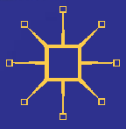
PALGRAVE EUROPEAN FILM AND MEDIA STUDIES

DOCUDRAMA ON EUROPEAN TELEVISION

a Selective Survey

Edited by
Tobias Ebbrecht-Hartmann and
Derek Paget



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Docudrama on European Television

A Selective Survey

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Palgrave European Film and Media Studies
ISBN 978-1-137-49978-3 ISBN 978-1-137-49979-0 (eBook)
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-49979-0

Library of Congress Control Number: 2016941774

Cover illustration: © Image Source / Alamy Stock Photo

Printed on acid-free paper

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by Springer Nature
The registered company is Macmillan Publishers Ltd. London

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction: A New Europe, the Post-Documentary Turn and Docudrama

Derek Paget

A Genre Made for New Times

This book is predicated on the idea that the screen genre docudrama became ubiquitous during the latter part of the twentieth century. It argues in general that the genre was made for new times. Fact-based art burgeoned during this period, part of a millennial zeitgeist. It is tempting to relate this to Francis Fukuyama's controversial 1992 concept of the 'End of History', which posited a new world order at the close of a century in which the capitalist system seemed triumphant. While the coming of this order seems less likely in the second decade of the new century, it is clear enough that Greater Europe has been radically reconfigured in the past quarter-century, and that more change must come. Initially, the new era was heralded by striking workers in Poland, by Gorbachev's glasnost policy in the USSR, and, crucially, by the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. Even before the fall of the Wall, the forests of aerials pointing westwards in East Germany, remarked by many visitors from the West during the long Cold War period, were testament to many things, including the desire for a 'free' media in the East that would open up proscribed subjects.[1] The extent to which any medium can actually be free will, of course, always be debatable. But the Wall and its collapse became a powerful symbol of contrasting desires arising from opposed political systems. If keeping some things out was uppermost on one side of the Wall, letting

T. Ebbrecht-Hartmann, D. Paget (eds.), *Docudrama on European Television*, Palgrave European Film and Media Studies,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-49979-0_1

some things in was surely the aim of those aerials. On both sides was a consciousness of a Europe still troubled by its twentieth-century past and becoming confused by the looming twenty-first-century future. The ramifications of the break-up of an uneasy Pan-European postwar settlement that had seemed for two generations to be set in stone, the emergence of a new, and unsettled, Europe, triggered many things—as the subsequent two-and-a-half decades have shown.

By 2000, the 'old' Cold War had (effectively) ended, the former Eastern European power bloc had (apparently) collapsed, and its organising ideology had (again apparently) become discredited. It was not just that 'satellite' nations formerly sealed into an alliance with the Soviet Union could suddenly secede from the previous union (for example, Poland, Romania, East Germany); the USSR itself also quite rapidly fragmented into its constituent parts. A New Europe seemed to be, if not born, at least emerging as the old millennium tipped over into the new. Docudrama—at its investigative journalistic best a profoundly democratic screen genre—offered, we will argue in the chapters that follow, a means in many European countries of supplying a real need for information, explanation, and reflection at this time of uncertainty and dizzying instability. The genre's history is embedded in anglophone and Western European television cultures, and its development is inevitably inflected by British and American influences. But the subject of this book is the emergence of docudrama elsewhere in Europe. The genre's spread can even be detected in countries from the old Eastern Europe, as Chaps. 2 and 3 will show.

In an article in 2000, John Corner identified what he called a 'post-documentary' turn in screen culture, occurring as millennial events played out. Indeed, 'docu-hybridity' has played a major role in representing these times to film and television audiences. Much inventive mixing of formerly discrete television genres has been evident. The 'intermateability' of factual and imaginative ways of seeing (literally, the mixing of separate components) has been viewed with much suspicion in the past, being seen as an unnecessary and confusing 'blurring of boundaries'.[2] But in the new era it has become almost *de rigueur*, and fact-based approaches have been evident across the performing and expressive arts.[3] Docudrama began as a distinctively post-World War II televisual genre (as I argued first in my 1990 book *True Stories?*). The tectonic shifts of the late twentieth century fuelled a new interest in facts and information that was altogether different from the earlier, post-Enlightenment 'faith in facts' that had spawned early docudrama. Improved technology, too, has had a role in widening

access to information.[4] Screen docudrama's newfound status served to bracket the genre off from the excesses of other forms of fact-based (some would say 'dumbed-down') television, such as 'reality TV'. With status came increased production activity, and instead of being, as I stated in 1990, an 'occasional' feature of broadcast television scheduling, docudrama's presence became frequent as well as significant. This has made the form more difficult to attack for lacking the heavyweight, 'discourse of sobriety' claims of documentary.[5] Indeed, its range of generic possibility has been hugely expanded as the result of synergies between the formerly rival film and television industries. Thus the 'biopic' and the 'based-on-fact' areas of the film industry, each with their own traditions of practice, have fed off television docudrama to emerge as more and more important parts of the modern cinema industry too. The pace of these changes was remarkable, and in my later *No Other Way to Tell It*, I proposed the idea of a 'continuum' of docudramatic practice to account for the burgeoning spectrum of fact-usage. And I attempted to highlight all this by using the phrase 'screen drama' to reflect the fact that docudramatic strategies were now at play in both film and television (2011, p. 3).

By the time the team that has produced this book were working together in the early twenty-first century, docudrama had established sufficient levels of industrial production, broadcast visibility, audience loyalty, and even academic respectability within the spectrum of hybrid fact/fiction television and film practices to demand further examination and analysis. This book seeks to explore docudrama's emergence and importance in a number of European television ecologies, and to examine the ways in which the genre has adapted to particular national sensibilities and interests. It seeks simultaneously to be an introduction to a potential research area (for there are more exclusions than inclusions in our 'Selective Survey'), and a blueprint for further investigation. It appears at a time when the precise contours of European re-alignment seem every bit as problematical as they have been at any time since the end of World War II; a time when the 'New Europe' is a place of doubt and difficulty rather than a stable point at the End of History. Geopolitical alignments and realignments, complicated further by religious extremism, population diaspora from within and beyond Europe's frontiers, and global economic uncertainty have added to the historical problems already evident in the very concept of 'Europe'. It seems more than likely that fact-based screen drama will continue to be a means of trying to make sense of social, political, cultural, and indeed geographical, change within the continent well into the future.

The 'Selective Survey'

Selection is the inevitable result of two pragmatic factors. Firstly, the core of the team that has produced the book came together at various international conferences through a common scholarly interest in the dominant screen traditions of Anglo-American docudrama.[6] Distinctively British (investigative journalistic) and American (entertainment-led) traditions of docudrama have been influential since at least the 1960s. Anglophone co-production has caused these traditions to dovetail since at least the 1980s, and international 'co-pros' with channels and production companies in Europe have extended the form's reach and grasp. It is important in this Introduction to acknowledge the hegemonic implications of anglophone screen culture. For all the contributors to this book it was a necessary—but manifestly insufficient—first step in the work that followed. The transfer of our common interest in anglophone docudrama to the screen cultures of each person's home nation was a more important step towards conference presentations that sought to gauge to what extent, if any, the distinctive features of the 'two traditions' could be traced in indigenous production in France, Germany, Spain, and Italy, and to what extent, if any, there were 'local', nuanced, differences—evidence, perhaps, of distinctive national concerns and senses of identity. The core group, then, already represented five major language communities of old Western Europe. The nations represented in the panels could in addition be claimed as hosting the continent's earliest, most highly developed, and sophisticated television systems and cultures. The docudramatic models of British and American practitioners have been both available and influential almost from the inception of these European nations' television systems. This has been ratcheted up by international co-production, and the influence of Arte and Canal+ in Europe is also an important factor. Our 'compare and contrast' approach in conference presentations offered an early opportunity to open up the subject further, to try to establish what might be distinctive about each nation's approach to docudrama, and to speculate on what this might mean for the wider European culture.

Secondly, we felt we had not only to acknowledge the fissures—hegemonic and otherwise—in our coverage, we had also at least to have a policy towards those gaps. A comprehensive survey taking in all European nations was highly tempting for 'completists' (myself included). But it had to be recognised as impossible in practical terms—no publishing house would wish to finance such a large volume. Having said all this, it was

still logical to try for as broad a base as possible. We wanted at least some coverage from outside the nations already represented. To this end, we sought out fellow academics elsewhere in Europe, and succeeded in drawing perspectives from Sweden and Poland. Thus there is at least some limited consideration of situations obtaining in countries outside the dominant language groups; one from a country formerly part of the old Communist bloc, and one from a Scandinavian country newly emergent as a 'player' on the European television scene thanks in particular to the rise of so-called 'Nordic noir' TV drama.

This book, then, argues only for representative potential within a directed but partly serendipitous selection. Collectively, we accept that some aspects of this must have the appearance of 'tokenism', but with a study that is, effectively, the first of its kind, this has the kind of operational inevitability that is regrettable but unavoidable.[7] Our hope is that this collection is a first step in encouraging academic studies of all kinds across the continent—theses, articles, books—because we are convinced that the docudramatic mode has been, is, and will continue to be vital to the representation, narrativisation, and understanding of difficult times. The best examples of docudrama have always gone beyond print and broadcast news and documentary; they possess a reach and grasp unavailable to other modes of public address. The worst examples—so-called 'disease of the week' docudramas, or those featuring tabloid crime, for example—furnish another kind of perspective on mass culture that is also potentially valuable. Examples from across the spectrum will be found in the chapters that follow, all have a relevance to the future potential of the genre and the future trajectory of its study (and I will return to this subject in the final section of this Introduction). Partial, then, our coverage is, but we hope that the selection we have made, the approach we have taken, and the examples of practice on which we focus will serve to point the way.

Our Approach: An Academic Backstory

Docudrama's generic characteristics have been formed via traditions in theatre as well as film, and its claims to documentary authenticity are additionally underscored by practices in both film and print journalism. Television networks throughout Europe have used and are using docudrama to examine key events in national histories, and to review the lives of individuals central to unfolding national histories. At the lower end of the scale, there is what might be seen as a pandering to the kind of tabloid

culture that has bedevilled an industry somewhat in thrall to the quick fix of reality TV and 'celebrity'. The celebrity biographical docudrama could be an element of this, but it need not be—as some writers show in their chapters. Worthy, serious docudrama—with something new to say about history, current affairs, and the place of important people in them—is the aspect of the genre to which many academics are drawn. But we do not avoid commentary on the tabloid just because it is tabloid.

At this particularly crucial point in a perennially troubled European history, screen docudrama is one of the means cultures have to work through issues, including difficult, even traumatic, elements of experiences shared both within national borders and in a pan-European context. The burgeoning of the genre across the 'quality-of-subject' spectrum is a good indication that it has a part to play in the task of making sense both of complex current events, and of cultural obsessions. Its inherent exploration of representational boundaries as creatively permeable in wholly new ways is one of the many reasons why we claim docudrama as a 'genre for the times'. This book's overarching theoretical position, then, is one grounded in the surveying of specific national contexts and practices, but one always alive to those relational issues that offer nuanced points of departure towards wider, international perspectives. To some extent the approach taken to docudrama is a common one; it is an approach founded on a distinctive academic backstory which, I hope, will partially excuse the personal tone of this Introduction.

If much of the history and tradition of docudrama developed via an anglophone screen culture that has somewhat dominated the genre—largely because of American/English-language screen hegemony—something similar is true of the academic attention that docudrama has received. This too has been dominated by British and American scholars. Work mainly from the last half of the twentieth century established the distinctiveness of the genre as residing in a combination of 'head' and 'heart' treatments of 'events that really happened'. The 'head' approach derives from forensic, investigative journalism, and legalistic applications of the notions of 'research', 'evidence', and 'proof'. The 'heart' approach stems from the emotional and behavioural dimensions available through performance—dramatic writing and structuring, realist film technique, and actor skill. Drama's capacity to offer second-order experience can never be discounted (see Paget 2011, pp. 287–289). Study of docudrama has emerged from many academic paths—studies in theatre, film, television/media, history—all with distinctive approaches. But in the early

days of commentary on the form, things were rather different. Beginning work on docudrama more than a quarter of a century ago, I was primarily interested in two things about the writing on the subject that irritated me. The first was a tendency to regard docudrama as either bad documentary, bad drama, or both those things. Critics would routinely condemn films and programmes on the basis that the facts were wrong (or inadequate), or the drama lame (or overly didactic). In the former case, as more than one maker of docudrama told me, the tendency was to think 'if they got *that* wrong, what about everything else?'[8] In the latter case, realist drama's problems in exposition—in supplying basic information (vital or otherwise) were always seized upon gleefully.[9]

A further assumption back in those days concerned the relative status of the different performative arts. An unspoken but very obvious hierarchy obtained, and to some extent still does. So film and (it almost went without saying) theatre were always seen as having the inherent potential to be art of the highest order. Television, and again it almost went without saying, was intrinsically inferior—a mass medium prone always to lowest common factor logic. Then as now, newspaper reviewing of television featured coverage of a range of programme categories unheard of for reviewing theatre and film. It was rather as if film reviewers had had to comment on the whole of the programme available to 1950s cinemagoers ('B' feature, a documentary, a cartoon, advertisements, main feature). For many early television commentators it became a given that docudrama could never claim either the 'truth' of documentary or the exalted degree of 'excellence' available in real dramatic art. In those days hybridity was an impure, mongrel element in an already mongrel medium. Times have changed to some extent as far as this attitude goes, and as the film and television industries in Britain and America have synergised there is now far more acknowledgement of the artistic possibilities available to television drama in particular.

In former times, it was easier for practitioner, newspaper critic, and academic alike to sustain the notion of a 'hard border', to coin a phrase, between documentary and drama. But hybridisation has always been the medium's strong suit in comparison with other media; it just took a long time to acknowledge it. Sophisticated systems have accelerated invention within television formats, and recognition of a 'soft border' between documentary and drama has become more evident as a result. Even in the academy, where many disciplines are in the business of categorising and defining, hybridisation has been recognised as a benefit, not a curse,

through work in emergent disciplines such as media and television studies. Docudrama has even been welcomed (if cautiously) into the field of documentary studies itself, and prominent historians have become involved both practically and theoretically.[10] In the present dispensation, 'long form' mini-series television drama in particular has increasingly claimed artistic status through the nuanced complexities of theme, plot, and character available to writers, the challenges available to actors, directors, and their co-workers in production, and to the audiences receiving the finished work. Writers, actors, and (to a lesser extent) directors now actively seek work in a medium no longer technologically confined to one timetabled broadcast and the possibility of repeats.

Television drama's stepping out of the long shadow of theatre and film has everything to do with industry synergy, technical innovation, artistic brilliance, and entrepreneurial awareness, and rather less to do with academic recognition. However, my 1990 *True Stories?* and *No Other Way To Tell It* (1998, 2011), along with Steven N. Lipkin's 2002 *Real Emotional Logic* and 2011 *Docudrama Performs the Past*, have marked out some of the ways this 'border territory' can be discussed positively. These remain the only current academic monographs specifically dealing with British and American docudrama. Ideas deriving from them will be found quite often in the chapters that follow.[11] In my own books, I was responding to Alan Rosenthal's still-pertinent question 'Why Docudrama?', and I attempted to do three things. I sought first to analyse docudramas in and for themselves, trying to determine what was distinctive in the genre—consciously opposing the bad documentary/bad drama argument. By means of this kind of enquiry I hoped to establish the hallmarks of successful docudrama, recognising that the form, like any other, manifests a wide range and variable quality of practice. I believed, too, that it was possible, occasionally, for a TV film/programme to aspire to the value-laden condition of Art. This led to my 1990 contention that there were 'two traditions' of docudrama, an entertainment-led American one ('docudrama'), and a British TV tradition founded upon investigative journalism ('dramadoc'). I also, along with many other commentators, drew distinctions between 'documentary drama' (invented plot and characters plus factual base) and 'drama-documentary' (real names and situations, with some authentic, some speculative, dialogue).[12]

As British and American film and television industries synergised, I subsequently (1998, 2011) argued that a merging of the two traditions has become evident especially in international 'co-pro' docudrama, beginning

with the American HBO and the British BBC and ITV channel Granada in the 1980s, and now involving major European players such as the BBC, Arte, and Canal+. For me, it became imperative to simplify terminology in order to focus on wider issues of content and motivation (Why this subject? Why a docudramatic approach?). There are understandable fears that continue to exist about the 'watering down' of the British investigative drama-documentary through a kind of contamination with American 'movie-of-the-week'-style docudrama. I have however contended that the best examples still contain enough facts and information for documentary credibility and enough dramatic quality to reach beyond the purely rational. I also believe that less exalted examples continue to tell us something about the wider world, and the individual cultures, within which we live.

Another idea for which I take some responsibility, and which also drives some of the nation-based accounts that follow, is the proposition that there have been identifiable 'phases' in the development of anglophone docudrama, and that these correspond to wider developments in television itself. These range from early periods of relative dearth (where the medium was limited in output and forced to compensate for technological inadequacies), through to the current period of plenty—in terms of digital channels, multiplicity of platforms, and greater quality.[13] Always a medium driven to hybridise, television can now claim to lead the way in formal dramatic innovation. Facts now shadow a good deal of dramatic and imaginative activity on all kinds of screen in the current dispensation.

Finally, I have recently opposed the very notion of 'blurred boundaries', not because it is without foundation, but rather because it has resulted in lazy commentary. This kind of commentary normally comes in two forms: either the writer subscribes unproblematically to the bad documentary/bad drama thesis, or they take the line that a mass audience of a mass medium is incapable of recognising the difference between fact and fiction. This argument often concludes that docudrama is thus socially 'dangerous'. I have sought instead to encourage the notion that borders are about meetings as well as separations—or about 'entanglements', as my co-editor Tobias Ebbrecht-Hartmann terms it. For me, the Benjaminian concept of 'porosity' is preferable—because less judgemental—to the idea of 'blurring' (see Paget 2011, p. 273). Here, perhaps, is the real significance of the idea of placing something—whether it is drama, film, opera, novel, popular song—on the 'based on fact' continuum signalled by the prefix 'docu'. This is why, having worked to define terms in 1990 and 1998, I now prefer to use the word 'docudrama' to cover the full spec-

trum of screen drama underpinned by fact. This is bound to irritate some academics, but definition rarely precedes form in any artistic practice; it is generally a reaction to change in form. Definition is the colander in which we academics try to catch the practices of creatives. Therefore, this book freely co-opts the 'biopic' as itself a form of docudrama, and we use the term 'biographical docudrama', as something on the docudrama's 'continuum of practice'.[14]

However, the academic backstory is just as much about Steven N. Lipkin's contribution. His ideas in relation to film melodrama, his concept of docudrama's 'arenas of representation', his establishing of the 'warranting' of docudrama's claims of fact, and—especially—his production executive-based "'rootable", "relatable" and "promotable"' mantra constitute the other controlling arm of theories that drive the accounts that follow.[15] Importantly, these theoretical ideas provide points of departure as well as organising principles. There have also been hugely important contributions specifically on docudrama from, for example, John Corner, John Caughie, Gary Edgerton, Hoffer et al., and Alan Rosenthal. Taken altogether, the academic backstory has gone a long way towards defining the terms for discussion of docudrama, mapping its history, and analysing its practices.[16]

The Chapters

The seven contributors to this book focus on the wider significance of the usage of facts and information in dramatic formats, rather than on further attempts to pin down the vagaries of form. In the second chapter, Tobias Ebbrecht-Hartmann makes the important point that the contemporary turn towards fact-based drama across Europe indicates a contemporary re-evaluation of the complex relationship between personal memory, historical memory, and nationhood. All this is part of, and goes beyond, the docudrama. The ongoing process of what he terms 'making Europe' is manifestly a site of contestation as established and emergent European nations struggle to define who and what they have been, are, and may become in what is still a very new century. Docudrama is a significant means of both the attempt to harmonise and to dispute the valency of 'memory'—personal and collective—in the public sphere of screen representation. So the best docudrama disputes received histories and hypostatised memory. It does this in two ways: either via its fact-base (often introducing new facts, highlighting neglected facts, and/or realigning

well-known facts); or via insights into human behaviour within events embedded within the dramatic frame of historical events. When it works to counteract hegemonic narratives, I see docudrama as part of a cultural immune-system response, seeking to heal the body politic by its intervention into the public sphere of broadcasting. The events depicted can in their origins be significant, provocative, contentious, prurient, celebratory. Responses across the board of quality scale the heights and plumb the depths of that 'ethical uncertainty' which Steven N. Lipkin has observed 'beset[s] a post-9/11 world' (Lipkin 2015, p. 52). Docudrama is in part a cultural admission that rationality alone is never enough. The rational seeks to explain, but can never be the sole repository of explanation of human activity, endeavor, and—particularly—frailty. Offering as docudrama does 'history in the present tense' (Lacey 2015, p. 36), television experiences a pre-eminence over film, which necessarily operates within the markedly different timescale of cinematic 'release'. The very words 'broadcast' and 'transmission', used about television, carry conceptually different connotations to 'release'. Television, even in the new age of multiple platforms, retains the ability for rapid response to crisis, noteworthy events, and the lives (and deaths) of significant individuals. Docudrama is one of the medium's key rapid-response options.

Each of the chapters that follow offers an account of the history of the TV industry in a particular country, and an account of docudrama's place in it. This includes an account of characteristic subject matter, and the wider social and political contexts in which docudramatic material appears. Case studies then take closer looks at specific material, with a view to bringing out similarities and differences inherent in national practices when compared to overarching genre characteristics as defined in the leading books and articles that have established docudrama as a genre to be reckoned with. Some chapters deal with terminology, some with its absence; some chapters focus on individual practitioners, some on characteristic approaches. As co-editors, Tobias Ebbrecht-Hartmann and I have adopted a particular policy with regard to presentation of the basic unit of information on case studies: we have asked for Title/Title Translation/Broadcaster/Year of Transmission. However, occasionally the name of a particular director or writer can assume an importance to which it is worth drawing attention. So, to take the UK example, it is important to mention directors such as Peter Kosminsky or Ken Loach, producers such as Tony Garnett, writers such as Peter Morgan, precisely because of their past record (and often, it should be said, because of their film as well as televi-

sion backgrounds). In some countries (Poland, for example), connections with a well-established and honourable documentary film tradition are significant factors. But in so much industrial TV production, director and writer tend to be 'hired hands', working without the resources and without the influence that an established name can virtually guarantee. The hard economics of television production determine that channels and production companies are often of more significance. As editors, we have left decisions about whether to go beyond the basic information unit to individual contributors. A select list of films and programmes is available, however, in the Filmography to this book.

In Chap. 2, Tobias Ebbrecht-Hartmann is available significantly to his own 2007 concept of 'historical event television' in his examination of recent tendencies in the 'long tradition of the genre on German television'. In that long tradition, he shows that Germany, like Britain, has its specialists: Heinrich Breloer and Egon Monk being German equivalents of Loach and Kosminsky in their frequent recourse to the genre and in their target topics. The Third Reich and German reunification are especially important periods in his account of German history and analysis of practice. Docudrama's potential to turn formally inwards (and here the influence of Brechtian theatre is strong) and conceptually outwards (into what I have termed the 'extra-textual'—2011, pp. 117–118) is illustrated in his account. His analysis of German docudrama post-reunification demonstrates how the 'competing memories' of Greater Germany's problematical past have been represented both in the separated old Germanys, and in the new Germany.

Borders of any kind connect fully as much as they divide, and in making this point Ebbrecht-Hartmann's case study material seems particularly important to the project of the book as a whole, being focused as it is on representations of the division and reunification of Germany. The historical event of the fall of the Wall returns in the anniversary schedule he examines at the beginning of his chapter, the whole day's television virtually, in his words, 'an extended docudrama'. Ebbrecht-Hartmann's citation of de Certeau in his chapter also seems foundational in terms of this book's angle on those 'borders' that docudrama, according to many commentators, allegedly transgresses. De Certeau, like Benjamin, reminds us that borders (whether literal or metaphorical) are unfixed. Inevitably they betoken 'entanglement', and this, as he shows, is a far more complex matter than separation. The entanglement of West with East Germany leads to a renewed search for 'Germanness' in the new, post-1989 dispensation—amongst a new generation seeking truth from its forbears.

The first two chapters analyse contrasting vectors following the fall of the Wall. The event resonated very differently in Wiesław Godzic's Poland. Journalistic input even in an age of entertainment-for-entertainment's sake gives the docudrama greater claim to documentary's originary power. Any attenuation of the directly documentary (and parallel increased accommodation to drama—with and without a capital 'D') in modern practices has tended to be seen as 'dumbing down'. As Godzic remarks in Chap. 3, the kind of detail in terms of facts and information made available in the best examples of the genre 'requires time and reflection'—for makers and audience alike. These are qualities not always available in the meretricious era of reality television, particularly as it has been foisted on post-Communist Poland. Polish television came very late to docudrama, part result of a culture forced to re-veal through artistic con-cealment. It was possible, as he shows, to comment on the absurdities of life under Communism, but full disclosure was not just impossible, it was positively dangerous. Reading his chapter, I was reminded of Jan. Kott's counterintuitive remark about Polish theatre in the Cold War: 'When we want fantasy, we do Brecht. When we want realism, we do Beckett' (Whitaker 1977, p. 19).

With the economic volte-face that followed the events of 1989, the full force of Western capitalism brought Poles the dubious benefit of tabloid television. This was, for Godzic, the most remarkable result of the reorientation of Polish television, and he laments its effects on serious work. But the rise of tabloid television and culture in his country has not entirely offset the potential docudrama possesses to revisit the past. And this is a past that has hitherto been more hidden then openly declared. Godzic examines, for example, the way the exalted nature of previous depictions of Poland's 'heroic' liberators has been recast, and focuses on key moments in Polish history such as the Warsaw Uprising. New treatments of a World War II and Cold War history heavily (and understandably) inflected by Poland's powerful eastern neighbour and its ideology, seek to rewrite this history. 'Television Lies!', the Polish street graffito of the Communist years, is sufficient indication that no political ideology can fool all the people all the time. In 1998, Poland even created a new state institution, 'The Institute of National Remembrance', to try to manage national memory and readjust the misremembering that results from skewed history. The authorities' propaganda, especially of the 1970s, left a need for the residue of those 'Lies' to be counteracted. As Godzic observes, there is always a danger that such organisations as the Institute will substitute the lies that reinforced an old regime with lies that

buttress the new one. What is certain is that the burden of conscience has determined that adjustments to the body politic become as vital as adjustments to the historical narratives that determine nationhood. Godzic's phrase 'the unrepresented world' is a telling one for any assessment of what can and cannot be treated by docudrama. In the case of Poland, it refers to those subjects proscribed under Communism. For Western observers, it resonates in a different way—where, for example, are the docudramas on political corruption and corporate fraud? Manifestly, they are not as easy to make as 'Disease of the Week' or 'Headline' docudrama.

Milly Buonanno, writer of Chap. 4, is a scholar who has already written extensively about what she calls Italy's '"return to the past"' (2012a p. 199). In the present dispensation, she fears the attenuation of docudrama production as the twenty-first century progresses in Italy. Like Godzic and other contributors, she notes how the serious is always so much more challenging and difficult to produce than the trivial. For Buonanno, the slowing-down of previously buoyant docudrama production is more a matter of Italy running out of the heroes through whose biographical docudramas the nation can reassess (and in some cases, radically rewrite) national history. While figures from the long past feature in historical docudramas discussed in her chapter, once again the guilt of the totalitarian past in World War II forms a focus for docudramatic treatment. Her case study hero, Giorgio Perlasca, was a kind of Italian Schindler. His biographical docudrama, she writes, was 'a high point' in the development of the form in Italy, and that was broadcast in 2002.

Rod Carveth, writing in 1993, observed that contemporary American docudrama came in two basic forms: 'the historical docudrama' and what he terms 'the headline docudrama' (p. 121). Buonanno's assessment of Italian historical and biographical docudrama as using fictive means to exploit an audience's prior knowledge of the events depicted fits well with Carveth's categories. The Italian form derives directly from historical film and biopic, but Buonanno remarks how the 'lack of a proper name' for docudrama in Italian critical discourse has held discussion back. Her chapter is one of several to call for further research, hugely complicated in the Italian case, she notes, by significant absences in the TV archive. She believes that the lack of interest in definition of terms has had serious consequences for the wider historiography of television in Italy. The void has been filled instead with a reliance on what she calls 'umbrella terms' that are particular to Italian culture and convenient to use (she cites *sceneggiato* and *originale televisio*). Beyond the recent focus on historical figures, treated in biographi-

cal docudrama, she identifies stories about family (involving challenges to traditional patriarchal models) and the Catholic Church as being significant foci for docudramatic treatment. Here also is potentially fruitful ground for further study and comparison; across a whole range of nations the influence of established religions on society, as dramatised in docudrama, would surely be worth investigating (see also Chap. 6 on Spain in this regard).

In previous work in 2012, Buonanno noted the power of fact-based films to encourage 'national reconciliation'(p. 223), and Georges Fournier pursues a similar line in Chap. 5 on French docudrama. Seeking a more positive line on the genre, he makes a not dissimilar point to Buonanno concerning the nation-building potential inherent in the stories of a country's great and good (as well as its more notorious) from the past and the near-present. So often, and in so many countries, this is fundamental to fact-based storytelling—especially if the subject's story also touches a sore spot in the national consciousness. In the course of his discussion, he coins the term 'patrimony television' to encapsulate the intention of such programming. His phrase denotes television production that seeks to bind together or to question notions of nationhood. Another of Fournier's important coinages is 'embedded biopic', through which he extends the notion of the biographical docudrama discussed often in these pages. We have become familiar with the notion of the 'embedded journalist' thanks to the military policy of effectively 'licensing' the reporting of recent wars both in Europe (the Balkans) and in the Middle East (Iraq and Afghanistan). Much ink, academic and journalistic, has been spilt on trying to establish the degree (if any) of compromise to the journalistic project inherent in the kind of 'privileged' access granted by the modern military to the modern journalist (see, again, Lacey 2015 on this). At times, this has made for fascinating collisions of intention (as represented in, for example, the 2008 HBO television mini-series *Generation Kill*, based on an embedded US journalist's 2004 book).[17]

Fournier's case study to illustrate the nature of the embedded biopic is about a significant but still controversial French politician—François Mitterrand—and a subject that has obsessed France for many years, namely the part played by the Resistance in World War II. The biographer with privileged access depicted in the docudrama, in Fournier's account, grows dangerously close to his subject—to the extent that his ability to assess Mitterrand is threatened and compromised. Fournier's analysis of the significance of this 2005 film, *Le Promeneur du Champ de Mars* (The Last Mitterrand), traces the ramifications of this situation. In the course

of his chapter, Fournier also remarks on the significance of a 2000 French High Court judgement that released some of the restrictions on docudrama. There is an obvious connection here both to Poland's Institute of National Remembrance, and to Victoria Pastor-González' citation, in Chap. 5, of Spain's 2006 *Ley de la Memoria Histórica* (Law of Historical Memory). This law, too, was one designed to reinstate that which was formerly occluded in Spanish history. The part often played by law and regulation is key to understanding docudrama, because television is more susceptible to interference (political and legal) than any other medium using drama. This is a direct result of its wide accessibility. Docudrama in turn is more vulnerable than almost any other kind of dramatic representation because of its factual claim.[18] The fascist past of Spain looms over the passing of this law, and Pastor-González notes that Spain was also what she calls a 'latecomer' to docudrama precisely because dictatorship militated against similar sorts of broadcast freedom to those which Godzic writes about in Chap. 3.

Pastor-González identifies different modes of address that obtain in Spanish public service compared to its commercial channels. Several of the teleplays she singles out for discussion bring to mind once again the headline docudrama: 'based', according to Carveth, 'on events that have occurred much closer to their airing'. Crime dramas, as was the case in Fournier's account (and as is the case again in Bergström's Chap. 7) feature strongly—sometimes permeated not just by the tabloid but also with distinctively Catholic religious overtones (see again Buonanno's Chap. 4). While Pastor-González takes the view that the current Spanish television ecology has an unfortunate predisposition towards the tabloid, she also focuses on docudramas dealing with arguably the most important recent shift in Spanish culture, the transition from dictatorship to democracy. Following the death of the dictator Francisco Franco in 1975, Spain became both a constitutional monarchy and a democracy with a new constitution (1978). But arguably the most significant event after Franco had gone was a failed right-wing coup in 1981 (which led to Spain's first fully democratic election in 1982). Pastor-González' version of 'patrimony television' consists in the analysis of docudramas that review '*la Transición*' and give accounts of its significance. Some of the chosen case studies concentrate on the Spanish Royal Family's contribution to the event, and especially their handling of the attempted coup of 23 February 1981. One of the films is titled *23F*, and '23F', Pastor-González notes, has become a shorthand rather as '9/11' references the 11 September 2001 destruction

of the Twin Towers in New York. Additionally, Pastor-González analyses docudramas that feature an outstanding female protagonist—an illustration of Meryl Streep's pertinent observation that, unlike film, the television industry 'has understood that there's a women's audience' (Collins 2015, p. 39).

The headline docudramas considered by Åsa Bergström in Chap. 7 tend to rely on what she describes as 'tales of adversity' as well as 'tales of crime'—tales told 'usually within five years' of the events they portray. They mimic headline news stories that are their principal source. Everyone who writes on the anglophone form comments on the increasing speed (and associated dangers) of the docudramatic response to news (see, for example, Rosenthal 1995, pp. 3, 10–11). Three kinds of ethical danger, again according to Carveth, attend headline docudramas: they can 'compromise the legal positions of the principals'; they often 'ignore the social and political forces surrounding an event'; and, 'adapting an event to standard narrative formulas changes reality in the process' (pp. 123–125). Where Pastor-González has cause to lament the fact that Spanish docudrama is mired in Carveth's second point, Bergström finds more promising material, especially in regard to crimes based in Swedish social problems, and in the kinds of emotional totalitarianism that tend to find roots in cult-like religion. She shows, too, that Sweden also has its key practitioners of docudrama in Olle Häger and Hans Villius. Perhaps the most significant of her case studies examine docudramas tackling Swedish political corruption. This subgenre, so common in the British tradition, tend often to be missing elsewhere in Europe.

Åsa Bergström is another contributor to point out that the naming of the form constitutes something of a prerequisite for adequate academic discussion of docudrama, and she argues like Buonanno that the absence of a language to talk about it has retarded progress in making sense of docudrama in her country. She applies my segmentation of docudrama history into 'phases of development' to the Swedish context, and Lipkin's concepts of 'warrants' and 'arenas' of authenticity as the foundation stones for charting docudrama's take on Swedish history and current affairs. 'Warranting', in Lipkin's analysis of US film and television docudrama, refers to the means by which filmmakers seek to persuade their audiences that the fact-base for their drama is both necessary and sufficient for the purpose not only of belief, but also to satisfy at least the legal requirements that surround the form. Warrants 'connect' filmmakers' claims of authentic presentation to the evidence (such as it is) that supports those claims.

Belief, then, inheres both in the pre-production work of establishing facts to underpin the drama, and—crucially—in what Bergström calls the 'performative warrants' that enact this research and convince audiences. 'Docudrama', Lipkin remarks, 'exists to create conviction' in order to achieve 'persuasive practice' (2002, p. ix). Performative elements—script, acting, filming technique—supply (or attempt to supply) credibility to the action of the docudrama. Bergström adds to Lipkin's arenas of 'noteworthy events, people and war' the arenas of crime and judicial process, and shows how important this arena is in the Swedish context.

In Chap. 8, David Rolinson concentrates on recent British docudrama, its latest developments extending what is a particularly rich tradition of practice. Having given a brief account of British docudramatic tradition and its links with the history of British television, he defines the most recent post-documentary turn that has led to practices that can be characterised as postmodern and reflexive. These not only rest on a long docudramatic tradition and history, they presuppose a highly sophisticated audience—one with a long memory for history itself, for the history of British television, and even for the history of British docudrama. There are knowing references to heroes, but these are not the heroes of national identity that feature in so many other chapters—they are instead the 'sad clown' heroes of postwar British light entertainment and comedy. The dramatis personae in his case studies are drawn in the main from another popular tradition, one inherited by British television. The long history of theatre-based popular entertainment, stretching back to nineteenth-century music hall, taking in 'end-of-the-pier' seaside entertainment, and culminating in twentieth-century 'variety', shadows early British television entertainment. Developing then into sitcom frameworks, this tradition recently became the focus of some thoughtful docudramas shown mainly on BBC4, and these form the subject of Rolinson's analysis. The biographical docudramas bring to life not only long-dead entertainers, but also particular aspects of British cultural life and cultural history. They additionally illuminate docudramatic treatment.

The other important recent postmodern tendency analysed by David Rolinson in Chap. 8 is the 'What If?' conditional/subjunctive tense docudrama that projects the legitimate fears of modern industrialised nations into researched dramatisations that enact those fears. Such docudramas deal in a variety of projected disaster scenarios, but scenarios that like much of docudrama content are to be regularly found in national discourse on television and radio and in newspapers. Anxieties about 'rogue'

states and their capacity to mount fatal attacks, worries about resource dearth and ecological meltdown—all are potential arenas of representation for 'What If?' docudramas that come both in single play and in series form. The tradition of the 'What If?' docudrama stretches back at least to Peter Watkins' celebrated (and banned) film *The War Game*. Made for the BBC in 1965, this docudrama was considered so dangerous it was not screened on television until 1985—even though in the 1966 the American Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences was prepared to award the film an Oscar as 'Best Documentary'. Rolinson's analysis of some recent variants of the 'What If?' demonstrates the potential for reflexivity at the heart of contemporary British docudramatic practice.

In the Conclusion to this book, co-editor Tobias Ebbrecht-Hartmann draws together some of the threads emerging from this book's individual chapters, his own included. He highlights similarities in what I have called the 'spectrum of practice' that constitutes modern docudrama—a praxis very largely innovated within and extended by the television industry. If the history of docudrama is dominated by American and British practice, as I have argued in this Introduction, a twenty-first century of transnational co-production, involving ever more complex patterns of distribution, has changed the landscape forever. Not least, the capacity of television to air important debates both within and amongst individual European nations has entered a new phase and created a new landscape—one involving both the 'old', public service and commercial broadcasters of Europe, and the 'new', multi-platform digital media.

What Next?

In the second edition of *No Other Way to Tell It*, I concluded by acknowledging that the left pessimism of the first edition, which led me to fear for the future of docudrama, was mistaken. I failed to take account of the innate creativity of film and programme makers. It seems to me now that this creativity is undiminished. Amongst the 'disease-of-the-week' and 'murder-of-the-month' tabloid docudramas that continue to supply a basic need for TV channels and audiences ('basic' often being the operative word), there are sufficient new forms to justify confidence, and enough serious practitioners to justify a guarded optimism. From an audience point of view, the Internet, I also observed, enables the curious viewer to investigate further the factual background of docudrama so often doubted by commentators in the past, and thus to take their