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Zsuzsanna Máté

Transformations of Literary Texts

(Comparative and Hermeneutic Studies on the Intertextual and
Intermedial Relations in Some Major Works of Dante,
Imre Madách and Béla Balázs)



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PREFACE

The overall goal of the studies in this book is the existence of literary texts within each other yet in an independent manner. Among the objectives there is also some (by means of language, images and musicality) intertextual and intermedial coexistence of the literary text, its related completion of meaning, and the comparative analysis of some works of art selected.

In the first part of the book I shall put Imre Madách's dramatic poem titled *The Tragedy of Man* into the centre of attention. I am at studying the changes of the literary work of art having taken place within various branches of art, including its inspiring nature, adaptations, further thoughts and transformations, which, compared to other works of Hungarian literature, lived on in the forms of diverse works of art in the past one and a half century. And actually this is what makes it special. However, the number of various works of art in which any transformations of this work of art has occurred is immeasurable. Without being exhaustive, I am presenting this abundance by collecting works of art created in various branches of art. At the same time, I intend to highlight the two ranges of change in Madách's text located the closest to the text. Such are the illustrations almost as old as the text (from Mór Than to contemporary fine arts), and the largest set of intermedial networking of connections, namely theatrical adaptations (from Ede Paulay to the contemporary direction of Attila Vidnyánszky). As for the second chapter, I shall deal with the so far uncultivated field of musical transformations, from cantatas of Lajos Bárdos or Ernő Dohnányi, as well as the opera adaptation of György Ránki. Also, as a novel approach, in the third chapter I plan to provide a demonstration of the *Tragedy's* intermediality to complete meanings in the "seven and a halfth" branch of art, the inspiring impact in János Kass's animated movie, and the animated movie of Marcell Jankovics, stressing out the modalities of autonomy within the adaptation. Finally, in the closing

chapter, I aim to question the secret of the appeal in *The Tragedy of Man*. I shall describe the hermeneutic and aesthetic features in the first place that make it a particularly prolific premedium within its intertextual and intermedial relations. In the second half of the book I shall undertake to carry out a partial comparison of Dante's *Divine Comedy* and Madách's *Tragedy* with the help of Madách's literature. Then, as a new perspective, I shall depict the prevalence of the common formative principle. In the end, I shall compare the interartistic transfer tendencies of the two grandiose literary texts in Hungary. As for the third part, I shall analyze some highlighted Hungarian 20th century pieces from the 300-year corpus of Bluebeard narratives, within the intermediality of text-image-music. Perrault's 17th century tale *Bluebeard* intertextually converted into a text living on in the 20th century Bluebeard stories, thus among others in Béla Balázs's mystery play and in the short story of Péter Esterházy. Besides exploring its intertextual and contextual relations, I shall compare Béla Balázs's mystery play with Bartók's opera shortening it and using it as a script, and the illustration series of János Kass, revealing relations of intermediality and processes of meaning-constitution.

All chapters concentrate on, apart from the study of some intertextual and intermedial connections of exact literary texts and the introduction of a few medial convergences, the hermeneutic and aesthetic features. Thus, in comparisons, I consider the same motive, symbolism, identical themes, narratives, formative principles, philosophy and the intersections of enwreathing of image-text-sound as a point of contact. Analyses dealing with the intertwining of communicative channels primarily emphasize the meaning-transformative and meaning-constituting processes in literary texts, from the aspect of hermeneutic activity and aesthetic way of existence in works of art.

According to Gadamer, the hermeneutic activity is universal. However, hermeneutics do not possess a comprehensive theoretical system.¹ Just as Gadamer's hermeneutics offer neither a strategy of

¹GADAMER 1984. 11.

interpretation nor a method,² but instead, it examines the nature of comprehension and interpretation.³ The hermeneutic activity is the most fundamental among all human life activities, and its universal aspect lies, according to Gadamer, in Augustine's "verbum interius". "Universality stems from the internal language, from the very fact that not everything can be explained and expressed." We are unable to express all that is to be found within the soul by means of the language with a sense. This absurdity of expression, as an "internal word" makes hermeneutics universal.⁴ In this way, hermeneutic speech, a discourse on a given issue can always be conducted and continued, including topics such as history, human existence, human individuals, art or any entities apprehensible by experience. The above process can be pursued throughout a whole life, or even spanning centuries, as the things to be uttered will always remain unutterable, thus the discourse will end up being interminable.

In Gadamer's interpretation, too, starting from Heidegger, perception is no longer one of the many relations of human thinking, but "the basic orientation of human existence in the present".⁵ Gadamer claims that apprehension of human universe for man primarily articulates in the form of language. At the same time, comprehension is a more extensive phenomenon, a "pre-language and post-language experience, too", as emphasized by Miklós Almási, as we can apprehend things not mediated by words, for instance in fine arts or

²BOEHM 1993. 87.

³GADAMER 1984. 11–13.

⁴GRONDIN 2002. 13–14.

In Gadamer's *On hearing* written at a later period of his life, in addition to admitting that there *is* comprehension without hearing, he accepts the dual existence of the Greek concept of logos, thus logos meaning speech, as well as an internal word. Similarly, he acknowledges the difference between the internal voice of Augustine and the voice becoming external. GADAMER 2000. 25–30.

⁵GADAMER 1990. 19.

music.⁶ This is true. Nevertheless, apart from acknowledging this, for man, perceivable existence and human universe are mediated from the aspect of language in the first place, since it relies on the internal oneness of word and object.⁷ Therefore, understanding something, such as mediating the perception of works of art is articulated in the form of language in the first place. Yet it must be emphasized that as per Gottfried Boehm, hermeneutics has always recognized spaces outside of speech in communication, nevertheless language has still managed to appear as such a reflexive medium that “hardly no attempts have been made to create the hermeneutics of a non-verbal expression.”⁸

As such, a work of art is comprehension in itself. Since the age of Dilthey, as Gadamer points out, art has been “the organon of apprehending life.”⁹ All works of art mediate this apprehension of life using a medial and peculiar formative language in a characteristic manner (visual and/or verbal and/or auditive). In the case of apprehending apprehension, thus comprehending the work of art, the only measure of interpretation is its meaning content, thus what the artwork “meant”.¹⁰ In order to accomplish this, we get closer to it by means of a dialogue conducted with the work of art, in the dialectics of a “question – answer”.¹¹ However, the correspondence of sense apprehended is constantly expanded toward the direction of the “differently apprehending” of the already apprehended, as “apprehension is not merely a reproductive, but always creative

⁶ALMÁSI 1992. 163.

Plessner is of the same opinion, too, as he claims that there exist ways of expression which language is incapable of mediating and comprehending with its own tools. Also, there are ones that wilfully discontinue holding instruments of language upon executing certain linguistic intentions. PLESSNER 1995. 217.

⁷GADAMER 1984. 329.

⁸BOEHM 1993. 87.

⁹GADAMER 1984. 329.

¹⁰Ibid., 226.

¹¹Ibid., 198–203., 207–217.

adjustment. [...] It is enough to utter that we comprehend things differently whenever we understand them at all.”¹² The “achievement” of the hermeneutic activity is the transfer of a “meaning correspondence from another world to ours” This transfer may be carried out in the forms of translation, interpretation or explanation,¹³ which results in comprehension and this becomes applicable for the individual. Experiencing sense taking place in comprehension contains application, too. Despite all differences in the forms of communication, the unity of thinking and language, the oneness of apprehension and interpretation provides the basis for hermeneutic activity in a Gadamerian approach, which results in the recipient aiming to achieve comprehension is guided by the concept of apprehension.¹⁴ For this reason, we can quote Gadamer stating that language is in effect understandable existence.

Upon managing apprehension, all humans conduct a hermeneutic activity. Moreover, even before having been declared by hermeneutic philosophers of the 20th century, the concept of man’s ceaseless effort for comprehension had already been valid. Like all individuals, the artist does a hermeneutic activity when interpreting for him or herself something appearing and existing in his/her own world. Then the artist comprehends it and upon “presentation” transfers it to the language of his or her artistic world, to its medium (verbal, visual, auditive or the combination of these) and its aesthetic form of language. Within this, the artist for whom all existing objects are works of art leads a mutual hermeneutic activity, thus he or she creates either the adaptation and/or transformation and/or some sort of further thinking of an artwork. In doing so, he or she acts as the primary interpreter of the original work, however, the artist becomes the carrier, the medium of his/her own or another work’s different medium and form of language. At the same time, this work of art functions as the conservator, enricher of the adapted or transformed work of art, keeping it on the move exactly by means of this correlation. However, owing to this correlation already

¹²Ibid., 211.

¹³GADAMER 1990. 11.

¹⁴GADAMER 1984. 264., 279–283.

having been formed in and inter-medium space, both works lose from their own autonomy for the benefit of this space, this inter-phenomenon, the correlation, the mutual conservation and enrichment. I do hope that definite analyses regarding correlative positions of these works will bring us closer to a more differentiated understanding of the comprehension-evolvement process.

Certain chapters in the volume of studies include and continue the topics and the thread of my English-language study published in 2010, and the Hungarian one published in 2016 in the *Mikes International – Hungarian Periodical for Art, Literature and Science*; my studies published in volumes of conferences organised by SZTE JGYPK Institute of Art in 2015 and 2016, in the 2016 volume of SZTE BTK's "Footnotes to Plato" Conference. Furthermore, my writings published in the periodicals "Létünk" and "Kalligramm" in 2016 are also included, as well as the materials of my guest lectures at the Partium Christian University in Oradea (Romania) in 2015 and 2016 in the topics of "Text-Image-Music: Madách's The Tragedy of Man in Various Branches of Art"; "Intermediality of Sign-Image-Creation"; "The Impact History of Dante's 750-year-old Divine Comedy in Various Branches of Art", and "Bluebeard Stories of 300 Years in Word, Image and Music". I owe thanks to the Academic Advisory Board of the Szeged Foundation and the advisory board of the Academic Grant of SZTE JGYPK for their support in writing this book. I also wish to thank Emőke Varga (PhD., habil.), for all her professional support, Erika Balog and László Pápai for taking care of my text.

Szeged, 26th May, 2016.

Zsuzsanna Máté

PART I

1 On the Transformation of Imre Madách's Dramatic Poem *The Tragedy of Man*

Madách's *The Tragedy of Man*, a dramatic poem, uniquely stands as an exceptional work of Hungarian literature with presumably the greatest history of interpretations, a huge bulk of related literature, and probably it possesses an utmost intermediality. Without attempting to be comprehensive, in this chapter I am actually going to refer, on the one hand, to literary works intertextually related with Madách's *Tragedy*, while on the other hand, to all works of fine art, theatre, music, film or other kind of artistic value, in which *The Tragedy*, as a literary work of art was classified into the medium of another field of art in the past half century.

The beginning of illustrations stretching out to these days since 1863 is marked by the oil painting of Mór Than titled *Adam in Space*. The large-sized painting is exhibited in the National Széchenyi Library in Budapest, and its golden illustration printing had decorated the cover of the *Tragedy*-editions until the first series of illustrations created by Mihály Zichy were published in 1864, 1869, 1879 and 1884.¹⁵ This duality, or 'dual existence', meaning that an illustration is a text-dependant work of art and a self-contained painting at the same time, is nevertheless not unprecedented in the illustration history of *The Tragedy*. However, it is no coincidence that even the first illustration is of this nature, and so are some drawings made by Zichy. After the popular publication of Mihály Zichy's series of illustrations in 1887, covering all colours, almost half a century had passed by until a complete series were created, also abound in 'dual existence' illustrations. Eventually, it turned out to be a woodcut sequence of

¹⁵BLASKÓ 2010.

György Buday, which he designed in 1935 for a *Tragedy* edition in Stockholm, in 1935. The first time János Kass prepared a series of illustrations was in 1957, then a different one in 1964, as an application for a competition arranged by the Petőfi Literature Museum, published together with Madách's poem in 1966, and has been published many times ever since both in Hungary and abroad. Apart from these series, considered to be classical ones, the richest collection so far, containing 45 various illustration sequences, can be found in the Digital Madách Archive,¹⁶ including illustrations from the first half of the 20th century made by Jenő Haranghy, István Somogyi, István Kákonyi, Dezső Fáy, Anna Bartoniek, Teréz Nagyajtay and Gábor Szinte, and from the second half of the 1960s by Béla Kondor, Piroska Szántó, Ádám Würtz, Ferenc Martyn, later on Endre Bálint, András Farkas, Imre Farkas and Zoltán Réti. The major parts of these are also book illustrations of different *Tragedy* editions, in the form of copper engravings, graphics, tint-drawings, woodcuts and paintings.¹⁷

The illustration as the visual interpretation of the verbal text sets remarkably diversified theoretical fields of problems. For instance, the involved relation of the creator-affiliate since the illustrator is also an interpreter affiliate and the illustration is a visual interpretation. Another important problem is the aspect of the production-reproduction as well, i.e. to what extent can we regard the illustration as an autonomous work of art.¹⁸ Arising from this problem, the illustration can be examined in relation with translation. The primary role of the written text to the visual imagery is also a significant

¹⁶The illustration collection of the Digital Madách Archive, along with the complete archives materials are available at the Somogyi Library in Szeged, and available at the Klebelsberg University Library of the University of Szeged.

¹⁷BLASKÓ 2010. 88.

¹⁸According to Stewart, in the hierarchy of arts illustration as such is at a disadvantage, it being only a "minor genre", or an "applied one", and in his interpretation the reason is narrative imitation. During his research, he advocates the independence and autonomy of illustrations. STEWART 1992. 1–39.

problem.¹⁹ Besides, another question arises from the aspect of the hermeneutics of the fine arts,²⁰ namely, how the illustrator, as an interpreter who got a primary role, ‘hits a window to the text’; what and how they interpret. The question of ‘illustration as rewriting and continuation in one’ is set from the aspect of hermeneutics that prevails through the openness and ambiguity of the text. If we have a look at the relationship between the literary work and its illustration, Áron Kibédi Varga determines it as follows: “word and picture separate from each other, however, they appear on the same side. They are in an inter-referential relation: they refer to each other.”²¹ From the 1990’s onwards, the genre of illustrations slowly overcame the category of “applied genre” subordinated to literature, since illustrator artists themselves questioned the exclusivity of this category by applying illustrations existing as autonomous images. Therefore, now, having broken with the subordination between the illustrated work and the illustration itself, we consider the genre of illustration within the reciprocal relation and its types,²² the reciprocal relation between the text (as a ‘pretext’) and the image. Image hermeneutic studies have revealed that translation between mediums of word and image, illustration as an intermedial phenomenon can be comprehended by means of a common basis, and understanding the

¹⁹As compared to priority, as a “chronological relation”, and instead of aspects regarding subordination of illustrations and “translation-analogy”, Carr considers investigating the relation between textual structure and visual structure of the illustrations, the difference between textual and image-supported visualisation to be more important. CARR 1980. 378.

²⁰Of the semiotic, structuralist and image hermeneutic theories in illustration research the gist of this latter paradigm, that is the endeavours of Gottfried Boehm and Oskar Bätschmann is that illustrations do not function as imperfect substitutes of the literary work of art, and act not only to convert it to become visible, yet the image also possesses an “independent achievement”. VARGA 2012. 17–25.

²¹KIBÉDI VARGA 1997. 307.

²²Emőke Varga defines this “interreferential” relation into four different types: metaphorical, metonymical, synecdochical and ironic. Cf. VARGA 2007. 9.

relation of language and image actually relies on visuality: “Only by using a shift towards the metaphoric nature of language can the range where language and image coincide be confined.”²³ Then, partly overwriting these aspirations, the recognition of the back-and-forth manner in illustration research has gradually become more and more emphasised, that is, the process of sense formation is not only directed from text to image, but the opposite way, too.²⁴ What is more, it did even overwrite the ontological status of perceiving illustration as an autonomous image. On the one hand, illustrations are practically the referentiality formed from the combination of verbally and visually determined mediums, which only become functional within the process of reception-viewing in relation to the “other” one.²⁵ Based on the relationships of semiotic code and cultural tradition illustration is, quoting György Endre Szőnyi, when “media (or the code) in the supporting role interprets and enlightens the one in the main role, thus it carries certain additional information. These two codes appear together in representation, yet they do not merge entirely and are not coequal, either.”²⁶ On the other hand, the practice of art and aesthetic experience tends to prove that there are cases when visual ‘achievement’ of illustration is of such a high magnitude or acts as primarily that even after leaving this visual appearance, without a text, as an image and independent visual work of art it functions as a fully-fledged work of art, thus becoming the object of aesthetic experience. In the name of and due to its establishment, illustrations are inseparable from the original work of art. Yet, often regardless of this, it can be the object of a reception approach independently from knowledge of the given text in its visuality, therefore even without this cognition and reference of its creation it is able to offer an aesthetic experience, as a fully-fledged visual work of art. Consequently, illustration separated from the text, as a fully-fledged visual work of

²³BÄTSCHMANN 1998. 56.

²⁴KIBÉDI VARGA 1997. 305-306.

²⁵VARGA 2007. 15.

²⁶SZŐNYI 2004. 19.

art is interpreted by the recipient from his or her horizon, without knowing the text at all. If we rewind the pictures to the medial status of the illustration, and interpret in its text-image interreferentiality, the aesthetic experience of value is that, referring to chief series of illustrations on the *Tragedy*, already having been observed in Zichy illustrations,²⁷ some illustrations, breaking with their ontological status, that is the text-image relations of the illustration framework, have an independent visual status. Therefore, I will highlight illustrations existing in a dual manner, namely the last pieces of the most well-known *Tragedy* illustrations, thus presenting that the illustrations constitute an independent visual narration parallel with and beyond the text.

In my writing²⁸ which briefly reviews some of the classical illustration series of the *Tragedy of Man*, the works of Mór Than, Mihály Zichy, György Buday and János Kass,²⁹ I only concern these theoretical questions. I highlight only one question from the aspect of the specific illustrations, accepting the definition of Áron Kibédi Varga, i.e. the illustration exists in the inter-referential relation of the text and the picture. However, we know that text is a sterling work (without an illustration as well), thus, the question can be posed whether which examined illustrations are the ones that have a dual existence, namely, they exist in an inter-referential relation with the text but they function as an independent piece of art without the text and what basic conditions it has.

In 1863, Mór Than painted the first illustration, an oil painting, *Adam in Space* (173 cm × 202 cm) one year after the publication of the *Tragedy of Man* in print. In the centre of the three figures floating among the clouds, there is Adam who looks at the prohibitive movement of the Spirit of the Earth desperately; on his right there is

²⁷“Pasteboards of full image impact, understandable in themselves are not only masterpieces as images, yet stand as the most authentic and best ways to express the text”. Emőke Varga quoting Tivadar Lándor. Cf. LÁNDOR 1902. 233-250., I. VARGA 2012. 182.

²⁸Part of my analysis is based on my study published in English: MÁTÉ 2010a. 27–31.

²⁹All illustrations analysed can be viewed here: KOKAS – TÓTH 2004.

Lucifer waiting malevolently. The gesture of the Spirit of Earth makes Adam stop. This hand motion is the link, the gesture which connects the sign system of this picture with one of the sentences of the *Tragedy* from the 13th scene:

“The Voice of the Spirit of the Earth:

Thus far my realm, thus far its boundaries:

turn back, you live; take one step more, you die,

like spores that swarm within a drop of water.

For you, that drop of water is the earth.”³⁰

In case of the illustration of Mór Than we can seize the passage exactly which is translated almost adequately by the sign system of the pictorial presentation, illustrating a specific scene element.

Mihály Zichy, the outstanding figure of the Hungarian romantic painting, finished the first illustration series of the *Tragedy* it in 1887. His illustrations made for the *Tragedy of Man*, the ballads of János Arany and *Lermontov's Demon* made him immortal in this genre. Zichy was the virtuoso of the graphic technique. The subtlety of the details, the lightness, the tone and spot effects elaborated with the difference in the light and the shade and the resolution of the unity into many little details are typical of all of his illustrations. He created the tradition in the history of the *Tragedy* illustrations that going by some mental key sentences of the scenes of the work, central dramatic scene or figures, he made a series of 20 pictures. At the same time, these 20 illustrations indicate the different variations of the visual interpretation of the text. The illustrator, Zichy, giving the visual interpretation insists on the linear sequence of the affiliation of the text. This shows that he tells the story of the Egyptian, Roman, Constantinople and the last two scenes in two or three separate pictures which are in a continuous relation. Separated from the text of the *Tragedy*, the picture-compositions of the 1st, 2nd and last scenes

³⁰Henceforward, I shall use the English *Tragedy*-translation of Thomas R. Mark. MADÁCH 1999.

are complete works by way of the virtuoso presentation of figures, movements and expressions. Paradoxically, these pictures certify that the artistic illustration exists independently of the text as complete works of art. At the same time, these independently complete pictures are the ones that express the ideality and text-totality of the scene the most comprehensively. The reason for the dual existence of these pictures is that they are in an inter-referential relation not only with the text of the *Tragedy* but the first picture refers to the recurring element of the rebellion of the most beautiful angel, the second picture refers to the scene of the commission of the original sin. The dual functionality of the last picture of the last scene can be seized in a way that it catches the dramatic boundary situation of human existence, the moment before the choice between life and death. Those pictures that show some kind of a defection as independent works from some aspects in the illustration series of Zichy, cannot be understood without the concrete text, moreover, their reference to the complete text, thus, the entire given scene can be queried. For instance, viewing the picture of the 4th Egyptian scene, *The Pharaoh and the Dying Slave*, it appears that the pharaoh is totally indifferent about the human suffering happening in front of his feet, contrary to those contained in the scene as a whole. Or the genre picture of the Eskimo scene does not give back anything from the astonishment and pain that overwhelms Adam after seeing the beastly degeneration of the human race. Parallel to this, the genre picture of the 2nd Prague scene, Borbála toying with the admirer or the fair scene of the London scene do not refer to Kepler's disillusionment. The source of the defection of these pictures is that the illustrator follows the narrative linearity, places the details into the focus and as a consequence, the visual imagery encounters with what is mentioned in the complete text of the given scene. It appears that this deficiency was detected by Zichy as well and that is why he chose the continuity of the narration in case of some scenes i.e. he fitted more, coherent but still separate pictures next to each other within the particular scenes, thus, in case of the Egyptian, the Roman, the Constantinople, the Phalanstery and the last scenes. The two or three pictures within these scenes emphasize a

dramatic key momentum from the complete texts of the scenes, picturing the dramatic power in a romantic way with extremely opposite figure and face movements and gestures with opposite directions, at the same time, depicting it with realistic elaboration. The last picture that has become the emblem of the *Tragedy* illustrations portrays Adam standing on a cliff who, by getting to know the seemingly meaningless future and seeing the unsuccessful struggles of humans, is about to commit suicide. Lucifer, waiting for the fact of the final downfall with an ironic look and the retentive movement and worried look of Eve hurrying towards Adam sets the first dramatic scene of the 15th scene into a united picture. The composition, the opposition of the figures, the expressive face portrayals, the wide perspective of the picture's background give a united formal solution that makes the picture a piece of art existing independently of the text and, at the same time, it is an illustration in total mental unity with the text. According to János Kass, the *Tragedy* but especially Adam's figure gives a great opportunity for artists to talk about their own era by way of it.³¹ If we extract the Adam depiction of the last scene from all of the significant illustration series and compare them with each other later on, we can see the relevance of the statement of János Kass clearly. The artistic quality Adam of Mihály Zichy is the symbolic figure of the middle of the 19th century, the romantic hero who wants to throw himself in the depth as the last demonstration of the free will of humans: thus, demonstrating there is another step, the last one in which he can decide about his own fate, he can control it and the fate of mankind as well even if it costs his life. This work is autonomous and it has a close relationship with the text of the first dramatic scene of the 15th scene:

“*Adam:*

No, I say no, you lie. The will is free,
(...) I've lost my faith
in many things, and now it all depends

³¹KASS 2006. 29.

on me to change the course that I will follow.

(...)

Stop! A thought just flashed across my mind.

I can defy you, too. Almighty God.

Though destiny decree a hundred times

‘Thus long you live.’

I laugh at it, for when I please, I die.

Am I not still the only one on earth?

Before me looms that cliff...beneath, the gulf:

a single leap – the last act of the play –

and I can say, »The comedy is ended.«”

The other famous illustration is of György Buday who was a member of the Artistic Hall of the Youth of Szeged at the beginning of the 1930s and was a student of Sándor Sik. The text of *Advent: oratory for choral speaking* of Sándor Sik was published in 1935 with the woodcut of György Buday.³² In the same year he made the illustration series of the *Tragedy of Man*, a 22-piece woodcut series. His brazen and woodcuts have soon become world-famous. He was rewarded with a prize at the world exhibition in Paris in 1936 and after this he stayed abroad with minor breaks, settling down in London from 1947.

The illustration series of György Buday made with woodcut technique was basically influenced by the fact that he made the scenery by order for the opening performance, the *Tragedy of Man*, at the Open-air Theatre in Szeged in 1933. This meant a positive effect, for example, in the formation of the light proportions, however, it had a negative effect as well, since the Roman scene is only a revelry scene, the second Prague and the Eskimo scene remained too simple genre pictures. The illustrations of most historical scenes function as theatrical scenes and not as the illustration of the whole scene or one of its significant parts. Thus, it rather illustrates and serves as a background for the text of the given scene. Another influential factor

³²MÁTÉ 2005. 115., 164.

is the technique of the woodcut. Buday does not draw with the technique of the old woodcut that depicts with black lines on a white basis but he cleaves white lines and surfaces from the blackness, he swaps the proportion of the black and white colours. In the history of the *Tragedy* illustrations the role of the colour contrast and the light and shade and the use of symbols become important by way of this woodcut technique, for example, Buday indicates the presence of the Lord with the sun, the light for the first time. Buday's woodcuts have an influence on the *Tragedy* illustrations and etchings of Béla Kondor by the depiction coming from the features of this technique.³³ The woodcut illustrations of the first three scenes and the last scene are iconic and, as in the case of the same illustrations of Zichy, their existence is dual: they bear original aesthetic value in their relation with the text but independently of the text as well since their inter-referential relation points beyond the text of the *Tragedy*. The Lucifer portrait emerges from them with its strong expressivity. The last woodcut of the last scene depicts Adam and Eve: Eve's whole body is wrapped into a halo, skirting it; she is standing behind Adam still and gracefully. In front of her Adam is in opposition. Adam's body is wrapped into darkness. The multiple break of the arch of his body, his eyes wide open, his mouth, his expression reflects the complex state of mind which means the suicidal determination and decision not to commit it. While Mihály Zichy caught the dramatic moment of preparing for the suicide, Buday's woodcut depicts the dramatic moment immediately after that: Adam falling on his knees in front of the Lord and the discretion of not being able to control the destiny of mankind, i.e. he does not end the existence of mankind with his death since Eve is expecting a child. Here we can also find the part of the text which is referred to by the last woodcut: Adam falling on his knees in front of the Lord and the painful resignation from his free will.

“Adam:
(falling on his knees)

³³VARGA 2008. 118–125.

Lord, you have conquered; I lie in the dust;
without you, against you, I strive in vain.
Raise me, smite me – I bare my breast to you.”

The last woodcut of György Buday expresses the struggle between the opposite powers of a modern man, Adam: his agonizing despair between the free will and the loss of it, the painful recognition that humans cannot control their fate and, on the contrary, his extremely strong desire for some kind of a certainty, a divine direction.

The most outstanding illustrator of the contemporary Hungarian fine arts is János Kass who was born in Szeged and made two illustration series for the *Tragedy*, in 1957 and in 1964 for the competition of the Petőfi Literature Museum, which was published along with Madách's main opus in 1966, then separately a year later, and several other times, too, both in Hungary and abroad. The antecedent of the series that was issued later, the first series, can be regarded rather as a sketch. The basic difference between the two series in case of the one made in 1980 is the framing. Besides, this framing is the feature whereby the illustration series of János Kass is fundamentally different from all of the *Tragedy* illustrations. Besides the main topic of the pictures, this framing (more, smaller, simply structured pictorial units can be found in the frame) not only makes it possible but also involves (multiplies) the motive richness of the series within itself, the multi-level inter-reference of the verbal and visual code and making the narrative style of the visual sign system polysemantic. After depicting the Adam of the last scene who prepares for a heroic suicide (drawing of Zichy), falling on his knees in front of the divine will and Adam returning to his God (the illustration of György Buday), the Adam of János Kass shows the one who questions God. He is almost an equal conversation partner of the Lord, in terms of his posture, dignity and self-consciousness, however, his muscles are tight, his palms are strained by perplexity, questioning and the tension waiting for the answer. His look and head turns towards the divine light. The inter-reference of the text and the picture can be seized in the series of questions which is the first sound of Adam towards the Lord:

“Appalling visions have tormented me, my Lord;
I do not know what’s true in them, what’s not.
Tell me, oh tell me, what my fate will be.
Is this constricted span my all-in-all,
(...)
Is mankind to evolve and to progress,
(...)
Is there a recompense for noble hearts,
(...)
Oh, give me to know,
and I will gladly shoulder any fate.
Whatever I may learn, I can but gain by it –
for this uncertainty is hell itself.”

This human figure is desperate to the utmost. He does not look at the ground, to his feet, however, the future appears there: as a recurring motive, in the middle of an elliptical net there is the human embryo as the symbol of the existence of humanity, on the other hand, as the shadow of Adam: Lucifer. This illustrational interpretation, by the figure of Lucifer appears as the shadow of Adam, refers to the words of the Lord, the authorized functionality of Lucifer:

“The Lord:
(...)
And you, Lucifer, you who also are
a link within my universe – work on!
Your frigid knowledge and your blind denial
Will be the yeast that brings the ferment on;
and though you briefly may dishearten man
– what does that matter? – man will stay his course.”

If we compare the last picture of all of the illustration series, their dual existence (both as an illustration and as a work of art existing independently of the text) cannot only be seized in that they exist in an

inter-referential relation³⁴ with the dramatic scene of the last scenes of the *Tragedy* but also in that they have an independent narrative, by way of the features of their own sign systems. Approaching from the aspect of Gadamerian hermeneutics, works of fine arts should also be “read” as answers given to a question.³⁵ One of the questions to be asked here though are directed to the quality of the relationship between God and man: for Zichy it was defiance, for Buday it was acceptance, while for Kass it was actually the question directed to God. The other question to be asked regarding understanding the image is the relation of man and free will versus determination, and the next one refers to the dilemmas of life and death, present and future. All three illustrations are of ‘dual existence’, as understanding the image of the autonomous picture are shaped by fundamental elements of the narrative, thus the order of “understanding perception”, as well as the combination of linearity and “simultaneity”. Similarly do the plot and timing of the “image text”, their coincidence, and the structure of image build up.³⁶

It was the end of 1936 when the monumental Adam statue made by Alajos Rigele had been completed, as a result of exemplary cooperation, to become part of the Madách’s tomb in the park of the Alsószéregova Castle. The foundation of the tomb is the crypt itself, where Imre Madách and his relatives lie. Adam’s 3.6 metres tall bronze statue stands on a 3.2 metres tall, narrowing-shaped white pillar placed on the tomb. Alajos Rigele, a Hungarian sculptor living then in Bratislava (or Pozsony, in Hungarian) was assigned with the task of planning and construction of the statue. The plan envisioning a “lad aspiring to the skies with his arms spread out”, standing on a huge pillar, with the “veil covering his figure falling off with ease”. As Alajos Riegele wrote on his finalising artistic plans and the figure of the young man (whom, as a matter of fact, he had never called Adam) in early June, in 1936: “I fancy a canvas rich in movement, already in symbolic contradiction with the

³⁴KIBÉDI VARGA 1993. 166–180.

³⁵GADAMER 1994. 161.

³⁶I am using these terminologies in accordance with Krüger. KRÜGER 1998. 95–116.

untroubled arch of the body. I have attempted to involve a lot of desire, and, I believe I have succeeded in doing so. The splendid environment generates the necessity of increasing the height of the statue. [...] The most beautiful solution in the symbolic sense is the one showing how ‘Man’s soul aspiring to the skies elevates from the tomb of Madách.’³⁷ The veil falling off (standing for ‘matter’, as such) and the figure of the lad aspiring to the skies are not merely a philosophical thought, the monumental symbol of the dominance of human spirit directing upwards, but they also represented a successful static alternative.

Madách’s main epos still inspires painters and sculptors, particularly from the aspect of giving it further consideration and playing. We can cite as examples the continuously expanding paintings of István Czene Gál,³⁸ the sculpture installations of László Jéga Szabó, such as *The Comedy of Man* (2008) and *Eve’s Apple* (2009), as well as his *Lucifer* (2010) collage.³⁹ The sculpture installations in the *Comedy of Man* rely on the demythologization of the first couple’s story in the Bible, and it envisions and predicts the ‘life situation’ of the first couple’s life (the naked Adam and Eve, created from the red dust – their terracotta sculpture) outside Paradise, further considering the *Tragedy*, fancying it as a possible Scene XVI. Consequently, referring to contemporary Devil’s temptations, it connects our days with the long-forgotten past, biblical fables with the concepts in the last scene of the *Tragedy*, thus indicating the eternal continuity of Devil’s temptation and the deviation of man.

From 1883, the *Tragedy* can be interpreted as the symbol for the universal reception and acceptance of Hungarian Theatre as such, and this exactly dates back to its premiere in the National Theatre on 2st

³⁷HORÁNSZKY 2005. 19., 22.

³⁸A photograph of István Czene Gál’s painting can be seen on the cover page of Palócföld 2008/3.

³⁹Works of László Jéga Szabó were exhibited during the Madách Symposia of XVI. & XVII. in Kecskemét and no. XVIII. in Szeged, and are still on display in the illustration collection of the Digital Madách Archive. The website of László Tamás Jéga Szabó, visual artist, can be viewed at www.jegaleria.com

September, 1883, directed by Ede Paulay.⁴⁰ This version already carried the adaptation dilemmas which the Hungarian theatre traditions were incessantly forced to face during the staging of the *Tragedy* in the past 133 years. This masterpiece of Madách has caused a real fever in the whole country among the theatre-goers and the ones interested in drama. In the following ten years after the premiere it was performed in 186 Hungarian provincial settlements, mostly on a temporary stage. Until 1905 this number has reached the 417th performance, with huge success and profit. The *Tragedy*, with changing cast and direction and some years of break, is still present in the program of Hungarian theatres. The thousandth performance of the *Tragedy* was on 7th April 1963 in the National Theatre in Budapest. The opening premiere of the new National Theatre on 15th March 2002 was also the *Tragedy of Man*.

The premiere of the *Tragedy*, the director approach of Ede Paulay has lived on Hungarian stages for 22 years. Besides the theatre reviews, the memoir literature, the costumes, the costume designs and stage designs, two basic historical documents remained in the National Széchenyi Library from the performance on 21st September 1883: the director's copy of Ede Paulay and the prompter book of that play. I have to mention that immediately after that performance Zsolt Beöthy was the only one who, after seeing the performance, matched the script published in print and what he had heard on the stage. In his review he criticized the arbitrary changes and mutilations of the Madách text. On the whole he was right. However, Ede Paulay's changes in the script and the roles were corrected as time was passing; the later directors conformed to the script more. Paulay's merit as a director was in the daring that started to show the work of Imre Madách towards the theatrical public. He liberated the drama from its 'book prison', familiarized the dramatic work with a wider audience that has become a reader of the work as well. The next renowned direction belongs to Sándor Hevesi who, as the director of the National Theatre, on 22nd January 1923, the centenary of the birth of Madách, has directed his own

⁴⁰Part of my analysis is based on my study published in English: MÁTÉ 2010b. 26–29.

modern approach of the *Tragedy* in the form of a mystery and has preserved the mental unity of the original writing by adhering to the script.

Since 1883 to this very day, taking *The Tragedy of Man* onto the stage has been the greatest challenge for directors, actors, setting- and costume designers as well. This particular challenge sets the controversial question recurring in the critical reception that whether the performance on stage can be regarded as the dramatic writing of Madách or the director's recreation or a kind of joint art. This problem arises for those who know the script of the *Tragedy* well, especially when they face the fact that some things were left out of the text of the dramatic work during taking it onto the stage and to what extent it modifies the interpretation of the performed work. The two major text reductions prevailed during the beginnings at the Paulay premiere in the old National Theatre, and at the opening premiere of the new National Theatre in Budapest on 15th March 2002. This latter director's interpretation has stirred a great professional and political storm since the approach of János Szikora has made the greatest modifications on *The Tragedy of Man*. The script was reduced to almost its half, with 40%. The roles were changed on purpose so several times the character said another character's script: for instance Eve said the script of the Lord, Adam, Lucifer, Adam said the script of Eve, etc. A similar role change but with a smaller scale can be detected in case of Paulay as well; in the first scene the chorus of Angels speak instead of the Lord and in the last scene the Archangels answer Adam's questions instead of the Lord and the Lord's voice can be heard only in the last line. In case of Szikora, there was hardly anything left from the fifteen scenes, it seems as if Madách had never written the most important scene: the Lord and the Archangels did not fit in the director's conception, we cannot hear even their voices.

After this short outlook let us go back to the beginning: only 61% of the original text of Madách has remained in the adaptation of Paulay. From the 4117 lines of the *Tragedy* he left 2560 for the three and a half hour performance since the whole text would have required a six-hour long performance. Unfortunately, the reductions and editing

basically damaged the mental unity of the original work of Madách. Thus, in the first speech of Lucifer in the premiere such philosophical thoughts were left out on which the basic mental conception of the whole work was based, for instance, the statement of Lucifer, 'the created world is senseless' was left out. This way the search for sense and the philosophy of struggling as finding the sense of life was damaged. Similarly, the prediction of the philosophy of struggling was left out of the songs of the chorus of angels and the omission of the space scene also changed the philosophical unity of the original work. Based on the comprehensive comparison of the director's copy of Ede Paulay and the prompter book of the premiere, we can state that the deeper philosophy and mental unity of the dramatic work could not materialize because of the reductions.⁴¹

The two-decade long success of Paulay's direction was due to something else. Paulay's approach of direction followed the contemporary *meinigenism*, the pictorial history which was a kind of theatre loyal to its era. In the historical scenes Ede Paulay emphasized the realistic and historical loyalty in the historical scenes and concentrated on the spectacular presentation rich in effects. Thus, he basically amplified the dramatic action of the scenes with pragmatism of human struggle and disillusionment and not the abstract thoughts. The mental unity and philosophy of the work was damaged, however, the *Tragedy* gained on the other side, in popularity and the strengthening of the inclination to read.

The direction of the play by Paulay in 1883 is quite instructive. Apparently, although during the theatre adaptation the narrative pattern of the *Tragedy* became overplayed, namely in favour of the intermedial space of the theatre, this latter having been formed in the correlation of word-music-image, still, as a reaction, interest towards the premedium, the pretext largely intensified. On the other hand, the first performance had launched a process, which has even up to our days been creating a renewing and constantly varying intermedial network in the world of theatre. In 2008 the Madách Literary Association has published a

⁴¹MÁTÉ 2009. 3–15.

unique issue by Sándor Enyedi: a bibliography called *'The Tragedy on the Stage – 125 years'* which registers altogether 1150 different theatre premieres and thousands of performances behind them; more than a thousand in the National Theatre. According to the data of this book, taking the Tragedy onto the stage did not only happen in the towns and several smaller settlements of Hungary but it also went around the world. Among the foreign premieres the first was in Hamburg in 1892 and in the same year it was followed by a premiere in Vienna and Prague and it could be seen in several European cities (1893 – Berlin, 1905 – Brno, Plzen, Prague, 1909 – Prague, 1916 – Zurich, 1922 – Prague, 1930 – Vienna, 1932 – Stockholm, 1932 – London, St. Gallen (Switzerland), 1934 and 1937 – Vienna, 1937 – Hamburg, 1937 – Paris, 1939 – Berlin, 1940 – Frankfurt, 1943 – Bern, 1946 Cerepoveci (Soviet Union), 1948 – Innsbruck, 1949 – Munich, 1965 – Poznan, 1966 – Belgrade, 1967 – Vienna, Warsaw, Prague, 1968 – Bucharest, 1969 – Vienna, 1970 – Moscow, Leningrad, Leipzig, Berlin, 1971 – Tartu, Gdansk, Katowice, 1972 – Leningrad, 1975 – Bucharest, 1979 – Minsk, Grozny, Riga, 1983 – Klagensfurt, 1984 – Paris, 1985 – Warsaw, Katowice, Gottwaldov, 1989 – Rome, 1992 – Paris, 1997 – Edinburgh, 2000 – Munich, 2003 – Milano, 2005 – Munich). Beyond the continent, in 1922 in New York and Detroit, in 1924 in Chicago, Detroit and Jerusalem, in 1953 and 1964 in Melbourne, in 1960 in Toronto, in 1964 in Buenos Aires, in 1980 in Minneapolis, in 1986 in New York, in 1987 in Los Angeles.⁴² According to the data of Sándor Enyedi's bibliography, this can be interpreted as the symbol of the welcome of the Hungarian theatre and literature.

If we should merely focus on the Szeged Open-Air Festival, it is worth mentioning that the premiere of the *Tragedy* was set on stage on 26th August, 1933, directed by Ferenc Hint, with Árpád Lehotay, Anna Tökés and Ferenc Tátrai in the leading roles. The projected stage scenery was prepared by György Buday, who previously illustrated the *Tragedy* with the woodcut sequence mentioned earlier. Following this, the play was performed every year in Szeged, until 1939, on Dóm

⁴²ENYEDI 2008.

Square, in front of the monumental, at that time already raised to the rank of cathedral Votive Church. This performance was directed by Ferenc Kiss, Count György Bánffy, Kálmán Nádasdy, Jenő Janovics and finally Ferenc Kiss. Between 1936 and 1939 the stage scenery was the work of Mátyás Varga, from Szeged, and so was the 1960 performance his accomplished stage design. Among the series of *Tragedy* performances at the Szeged Open-Air Festival, re-launched in 1959, the outstanding presentation was the one directed by Tamás Major in 1960, philosophical and close to the original text, starring Lajos Básti, Margit Lukács and Ferenc Bessenyei. As Árpád Marton wrote: “Without doubt, in the resurrection of the original work, stigmatized as a clerical play, the performances having taken place in Szeged had a remarkably significant role.” Major, being a fearless favoured artist then, dares to confront the official set of values, and the performance presents 800.000 viewers during the 1960/1962 series, which stands as an undeniable demonstration to support the *Tragedy*. Moreover, Major’s legacy truly aggravated the task of the director to manage the 1965 premiere. László Vámos was thus actually forced to choose means of spectacular historical revue from the dual stage interpretation of the play, at the expense of the philosophical concept. As a result, his direction of the epos will go down in the history of the open-air festival and our *Tragedy* traditions as a ‘wide-screen’ version, which labelling was not too much mitigated by the magnificent casting, namely Éva Ruttkai, Attila Nagy and Miklós Gábor, or by the more moderate appearance of the 1969 renewal version. Thus the duty of continuing the course fell on the great ‘equalizer’ of Hungarian theatre history, Miklós Szinetár, who directed (with the assistance of László Félix) a ‘jeans version’ of the *Tragedy* in 1976 with the contribution of young actors such as Géza Hegedűs D., Ildikó Bánsági, Sándor Lukács.⁴³ And this strange story was continued, even after the 1983 Vámos direction of the play, which, instead of performing the previous ‘wide-screen’, ‘painted grey with grey’ staging, then did not cease to resume after the 2000 version of Károly Korognai without any significant critical response received.

⁴³MARTON 2011. 4–5.

The year of 2011 was rife with first performances of the *Tragedy*, for directions of e.g. Tamás Jordán in the Weöres Sándor Theatre in Szombathely, Alföldi Róbert in the National Theatre in Budapest, or Vidnyánszki Attila (founder of the Illyés Gyula Hungarian National Theatre in Beregszász, Ukraine, and then director of the Csokonai Theatre of Debrecen). I do believe that this latter performance will be considered as one of the great ones in the history of the Szeged Open-Air Festival. The most spectacular central element of the Ukrainian scenic designer, Alexander Belozub's 25 meters wide image design is the 15 meters tall, gently curving scroll that covers the monumental figure of the Votive Church. At the beginning of the play, the scroll is snow-white, then by the end of the performance some fundamental symbols are written onto it (eye of Horus, Doric order, cross etc.). There was displayed a rotating stage platform with a diameter of 8 meters, placed in a huge black hole at the bottom of the scroll, which at the same time served as the venues for the changes of the historical scenes. The scenery and the sight are entirely metaphorical not only in the sense of the way it connotes the rotating scene of history, but also as the manifestation of the literacy memory of mankind. The monumental scroll and the rotating stage was surrounded by a two-sided row of stairways reminding the spectator of an arena, thus viewers could interpret the rotating stage of historical scenes as an arena, or a circus sand at times. Another basic symbol of the director's interpretation was mud. At the beginning of the play Adam and Eve are shovelling the soil, which act symbolizes their struggle with matter as such, and also the very fact that already upon birth all humans are destined to death, ashes to ashes, dust to dust. The third central element of the performance is a lamp extending from almost the sky above the stage; it may represent the presence of transcendence in this world, with everyday stories of men and women happening below. I was elevated to a key role in its function in the Space Scene, when Adam, hanging on the lamp, was literally hovering between earth and sky. On the other hand, shadows of figures casting over the scroll therefore emphasized the 'cosmic struggle' between good and bad, 'dark and light' elements. Adam was played by Zoltán Rátóti, director

of the Kaposvár Theatre, having melted into the historical scenes, yet portraying Adam observing events still from the outside, as a man contemplating, reflecting to action, and becoming more and more exhausted. Due to double roles in Adam's acting role versions, László Tóth played the Pharaoh, Sándor Gáspár played Miltiades, while György Cserhalmi acted as Kepler. Furthermore, Zsolt Trill, a leading actor from Berehove (Beregszász), appeared as Lucifer, Eszter Ónodi as Eve and József Varga as God. The conceptuality and symbol usage of the performance accentuated historical man to be the leading character. The continuous flow and movement of supernumeraries made certain historical scenes dynamic, and occasionally chaotic, main characters faded into the whirling crowd, therefore it was not a coincidence that spectators found it difficult to decide, without a sound knowledge of the textbook, as to who was leading a conversation with whom at the time. The hopeless simplicity of the Space and Eskimo Scenes provided a sound counterweight to this. At the end of the performance, Adam is displayed with a straightened back, head up high, dignity regained, holding Eve's hand, and declaring for the first time: "man: strive ever on with faith and steadfast trust." Eve then repeats the phrase slowly and gently, and eventually God confirms the last sentence of the *Tragedy*, to be continuously repeated by the entire group of characters.⁴⁴ In my view, this interpretation of the director seized the universally general and transcendent nature of this internally-driven strive-philosophy.

Since 1929, the *Tragedy* was frequently broadcasted on the Hungarian Radio, the earliest version directed by Árpád Ódry, and after that almost every year, up until the Second World War. Of all these, the most prominent one is probably the play directed by Antal Németh in 1935, adapted by Lőrinc Szabó, in a remarkable casting, including

⁴⁴A behind-the-scenes book came out about the Szeged open-air performance, dealing with the birth and launch, and then the culminating 'celebration' of the play's realization, and following the universal artwork process. In addition to photos included, several interviews of László Bérczes and a longer article by Attila Vidnyánszky can be read, thus introducing the reader into 12-year-long preparation processes of his three great *Tragedy*-directions Cf. VIDNYÁNSZKY – BÉRCZES 2011.

Gyula Csontos as Lucifer, Artúr Somlay as Adam, Gizi Bajor as Eve. In 1969, the adaptation of *The Tragedy of Man* to film was completed, with a memorable direction of Miklós Szinetár, with Lucifer played by László Mensáros, Adam played by Péter Huszti, while Eve by Mariann Mór. The television film can be regarded as a genuine adaptation as it was capable of transforming both base layers of the original work to the screen, the narrative and also the narration, this latter as a chronological series of events, and finally narration⁴⁵ itself, the relating structure. As a result, the atmosphere and philosophy of the original play can entirely be converted into the television film. As a counterpole, we can consider a unique interpretation of the *Tragedy*, which is András Jeles's artistic movie titled *Annunciation* (1984). Characters are played by children, and the main theme adapted from the *Tragedy* is death. The film itself is the deliberately undertaken special adaptation of the *Tragedy* by the director, and, at the same time, a sovereign transformation. On the one hand, it gives the impression of the adaptation, since the majority of texts are Madách's, yet this further thinking occurs due to some kind of borrowing, changing of the structure and the variability of the theme. Interpositioned in this duality, this artistic movie is a special interpretation of the *Tragedy* which 'builds on the destruction' of the original work's verballity, thus creating a continuous tension between extracts of Madách's play familiar to the viewer and the unknown and theatrical visual world deviating from the original work of Madách, all made possible by surprisingly unique arrangements by the director. This way, the director confronts the verballity of literature and the film's multimediaility, Madách's text cited by the children in a monotonous, unemotional way with the theatrical visual world relying on naturalistic and bizarre image series called forth by the text. Therefore, András Jeles's intentions as a director predominate, as he considers the language of the theatre, music or film to be more perfect than language itself. However, Jeles claims that cinematography as such does not exist in itself, but instead it synthesizes the language of other mediums.⁴⁶ In

⁴⁵I am using this terminology in accordance with McFarlane. MCFARLANE 1996. 19–20.

⁴⁶JELES 1993. 37., 39.

his *Annunciation*, the firm interaction of mediums (Madách's text, image, music and theatre), the direct and apparent functioning of "together or against each other" can be observed.⁴⁷

János Kiss made his *Tragedy*-inspired animation movie titled *Dilemma* in 1980, which actually proved to be the first European animation cartoon prepared using computer programmes.⁴⁸ Marcell Jankovics's 160-minute long animation movie titled *The Tragedy of Man* was made between 1988 and 2011, with a premiere in Uránia National Movie Theatre in Budapest, on 27th November, 2011. In addition to the well-cut script, the cartoon is an adaptation containing innumerable musical and visual impulses, visual ideas and acts of drawing bravura. Also, it is a 'further writing and drawing' of the original. A film adaptation in the sense that the motion picture version is quite close to the text of the *Tragedy*, cutting of the text does not harm the interpretation framework of the whole epos, its levels of concepts. The utmost artistic virtue of this adaptation is that it elevates historical scenes into a high quality art historical context typical of the age, while placing it into the well-definable set of symbols of the *Tragedy*. As regards philosophical aspect, moral issues are emphasized. Nevertheless, it simultaneously can be defined as a 'further writing and drawing', as, beyond its closeness to the original text and/or plot (typical of classical adaptations), and the visual representation of the *Tragedy*'s conceptuality and atmosphere, almost each scene includes a highlight which resumes the plot in the form of images. This 'further writing and drawing' becomes particularly robust in the London and Phalanstery scenes by having been made relevant. For instance in the danse macabre scene, when iconic 20th century and contemporary figures are all heading on the moving staircase towards the depth of the tomb (history?), and the visual language of the Phalanstery scene refers both to Orwell's *1984*, as well as to Hungary's decades spent in Communism.

⁴⁷In addition to this, clash of mediums within the medium of the film can also be observed. RÉCZEI 2009. 57–64.

⁴⁸KASS 1980.

In his analytical study titled *Madách – in a musical disguise*, Miklós Győrffy enumerates versions of Madách-texts set to music. Among the several musical plays, and beyond the incidental music pieces to the theatre performances, the following should be highlighted: Lajos Bárdos's cantata titled "Man, strive on!" (1935), Ernő Dohnányi's symphonic cantata *Cantus vitae* (op. 38, *Song of Life*) presented in the Hungarian Opera House) on 28th April, 1941, being prepared for two decades, moreover, the opera version performed also in the Opera House some three decades later, in 1970, directed by György Ránki.⁴⁹ György Ránki's opera adaptation accurately follows "Adam's internal struggles, indecisiveness between constructive enthusiasm and destructive despair", relives his "tragic historical visions" and "exemplary willingness to strive".⁵⁰ In Ernő Dohnányi's cantata the *Tragedy* tends to function as a starting point, relying on the selected lines of the text written by Madách, 'borrowing' them in a way, turning the musical play into a "philosophical confession of life" by the author, praying to God in the final part. So as to make a short reference to pop music genres in our days, let me mention a rap adaptation written by a band named Belgä in 2010 (the group was established by then-Buddhist college students, and they are still actively touring), titled "*The Tragedy of Man*" from the album *Educational Aid*, quoting the last verse where the oscillation takes place between the *Tragedy*, a literary work of art and its related fictitious world: "Adam poses the vital question / But God gives him a fractal answer / Then he casts the roles / And spontaneously cites a quote / Man, strive on and trust! / Once you do this, let me do the rest".⁵¹

⁴⁹GYÖRFFY 1999. 125–146.

⁵⁰Miklós Győrffy quotes György Ránki's words: GYÖRFFY 1999. 131.

⁵¹The complete last verse of the rap adaptation: "In number fifteen Adam woke up / And realized he just dreamed the whole thing / And felt an urge to commit suicide immediately / But then Eve was just about to announce she'll be a mother soon / Adam poses the vital question / But God gives him a fractal answer / Then he casts the roles / And spontaneously cites a quote / »Man: strive on and trust!« / Once you do this, let me do the rest / »The engine turns, the Maker rests«".

When turning our attention to (polite) literature, the inspiration the *Tragedy* has generated can be really surprising: a long list of works could be provided here in which the impact, some form of the re- and further interpretation, free adaptation, inclination to be continued or “further writing” can be discovered within the larger set of intertextuality. For example, the almost unknown dramatic poem, *Donna Juanna* by the unfairly forgotten Minka Czóbel, who wrote the *Tragedy from Eve’s perspective* in 1900, as the first one, to the best of my knowledge, to ‘further write’ the *Tragedy*. I assume a fundamental philosophical parallel between the two dramatic poems, Madách’s *Tragedy* and Czóbel’s *Donna Juanna*, namely that Donna Juanna’s motivation is analogous with Adam’s longing for a metaphysical all-knowledge and metaphysical accomplishment, which motivation aspires to get to know and realise the only idea, that is love perceived in a metaphysical and mystical manner. And, as much as answers received by Adam are ‘uncertain in certainty’, likewise, Czóbel’s work portrays contradictory concepts of love, too. Moreover, their final conclusion is also the same, stating that the knowledge of metaphysical essence is beyond man’s reach; love cannot be experienced as a metaphysical notion. Similarly, love elevated to metaphysical heights is impossible for worldly women to live through, much as astonishingly beautiful she is, as neither could Adam’s ideas be fully achieved, be them however “holy” or “grandiose”. In this case we do not talk about a direct effect and transformation, but a sort of inspiredness, an analogy based on it and ‘further writing’ regarding the way these two are connected, more precisely, from the viewpoint of women’s essential knowledge, world of ideas and the image of love. Nevertheless, it is an interesting twist, yet a Schopenhauer-inspired one, that in *Donna Juanna* the soul, with its desires, will and bad conscience oppresses and rules the body, torturing it, while in Adam’s case it is actually his bodily-biological existence that restrains his “proud soul”. The parallel is conspicuous, between historical forms of the *Tragedy*’s dream scenes and *Donna Juanna*’s dreamlike encounters with Julius Caesar, Saint Augustine and the Saviour. Contemporary philosophical idea-mosaics serve as a parallel trait typical of the era, and such are the frequency of utter antagonisms,

love and death getting connected. However, while in the historical scenes of the *Tragedy* the shadow of death is cast, indirectly, on love, in Donna Juanna it directly unites in the figure of the heroine and her disastrous fate.⁵²

Minka Czóbel's work is the first literary work of art having been, as proven by the above analogies, inspired by Madách's poem, moreover, it used certain elements in a modified manner. In this sense, it is on the borderline between inspiration and "borrowing". Within the network of relations, we could then continue with the series of literary inspirations, tributes, paraphrases, parodies, references and transcriptions manifested in literary works of art, having intertextual relations, among others with the works of János Arany, Károly Szász, Károly Eötvös, János Vajda, Kálmán Mikszáth, Lőrinc Szabó, Gyula Juhász, Gyula Krúdy, Endre Ady, Frigyes Karinthy, Dezső Kosztolányi, Sándor Reményik, József Nyírő, Dezső Keresztury, Ferenc Juhász, Gyula Takáts, István Baka, Kornél Döbrentei, Anna Jókai, Géza Páskándi, Csaba Lászlóffy (etc.).⁵³ Among contemporary authors, parallels can be drawn with Péter Hajnóczy's *Jesus's Bride*, *The Fireman* and *Da capo al fine*, as well as László Krasznahorkai's "world novel" titled *War and Peace*.⁵⁴

Regarding intertextuality, Frigyes Karinthy's name may be underlined, as he recorded the impact and literary 'utilisation' of Madách's work in various genres and modality approaches.⁵⁵ In addition to his enthusiasm shown in his childhood diary on the performance at the National Theatre in Budapest, in January 1900, then his related experience while reading the epos, but as an adult, too: "If nothing but the sheet of paper onto which Madách had taken down

⁵²MÁTÉ 2013. 271–288.

⁵³KOZMA 2007. 76–84.

⁵⁴CSEJÉS 2005. 47–67., CSEJÉS 2004. 79–100.

⁵⁵Edit Nagy offers a wide range of collection of Frigyes Karinthy's works, where the obvious or concealed impact, cross-reference or overplay of the *Tragedy* can be noticed, or in the introduction the link of certain Karinthy writings to the *Tragedy* is detailed. Cf. NAGY 2011.

his ideas for the drama had survived the ages, if he never actually wrote down his work, only the draft, the tale of the drama in short, in a few words, still this draft, this plan would have been enough to save his name for the future to be mentioned as one of the greatest poets who has ever lived”.⁵⁶ Karinthy wrote the ‘continuation’ of the *Tragedy* in his less-known novel *Tightrope walking*, which elevates its protagonist through the “renewing waves of eternal hope and failure” into modern age, where he fails once and for all in the world of hatred.⁵⁷ The *Tragedy of the Embryo* (the word rhymes with ‘ember’, Hungarian for ‘man’) can be interpreted as the parody of the drama in his famous *That’s How You Write*.⁵⁸ In addition to this parody, he published an analytic study in the 1923 centennial edition of Nyugat, in which, among others, he declares that Madách’s drama is a more splendid and perfect work than Goethe’s *Faust*, it being uniquely witty and authentic, reaching the standards of world literature.⁵⁹ From then onwards, we keep on stumbling across references to the *Tragedy* in several of Karinthy’s satirical fictions, mainly the symbolic elevation of the three main characters. Such writings are *The Tragedy of Man or the Vica*; *The Third B) Scene*; *An Unbiased Critic, Everything in a Different Way* or his *Tilted Line* on the experience of flying. Similarly to Kosztolányi, Karinthy fancied what the 16. Scene could have been like. His 15-page long fiction is subtitled “*A Newly Discovered Part of the Tragedy of Man, Omitted from the Original by Accident, Wedged in Between the Kepler and the Tower Scenes.*” The *Sixteenth Scene*⁶⁰ is certainly set in Karinthy’s present, in one of his favourite cafes, named New York. Adam appears as a provincial editor, while

⁵⁶KARINTHY 1923. 113.

⁵⁷Edit Nagy draws a parallel with Karinthy’s novel titled *Celestial Report*. NAGY 2011. 16.

⁵⁸*The Tragedy of Little Man* (‘emberke’) would later be compiled by Karinthy’s son, Ferenc, based on the manuscript found in his father’s heritage items. cf. KARINTHY 1979. 283–288., 469–485.

⁵⁹KARINTHY 1923. 113–123.

⁶⁰KARINTHY 1979. 235–250.

Lucifer as a book agent. Like at the fairground of the London Scene, contemporary figures are demonstrated, all typical characters of literary life. Back then Adam, a provincial editor here, gets disillusioned again: “Oh, I am horrified! I have found a soulless fair, / Where I sought notions and justice”. And, since he is unable to choose between neo-impressionism and “nio-neo-impressionism”, what’s more, impostor journalists storm him with their manuscripts, he truly believes that he has to flee from there, too. Finally, as an act of his last disillusioning from the fictitious present, Adam recognizes (formerly) Eve as the cloakroom lady knitting stockings, who whispers him one sentence in his ears: “Adam, I feel myself a poetess”. Thereafter, he escapes with Lucifer, screaming, and then they “Sink”.

Dezső Kosztolányi also “further writes” the *Tragedy*, by authoring *Lucifer on the Teachers’ Platform*⁶¹ (*Play in One Act*), published in Nyugat in its 1923 Madách-edition. The underlying idea is rather authentic: the play ends with the concept of Adam and Eve starting to read their own story, *The Tragedy of Man*. At the same time, by borrowing text from Madách, they are both recognizably characters from the *Tragedy*, yet still have their definite share and participation in Kosztolányi’s age, amidst the very reality of the First World War, the actual everyday life of Hungary after the Treaty of Trianon, this latter created due to some Luciferian manipulation. The basic idea implies a cyclic and decentralized dilemma regarding its starting point: what comes first, reality or literature, Madách’s epos or Kosztolányi’s rewriting it? Kosztolányi actually ‘rewrites’ Madách’s text in the whole of the scene, in which Adam, Eve and Lucifer have their characters already appearing in the *Tragedy*, therefore their dialogues are put into the *Tragedy*’s text and range of interpretation together, in addition this tradition is being referred to, as well as the events of Madách’s life, with Eve standing for Madách’s wife in parallel. Kosztolányi retells us the story of Adam and Eve, placing Madách, the creator poet, into God’s position. Obviously, Kosztolányi is playing here, he paraphrases, transcribes and rewrites again, creates a set of interrelated intertextual

⁶¹KOSZTOLÁNYI 1923. 152–160.

connections full of surprises with the *Tragedy* and its creator, and the interpretation context related with his own age and the epos, and also with the interchangeability of reality.

This is the impact of the *Tragedy*, already existing for half a century, generating illustration, adaptation, transformation, further playing, further consideration, thus creating various realizations of re-interpretation and re-creation in a wide range of forms, types and genres, within the relation of intertextuality and intermediality. The secret of the charm and success of the *Tragedy* is its eternal intellectual content, universal questionings, timely answers, power that makes us think and richness of interpretations. The *Tragedy* carries the diverse and numerous possibilities of the explanatory and re-creative approaches. Since the writing generates the different interpretations in an immanent way by its openness, questionings, discussions and dialogues. The existence history of the *Tragedy* offers the hermeneutical approach to the individual interpreter. Our common problem is to understand the existence, thus, the *Tragedy* can be about us as well. This relevance to the reader makes it alive and continuously present at all times. It is effective because it questions our own lives and even the problems of our era and also makes us question, thus, its questions have been our questions as well. The *Tragedy* is the brand name and emblem of Hungarian literature abroad. In the last one and half century it was translated into more than 36 different languages – thanks to the decades of collective work by György Radó and Csaba Andor, all translations, reviews and receptions are now available⁶² – in English there are ten versions. In the last twenty years, for instance, it could be read in Hindi, Gipsy, Turkish, Hebrew, Italian, Latin, Serbian, Catalan, Spanish, Gallego, Finnish, Swedish, Polish, Slovakian, Portuguese, Romanian, French, Dutch, Russian, Bulgarian, Esperanto and English. There have been studies about the reception of *The Tragedy of Man* in particular countries, specifically in France,⁶³ and in Germany.⁶⁴ Published in English in Boston, Dieter P. Lotze's book on Madách did not only

⁶²RADÓ – ANDOR 2014.

⁶³MADÁCSY 2008.

⁶⁴PODMANICZKY 2011.

provide a general idea on Madách's lifetime achievement, but in its longest chapter it presented an independent interpretation of the *Tragedy* by differentiating between three fundamental, hierarchical levels in the opus, these are the struggle on the level of one's relative and subordinated fate, on the basically value-denying level and on the struggle on a metaphysical one.⁶⁵ As regards the philosophical background (in addition to Hegel, Büchner and Feuerbach) Lotze argued in favour of the existence of Kantian parallels, resulting his stance that ethical behaviour (having to choose between good and bad) must stem from an inherent moral law, regardless of any rewards coming from this world of here after.⁶⁶ Three of the English-language *Tragedy* translations have illustrations in them, as György Szirtes's *Tragedy* translation is illustrated with Mihály Zichy's graphics,⁶⁷ Thomas R. Mark's translation with György Buday's woodcuts,⁶⁸ while MacLeod's work has János Kass's pictures.⁶⁹ I outlined these three illustration series in this present synthesizing study (partly) because of the English-language illustrated books. I shall in detail deal with János Kass's animated movie *Dilemma* due to its English and American relations, it indicating Madáchian inspiration.

The exploration of the intertextual and intermedial network of literature, fine arts, music, theatre and cinematic arts that grew around the *Tragedy* will certainly be the task of Madách research in the future. On the one hand, this present summary shows the need for the creation of a precise database,⁷⁰ on the other hand, though, it outlines

⁶⁵LOTZE 1981.

⁶⁶Uo. 97–98.

⁶⁷MADÁCH 1988.

⁶⁸I use the English *Tragedy*-translation of Thomas R. Mark, with an afterword by Mihály Szegedy-Maszák: MADÁCH 1999.

⁶⁹MADÁCH 1993.

⁷⁰The application of database was initiated by Manovich, which, connected to the supreme tool of contemporary digital culture, that is the computer, will be able to help in a more overall understanding of correlations, thus intermedial networks. Cf. MANOVICH. 2009.

an intertextual and intermedial network of relations within, more precisely, some tendencies in the intermediality of the *Tragedy*. The network relations of transformations appearing in either literature or other forms of art unequivocally indicate the dedicated role of Madách's dramatic poem in our culture. The various forms of its appearance during the past 150 years within different intermedial relations, be them book illustrations, theatre and opera adaptations, rap music covers or radio plays, television films or animated movie adaptations and further writings, utilizations and borrowings, indicate not only the inspiring impact of the *Tragedy*, its universal, updatable and reinterpretatable, yet open nature, but also the fact that the way of existence related to this literary text in can be visualised in any mediums or intermedial space. In Ágnes Pethő's "*Texts Among Mediums*" she construes a broader interpretation of intermediality, which "on the level of communicative channels can be apprehended in the meaning-saturating intermediality of interconnectedness."⁷¹ Considering the thus interpreted intermedial network of relations, the myriad of illustrations having set up the text-image relation represents a considerable productivity starting already from the second publishing of the *Tragedy of Man* as a book in 1863, and it has lasted up to our days. This productivity of illustration series is in an interaction with the philosophical feature of the *Tragedy* as a pretext. Since from act to act within the scenes the poem offers the illustrating artists the details with some "general characteristic within the unique entity". Yet the modality of thought being able to be moved abstractions, that is the option in the act of apprehension via seeing,⁷² which eventually means saturation of meaning. The other outstanding group of intermedial phenomena are the adaptations of Madách's poem having been made since 1883 (until up to now), that is the Paulay-premiere in theatre featuring universal artwork, including theatre, music and film. Performances in theatre, as one element of the intermedial group of phenomena have acted as a canonizing force from the very beginning.

⁷¹PETHŐ 2002. 8.

⁷²ARNHEIM 2004. 7–8.

Also, Paulay's direction made the *Tragedy* even more popular, yet up against contemporary critiques stating that the work lost much of its ideas during being set to stage,⁷³ however, it re-launched the re-discovery of this literary work of art as well as the wave of its re-reading.⁷⁴ Significant research has been going on even in our days in these two prominent intermedial fields. Here we cannot fail to mention Emőke Varga's studies, herself systematically analysing the *Tragedy*'s illustrations, as she primarily approaches the series of illustrations from the aspect the image as an interpretation of language, with special respect to the pictures by György Buday, Endre Bálint, János Kass and Béla Kondor.⁷⁵ In his analyses, Thomas Mitchell applies his perception of images as a language, the very basis of his "image twist", as "in the modern science of pictures it is a cliché that they should be comprehended as a language".⁷⁶ In addition to illustration research and the exploration of text-image relations, his research regarding the stage adaptations of the *Tragedy*, as well as Zoltán Imre's research aimed at cultural and theatre history and the increased role of visibility can be considered as outstanding. Moreover, so are his significant studies analysing, in addition to the premiere of the *Tragedy*, the social and cultural history contexts of the 1955 and 2002 lectures.⁷⁷ Considering other intermedial field organised around the

⁷³MÁTÉ 2013. 263.

⁷⁴The first theatre performance based on intermediality exerted a similar impact, as Ferenc Kerényi claims with some data: "One thing is for sure: had it not been for the decisive measures taken 125 years ago, the *Tragedy* would only be an item in the literature museum of drama since at the time of the premiere the collected publication by Madách and former self-sufficient publications in 1880 had already been on bookstore shelves, where the impact of the stage success could be felt, too. It is known from contemporary newspapers that in Tírú Mures (Marosvásárhely) alone 85 copies had been sold in February 1885, following the local premiere." KERÉNYI 2008. 52.

⁷⁵Cf. VARGA 1997. 199–212., VARGA 1998. 96–115., VARGA 2008. 118–125., VARGA 2012. 181–243.

⁷⁶MITCHELL 1997. 339., MITCHELL 1980.

⁷⁷Cf. IMRE 2009. 20–35., IMRE 2011. 12–20., IMRE 2012. 36–45.

Tragedy, as per the latest names, called either multi- or transmedial,⁷⁸ with regard to the opera, film and animation adaptation of the *Tragedy* in universal artwork style, no significant research has been conducted in the field of text-image (opera) and text-film (animation) relations. For this reason the next two chapters, Chapter II and III contain detailed analyses in this topic. Moreover, the question as to which features in Madách's opus generate the ever-expanding network of relations did not even emerge in Madách research, and the last chapter includes my answer.

The diversity and variety in the *Tragedy*'s transformations raises a typological issue, the solution of which is not my task since these heterogeneous intermedial works of art are difficult to be characterised into one single taxonomic structure. Based on the typology of intermedial phenomena, for example Werner Wolf's system, the two prominent intermedial tendency illustration and adaptation can be called "medium combination" and "intermedial transposition",⁷⁹ and in our case the theatre, animated movie and opera adaptations can be classified here. However, András Jeles's sovereign film titled *Annunciation* cannot be positioned here, which clearly indicates the unclassifiability of medial phenomena, thus the instability of taxonomic systems. Since typologization is not among my aims, the transformation of the relation network in Madách's literary text shall be my starting point, while the point of reference shall be the "saturation of meaning" compared to the literary text. This is, using Ágnes Pethő's terminology, the interpretative and (re)creating attitude towards the literary text. As we could see above, the illustration is in the closest possible relation with the literary text the *Tragedy*'s intermedial "network of relations". As per György Endre Szőnyi's categories, within the relationship between the two semiotic codes, verbal and visual, this latter is subordinated and referential;⁸⁰ in a broader sense, in János S. Petőfi's approach we can

⁷⁸BENE 2014. 169–173., KLOEPFER 1999. 43.

⁷⁹Wolf at the same time draws attention to the dangers in the stabilisation of taxonomic categories as well as to their shortcomings. Wolf 2002. 163–179.

⁸⁰SZŐNYI 2004. 19.

also talk about linguistic subordination;⁸¹ while Áron Varga Kibédi describes this relationship as interreferential, from text to image, and vice versa, as a way of verbal-visual perception of an object.⁸² This latter interreferentiality is justified by the image hermeneutic analysis of the examined illustrations that is the analysis of illustrations made by Zichy, Buday and Kass to the last scenes. These analysed illustrations, emerging from their ontological framework also bear an independent image hermeneutic achievement, and can even exist without knowing the pretext. Let me add here that within the text-image relation of the analysed illustrations (as opposed to the proliferation of meaning in the text, its various modalities of interpretation) the clarifying, purifying and compressing role of the image can be observed. All illustrations analysed validate the feature of “visual language” according to which “facts and ideas are mediated deeper and to a greater extent by visual language than any other means of communication”.⁸³ Apart from illustrations, the other determining tendency of the network relation is adaptation, as a transplantation to the mediums of some other branch of art (theatre, music and movies⁸⁴) carrying signs. Illustrations, adaptation and transformation can be typologised further beyond themselves in relation to its distance from the pretext and the increased autonomy of the transformation. Now, the third base form in our exact empiric set of facts is further thinking, as a way of re-thinking, which, as a collecting category includes the ‘further writings’, ‘applications’, ‘borrowings’, its ‘overplaying’ of the *Tragedy* to one or more

⁸¹Petőfi deems the didactics of multimedia communication to be deductible from the semiotic textology and didactics of verbal text, thus it becomes subordinated to the text, conceptualizes as a sub-layer of the vehicle, its imagery being dispossessed by language. PETŐFI 1996. 7–21.

⁸²KIBÉDI VARGA 1997. 306.

⁸³KEPES 1979. 5–6., 11.

⁸⁴Györgyi Vajdovich provides us with a comparative analysis on the different types of movie adaptation of literary works of art, along with giving a review of the works and division approaches of Klein, Parker, Bordwell and Wagner. VAJDOVICH 2006. 678–692.

momentums. All three categories can be called transformations, meaning a comprehensive way of all transformations or further writings, further or re-thinkings, which relies partly or fully on the original work of art. The separation of the three basic types of *Tragedy* transformations for the works of art examined (illustration, adaptation, re-creation), as regards their formation, also designates a chronological order in the past one and the half century. Accordingly, from 1863 onwards (Mór Than's painting) illustrations, from 1883 adaptations (Paulay's premiere and theatre) and from 1900 (Minka Czóbel's work) the various transformations of re-creation as a way of "borrowing" can be observed in the relation network of the *Tragedy*. Even in nowadays works of art are being made in all three transformational base forms, including illustrations, adaptations and further interpretations of re-creations. Beside transformational base forms, works of art being made as a result of the *Tragedy*'s inspiration are also considered part of the network of relations. This inspiration was objectivised to become some formal element of the work of art, for instance the principle of construction-deconstruction in János Kass's film titled *Dilemma*, the apocalyptic feature, or the structural similarity in Péter Eötvös's opera. The chronological growth of the network of relations was accompanied with the advancement of the artists' freedom of potential in interpretation, which in practice means re-interpretations and re-creations of the *Tragedy* becoming more and more continuous yet also distant, too.

2 Modalities of Existence of *The Tragedy of Man* in Music

133 years ago, on 21st September 1883, the first performance from the *Tragedy of Man* was carried out by Ede Paulay, who had been the dramatic director of the National Theatre from 1878, and, from 1884 for 10 years until his death, he worked as an executive director. We can attribute other plays' first presentations to him as well: Vörösmarty's *Csongor and Tünde* (1879), Goethe's *Faust* (1887), Byron's *Manfred* (1887) and Lessing's *Nathan the Wise* (1888).

Besides directing *The Tragedy of Man*, his activity had spread to almost everything; the original, handwritten director's copy proves this. He attributed great importance to the scenery and setting which had to be historically appropriate (he had designed and drew them as an indication). In the National Theatre he was the first to use electric illumination on the stage (for example moonlight, shade, darkening of the stage, bright morning, little light). For him, the composition of the scenes, the casting, the instructions, the setting and the designing of the 504 different costumes carried the same importance. Except for the costumes of Eve; there were 11 types of them. Mari Jászai, who played Eve, performed in her own costumes which she designed with the help of painters Ferenc Paczka and Árpád Feszty. With regard to the great success, it was played 13 more times in the same year and eleven years later, on 13th May 1894 the hundredth performance in the National Theatre took place, the Paulay's version was still on stage until 1905, the revival of Imre Tóth. And it was played not only in the capital. The premiere of the *Tragedy* was held in 1883, the director approach of Ede Paulay had lived on Hungarian stages for 22 years. Paulay attributed great importance to the nature of the musical background, exactly describing it (quiet, strong, song-like, sung, fanfare-style). The incidental music of the premiere was composed by Gyula Erkel.

As Ede Paulay put it in his article published in September, 1883, attempting to prepare the public for the premiere: "Nowhere have I tried to distract attention from the poem by using external lighting, however I have attempted to achieve and create everything available to make it as clear and as easily understandable as possible. Furthermore, I had to emphasize certain sections by using music, and I have found an eager and wholehearted partner in Mr. Gyula Erkel."⁸⁵ In those days, Gyula Erkel was the number one conductor of the Hungarian National Theatre. His incidental music consisting of 33

⁸⁵PAULAY 1988. 211.

closed parts is a precious piece of work.⁸⁶ This notion is nicely verified by the fact that his incidental music had been played for some half a century during theatrical performances of the *Tragedy*. Separating distinct musical groups, as a director, Paulay assigned dramaturgical and predominantly highlighting functions to the incidental music. In addition, Erkel's incidental music also excellently served as a director's ambition to achieve perfect illusion, and the pictorial-historical performance theatre. Thus, adapting to the special genre characteristics of incidental music, he also followed and emphasized the emotional motions of the various colours and scenes, "on occasions acoustically well isolating them as determining tone-elements, or effects of creating an atmosphere".⁸⁷ Therefore, Gyula Erkel's incidental music can rightly be considered as a great opening in the history of *The Tragedy of Man's* musical settings.

Incidental musical pieces of *The Tragedy of Man* are generally characterised by scarcity of information, lack of printed scores, just as in the case of Erkel's incidental music, where only a few handwritten sheets and copies were left as a legacy for the ages. Henceforth, I am only going to mention only a few incidental music composers for this reason, based on the work of Miklós Győrffy. Such are Viktor Langer (1842–1902), first director of the Szeged conservatoire, later a theatre chorus-master in Pécs (both in Hungary) – he completed his incidental music in 1885, for the first performance of the *Tragedy* in Pécs. Moreover, we can mention the incidental music of Ákos Buttkay (1871–1935), prepared in 1905, then in 1910 one was made by Rezső Máder (1856–1940), chorus master of the Hungarian Opera House. The version written by Ferenc Farkas was first performed in 1937, and was later often presented on stage even after World War II. Looking back the past half a century, we can highlight Viktor Vaszy's (1903–1979) incidental music written in 1965 for symphony orchestra, organ and mixed choir. The *Tragedy* was performed in Subotica (Szabadka)

⁸⁶In total, 34 songs are distinguished in Paulay's cue sheet from the 1883 First Performance, including the overture. cf: PAULAY 1883.

⁸⁷KAIZINGER 1997. 42–45.

the same year, with the music composed by the then only 21-year-old composer Péter Eötvös, who aspired to create a modern approach. He had “borrowed” two songs of the Rome Scene from Vaszy. Finally, a Kodály student, Gyula Dávid (1913–1977), formerly the chore master of the National Theatre, presented his incidental music of various euphony in 1970.⁸⁸

The first composition was created after some two decades of tradition of the incidental music closest to the *Tragedy*’s text, serving the impact of the theatrical play and emphasising the emotional and mood elements of the script. This composition written as a song to the *Tragedy*’s text can however be considered as the first to be sovereign. Gábor Veress, teacher of the Nagyenyed Boarding School dedicated his composition titled ‘*Glory in the Heights*’ ‘reverently to Bartók György of Málnás, Lutheran Bishop in Transylvania’ in 1905. This opera is a piece written to vocals, organ accompaniment (mezzo-soprano harmonium) and a band featuring a violin-cello duet.⁸⁹ Then again, two decades had passed by until the next sovereign musical piece was authored, this time by Lajos Bárdos, in 1935, a 18-stave maestoso three-part canon titled “*Following Madách’s words: Man, strive on!*”.⁹⁰ Both compositions were written to be certain transformations inspired by specific text parts of the *Tragedy*.

Among the sovereign compositions written inspired by the *Tragedy*, Ernő Dohnányi’s *Cantus vitae (A Song of Life)* has proved to be the one outstanding by far. The premiere of the *Cantus vitae* took place on 28th April 1941 (and was repeated the next day) in the Hungarian Royal Opera House, featuring the Budapest Philharmonic, conducted by Dohnányi himself. Ernő Dohnányi, despite his musical

⁸⁸Composers of incidental music to *Tragedy* premieres abroad, based on Miklós Győrfy’s collection: Rudolf Walner (Munich), William Sichel (Hamburg, Vienna), Franz Salmhofer (Vienna), Peter Janssens (Vienna), Péter Vermesy (Cluj-Napoca), Tibor Oláh (Târgu Mureş), Peter Michale Hamel (Kassel). GYÖRFFY 1999. 133–136.

⁸⁹Gábor Veress, *Glory in the Heights (Dicsőség a magasban)*, 1905. (Notes engraved and printed in Pest. Bound in Cluj-Napoca.) Cf.: BARTHA 1965.

⁹⁰GYÖRFFY 1999. 127–128.

legacy having been ignored for half a century, proved to be one of the most highly regarded performers, pianists, conductors and an eminent pedagogue of the 20th century. A particularly inspired interpreter of the works of Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann and Brahms, he also performed compositions in all musical styles, including ones that of Bartók and Kodály. Dohnányi regarded himself as a composer in the first place; therefore dozens of piano pieces, operas, theatrical plays, orchestral works and concertos feature the greatness of his overall legacy.⁹¹ As he puts it in his autobiography titled *'Farewell and*

⁹¹Ernő Dohnányi (Bratislava/Pozsony – 1877; New York – 1960.) first appeared in a public performance at the age 9, in Bratislava, in 1886. He meets Béla Bartók, four years his junior, at the Bratislava Secondary School, later on they became good friends. From 1894 to 1896, he studied piano and composing at the Royal National Academy of Music, composing from István Thomán (former student of Liszt), piano lessons he took from János Koessler (Brahms's friend, later teacher of Bartók and Kodály). In 1895, at the age 18, he completes his Piano Quintet No. 1 in C minor, which Hans von Koessler (Koessler János) intervened to be presented and performed by Johannes Brahms in Vienna, in 1895. Brahms allegedly commented the composition as "I couldn't have composed it better myself". Between 1896 and 1899, his years at the Berlin Academy of Music are followed by tours all over Europe. From 1905 onwards he works as the piano teacher of the Königlische Musikhochschule in Berlin for ten years, the youngest professor there ever. From 1919 to 1944, he is the leading conductor of the Budapest Philharmonic. The Hungarian Opera House presented his Opera titled *"The Tower of the Voivod"* in 1922. From 1925 Dohnányi works as the leading conductor of the New York State Symphony Orchestra. He taught from 1916 at the Academy of Music, and then became a professor there in 1928, being appointed its director in 1934. In 1930, he composes the *"Szeged Mass"* for the inauguration of the Votive Church of Szeged. In 1931, he becomes the music director of the Hungarian Radio, which position he holds for 10 years. On 9th November, 1936, Dohnányi conducted the Hungarian premiere of *Cantata Profana* (Bartók) featuring the Budapest Philharmonic. He largely contributed to the establishment of the world fame of the Budapest Philharmonic. Dohnányi emigrated to Austria in 1944, and lived in South America between 1946 and 1948. From 1949 to his death, he worked as a professor of piano and composing at the Florida State University in Tallahassee. He was charged with war crimes by a Hungarian

Message', "I mostly define myself as a composer, once I have acted in more roles. The reason is that it is only the composer that does creation. Then, what he has created will live on even after his death, making him immortal, and carry on his name for posterity. Again, talking about my composition, I can only repeat myself and declare that I have not been particularly diligent at all, yet I have tried to be perspicacious and punctual in expressing myself."⁹² He, as a composer, grew witnessing and adapting the musical style late romanticism at the turn of the century, then became a renowned master of post-romantic tradition and classicist endeavour. The regime change of Hungary put an end to his half-a-century ignorance and oblivion, so, in 1990, he was awarded a posthumous Kossuth Prize. His works have continuously been performed from 1995 onwards, pleasing performers and music-lovers alike.

Ernő Dohnányi's symphonic cantata *Cantus vitae* (A Song of Life) Op. 38 was considered by critics as his magnum opus already in 1941, its premiere year, as it provides a framework of his philosophy, expressing his life statement. Dohnányi first started working on the *Cantus vitae* during his successful debut tour of America in 1900. He had brought with him a copy of Imre Madách's Hungarian dramatic poem *The Tragedy of Man* (1862), which proved to provide the basis of a later libretto. It took him years to select and find the right grouping regarding the text of *The Tragedy of Man*. Dohnányi had decided not simply to create a condensed version of Madách's original text but instead to rearrange various excerpts from the poem to convey his own philosophy. He completed the libretto sometime prior to 1927, and completed the score of one of his major work on 23 March

Commission groundlessly in 1945. He was acquitted of charges, however, the suspicion remained, which cast a shadow over his career later on. Dohnányi had been given undue and unjust ignorance until the regime change in Hungary in 1989, what's more, his legacy became forgotten. Cf: VÁZSONYI 2002., DOHNÁNYI 2005.

⁹²KUSZ 2014, 85.

1941.⁹³ This symphonic cantata is the most lengthy and voluminous piece of his legacy. On the one hand, it parades the largest apparatus ever used by a composer, being scored for four soloists, at times a four-part female and male choir (of a large choir), a children's choir, an entire bass *Chorus Mysticus*, and an immense orchestra. On the other hand, it is over ninety minutes in length, one of his longest pieces. The premiere of the symphonic cantata, repeated the very next day, featured the Budapest Philharmonic, conducted by Dohnányi himself, with the Budapest Municipal Choir and the choir from the Erzsébet School for Women. The four soloists were Magda Rigó, soprano; Mária P. Basilides, alto; Endre Rösler, tenor; and György Losonczy, bass.⁹⁴ About the premiere of the *Canteus vitae*, Géza Falk wrote, "Hungarian music is attending a great baptism. A new and monumental creation was born that is perhaps the favourite 'musical' child of the father and his large family: Dohnányi and the Hungarian

⁹³During the time of his immigration in the US, when being asked by students about "his favourite composition", he answered: "Well, my answer is that I have none. Undoubtedly the one I am most proud of is *Cantus vitae* [Op. 38], which I worked on for three years, yet I had been collecting and maturing my thoughts and ideas for it for long-long years. Another one is *Symphony No. 2*, which I had totally recomposed after 10 years of resting here in Florida, (...). I don't only stick to these works of mine so much for their being the most monumental ones, but these express my ideas and life philosophy the best." Taken from Dohnányi's autobiography *Farewell and Message*. Translated and quoted: KUSZ 2014. 86–87.

"The Symphony was written – in its first version – about 12 years ago, after I had composed my 'Cantus vitae', a work for Soli, Chorus, and Orchestra based on words taken from Imre Madach's dramatic poem 'The Tragedy of Man'. [...] the Symphony [...] arose under the influence of the same ideas. The essence of these, in my opinion, also Madach's work: 'The goal is the end of the glorious fight; the goal is death, *life is a strife*.'" Dohnányi's letter to Donald Ferguson, 17 February 1957. (FSU Dohnányi Collection). Quote: KUSZ 2014. 87.

⁹⁴GYÖRFFY 1999, 129. For the creation of *Cantus vitae* see James A. GRIMES: "The creation, musical structure and premiere of the symphonic cantata *Cantus vitae* (op. 38)" (transl. Mészáros Erzsébet) = DOHNÁNYI 2005. 3–20.

nation. In the great noise of weapon the poet barely sang. Dohnányi broke this silence and surprised the public not with a pleasing little work but instead by presenting the musical world with the greatest and maybe the most important creation of his life”.⁹⁵

On 2 February 2002, over fifty years of ignorance by the public, the Musical Faculty of the Florida State University performed his ill-fated piece for the first time since its premiere, in the course of the International Dohnányi Festival. In 2004, conducted by Kálmán Strausz, and with the contribution of the music bands and orchestras of the Hungarian Radio, the first recording on CD was performed.⁹⁶ According to Tamás Pallós, music critic, “When listening to Dohnányi’s music, as a first reaction, one unconsciously seeks parallels of music here. Much as it seems an obvious and convenient solution, this piece of music with an immense orchestra involving a mixed and a children’s choir, four soloists just simply cannot be classified as an eclectic and post-romantic work. Certainly the impact of Wagner, Mahler, Richard Strauss, and, what’s more, Respighi is perceptible, however, without a doubt Dohnányi created something entirely unique and authentic. *Cantus vitae* includes all the musical aspirations of its age, while the nature and momentum of characterisation almost forecasts Shostakovich. The intensity and constant glow of the magnificent, varied and lavish instrumentation does not allow listeners to lose attention for even a moment. The soprano solo stands for the victory of art, resumption and faith. The amazing beauty of Dohnányi’s lyre manifests the most in such details. (Similar means were used by the composer during Iva’s farewell in his opera *The Tower of the Voivod – A vajda tornya*). The last two items praising God in the ending is in close relation with the final scene of Wagner’s *Parsifal*. Dohnányi’s symphonic cantata is undoubtedly a lofty, non-pretentious and high-class opus, enriching the list of significant works in Hungarian music history.”⁹⁷

⁹⁵FALK 1941.

⁹⁶DOHNÁNYI 2004.

⁹⁷PALLÓS 2004.

The lyrical symphonic cantata abounds complicated canons and fugues, while the counterpointing of post-romantic harmonies demonstrates Dohnányi's virtuoso compositional style. Formally, his 21 movements constitute 5 larger parts, most movements follow each other without a break, and the final movement closes the whole with a prayer to God. All lines of the libretto are taken from Dohnányi's favourite literary work, *The Tragedy of Man*. However, the *Cantus vitae* is not a setting to music of Madách's *The Tragedy of Man*, but he used the *Tragedy* as a raw material, to rework and compile it into a new whole, to create his own intellectual creed.⁹⁸ This type of reshaping is a transformation and a reflexion in one, if we consider the relation with the original work. The phenomenon tends to be typical in our postmodern age, yet it proves to be unusual in the middle of the twentieth century. However, not every movement is dominated by the text, e.g. in the fifth, for example, the orchestra plays alone, representing the world and spirit of the French Revolution through the *Marseillaise*. The melody gradually becomes more and more distorted and diabolic, where at a point the brasses introduce *The Internationale*, so it sounds threatening (cacophony) and recalls the world of dictatorships. The bass soloist passes a sentence upon it, referring to how the three ideals of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity had been distorted. However, there are no protagonists in the libretto, yet taking the original source of the *Tragedy* as a reference for comparison, then the bass soloist tends to remind us of Lucifer's words, the tenor soloist that of Adam, while the soprano refers to Eve, finally the alto echoes the people or some of the supporting characters. Generally speaking, soloists incline to sing recitatives and monologues. The Mixed Choir opens the symphonic cantata with the lines from the London scene of the *Tragedy*, therefore in the first movements the clash between mere matter and ideas can be heard. In the second movement the arguments of materialism are cited, here the bass gives voice partly to Lucifer, partly to the materialist views from the Scientist in the Phalanstery. Opposing this, the tenor is desperate

⁹⁸A. GRYMES 2005. 3–20.

to find an ideal and declares the importance of seeking them. This dispute rages through the first 8 movements, then is closed with the argument of “That all should have enough to live on; this. / This is the ideal that linketh us”. Bacchanalia, the second part of the cantata takes it as a basis, and recalls the age of the composer, that is the 20th century. Musically speaking, the harmonies and rhythms of the waltz and the foxtrot sets up the opening, which gradually transforms into the hedonic orgies and feasts the actualised, era-typical danse macabre after the Fall, intertwined with the soulless noises and squeaking of a factory in capitalism. The songs of Hippiia and Cluvia draw a parallel between the collapse and decline of the Roman Age, its relative set of values, and the crises of its own era, the twentieth century. The tenor speaks through the words of Adam in the London scene, while missing “unselfish elevation” and “sacred poetry”. Then Dohnányi keeps employing the stance of the musician in the London scene to make the situation up-to-date. The part titled *Funeralia* (III.) is actually a funeral march, the chorus of gravediggers sings. The part envisions the danse macabre of the twentieth century, and at the end of it the bell starts to toll. Then from the abyss the violin soars up high, enhancing the light of Eve’s words, endeavouring to reach the way that leads up to God. The tenor voice of the fourth part, in Adam’s words, questions, seeks and longs for laws directing our world, and also knowledge and certainty. The mixed choir of Chorus Mysticus answers with a “life is strife”. This “philosophy of strife” is enhanced by the composer with a divertissement of the orchestra. Following this, the lines depicting God’s rearrangement of the world and the tasks and roles of the individual in the final scene of the *Tragedy* sung by the soprano emphasising man’s spirit for strife are cited. The Children’s Choir sings the Choir of Angels, and emphasises the free will and transcendent determination of man, as well as God’s grace. In the end, this fourth part is finished with the law of Peter Apostle, with the law of love, meaning the chance for redemption at the same time. The praising of creation in the *Tragedy*’s first scene is played in the last part of the symphonic cantata, which is the Final. As regards the composition, according to Tamás Pallós, the concordance of text and

music is determined by creation-fall-redemption concerning the fate of mankind, and strife and the trio of awakening, strife and hope for eternal life regarding the individual.”⁹⁹ Dohnányi’s optimistic life philosophy – “We aim at doing good, yet it turns out to be bad; at the same time, strangely enough, evil can transform into good,”¹⁰⁰ – echoes from the summary of the whole piece.

György Ránki (1907–1992), composer, had the premiere of his opera version of *The Tragedy of Man* on 4th December, 1970, which he considered his magnum opus. His own music style he characterised as neo-normal, thus picturing the harsh contrast existing between avant-garde trend and his own musical language in contemporary Hungarian music.¹⁰¹ Some ten years of preparation had passed before Ránki had started writing the opera, and adapting the text also took a year to complete. The extracting and editing of the text mostly effected the historical-philosophical contemplations of Madách. Yet one significant element and an updating aspect making a difference emerged between the opera and Madách’s work: the vision of nuclear disaster wedged in between space travel and the icy desert. Originally, Ránki had meant his composition to be an opera-trilogy, however later on he changed his plan and composed a two-act mystery-opera expressing universal artwork endeavours. He truly believed that music has to serve Madách’s dramatic poem with the stage and visual-verbal effects jointly: “I had to build up a concept arranged relying on ‘total work of art’ (Gesamtkunstwerk-like composition), in which all stage elements to be seen and heard can serve the given main value in a unique synergy and shared rhythm: such are the thoughts and visions that of Madách (...) An opera-stage mystery play (...) came into existence, where oratory-like scenes of Madách and spectacular-stage-like and modern interludes, solos, choir, moving choir and an orchestra alternate and vary rhythmically, at an almost film-like pace, in an uninterruptible continuity. (...) The dreamlike nature of the play

⁹⁹PALLÓS 2004.

¹⁰⁰KUSZ 2014. 69.

¹⁰¹PETHŐ Csilla 2002. 18.

gives a good reason for this almost film-like speed.”¹⁰² In order to make the stage act more and more vivid, interludes relying on moving choirs of pantomimic motion, that is a ballet choir and a recitative Greek choir were inserted in between the 15 scenes to serve as a transition. The high number of supernumeraries in the play (angels, the people, heretics, friends etc.) and the Greek choir of similarly numerous members also significantly contributed to the musical illustration and narration of the plot. A convex slice of globe with a crater drawn on it was also a permanent item of the scene setting, as the actors and characters were moving on it, and images (connecting to respective scenes) were projected on a canvas placed backstage. For instance, the music dubbing the birth of the cosmos was coupled with an image suggesting cell division. Also, the cog wheels and rotating pulleys of the Phalanstery, the red and glowing sun-disk of the icy desert are good examples, yet even the ballet dance and choir interludes scenes were accompanied by projected images. The new light organ of the Opera House was amply applied here, too. In his author’s instructions to the *Tragedy*, Madách often refers to various sounds and noises (branches shaken by a storm, the approval and laughter of the people, yammering, reverential hymns heard from the outside, buzz of the wild crowd, clattering masses, church music, bell tolling, ringing, sea roaring, sound of seals etc.). Ránki accomplishes these sounds by means of musical instruments, neglecting the use of electronic devices or recordings.¹⁰³ Such Gesamtkunstwerk efforts strengthened the connection and communication between the ideas of the *Tragedy* and the listener, promoting the interpretation of notions in the dramatic verse. The opera stage mystery play was directed by László Vámos. The play was conducted by Miklós Erdélyi, while Géza Oberfrank and Amadé Németh also contributed in rehearsals.¹⁰⁴

The music of the opera composed to the grand orchestra was particularly varied, yet it managed to remain unified, primarily due to the ariosos carrying recitatives and lyricism, recurring themes, and

¹⁰²RÁNKI 1971. 3–4.

¹⁰³LOHR 1971. 22.

¹⁰⁴FEUER 1971. 21.

identical melody schemes.¹⁰⁵ For example, the scornful reflections of Lucifer, or the love confessions of Adam, the threats imposed, fighting, war, vulnerability of people are all linked together by leitmotifs of music. Diversity of music derives from the style aspirations of the author familiar with film music, accommodating historical descriptions and scenes in the *Tragedy*, thus the Rome scene is dominated by Andante erotico (Tempo di Habanera), a style of Southern-like rhythms and melodies, Bacchanalia was governed by the Allegro feroce rhythm of asymmetric-beat, later made peculiar by the Hippias-song of asymmetric melodies. The witch Saturday in the Constantinople scene, the madrigal voice of the Prague scene, the revolutionary march of Paris, the jazzy atmosphere and the barrel-organ melody of the London Fair, the tarantella-like danse macabre, and, finally, the mechanic music of the Phalanstery are all characteristic and are typical features depicting the given age and their scenes.

György Ránki's mystery opera proved to be a magnificent adaptation and reshaping of the dramatic poem *The Tragedy of Man* to the medium of music. According to István Raics (writer, poet, pianist and music critic), Ránki's insisting on emphasising the name and intellectuality of Madách proved Ránki's modesty, as "he (Ránki) adhered to Madách not only literally, but spiritually as well...", thus the figures and characters, the situations, the movement all remained despite the oratorical style of the mystery-opera framework.¹⁰⁶ Further enlarging the Gesamtkunstwerk genre features of the opera, in accordance with it Ránki carried out only minor transformation to Madách's main epos. The theatre performance constituted a unity, including the equally-levelled dialogue of music, ideas and drama, view and motion, rhythm and the quoted text, the universal artwork unity of music-word-view. Hans Heintz Stuckenschmidt, a German music historian and critic, praised and acknowledged the opera, its direction and musical realisation alike, and rated the performance to be at a European quality level: "Ránki has his own personal message and his peculiar voice can always be found, even if it is made heard

¹⁰⁵TILL 1973. 466–470.

¹⁰⁶RAICS – KERTÉSZ 1971. 3–5.

through the language of traditions in certain cases. I consider it as a closed, sovereign unit, which is irregular in its era.”¹⁰⁷ The opera was played on stage for one season.¹⁰⁸

When further examining the adaptation of *The Tragedy of Man* to music in the life of art, one must mention the opera¹⁰⁹ of world-famous Péter Eötvös, titled *Paradise reloaded* (Lilith), as the most distant reference to the text script. It was performed on stage at the Palace of Arts (Művészetek Palotája) in Budapest, on 23th January, 2014. It is related to the *Tragedy*’s text in two ways, by means of the very basic idea of the opera and its structure. This way we can regard the relation to the original work as an inspiration. Madách’s magnum opus is a source of inspiration and ideas, however, unlike Madách, the starting point for the story is not rooted in the Genesis story canonised in the *Old Testament*, but in Hebrew Biblical apocrypha sources.

¹⁰⁷BOROS 1971. 1–2.

¹⁰⁸Kossuth Radio broadcasted the play at 7 pm on 4 December, 1970. The recording was repeated several times in Bartók Radio in the 70s. Later Hungaroton made an LP of it. The record contains the danse macabre, visions of the Phalanstery, space travel, the nuclear disaster and the devastation of the Earth, images of awakening and reckoning. The LP features György Melis, Margit László, István Rozsos, József Gregor, Árpád Kishegyi, Albert Antalfy, Imre Turza, Kornélia Tóth, László Egri, Erzsébet Kovács, Mihály Illés, Béla Hami, Mária Jakobinyi, Miklós Mosolygó, the Kodály Choir of Debrecen and the Orchestra of the Hungarian Opera House were conducted by János Ferencsik. The family recently handed over the composer legacy of György Ránki to the Institute of Musicology, containing so far non-public and non-disclosed documents that are connected to the *Tragedy*. Among the documents are several sketches of the libretto and the complete sound recording of the opera featuring amateur singers, with Ránki’s accompaniment.

¹⁰⁹The latest opera authored by Péter Eötvös is based on the adaptation of the drama written by a young German writer, Albert Ostermaier. The main character in the original Ostermaier plot is Lucifer, which plot Eötvös used to write his *The Tragedy of Devil*, later put on stage as an opera in Munich in 2010, directed by Balázs Kovalik. Yet Eötvös was not fully satisfied with this play, therefore he designated Lilith, to himself the most intriguing character, to be the title person for his new opera.

According to these, Adam's first wife was Lilith, who was expelled from Paradise for persuading God to tell her his sacred name. The opera is structured similarly to *The Tragedy of Man*, the couple expelled from Paradise wanders through the past, present and future, led by Lucifer, this latter being equal to God. The opera poses us with a question: what would have happened if our Bible-based culture considers Adam's first wife, Lilith as its ancestress instead of Eve? At the beginning of the opera Lilith is expelled from Paradise, and she is punished to live in the desert as a female demon. She returns to give life to a child, conceived by Adam, which child later frees her from her demonic existence. However, Adam's second wife, Eve hinders her in reaching her goal, and the conflict of the two women pervades the whole play. The reason is that God created Lilith in the same way as he did Adam, equal with him, an independent person, while Eve was created from Adam's rib, as an 'accessory' of his. Lilith represents free will, power, conspiracy and emancipation, while Eve stands for effeminacy, purity and cleanliness, sacrifice. Actions are being formed according to Lilith's will, this fiction of the future displays what it would have been like to have Lilith as our ancestress. The opera does not tell us about the emancipation of men and women, but instead it shows a fiction as to how social structures of the European civilisation would have been shaped, had Lilith been the one chosen to be the ancestress instead of Eve. In the end, Lilith reaches her aim, and gives birth to a child to Adam, still Adam does not choose Lilith to be his partner. Unlike in Madách's work, here Adam is not forced to take a stand between life and death, but the dilemma lays between two women with a totally different approach to life. His decision will determine the next generation. According to Péter Eötvös, the fundamental question of the opera still remains open: "if both women are pregnant, who is actually our ancestress? Are we the descendants of the demonic Lilith, or Eve, lacking independence and permanently seeking her partner?"¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰Interview with the composer on Színház.hu, the Hungarian Theatre Site (Magyar Színházi Portál), on 18th January, 2014.

Existence modalities of the *Tragedy*'s conversions in music¹¹¹ range from Gyula Erkel's incidental music to Péter Eötvös's opera, *Lilith*. During the 1883 theatre premiere, Gyula Erkel's incidental music performed a function of being subordinated to the text, dramaturgical, emphasizing, indicating emotional changes and movements. György Ránki's opera version of *The Tragedy of Man* is an adaptation, since it 'serves' Madáchian ideas and visions, yet the autonomy of transformation is manifested in its being a universal artwork, Gesamtkunstwerk-like feature, which incorporates text, music, visuality, movement forms with an image shift pace in a movie-like manner. Dohnányi's sovereign re-creation, aiming at a unique re-writing within the framework of creation-fall-redemption is a strikingly modern ambition of transformation. The *Tragedy* proved to be an inspirational source of ideas in the case of Péter Eötvös's opera *Paradise reloaded* (*Lilith*), however, with its fundamental structure being, similar, too, it offers a kind of objectivised inspiration regarding the relation of the two.

3 *The Tragedy of Man* and Animated Movies

Szeged-born János Kass's animation film titled *Dilemma*¹¹² was inspired by Madách's *The Tragedy of Man*. According to the graphic artist and sculptor, this outstanding piece of world literature may be considered as a raw material, in which "the tragedy of man of all historical periods can be reflected". János Kass's illustration series substantially differ from any *Tragedy* illustrations made earlier or later. In addition to the 1966 *Tragedy* illustration series, with the main themes of its images since having become classical ones, the so-called framing (more, yet smaller and more simple image units can be found within the frame of the main picture) not only makes it possible, but exponentially multiplies its richness of motifs of the series within

¹¹¹This chapter was also published as a study: MÁTÉ 2015a 7–20.

¹¹²KASS 1980.

itself, its verbal and visual multi-level inter-reference.¹¹³ Last, but not least, it makes the narrativity of the visual system of signs polysemantic.

Inspiration of Madách did not cease to continue even after decades had passed by, as János Kass stated that “the enormous energy of Madách’s soaring creative power has driven me to generate further works of art. As a matter of fact, it was Madách and his *Tragedy* that inspired the birth of my animation film *Dilemma* in 1980, too, and this movie proved to be the first animation film made with CGI in Europe. Even back then Madách’s vision was working within me. By means of the film, I had offered a review of mankind’s history, up until its fate awaiting in the 20th century.”¹¹⁴ However, countless artists have been influenced by the Madách’s opus carrying importance of world literature, yet János Kass as one of the few to, subsequent to his illustrations based on the intertextual relationship of the text, raised in his peculiar way the fundamental question of *The Tragedy of Man*, that is, why do humans exist? What is the past, present and future of individual, what is the fate of mankind? Either Madách or Kass had failed to provide an unequivocal answer to the basic question.

Although the literature of animation movies has positioned it in its historicity, János Kass’s animation film *Dilemma* with its 11 awards still has not been interpreted.¹¹⁵ What is more, in terms of reputation, it may even be considered to be forgotten, despite the fact that this was resolved not long ago by a short article¹¹⁶ and another, essayistically analytic one.¹¹⁷ Kass’s primacy is indisputable in the history of animated movies, since as a result of a cooperation of the then already world famous director János Halász (John Halas) and the American movie industry, Europe’s first computer technology

¹¹³VARGA 2007. 43–44.

¹¹⁴KASS 2006. 29.

¹¹⁵DIZSERI 2006.

¹¹⁶KÉPÍRÓ 2013. 97–99.

¹¹⁷NÉMETH 2015. 201–215.

animation film was created, based on some 1000–1200 phase-drawings prepared by János Kass.¹¹⁸ The static feature of the different, yet intertwining Kass drawings was transformed by means of the computer into rhythmical movement and change.¹¹⁹

Dilemma is an animated short movie, with music in the background, without any text. As regards levels of verbality, only the names of Aristotle, Copernicus and Leonardo da Vinci appear, along with the letters of ‘news’. The solid stylization of Kass drawings, the story told by means of the images and the genre of animation make it possible for the film to emerge as both philosophical and intellectual. Thereby, frame series appearing constitute a transition between character animation and three-dimensional graphic simulation. After being changed, the pictures are remodelled to provide an entirely different image and scene. At times, objects take abstract shapes so within a few seconds they would become an organic part of certain scenes of the original story. Rhythmical repetition is the cohesive element of the short movie, with slow and speedy sections alternating, which latter converges the individual scene units, the single structural units of the film narrative. Much as this almost 11-minute long short movie containing some 160 scenes carries an abstract set of symbols, yet it presents the viewer the philosophical and social issues of our age in an easy-to-understand manner. It is significantly compact, which is due not only to the use of symbols in the images of phase-drawings, but also, owing to the intermediality and genre of the animated short movie. This work of János Kass bears an intermediality of increased gratitude and one offering a special status. On the one hand, it can be found on the borderline between three-dimensional simulated graphics and animation, animation being a mediatory genre itself. Moreover, it acts as a genre having become so permanent between fine arts and film that we may even call it the “seven and a halfth” art, that is, a miniature version of cinematic art.¹²⁰ Besides, it is actually the film-

¹¹⁸KASS 2006. 29.

¹¹⁹LINDNER 2009.

¹²⁰MARGITHÁZI 2002.

likeness of *Dilemma* that efficiently employs the compact feature carried by the possible dynamic nature of film, as a language,¹²¹ by means of the fascinating flow of events getting revealed. This dynamism better suits the contemporary observer's taste than that of the lengthy opus of 4141 lines and its difficult language dealing with the same fundamental question. At the same time, the increased intermediality of *Dilemma* basically stems from Madách's inspiration, by which *The Tragedy of Man*, as a literary work of art and an animated short movie can also be interpreted in its being positioned between text and image.

However Kass's *Dilemma* fully stands an autonomous work of art, when comparing it with Madách's *The Tragedy of Man*, we can observe well-definable analogies, since due to the nature of inspiration the two works of art basically engage almost in a dialogue. The functionality of this intermediary role is that the two mutually intensify each other. Yet if we are not familiar with the dramatic poem, and the comparison with Madách's opus is cancelled at the moment of reception, we do not create space for this intermediary feature. Even then, the animated short film will be a complete one. They both line up colours of past, present and future, as well as, in the case of the short movie, its scenes. Moreover, both one of them give a warning for the devastation of mankind and for the coming of this doom, which, however, could be interpreted even as apocalyptic.¹²² Nevertheless, the quality of this final destruction differs here, it having been caused by the cooling down of the Sun in Madách's work, while in Kass's work it is the continuous slaughter and its endpoint: the nuclear war. Consequently, the triggering factor of this eternal devastation is different, too. In *The Tragedy of Man*, it is an external factor of cosmic determination, encoded in the act of creation, while in the *Dilemma* humans as such are responsible for the doom. Both of them serve as a kind of confrontation, as Madách confronts the reader with the fallibility of man and the distortion of "holy notions", while

¹²¹BÍRÓ 2001.

¹²²NÉMETH 2015. 201–202.

Kass does it with a social and globalizational status, which is characterized by manipulation, alienation, depersonalization, ever-existing struggle and destruction. It is essential to note that this way both artists confront us with the loss of man's essence, yet in a different manner, and they mean different concepts by this essence. In the *Tragedy*, 19th century humans lose the essence embedded in the splendid notions of liberty, equality and fraternity, while in the *Dilemma* loss of man's essence is the autonomy of his individual existence, and its loss is the manipulation itself, the actual process of alienation and destruction. As these works of art provide mankind's conceptual and intellectual, that is, scientific-technical, history of advance, they also represent the ever-continuous struggle, destruction and devastation, moreover, the stories of man's becoming inhuman, its deeds carried against its own substance, be it either good or bad. The principle of construction-deconstruction keeps on alternating in the *Tragedy* from scene to scene, during Adam's formulation of particular notions, and their subsequent realization or unrealizable nature,¹²³ so on the ruins of breakdown a newer notion could arise. Scenes of the *Dilemma* are built up based on the same structural principle, in the rhythm of construction, then deconstruction, and, following this, in the rhythm of the images produced by remodelling. The rhythm of construction and deconstruction prevails in the scenes of creation and falling apart of portraits symbolizing various historical ages, as well as in the scenes of its breakup to one or more men struggling. Frames depicting the modern world carry a similar structural solution, as in scenes after the positive scientific accomplishments in the "Kass-Heads", scientific achievements convert to such technical knowledge and tools that in certain respects already do serious harm to mankind. In the opening frames of János Kass's animation film *Dilemma*, yellow light glitters from the darkness, and transforms into a pendulum, while the background becomes brighter with the film's title showing up in the image near: DILEMMA. Following the silhouette

¹²³MÁTÉ 2013. 181–189. Analysis of the animated movie has been based on the below study of mine: MÁTÉ 2016a.

of the pendulum hovering in outer space, Planet Earth is outlined, and forms an amorphous white substance, which may represent life along with the blue colours rotating around. All this pulsing with the yellow symbol of radiation, illuminates and changes in front of the red background. The frames suggest the creation of material world, space, time and life, this latter symbolized by the pendulum. During the emergence of Aristotle's name the blue planet takes centre-position, followed by the geocentric model transforming into heliocentric, with the name of Copernicus showing up. Finally, this whole breaks down onto its components and takes shape of an enormous light beam, shining further in an initially dark, then enlightened "Kass-head". This was the Solar System; the two different models of outer space and man of intellect appear in the closing frames of the film. All in all, it refers to the creation of our world from a scientific point of view, yet on the other hand it also refers to the man recognizing or constructing the process (in theory).

During the images of introduction, two crucial symbols are displayed as the organizing principle of mankind's existence and the key motives of the movie at the same time: that is the pendulum and the human head. Simultaneously, the pendulum stands for time, but its monotonous movement on the other hand represents timelessness and eternity, too. Thus, this seemingly simple symbol turns out to be a complex one. Images from the film only show the pendulum part of the watch, excluding suspension and the mechanism operating it. This makes it look hanging in the middle of nothing, moved by nothing, it appearing as a monotonous perpetual motion machine. For this reason, it functions not only as the symbol of time, but in a broader sense the created and existing universe, the material and living world, therefore the symbolic feature of the pendulum might as well refer to everything having been created. Connecting motion pictures, the pendulum's double function in the film, indicating time and eternity, is in analogy with the first lines of the *Tragedy's* first scene in which the Archangel Michael describes The Creative Power, one of God's attributes: "You, who yoked the changeless to the changing, / creating everlastingness and time". At the same time, the pendulum refers to eternity by means

of the cyclic nature, connecting the scenes in their structural similarity. It seems as if Madách's Lucifer and the Lord have been united into this pendulum, particularly when we recall their dispute on creation and Lucifer's set of arguments¹²⁴ in the first scene, such as "For we both have created" and "what purpose doth thy whole creation serve?" If we consider Lucifer's question, the Lord itself may be suspected to stand behind the pendulum, the result of the act of creation, its "bad machine":

"Then again – to what end, this whole creation?
To glorify yourself you wrote a poem,
matched it to this feeble hurdy-gurdy
and listen to the same old tune
creak on and on in endless repetition.
Is it appropriate that such an elder
play games that only children can enjoy –"

The pendulum swings back and forth between the two extreme poles. This motion however symbolizes and sums up the ever-changing scenes of various historical and cultural events, its cyclical yet structurally similar repetitions, therefore the recurring dynamics of formation and falling apart.

The other symbol appearing in the opening frames of the short movie is the initially dark, then enlightened "Kass-head". It functions not only as a symbol, but it also refers to the origins of the film as well as to the Heads-series. As examples, we can display the materials exhibited at the Savaria Museum in Szombathely in 1971, and one in the Petöfi Museum of Literature in 1973, both within the framework of an exhibition named "Heads", connected to new aspirations of contemporary art. The nearly 60 pieces of identical Heads moulded of plexi and styrene served as a source to other works of Kass. In his illustrations made to György Faludy's *Prison poems*, the styrene Heads are "decorated with the stigmas of suffering. They are a series

¹²⁴MÁTÉ 2013. 189–206.

of heads, marked with bull's eyes, crown of thorns, prison bars, nightmares of Goya, 20th century clichés (...) thus, I have highlighted some of the previously made heads from the heads, ever-increasing since the 70s, made to illustrate Faludy poems. Using these head I followed the poems, by setting up milestones in between the printed pages. These heads are identical, yet the attributes of pain vary and alternate. The teardrop, the bleeding lips, shot in the back of the head, the barbed wire, humans used as targets, exploited, tortured and humiliated: these are universal signs of mankind. (...) Therefore, these 'heads' are mere outcomes of mass production, the anonymous, stressful mass not knowing its own future. Faceless. Masses do not have a face!”, as János Kass put it.¹²⁵ As a matter of fact, almost the same Heads (bleeding, serving as bull's eyes, dropping tears) can be seen in the animated movie, too, its symbolic feature having been resolved by the artist himself in the above quotation.

In my interpretation, it is the Kass-head symbolizing the man of sense and yet the “mass individual” (the very first appearance of the Head in the film) and depersonalization that became the main character in the plot of *Dilemma* in the two-hundred years of present modernization and the image series of the future. This “Kass-head”, as a schematized, modern good of “mass-production”, is contrasted with more individualized head images of various cultures in the past. By illustrating modern man (following Leonardo's portrait) as a uniform head, indicating that they all lack real features, mimics, and only a bear, faceless image, János Kass provides a firm reference to alienation and the ever-growing trend of modern people to become mechanical, therefore “mass-produced”.

In the series of scenes enlisting historical periods of the past, and constituting the first structural unit of the film, including a short glimpse at the Easter Island, Assyrian, Egyptian, Aztec, African, Greek, Roman, then Middle Age cavalry cultures, the motion of the pendulum implies the historical cyclicity stating that everything is repeated rhythmically in the pole shifts of creation and destruction, the

¹²⁵KASS 1994. 15.

latter due to fighting. At first, these portraits display calmness and balance in themselves, yet later the scenes building up from jigsaw pieces show violent battle scenes, death and bloodshed, following the same logic of offsetting in their structure. The historical change of carnage finishes with the closed image of medieval knight helmets and thus killing becoming faceless, topped with a sea of blood overflowing all. In fact, this is the point where the film's title becomes clear, it being the dilemma itself, and mankind's tragedy, at the same time, between the pendulum's motion, the cyclical repetition relying on the passing of time, between creation, and destruction triggered by man. However, it carries and ending, which leaves one question unanswered: can an end presented as a total one become the beginning of something new?

Another series of past scenes begin here, and, with its increasing rhythm, we reach the present within less than two minutes. The medieval sea of blood turns white and the face of Leonardo da Vinci, the first modern thinker, the creator polyhistor appears, with the flying man's vision, and eventually a sophisticated device in his head. The onset of our current modernity is indicated by a flashy appearance of a Kass-Head, placing the sensible, but impoverished and faceless mass individual in the centre of focus. The images depicting the development of architecture start to be shown, from the plan of St. Peter's Cathedral up until the transformation of the domes. These latter may refer to the continuity of the head motif, the dome representing the "head" of the building, figuratively emphasizing the determining, controlling role of human intelligence. These images eventually come to an end in Big Ben's clock tower. Furthermore, the modernity of some two centuries is kept in motion by this human intelligence. Images are becoming rapidly changing, picturing the unbelievable dynamics in the advance of science, up to our days. The clock transforms into a steam engine, after the spindle of the manufacturing plant the immense advance of chemistry, biology (including the lesser circulation and the greater circulation) and computer science (images of punched cards in the head) is displayed. Finally, all these are continuously transmitted from the Kass-Head to

the Kass-Heads so that ultimately they would transform into a spaceship and leave the planet.

The process starting from and returning to Kass-Heads prevailing in further structural units and scenes, symbolizes that not only all this has been a result of human intellect and ingenuity but it also acts as a harbinger of humans themselves becoming mechanical in our fast-changing world without realizing that in the meantime machines have taken over in people's life and minds. Following Leonardo's portrait, the reflexive process in the advance of science and technology comes into focus. Now, the question is what influence technical and modern tools, created as a result of scientific advancement, exert on our quality of life and the very existence of mankind.

There are no transcendental characters in Kass's work, thus humans must claim all responsibilities for their living space, that is, planet Earth. In the space scene of the film, a small fish vs. big fish episode visualizes the scientific-technical world relying on capitalism. This is the globalisational metaphor of multinational capital (in its Marxian capitalist sense) as such, which swallows up everything that grows big enough to eventually break apart. By locating the metaphoric image in space, this process refers to its own world-wide scale. Then the focus is shifted to Earth, presenting mankind's destruction and the total elimination of its autonomy. Coloured sheets fly from between the rollers of the press machine, thus overwhelming, blinding and muting the individual with a sea of information, emphasizing the helplessness and vulnerability of man, who has already ceased to remain to be human, but instead have become a manipulated victim of media.

Now, a change in scene series takes place in the short movie: so far we have only suspected that the victim is man, now we can be very certain about it as the Kass-Head is in the bull's eye, with the black pistol barrel pointing at us, the spectators. From the stone-axe to the spear and the sword, in this scene of the present we arrive to the pistol. While in ancient civilizations opponents had fought face to face, in the Middle Ages, however, the helmet covered the face, now, in modern times the killer is faceless. Paradoxically, the first sign of life of the

“mass-produced” Kass-Head is having blood pouring out of the hole struck by a pistol bullet, with the blood slowly covering the screen. This is the second sea of blood in the film. After a scene series symbolizing a funeral and presenting the image of a red rose, with a sudden shift we find ourselves in outer space, where the pendulum transforms into the blue silhouette of Planet Earth. Then, it changes to become the image of elementary particles and the nucleus, which is followed by the phenomenon of nuclear fission, the scene constantly being the Kass-Head. In the closing section dubbed with music the tension cannot be intensified any more, we can see a total and ultimate earthly death in the form of a nuclear explosion, still with the human head as its scene. In the first part of the film, faces of ancient human civilizations fell to pieces the same way, yet the difference is that in this series of scenes, after the atomic bomb explosion, the fragments of the head do not become one again, and the domes of the past buildings, their symbolic “heads” are also swept away by the explosion, and all this is replaced by the hopeless desolation and barrenness. Mankind falls victim at the end-point of technical advancement due to man-created science. A teardrop in the man’s eye in the closing scene stands for the symbol of repentance, mourning and helplessness. By now, there is only one (human) head, lonesome, in the middle of nothing, after total elimination and (self) destruction, perhaps another beginning again. The view of the teardrop coming from the almost statue-like Head’s eyes appearing in front of a black background has a cathartic effect on the viewer, making the spectator contemplate by means of the openness and mysterious nature of the closure, and the questionable restart. In János Kass’s work on man and the tragedy of man, the concentration of images, simplicity, intelligibility and greatness are combined. The framework structure, the symbols, the dynamics of formation, decomposition and restructuring, and the presentation of processes starting from and arriving back to the Kass-Head make this short movie dramatic. This involves the demonstration of man’s helpless drift within the defencelessness to the forces he had created, as well as leaving the question of what future will be like open.

When examining János Kass's animated short movie, it can be considered as a cultural criticism of the scientific-technical achievements of modern history yet regarded as advancement. Furthermore, it warns us that these accomplishments may even become the tools of mankind's self-destruction. They can destroy the individual with autonomous and free choice of speech, human relations and ultimately mankind itself. Due to its negative catharsis, this work of art carries a confronting and warning character. Thus, it is a criticism of modernization, a world ruled and controlled by scientific and technological tools and devices, in which man does not appear as an autonomous, free individual, but as a faceless, exploited mass individual or even in a global uniformity. Within the series of scenes with an ever-growing pace, the animated short movie depicts the scurry, the (over)mechanized world as well as the increase of impersonal aggression. At the same time, it makes us realize how human creativity may end up, how great inventions in the hands of those with moral deficiency may become tools of destroying human race itself.

Marcell Jankovics's¹²⁶ animated film titled *The Tragedy of Man* is in fact the adaptation of Madách's main work,¹²⁷ however, besides

¹²⁶Marcell Jankovics (graphic artist with a Kossuth Prize, animated film director with a Balázs Béla Prize, screenwriter, cultural historian, culture politician). In his cartoons he used the treasures of Hungarian folktales and legends (*Song of the Miraculous Hind, Legends of Hungarian History, Son of the White Mare, Hungarian Folktales*). He is also the creator of unforgettable animated movies as *János vitéz (John the Valiant), King Kacor, Mattie the Goose-boy* or the *Gustav series*. His film *Sisyphus* was nominated for an Academy Award in 1974, while his *The Struggle* was awarded the Short Film Palme d'Or at the 1977 Cannes Film Festival. He has also been involved in research of symbols and art history, with several books published dealing with the background and history of symbols (*Book of the Sun, Calendar of Symbols*). CSANDA – LAIK 2011.

¹²⁷A film adaptation of a literary text, which is primarily a reception at the same time, carries the "trace of the medium" and its attitude toward it. In a symbolic sense it represents the literary work of art, while on a material level it appears in a new medium. PEACH 1998. 447–475.

this, with the further thinking of the literary text, and placing it into set of mediums resulting a saturation of meanings he has already created a sovereign, autonomous piece of art. “It was worth it.”¹²⁸ – said the director once in an interview. Likewise, all viewers may have the same standpoint after carefully watching, even several times, this 155-minute long animated film. It was in 1983 when Jankovics completed the screenplay, and by shortening it, he edited the script of the six-hour long dramatic poem to become a 105-minute-long dialogue. Also, he omitted meditative monologues and preferred to incorporate dialogues to the scenario. “Even I was surprised to see how well I have managed to edit the script back then as now it contains no idle sections, but there is room for action and further thinking.”¹²⁹ – said the director in an interview. Indeed, the sense of the *Tragedy*’s text not only did not get hurt, but, as its creator had originally intended, it even provided a coherent interpretation and visual explanation to further facilitate a complete understanding of this literary work.¹³⁰ Using the tool of images, this explanation compressed all untold parts of the literary text, by means of colour symbology, visual interferences, transformation, or symbols. On the other hand, by means of transformations he also moved beyond the text in many respects, thinking it further, moreover, at times even continuing it. The some 155-minutes long film took almost 23 years to make. The very act of creating the film started in 1988, and, due to the management of the numerous grants, fundraising (altogether totalling a budget of 600 million forints), and the technological advance having taken place during the 23 years of making (this way the film represents the history of animated movies in Hungary, from initial hand-drawn limited animations to computed animation), the process lasted until 2011. The second movie version of *The Tragedy of Man* was eventually screened in cinemas on 8th December, 2011, some half a century after Mikós Szinetár’s television adaptation of the *Tragedy*, as an animated movie,

¹²⁸GYENGE 2011.

¹²⁹CSANDA – LAIK 2011.

¹³⁰JANKOVICS 2012.

standing as a work representing the lifetime achievement of Marcell Jankovics.

Madách's *The Tragedy of Man* is regarded as an ideal literary work of art from several respects to be transferred to the set of signs of various mediums. As I pointed out in the second chapter titled *The Precondition for the Creation of Intertextual and Intermedial Relations in the Tragedy of Man*, it was the hermeneutic nature, the ability "to be filled up", interpretative and regulated openness and the potential for the freedom of interpretation in this work of art that I named as the immanent source of productive interpretations and re-creations. I have also emphasized that the medial complexity of Madách's dramatic poem within itself is the internal feature which enables it to be transformed in various forms of art. Such is the descriptive involvement of different visual, auditive or kinesic phenomena into the literary text, as well as their inclusion to indicate their presence there. Also, the typical "dramaturgy of dreams" can be considered such, since historical scenes, as an unreal series of dreams are displayed in connection with Adam's level of reality, thus representing another aspect of "mediality". As a matter of fact, this medial complexity particularly qualifies Madách's work for a motion picture transformation. As the film itself provides an option to, by means of the multitude of concurrent perceptual effects, mediate complex experiences of great impact, in which both emotions and thoughts have their part: "films differ from most forms of communication in the sense that they address not only perception directly, that is they function as the actual physical, perceptual stimulus of the so-called first system of signals, but they actually bear a role in the second line of signals, where, in addition to physical stimuli, conceptual speech is given and important role, too."¹³¹ By using image, sound, music, gestures, motion, distribution of light, etc. it brings such aspects and complexity of phenomena into the recipient's world of experience, which could only be achieved by language, as a verbal medium with only complicated and lengthy circumscription.

¹³¹BÍRÓ 2001. 20.

The television film version of the *Tragedy of Man* was made in 1969, directed memorably by Miklós Szinetár, with László Mensáros as Lucifer, Péter Huszti as Adam, Mariann Mór as Eve. The complexity and dynamics of the film's language, as well as the fascinating flow of events all make it possible for the viewer to realize the summary of the monumental work of Madách, which trustworthily presents us the history of mankind, from the beginnings to the fictitious ending. In Miklós Szinetár's interpretation, it was the complexity of intermediality and text-image-music that made it possible for the philosophical depths, question and response modalities to adjust directly to the elevated threshold of aesthetic experiences of the modern recipient, as regards the complexity of experience impact on the recipient. Moreover, the philosophical questions and answers raised by means of the compound nature of verbal-visual-auditory stimuli are mediated in the mediums of various communicative channels, thus their function was to promote a more complete understanding of the pretext. In Szinetár's television film the literary text of Madách bears a primary role, while acting, involvement of other mediums, the images and the background music all accounted for the interpretation of the above. This television film aimed at achieving solutions analogous with the literary text, stressing out in its adaptation the similarities between literature and the film. Applying André Bazin's terminology, the literary work of art was basically "translated"¹³² to the language of the (television) film.

The Jankovics-adaptation, as an animated film, created in the triple overlap of Madách's literary work of art, the film and fine arts, within an intensified group of intermediate mediums can even be called, using Klopfer's term, a transmedial¹³³ work of art, which

¹³²Construing its various forms, Bazin uses the expression of translation that is the adaptation of literary works of art, which implies film to be a language in his approach. (BAZIN 1995.) However, the question whether we deal with the transmission of language or image is still disputed nowadays. PETHŐ 2002. 9–11.

¹³³KLOEPFER 1999. 43.

denomination occurs more and more frequently within the semiotic and narratological investigations of opera, film and literature.¹³⁴ The film by definition is situated between the multiple intermediate mediums of the “synthetic and intermedial¹³⁵ characteristics integrating means of expression from other branches of art” and the borderline of fine arts, that is the “seven and a halfth” genre, called animated film, which in sum produces a pronouncedly intermedial genre, using ordinary terminology. The animated film gives the viewer the expression as if the series of actions made up of the slightly differing frames and the characters came alive or actually were alive. All this has been achieved by using and mixing static and space elements (line, field, space, colour), and film elements, dynamic and time components (direction, rotation, cut, amplification, background music). While films generally animate real movement, this peculiar genre has the charm of establishing the “illusion” of movement. Quoting the statement of Orsolya Margitházi: “It was as if we have witnessed the dazzle of some ancient magic, where even those things can move we previously thought to be unmoveable. Anything within the boundaries of our everyday lives can happen. There is no doubt that this can only happen in the ‘dream world’ of cinematic art, in the empire of animation.”¹³⁶

The greatness of Jankovics’s work lies in the fact that he had managed to effectively operate all intermedial features of the animated cartoon-adaptation. For instance, a structural trait of the *Tragedy*, namely that 11 of the 15 scenes are basically Adam’s dream regarding different periods of human history, made the displaying of the movie in the genre at the borderline of fine arts and film not only reasonable, but ideal. As a result, not only an adaptation was born, but a sovereign work of art, too. The director, Jankovics Marcell himself asserted on this as follows: “the play itself is a joyride, I have followed the dramaturgy of the dream, which is seemingly chaotic, yet it holds a

¹³⁴BENE 2014. 169–173.

¹³⁵PETHŐ 2002. 18.

¹³⁶MARGITHÁZI 2002.

strict structure. Compression, done by animation only, is a typical dream technique. If in the movie industry you can call someone a dream expert, well, in this case I consider myself to be one”.¹³⁷

The “dramaturgy of dreams” within the intermedial animated movie including the magnitude of Madách’s literary work not only illustrates and adapts the pretext, but it even offers a related re-interpretation to it. As a result, by means of the intertwining of communication channels, it creates a complex, ever-changing formation of statements within the intermediality of text-image-music. This process is accompanied by a saturation of meanings, resulting the emergence of countless symbols and grotesque images to match the pretext, thus extending its interpretative modalities, fulfilling its “ability to be filled up”. Following the unique process and abstract structure of dreams, the dynamics of Jankovics’s images practically show us how they actually work, that is the eternally-moving visual forms of dreams, their changes of shape embedded in a constant metamorphosis, yet all along keeping their being bound to the original opus. The main instrument of expression of the animated movie is the visual language of images, while the verballity of Madách’s pretext is narrated via voices of great actors such as Mátyás Usztics (Lucifer), Piroska Molnár (spirit of Earth) or Tibor Szilágyi (God). The visual-verbal coexistence is accompanied by music, which increases the emotional tone of the combined effect of image and text. Background music was arranged by László Sáry, while, at the same time, in addition to his own works the great ones of African and Greek folk music as well as the immortals of classical music, like Mozart, Bruckner, Rimsky-Korsakov, just to mention a few.¹³⁸ As recurring motifs, scenes related to death are connected with staves from Mozart’s *Requiem*.

Text, image and music complement each other in a peculiar way, thus providing the viewer a complex aesthetic experience, not exceeding the threshold of acceptability. Jankovics’s work is

¹³⁷JAKAB APONYI 2011.

¹³⁸CSANDA – LAIK 2011.

undoubtedly a difficult one to digest, therefore several viewings are required due to the dynamic and rapid pace of the film. Since processing impulses from various mediums require a quite complex concentration on the recipient side, apart from perceiving and noticing the exact physical, sensual (visual and auditive) stimuli conceptual speech must also be dealt with, and, beyond all this, one should note that perception of meaning-plurality with medial complexity is time-consuming, too. On the other hand, the animated movie offers a unique situation, which is a recipient experience, as it makes us discover how naturally our thoughts commute between image and language, visuality and verballity. However, conditions of text-image-music, the coexistence and syncretic nature of different mediums bestow a dynamic and concise feature to the animated movie. This condition prevails since these mediums not only coexist next to each other, but, at the same time, interact, too. The encounter of various mediums, their projections on one another result a number of relations. One of the two major ones is when these mediums can be aligned into an analogue correspondence, due to which moving and presenting certain notions into another medium they carry an illustrating (yet not providing the illustration of Madách's text¹³⁹), adaptive, interpreting-explaining-emphasizing and "translating-interpretive" function. Consequently, these mediums can basically be paralleled into a hermeneutic relation and a dialogue. Being the primary interpreter of the pretext, the director applied an adaptation technique following the spirituality of the original dramatic poem by Madách, displaying a coherent visual interpretation of the literary text, telling about the colours in 5–20 minutes each. Projection of various mediums on each other has another relation, stemming from their dissimilarity, from the "form of difference in their intermediate existence".¹⁴⁰ This derives on the one hand from the dissemblance of

¹³⁹Pusztai Virág compares the directors's instructions regarding Madách visual world with the animated representation of individual scenes. By doing so, she can prove that the animated film cannot be considered as an illustration. PUSZTAI 2013. 89–96.

¹⁴⁰PEACH 1998. 451–452.

verbal-visual-auditive mediums, and from the medial otherness, intermediality, and interartistic nature of various forms of art on the other. Verbal transfer of the literary work of art into the intermedial branch at the borderline of fine arts and cinematic art has an intermedial basic feature,¹⁴¹ namely that it forms the bringing to life by accomplishing the illusion of movement, between the poles of movement and immobility, between bringing to life and rendering lifeless, mixing the arts of space and time with elements of movement and cinematic art. The text of the adapted literary work of art (shortened and experienced text of Madách's pretext), the movement illusion of the film, technical features and genre of fine arts (in addition to hand-drawn animations and by them the display of frescoes, sculptures, reliefs, codex miniatures, etched engravings, cartoon-style etc.) and the intermediality, interartistic characteristic completed by the music all prove what sovereign, entirely autonomous work of art Marcell Jankovics had created.

From the aspect of the reception, the syncretic coexistence, the process of their projection on each other are dynamic, due to their being different, thus (using Lachmann's term) making a "semantic syncretism" possible, which, owing to the eternal movement of mediums, their interaction and transformation, analogue or tense coexistence function as the plurality of meaning in a continuous instability.¹⁴²

Marcell Jankovics created a work with synthesis of history, arts, culture and art history that was generated by the dynamic yet instable nature of our age. In our days, in this chaotic, ever-decomposing space, we perceive animated film as a relevant entity, due to its transformations made continuous. As due to its concise and dynamic characteristics, surprising dimension shifts it fits our accelerated life, as in 155 minutes an amazing amount of information, impulse, experience and thoughts to consider are literally inundated onto the recipient.

¹⁴¹MARGITHÁZI 2002.

¹⁴²LACHMANN 1995. 273.

Jankovics's animated movie succeeded in simultaneously preserving and invigorating Madách's literary work of art, and, as an adaptation fully respecting the ethos of the original book,¹⁴³ furthermore, coherently re-interpreting it. Being an autonomous work of art and remaining in a prolific dialogue with Madách's pretext, it extends each thought of the 105-minute long text, shortened by Madách, in the intermediality of various mediums, offering new and genuine perspectives by means of transformations. For instance, the animated movie further emphasizes one hidden quality of the pretext, which is an ironic perspective,¹⁴⁴ as it enriches Madách's work with several grotesque elements, thus turning the gap between 'is' and 'ought' even more direct, that is the relativity of values and the rule of 'There is'.¹⁴⁵ Such is the first scene of the Roman orgy, the entry of Tancred, the parallel cuts of the Prague Scene, where Kepler and Barbara are seen in turns and the famous astronomer declares his pathetic creed while his wife is having an intercourse with a stranger. The list is endless, with numerous acts of the London Scene etc. The most deviating from the pretext sequence is when we can hear God's last sentence, later becoming a proverb. It seems as if the director had previously read Eco's advice: "Used or estranged clichés be overcome by either breaking down its communicative form it is based on or by conducting an ironic approach thus getting rid of it."¹⁴⁶ Nevertheless, even if he hadn't read Eco's advice, the director apparently took both the decomposition (broken down to words, intonations, verbal and visual elements) and irony regarding the last sentence of the *Tragedy*, later to become a proverb. Upon uttering "I have decreed your destiny, oh man: strive ever on with faith and steadfast trust!" God's iconic figure converts into the Patriarch of the Constantinople Scene persecuting heretics. Thereafter, upon the next, more and more scornful "strive ever" being said, Rudolf, the Holy Roman Emperor

¹⁴³BAZIN 1999. 84–100., PETHŐ 2002. 62.

¹⁴⁴S. VARGA 2007. 461–480., MÁTÉ 2013. 161.

¹⁴⁵MÁTÉ 2013. 181–189.

¹⁴⁶Eco 1998. 315.

previously compromising Kepler can be seen. Then, after reaching the even more cynical-sounding "...and steadfast trust" section Robespierre ordering the beheading of Danton, the London showman launching the Ferris-wheel, and finally the old scholar of the Phalanstery are demonstrated. The very last sentence uttered by God manifests in the sound differentiation¹⁴⁷ of intermediality, and thus the high tension. The pronunciation of the final sentence on the auditive level, with the sarcastic, cynical and slow-paced intonation coupled with the intensive view, figures carrying Adam's disappointment, establishes an ironic quality, which definitely questions the written message of this ending sentence, firmly confronting it. Moreover, separation of the written form speech by means of uttering the words, and the irony appearing in the mediality of visuality increases the negative catharsis, not allowing room for developing the comforting sense of "everything will be fine" in the recipient. The historic atrocities occurring during the one and a half century that has passed since Madách's present do not allow the creator of the animated movie to mediate the "and trust" in a transcendental manner. The series of images shown during the sentence uttered, the reverse set of reference to the meaning of colours and the sarcastic articulation all generate sharp tension with the written sentences of the pretext. The director aligns current executives and travesty persons of 'is' in power who, throughout the whole opus, contribute to the distortion of certain "holy notions" of Adam in reality, making it represent the opposite, similarly to what the showman or the old scholar does by distorting and depreciating art and science. In sum, the above lead to the disillusioning of Adam. In the world of animation it is not God who has the final say, but the crying Adam, the first man, who speaks on the life struggle as follows, in a resigned voice: "The goal is death, but life is struggle, strife, / and it is strife itself that is man's goal."

Marcell Jankovics visualized colours with a rich set of symbols, references to art and art history relevant in the given era, and in a

¹⁴⁷Applying Peach's term, originally borrowed from Derrida. PEACH 1998. 451.

style¹⁴⁸ using their characteristic representation conventions or medial techniques, with almost encyclopedic completeness¹⁴⁹ and consciousness. The graphic artist, the director of the animated movie has used its wide range of knowledge on cultural history, symbol research and mythology to incorporate them in an almost unnoticed manner into his works, as well as into his animated movie on the *Tragedy*. He claims that art must act in a useful way, otherwise it has no sense at all: “From the very onset I have believed that art as such is a useful entity. And, if it should not be useful, it is useless then.”¹⁵⁰ I tend to see this usefulness, apart from maintaining Madách’s work, in, among others, the reinforcement and expansion of its three meaning-horizons, which are universal, historical and up-to-date. The philosophical topic of the literary work of art is an explanation of the world with universal completeness, providing and seeking meaning, interpretation of oneself and the intellect. Its content is the positioning of the philosophical concepts and thoughts confronting and criticizing each other in historical dimensions. Madách’s opus is about creation, man, historical ages, as well as the development history of ideas, these latter confronting their realization. It also tells us about the meaning of human existence, while at the same time it raises fundamental questions of existence philosophy, moral, universal and updatable issues to all readers.¹⁵¹ Likewise, Jankovics’s animation as an adaptation has retained these features of the pretext, enriching it with a visual adaptation, thus having been able to further expand these rudimentary horizons towards a work of art shaped autonomous.

Employing these symbols, Marcell Jankovics expands the horizon of universality, therefore I aim to discuss it in detail in the last third of my study. The historical dimension is complemented and completed with references of art and culture history. From the already known narrative of the development of art history, the medium of art as a

¹⁴⁸GYENGE 2011.

¹⁴⁹JAKAB APONYI 2011.

¹⁵⁰M. TÓTH – KISS 2014.

¹⁵¹MÁTÉ 2013. 90–113.

mediator is highlighted (style and carrier), in addition to some other iconic works. Also, he deals with philosophical issues, too, namely the relation of life and art, during which separateness of the two territories of the work of art and life (reality) is dissolved by having works of art and life events project over each other, thus mutually using each other to build up and intertwine. Just to take a few examples from the many, the two-dimensional paintings of the Egyptian tomb chambers represent the crowd, while after being elevated into three-dimensional imagery, they in transition picture the Pharaoh. Red and black figures of painted vases come to life in the Greek Scene and subsequently smash the vases, perhaps thus indicating the decline of Greek culture. As regards reliefs on Roman sarcophagi, Roman legions are marching, as gladiators began to fight their battle, this way changing the static condition of mosaics floors into a dynamic movement, and eventually arising as three-dimensional figures from it. Also, the fall of the Roman Empire is pictured by the permanent cracking of plaster walls, petals falling from the flowers of trees on the palace walls, and statue-like characters become gradually fragmented. In all of the above, the medium mediating (vase, sarcophagus, mosaic, fresco, and statue) is made to be the narrative part of the image series. This creative and authentic approach, meaning the elevation of medial elements into the process of storytelling returns later on. The other peculiarity is when the director plays with basic features typical of the genre of animated films, that is how lifeless objects (frescoes, statues, mosaics) become alive, while in other scenes exactly the opposite happens, the living change to lifeless, for example in the London Scene, where the craftsman's loved one turns into a puppet, or in the Space Scene, which shows the destruction of Adam ending up in the form of a lifeless spacecraft. Moving back to medial styles characteristic of different ages, the golden background and stage-like settings of the Constantinople Scene are like codex illustrations, reminiscent of codex miniatures; blue-white-red whirling ink drawings accompanying the mutinous crowd scenes wedge in the etched engravings of the Prague Scene; coloured sketches of the London Scene turn into black and white at times. So here a time travel begins, leaving Madách's

present, the horizon of being up-to-date is becoming more and more definite, which, however it returns several times during the entire film, at this point it proves to be at its most prominent level. The director has chosen a Ferris-wheel as a sort of 'time machine', spanning the some 150 years having passed by since Madách's present. Different historical traumas come to life, in which, quoting Jankovics's comments, "devil show us his devilish face", in the forms of Lenin, Hitler and Stalin. Further thinking of the death dance in the pretext, the historical table spanning the 20th century, figures spinning into nowhere on the Ferris-wheel are overall remarked by the director as follows: "Madách so far, from now on Jankovics! The way I have been selecting from the actors, who will line up here. (...) Some do not exist at all, some have come from films, some arrive from art, science, and some are politicians and public figures shaping conscience of the masses. Also, some are good, while some are bad, and unfortunately, the whole thing has been controlled by a spirituality which rather reminds us the dance of death. (...) Those aligned on the wheel are of many kinds, a group of people on the brink of extinction, a Hungarian invention, a woman after female-to-male reassignment surgery, murdered politicians, overweight adolescents, a boy wrapped in the Hungarian flag, standing in the face of a police line. Finally, a polar bear can be seen, the perish of which shows what awaits us after global warming."¹⁵²

Words cannot describe the visual experience and impact impulse we can perceive from the first scene onwards, including the transformation of shapes and colours, diverse shifts between dimensions, rhythmic movements of images with transition, ideas, special tricks, a rich manifestation of visual fantasy. On the recipient's part, watching this film requires a great deal of mental energy and effort, as it assumes a visual competence which has the immediate perception and comprehension of the image message as a basic element while it also takes for granted a high level of reading comprehension competence, too. Moreover, living through and

¹⁵²JANKOVICS 2012.

understanding this ever-changing work of art created in the intermediality of text-image-music is also presumed. Degrees of interpretation and comprehension obviously depend on the recipient's background knowledge on the history of art. It particularly manifests itself in the visual representation of symbols and their association to the text, however, should it be absent, the speciality of this film is that it is capable of mediating this knowledge. Upon the application of symbols, as Marcel Jankovics put it in an interview speaking as an art historian, he actually implements it as a film director: "As an art historian all I do is translate myths, symbols (...) and attempt to put together objects taken apart."¹⁵³

Further on, as part of the accomplishment process regarding semantic syncretism, I shall only focus on the first three biblical scenes, where I present the application of symbols, which is one of the major factors in the formation of the universal horizon. The first scene depicts the act of creation, introducing the mighty forces and implying a hermetic philosophical analogy with the nebulas projecting over the human iris. This image series are interpreted by our rational consciousness as something perceived this was by all-time man. Beyond this, in accordance with an analogy in Trismegistus' tract of Hermes it can be construed as whatever exists in the microcosm exists in the macrocosm, too. The occasionally abstract frames of the stars, light, the Milky Way and pitch darkness indicate that ancient, universal symbols live within us, while at the same time they represent how the universe works. They demonstrate opposite forces and their necessary coexistence, the divine light, and next to the symbolism of its flashing double cross, the ever-changing symbol of pitch darkness of alternating shape. (Both the double cross of the divine light and the symbolism of devil's altering black sphere are recurred in the closing 15th scene.) The narrative of the seven-minute long second scene, which is the fall of the first couple, is depicted by the director with the tree's symbol and the ever-changing symbols of colours. Eve is created from the tree's root, as described by Yakut tradition, in the

¹⁵³CSANDA – LAIK 2011.

form of the tree-foremother and the tree-forefather.¹⁵⁴ At the same time, these trees of the world can be regarded as trees of the world with their roots stemming from the underworld and stretching out to the sky. Men receive a materialized body only at the end of the third scene, up until then they were hollow, contoured bodiless figures in symbolic colours. Their initial green colour indicates their being creatures of nature, assimilating to the environment of Eden. Yet the instinctive desire appears in Eve's eyes in red, which is when she is about to pick a "fruit of desire" and thus God's prohibition is uttered. During their dialogue with Lucifer, their silhouettes are seen in sky-blue. On the contrary, Lucifer stands for pitch dark, with his black figure forming either the snake, the Anubis-headed creature, or a character with bat wings, this latter returns in the closing of the opus. The changing colour symbols of the first couple yet follows their progress in being lured to possess knowledge and immortality. While Lucifer's arguments are told on one's own power, the power of thoughts and the greatness of free shaping of our fate, on why we should resist God's bans. In doing so, onto the silhouettes of both men and Lucifer's the pieces of our later historical fate are projected, further writing the pretext via images, thus providing future reference in a visual form to historical scenes and figures to appear later on. This creative solution fulfills the function of future reference, while merging the figures of Adam and Eve a reverse reference if offered in the story of creation to the woman's narrative, who was previously created from man. The result of Lucifer's temptation is the resistance against God's ban, committing the original sin, which results first Eve's eye and then her body turns red when she takes the apple functioning in the cold background as a lamp. Subsequently, she bites in the apple, and Adam, like her before, becomes red, too. Life, blood, colour of the body represents us that man has awakened to self-consciousness, his own mortality. However, he cannot taste the fruit of immortality. The couple in red escapes from the green of Eden running, complementary colours generate enormous tension, while God speaks, disappointed

¹⁵⁴HOPPÁL – JANKOVICS – NAGY – SZEMADÁM 1997. 62.

(“Adam, Adam, you have abandoned me. / I, too, abandon you. Go now and see / what by yourself you’re able to achieve.”) After this, the couple becomes tiny to eventually find shelter under Lucifer’s bat wings. At this stage, the screen is in cold blue and grey. The same grey coldness and desolation radiate from human figures, too, while Adam and Eve set out to reach the dark world. Now, it is worth making some references to the last scene in terms of colour symbolics. In the first half of the 15th Scene it is this distinctness that will have an emphasis in the characters’ skin colour. Adam is grey, indicating the dream-triggered despair for mankind’s future, while Eve is lifelike, vivid, proving her confidence in her future as well as her being a mother. Finally, in the closing part of the 15th Scene, upon returning to God, contours of their bodies take colours of the rainbow, which clearly represent the new covenant with God, referring to Noah’s story.

At the beginning of the 3rd Scene Adam enters a dark cave, thus illustrating the lack of divine guidance, his being abandoned by God. The torch he is holding in his hand may stand for divine light. On his other side Lucifer escorts the first man in the shape of a dog. All in all, this inseparable duality exists in good and bad, not only outside, but inside, too. In this scene, glittering of the light in Adam’s eyes refers to the presence of good forces, whereas he is carving his Venus statue. On the other hand, existence of evil forces is shown by snapshots in which we see flashing black figures of prehistoric man dancing around the fire, executing magical acts.

Of the frame scenes (1–2–3., and 15.), it is the 3rd and 15th scenes that really move beyond the literary text. By this, a semantic syncretism is created, by means of the deviating mediums generating (verbal, visual, auditive) tension and projecting on each other, which phenomenon functions in the plurality of meanings and the creation of new layers of meaning. Hereby I would take two pieces of syncretism as examples from the Third Scene. The abstract contemplation of the dialogue with Lucifer is practically translated by the snapshots from the everyday life of prehistoric man. Such are the carving of the Venus statue, struggle with nature for survival, yet all these at the same time

generate tension between general and exact verbal and visual concepts. This strained coexistence of the two mediums opens up a new layer of meaning, which refers to abstract thinking stepping over specific points. Also, it points to the fact that here we do not face a discourse with an external evil but in fact a dialogue is conducted between man and himself, with his double self carrying the knowledge of good and bad. Similarly to the previous case in the other two topics dealing with semantic syncretism, the director steps over the pretext of Madách's literary work of art by incorporating cave paintings, Mother Nature and the Venus of Willendorf with their added meanings. This latter nicely shows the replicate of the creator's intention of using symbols, the deconstruction and construction of symbols. The light of the torch in Adam's hand pictures the animals on the walls of the Lascaux Cave. These drawings and interferences appear in the scene interconnected, thus referring to our concepts regarding the magical activity and within that our ideas on the formation of art. One interference of cave paintings is already mentioned quality of the magical activity to merge good with bad. Such feature is the creating moves of black shadow hands drawing and bringing things to life, or the human hand showing respect for the deer, drawing its antlers decorated with the sun and stars, yet in a different image series killing the animal. Harmonic and sinister tones of the background music indicate this polarity. Another interfering approach of cave paintings projects the development of arts, the process of prehistoric man imagining exact forms into random shapes. On the other hand, the light in his eyes as a divine spark offers another interference, thus giving a proof that whenever man creates something, he does so similar to God, from nothing, bringing things to life, in our case animals are created by means of drawings. The multiple recurrence of the fire dancing in the cave gives an opportunity not only for different transformations, but change of time dimension, too. This is how prehistoric man struggling for his survival in the 3rd Scene converts into an Eskimo, who is a creature with bare instincts, without human traits, focusing only on survival, thus ominously forecasting events of the 14th Scene. The fertility statuette of Venus of Willendorf, an

iconic work of prehistoric art induces various narrative meaning layers in a semantic syncretism. On the one hand it refers to the alleged creative course of prehistoric man, while Adam carves, during a seemingly mechanical work process he contemplates in a meditative state of mind. In the animated movie the sentences of the philosophical conversation with Lucifer are heard, and montage-like scenes from the life of prehistoric man wedge into this abstractness. Or, as we can see Adam longing to recall the mythological story of Icarus using his wings, thus giving an insight into the origins of mythological narratives. On the other hand, while Adam sculpts the statue, these snapshots imply the relation between mankind and Mother Nature, as well as other role model, big-breasted Eve acting in the background. When Adam claims to possess the knowledge promised by Lucifer words by Spirit of the Earth are told, and what we see is a gigantic Venus-like statuette of fertility, a progenitress, presenting her power as Mother Nature. In an astrological sense she is Gaia, as soil, Demeter. Mother Earth of dual nature is “a warm-hearted mother and a cannibal” too, she is “breed and decay”.¹⁵⁵ Spirit Earth, this not so easily interpretable character of the pretext, is enriched with an additional meaning by Marcell Jankovics, in an intermediate space of verballity and visuality. Furthermore, he presents it in the complex system of correspondence of semantic syncretism with the Venus statuette of individual life and Mother Earth embracing the macro-world.

After demonstrating a few intermedial features of Marcell Jankovics’s animated movie, it is clear that its concentration, dynamics, set of symbols, references both forward and backward can only be accomplished with lengthy and complicated circumscriptions on an analytical level of grammatical composition. As a result, Gombrich’s statement made some half a century ago seems even more justified, as “we are right now at the beginning of a historical era when image takes over the role of the written word”.¹⁵⁶ However,

¹⁵⁵HOPPÁL – JANKOVICS – NAGY – SZEMADÁM 1997. 70.

¹⁵⁶GOMBRICH 1978. 123.

nowadays the written word and image are situated next to each other, just as in our present case. Ultimately, the viewer of Jankovics's animated movie is positioned into a special, and undoubtedly difficult recipient status, since, in addition to comprehending the text, he or she must have "genuine" sight,¹⁵⁷ too. Therefore, this animation teaches the ability of this real sight to all viewers, in this resides the one of its utility, meant by the director, beyond the fact that it further carries on the heritage of Madách's classical work.

4 *The Tragedy of Man* as the Creator of Interartistic Relations

The Tragedy of Man, a dramatic poem by Imre Madách is a representative item of 19th century Hungarian literature, with a quite controversial and varied history of interpretation. This history of interpretation and receptions may be the largest it dealing with only one piece of Hungarian literature, despite the fact that the opus is "not perfect". Its history regarding its impact is similarly outstanding, not only in terms of its greatness, but of its peculiarity as well. As I have already indicated in Chapter I with some data, apart from its intertextuality, Madách's opus is rich in spectacular illustrations, adaptations and transformations, moreover, it possesses a number of various adaptations and revisions, 'further thinking' and 'remakes' of the poem in different art mediums. Due to this grandeur and variety of *The Tragedy* doubly manifesting (both in the history of interpretation and in the influences), that is, its unbroken power of impact even after one and a half century, I deem it to be a necessary and indispensable task to explore all hermeneutic and aesthetic characteristics that make it possible.

Even in spite of this dedicated nature of the *Tragedy*'s vast impact, paradoxically, this piece of art had generated extremely adverse aesthetic evaluations and critics, from its first publication up until the last third of the 20th century. According to Béla G. Németh "it was generally hymns or abuse. Arany's inaugural speech is normally cited

¹⁵⁷GADAMER 1994. 161.

as a pro argument, while Erdélyi's article of opinion is referred to as a con one."¹⁵⁸ János Arany regarded the *Tragedy*'s immanent peculiarities to be its real value.¹⁵⁹ On the contrary, because of an external requirement, János Erdélyi perceived the aesthetic value of the opus questionable owing to the lack of three elements: uniform view of the world, "an approach of history as a uniform build-up of values" and historical authenticity.¹⁶⁰

All the above indicate that this piece of art has brought traditional aesthetic categories to a 'crisis'. So even if despite some of its linguistic and poetic incompleteness, this complex poem has still lived on to this day and has exerted its impact intensively, thus these features cannot be explained using ordinary aesthetic categories. Similarly, one may find it difficult to perceive how a work of literature has been able to generate a controversial series of interpretations continuous for one and a half century, yet, at the same time, create a 'remade' presence perpetually renewing in many works of different branches of art, which already bears a significance of cultural history. By today, this history of interpretation and influences has become an open existence process, an act of sense deploying the potentials of the *Tragedy*. Therefore, this complex way of being, the history of interpretation and influence is closely connected to the very existence of the interpreted subject.¹⁶¹ In my view, one of the fundamental aesthetic values of this piece of art is the fact that this opus provides a wide range of "different interpretations" manifesting in the history of interpretation and influences. Also, I do believe that the source of these "different interpretations" can be perceived in the hermeneutic-aesthetic peculiarities of the *Tragedy*: in its hermeneutic feature and

¹⁵⁸NÉMETH G. 1987. 94.

¹⁵⁹János Arany's letter written to Imre Madách on 5th November, 1861. MÖM II, 1014–1015.

¹⁶⁰VERES 1978. 173–183.

¹⁶¹A paradigmatic line, according to Iser, when the interpretation itself closely belongs to its existence and very essence, which actually is the interpreted subject: ISER 2004. 20–21.

“hermeneutic capacity to be filled up”; that is, its ‘regulated’ openness and inclination to give grounds to free interpretation, as well as in its involvement with the poem. For some 150 years now, all the above have enabled the continuous presence and complex way of existence, interpretation and influence history of the opus to be actively present. This chapter summarizes these hermeneutic and aesthetic characteristics from a theoretical point of view, yet still related to the *Tragedy*. I have made my approach from the understanding-interpreting-applying quality of the reception process, and its ‘recreated’ manifestations already turned explicit, as well as from the literature related to the history of interpretations of the opus (scientific and essayistic), trying to view the dramatic poem from its materializations manifested into various works of art.¹⁶² Furthermore, I do deem it essential that the methods and results of my investigation directed toward this very work of art have justified Gadamer’s radical statement, declaring that “aesthetics should merge and dissolve into hermeneutics.”¹⁶³

When examining the obvious and apparent variety and also contradictions of the history of interpretations and influences in the *Tragedy*, the “different interpretations”¹⁶⁴ on the reception side, the following of the separating factors prevailed: the influence exerted

¹⁶²This chapter relies on the research results of a part of my monograph titled “On the ‘Different-interpretations’ of *The Tragedy of Man*”. MÁTÉ 2013. 17–60.

¹⁶³GADAMER 1984. 126.

¹⁶⁴According to Gadamer, the already understood and perceived correlations of meaning constantly expand to the direction of the “different comprehension” of those concepts already perceived and understood. The reason for this is that “comprehension does merely reproduce things, but turns out to be a permanently creative attitude [...] Therefore, it is sufficient to state the *we comprehend things differently, provided we comprehend them at all.*” GADAMER 1984. 198–203., 207–217. (Quote: 211.)

In Hans Robert Jaub’s reception aesthetics, “different-interpretation” is a process which not only occurs in a given hermeneutic situation during each and every reception, but also in the historical process-like concept of an exact work of art, thus, “it always specifies the essence of the text differently (and more completely) [...] by using new degrees of solutions.” JAUB 1997. 152.

by the receptor's horizon, cultural pattern, literacy, previous knowledge and taste; the manifestation of his/her world-view and ideology; the manifestation in an adjustment to mainstream contemporary ideas; the conscious or unconscious application of a given interpretation strategy in the reception process. Another substantial source of the otherwise rich "different interpretations" of the *Tragedy* can be found in the reception process and in its nature of applying it simultaneously with interpretation and comprehension. This peculiar applying nature stems from the fact that the explicative, self- and existence interpreting (immanent, taking place within the poem and calling for interpretation at the same time) nature of the *Tragedy*'s philosophy proposes the option of an authentic interpretation of its own existence, one's actual position, understanding our age, seeking sense and finding opportunities to shape forms of being in an applicable manner. Hence, this applying-applicative quality proves to be the depository of "different-interpretations", thus the variety of interpretation and impact histories as well, since, in Gadamer's words, "we actually understand ourselves in the work of art, step by step."¹⁶⁵ Here we see the application phase, after the hermeneutic interpretation and perception, which is when the genuine impact of the poem becomes realized in its merging into our lives, "gets into our existence", so that its self-interpretative and self-creating nature turns out to be apparent. The ongoing socio-cultural dialogue (started one and a half centuries ago) on the *Tragedy* has been created along "interests controlling application",¹⁶⁶ which dialogue, projected and materialized, produced a bulk of interpretation histories, and an extremely high number of remakes and adaptations in various fields of art, intertextual, artistic and intermedial connections. Therefore, this dramatic poem ranks among those classical works of art which, owing to their "own fertility",¹⁶⁷ embody a "cultural performance nature", have become and are becoming a part of cultural

¹⁶⁵GADAMER 1984. 85.

¹⁶⁶I apply Hans Robert Jaub's term: JAUB 1981. 195.

¹⁶⁷György Márkus's terminology has been used here: MÁRKUS 1992. 164–165.

practices in use in the given era, as much as their object and function are concerned. Obviously, the continuous dialogic relationship with the work of art, in Gadamer's terms, "is in process, and thus cannot be terminated".¹⁶⁸

Considering this dialogic process from the a work-of-art perspective, then, based on my Madách-biography, it has become visible¹⁶⁹ that aesthetics in case of the *Tragedy* possess such hermeneutic characteristics that may very well generate the potential of the sometimes controversial and variant "different-interpretations", its intensive-looking operation and thus the recreation, what's more, the further thinking of the poem ('further creation'). That is to say, the (self-) identity of this work of art lies in the fact that it makes the creation of a wide range of "different-interpretations" possible by means of its special virtues. Such special virtue is the poem's hermeneutic nature, by which I mean the existence, world and self-interpreting processes of hermeneutic character taking place within the poem, as well as its complex philosophical problematics and a feature calling to 'comment' it. Among others, this hermeneutic nature helps to realize the "hermeneutic capacity to be filled up" in the reception process, as the prevalence of the ambiguity's aesthetic value, which is a basic factor in the value structure of the work of art, and this structure is capable of revitalization.¹⁷⁰ Another aesthetic peculiarity of the opus is its interpretative, and formal-logical, 'regulated' openness. In its interpretative character, openness originates in its

¹⁶⁸GADAMER 1984. 388.

¹⁶⁹MÁTÉ 2013. 61–241.

¹⁷⁰Miklós Almási reckons the "hermeneutic capacity to be filled up", including its ambiguity, to be the *immanent and fundamental value-creating* factor of the work of art as the major and most significant source to aesthetics generation, that is, if "we take the possible ambiguity as a basis, this sponge-like thing, which is capable of absorbing and expressing troubles of various recipients' present-worlds. Namely, I regard its hermeneutic capacity to be filled up as the key element in the poem's immanent value structure. The more options can be fit in here, the more valuable it is". ALMÁSI 1992. 202–203.

hermeneutic nature and capacity to be filled up, while its formative-logical and 'regulated' openness derives from the making of aesthetics, thus the forming method of the philosophy (and many of its philosophical scope problems) of the opus. The abovementioned peculiarities combined make it possible that the freedom of interpretation, a determining element of aesthetics, could prevail. The *Tragedy's* power of impact reflects not only in its history of interpretation's volume, but the very fact that it operates spanning through generations and exerts its effect further and further fields of intellectual culture, thus objectifying its impact in various fields of art. This magnitude and diversity of the histories of interpretation and influences represents the *Tragedy's* freedom of interpretation as well as its objective presence and operation, it being a concept of outstanding aesthetic value.

My theoretical starting point is that the freedom of interpretation is possible in relation to its determination. The gist of my conclusion implies that the freedom of interpretation, its prevalence and some sort of determination always go together with its moving, ever-changing nature, so this is where the continuity of interpretations and the possibility of "different interpretations" are rooted. I consider this work of art to be mainly determined by the dynamically interrelated factors of interpretation liberty; secondly, such an ever-changing and moving determination is the interpreting receptor; thirdly, the interpretive process generated by the receptor and the interpretation strategy validated within, which latter can also function as a changing determination. All variables, moving entities regulated in themselves are determined.

Therefore, on the one hand, the liberty range of interpretation is assigned by the opus, as a "moving determination", yet, on the other hand, it controls it, at the same time. Due to the polyphony¹⁷¹ of the

¹⁷¹This polyphony is detailed and explained in the book of Pál S. Varga, him analyzing individual parts (including Adam's, Lucifer's, Eve's, the Lord's and historical Man's), this presenting their diverse interpretations of existence, world views, self-interpretations, and their relations to each other. S. VARGA 1997. 5-6.

Tragedy, revealed by Pál S. Varga, and its hermeneutic nature and capacity to be filled up, the formal-logical background of its openness, thus resulting a ‘regulated’ openness, the work of art itself offers a dynamic and ever-moving determination in the process of the prevailing reception. The ‘controlled’ openness of the opus takes alternative solutions to its philosophical problems as a basis. In my terminology, philosophical response variations (being constructed in trinities) are composed on the theoretical horizon of the metaphysical-antimetaphysical (the ‘everyday life practice’ philosophy, contradicting both of the latter) philosophy, of which variations none become absolutized in the overall philosophical wholeness of the poem.¹⁷² Therefore, there are three philosophical horizons: the metaphysical thinking can typically be observed in Adam’s aspirations: such as pursuit of essence, belief in notions, longing for omniscience, declaration and seeking of the meaningfulness of existence, a sort of theological perception of history, representation of strive-philosophy and free will, directing toward a higher sphere of existence, accompanied by divine endeavours. The antimetaphysical horizon belongs to Lucifer: relativism, mechanic materialism, absolute determinism, the cyclical circulation-approach, the statement of the senselessness of being, as well as its lack of sense, and relativism of values. The theoretical horizon of ‘everyday life practice’ philosophy can be opposed to the speculativeness and exclusiveness of both the latter. This horizon is present in a mosaic-like manner in Eve’s positive taking shape a number of times, in the awakenings of the struggling Adam, and in the Lord’s manifestations in the closing scene: such are the “but still” strive philosophy, realizing the meaningless nature of divine endeavours (by Kepler), the chance of moral-spiritual development, orienting toward higher spheres of existence. The balancing of the exclusively (in an “either-or” relation) opposed response variations within the metaphysical and antimetaphysical controversies take place in this ‘everyday life practice’

¹⁷²I analyze this philosophy in the chapter titled “*How does philosophy transubstantiate into aesthetics in the Tragedy of Man?*” MÁTÉ 2013. 61–241.

philosophy, and the value-hierarchical co-existence of opposites (in an “and, but” relation). During the exponential opposition neither theoretical horizons can become exclusive. It is actually this opposition that enables us to label the entire philosophy of the *Tragedy* a typical feature of modernity, since neither theoretical horizons, nor the alternative solutions and response variations of subordinated philosophical problems may become exclusive, or absolute. Similarly to the philosophical discourse of modernity (using Habermas’s terminology), the *Tragedy*’s philosophy can be interpreted as “openness to the future”,¹⁷³ the lack of universal metanarrative being a harbinger to the Lyotardian recognition.¹⁷⁴ These modernity features of the *Tragedy*’s philosophy, continuous negation, denial of absoluteness and certainty, and the “openness to the future” all manifest in the formation of theoretical horizons and philosophical problems, in their contradiction of highly increased degree, and ‘regulated’ openness. Therefore, the *Tragedy*’s philosophy is the expression and representation of modernity’s philosophical discourse at the same time, manifested in the manner of forming this philosophy, being its very essence. Due to its “on-the-move” nature, its internal relations and dynamics, the *Tragedy*, as a determined entity thus gives ground to various productive interpretations, yet the actual direction of possibilities is controlled by the opus itself. This is what I have specified as “regulated openness”.

Another determining factor in the room for interpretation’s freedom is the receiver, who, due to its features typical of its expectation horizon, traditions, hermeneutic situation, and role (“naive receiver”, and/or as an analyzing “professional receiver” and/or as an artist carrying out recreation), acts as a party continuously on the move, yet represents a determination in its motion, it being a constantly changing element in its uniqueness and historical characteristics. Within this could reveal the consciously or unconsciously involved interpretation strategy of the receiver, who is

¹⁷³HABERMAS 1998. 11.

¹⁷⁴LYOTARD 1993. 8.

a participant in the aesthetic activity. Obviously, this latter fact also determines the freedom of interpretation and offers a similarly moving determination, both in its uniqueness and historical characteristics.

The history of theoretical trends behind interpretation strategies in Hungary are coeval with the interpretation history of the *Tragedy* itself, so an increasing level and space of freedom can be observed in the positivist, historical, Marxist, hermeneutic and reception aesthetic interpretation and analyzing strategies, all these having a chronological and at times overlapping operation. Interpretation strategies and analytical methods determined by different schools of the study of literature can propose a continuously changing, moving set of aspects, which imply another and further peculiarities of the *Tragedy*, or any other work of art. Similarly, this increasing level of freedom is visible in the *Tragedy*'s different manifestations in various branches of art. During the transfer from the medium of literature to another branch of art, the interpretation process takes place within the 'space' between two worlds. Regarding this interposition, remakes and adaptations drifted further and further from the original text in terms of its historicity. On the other hand, these remakes, adaptations and transformations appear in newer and newer formations (genres, intermedial phenomena), carrying the ever-renewing genre and formal characteristics of art.

I will unfold the tension between the different determinations within the process of interpretation and comprehension, where determinations include the text, the unique and historical existence, cultural pattern and interpretation strategy of the receiver-recreator. If we project the process of interpretation freedom within this space created by determinations, then its continuous renewal, namely the birth of another interpretation, "different-perception" and consequently the creation of remaking will necessarily be accompanied by the removal or dislocation of the abovementioned determination. By means of this dislocation, more and more creating spaces may open to the freedom of interpretation, thus generating a different interpretation of the opus. The current qualities of the text, the receiver, the reception process, and also, the currently validated

interpretation strategy all function as the peculiarly moving barriers of the interpretation strategy. These determinations continuously on the move operate the interpretation and impact history processes, moving them toward the birth of newer and newer meanings, interpretations and remakes, as well as toward the continuity of “different perceptions”. As a work of art, during its interpretation the *Tragedy* remains to be a living piece, yet relative in its specific series of action, thus, among others, it lacks an ultimate, essential or single true meaning, however, in addition, it possesses only one-time and exact meaning-creations and unique remakes (objectivised in different works of art). Therefore, even though the freedom of interpretation is limited by means of moving determinations as variously validated barriers, yet it is an open process never to be closed in its action and continuity, since the option of “different perception” will never cease to be linked to the freedom of interpretation. As a result, not only the series of interpretation can be considered to be an open yet unfinished process, but the creation of remakes objectivised in different works of art as well.

When highlighting the relation between the work of art (as a moving determination) and the receiver (as a moving determination) within the process of interpretation and recreation as well, two fundamental attitudes can be observed. The interpreter validates its freedom in seceding from the determined nature of the opus, that is, it abandons all ties made by the text, enforcing its freedom independently from the poem, directing toward “freedom from something”. Some accept the text-evoked determination of the interpretation, the orientation of “freedom to something”, which, at the same time, itself represents a continuous dislocation in the case of the *Tragedy*, owing to its hermeneutic system, “capacity to be filled up” and “regulated openness”. Here two different philosophical approaches of freedom interpretations may be put to the background, these are the concept pairs of “freedom to something” and “freedom

from something”.¹⁷⁵ Using this dual orientation of interpretation freedom we can separate e.g. illustration and adaptation from transformation.

The series of various reflexions (history of reception combined with the history of impact on art) spanning one and a half centuries seem impossible to be completed in the case of the *Tragedy*, therefore the opus itself “manifests differently” each and every time.¹⁷⁶ This potential incompleteness does not mean the objectivised insufficiency of personal reflexions, the interpretation history, adaptations and remakes of artistic qualities, or even of different transformations, but it is the very essence of the existence ever changing in its historicity, which we, the interpreters have been living as interpreting recreators for over one and half centuries. Another key factor of the possible incompleteness is that the *Tragedy* is a work of art with an independent existence, an autonomous “art of interpretation” which is the internal existence interpretation of itself. Moreover, its “hermeneutic nature” generates the diversity of “interpretations of art”, too, as well as the history of reception, therefore, the professional, interpretational and essayistic approaches, and, on aggregate, the “cultural performance modality” of the *Tragedy*. In addition to the hermeneutic capacity to be filled up carried by the opus within, its openness, the “purport-generating function” manifested to the receiving subject in the

¹⁷⁵FEHÉR M. 2010. 145–146.

According to István M. Fehér, considering its philosophical interpretation, freedom can be approached with the below concepts, as positive (freedom to something), or negative (freedom from something). Accordingly, we can talk about “the interpretation of Kantian freedom concepts (as legislation to ourselves) as positive freedom”. Or, as in the case of Sartre, about both: “the freedom perceived as a connection between shifting away from restrictions and entering them”, just as the various aspects of “freedom from” and “freedom for” “alternate and intertwine” in Heidegger’s freedom philosophy. This pair of concepts had become known due to Isaiah Berlin in the second half of the 20th century, and can be partly applied for the description of various freedom perception theories. Ibid., 156.; Cf. BERLIN 1990.

¹⁷⁶GADAMER 1984. 115.

Ricoeurian sense,¹⁷⁷ and the already mentioned Gadamerian self-comprehending function, I intend to emphasize the ‘modality’ and the ‘quality of operation’ as aesthetic traits, and conditions, at the same time. Understanding our being is a common issue for all of us, and so is questioning the meaning of life, thus for the current receiver-recreator the creation of ‘involvement’ bears great probability due to the universal nature of this problem. Ultimately, among others, this base problem and raising the question have made the *Tragedy* continuously present work of art, and a living one in the future, too.

Mitchell’s statement claiming that “all media are mixed media”¹⁷⁸ can be particularly justifiable in our case, by which the conditions to come into existence of inter-artistic relations of the *Tragedy* is the medial mixedness of the literary work of art within itself. Already starting from the first scene, visibility is a main characteristic, it being a dream scene, moreover, there is continuous reference to some auditive medium. Even if we only read through the author’s reference inserted in brackets at the beginning and the middle of scenes, it clearly becomes apparent that in all of them the description of the scenery and movement forms, strength and quality of the light, marking of sound effects are equally frequently displayed. For example, this occurs in the middle of the first scene: “To the hushed strains of the music of the spheres, the guardian spirits rush past the throne, wheeling in front of them single and double stars, comets, and nebulas of various sizes and colours. (...) The guardian spirits of the stars withdraw.” At the beginning of the second scene: “Paradise. Centre stage, the Trees of Knowledge and Immortality. Adam and Eve enter, surrounded by various animals, tame and trusting. Through the open gates of Heaven shines the light of glory and the soft harmonies of angelic choirs are heard. Bright, blazing sunshine.” Also, there is some sort of sound effect and a lengthy description of a vision in almost all scenes, thus marking the viewer. Citing a few typical examples, we can take the second song of the Choir of Angels, which

¹⁷⁷RICOEUR 1999. 284–285.

¹⁷⁸MITCHELL 1994. 95.

describes the image of the created universe God sees from his throne, while at the beginning of the second scene it is the dalliance between in Adam and Eve in Eden, as seen and heard by Lucifer watching from the tree's greenery. Also, Adam's request at the end of the scene III states "(...) my ardent heart desires / to cast a glance into my future days, / to see what I will suffer, what I struggle for." Lucifer's fulfilment declares that "Agreed. Upon you both I'll cast a spell / and through the fleeting visions of a dream / you'll see the future to its farthest verge." – based on which all previous scenes are dream visions of Adam evoked by Lucifer, except for the last one. In many text parts of this greater dream vision the display induced by Lucifer, as we could enlist his abstract philosophical commentaries, in many cases introduced by some demonstration of images based on exact similarities. Also characteristic is the perspective of the space scene: "Outer space. At first, at this distance only a segment of the Earth appears. Later, as the Earth diminishes in size, it takes on the appearance of a star and mingles with the others", followed by Adam's description of the Earth's view while gradually moving away. I would definitely highlight, instead of the lengthy enumerations, the colourful multitude of the London scene's fair. Vilmos Tolnai comments on this as follows: "There are several large engravings on display by van Hogarth, an emblematic and satiric drawer of English life in the Hungarian Museum of Fine Arts, picturing a fair, where we can also see a person showing pictures. Madách wrote the Adam-Eve puppeteering under the influence of van Hogarth's work."¹⁷⁹ According to Miklós Peternák, Vilmos Tolnai had referred to a copper engraving inspired by William Hogarth's painting titled *Southwark Fair* (1733–1734).¹⁸⁰ This copper engraving containing more than fifty figures had inspired Madách regarding not only the puppeteering part, the tumult and clang of arms in the fair, since characters of the London scene could almost be perfectly identified on the engraving,

¹⁷⁹TOLNAI 1921. 113.

¹⁸⁰PETERNÁK 2006. 91.

including workers, soldiers, innkeepers, the “prostitute”, common women, beggars, street performers, lords and a gipsy woman.

I do believe that the high level of medial composition within the *Tragedy*, that is the verbal medium (descriptive or indicative inclusion of various visual and auditive phenomena) is the other fundamental condition which simultaneously and largely generates the intermedial networks springing from Madách’s work. This medial composition of the *Tragedy* seems to justify McLuhan’s statement, as “content of a medium is always another one”.¹⁸¹ Now, we can again quote Mitchell, as writing is “held together by two different entities, sound and sight, speaker and viewer subjects.”¹⁸² The *Tragedy* as a literary work of art also commits dialogised speech into writing on a verbal level, thus its mediatization is from this point of view is remedialization. It is remedialization, in J. D. Bolter and R. Grusin’s media theory terminology, which claims that in media history from the shift of verbalism and literacy to our days previous mediums always leave a trace on new ones, meaning that its conventions become remedialised, just as speech’s pattern does so in writing.¹⁸³

¹⁸¹MCLUHAN 1964. 23.

¹⁸²MITCHELL 1994. 114.

¹⁸³BOLTER – GRUSIN 1999. 45.

PART II

On Dante's *Commedia* and Madách's *The Tragedy of Man* – From a Comparative Research Perspective

Mihály Babits completed the translation of Dante's *Inferno* in 1912, a result of a work "beautiful rather than wearisome".¹⁸⁴ Moreover, in 1920, he continued this confession of a translator regarding the following chapter of the *Divina commedia* as follows: "the translator of this work loved the *Purgatorio* the most..."¹⁸⁵ then, two years after, he declared the following on translating *Paradiso*: "Perhaps the most gruelling part of this task was *Paradiso* itself, due to not only its serious, philosophical content, but owing to its more sublime demands of Music and Soaring generated to contrast the translator".¹⁸⁶ Obviously enough for a "poeta doctus" translator, during the over 10 years of this major work, and then for the coming 20 years, too, up until 1940, he continued to explain, interpret by means of several studies the text he translated into Hungarian to both himself and the readers of Dante, he himself being a participant in all forms of hermeneutic relations. Leastwise, this applies provided we perceive the "performance of hermeneutics" basically as a connection of meaning taken from "another world" into "ours".¹⁸⁷ From his many studies,¹⁸⁸ I shall quote his thoughts from one published in 1929, titled *Dante and the Contemporary Reader*, on the "modernity of this opus. Not only he names Dante in this study "one of the most difficult poet in the world", but he also claims in his *History of European*

¹⁸⁴BABITS 1986. 567.

¹⁸⁵Ibid., 569.

¹⁸⁶Ibid., 571.

¹⁸⁷GADAMER 1990. 11.

¹⁸⁸SZABÓ 2003.

Literature, published in 1934, that his main literary work is the “greatest poem in the history of world literature”.¹⁸⁹ In addition, Babits also considers the poem as “the most lyrical one”, too: “Finally, this superstition suggesting that the most lyrical spontaneity is simply incompatible with the most scholarly and artistic complexity cannot be denied any better than through the example of Dante, who may very well be a poet with the utmost lyrical depth in the world of literature. (...) he views the entire world from the perspective of his own life, all its richness and all possible stages of heaven and hell via his deepest desires and emotions, thus living and offering us this enormous illustration and symbol of his own life, what’s more, his love. (...) Really, among all great geniuses of the past, Dante undoubtedly provides a most peculiar attitude to our age: no one gets closer or farther! Thus, he exerts an impact to his devotees of eternal modernity.”¹⁹⁰

Babits, himself being near to philosophy, had given an account on Madách’s main literary work, on its unique significance and eternal relevance in Nyugat a few years earlier, in 1923: “Madách’s poem is actually the one and only authentic philosophical poem in world literature. In the poems of Dante, Goethe and others philosophy is only a means, not the actual goal; notion is only a mere servant of colours, feelings. In Madách’s art, as a matter of fact, it is colours and feelings that serve the Idea, (...). This is philosophy, it being a criticism, situated beneath the moods of various centuries; criticism of the world; (...). Imre Madách was born a hundred years ago, re-read his work, and surely it will appeal to you as some bloody issue of our days: you will soon have to face some of the most crucial problems of our time, and will put down the book dizzy, with your fingers trembling.”¹⁹¹ Thus, Mihály Babits emphasizes the ‘eternal modernity’ of this work to the all-time receiver.

¹⁸⁹BABITS 1934. 175–180.

¹⁹⁰BABITS 1978.

¹⁹¹BABITS 1923. 170–172.

In the case of Dante, the almost seven centuries that has passed by justifies both the importance of the *Commedia* and the *Tragedy* and, within its Babits sense, its ‘modern eternity’. As for Madách, this factor is the past some one and a half centuries of interpretation and impact history. Two anniversaries confirmed their eternal relevance: one is the 750th birth anniversary of Dante (in 2015), the other is the 150th anniversary of Madách’s death (in 2014). Both literary works are strained by ultimate questions, a sort of crisis sense, and symbolic, world view, philosophical and moral responses. As a result, posterity was forced to conduct a series of comments, which can be declared simply amazing, either by judging its vast quantity or the enormous literature related to Dante or Madách. However, the literature related to Madách is smaller than that of Dante’s, yet it is the largest in the sense that there is no other Hungarian literary work of art which has been interpreted, examined on so many occasions, had such a large number of and so many kind of artistic adaptations in Hungary, or has been translated to so many foreign languages. The cultivation of Dante’s intellectual heritage spans countries, and proves to be significant in Hungary, too. On the one hand, this can be proven by the two-hundred year-old Dantistic tradition of Hungary, the work of Jenő Péterfy, Károly Szász, József Kaposi, Lajos Fülep, Mihály Babits, Jenő Koltay-Kastner, Imre Bán, Tibor Kardos and József Szauder, and also, the internationally-renowned Dante research and the multitude of books written by János Kelemen, József Pál and Tibor Szabó in the past two decades. On the other hand, this is evidenced by the now some 10-year-long conceptual work and operation of the Hungarian Dante Society. The diverse reading and aspects of interpretations provides further analyses and interpretation regarding both literary works of art, thus offering and facilitating philological, history and theory of literature, theological, philosophical, language philosophical, cultural philosophical, ethical, aesthetical, comparatistic, symbol research (etc.) approaches both in the past and the present. The abundant commenting-interpreting literature proves the continuous re-interpretation potential of the *Commedia* and the *Tragedy* and its inexhaustible nature of “further”

and “different” interpretations generated by and created after any “further-interpretations”. As Babits puts it: it is verified by our eternal modernity, and constantly being up-to-date. According to Gadamer, with the emergence of newer and newer interpretations great works of art are portrayed “amidst the changing conditions, yet differently”, which causes “today’s reader not only to look at things differently, but actually he sees different things, too.”¹⁹²

Apart from the obvious magnitude of the commenting literature, when examining parallels between Dante’s *Commedia* and Madách’s *Tragedy*, a primordial question can be put, that is whether Madách had known Dante’s opus. It seems quite certain that the *Tragedy*’s author had read the *Divine Comedy*, yet we cannot know for sure in what language, in Italian, German or both. The reason is that even though Madách learnt Italian, yet from his personal library we only know of a German edition of Dante’s work, published in Vienna, in 1826.¹⁹³ Even his nephew, Károly Balogh’s son, brought up in Madách’s house provided proof that he had known Dante’s opus: “Even my Father had read the German edition of Dante’s book.”¹⁹⁴

Now, talking about parallels, the other basic questions that remains is whether any exact signs of Dante’s impact can be discovered in *The Tragedy of Man*. Certainly this question has been raised by a number of researchers dealing with Madách, also, I provided an overview on this in a previous study.¹⁹⁵ In summary, let me highlight a few pivotal standpoints from the comparisons. Antal Vidmár authored a comparison of bookful volume in 1936, the larger part of which deals with the *Tragedy*’s analysis. Vidmar, translator of the *Tragedy* to Italian, here praises Imre Madách, calling him a man unequivocally seeking and finding God, which actually provides the guiding principle to his comparison with Dante. As a common feature, he emphasizes the symbolic nature and absolute timeliness, the eternal

¹⁹²GADAMER 1984. 213., 115., 212.

¹⁹³SZÜCSI 1915. 5–28.

¹⁹⁴BALOGH 1934. 88.

¹⁹⁵MÁTÉ 2015b 43–55., MÁTÉ 2015c.

topicality of the two works. Similarly, it is also highlighted that Dante and Madách “following the unspeakable sufferings of their lives both had reached a superhuman conscience that leads them to cognition of God (...) and both of them were worthy prophets of this notion.”¹⁹⁶ The turn of the 19th and 20th centuries is highly significant in the reception history, and, regarding the nature of impact, we can list three different types of response-variations. Győző Morvai observed an exact similarity between the two in 1897,¹⁹⁷ while Bernát Alexander deemed it irrelevant in 1900: “Dante satisfied his contemplative inclinations, yet his overall impact on his work is entirely insignificant.”¹⁹⁸ The third opinion belongs to the poet’s son. Aladár Madách’s “*Spiritual Elements in the Main Characters of The Tragedy of Man*” was published in 1899 in a short-lived spiritual journal titled *Mysterious World*, and remained unknown up until 2001. According to a fragment of thought in his forgotten study, he believes that the main opus of Dante, Goethe and Madách can be inserted to those “world poems” in which “there is a solidarity of man’s perception indicating that the world manifesting in man or the whole world is a microcosm, it actually being one whole (...) Such literary works are genuine world poems.” He does not detail his ideas further, instead, he indulges in the discussion of a psychological system of correlations indicated in the title.¹⁹⁹

With regards to parallels, Dante’s *Commedia* actually shows little overlap with the *Tragedy*. Paralleling the two opuses within the Madách-reception in the second half of the 20th century can be primarily originated to their genre similarities, as well as the genre peculiarities of the mankind-poem and the dramatic poem. Based on the principles only presumed and suspected by Aladár Madách, such as “one is all – all is one”, and ‘mankind’s microcosm is the same as the macrocosm itself’, the comparison to follow can be further

¹⁹⁶VIDMAR 1936. 4–6.

¹⁹⁷MORVAY 1897.

¹⁹⁸MADÁCH 1900. 322.

¹⁹⁹MADÁCH Aladár 2001. 128–144.

thought, as I have already indicated in the referred study.²⁰⁰ Not designating it exactly, Aladár Madách builds up the “world poem” denomination to the hermetic philosophy axiom already popularized in spiritism, to the “one is all – all is one” principle at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. Originally, this is the hermetic philosophical thesis of the Hermes Trismegistos tradition, which left its mark in 3rd century teachings of Plotinus, by means of the emanation of the one and only God towards the world. With the help of his notions, the entire world soul is present in all individual’s soul, too.²⁰¹ Moreover, Plotinusian Neo-Platonism can be coupled with the Christian concept of the Holy Trinity, the trinity and “scholastic tectonics” on which Dante sets up his main work.²⁰² Later on, in the 15th century, the original hermetic philosophical texts were translated and interpreted by Renaissance Neo-Platonists, Ficino and Mirandola, “and these thoughts provided a significant inspiration even during the formation of the concept of man’s greatness and noble nature, this latter having been a crucial concept of Renaissance.”²⁰³ Renaissance philosophers of the hermetic tradition were not only scientists, but well-known astrologists, magicians of their era, at times even possessing visionary and ‘vicious’ powers. As a result of their activity, partly due to the persecution by the Catholic Church, hermetic thinking was becoming more and more occult, symbolic, enigmatic, and its followers later naturally found themselves in opposition with the rational movement of Enlightenment. Prior to the writing of his Tragedy, Madách’s a favourite book was Alexander Humboldt’s *Kosmos*, the science philosophical and holistic approach of which carried a solid resemblance to the highlighted thesis of hermetic philosophy. In my monography of 2013, I already set forth the fulfilment of the principles of hermetic philosophy in Madách’s *Tragedy*, as a concept of unity.²⁰⁴ Based on the fundamentally hermetic philosophical theses

²⁰⁰MÁTÉ 2015b 43–55.

²⁰¹PLÓTINOSZ 1986.

²⁰²FÜLEP 1921. 18.

²⁰³PÁL 1995. 561.

²⁰⁴MÁTÉ 2013. 453–459.

of 'one is all – all is one' and the 'microcosm equals macrocosm', in my view, more analogies can be observed between the two opuses. The eternal moment in Dante's only vision lasting for seven days, ranging from the Maundy Thursday of 7th April, 1300, to Wednesday noon, 13th April, definitely captures all spiritual spheres of afterlife. This one and only vision flashes the exceptional multitude of the lives he had lived: all in one. The same way, a dream of Adam's, a series of dreams span through the whole history of mankind, from the beginning to the end, from the end to the beginning. The principle of 'one is all – all is one' bears a structure-generating function in both opuses. On the other hand, Dante, travelling through underworld spheres in the *Commedia*, as "an individual, he carries the entire form human's existence", as the "most general person is the most personal, at the same time".²⁰⁵ This is similar to Adam, who, as the first man, at the same time steps up to be the symbolic figure of human race. In Adam's multiple dream-figures it is always the individual that appears, yet by means of his historic forms he covers the entire span of human history. Thirdly, this principle also generates an overall aesthetic totality-quality at the same time, since this work of art is a projection to simply everything. The scientific knowledge, philosophical ideas, approach to history of its time is interwoven into the mythical-biblical base story of the *Tragedy*, as well as the fundamental question in the interpretation of human existence, and the related variety of responses. Likewise, this multitude, the mapping of 'everything' prevails in the only book of world literature significance in the Middle Ages, that is the *Commedia*. It is known that the book was called the encyclopedia of the Middle Ages.²⁰⁶ Dante travelling through Hell, Purgatory and Paradise himself represents mankind, and into this travelling figure, it being a subject, the whole infinite outside world is compressed. Being a biblical allegory itself, travelling practically is the story of escaping sin, by which the poet intends to make man return to God. Just as Dante, Madách too possessed abundant

²⁰⁵PÁL 2009. 19.

²⁰⁶BABITS 1978. 742.

theological, philosophical (of wide range, typical of his age), scientific, cultural knowledge as compared to his contemporaries. As for Christianity (in Dante's case), and the philosophical and ideological trends of his time (this applies to Madách), they were fully aware of all their aspects, and therefore they compressed all this into their one and only great work of literature. Consequently, the main works of both authors offer a long series of wisdoms of life, and axioms.

Both writings were a result of a similar financial situation, however, even though they are some five hundred years apart, the parallel in their history of creation is quite conspicuous. Either the *Commedia* or the *Tragedy* could only be written in their symbolic forms when Dante or Madách themselves were no longer a problem for themselves, that is when the hardship of their lives was not more than poetical tools in their hands. These hardships included Dante's exile, vulnerability, the political turmoil of his age, the physical-spiritual tribulations of his wandering, Madách's years in prison, his divorce, illnesses, sense of his early death and the crisis of his world views. Considering the time they lived in, they both found that as if the metaphysical level, nobility and dignity were lost, as if the determining intellectuality of their age had faded, namely the word of the Bible in Dante's era, or, 500 years later the "sacred ideas" of liberty, fraternity and equality. Just as Dante expands his own soul into a cosmos, traversing the otherworldly spheres, Madách projects his own intellect, roaming the main periods of ideological changes in world history. Amidst the political and/or religious and ideological turbulence of their age, by means of their sense of crisis they had both realized that the level of man's noble-mindedness and dignity may not be caused by an external factor, but in fact can be found in the individual himself, within its moral autonomy and purity. Dante presumed to find this in Christianity, and particularly in love. But Madách believed it to be in striving, as such, and, after failure, in encouragement to transcendent striving. They both believed that the goal of mankind is the achievement of a superior life, so as a result they had formed the morality and ethics rooted in their personality to become a universal, a "moral Cosmos". Both poets, however, half a

millennium apart, had written the drama of their own lives in a way it reflected the drama of mankind of their age. Virtually, both the above illustrated the fate of mankind as a whole while symbolizing the crises and misfortunes of their individual lives. For Dante is led by his pure love for Beatrice to the prominence of human soul and living love for God, in the closing scene of the *Tragedy*, with her words uttered to reorder the world it is the woman who actually hears the “divine word” and mediates it to the man and the world. For both of them woman is God’s herald. In addition, they both warn our day’s man either through the moral of Odysseus’s story or the lessons of Adam’s dream that human beings are limited creatures, and in order to acquire knowledge they cannot cross neither moral nor human boundaries.²⁰⁷

Another substantial resemblance is the inter-artistic gratitude and uninterrupted continuousness of the two literary works of world literature. Already two years following Dante’s death, commentators engage in their work just as within half a century, the poet’s spirit and main work also begins to continue to persist in various forms of art: “Jacopo della Lana wrote his commentaries and explanations to the *Commedia* between 1323 and 1328, and already in October 1373, Boccaccio indulges in solving the riddles of *Inferno* in the church of Badia Fiorentina in Florence. Following the example of Florence, other towns of Italy set up Dante-departments, too, and a long line of lecturers, biographers, translators, imitators, illustrators, painters, sculptors, medal makers and composers proclaim his glory, admire and pay homage to him.”²⁰⁸ Similarly, the first edition of *The Tragedy of Man* in 1862 not only marked the beginning of its reception history lasting up until our days, but soon its first illustration becomes completed, that is Mór Than’s oil painting titled *Adam in Space*. For commenting of both opuses is continuous, its elaboration, adaptation and transformation in different branches of art is undiminished, too. Also, the multitude of literary, musical, fine arts, theatre and film works of art, the birth of to which the inspiration by Dante’s and

²⁰⁷MÁTÉ 2015. 43–55.

²⁰⁸KÁPOSI 1911. 2.

Madách's main writings had contributed to is immeasurable. The afterlife of the two opuses fairly represents the interoperability among various branches of art as well as transfer occurring. Within the framework of this present study I do not undertake to investigate in detail the variety of intermedial transformations and the conversion of one medium into another, since involving the comparative research of art²⁰⁹ would go beyond the objectives and volume of my essay, however, I merely aim to indicate its magnitude. Especially, as the exploration and collection of the interartistic relations of the *Commedia* and the *Tragedy* is continuous in Hungary, conducted both by the Hungarian Dante Society and the Hungarian Madách Society. Regarding Hungarian interartistic relations, three significant summaries have been compiled and published in this field. József Kaposi's *Dante in Hungary* provided a survey of Dante interpretations until the turn of the 20th century, and, also, he reviewed impacts emerging in various forms of art.²¹⁰ Tibor Szabó's *Eternity Commenced, Dante in 20th Century Hungary* demonstrated not only the influence of Dante and his main work on Hungarian literature, but he also collected works of art (fine arts, theatre, music) in Hungary bearing the inspiration of Dante, moreover, at the same time, considering the "Dante-image" of Hungarian culture, media and education.²¹¹ The influence generated by Madách's dramatic poem, *The Tragedy of Man*, realized in a wide range of works of art is detailed in my first chapter. In terms of volume and diversity of artistic adaptations, it can be considered to be the greatest and broadest of them all ever to have been elaborated by a Hungarian literary work of art. If I should compare the tendency of inter-artistic transfers in the *Commedia* and the *Tragedy* based on these three 'collections', it can be stated that in case of both opuses the inter-artistic transfer spectrum is quite broad, it spans almost all branches of art and their respective genres, and both are transposed to new genres

²⁰⁹SZEGEDY-MASZÁK 2007.

²¹⁰KAPOSI 1911.

²¹¹SZABÓ 2003.

typical of that age. As an example, in our days we can mention Sean Meredith's film acted with puppets (2007), referring to *Commedia Inferno*, or Marcell Jankovics's animated cartoon (1988–2011). In addition, a shift of proportion may also be observed, as much as the musical adaptation of the *Commedia* became stressed from the 18th century onward,²¹² the same shift of proportion is valid for the *Tragedy* regarding all its stage adaptation, starting from its 1883 première up until today.²¹³

Regarding interartistic relations, as a substantial parallel in impact history we can declare that adaptations of both opuses in fine arts have an incessant continuity. Obviously, this might not be a coincidence, since Dante tells us about an afterworld vision of an afterworld journey, while Imre Madách converts Adam's dream images into a dialogized philosophical poem. The act of seeing and made to be seen in these works bear a fundamental function, therefore they feature a high number of illustrations. Displaying Dante's universe and the respective physical system have received a paramount role in illustration of *Commedia* for centuries, as well as the visualization of certain retributions of hell, penitence in purgatory and visions of paradise, all of which are manifested via Sandro Botticelli, Michelangelo, Leonardo, William Blake, Delacroix, Gustave Doré, August Rodin and Salvador Dali. Referring to various collections, József Kaposi provides the following summary in 1911: "not counting the Bible, it was his *Commedia* that was most frequently and abundantly illustrated by painters and illustrators."²¹⁴ Until the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, Kaposi was able to provide a "collection" of only narrow list of works of art, however, due to Tibor Szabó, by now we can cite a number of 20th century Hungarian artists as being illustrators to the *Commedia*. Such are Lajos Gulácsy, Miklós Szentkuthy, Dezső Fáy, Líviusz Gyulay, László Boda, Mihály Schéner, Ferenc Lajos, Lajos Cséri, Mária Törley, Miklós Borsos, Béla Kondor, just to mention few of the

²¹²DOMBINÉ KEMÉNY 2015. 56–67.

²¹³MÁTÉ 2008. 57–67.

²¹⁴KAPOSI 1911. 319–320.

most noted ones, yet then I still have reckoned with the Hungarian artists (of fine arts) awarded at the Ravenna Dante Biennials in the last four decades.²¹⁵ In the case of *The Tragedy of Man*, it is Mór Than's oil painting titled *Adam in Space* that marks the illustrations' continuity lasting up to our days. It was Mihály Zichy who created the first series of *Tragedy* illustrations, then, from the first half of the 20th century onward, the illustrations of Jenő Haranghy, István Somogyi, István Kákonyi, Dezső Fáy, Anna Bartoniek, György Buday, Teréz Nagyajtay and Gábor Szinte should be mentioned. As for the period after the second half of the 60s, it was the works of Béla Kondor, Piroska Szántó, Ádám Würtz, Ferenc Martyn, János Kass, later on Endre Bálint, András Farkas, Imre Farkas and Zoltán Réti. All in all, some 45 pieces of significant *Tragedy* illustrations series can be taken into account in Hungary until the turn of the millennium.

If we consider their common set, we can find that four Hungarian artists were surely inspired by both literary works. Due to the limitations of this study, let me only mention two remarkable 20th century artists. The first one is Dezső Fáy, who prepared 40 woodcuts on the *Commedia* between 1928 and 1931, and regarded it as the main work of his life. As of the *Tragedy*, illustrations by Fáy were published in Antal Vidmár's Italian translation in 1936. Besides, Béla Kondor is worth mentioning, who displayed Dante and Virgil on his oil pastel titled "*The Progress of Time*" (1963), and made nine lithographs and two copper engravings on the *Tragedy*, in a saliently higher proportion, thus referring to the colours of the future. As for the 19th century, two prominent illustrators cannot be missed. It is Mór Than, who can be regarded as one of the artists inspired by Dante and Madách, and on a painting of his, based on a report of Pesti Napló in 1877 (a daily edited by Emil Ábrányi) József Kaposi accounted in 1911 as follows: "Mór Than (1828–1899) painted Francesca da Rimini. In another painting exhibited at an exhibition of the Society of Fine Arts in the winter of 1877, he portrayed Dante's Charon in the moment when he is collecting the reprobate ones into his boat and

²¹⁵SZABÓ 2003. 177–184.

urges the ones lagging behind with his oar. (Inf. III. 109. sqq.) These paintings I do not know. In this latter, Robin (Emil Ábrányi) praised the vigour in Charon's wild move as well as the effective colouring of desperate ghosts and turbid waves floating in blood-red flames."²¹⁶ It is worth mentioning that Mór Than emphasized the border-line stage of death on his painting already mentioned above, that is *Adam in Space* (1863). Adam is situated in the centre among the three figures floating in the clouds in the oil painting, which is originally of great size (173 cm × 202 cm). Even if you are not familiar with the text of the Space Scene in Madách's *Tragedy*, that is, the 'preliminary text', only with the title of this painting, still, this painting can be interpreted due to the man portrayed startled, scared and defenceless, in a position between earth and sky, on the border-line to his destruction. Another great artist is Mihály Zichy, whose illustration series made about the *Tragedy* is deservedly reputable and known owing to its narrative. Even though the number of works of art created by Zichy inspired by Dante (one or two) is determined differently in its relevant literature, yet at the same time the Dante and/or Madách-related assumption marks the similarity between these two works of worlds literature. In her analysis on the Dante cult of the 1900s, Erzsébet Király refers to Zichy's painting titled *Petőfi's Apotheosis*, made in 1898, which shows Dante as a supporting character.²¹⁷ However, it does not include another work of Zichy, *The Demon's Weapons*, or the *Triumph of Devastation's Genius* (1878), which was believed to be Dante-inspired by two people at the turn of the century, Jenő Péterfy²¹⁸ and József Kaposi. After having seen the Dante-illustrations of Károly Markó Jr., Mór Than and Sándor Ipoly, Kaposi declares on Zichy's painting the following: "Mihály Zichy (1827–1907), who presented us so many Dante-related features on his enormous canvas titled *The Demon's Weapons*, which picture was exhibited in the Hall of Art, Budapest, in 1878."²¹⁹ Zichy's

²¹⁶KAPOSI 1911. 321.

²¹⁷KIRÁLY 1997.

²¹⁸PÉTERFY 1903. III. 289.

²¹⁹KAPOSI 1911. 322–323.

monumental work is then elevated to a wider context and receives interpretation by Júlia Szabó: “Zichy considered his own age more and more sturdily as the period of Evil’s and Demon’s triumph, and made Devil, already described by Byron, Lermontov and Madách, to stand out the hero in one of his most outstanding paintings. *The Demon’s Weapons* or the *Triumph of Devastation’s Genius* is the panorama of both total destruction and the understanding of the critical period at the end of the century.”²²⁰ Considering its artistic purposes, Zichy’s grandiose painting is a “grievous and fearsome scream”.²²¹ Also, regarding its inspiration, it actually is parallel with works of Dante and Madách (the ones already seen by Péterfy and Kaposi), by means of presenting the sense of crisis in our times and the elaboration of Devil’s forces.

²²⁰SZABÓ Júlia 1985. 46–47.

²²¹FENYVES 1997. 9–10.

PART III

On the Contextual, Intertextual and Intermedial Network of Relations in Bluebeard Stories

(Béla Balázs – Béla Bartók – János Kass – Péter Esterházy)

Perrault's 17th century tale of Bluebeard turned out to be a text living on in its intertextual relations in the shape of 20th century Bluebeard stories, among others, in Anatole France's work, in Béla Balázs's mystery play and Péter Esterházy's short story. In my study, I am going to examine, in addition to the intertextual relationship of the above works, Béla Balázs's mystery play from the aspects of comparative art research and intermediality. Focus shall also be on János Kass's 17-picture illustration series, and on Bartók's opera as well, which latter shortens the mystery play and uses it as a libretto. Moreover, I also aim at exploring the semiotic configurations that constitute the collection of literary text, music and image, various mediums, as well as the meaning-constituting processes, with the formation history of aggression as an example.

The fundamental tale source of Béla Balázs's mystery play²²² titled "*Bluebeard's Castle*", which actually is the slightly abridged libretto²²³ of Béla Bartók's opera, proved to be the folktale²²⁴ titled *Barbe Bleu*, written by Charles Perrault, published in its literary form in 1697, and was originally known as the French Bluebeard saga. It was presumably inspired by the real 15th century historical figure of Baron Gilles de Rais, a Marshal of France at the same time. The Marshal's dreadful acts committed against children and women are in

²²²BALÁZS 1960.

²²³BALÁZS – BARTÓK 1979. I shall use the English translation of Thomas Ország-Land: *Prince Bluebeard's Castle. A libretto. Adapted from the Hungarian of Béla Balázs*, London, Tern Press, 1978.

²²⁴PERRAULT 1992.

detail discussed by Gyula Pekár. Compared to other accounts on Rais, he adds the interpretation claiming that the Marshall actually fought along with Jeanne d'Arc, being her loyal defender, then, all of a sudden, from a military hero he transformed into a monster, and was eventually executed by the inquisition²²⁵ in 1440. Acts originated from real life or forged charges of the inquisition later took shape in a myth, then a folktale, which tale nevertheless had already been spread and told by the people. His character had become known due to Perrault's tale, in which "Bluebeard is by far the most terrible and evil of all husbands ever mentioned in tales".²²⁶ The Bluebeard Myth is a story popular with the French, thus it can be found in several editions and forms by the name *La Barbe-bleue*. Supposedly the Marshal's story served as one of the key sources, the other one perhaps stemmed from a Breton king named Cômor.²²⁷ The character of Bluebeard, an

²²⁵De Rais was executed for heresy on 26th October, in 1440. His trial was labelled upright comical by some, thus referring to the fabricated nature of charges and the procedure possibly being a show trial, however, the facts, the endless row of victims and certainly de Rais's testimony all proved to go against him. Parents of the kidnapped, tortured and murdered children all had borne witness against the monster. He committed his first demonic murder immediately after withdrawing from the military, and decided to serve evil forces. His detailed biography was recorded and written by Jean Benedetti. Cf: BENEDETTI 1971.

²²⁶BETTELHEIM 2000. 309.

²²⁷In his research regarding Bluebeard's character, Gyula Pekár refers to a French writer named Huysmans, who names a Breton king called Cômor as a "first ancestor". He adds that Henry VIII, a well-known 'wife-eater' king, may have also had an impact in the creation of the myth. Yet Pekár considers Rais as his major inspiration in dealing with Rais's transition to become a bloody monster. He sums up the birth of the Bluebeard legend as follows: "We are all very aware of the fact that legends do not emerge from one figure, but normally after the merging of several analogical heroes. This merge is carried out by the people's imagination in a way that the bravado of supporting characters is assigned to the most outstanding hero." PEKÁR 1909.

György Kroó connects the alleged pattern of the tale's character to Rais, too, as well as to the 6th century Breton squire figure of Comor. BALÁZS – BARTÓK 1979. 51.

affluent man killing his wives can be observed in the folklore of other nations, too, its Hungarian version considered to be the ballad of Anna Molnár.²²⁸ It eventually became widely known and earning a major impact due to Perrault's tale rich in realistic elements. This one is listed as a "warning-type" one by contemporary tale interpretations,²²⁹ while the figure of Bluebeard is considered as an "animal groom type".²³⁰ Bruno Bettelheim has a featuring psychoanalytic-like interpretation, which identifies the key symbol as a male sexual organ. In his view, it also symbolizes that guests arriving to the house while Bluebeard was away had "affairs of sexual nature" with Bluebeard's wife, therefore this tale is in effect the test of the woman's faithfulness.²³¹ This interpretation of the tale is questioned by Tivadar Gorilovics, as it unequivocally becomes clear from the original French text that all visitors are female. According to Gorilovics, Bluebeard just simply sets a trap to prove that his wife will not be able to resist her curiosity.²³²

Based on my comparisons, this tale narrative carries three crucial features which can be found in 20th century Hungarian Bluebeard stories appearing in various branches of art. The first one is female

²²⁸Its Hungarian version is the Ballad of Anna Molnár, in which Márton Ajgó acts as Bluebeard. Within the framework of classical ballads, Zoltán Kallós published in several version this story of seduced, but then (in such later versions) vengeful wife. KALLÓS 1977. 40–58.

²²⁹Andrea Csűry's interpretation from her study titled *Charles Perrault*: "(...) it actually does not fall into the category of tales featuring miraculous elements, but rather into ones giving warnings, which tales are supposed to prove that marrying unknown people is quite dangerous." CSÚRY 2006. 201.

²³⁰BETTELHEIM 2000. 309.

Andrea Csűry's and Bruno Bettelheim's tale-interpreting studies both claim that Perrault's 17th century tale cannot be regarded as a fairy tale, it not having any direct folktale antecedent. Although neither character's personality develops, the evil husband eventually expiates for his sins.

²³¹BETTELHEIM 2000. 309–313.

²³²GORILOVICS 2006. 188–194.

curiosity, working against man's prohibition, thus breaking her promise made to her husband. The other motive being the target of man's prohibition and the women's curiosity is the mystery of the secret rooms,²³³ while the third one is the phenomenon of bleeding, as a telltale sign of a sin. In the tale, the seventh wife is betrayed by the bleeding key regarding the breaking of her promise and the prohibition, that is, of some sins she had committed, indicating that presumably neither her nor her ancestors had been able to resist the temptation of curiosity. Relying on the low number of miraculous elements, e.g. the unremovable blood stain on the secret room's key, we can also conclude that this tale was rather written for adults (not children). In the end, Bluebeard pays for his evildoing, including the murdering of her previous wives, and gets his deserts as brothers of the seventh wife slay him.

The re-edition of Perrault's tales in 1861 was illustrated with the tonic drawings by French painter Gustave Doré, whose drawings were already appraised by his contemporaries. Hereby let me note that it was Doré's great plan to create a "world library" illustrated by him.²³⁴ In addition to his illustrations of the Bible, works of Dante, La Fontaine, Cervantes, and Victor Hugo, Perrault's Bluebeard include four Doré illustrations, of which the first one is the most expressive, it depicting the scene of key handover, with almost lifelike figures. With his formidable appearance and hands putting you on guard, Bluebeard is menacingly towering above his wife. She is timidly looking in his eyes from below, but still, it seems as if her entire postures suggest her intrinsic curiosity as to find out what is actually hidden behind the door.

²³³The concept of a "secret room", a secret chamber, into which entry is forbidden, occurs in several fairy tales. In Russian and Scandinavian tales the animal husband forbids the wife from entering. Also, it is also found in Grimm's tales such as *Mr. Fox* or *The Bird*. The concept of a secret room or a chamber mostly represents the woman's faithfulness to her husband, or just functions as her trial whether she keeps her promise or not.

²³⁴KOVÁCS 1994. 233–234.

The man's aggressive behaviour in this 17th century tale, that is the intention to murder the seventh wife is triggered by female curiosity, which itself bears a moral implication causing the breaking of her promise made to her husband, and, at the same time, it also means disobedience of the man's prohibition and his individual law. The "Moral" (*Moralité*) to be found at the end of tale provides help in interpreting Perrault. In the first poem, moral instructions are provided with reference to curiosity: "Lo, curiosity, much as it gives us numerous minutes full of joy, Yet remains seldom unpunished; Day by day we see thousands of examples for that. For our senses desire light pleasures; Still they are immediately caught in the act, And the price paid was in vain."²³⁵ The other lesson is articulated by Bruno Bettelheim's recent tale-interpretation. According to him, tales also warn us to realize the importance of forgiveness, since at the end of the tale (murder of the husband) Bluebeard's behaviour is condemned, since "it is a more human morality which understands and forgives (...) violations."²³⁶

The essence of Bluebeard's aggressive behaviour is punishment, as, on the one hand, the one not complying and keeping the promise and the moral principles is punished. On the other hand, the infringement of the prohibition and law (opening the secret chamber) induced by the husband is severely punished. Bluebeard's punitive aggression, which actually means manslaughter, is of a large scale, too high compared to the sins he had committed. In the closing section of the tale, as Bluebeard's aggression falls into the type enforcing "normative or moral" type, the same can be stated about the aggression represented by the wife's brothers. However, the brothers' aggressively enforced moral principle, as a rule, is actually forgiveness itself, namely, by means of the murder of Bluebeard, who had been unable to forgive and slew his wives. Although the type of aggression proves to be the same, yet it differs in the validated normative and moral principle: Bluebeard's prohibition regarding the

²³⁵PERRAULT 1992.

²³⁶BETTELHEIM 2000. 313.

secret chamber acts as a law or individual norm “defending itself, since it attempts to conceal its sins”, while the brothers’ moral principle of forgiveness belongs to a given group. Thus validation of the group’s normative principle ‘overwrites’ that of the individual’s, that is Bluebeard’s punitive normative in the closing of the tale.

In identifying this “normative or moral” aggression type, I have applied Vilmos Csányi’s description of aggression in human ethology. According to his definition, members of a certain group (that is, the brothers of the wife in the 17th century tale, who in the end slay wife-killer outcast Bluebeard) “often take action against fellows who deviate from well-accepted behaviour patterns, habits, principles and norms. A highly important and characteristic feature of the individual lays in the background of moral aggression, which actually is that he/she is firmly bound to his/her group, and therefore is more or less in opposition with every person not belonging to the group itself.”²³⁷ As we could see, based on this standardization, the aggressions of Bluebeard in the 17th century tale and that of the wife’s brothers killing the prince fell into the same category. Yet this latter type of aggression is notably different. According to public perception, “we denominate any deliberate action as aggression, which aims at, either in an open or symbolic manner, causing harm, damage or pain to somebody or something.”²³⁸ Within this definition, being deliberate is a crucial criterion to the proper judgement of aggression. As a matter of fact, due to the difficult determination of being deliberate, Jenő Ranschburg considers the moral content of human behaviour as a genuine starting point. As a consequence, in his classification of aggressive behaviour he differentiates between “destructive, anti-social aggression, or pro-social aggression serving the interests of the community and the individual. In the case of the latter, this category matches the framework of the given group’s cultural expectations, moreover, it is deemed important whether “aggression is a mean or an

²³⁷CSÁNYI 1999. 174., CSÁNYI 2000. 122–139.

²³⁸RANSCHBURG 2004. 90.

end”, whether it is instrumental, emotional or retaliatory.²³⁹ Taking this type of description as a basis, the aggression of the 17th century tale’s Bluebeard is antisocial and emotional, while the brothers’ aggression can be considered pro-social and instrumental from the aspect of behaviour.

In the 17th century tale Bluebeard expiates, while female curiosity, as an undesirable behaviour form, remains unpunished, moreover, by contrast, female figures embodying curiosity of biblical and mythological origins are penalized. To Eve, the very first female character in the Old Testament’s Book of Genesis, “that tree is desirable for its wisdom”, and its fruit is a “joy to the eye”, so as a result the first couple does not obey and breaks God’s prohibition, a God giving law, punishment and looking after its creatures. Lot’s wife turned into a “pillar of salt” as a punishment for her curiosity. Pandora, the first female figure in Greek mythology, also gets her severe retribution after revealing the secret of the box due to her curious ‘behaviour’ and denying her husband’s ban. The inquisitiveness of these two women then becomes the direct cause of death for humanity, that is existence in the sense and approach of death. Also, in Greek mythology, fatigue, disease, aging, feud comes upon mankind, leaving hope as the only comfort. Of the ban-curiosity-penalty ‘triangle’ of the 17th century tale narrative, two can still be found in these ancient stories. Namely, these are the ban itself and female curiosity violating it in order to gain some secret knowledge, however, modern tales do not penalize women for their inquisitiveness, but instead strike down on men who are unable to show forgiveness.

In its 20th century Hungarian adaptations of Bluebeard’s story, Perrault’s tale is present in the background, yet in a reverse way. On the one hand, this reverse manner represents the transformation of aggression, it taking place along opposite polarity change of genders, presenting several types of aggressions, just as I am going to detail it in the second half of my study. Shift of poles already took place a year earlier in Western Europe, let me refer to Anatole France’s short story

²³⁹Ibid., 92.

titled *The Seven Wives of Bluebeard* (*Les Sept Femmes de Barbe bleue*),²⁴⁰ published in 1909, which turns the original tale inside out in an ironic way, and attributes aggression to women. Anatole France's Bluebeard is a man fondly trusting women and assuming only good about them, however, due to women's selfishness and their wicked inclination, he gradually becomes a victim of circumstances and an aggressor, the above circumstances including women's violent behaviour, delusiveness and heavy drinking.

While in the 17th century tale, and then in 20th century literary works it is Bluebeard's aggression that is in the centre of attention, in Anatole France's and Béla Balázs's interpretation female aggression shifts into focus, coupled with curiosity, however, in late 20th century Hungarian literature it is men's aggression again to occupy this central role, thus representing another nuance and type. Here we can refer to Péter Esterházy's short novel²⁴¹ titled *The Beautiful Life of Bluebeard*, published in 1994, and József Bényei's collection of poems titled *Elegies of Bluebeard* from 1997.²⁴² Esterházy's novel begins with a surprising upbeat, not only with his tale-like transcription of the opening formula, but also by using the "he lived happily ever after" tale-type closing formula in the introduction. On the other hand, the opening summary of him "lived happily" not only stands in sharp contradiction with the intertextual relation of Bluebeard's name, but with the factually enlisted life events in the novel's possible world, be it his deportation, the hero Balázs himself being a Jew, or the events after 1945, his joining the Communist Party, or imprisonment during the Rákosi era.²⁴³ At the beginning of the novel Bluebeard is a young piano student, whose mates were Don Juan and Casanova, and he started his studies under the guidance of Bartók. Before placing his figure into the line of legendary literary men seducing women, it begins the listing of life events based on

²⁴⁰FRANCE 1959. 183–201.

²⁴¹ESTERHÁZY 1994. 533–542.

²⁴²BÉNYEI 1997. 538–541.

²⁴³ESTERHÁZY 1994. 533–534.

timeline shifts and free associations. Here the layers of the individual's spheres of choosing a profession and its private life are mounted on each other, with emphasis on the descriptions of finding one's path in looking for a partner, absurd in its variety, and the related sexual habits. Their impact relies on a tension, the one between the astonishing gender identity changes and the very fact of related sexual habits as well as the cold-livered descriptions dealing with them. On top of all there are the strings of references heavily based, meaning references among the most significant historical and political changes having taken place from 1945 until the political changes in 1989. This latter layer of the text provocatively does not take notice of the fact how well-informed the all-time recipient is regarding historical, social and political processes after 1945, yet it is capable of representing the irrational intertwinement of personal life sphere and historical, social and political events. Mounting is held together by the similar quality of the layers. Bluebeard's endeavour to find his path in terms of profession, his perpetual alternation of his sexual identity, his dating, sexual and partnership habits, as well as his life events are just as chaotic and absurd as the events of historical, social and political life. Within this novel, aggression is extended with a further nuance, that is humour. Bluebeard's source of humour is a scene of jealousy, which is actually based on legal terms, rhetorical cross-talk in the tale, the tensions of its being struck to death, and controversy. This aggression is clearly manifested when "Bluebeard was cheated on.

– I want to know his name – he rattled.

– I can't tell you even if you strike me to death – shrugged the fast woman, so he knocked her on the head, and she immediately died. Then the injured party handed the required information right away, so, and this is what really matters, it was proven that she had really lied to him before."²⁴⁴ The end of the novel, the interpretation tendencies of both the text of Béla Balázs and the opera are recited, based on the Opera Guide 2, as items proving the prince's being tired of life. Bluebeard had lost interest in "Judith (...), more precisely in the

²⁴⁴Ibid., 538.

eternal struggle between woman and man, the woman, who almost aimed to identify herself with the beloved man, seeing into all his concealed secrets, she also got tired of the man, who is compelled to secrecy by the interminable command of reservedness and solitude, as if he revealed his most inner and strictly kept secrets, he would therefore reveal himself, and he got tired of an ideal never-to-be-found, who does not intend to dig out the secret of secrets, one who loves Lohengrin-Bluebeard the way he is, together with his bloody, painful, teary and perhaps sinful secrets, as Bluebeard can only be loved, if you accept the torture chambers, the tearful castle walls and blood-rooted roses, and the clouds of his grief dewing blood drops, (...).²⁴⁵ “When the time came, Bluebeard died. What can I add to this now? Should I say he buried himself into his beard? By the time he was already not Bluebeard, his death left a void, perfectly with his shape and silhouette. Further on, people called this nothing Bluebeard (due to his beard being blue).”²⁴⁶ Esterházy’s novel, acting as a kind of post-modern closing chord, and as the result of intertextual relations, is the interpretation of Béla Balázs’s Bluebeard story, while, at the same time, it functions as its endpoint, due to its being boring.

In József Bényei’s *Bluebeard’s Elegies*, each of the seven doors open to a part of Béla Balázs’s works, thus forming an intertextual relation, and all of them deal with the self-torturing explanations of his state of mind. In accordance with the number of doors, the book is divided into seven chapters. The doors open to a part of Béla Balázs’s script, then we find a room full of poems, which follow the Balázs quotation both in their mood and theme. Door VII is hiding the title poem of the book, that is the *Bluebeard Elegy*, and then it is broken down to 20 further elegies. Each elegy contains entirely negative words: death, dead-march, dead man, withered, parched, wounded, bleeding, decomposing, etc. Blood, as a motif, is present throughout the whole work. The whole book narrates Bluebeard’s solitude, grief, coldness and situation in second person singular, with no answers

²⁴⁵Ibid., 541.

²⁴⁶Ibid., 542.

received to his self-torturing questions and calls. As a matter of fact, Bluebeard's aggression here turns against himself, which as a consequence can be considered as auto-aggression.²⁴⁷

I shall hereafter place the Szeged-born Béla Balázs's mystery play written in 1910 into the centre of focus,²⁴⁸ in parallel with Bartók's opera²⁴⁹ debuted in 1918, and the 17 illustrations published in 1979 of the also Szeged-born János Kass, graphic artist, illustrator and sculptor. As of the mystery play, the opera and the illustrations a number of separate analysis have been written. Comparison of the musical and

²⁴⁷CSÁNYI 1999. 175.

²⁴⁸Béla Balázs completed his mystery play in 1910, published in the journal named "Színházték" ("Play") in its April 20th and June 13th issues. Cf. BALÁZS – BARTÓK 1979. 49.

Following this, it appeared in Nyugat in 1912 as the first piece in Balázs's *Mysteries* series: this is considered to have the original text version of *Bluebeard's Castle*. Latest edition: BALÁZS 1960.

²⁴⁹György Kroó, a music historian summarizes the creation of Bartók's opera as follows: "Originally it was meant to be written to Kodály, Balázs even read it out to him in 1910. Bartók was also present himself during this session, and it was him to be fascinated by the topic." Bartók "left the work unfinished and open" in 1911, then a year after he managed to form the concept we know now. Its final version was authored in the spring of 1918. Balázs's text was only shortened a little by Bartók. Bartók's opera debuted in the Budapest Opera House, on 24th May, 1918. BALÁZS – BARTÓK 1979. 49–50., KROÓ 1980. 60.

Why was Bartók fascinated by Balázs's mystery play? According to György Kroó, this mystery "awakens the deep and indelible Wagner experience within Bartók's mind. This applies to not only its musical aspects, referred to by the dozens of motifs and sounds in the opera's music, but to Bartók's notions ideology as well. Both Bartók and Balázs received the idea of »redeeming love« from Wagner, the motif of one-act ban thus directly refers to Lohengrin (Nie sollst du mich befragen – You shall see, but never question, Whatever you see, don't question!), the couple of the »chosen« man and the fallible woman represent the artist's (according to Wagner's interpretation) longing to be among ordinary people, looking down from the »heights of spiritual life«, and the unfeasibility of this desire." KROÓ 1980. 61–62.

visual components was already carried out by László Vass in 2004, presenting a synthesis of the results of separate analyses and, at the same time, comparing the “communicatum” made up of several medial components, being created within the text-music-image compound.²⁵⁰ Within the framework of Mihály’s comparative analysis of music and text in 2006, he compared the parallel of Béla Balázs’s text with Maeterlinck’s, and the mystery play’s text with the libretto of Béla Bartók’s opera.²⁵¹ Then, in her book from 2007 written on János Kass’s illustrations, Emőke Varga describes the text-image relations in the *Bluebeard* of Balázs-Kass from an interartistic aspect.²⁵²

Contrary to the studies analyzing 20th century *Bluebeard* stories so far, my paper²⁵³ focuses on the processes affecting interartistic courses, its hermeneutic act of raising questions aims at meaning-constituting processes within the text-image-music compound, by means of one example, that is the behaviour forms of aggression. The corpus investigated within my study is “*Bluebeard’s Castle*”, published by Zeneműkiadó in 1979 – Bartók’s opera libretto is significantly shorter than that of the original written by Balázs²⁵⁴ –, the pictures of the illustrations²⁵⁵ and the music of Béla Bartók’s opera.²⁵⁶

²⁵⁰VASS 2004. 99–144.

²⁵¹SZEGEDY-MASZÁK 2006. 146–153.

²⁵²VARGA 2007. 167–200.

²⁵³My analysis relies on my previously published studies: MÁTÉ 2016b, MÁTÉ 2016c

²⁵⁴László Vass has compared the text of Balázs’s mystery play with the significantly shortened libretto of Bartók’s opera (BALÁZS 1960., BALÁZS – BARTÓK 1979.). Apart from repetitions, Bartók has deleted less successful and rhetoric manifestations, too. Cf. VASS 2004. 107.

²⁵⁵BALÁZS – BARTÓK 1979.

János Kass was assigned by Helikon Kiadó (“*Helikon Press*”) in 1960 to illustrate *Bluebeard’s Castle*, and this is when the first version of illustrations was released: BALÁZS Béla 1960.

Then he made more illustrations during the decades, what is more, he even provided the drawings to the screenplay. In his book published by Zeneműkiadó in

Béla Balázs's beat-stressing versification, eight-rhythm, rhymed-tale-like mystery play, the primarily standard work of *Bluebeard's Castle* firmly rewrites and twists Perrault's story, because a sin, this case the trial of the wife's love gets in the centre of attention, and, on the other hand, it is the wife who becomes aggressive. The mystery play however keeps the three fundamental motifs of the 17th century tale, which are curiosity, the mystery of the secret room(s) and the act of bleeding. Yet this latter one is twisted, too, meaning that bleeding in the mystery play is not a telltale sign of the wife's breaking her promise, but they are the blood-motifs behind the six doors actually implying Bluebeard's sins.

As a matter of fact, it is Béla Balázs's first voluminous art theory work titled *Death Aesthetics* which is in the contextual background of the mystery play. It had become well-known due to Babits's critique published in 1908. Balázs's work was deemed by Babits to be naive, sophisticated, fragmented and one seeking genuineness.²⁵⁷ Concerning the Hungarian reception history, two authors emphasize the connecting points regarding this mystery play, on the one hand to the tale, as an aesthetic category,²⁵⁸ and the other, to Balázs's concept of death.²⁵⁹

In his *Death Aesthetics*, Balázs connects art with death. He claims that fate provides us with self-consciousness, it is death or one of its forms that lets us know how we actually live our lives. Whereby life is formed to be an entity and a whole by the sense of fate and passing,

1979, built up from verbal, visual and musical components, János Kass changed the proportions of key characters to some extent, left colour symbology unchanged, and only in the case of the torture chamber can we see a different type of illustration. Also, the house with weaponry and the flower garden can both be characterized as formally simplified, particularly if compared to the 1960 one. Nevertheless, the 1979 series are more firmly stylized, archaized and unsophisticated, this is why I have chosen this series as the basis of my comparisons.

²⁵⁶BARTÓK 1991.

²⁵⁷TÉGLÁS 1988. 17.

²⁵⁸SÓFI 2010. 9–17.

²⁵⁹GYÖRI 2010.

which actually is the act by man of mould when realizing the limits of his own life: “Death is a form of life. Its end, just as contours to a drawing, limits to a pattern, provides its shape.”²⁶⁰ “Sensing the limits of our lives is sensing the whole.”²⁶¹ Art is called “the self-consciousness of life”,²⁶² since works of art, by forming a whole in their closedness, visualize fate, that is our death. Therefore, this is how the task of art will be, regardless of its actual topic, to provide a metaphysical projection of being a whole from the aspect of fate. The closing of the mystery play can be interpreted from this aspect of such approaches to death and art, implying that love and life can only be observed and perceived as a whole when viewed from its closed, formed shape. Similarly, Judith only realizes that she had been the most precious and beautiful to Bluebeard of all the women after she had become one of the women in the past as the love had gone. In Balázs’s *Death Aesthetics* death and end are forces creating entity because the life phase they bound eventually gains form and value. All this becomes defined in his mystery play, as the love of Judith and Bluebeard receives the form and value during the “end”.

In his art theory work written in 1907 Béla Balázs outlines the directions, experiments and solutions he would go along as a writer. A nice example to represent this statement²⁶³ made by Ferenc Fehér is the creation of the mystery play *Bluebeard’s Castle* in three years. Thus, agreeing with his oncoming interpretation, we can state that “Even if it is true that art is the real eternal life, life is mortality, even if it is true that this is why aesthetics is deemed as *Death aesthetics* (aesthetics of life’s finiteness and the eternity of the opus), yet art is the self-consciousness of life, as he takes over the torch from Romantic artists, therefore it can only be the art of pain.”²⁶⁴

²⁶⁰BALÁZS 1974. 294.

²⁶¹Ibid., 299.

²⁶²Ibid., 292.

²⁶³FEHÉR 1974. 24.

²⁶⁴Ibid., 26.

According to the preface of *Death Aesthetics*, essential things are secluded from rational scrutiny, therefore the task of art is nothing but mobilizing a metaphysical instinct in the individual in a secret manner, the existence of which is virtually indicated by the desire to obtain cognition of the world as a whole, nurturing from the deficiency of cognition itself.²⁶⁵ The manifestation of this metaphysical instinct is in fact “sensing life’s transcendence”,²⁶⁶ which art itself is destined to make perceived: “Perceiving that the image series of life phenomena around us are a sequence of unsolvable hieroglyphs, which are actually the manifestations of something.”²⁶⁷

Béla Balázs’s mystery play interpretations even being relevant in our times, as ‘hieroglyphs’ are sequences of symbol solutions. That is, Bluebeard’s castle itself, a spiritual-mental space can be interpreted as the spiritual-mental space of man, a living ‘organism’, since tears go down from its soggy walls, the castle occasionally sighs, and blood appears in every room. Blood, bleeding acts are interpreted here as additional symbols, mostly as the misdeeds in Bluebeard’s past. Moreover, the cyclic nature of darkness-light-darkness, parts of the day, the symbolical contents of the secret rooms, and the very fact of their opening as the unfolding of the past may all symbolize the idealistic perception of Bluebeard’s complete personality. Women of the past behind the seventh door are ‘panopticons’ or ‘museums’ of old loves. Silence, nevertheless, can stand as the symbol of death. Women’s denominations based of various parts of the day might refer to the depth they had reached in Bluebeard’s soul or within its recognition, or realizing in which state of his life they were the man’s

²⁶⁵Wider textual contexts for concepts of “metaphysical instinct” and “sense of transcendence” in early works are explained in the monograph of Emőke Mihályi, from Cluj-Napoca, Romania (Kolozsvár, in Hungarian), cf. MIHÁLY 2008. 41–47.

²⁶⁶BALÁZS 1974. 293.

²⁶⁷Ibid., 290.

partners. Approaching to various readings,²⁶⁸ whether from life event facts, or aiming to unveil contextual relations, or from the aspects of symbols' typology or perhaps psychoanalysis, we can find that it is the symbols' hermeneutic capability to be filled up that provides us with an opportunity to conduct several readings and interpretations.

Referring to the background of the impacts and aiming to emphasize only one symbol, let me add that the darkness-light-darkness signals the influence of Béla Balázs's popular contemporary, Maeterlinck's (a Belgian dramatist) *Ariane et Barbe-bleue*, published in 1901. Béla Balázs himself acclaimed this young dramatist,²⁶⁹ just as the young Lukács did so in his *The Evolution of Modern Drama (A modern dráma fejlődéstörténete)*. Based on Jean Stranobinski's interpretation, in his drama Maeterlinck says a farewell to the "old women" who did not die, just as they didn't in Balázs's mystery play, either.²⁷⁰ The same

²⁶⁸Boglárka Sófi compares the mystery play to parts of the *Death Aesthetics* dealing with the tale, where the tale is discussed as an aesthetic category, rather than a separate genre. Finally, the symbol of life is identified with death. Cf: SÓFI 2010. 9–17.

In her essayistic work, Orsolya Györi presents the value and form shaping principle of finiteness, as well as the artistic role of making death conscious, concretized with the mystery play. Cf: GYÖRI 2010.

László Bóka, a literary historian, launches his interpretation from the events of one's personal life. Cf: BALÁZS 1960. 59–75.

²⁶⁹BALÁZS 1908. 446–454.

²⁷⁰«It's not about Perrault's tale. The story is continuously in the background, yet re-read, re-interpreted, re-constructed and in a sense reversed. (...) Citing a famous story it retains the starting point, but then, by inserting new episodes and characters, the original meaning is completely distorted. The same was later done by Bartók, too.» STRANOBINSKI 2009. 255–258.

Let me note that in Maeterlinck's drama, upon opening the last door a sudden turn comes in, which was adopted by Bartók, too, that is, the previous wives do not die (they are held captive in the basement, having received their names from previous heroines in the author's earlier dramas). However, Ariane, contrary to them, is not merely a powerless female figure. She opens the closed door for the lively, vivid women, yet they, not wishing to be exposed to the light, recoil, and are afraid to abandon their

applies to László Bóka's interpretation, himself a literary historian, where Béla Balázs verses a critical, interim period between the life periods of the young lad free in love, and the mature man seeking a spouse. László Bóka designates Bluebeard as the symbol of voracious youth. Then he calls him a "man seeking his partner", who keeps his old loves in the mysterious and "gruesome panopticon" of his heart, and to whom "... the loves conquered yesterday, ... have become heavy, irremediable memories today".²⁷¹ Beyond this biographical parallel, the other crucial common feature in the works of both dramatists is the symbolism of darkness and light, however, Balázs's symbolism is deeper than that of his Belgian contemporary's. The operas, the first one being Messiaen Dukas's only opera, written on the basis of Maeterlinck in 1907, the other one a musical composition of the Bartókian opera created in accordance with the libretto of Balázs's mystery play, both ones based on literary works set in a parallel of influence employ the darkness-light-darkness symbolics as a compositional and axiological basic component. In addition to Maeterlinck's influence, and the parallels relating to *Death Aesthetics* and pragmatizing art theory in the work of art, the mystery play also relies on Béla Balázs's metaphysical concept. Similarly to many then-contemporary intellectual writers, that is those gathering around the periodical called *Szellem (Spirit)* in 1911,²⁷² in his writings he contrasts the positivism of his own age with metaphysical instinct, as a kind of metaphysical experience, the last manifestation of which he

desolate lives, which they had been accustomed to. In Maeterlinck's work, similarly to Balázs's, the light gradually flows in, until it reaches a wonderful brilliance. According to Ariane's inspiring words, the symbols of light are realized in life, nature and the love of freedom:

"Don't you miss the sunlight,
Birds on the trees,
And the huge gardens up there, full of flowers?
Don't you know it's spring now?"

²⁷¹BALÁZS 1960. 59–75.

²⁷²MÁTE 1995. 40–43.

believes to be found in the “romantic ideology”. He considers Hebbel to be the last great metaphysical and romantic artist, as we can read in his studies titled *“The Metaphysical Theory of the Tragedy in German Romanticism and Friedrich Hebbel”*, and *“A Dialogue on German Romanticism”*, both published in Nyugat (*West*) in 1908, and also, in his doctoral dissertation on Hebbel in 1909.²⁷³ It is no coincidence that the heroine of Balázs’s tale was named Judith after Hebbel’s drama with the same title. On the other hand, the basic parallel between the works of Hebbel and Balázs is the manifestation of female aggression, yet strung on a peculiar feminine fate and with aggression put into an instrumental function. In the case of Hebbel’s Judith aggression generates the opposition of earthly moral and divine law upon the killing of Holofernest, the leader of the enemy: “If God had placed sin in between me and the deed of mine – who am I to be able to escape it?” In Balázs’s works female aggression shapes the fate of Judith, as from the first door to the fifth she feels compelled to bring light into the castle, in contrast with Bluebeard’s fate predestined to be darkness, since the castle can be identified with the spiritual and emotional isolation, solitude, grave sins committed in the past, that is with everything the darkness of Bluebeard’s castle can stand for. After the dramatic turn of the fifth door, the aggression of woman’s curiosity will be the instrument, which overwrites Judith’s ‘light bearer’ fate, and turns her future fate to be darkness itself. Thus the woman’s line of fate, even when turned to be the opposite, will not be different from that a man’s. In order to make this line of fate fulfilled and achieve sinking again into darkness Balázs used Judith’s female curiosity as a dramatic tool, and converted to aggressive and exaggerated.

Can love redeem you? This post-romantic and metaphysical question is answered by Balázs, Bartók and Kass with a congruent denial. Verbal (Balázs’s textbook), musical (the musical material of Bartók’s opera) and visual (illustrations of Kass) mediums, and particularly the opera genre, which combined all three mediums,

²⁷³Emöke Mihály’s monograph analyses these metaphysical writings on art theory from his youth. Cf. MIHÁLY 2008. 39–78.

eventually create a complex multimedial and intermedial compound. Using their own set of forms and instruments, works of art separately existing, like the mystery play, the opera and the series of illustrations represent the rhythm, contrast and assimilation of male and female line organized into a system. Nevertheless, they require character and customized individualization only to such extent where this dramatic fate geometry can already be shaped. As a result, aggression with an altered nature, that is the aggression of the female as a formulation will become one of the substantial tools.

The mystery play begins with the prologue of Regös, after a riddle of, a “seeking an evening's musical rest / from the only drama that you know best / that matters the most till the curtain's fall...” we seem to be at the end of the 16th century, listening to Melancholy Jaques in Shakespeare's *As You Like It* (“All the world's a stage, / And all the men and women merely players: / They have their exits and their entrances”), namely a new version of his ideas:

“Lonely faces. Intently, you
watch me – and I watch you too.
Where's the stage? Can you be certain?
Our eyelashes are the curtain,
the curtain ladies and gentlemen.”²⁷⁴

This is the atmosphere evoked by the bard in renaissance clothes, playing his lyre. However, Bartók's opera, instead of this prologue, creates the gloomy “ballad-like” atmosphere with an instrumental foreplay reminding us of Hungarian folk songs, and, as a framework, this melody later returns in the last beats of the opera.²⁷⁵ The opera sets up all its medial components in an organized way, in the total configuration of music, text and image.

In Balázs's mystery play, the emphasis is on the trial of love, on the perseverance of woman's love, which relies on the opening of

²⁷⁴BALÁZS – BARTÓK 1979. 6.

²⁷⁵BALÁZS – BARTÓK 1979. 6–7., KROÓ 1980. 63.

doors in the prince's castle, and on the act of facing hidden and symbolic contents behind these doors. Also, this fundamental element organizing the structure and indicating dramatic turns has a meaning-constituting and scenic function, too. The musical structure of Bartók's opera, in addition to the foreplay, is also divided into seven scenes, in accordance with the seven doors "the symbolic location, Bluebeard's castle, the symbol of man's soul, the seven doors of the castle conceals separate and relevant parts of the soul, a feature of man's character, a part of man's life".²⁷⁶ It can be observed to take place likewise in János Kass's series of illustrations, where the doors are placed into a dramatic and meaning constituting function. As János Kass writes: "I conceived the pages of the book as doors, and this structure follows the events. The doors, as dramatic intersections, straddle the psychological process going on between the two characters."²⁷⁷ Five of Kass's 17 illustrations refer indirectly to the denotations behind the doors, to the visualization of the torture chamber, the house of weaponry, the flower garden and the old women. Six pictures of the series illustrate only Judith. In the first one's background, the first door's "glowing crimson rectangle in the wall" is seen (as an extended rectangle),²⁷⁸ then in the other four the excited and dynamic Judith hurrying to open some of the doors is portrayed. As for the last picture, it shows the "most beautiful woman" wearing a mantle and a diamond crown, with the door being shut behind her. The tracing and colour dynamics of Kass's pictures (blue, red, white and black, or any of them combined), the gestures and mimics of the characters on the one hand indicate the dramatic actions, psychological processes and motivations, while on the other hand they overwrite, emphasize or compress them. Thus they not only

²⁷⁶KROÓ 1980. 63.

²⁷⁷KASS 1994. 13.

²⁷⁸BALÁZS – BARTÓK 1979. 13.

stand in an inter-referential relation with the text,²⁷⁹ but the pictures also establish relations with each other that carry a meaning-constituting function, regardless of the text, existing separately. János Kass's symbolics, quoting the artist is "the non-eternal struggle between the opposite sexes, black and white, positive and negative. The conflict rooted in the ultimate distinctness of man and woman is fate (...) It has been clear from the very first moment that emotions must be expressed with the use of colours. The contrast of blue, red, white and black builds up the rhythm of consecutive sheets."²⁸⁰

In the works of Balázs and Bartók, the attribute for the transformation history of the symbology of darkness-light-darkness functions as the measuring value for love trials (in close connection with the opening of doors), that is, the slow death of love, and in line with this passing away, the growing power of female curiosity. In case of both the mystery play and the opera this symbology determines the internal dynamic composition which moves together with the process of love's trial, meaning the dramaturgy of the doors' opening and their relating meaning constituting process.

Agreeing with Ernő Lendvai analyzing the opera, we can declare that it is framed by "the symbology of light and darkness, day and night, life and death". The opera emerges from the "night" to reach its peak after constantly rising at the time of the opening of the 5th door, in the amazing "light chord" of Bluebeard's empire. Then, with the gradual darkening of the stage it again falls back into the night. The formal arch drawn between polarities of light and darkness is followed by the opera's bridge-structure, too, and it piles up the scenes into a pyramid-shape. Thus the three positive images (doors 3, 4 and 5) are arranged in the middle, while the negative ones are placed (doors 1, 2, 6 and 7) on the wings of the opera. (...) The major tonality axiom of

²⁷⁹From a semiotic point of view, this relation is determined by Áron Kibédi as follows: "word and image are separate from each other, yet they appear on the same page. As a matter of fact, they are in inter-referential relation, as they relate to each other." KIBÉDI VARGA 1997. 307.

²⁸⁰BALÁZS – BARTÓK 1979. 13.

the opera is the identification of the F minor and C key counterpoints with darkness and light, respectively. (...) The low of the opera, the »night-themes« of the beginning and the end are all rooted accordingly in the F minor pole, the opera's peak is the »light-theme« of the 5th door, erupting from the C key (...) Bartók places not only the F minor and C key poles in opposition, but the *la* and *do* (minor and major) *pentatony*, too, and these represent the most fundamental tonal concepts in the opera.”²⁸¹

Within the text-music-image compound I will henceforward present the process of love put to the test, building up of the structure (opening the doors, the view inside and the light flowing out), the changes of the darkness-light-darkness symbols that provide the internal structure, along with the meaning-constituting process, thus indicating the aggression of woman's curiosity put into an instrumental function. I will also attempt to create a multi- and intermedial reception, which in individual mediums and intermediality is accompanied by continuous repositioning of the receptive situation. At the same time, I will not fill the given symbols with an exact content, that means I will not repeat the various and already existing interpretations regarding meaning (the eternal struggle between man and woman, which struggle is one for ourselves, each other and our love; the hidden layers of man's soul behind the doors; the woman longing to identify herself with the beloved man by entirely getting to know him; or the man, who is forced by his solitude to keep his secrets etc.).

Balázs's mystery play and Bartók's opera basically rely on one single dialogue in a slowly changing stage background, which are actually well-described by Béla Balázs's genuine instructions, precisely depicting the setup and view behind the door and describing the actors' moves as well as the colour and strength of the light flowing out. Much

²⁸¹LENDVAI 1971. 25–26–27.

Music researcher Ernő LENDVAI's analyses present, beyond the parts characteristic of the quoted musical dramatic sections, the poetry, style, key and tune. Also, they unfold the symbolism and the scenes, what is more, they deal with the dramaturgical laws, scenic variants and lighting effects of the opus. Cf. LENDVAI 1971. 25–58.

as the pictures of János Kass fall into the genre of illustrations, still they are not performed subordinated to the text, but they at times overwrite, prepare or emphasize the libretto, highlighting an interpretation modality, also, sometimes these pictures compress them. Therefore the meaning-constituting function of illustrations is quite complex, and all this is bound to the status of being “in between”, so reception is thus directed not only on the text-to-image, but at the image-to-text meaning-constituting process, too, which already embodies the issue of intermediality. Illustrations only pretend to be subordinated to the text, as they also complement, modify, deform and sometimes corrupt, demoralize and falsify.²⁸² Thus one of the conditions to intermediality we can designate to be in its non-matching of text and image, and partial non-compliance. On the other hand, in conjunction with Mihály Szegedy-Maszák, “conducting a discourse on a picture actually means explaining the thesis of space hidden in time”.²⁸³ In our case, I aim at realizing the assigning modality to the basic text’s linearity in time in the positioning of illustrations to one another, while I signal the intermediality of word-image relations, too.

Overwriting the text already takes place during the representation of the second illustration,²⁸⁴ since here the illustrator gives a perspective to the castle from the outside, as black blocks in the night, surrounded by blood-red thin clouds, while in the script, after the prologue of Regös, based on the instructions of Balázs, the huge, rounded, gothic hall of the castle is shown with characters entering the little iron door of “dazzling white light” framed by the doorway. The first lines of the dialogues are based on a question-answer pattern and directly refer to the prelude, that is when Judith left not only his family, but her fiancé for her unconditional and devoted love for Bluebeard, thus submitting herself to the man’s will: “Bluebeard! If you should dismiss me, / I would never leave your portal, / I would rest

²⁸²STEWART 199217.

²⁸³SZEGEDY-MASZÁK 2007. 35.

²⁸⁴BALÁZS – BARTÓK 1979. 9. (Unnumbered page following numbered ones.)

upon your threshold.” Kass’s third picture portraying Bluebeard,²⁸⁵ the fourth one portraying Judith,²⁸⁶ both full-figure pictures, forecast their relationship, namely Bluebeard’s pride in contrast with Judith’s submission. Kass’s Bluebeard proudly stands in the blinding whiteness of the iron door, his contrasted black silhouette appearing as a solid, heavy block, so the determined lines and the relative greatness dominate the picture. He is looking down from above, his knit brows seem to indicate his suspicion toward the strength and endurance of Judith’s love for him. Differently from the proportions in previous pictures, Kass places Judith in the lower third of the illustration, indicating and preparing the hierarchy of the two characters. She also has her eyebrows knit, similarly to Bluebeard, yet due to her positioning, too, her countenance rather suggests worrying and cluelessness than suspicion. According to János Kass, Judith’s peculiar headgear originates from Mary’s Garden, close to Aristotle’s village of birth.²⁸⁷ In order to support contrast and emphasis, we can take the only picture with two figures,²⁸⁸ the picture showing the scene before the last door was opened, which unequivocally indicates the hierarchy changed compared to the beginning of the opus by having altered proportions between man and woman, with the woman carrying the dominant role. This is backed up by the adverse relations between man and woman, with the two single-figure pictures at the beginning of the opus, having Judith in a subordinated position there. Compression of meaning is illustrated by, among others, the image of the torture chamber, as we can see below.

After the closure of the little iron door mentioned above, Judith, facing the darkness of the castle takes upon the task herself to bring light and warmth into it: “I shall dry up all the dampness; / With my own warmth, I shall dry it! / I shall warm the chilly stone walls; with my body, I shall warm them! / Won’t you let me, won’t you let me, /

²⁸⁵Ibid. 11. (Unnumbered page following numbered ones.)

²⁸⁶Ibid. 13. (Unnumbered page following numbered ones.)

²⁸⁷VASS 2004. 108.

²⁸⁸BALÁZS – BARTÓK 1979. 37.

Bluebeard! / Let me light into your castle! / Let's tear down the walls together! / Let the winds come, and the sunshine, and the sunshine. / We shall make your castle glitter!"²⁸⁹ Then she reckons that opening the seven doors of the castle can help her in doing so. When opening the first one, she glimpses instruments of torture and bleeding walls. With a bloody background and positioning from all directions, János Kass's illustration displays the same paired white instruments of torture, two from above and under, differing in length, and two black ones, also of different size pointing from left and right. The two types of instruments meet according to the golden ration. A part indicates the whole, the collection of torturing instruments in the chamber. This stylized, tipped shape can also represent a stake, broach, nail, knives or the bloody wall, whatever Judith can see, according to the script. Therefore, this simplified repetition of the tipped shape enables us for all the hermeneutic capability to be filled up carried by the text. Its meaning-constituting is complex, because of its compressed nature, and this is what manifests in the illustrations of the house of weaponry, the treasure chamber and the flower garden, too. According to Balázs's and Bartók's instructions, "the door opens, forming a blood-red frame in the wall, like a wound. From deep behind the door, a red glow casts a long beam to the lobby's floor", which is later seen by Judith as a "stream of radiance", while "bloody waters" by Bluebeard.²⁹⁰ Three points of view, three value levels. In the opera, from deep behind the first door "with the sharply aching trills and screams of piccolos the F-sharp – do pentatonic theme rings out via seething-rippling-shivering harp and wind instrument effects (...), to hitch, upon shifting to the counter key C a "blood them" connects to sordino trumpets."²⁹¹

In the text, the opening of the second door is justified with Judith's love, slightly overwriting the libretto. The countenance of Judith in Kass's version is determined, yet worried. Behind the second door you

²⁸⁹Ibid. 15.

²⁹⁰Ibid. 17–18.

²⁹¹LENDVAI 1993. 79.

can find the house of weaponry, and the girl marvels at the man's cruelty and power. However, this time no answer comes to the repeated questions of the prince ("Fearful?"). The red and yellow, but still "disturbing" light coming from the doorframe is repeatedly believed to be a "Stream of radiance" by Judith. She, despite the recurring warnings of Bluebeard, him uttering "Take care, take care of my castle, / Take care, take care of us, Judith!" supports the justification of her request emphasizing her love, "I have come here for my true love. / Here I am, belonging to you. / You must show me every corner, / You must open all the door-locks!"²⁹² It is after this reasoning that Judith changes for the first time, using her feelings of affection to persuade Bluebeard, that is, her curiosity has become manipulative. Kass's illustration²⁹³ intensifies Judith's 'victory' achieved by means of manipulation, it being the only Judith-portrayal where a smile appears on her face. However, it towers above other Judith-portrayals by using other kinesic elements, such as the gesture of hands, posture, which are used to emphasize her dynamic figure over-excited by curiosity, indicated to be in a rush by the pleats of her dress. Bartók creates an astounding contrast between the two figures during the opening of the doors and the growth of light: "Judith sings in a dominant (!), while Bluebeard sings in a subdominant (!) key (...) according to Judith, with the symbolic increase and extension of the light, the orchestra's tones expand, too (...), and this expansion is repressed by Bluebeard without any transition to a minor third ambitus. Yet the most efficient contrast is shown by harmonization."²⁹⁴

The prince hands over the further three keys on condition that whatever she might see, she should never ask questions. Behind the third door is the treasure chamber, "the light behind it is golden, throwing a beam of light across the floor alongside the other two." Bluebeard offers its treasures to Judith, who is admired by them, however, she realizes that there are blood stains on both the gemstones and the crown. Now Bluebeard urges the opening of the fourth door:

²⁹²BALÁZS – BARTÓK 1979. 23–24.

²⁹³Ibid. 25.

²⁹⁴LENDVAI 1993. 81.

“Let the light in – open, open...!”²⁹⁵ The beautiful garden of his castle is hidden behind this one, illuminating with blue and green light. Bluebeard asks Judith to look after the latter. However, she notices that the ground beneath the huge flowers is bloody, and she keeps on asking who had taken care of the garden before, to no avail: Bluebeard does not answer her: “Judith, love me, never question. / See the radiance of my castle? / Judith, open the fifth door!” Behind it a beautiful view to Bluebeard’s empire opens up, and “bright light floods the scene”.²⁹⁶ Although Judith acknowledges the beauty and greatness of Bluebeard’s country, she still takes notice of the clouds casting bloody shades. Thus, these three doors represent entirely positive views to Judith, but the woman can see the negative qualities, symbolized by the motive of blood. After opening the five doors, the prince is contented with the full brightness of his castle, and with admiration and appreciation invites Judith to kiss and love him. Finally, she has achieved her objective by succeeding in bringing light and warmth into the castle, which is appreciated by Bluebeard: “See the castle’s sparkling radiance, / Blessed woman, you have done this, / Blessed are you woman, blessed. (...) Come to me, I yearn to hold you!”²⁹⁷ Bluebeard’s love for Judith seems to have been fulfilled, yet she does not appreciate this affection.

Summarizing the scenes of the first five doors it can be stated that Judith’s value concept always works the opposite way. The reason is that in the case of the 1st and 2 doors, which, according to the author’s instructions, were supposed to be regarded as negative ones, was deemed positive by Judith. On the other hand, as regards the 3rd, 4th and 5th doors, considered as valuable and positive ones by Bluebeard, he proudly showed them to others, offering all of them to the woman, well, much as Judith appreciates their value, she discovers their negative elements, too.

²⁹⁵BALÁZS – BARTÓK 1979. 26.

²⁹⁶Ibid. 28.

²⁹⁷Ibid. 32.

This confrontation is expressed by János Kass with the total profile image of the figures,²⁹⁸ as well as with the static nature of Bluebeard's posture and the dynamic one of Judith's. Similarly, Judith gets confronted with her own set of values previously declared at the first door by bringing light and warmth into the castle, as when it is achieved during the opening of the 5th door, "blinded, she covers her eyes with her hand",²⁹⁹ yet it is not her but Bluebeard who delights at the light, the shining. Unlike him, Judith makes no comment on this, and does not return this confession of love. Instead, she demands that the further two closed doors be open. János Kass highlights this love confession, yet we can only see Bluebeard. The kinesic elements in his illustration,³⁰⁰ that is Bluebeard's dignity, the reverence gently indicated with his hands, his being in love can at the same time represent to us his satisfaction about his glorious castle.

According to Ernő Lendvai, "each of the series of doors opening up acts as a sealed painting, a static sound field", while "the dialogue of the two characters moves on two independent dimensions".³⁰¹ The fifth door in the opera's music reached its peak in its big *C major* chord: "The volume reaches its peak with Judith's scream and an enormous organ ringing! (...) at this point, not the »most tense« sounding modalities are played (...), but the most fundamental ones: the clear *pentatonic* and the *major scale* chords."³⁰² The music in the love scene at the 5th door, as well as their relationship is "spoiled by Judith's behaviour (...). Since it is Bluebeard who is desperate to protect and maintain the tonal order to the end, while Judith aspires to achieve disintegration of the tonality order: with every step of hers she sings a tune of distance (...). The tonal waiving of the scene thus

²⁹⁸Ibid. 33., 35.

²⁹⁹Ibid. 28.

³⁰⁰Ibid. 33.

³⁰¹LENDVAI 1993. 84.

³⁰²LENDVAI 1971. 28.

gradually becomes and dissolves into moves of distance.”³⁰³ By the end of the scene we reach the counterpoint of the big C-major.

Therefore, the real turning point, both in the libretto and the music or in the images, is the opening of the 5th door. So far, aggression has been linked to Bluebeard’s character, in an indirect or direct manner, regarding the torture chamber and the house of weaponry in the castle, and also concerning the blood-motifs in the view behind the 3rd, 4th and 5th doors. Starting from the libretto’s dramatic turning point, aggression changes gender, and from then the thus far natural female curiosity becomes aggressive, a Freudian ‘drive’, towards full recognition. The aggressive passion in the woman’s cognitive curiosity distorts the image of their world, so Judith does not realize the genuine nature of Bluebeard’s love, and likewise, she can’t appreciate the glittering castle emerging as a consequence of the opening of the 5th door. Her curiosity now is aggressive, longing for cognition, it energizes Judith’s behaviour. János Kass expressively describes this intense and forceful dynamics and scurry, with the flitting pleats of her dress, all in contrast with the static dignity of Bluebeard in the previous scene.

Despite Bluebeard’s warning (“It shall not shine more brightly.”) Judith does not want to see closed doors in front of her. Her will to get to know the other ones, the 6th and 7th doors here can be connected to a certain “aggression related to possessing, owning” using Vilmos Csányi’s standardization.³⁰⁴ Upon the opening of the 6th door “there is a deep moan”, then it becomes slightly darker in the hall. This brightness built up to the 5th door is constructed with geometric punctuality in the text. Judith sees a “Silent, tranquil stretch of water”, gaining its water from women’s tears from the past. The colour symbology in János Kass’s illustration indicates that a fundamental change has taken place in Judith’s personality at the 6th door: love’s red has disappeared from the background, and Judith’s black dress and

³⁰³Ibid. 51.

³⁰⁴CSÁNYI 2000. 128.

the blue background detail³⁰⁵ may remind us of the second illustration of the series; darkness awaits us in the night. After the 6th door, this altered blue and black, and white colour does not only reconnect Judith's figure to darkness in the process of reception, but also places it into a forecasting function. The reason is that it uses colours (blue-black-white) describing the women in the past after the picture with dual figures. The opera is built up similarly, each pole has its counterpole,³⁰⁶ thus the "sinking" created with counterpoles after the buildup and elevation of the 5th door up until the end of the opus. At the 6th and 7th doors the "distance-model" prevails, as, according to Ernő Lendvai, it "eliminates the tonal sense", tonality of the other. For instance, C major becomes a "distance-model" with the adding of A flat minor, as it soon happens so at the 7th door.³⁰⁷

The prince is simply unwilling to open the 7th door. His latest love confession ("You're the radiance of my castle, / kiss me, kiss me, never question.") is interrupted by Judith's jealousy ("Tell me, Bluebeard, tell me, / Bluebeard of the loves who came before me... / (...) Tell me how you loved them; / were they fairer than I? / Better than I?"), and becomes broken off by her suspicion ("I know, I know, I know Bluebeard, / know the source of all those teardrops. / All your former women lie there / in their own blood spilled in murder. / Oh, the rumours! Truthful rumours!"). Here is the point where Judith's aggressive curiosity is the strongest, almost obsessed, all because of the alleged beauty of women from the past. As a matter of fact, it is almost a frustrated aggression. According to Vilmos Csányi, this modernity is the most frequent and at the same time strongest aggression type.³⁰⁸ Quoting Jenő Ranschburg's summary: today's psychoanalysis considers aggression a mechanism which is created due to external circumstances, frustrating situations, these are situations generated as a consequence of attempting to prevent or

³⁰⁵BALÁZS – BARTÓK 1979. 35.

³⁰⁶LENDVAI 1971. 38–39.

³⁰⁷Ibid. 45., 47.

³⁰⁸CSÁNYI 2000. 128.

delay targeted behaviour forms, and are directed towards the outside, the outer environment. Past experience and social learning have a major role in the birth of aggression.³⁰⁹ Judith's goal is to defeat Bluebeard's resistance. The aggression of her highly increased curiosity becomes a ranking-generator, which Kass splendidly demonstrates with the proportion. He also emphasizes the altered dominance, even with the direction of looks: Judith, as a figure grown to be gigantic, looks down from above to the prince placed in the right bottom corner.³¹⁰ At this point in Bartók's opera, before the opening of the seventh chamber "the disagreement between Bluebeard and Judith had never emerged to be so intense, during the course of action the roles, both in their motivational and harmonic image, were now sharply separated and distinct. The man in love is characterized by soaring music flowing like a melody; from behind the flattening words of Judith the face of a cunning, what's more, almost desperately fanatic woman looks back to us, even the tone, contrary to Bluebeard, is typically and strictly mono-centred: it obsessively returns to the G sound and keeps repeating (...)." The part most critical, and almost disorganized in its tonality is the lobby of the seventh door, as here "we are entering the emotional nadir, the most touching opposition of the whole drama."³¹¹

Upon the opening of the 7th door, "the fifth and sixth doors close with a sigh. The stage darkens considerably"³¹² – according to Balázs's instructions. The characters become visible in the "silver moonlight" glowing out of the door. Judith is amazed to see the women alive, and she calls herself a "shabby" beggar as compared to any of them. The three women of the past are the mistresses of dawn, noon and the evening, they look after the prince's garden, collect his treasure, and make his empire great. By changing the earlier colour symbology of Judith's appearance and using black-blue-white colours at the 6th

³⁰⁹RANSCHBURG 2004. 94–96.

³¹⁰BALÁZS – BARTÓK 1979. 37.

³¹¹LENDVAI 1993. 96–97., 101.

³¹²BALÁZS – BARTÓK 1979. 39.

door, János Kass had previously predicted to the observer that Judith would once belong to the women of the past.

After the third woman had left to enter the seventh door, the process of darkening continues. Due to her curiosity having already become aggressive, and her suspicion and jealousy she did not recognize the prince's love toward her, she did not stand the proof of love, she did not remain faithful to the original goal matching her womanly features set and fulfilled by herself, and, finally, she was not content with having been able to fill up the prince's castle with brightness and light. Thus the strict order of her changed fate is set up by the prince. The tonic unity of this section is secured by organ points, which slope down on steps of whole notes (...) thus connecting F minor to the C key, the counterpoint. (...) yet this going down seems to have taken place only to create the opportunity of ultimate apotheosis: "You are lovely, you are lovely, you were my most special woman, most special woman!" (...) ³¹³ In the last image, János Kass presents the legal mistress of the night: "the ending, the apotheosis, the gold implied by Judith's crown and mantle and the black stretching behind finish the hopeless story." ³¹⁴

Bluebeard

(Bluebeard confronts Judith in silence for some time. The fourth door closes.)

Night fell when I found the fourth one.

Judith

Bluebeard, stop it! Bluebeard, stop it!

Bluebeard

Darkness loomed beneath the starlight.

Judith

No more! No more! Still, I'm with you!

³¹³LENDVAI 1993. 108.

³¹⁴KASS 1994. 14–15.

Bluebeard

Your pale features bathed in starlight,
your hair lashed away the night clouds.
All the nights are your own since then.

*(Bluebeard goes to the third door and takes the crown, mantle
and pendant from the threshold where Judith had left them.
The third door now closes. Bluebeard places the mantle on
Judith's shoulders.)*

Yours the mantle bright with starlight –

Judith

Bluebeard, spare me! Bluebeard, spare me!

Bluebeard

Yours the crown of night with diamonds.

Judith

No! No! Bluebeard! Take them all back!

Bluebeard

You have my most precious treasure.

Judith

No! No! Bluebeard! Take them all back!

Bluebeard

You are lovely, you are lovely,
you were my most special woman,
most special woman!

*(Judith and Bluebeard stare at each other. Weighed down by
the mantle and bowing her crowned head, Judith walks along
the beam of silver light following the other women through the
seventh door. It closes.)*

Now it shall be night forever.
Always... Always...

(The stage is covered in complete darkness in which Bluebeard disappears.)

Judith's aggression has completely been neutralized by the "compliance" due to her belonging to the group (women). The following quote by Vilmos Csányi tells us about this form of behaviour, a type of termination of aggression: "When one obeys to the rules, in effect one obeys to an impersonalized dominance. The dominant person is replaced by a new rule, endorsed by the community, and then the submissive individual carries out the instruction embodied in the new order."³¹⁵ Judith obediently joins the line of women, this we can call "dominance of a rule". Here the person giving instructions and orders is Bluebeard, and he is the one determining the hierarchy, too. Thus Judith becomes the mistress of the night, the most beautiful and delightful of them all. The prince of János Kass holds a crown in his hands, which at the same time appears as a cage, and oscillates as a pictorial/imagery metaphor. She occupies her position among the other women behind the seventh door, her fate has now been fulfilled, the castle has become dark again.

In comparison with the fundamentals of the tale, a multiple shift of polarity take place as much as aggression is concerned, that is verbally, in images and music. On the one hand, the woman turns out to be aggressive, driven by curiosity. Aggression of curiosity at first is manipulative, and then it becomes frustrating by means of total cognizance. Female curiosity longing to have knowledge of everything contorts real perception and thus destroys the love that was thought to be a redeeming one. Luckily, it is the end of this love that enables one to realize the real form and value of this love.

Just as God has forbidden the first couple to take a fruit from the tree of knowledge, despite the ban they still commit the original sin.

³¹⁵CSÁNYI 2000. 136–137.

Similarly to their original sin, in Perrault's tale the wife opens, despite the ban, the door of the forbidden chamber, or Judith does the same in Balázs's mystery play to the seven doors. In the 20th century Bluebeard stories of Balázs, Bartók and Kass, the death sentence imposed as punishment is directed at unconditional love, indirectly at Judith and Bluebeard. Furthermore, aggressive female curiosity turns out to be the tool of punishment, and the killer of redeeming love. At the same time, offering some consolation, the death of their love yet provides eternal life to Judith behind the seventh door, and, her being the most beautiful of all the women, she integrates into the order set up by Bluebeard, and in the end becomes the mistress of the night. Consequently, the fate of the woman bearing light will be the same as the man's: that is darkness.

EPILOGUE

Within the intertwined communication channels, both hermeneutic and aesthetic, this collection of studies contains empirical analyses which investigate some intertextual and intermedial transformation of a given literary text to become a work of art from the aspect of the meaning-constituting process. As regards its objectives set, my research follows Gumbrecht's proposition, stating that during the investigation of intermedial phenomena, tendencies should be directed toward not general and abstract statements, but instead a "patient, historical and empirical research" in a legitimate manner. Another aim is to face the very fact that the hermeneutic starting position, much as it may have lost the exclusivity to possess the paradigm of a "readable world", turns out to be unavoidable.³¹⁶

The intertextual and intermedial phenomena surrounding Madách's dramatic poem *The Tragedy of Man* and Béla Balázs's mystery play *Bluebeard's Castle*, as artistic works positioned in the web of 'mediality', forming similar or different intermedial spaces offer various and creative interpretations in advance. This way all works in the network are further interpretations, materialized in the work of art, to the dramatic poem or the mystery play. Moreover, the opportunity of their formation is based on the *Tragedy's* openness and hermeneutic capability to be filled up; its universal raising questions and their potential to be made up-to-date; and the significant medial hybridity of the literary text. As for 20th century Bluebeard stories in Hungary, it is the ever-relevant nature of the topic and the man-woman relation which maintains and generates the network. Also, the "obscurity" of Béla Balázs's mystery play, primarily due to its symbology, possesses the same function. The network of 'mediality', be it between either a literary and non-literary work of art, results both in the case of Imre

³¹⁶GUMBRECHT 2003.

Madách's and Béla Balázs's opus the perseverance in cultural memory. Artists creating fine arts, musical, theatre or cinematographic transformation of the *Tragedy* bear a special attitude towards the spirituality of the pretext, with their names already connected to Madách's poem. This includes Zichy and János Kass with their illustrations, while other artists, Ernő Dohnányi, György Ránki and Marcell Jankovics considered the sovereign adaptation and re-creation of the *Tragedy* as their main lifetime achievement. The historical starting point of the intermedial network of the *Tragedy*, Zichy's series of illustrations, then the 1883 theatre premiere linked with visuality and the ever-increasing role of images in the last third of the 19th century, which, as already declared by Gombrich half a century before, would slowly take control to replace literacy.³¹⁷ Therefore, if we only examine the pretext-decreasing proportions of the various *Tragedy* adaptations, including theatre, opera and movies, we find that the original literary text shortened first to half, then to one-sixth of its length, yet presentations with universal artwork quality fill in the gap generated by the pretext, or compress it. They almost bring static verbal concepts to life, and promote the emergence of the pretext's philosophical nature by means of several tools.

On the basis of my analyses attempting to grasp the idea of intermediality, it can be stated that in the case of works of art in interaction with each other the autonomy of works getting into an intermedial relation and being formed there are overshadowed for the benefit of the establishment of intermedial space. However, this autonomy becomes stronger in the other direction. On the one hand, works in the network within an intermedial relation become dedicated by invigorating the meaning-constituting process with newer and newer interpretations as opposed to the premedium, thus forming a chain link in the intermedial network, functioning as a canon-formatting element. Nevertheless, from the other side of the interaction, works present in the intermedial network bear their independent way of existence, as we could see in the cases of illustrations of "dual existence" by Zichy,

³¹⁷GOMBRICH 1978. 123.

Budai and Kass, or György Ránki's *Tragedy* universal artwork opera-adaptation and Marcell Jankovics's animated movie. The collection of the interrelated works often induce a metanarrative overall reading, a sort of network pattern, therefore Béla Bartók's opera, János Kass's illustrations (as micro-narratives) and Esterházy's short novels can be "simultaneously read" with the premedium, Béla Balázs's mystery play. What is more, at the end of Esterházy's short story, this reading, the interpretation of Balázs's and Bartók's work becomes the decisive meaning-constituting factor of the text, and also the ironic point of the Bluebeard theme. Both Madách's *Tragedy* and Balázs's *Bluebeard* had created a construction of sense within the surrounding network as compared to the premedium which at the same time had overwritten the highlighted nature with regard to the premedium, and its dichotomy, too, not to mention the secondary character of works in the network of mediality, or the primary character of the premedium's narrative. This overwriting at the same time has confirmed the process nature of the intertextual and intermedial network, the network of mediality. In which process the premedial work is already only a chain link, however, a 'sample-provider' one to the network. As a result, it is not exclusively the relation to the medium and its exploration which are in the focus of the investigation, but the collective analysis of works grouped around the premedium as a medial network. Another target of analysis will be some highlighting of premediums manifesting in individual works of art, a new way of interpretation and the aesthetic pleasure of this recognition from the recipient. Losing ground of the pretext or single works of art in this medial network is accompanied by the build-up of the intertextual and intermedial space itself. Apart from this interaction, the pattern of the mediality network is shaped by the premedium itself, and because of this the intertextual and intermedial network itself becomes the 'rescuer' of the premedium in some aspect. For instance, in the *Tragedy* certain ideas or the structure in its philosophy provides this actualized network pattern, like a 'sample portion' is the apocalyptic feature in Kiss's animated movie, the coexistence of good and bad, the theme of death in András Jeles's film, the polarized world in Jankovics's work, or the scheme of creation-fall-redemption in Dohnányi's

symphonic cantata, the fundamental structure in Péter Eötvös's opera, some Madáchian questions raised by Minka Czóbel etc. Dante's *Commedia* and Madách's *Tragedy* are connected by such network pattern, with regard to the hermeneutic principle of one is all, all is one. Similarly, Béla Balázs's *Bluebeard*, in addition to the pretext's libretto form, between Bartók's opera and Kass's pictures the golden ration and symbology is the connecting aesthetic pattern.

I tend to interpret mediality, either between two literary texts or between a literary and non-literary work of art, to be a movement out of a homogenous medium, which was apparently accompanied by the shaping of meaning, or even its changing, yet by all means some mutual enrichment of sense. Also, this mediality induced such a complex aesthetic process of impacts, and/or its series, that it provided an aesthetic joy of the verbal-verbal, verbal-visual, verbal-auditive sensing in an excited, tense and oscillated manner, moreover, it gave an aesthetic pleasure in the recognition of complementary elements. The ever-changing, premedium-related network relation of various works of art organised around Madách's *Tragedy* and Béla Balázs's *Bluebeard* proved to be such cultural processes in my comparative analyses which can be comprehended on account of their own productivity, in their process-like quality. The hermeneutic standpoint could partly be justified by this, during which rising from the medium actual network relations, adaptive transformations and inspirations they could be placed into a wider range of cultural sense formation. For instance, this process can exclusively be observed in the formation history of aggression's behavioural forms the 20th century "struggle-philosophy", or in the way how certain works of art sound or do not sound the last sentence of the *Tragedy*. Likewise, in Dante's *Commedia* the slightly indicated network relations of the works of art, or the detailed network relation organised around Madách's dramatic poem or Béla Balázs's mystery play as well as the hybridized nature of deviating intermedial relations and their study poses an interdisciplinary task to researchers. Moreover, as Mitchel points out, the theory of hybridization may even have to face its own hybridization.³¹⁸ In order to avoid this, research has

³¹⁸MITCHELL 1994. 82.

been directed towards the processes aimed at aesthetic value establishment and hermeneutic meaning constitution regarding the transformative processes of these literary texts. I do hope that such empirically well-established analyses can also contribute to the further study of intermedial phenomena.

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