

SCRIPT WRITING AND TV SERIAL FILMS

EVDOKIYA BORISOVA

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, PHD
IN DEPARTMENT "JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATIONS",
SHUMEN UNIVERSITY "KONSTANTIN BISHOP OF PRESLAV"

BULGARIA

EVDOKIYABORISOVA@ABV.BG

ABSTRACT: THE ARTICLE COMMENTS THE TECHNIQUES, STRUCTURING AND THE RECEPTIVE EFFECT OF WRITING AND SCREEN PRODUCTION OF SCRIPT PLOTS OF SUCH BOUNDLESS, "MONSTROUS" LONG STORIES AS THE TELEVISION SERIES. PARTICULARLY INTERESTING ARE THOSE SEEMINGLY CLEAR ENCHANTING MYTHOLOGICAL MODELS IN THE SOLUTIONS OF ORIGINAL SERIAL STORIES. EVEN MORE INTERESTING, HOWEVER, ARE THOSE SCRIPTS CREATED AFTER CLASSIC AND POPULAR NOVELS OR THOSE THAT ARE "BASED ON THE NOVEL OF ...".

KEY WORDS: SCREEN SCRIPT, WRITING, STORY, TV RECEPTION, ART CINEMA, SERIALS, SERIES

TO ensure the dynamics of acting, classical cinema operates with placing two to six turning points in the development of the script plot. David Bordwell in his book 'Narration in the Fiction Film' (1985) describes six parts of what he calls canonical format of the plot: 1. Introduction of setting and characters. 2. Explanation of a state of affairs. 3. Complicating action. 4. Ensuing events. 5. Outcome 6. Ending.

THE turning points vary from six to ten (John Truby) unlike with Sid Field (Screenplay, 1979) who states that their number is two.

A serial film is a large-scale, prolonged story reduplicating and literally accompanying real life. Months pass, sometimes even years and decades, members of the audience are born and die while a serial continues endlessly... There can hardly exist a more adequate title for a soap opera than "As the world goes round". Consequently, a serial script is far more difficult to write than other genres. The case of the six points in cinema is multiplied with every new season.

HOW is a TV melodrama script written? It is a difficult task, especially when it comes to family sagas. Linda Seger in her study 'To Create a Good Script' makes the opposite claim. She states that if one has a good idea and already has the story, it is not so difficult to lay it on paper. All that one needs are some skills and talent. (Seger 1984:52) There are elements that can make any script a good film. These elements have to be analyzed and used. Every script like every classical story (as it is known from the times of Aristotle) is built on a three-element structure: beginning, middle part and end i.e. inception of the action, development, outcome. Each of the three elements has a different sense and function. The events that start in the first episode and develop in the next, sometimes change their direction as a result of a marginal, however, turning point event. The first few minutes of the story can be the most

important ones. This is the case with the action films, fantasy, crime dramas. It is not the case with family sagas, though, or with classical melodramas. With the latter genres, contrary to all dramaturgic rules, somebody tells the story. It is far more difficult to comprehend films starting with a dialogue. This is because of the fact that information is processed faster by the visual channel than by the audio channel. Of course, this is not an obligatory rule. So, it is best to start with an image as Linda Seger suggests. It should be made known where the action will be concentrated and what is to happen. Tell the audience as much as possible with that image. (Seger, 1984:52). The author uses the term *catalyzer*, in order to mark the event which gives an impulse to the activity. Something happens: a crash, an earthquake, death of a relative, a letter from a creditor; the main character leaves for somewhere or makes an important decision which gives an impulse to the action that follows. According to Seger there exist three types of catalyzers: *the action itself*, *the dialogue*, *the situation in question*. That is why it is always interesting to watch a good film. It is valuable, first of all, for its unexpected paradoxical moves and turns of action. If the story develops in a linear manner without unexpected turns of catalyzers to the climax, the interest of the audience naturally drops. The above-mentioned fact is well-known to film directors and script-writers of the serials and sometimes the unexpected turns are overused to the extent of becoming... expected. This usually happens with the long serials which are by no means deprived of originality. These TV serials deal with traditional cinema tools such as: *close-up*, *voice behind image making a monologue*, *silent images in foreground* (dreaming, crying or smiling faces) a persistent melody or a song, large scale perspective (sunrises, sunsets, waves, night landscapes-natural or urban), memories and emotive reactions in a *cadence*, etc.

EVERY turning point in the serial performs a number of functions:

1. It gives the action a new line of development.
2. It poses other problems.
3. It forces us to make guesses.
4. It intensifies risk.
5. It often makes the characters make a crucial decision.
6. It serves as an impulse to the development of an action in the following parts.
7. It introduces us to new circumstances and in a new way throws light on what is going on. If the event is loaded with all those functions it is particularly powerful.
8. As a rule, the climax happens near the end of the film (however for many episodes on end before the final of the serial).

WHEN we focus on the plot of the TV serial we have to pay attention to one more problem: the number of the plotlines. Unlike classical cinema, there can be many of them in serial films. Are they all necessary or can we abridge some in order to focus on the basic one? Even in the most intricate prolonged serial (such as "The Bold and the Beautiful") this is of ultimate importance. If it was not the case, like careless first-grade students, the audience would be distracted and disheartened. If we cannot concentrate as script-writers we have to look for the answer to the question: What is the contribution of all the intricately intertwined plot lines to the basic one? If the dramatic plot is well-constructed, synchronized with the story, then it is a good one, helping authors express their ideas. (Seger 1984:72) The most commonly appearing problems of the plot and the story are related to the complexity of the transitions and the merging of the plot lines. At some point the story stops developing and faces a real danger of losing its logic. The actors speak too much and do not act. The events

develop either too slowly or too fast and the motivation is unclear. (The beginning of the endless saga "The Bold and the Beautiful" starts vehemently. The beautiful Caroline dies of cancer. She "bequeaths" her sister Brooke Logan to her young fiancée Ridge. This is a fatal love in spite of all the temptations, partings, antagonism intrigue etc. Brooke and Ridge will always be in love with each other.) To analyze that is of primary importance in motion pictures but it is even of greater importance to TV serials that tend to last definitely longer. Side plot lines are necessary as the characters could become more clearly delineated.

HOW is a script written? Serials are macro-genre products which comply with a micro-genre thematic field of their identification e.g. family, romance, medical profession, law, criminal, fantasy etc. The technology of script writing is done on a daily basis, in a team, incessantly, in constant readiness for changes (in case the actors are sick or die, if an actress decides to leave the shooting ground forever etc.). There are some options for the characters to be "shot" by the script, taken outside the story or to be replaced by other actors (this happens many times in "The Bold and the Beautiful" with Brooke's brother, with Brooke Logan, although temporarily). Disillusionment sometimes brings comfort. Script thinking is "a particular type of literary thinking" that brings up certain ideas redefining them with the tools of TV and cinema, thanks to verbal suggestions but mainly relying on associations and audio-visual suggestions (Hristova 2010:7). A script is a polyphonic structure according to Sergei Mikhailovich Eisenstein, that equally relies on vision, words and music. Consequently, scripts possess "audio-visual rhetoric, using three areas of drama acting: verbal, visual and musical" (Hristova 2010:14). Of course, the classical plot constructions, known as types of story since the times of Aristotle: episodic, classical, multi-story and modern anti-plot composition can adequately be attributed to that type of story multi-plying TV serial principle. For example, episodic stories will serve a large-scale plot of formats such as sitcom or sci-fi ("Dharma and Greg", "The X Files"). The mythological causal stories will motivate the family sagas ("Forsythe saga", "Brideshead Revisited"). The chronicle stories will work for historical serials ("The Magnificent Age", "The Borggias"). A multi-story construction can be seen in the luxury drama and chicklit ("The Bold and the Beautiful", "Orange county", "Ally McBeal", "The Sex and the City") or professional TV novelettes ("Grey's Anatomy", "ER"). It is the melodrama that connects the disperse narrative with the syncope monologue and fragmented dialogue in a harmonious whole. Let us call it an ironic-moderately-heartbreaking story that is a drama of characters put in interesting life environments and circumstances: luxury, foreign, however arousing trust. The melodrama is the engine of likelihood.

RECEPTION is of particular importance to the script. The script-writer is particularly interested in the successful act of identification - the way the reader (the audience – my note) identifies with the character of the piece of writing. (Hristova 2010:23) Correspondingly, the characters in the plot script have more functions than characters from novels, stories etc. They very much resemble characters from fairy tales because of the receptive expectations they engender: associative, admiring, expectations of catharsis, sympathetic and ironic.

HOW is a good TV serial script created? There are a number of ways: after an *initial linear script* based on a literary source (a novel) following the principle of *episode after episode* or with the active participation of the audience (*after making questionnaires, opinion polls, suggestions, wishes and expectations*) completing it in the seasons that follow. If in the classical films a principle that surprised Shklovski is at work, namely 'this stunning ability of

films – the lack of motivation of the links between the parts of the script' (Shklovski 1984:164), the serial films are immune to such disadvantages to a great extent.

THE script *plots* are based on the following structural schema: Frame-scene-episode-act (inception, development, outcome). (Hristova 2010:44-47)

'**A** frame is the smallest autonomous organic unit of film narration.' (Znepolski 1986:646). 'Every well-written scene is a miniature story', an episode is 'a detailed autonomous unit built on a number of scenes...often...with their inner climax' whereas the acts mark the macrostructure of the script... - the inception, development and the outcome. (Hristova 2010:45-47). TV editors and the specialists in TV programming must strictly abide by such theoretical postulates and at the same time (often) show (theoretical) creative freedom. In the program time of the serial *episodes* are synonyms of a *series*. *Act* is a synonym of *part/season*. The scripts of novelettes and sitcoms are of *two or three acts*. What happens to long serials with four or five seasons or those with eight to nine seasons? Unless it comes to the prolonged act of the soap opera depending on the season, the classical three-act structure is repeated: 1.Beginning.2.Confrontation 3. Resolution. They are separated by 'turning points' that were mentioned above.

IN TV serials of the family saga type-melodrama the principle of introducing a number of turning points in the rather calm, lethargic course of time is quite productive. Everyday existence is shattered by turning points of events. Undoubtedly, the final is always there at the end of every act-season. In the logic of the TV serials-sagas the 'screen time' is usually comparable to 'audience time' that can last equally as compared to the 'plot time of a frame'. It is the time of reality modified by the camera into artistic time. At least this is the case with 'the quality films'. (Manov 1996:101). In family saga serials such time pieces can really follow their actual length counterparts. For example, the death and the funeral of Gem from 'Falling Leaves' takes up two episodes where actual and artistic length of events are equal. The audience witnesses an ancient picture of suffering in a prolonged sequence of scenes (at the hospital, at home, prayers in the mosque etc.). Of course there are many tears and touching music, the necessary healing pauses between the scenes of suffering until the very end. Actually, days and nights pass in the life of the characters and the audience is left with the impression of witnessing a real funeral. There is a similar scene – the one with Riva from 'The Bold and the Beautiful', giving birth to a baby. It is both terrifying and banal as it extends over a number of episodes. The principle of procrastination for three days on end is a bit too much for the audience.

IN contrast to the above-mentioned examples, although the picture is quite detailed from the point of view of artistic vs screen time, the scene with the air crash in 'Grey's Anatomy' leaves the audience with the impression of being a witness to a short and compressed scene rather than a reality-like picture extending over more than two episodes. After that the audience will go back to that scene many times with the memories, analysis, traumas of the characters in the episodes that follow.

THE puzzle from the blanks, from what is understated and not told has to be made. The professional novelette with thriller elements has another type of plot logic. It resembles the ambitions of 'quality' cinema.

COMMUNICATION by written texts (stories) is an intellectual escape from the worlds and stories of reality. It makes the author alienated from the audience as well as the readers from themselves. The recipient sinks in a world of uncertainty, of personally imaginable images

and situations. This is a danger, Nikola Georgiev writes, that Platon and Augustine predict. The return to the listening and observing culture, suggested by the postmodern cultural situation through TV stories as well as the productive tendency towards TV and film interpretation of novels, is a specific return to the ancient tradition of oral communication and sharing.

THE great French philosopher and playwright Jean-Claude Carrière ironically suggested in a conversation with Umberto Eco that many authors think that knowing how to write novels means knowing how to write scripts. However, they are mistaken. They are not conscious of the fact that the novel and the script use two different means of expression. (Eco, Carrière 2011:59) These are two quite different concepts of the characters, of the chronotope (Bakhtin), space architecture and time because if in a novel years and months can pass by, a frame should not last for more than three seconds (Eco, Carrière 2011:62). What is meant here are, of course, American actions, and art-cinema. TV melodramas are favoured with much more time. They are entitled to different rights.

OF course, every cinema-maker has specific language or at least Marcel Proust says so. Luis Buñuel remembers that when he went to the cinema in Saragosa there was an 'explicador' in the hall (Eco, Carrière 2011:63). This was a real cinema teacher, a real plot lesson. The year was 1908. The receptive needs and the communicative activity of the audience haven't changed much. Today the 'explicador' is a voice behind the screen. It is the epic narrator who comments, explains the events in retrospect or prospect – a feature very much loved by Turkish serials, however powerful in English classical sagas such as 'Brideshead Revisited', too. This phenomenon works, so to say, 'against vision' weakening its autonomous potential but also strengthening the cause of thinking, feeling and lyrical introspection; its function is capable of replacing the foreground and the cadence. There is a particular eroticism in being intimate with the audience in such a way. Moreover, the explicador has the power of placing himself in the vast space and time of the serial for years on end like Scheherazade, promising immortality and making it possible. The function of the 'explicador' is performed by real voices of characters behind the screen and TV background scenes, ads, announces, resumes, script retrospections at the beginning of every new episode. In the course of the years and centuries there appear new readings and texts, interpretations of masterpieces that seem to prevent us from perceiving literary works. What is a masterpiece? What are the risks that the creation of the serial script plot, based on a masterpiece or pulp fiction, takes? Undoubtedly, the modeling of a script plot 'after the novel of' is an act of axiology, a highly professional act of artistic interpretation offered again as a literary and cinema text.

PULP FICTION could provide the script-writer with the necessary confidence and even the liberty of improvising (at times quite successfully and even more successfully than the novel itself) while the work on a masterpiece (free from the risk of banality) is a risky task especially if meant for the TV screen. It can be a risky task with 'quality' films, too. Mukarzhovski reminds that the less prone a novel is to verbal interpretation the more meaningful it is. That is an arguable suggestion. However, its relevance could be supported by those adepts who are against mass media visual culture. Following that line of reasoning, the greatest literary masterpieces will never be transformed into TV surrogates and subproducts i.e. serials. Although supporters of the above-mentioned statement may not like this fact, today TV has actually turned into an institutionalized authority for evaluation criteria. That invariably happens in the community of the show.

BOOKS, films, pictures, newspapers and the TV screen are the ‘forms of the modern media exhibitionism’ (Eco, Carrière 2011:278) but also of the pre-historic atavistic need for collective perception of universally important stories of different types. Is watching today preferred to reading? Nowadays such family-like perception (all together in front of the TV or everyone independently waiting for their favourite serial) makes for the individual loneliness of the postmodern man, the shortage of time, the excessive stress and the need for compensation for the need of sentimentality. Of course, a reasonable alternative is the intimate internet watching and sharing of the plots because serial plots are personal plots.

The film or the book; the serial or the literary work? Such antinomy does not exist; there is no such alternative. The great philosopher Jorge Luis Borges imagines Heaven as a library and writing as the work of mortals that should be short and imply less fatigue for the audience than a novel can hold. The novel is said to be endangered of extinction. On the other hand, ‘the style of God resembles the style of Victor Hugo’ – Jorge Luis Borges remarks (Sorrentino 2012:72). Only God tells stories in that way, we could add: detailed, long and melodramatic. In the story of Adam and Eve there exist all the classical rules of melodrama – fraud, denial, eroticism, sin, expelling, sacrifice, fatalism, mutual accusations. There is abandonment. There is the antagonist-cheater (the snake). There is also atonement and forgiveness. Immortality is promised. Immortality is achieved. Actually, God is a romantic character who finds His media for story-telling today and it is the TV. It is the TV that will reason the ironical pun of the conservative skeptic Borges: The ‘atmosphere is more important than the plot’ and the ‘pleasure, emotion and hedonism are above all’... (Sorrentino 2012:167,11).

THE TV of today, Roger Fiddler says, is the main rival of art and books in a competition for time and attention. The feeling of shortage of time for reading and other types of entertainment (or various forms of knowledge) reflects the ‘fall of literacy’ (Fiddler 2005:139) and is a fact that will be more and more important. At least, this is what media theorists say, and the futurology hypotheses are to be checked in practice, which is rarely surprising. The priorities of modern men, Fiddler says, are redirected from books to “the huge desert” (after Newton Minow) – TV, called *electronic Sheherezarda*. Such pessimistic claims regarding culture and the multiplication of the habit of reading are made by Teodor Adorno and Jack Ellule. TV, the father of modern media studies Marshall McLuhan points out, is exceptionally attractive area, which not only launches the characters but also breeds sensations and manages to turn “the eye into an ear”, disrupts, destructs the habits for reading but also (as we will point out today, owing to the receptive effects of watching and TV melodramatic serials in particular) further stimulates the activity of the audience, arousing spiritual interest. The audience wishes to be much more important. For example, a reader/ a co-author can participate in forums in order to make judgements/predictions about the development of the plot events and the characters’ fate; to criticize conflicts, characters, the logic of the actions etc. The audience wishes to be informed even more after they have read the book. Similar to the audience, TV decides to be much more than a moderator of the work of art. The image confronts the content. The view of the world today has much more in common with the ancient oral legends than with modern literary culture. People seem to have been moving in the opposite direction: from the rising literacy and individualism of the Western culture since the Renaissance towards the decline and the return of oral *practice* and syncretic esthetic images. Notions, genre categories, historical facts, familiar plots, literary myths and names are not excluded but rather integrated in the various cultural movements and communicative strategies of the TV screen. TV is able, as a good history student to

reconstruct historical and cultural layers so that it could attract to them the curious TV audience. The examples in our case with the TV serials are quite indicative of the above mentioned statement. The marvelous times of the late Ottoman Renaissance from the middle of the sixteen century ("The Magnificent Age"), the end of the Victorian age and the British British Raj¹ in the 40s of the twentieth century ("Jewell in the Crown"); the dawn of the modern age and the time of jazz as the end of the English conservative values in the end of the nineteenth century up to the 20s of the twentieth century ("Forsythe Saga"); The Second World War and the end of the religious status quo, the rights of homosexuals and free choice, the 40s of the twentieth century ("Brideshead revisited"); the fall of the conservative family and the onset of individualism and social poverty in the modern city jungle of today ('Falling leaves'), the value of professional ambitions but also the realization of the project for personal happiness based on tolerance - racial, religious, gay, sociable today ('Grey's Anatomy', 'The Sex and the City', 'Ally Mcbeal', 'Monk') etc.²

TV serials 'based on the novel of...', however, exploit the potential of the original film serial to realize real, topical contemporary clashes, intrigues, conflicts. Moreover, the serial plot is always closer to the novel plot, at least, because of the vast time and space that it can afford.

THE decision to transfer the events of the novel to contemporary times (from the serial script) is quite bold and it has its positive effect on film reception. In that respect there has been a lot of experimenting in Turkish films 'Falling Leaves', 'The Heart's Melody' (after Reşat Nuri Güntekin), 'What is Fatmagul's Fault' (after Vedat Turkali), 'The Forbidden Fruit' (after Ushaklugil) that boldly use the time machine and are examples of successful TV serial plots. In other cases the interpretation of the characters is far from the author's concept, although the age is preserved as is the case with 'The Magnificent Age' and the novel 'Hürrem the Moscow Mistress' by Demet Altunieleklioglu. The English serial films solve the artistic script chronotope in a conservative manner, restoring literally the spirit and the characters of the time: 'The Forsythe Saga', 'A Jewel in the Crown', 'Brideshead Revisited', 'Pride and Prejudice', 'Downtown Mansion'.

THE script has to be successful to make the most of the melodramatic or adventurous potential of the work of art so that the serial TV product is successful. Such are the TV rules of mass therapy, which is called serial watching. The script plot can (and usually does) shorten the plot of the novel. Such is the approach of the script-writers (Paul Scott et al.) of "Jewell in the Crown" and "Forsythe Saga" where three of the six parts of Golsworthy's novel are quite abridged in the film version from 2002. In the version of the 70s there are

¹ The British Raj (rāj, meaning "rule" in Hindi) was the management imposed on the Indian subcontinent in the period 1858-1947 and included territories, ruled by the British administration in Delhi. The British Raj divided the country into two - British India and local India. British India was managed by a Governor and was directly subordinate to the power of the British East India Company under the rule of the Queen. Local principalities managed by Raja, Maharaja, Nizami and Nawab. After the collapse of the British Raj in 1947 (thanks to more than 20-year old efforts of the mass movement led by Mahatma Gandhi), the country was divided into two - India and Pakistan, the Muslims were concentrated in the second state. These dramatic events were the historical background of the novel "The Crown Jewel" by Paul Scott, which became the basis of the script storyline of the eponymous television series.

² See more in the author's monograph "The Melodrama in Television Series", Plovdiv, "Janette-65", 2014, 456 p. ISBN 978-954-356-007-3. The book can be found in electronic form at: http://litermedia.com/index.php?ind=downloads&op=entry_view&iden=147

more details. A lucky exception is the script of 'Brideshead Revisited' with its hundred percent correctness of the facts and the spirit of the novel. The modernized version of the Turkish serial 'The Forbidden Fruit' (after 'The Forbidden Love') is also true to the original. The motifs are fully exploited, doubling and tripling. Their explications are transferred and modernized. The author is implanted in the TV text. The script plot in this case modernizes the one of the novel. It does not simply give a larger perspective and diachronics to all the characters but introduces more new ones trusting them in tying and untying 'Gordian knots' of plot conflicts in order to be engines of the script's action. The script 'rereads' and even completes the novel; it acquires 'male' as opposed to 'female' (script) writing. The latter is adaptive and explicative doing it quite completely. Cinema 'reads' literature. The TV teaches literature.

APART from script-writers, fans also take the liberty of writing and rewriting the script. Why not? After all, a script is a type of transformative work of art; it engenders the new postmodern syncretic genre of fan-fiction. This time of deviation from the rules (of the classical authors and their authentic imaginary world) gives birth to a new world born of the conscience of the fans. This is a "specific type of literature that is written primarily by women which determines the marked interest to gender problems... the voice of the minorities, multiculturalism and policies of difference..." (Lilova 2012:74). The most diverse "*remixes*", "*quotations-transformations*" (including fan-fiction sometimes as a form of plagiarism), "*transfers*" of motifs and characters (from fairytales, myths and literary works) from one world into another (ancient/new; literary/script) characterize that type of new (network) culture: new writing, however, postmodern as a whole.

THE text of the script "after the novel of..." is de-authorized in order to be authorized again (most often multiplied). The author is not important ("What is an author?" asks Michel Foucault), not even the text but the context. That's what TV drama is built on. Jean-Luc Godard points out that what matters is not where you take something from but where you take it to, as art relies on and is inspired by the nature of the simulacrum. James Roberto "Jim" Jarmusch points out "Nothing is original. Steal everything which inspires you and feeds your imagination! Select to steal only things that speak directly to your soul. If you do so, your art will be authentic. Authenticity is invaluable, originality is not important." (after Kastelov 2013). And all that can be done, no matter whether you write, draw, make a film or direct a film. Reproduce!... It sounds like an advertisement of frozen batter that provides women with more leisure instead of making them do the housework.

THE question is how far the conscientious correct re-readings go and how far fan art script completions and reproductions go; and also what is the real meaning and effect of all that. Where is the border between authorship/authorizing and plagiarism? What is co-authorship and equal creativity? How is writing affected by reading in a modern age such as ours, which lives returning to a "total folklore" to a synthetic reading-watching-listening-playing, to "the superficial but quantitative reception of the work" (Dichev 2012:25) and its characters, plots, acts, situations, examples etc.

SCRIP writing is a way of re-reading. Roland Barthes writes about the benefit of the re-readings regarding understanding literary works at length in his theoretical book "S/Z". Re-reading, Barthes points out, is critical reading of the text which marks additional unexpected authentic (?) meanings. There is nothing more treacherous than the first reading. Paul de Man adds that criticism as crisis humanitarian practice researches literary texts for specific reasons in order to pose global issues. We can adequately ask the heretic question about whether the

TV script writer takes up the function of the critic after having successfully “murdered” the author? TV provides ubiquitous representatives of the work and the creator; of reading and literary texts through its non-traditional project of visual re-reading.

ONLY re-reading, Barbara Johnson points out, saves the text from repetitions, ‘Those who do not reread are destined to read one and the same story everywhere.’(Johnson 1997:244) This is a female concept of re-reading. It turns out that TV re-reads all the time in its role of condemned female intellectual. It lives with the old and, at the same time, new plots. So, it always discovers what is new. It does not deserve to be scornfully called a marginal cultural institution: by the way it preserves the status quo. Re-reading delves in the direction of uniqueness of the text: therefore, towards the ‘Self’. ”What we are capable of seeing in one text at first is already with us and not with the text.” (Johnson 1997:244) That is, we approach the text in a prejudiced manner pushed by our (harmful for reading but useful for the works’ re-reading) preliminary knowledge. In such a receptivist manner TV serials created “after the novel of...”, teach by translating the meaning to their young audience in the most gentle manner. Or at least they have to do this. Unfortunately, TV does this far more successfully. It presents literary works. Because a human life span is quite short in order to afford reading a book more than once or twice, in the dynamic cultural times of our age TV dominates. Screen reading has cognitive and didactic pathos; there is always evaluation in the process of disentangling the additional meanings of a literary work. There is multiplicity and constant recurrence. This reading is discursive and topical, historical, ideological, therapeutic. Re-reading is differentiation according to Johnson. We would like to add that this saves the work from “mummification” which is caused by a law called *literary rules*. The resuscitation mission belongs to the TV film. A TV re-reading is the most notable fate that a novel can wish for because it engages the audience and saves their time. It also meets the expectations of the receptive stereotype of today’s audience in a most adequate manner. The average reader-viewer is a viewer in most of the cases, however, a potential future reader, too.

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APPLICATIONS TO THE TEXT:

Front cover of the author's monograph "The Melodrama in Television Series"

