband of her new female friend, joined the session in his own house. He was in his thirties and not related to Mrs. B but had the same family name. His wife was five years younger, and they had two children. Originally, his pregnant wife was supposed to be a

hostess and a discussant in the session. However, deeply concerned with her wife's health on that day, he volunteered to take over her role instead.

In the session, Mrs. B and Mr. B had a long talk about their names, and, more importantly, how one historic figure came to disturb them just because her married name and his family name were coincidentally same as a hero's. It was the name of an admiral, a war-time hero who was the commander-in-chief when the Japanese Navy attacked the Pearl Harbor during World War II.

Especially for Mrs. B, being in a foreign country with a new family name seemed to cause troubles. It was because she recently changed her family name due to marriage. The name was actually her husband's. Suddenly, her name happened to obtain a completely different connotation from what it used to mean for her about fifteen years ago as a child in the United States.

Her complaint was that each time she introduced herself to her neighbors and classmates in her English conversation classes, she was often subjected to strong reactions in reference to the admiral. Mrs. B shared the same pronunciation and the same Chinese characters with the admiral. What disturbed her most was the fact that the name of this brave admiral automatically meant an enemy alien in the history of the United States.

It was totally unexpected for her, as she had never been interested in warfare nor military affairs. Apparently, the majority of the people she was first acquainted with in some formal occasions in San Diego could instantly make the association between her and the admiral just because their names were B. Moreover, she had never encountered such a reaction, although about a third of her education was conducted in the United States.

Of course, there were some underlying sub-contexts of this talk. Let me locate the talk in two time-spaces with different modalities: semantic and topographic. First, in the drama we watched together, one of the main characters was named Captain B', a Japanese army officer in a prison camp in East Asia. Captain B' played a central role in a confrontation between Japanese soldiers and captive women of British and other nationalities.

According to my interview with the script co-writer Jill Hyem, two writers created the character with reference to two Japanese officers, both of whom existed in real life and became models for a novel and a TV documentary: Captain Suga, whose fictional character based on himself appeared in the war novel *Three Came Home* (Keith, 1947) published in the United States; and Captain B'', who was in charge of a real internment camp featured both in a TV documentary, *This Is Your Life* (1978), and a globally-broadcast BBC drama series, *Tenko*, co-produced by the national broadcasting corporations in the United Kingdom and Australia.

Second, San Diego is, after all, a naval city. As for its landscape, it is basically a desert while at the same time a seaside resort community where a wealthy white and Asian-American population resides. Figures and architectures of old buildings and

heritages embody colonial styles in a visualized way. Reference to Admiral B is considered more than natural in this location.

Thus, in viewing *Tenko*, both Mrs. A in London and Mrs. B in San Diego re-encountered with the different types of war-time memory. In Mrs. A's case, it was a reminder of her late father's recruitment. On the contrary, for Mrs. B, her new family name sometimes became a burden. Her married name was highly disturbing and, in addition, put her identity in question in a naval city in the United States. Thus, mobilities both in diaspora participants' names and their spatial itineraries not only maintain but also often upset collective memories. In the worst cases, you may step into new streets where there are land mines embedded underneath.

Collective Memory and Cinematic Time-Spaces

Second, cinema is also a site of collective memory. If names act as words in memory-works, cinema and other media representations can be considered as sentences where memories are represented in more crystallized forms. When I talked to Japanese women after viewing *Tenko*, they often referred to other movies, TV dramas and documentaries (Gledhill, 1997).

Moreover, for foreign audiences, *Tenko* is somehow a kind of drama that is not easy to understand or explain when you are unfamiliar with the production format of British situation dramas. Dramas in this genre are mainly set in a room and have comparatively less actions than their American counterparts. Therefore, the Japanese women I interviewed struggled with and tried to challenge *Tenko*. Thus, the discursive strategies they took were to remember and to refer to as many media texts they knew well as possible and, as a result, to embed *Tenko* into their familiar terrain of memories. Sometimes their talks provided the sites where trans-coding (Hall, 1997; Morley & Chen, 1996), or more specifically, re-appropriation of memories was observed.

Of course, there were a few popular movies that the Japanese women equivocally quoted⁵. For example, among them was an Anglo-Japan co-production film, *Senjoo no Merii Kurisumasu (Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence)* (1983), which was directed by Nagisa Ohshima. Inspired by the war-time novels of van der Post (1954, 1963), this colonial encounter film features famous persons in Japan and the United Kingdom: Takeshi Kitano, a Japanese comedian and film director, Ryuichi Sakamoto, a Japanese composer-musician, and David Bowie, a British musician. Other examples were *The Bridge on the River Kwai* (1957), an epic Hollywood war spectacle, and *Biruma no Tategoto (The Burmese Harp)* (1956, 1985), which cinematized a post-war story of a Japanese soldier who remained in Burma as a Buddhist monk. The story was filmed twice with different actors, Shooji Yasui and Kiichi Nakai respectively.

It was no surprise that the Japanese women remembered all three movies

mentioned above, since they roughly fall into the same genre and share the same characteristics with *Tenko*: war-time dramatic narratives located in colonial settings in Southeast Asia. However, hereafter I would like to focus on other interesting references made by the Japanese women I interviewed. It was totally unexpected for me to hear those references, which the women made from different registers of collective memories in their talks. To facilitate the description, I divide them into three categories: narratives, settings, and bodies of actors and actresses.

First, the Japanese women often referred to even Japanese folk tales and Western fairy tales in reference to the narrative structure of *Tenko*. After my discussion with script writers, I selected Episode 3 and Episode 9 from the first series for screening. The reason was that both episodes show strong narratives. While Episode 3 introduces the arrival of the British and other captive women at a Japanese internment camp, Episode 9 features an escape attempt by two of the female Prisoners of War. In the latter episode, the renegade women were punished for their misconduct and other POWs tried to save them by making straw hats for Japanese soldiers.

Especially, Episode 9 seemed to be more influenced by Western classic folk tales in which how the initial problems finally come to be solved are chronologically told. I knew that the episode had a strong story line before the screening sessions. Nevertheless, I was continuously astonished when some of the Japanese women explained how *Tenko* reminded them of the Japanese translations of the Western tales, such as *Usagi to Kame* (“The Tortoise and the Hare” or “Slow But Sure”)⁶ retold by Aesop (2013a) and *Ibara Hime* (“Little Briar-Rose”) retold by The Brothers Grimm (1998b). They even suggested the common structures of narrative forms in which there is tension between the hero or heroine and the villain and the hero or heroine obtains a reward when he or she successfully solves the initial problem.

Second, it was often the case that the Japanese women made frequent references to the settings as “kyokugen jookyoo (critical situations)” (Ogawa, 1994, 1996). Some of the women who resided in Britain remembered Australian TV dramas broadcast in the United Kingdom, such as *Prisoner: Cell Block H* (1979-1986) and *A Town like Alice* (1981). Interestingly, many women in both London and San Diego mentioned that Japanese prime-time TV programs categorized as *Keimusyo-mono* (Prison Story), with their all-female casts, were remembered as the typical time-space of “kyokugen jookyoo” in the register of their memories⁷.

Lastly, the Japanese women often made inter-textual references to other media products in which the actors and actresses in *Tenko* appear. Some of the Japanese women, mostly above forty years of age, acknowledged Captain B’ (Burt Kwouk) as the driver in *The Pink Panther* movie series (1963, 1964, 1975, 1976, 1978, 1982, 1983, 1993). In addition, many of the women watched the soap opera series *Dynasty* (1981-1989) rerun several times in London and San Diego. They pointed out that

Stephanie Beacham, the actress who played Rose in *Tenko*, also appeared as Sable in *Dynasty*, and that she was the most beautiful among the captive women. If we consider the fact that *Dallas* (1978-1991), another popular soap opera series widely-known as well as *Dynasty*, failed to attract popularity when the series was first broadcast in Japan (Liebes, Katz, & Iwao, 1990), their frequent references to Beacham as Sable in *Dynasty* deserve further inquiries.

Thus, the Japanese women in question endeavored to embed *Tenko* into their familiar terrains of background knowledge. In that process, not only cinema and TV dramas but also folk tales, both of “the East” and “the West” (Aesop, 2013a; The Brothers Grimm, 1998b), were referred to as collective memory, if not without misunderstandings.

Conclusion

Global telepoiesis is considered as a consequence of human and non-human bondages entangled in media mobilities. The Japanese female diasporas are obliged to encounter collective memories by re-arranging their attachment to and displacement from the old and new environments. In this paper, I demonstrated how recursivity in two mobile names invited different outcomes. By viewing *Tenko*, both Mrs. A in London and Mrs. B in San Diego re-encountered war-time memory. In Mrs. A's case, it was her late father's memory which was interpellated again and again. On the contrary, for Mrs. B, her new family name, which coincided with the name of a Japanese war-time hero in WWII, sometimes became a burden. Her name also came to disturb her migrant life, and, in addition, put her identity in question. Thus, mobile names not only maintain but often upset collective memories in global telepoiesis.

Recursivity discussed in this paper also leads to unintended consequences when agencies struggle with cinematic time-spaces in collective memory-work. I shift the emphasis from meaning of the media text itself to the process of mediation: how collective memories as contexts in the talk act as sites, namely time-spaces, when the Japanese women try to situate themselves in local places amid global upheavals. By referring to cinema, TV dramas, documentaries, and surprisingly, Japanese translations of Western folk tales, we see how the Japanese women in question endeavored to embed *Tenko* into their familiar terrains of background knowledge. Lastly, the analysis of global telepoiesis would undoubtedly provide better understandings of diasporas and media mobilities. It is especially so in relation to time flows, namely individual differences based on biographies and trajectories of agencies in discourses and collective life forms, as I demonstrated with the examples of Japanese female diasporas.

NOTES

1. Earlier versions of this paper were presented at Oxford Kobe Seminars (Ogawa Nishiaki, 2001) and reviewed by John Urry and Anne-Marie Fortier. The present author would like to thank Roger Goodman for his insightful comment on ethical issues concerned with the publication of this research.
2. The research consists of initial contacts, ethnographic observations, screenings, intensive interviews, focus group discussions and surveys of background information of informants' daily schedule. Comparative field works were conducted with 120 Japanese female diasporas in total in London (1988-1989) and in San Diego, California (1990). The informants were recruited by snow-ball sampling with attention paid to balance three age groups. The follow-up research and more participant observations *in situ* were conducted during the period from 1990 to 2002. For the details of the research, see Ogawa (1994). The present author also made about 20 visits to Hong Kong in order to compare diasporas' knowledge according to their host countries, either "Western" or "Asian."
3. Screening materials were selected to investigate ethnic and gender identities of Japanese female diasporas. *Tenko* is a BBC drama series which describes confrontation of European POWs with Japanese Army in East Asia (Warner & Sandilands, 1987, 1997). *Tenko* has been broadcast and widely known in both the United Kingdom and the United States since the early 1980's. *Tenko* is available as a classic war-time drama content in various media forms. For the novelized versions, see Masters (1981), Hardwick (1984) and Valery (1985). The present author would like to acknowledge Richard Collins, John Dower, Christine Gledhill and Paddy Scannell for the justification and selection of the materials. Especially, John Dower suggested the material, *Song of Survival* (1985) for comparison.
4. In order to protect the informants' privacy, their family names and other names in history and media fictions are referred as A, B, B' and B'' and the informants' utterances are also summarized.
5. The present author uses "equivocally," "most," "many" and "some" according to the relative percentages of the total number of informants both in London and San Diego.
6. The title of the fable the present author refers here is translated as "Slow But Sure" (Aesop, 2013b).
7. Although the informants did not mention any specific titles, the following films and TV dramas are considered to be categorized into this genre: *Josyuu to Tomo ni* (1956), *Onna Bakari no Yoru* (1961), *Onna Bangaichi Kusari no Mesuinu* (1965), *Tokugawa Onna Keibatsu-Shi* (1968), *Tokugawa Irezumi-Shi Seme Jigoku* (1969), *Josyuu: Hei no Naka no Onna-Tachi* (1985-97) and *Joshi*

Keimusyo Higashi San-Gootoo Nana (1998-).

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- Biruma no Tategoto (The Burmese Harp)* (Film) (1956). Country: Japan, Production Company: Nikkatsu, Director: Kon Ichikawa, Script Writer: Natto Wada, Cast: Rentaro Mikuni et al.
- Biruma no Tategoto (The Burmese Harp)* (Film) (1985). Country: Japan, Production Company: Fuji TV, Hakuhodo, & Kinema Tokyo, Director: Kon Ichikawa, Script Writer: Natto Wada, Cast: Koji Ishizaka et al.
- Dallas* (TV Drama Series) (1978-1991). Country: U.S., Network: CBS, Producer: Leonard Katzman, Director: Leonard Katzman et al., Script Writer: David Jacobs et al., Cast: Patrick Duffy et al.
- Dynasty* (TV Drama Series) (1981-1989). Country: U.S., Network: ABC, Production Company: Aaron Spelling Productions, Director: Irving J. Moore et al., Script Writer: Esther Shapiro et al., Cast: John Forsythe et al.
- Joshi Keimusyo Higashi San-Gootoo Nana (Female Prison East 3-7)* (TV Keimusyo-mono Drama Series) (1998-). Country: Japan, Network: TBS, Production Company: TBS & Dreamax Television Inc., Director: Makoto Kiyohiro, Script Writer: Toshio Sekine, Cast: Pinko Izumi et al.
- Josyuu: Hei no Naka no Onna-Tachi (Female Prisoners: Women behind Bars)* (TV Keimusyo-mono Drama Series) (1985-97). Country: Japan, Network: TBS, Production Company: TBS & Dreamax Television Inc., Director: Makoto Kiyohiro, Script Writer: Toshio Sekine, Cast: Harue Akagi et al.
- Josyuu to Tomo ni (Women in Prison)* (Film) (1956). Country: Japan, Production Company: Tokyo Eiga, Director: Seiji Hisamatsu, Script Writer: Sumie Tanaka, Cast: Setsuko Hara et al.
- Onna Bakari no Yoru (Girls of the Night)* (Film) (1961). Country: Japan, Production Company: Tokyo Eiga, Director: Kinuyo Tanaka, Script Writer: Sumie Tanaka, Cast: Chisako Hara et al.
- Onna Bangaichi Kusari no Mesuinu (Chained Bitch)* (Film) (1965). Country: Japan, Production Company: Toei, Director: Shinji Murayama, Script Writer: Kazuo Funabashi, Cast: Mako Midori et al.
- Prisoner: Cell Block H* (TV Drama Series) (1979-1986). Country: Australia, Network: Network Ten, Production Company: Reg Grundy Organization, Director: Chris Adshead et al., Script Writer: Ian Smith et al., Cast: Elspeth

Ballantyne et al.

Senjoo no Merii Kurisumasu (Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence) (Film) (1983). Country: Japan, U.K., Australia, & New Zealand, Production Company: Shochiku & Nihon Herald, Director: Nagisa Ohshima, Script Writer: Nagisa Ohshima & Paul Mayersberg, Cast: David Bowie et al.

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Tenko (Roll Call) (TV Drama Series) (1981-1984). Country: U.K. & Australia, Network: BBC1, Production Company: BBC & Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), Creator: Lavinia Warner, Director: Jeremy Summers et al., Script Writer: Lavinia Warner et al. , Cast: Ann Bell et al.

Tenko Reunion (TV Movie) (1985). U.K. & Australia, Network: BBC1, Production Company: BBC & Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), Creator: Lavinia Warner, Director: Michael Owen Morris, Script Writer: Jill Hyem, Anne Valery, Lavinia Warner, & Devora Pope, Cast: Ann Bell et al.

The Bridge on the River Kwai (Film) (1957). Country: U.K. & U.S., Production Company: Horizon Pictures, Director: David Lean, Script Writer: Carl Foreman & Michael Wilson, Cast: William Holden et al.

The Pink Panther (Film Series) (1963, 1964, 1975, 1976, 1978, 1982, 1983, 1993). Country: U.S., Production Company: United Artists, MGM, etc., Director: Blake Edwards et al., Script Writer: Blake Edwards et al. Cast: Peter Sellers et al.

This Is Your Life (TV Reality Documentary Series) *for Dame Margot Turner* (1978, January 25). Country: U.K., Network: Thames Television.

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