

Imaginary Dreamscapes

Television Fiction in Europe

First Report of the Eurofiction Project



Edited by Milly Buonanno

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Television Fiction in Europe

Eurofiction First Report 1997

Milly Buonanno (editor)



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Contents

Project Team	vii
Contributors	ix
Preface	xi
<i>André Lange</i>	
Introduction	xiii
<i>Giovanni Bechelloni</i>	

Part One:

Methodology	3
1 A Comparative Overview	7
<i>Milly Buonanno</i>	
2 Women and Cops	21
French Television Fiction in 1996	
<i>Régine Chaniac and Jean Pierre-Jézéquel</i>	
3 Derrick's Children in the TV Supermarket	35
German Television Fiction in 1996	
<i>Gerd Hallenberger</i>	
4 Recombinant Stories	51
Italian Television Fiction in 1996	
<i>Milly Buonanno</i>	
5 Family Comedy, Family Doctor	67
Spanish Television Fiction in 1996	
<i>Lorenzo Vilches, Charo Lacalle and Rosa A Berciano</i>	
6 Friends, Fools and Horses	81
British Television Fiction in 1996	
<i>Richard Paterson</i>	

Part Two:	
Programme Index	95
<i>France</i>	
Top Fifteen Programmes	97
Three Primetime Programmes of Interest	106
Two Non-Primetime Programmes of Interest	108
<i>Germany</i>	
Top Ten Programmes	111
Five Top Quality Programmes	116
Five Unfavourably Received Programmes	119
<i>Italy</i>	
Twenty Top and Interesting Programmes	123
<i>Spain</i>	
Top Twenty Programmes	137
<i>United Kingdom</i>	
Top Ten Programmes	149
Five Favourably Received Programmes	153
Five Unfavourably Received Programmes	156
Appendix: The Eurofiction Project	159

Preface

The publication of the first *Eurofiction* report on domestic television fiction in five European countries marks an important step in the process of understanding Europe's broadcasting industry. Fiction figures prominently in programmes broadcast by European networks. Its importance is therefore undeniable, from both an economic and socio-cultural point of view. It is paradoxical however, that no permanent framework existed previously for monitoring fiction throughout Europe on the basis of a common set of criteria.

Eurofiction is promoted by the Fondazione Hypercampo. Its founding resolutions include interactive research and the adoption of a common methodology for analysing domestic fiction. To this extent, it is a pioneer in its field. The project is carried out by a network of five specialist research bodies, each of which is recognised in its home country as an authority in the field of broadcasting research, particularly for television fiction. This project is clearly a landmark in the study of broadcasting on a European scale.

The European Audiovisual Observatory, which is dedicated to gathering and distributing information regarding the European audiovisual industry, welcomes the creation of this *Eurofiction* network. Hence the Observatory's support in releasing the first issue of the *Eurofiction* report.

Lending support for the *Eurofiction* network is part of a global strategy adopted by the Observatory in its mission to gather data pertaining to the audiovisual sector. The Observatory's efforts to promote the collecting and disseminating information include:

- a Statistical Yearbook containing vital statistics regarding the sector: turnover ratings for the major companies in the industry, European television channels, an overview of fiction programmes and broadcasting rights, fiction imports, the current state of television in the 34 member countries of the Observatory, market shares, financial performance and programming on the major broadcasting stations. This yearbook is produced by the Observatory in collaboration with its partners (BIPE Conseil, IDATE, Screen Digest), and specialised organisations (notably ACT, ECCA and EUR), along with numerous other information providers (particularly ETS and the Eurodata-TV service offered by Médiamétrie.
- *Iris*, a legal review offering summaries of the most important legislation and case-law rulings pertaining to radio and television broadcasting.

- a website (<http://www.obs.coe.int>) providing links to television channel sites and a guide to information sources. During the course of 1998, this site will be enhanced with monographic studies giving comprehensive overviews of radio and television broadcasting in the different countries, in addition to a database covering European television networks.

The Observatory considers the approach chosen for the *Eurofiction* with respect to domestic fiction (assessment of volume of domestic fiction broadcast, critical analyses of fiction themes, and a filmography of the most important programmes) in keeping with its overall strategy. It is the perfect complement for gathering information concerning one of the key genres in television production and broadcasting.

Since the publication of the first *Eurofiction* report, under the patronage of the Observatory, several Northern European and Russian organisations have applied for membership to the network. For researchers from the various founding organisations of *Eurofiction*, this desire to collaborate expressed by colleagues from other countries reaffirms the validity of their work. Pan-European in make-up and vocation, the Observatory can only look with a favourable eye upon the gradual enlargement of the *Eurofiction* project to include the entire European area.

Moreover, it is also satisfying to note that this publication has stimulated the interests of the European and national institutions working together with the European Audiovisual Observatory, as well as many major European companies from the industry.

The European Audiovisual Observatory is pleased to play a vital role in helping specialist organisations and professional European and national broadcasting institutions – which all too often know little or nothing about what the other is doing – to find converging goals and guidelines.

André Lange

European Audiovisual Observatory

Expert in Market Information