Although AT&T’s objections were rejected in federal court the issue of harming the network endures today in, for example, the connection of electronic devices which may result in incompatibility.

The physical equipment that comprises the traditional telephone network is intelligibly explained in terms of the industry’s accounting of associated costs and the rationale behind the rate structure and regulation. Cost allocation and revenue recovery methods, concepts sparking debate both before and after divestiture, are more or less demystified. The authors present a good example of pre-divestiture cost separations, one using the 1971 Ozark Plan which resolved the 19-year war over state toll settlements. Not until the twelfth chapter do they deal with access charges and other changes brought about in the post-divestiture era.

Because the book is a presentation of research reports written for the Program on Information Resources Policy at Harvard University, it might be expected that it would be somewhat disjointed. While conceptually self-contained, however, the chapters are at the same time complementary. The heavy reliance on acronyms might require the reader to flip regularly back and forth but together with the reliance on statistics it provides the opportunity to experience industry discourse. The book’s appendices are well-documented, and include useful chronologies.

While the authors succeed in grounding terminology in the day-to-day operations of the industry and care has been taken to explain the politics underlying the evolution of many of the issues, ostensibly missing from the text is a discussion of the social implications of the various methods of accounting for costs and what competition and deregulation might mean to the individual. To be fair, the authors did not undertake such a study. But one is left wondering about the individuals wishing to use the services, who are in the final analysis often left far behind the telephone debates.

Reviewed by: Suzanne Scheuneman
Simon Fraser University

Docudrama: Fact and Fiction
A Videocassette Review
Michel Choquette, National Film Board

Professor Tom Waugh of Concordia raised the question. "Why no seams?' he asked Donald Brittain. Brittain, Canada's pre-eminent documentary filmmaker, had just completed a succinct and well-illustrated exposé of his own work. showing an excerpt from CANADA'S SWEETHEART: THE SAGA OF HAL C. BANKS, he commented on his desire to join dramatized scenes with archival footage to form "a seamless web".
Seated at the long table with Britain were most of the guardians of the National Film Board’s documentary tradition. Jacques Godbout was wearing the tweed jacket which always makes one think he should stick to writing and smoke a pipe. That is, until you’ve seen his latest screen success. Anne Claire Poirier explained why she felt compelled to dramatize rape in her innovative MOURIR A' TUE-TEATE. Giles Walker, fresh from the success of his film 90 DAYS, was ready to play with words as he hesitantly described his genre as "drama-mentary". Then there was Paul Cowan.

The occasion was really all Cowan’s fault. Nine notables in Canada’s serious image industry lined up before the lights, offering expert testimony. McGill’s English Department was hosting the marathon Saturday session, through the quick and genial person of Michel Choquette. A lecture hall was filled with young film students, proud war veterans, and those curious about the "Billy Bishop Affair." And the TV cameras were rolling.

Paul Cowan is a serious filmmaker. In China they’d call him "5th Generation." His DEMOCRACY ON TRIAL broke new ground in style. He’s a risk-taker. But in the upper chambers of the Senate, he’d been called to task for portraying World War I Canadian hero Billy Bishop as someone a little lower than the angels. And in a film which seemed to be a documentary at that! The Billy Bishop Affair consumed a lot of time and energy, and this gathering at McGill on February 1, 1986, was one of the many attempts to clarify the situation.

No doubt the original purpose of the videotaping was for official reference. This whole debate was already pushing its way into the legal and legislative systems. Fortunately, Choquette, who teaches film studies at McGill, saw it learning rather than law. With support from the National Film Board he shot some introductory and connecting links, recorded some useful commentary, and edited the whole bundle into a tight and informative two hours about fact and truth, drama and documentary and above all, about the rules of the game.

From the outset, the motion pictured has been based on a tremulous collusion between fact and fiction. The very technique, projecting a sequence of flickering images which are transformed into motion by the eye and the mind, is only the beginning of the conspiracy. Even the most non-controversial documentaries, those which show salmon spawning and icebergs forming, play fast and loose with time and space as they are experienced in daily life.

As the audience, we willingly suspend our disbelief. Real time reality is for the likes of Andy Warhol and Michael Snow. But to play by any rules there must be agreement—an unstated contract between filmmaker and viewer which could be described as the conventions of cinema. Amendments to this concord are unremitting as both technological innovation and creative vision establish new parameters. Sometimes the viewer is left behind, unaware of the new rules of the game. This has happened with the emerging docudrama genre.
DOCUDRAMA: FACT AND FICTION is available from the National Film Board on videocassette only. Not only is it a superb professional reference, but it will be used in segments with film studies and media literacy classes. In it, you will find exposed the elements of the structure of a dozen films, seams and all, along with the perceptions, anecdotes and arguments of Canada's finest documentarians.

Reviewed by: Gordon Martin
Montreal