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DLA Synopsis

„Our Bread and Butter”

It is my definite opinion that television, which replaces a number of human activities - as it has been stated many times - monopolizes the genre of series as its possibly most characteristic form.

The television series as such has been called into being by the demand of viewers and it has been made increasingly cleverer by the work of editors and directors. It so happened that the genre of television series has a firm position with television broadcasters all over the world. There are excellent and poor quality ones among them, successful and unpopular ones as well, however on the whole this form of television entertainment is on a triumphal march.

To my mind when judging their aesthetic qualities one needs to measure them in the same manner as any other product of art, and according to the same criteria, keeping in mind that apart from the quality the success on the viewers' part depends greatly on its social and psychological authenticity.

Television films, though with more humble tools, are able to create the same effect as cinema, present a forceful protagonist and his or her gripping story. It is important to see that one watches television at home and not in the cinema as a result of which one does not have the same collective artistic, and possibly cathartic, experience sitting in the dark or semi-darkness of our home eager to meet that person(s) on the small screen who the viewer finds the most interesting, that is himself the average man like himself.

The whole history of art starting with the drawings of Egyptian catacombs depicting everyday life proves that people are not only interested in heroes but wish to experience human existence through reflecting on their own lives directly as well without any transposition. Thus a world is created, one like theirs, in which people very similar to them live their lives closely resembling their own. The secret of the survival of a series possibly lies in this. The story itself might not have central importance as ending the story is not the aim. The story has a certain significance as it keeps the viewer's attention alive but the endless stream of the story is what becomes really important. That is why very often the series are made to be never-ending, the story could be ended easily episode by episode as there will always be a new one just like starting a new day after having watched the series the previous evening. It does not really matter whether the film was about the President and his Men or fireman risking their lives, policemen, devoted doctors, unhappy lovers or about the everyman maybe living in the same house. The important thing is that it is clearly proven that

everybody and absolutely everybody although different but at the same time is just like me and vice versa. I am not alone.

This is such a decisive and psychologically important message, which the viewer cannot get enough of even sitting alone and not having the collective experience of watching a film it is there to be consumed.

We are witnesses. We all witness that all over the world - in the more or less civilized countries - it is every television viewer's ritual to watch a series. There are countries, which produce their typical television series such as Brazil and Mexico but one recognizes an American or German series at first glance as well. The characteristic factors can pertain to the content touching upon social background, psychology, sociology or they can be the matter of form. We can also find the typical in genres such as romance, drama, comedy or in dramaturgy meaning open ended episodes or independent ones or let's take social environment the world of the rich to a state hospital or the span of time such as mini-series or prime-time long series, the public series aimed at teenagers or a thriller attracting the more adult viewer' and there are other viewpoints according to which series can be classed.

In my thesis „Our Bread and Butter” I would like to offer a brief survey of the antecedents of the series as a genre in literature and art mainly citing exact examples from the 19th and 20th century.

It is also my aim to present a survey of various series and to define them according to type and to give an analysis of the differently classed types based on Hungarian and foreign examples. The analysis of viewer-reaction cannot be omitted from the thesis however my main and most important considerations lead me to concentrate on the analysis of the film-makers involvement.