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# EDE TERÉNYI – MONO-OPERA *"LA DIVINA COMMEDIA"* FORM AND CONTENTS (II. PART – *"PURGATORIO"*)<sup>1</sup>

# GABRIELA COCA<sup>2</sup>

**SUMMARY.** Ede Terényi had come across the poetical work *La Divina Commedia* for the first time at the beginning of the 1970's. As it was a turning point in his life as well, the work of Dante had a very sensitive influence in his own life as along thirty years of his life, the composer came back thorough his creations to this subject. His impressions were transposed both in a colour visual form – by creating a series of twenty-five pictures that were entitled Dantesca, and also in a musical sonorous form by composing the mono-opera *La Divina Commedia*. Not only this musical work but also many other musical works from the 1971-2004 have the print of the work of Dante. This study has the short and the analytical presentation of the mono-opera *La Divina Commedia* by the mirroring of the pictures in the series *Dantesca* that were signed by the composer.

**Keywords:** Ede Terényi, La Divina Commedia, Mono-Opera, Dantesca, Purgatorio, analysis, musical form, harmony, structural conception

"<u>The Purgatorio</u> is also divided into three parts and three scenes. in the structure of a tempo –slow- fast – slow – fast, the middle part has, in this case, a scherzo feature. Dante sleeps into the Purgatorio for three nights in a row. What can be more human than the fact that Dante is capable of sleeping in this fantastic world and he is also capable of having dreams, too? In the first part he is lifted to the skies by a bird of fire:"

*«...Terrible as a thunderbolt it fell And swept me up into the sphere of fire.* 

There it seemed that the eagle and I burned, And the imaginary flames so scorched me That I broke straight out of my dreaming sleep»<sup>3</sup>

However, in the third part, the protagonist has to cross a real fire, a fire that punishes the sensuality:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> This work is the continuation of the analysis that was started in the previous number of our magazine (Studia Universitatis Babeş-Bolyai, Musica, nr. 2/2008).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Babeş – Bolyai University, Faculty of Reformed Theology, Musical Pedagogy Departement, RO-400535 Cluj-Napoca, Horea str. 7. E-mail: gabriela\_coca@yahoo.com.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Dante, Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy*, Translated by James Finn Cotter, Web Edition by Charles Franco.

«Once in the fire, I would have flung myself Into molten glass to feel cooled off, The burning heat inside was so intense. »<sup>4</sup>

The second part transposes into music the flames of desire, the magic Mermaid that has appeared into Dante's dream is the embodiment of the sensual voluptuousness.<sup>25</sup>

From a metrical point of view, the three parts of Purgatorio amplify the symbol of the number **3** and they are conceived into an evolving succession. All three of them have a *notturno* allure. The vocal-instrumental assembly that have these parts been made, they have the percussion 1, the percussion 2, the harp, the percussion, the voice and the piano.

The text, in the same way as it is in the first part of the musical work – *Inferno*, it is also selective as it was taken by the composer in the Italian language as well.

## Table 8

	PURGATORIO – I. <sup>6</sup>
	Canto IX – "You are right now arrived at purgatory"
	()
10	When I, who had a trace of Adam in me, Overcome by sleep, lay down on the grass ()
29	Terrible as a thunderbolt it fell And swept me up into the sphere of fire.
	There it seemed that the eagle and I burned, And the imaginary flames so scorched me That I broke straight out of my dreaming sleep ()
46	"You have no need to fear," my master said; ()
49	You are right now arrived at purgatory:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Dante, Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy*, Translated by James Finn Cotter, Web Edition by Charles Franco.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Terényi, Ede, Dante: La Divina Commedia (essay), in: Terényi, Ede, Zene – költői világ (Music – poetical world), Editura Grafycolor, Cluj-Napoca, 2008, p. 133.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Dante, Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy*, Translated by James Finn Cotter, Web Edition by Charles Franco.

76	I saw a gate, and underneath its threshold Three steps each leading up, of different colors And a guard too who had not said one word.
79	And as my eyes grew focused more and more, I saw that he was seated on the top step, But his face shone so bright I looked away!
	And in his hand he gripped a naked sword Which so reflected rays of light on us That it was useless to turn my gaze on it. ()
112	Seven P's he traced on my forehead With his sword-point, and said, "Be sure you wash These wounds away when you are there within." ()
130	Then he pushed the sacred portal open And said, "Enter, but I would have you know Those who look back return outside once more."
	And when the pivots of that holy entrance, Which were round rods of ringing and strong steel,
135	Turned within the sockets of their hinges,
139	I turned around at the first thundering sound And thought I heard "Te Deum: Praise to God Chanted by voices mixed with that sweet strain.

	PURGATORIO – II. (Canto XVIII + XIX)
	Canto XVIII - "The intellect, created quick to love,"
19	<b>"The intellect, created quick to love,</b> Responds to everything that pleases it As soon as pleasure wakens it to act. ()
70	"So, even supposing every love enkindled Within you rises from necessity, The power to restrain it still lies in you. ()
76	The moon arising late, almost at midnight, Made the stars look scantier to us, For it was glowing like a burnished bucket, ()

	Canto XIX
7	There came to me in dream a stuttering woman With eyes crossed-up and crooked on her feet, With crippled hands and sickly pale complexion.
10	l gazed at her. And as the sun gives comfort To the cold limbs which night had left benumbed, So did my look make her tongue loosen up
19	And in a short time set her fully straight () "I am," she sang, "I am the charming Siren, She who allures the sailors in midsea. So fully pleasing am I to hear sing! ()
26	A lady, saintly and alert, appeared, To thrust the Siren into sheer confusion.
31	"O Virgil, Virgil, who is this?" she asked () She seized the other, stripped her bare in front, Ripping her clothing, and showed me her belly; The stench that sprang from it awakened me.
	I turned my eyes, ()



Then, "You may go no further, holy souls,	_
Unless the fire sting you: enter it,	
And don't be deaf to what is sung beyond,"	
()	
Human bodies I had once seen burned.	
()	
()	
Once in the fire, I would have flung myself	
The burning heat inside was so intense.	
()	
"Come, you who are blessed of my Father,"	
()	
"My son, now you have seen the temporal and	
The eternal fire, and you have reached the place	
Where on my own I can discern no further:	
()	
"Await no more a word or sign from me.	
Your will is straightened, free, and whole — and not	
To act upon its promptings would be wrong:	
"I crown and miter you lord of your self."	
	Unless the fire sting you: enter it, And don't be deaf to what is sung beyond," () Staring at the fire, I clearly pictured Human bodies I had once seen burned. () Then he stepped in the flames ahead of me, () Once in the fire, I would have flung myself Into molten glass to feel cooled off, The burning heat inside was so intense. () "Come, you who are blessed of my Father," () "Come, you who are blessed of my Father," () "My son, now you have seen the temporal and The eternal fire, and you have reached the place Where on my own I can discern no further: () "Await no more a word or sign from me. Your will is straightened, free, and whole — and not To act upon its promptings would be wrong:

The First Part (Purgatorio I) it is divided into three ample sections that add to 106 measures that have many *Libero* segments, which are interwoven. The metric proportion of the sections is presented as follows: the section I contains 56 measures, the section II has 30 measures and section III has 20 measures. The three sections are conceived under the form of a chain – **ABC**, the sections **B** and **C** are connected between them with transitions segments (*Recitativo parlato - Libero*).

As a general atmosphere, the two extreme sections have an Impressionistic profile and they frame a *siciliano* section that is marked by the pointing rhythm that is specific for this type of dance:



# The Structural Conception of the Composing Parts of the Musical Work : Purgatorio – I. (Canto IX)

Table 9



Ede Terényi: Dantesca, Purgatorio, "Souls in a rush"<sup>7</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Terényi, Ede, *Dantesca*, Ed. Echinox, Cluj, 2004, p. 37 262

The First Section (A) – Tempo di siciliano, in the measure 6/8 it is divided in three segments of a contrasting form between them. The First Segment (a) by its own glittering of a pointing rhythm of the siciliano it seems that it prepares the audience on time for the riotously apparition of this rhythm of the median section (B). The musical discourse makes its debut by using a *tremolo pp* on the vibraphone, which is prolonged by a pedal and by a *ppp* rhythm of the percussion. Those two measures of the introduction create a deepening atmosphere in a sleeping state of mind.



The chorded colour is a mixture of red-orange-brown, as we can see in the colours of a sunset, the harmonic basis of the segment is made of one gravitational chord: A major / C # major – with a distance of eight semitones. The end of the segment brings with itself the scordatura of an inferior semitone of the basic chord.

**The Second Segment (b)** brings with itself both a structure contrast and also a tempo one (*Agitato molto quasi doppio più mosso*). Beginning with the measure 13 in *pianissimo*, along four measures only the author in *poco a poco cresc molto* reaches the dynamics *fortissimo* which he will steadily

maintain towards the end of the segment, when, in order to re-equilibrate the tonality he will suddenly come back to the *pianissimo*. The mysterious atmosphere of the night is suggested through rapid and tumultuous crisscrossed glissandos. Here and there, glittering luminous tonalities create a hallucinatory effect.





The mystique atmosphere is increased by the background *tremolo* that is sustained by the *piatto*. The composer offers a creative liberty in this segment for the performers by using the *improvvisando* and he graphically takes out of the context only certain tonality helping points. The sonorous centre is represented by the tone **C** that can often be found at the basis of the ascending *glissando* of an arrow type motif.



**The Third Segment (c)** in the measure 38, after two measures of general pause brings back the dreamingly atmosphere of the first segment without using the tempo modification. The sonorous material of this last segment synthesizes the two previous segments. By calculating the negative golden section of the eighteen composing measures of the segment (18 x 0.382 = 6.876) – (which is the measure 44) – we can see in this moment an ascending scale that is specially shaped and it bursts into *subito* and *ff marcato* (!) on the general background p - pp - ppp of the segment.



Ex. 34

The composer creates in this place a sonorous effect of an ample spatiality through the rapid *glissando* that is quickly executed on two-three eights as some glittering of a leitmotif of the lightening. These appear both in the instrumental part and also into the vocal part. See the descending vocal *glissando* on two eights of the measure 45 (the above-presented example).

On the whole, the central tones reports of the three segments that compose this first section of an A form one can see the following:

- in the first segment (a) from a tonality point of view we can find the basic **C** Dominant Axis that has a fundamental representative the Anti-tonic – **c sharp**;

- in the second segment (**b**) the Tonic Axis is imposed – through the intra-axial Tonics **C**;

- in the third segment of the Sub-dominant axis that has the fundamental representatives the intra-axial<sup>8</sup> Tonics (F) and the Anti-tonics (B)

#### Table 10

	Dominantă	
	Tonică	C sharp - e - <b>G</b> – b flat – d flat
Subdominantă	f sharp - a - <b>C</b> – e flat – g flat	at-s-t-d-at
b - d - <b>F</b> - a flat - c flat	at-s-t-d-at	
at-s-t - d - at <sup>9</sup>		-

**The Second Section (B)** – the measures 57 - 72 / 73 - 84 that is made of two segments has a very clear square delimitation of the composing phrases. The section is marked by the steady pulsation of the *siciliano* rhythm in the first place of the piano rhythm and then to the percussion 1 (the vibraphone), the voice and the harp. After the *Agitato* of the previous segments in this moment we can see the initial tempo of the *siciliano* (J = 96 - 108). The two composing segments of this section can be found in a contrast with the tempo, the second segment had a quickened tempo and also a more firm feature. The composing phrases are structured under the form:  $\mathbf{a} + \mathbf{b} + \mathbf{a}_v + \mathbf{c} / \mathbf{c}_{v1} + \mathbf{c}_{v2}$ .

The basic tonality *F major/minor* imprints a pastoral atmosphere to the entire musical discourse of this section.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Bibliography that can be recommended for the axial tonal system: Lendvai, Emő, *Bartók és Kodály harmóniavilága (The Harmonic World of Bartók and Kodály)*, Ed. Akkord, Budapest, 1996.

Terényi, Ede, *The Harmony of the Modern Music (1900 – 1950)*, translated by Maria Mihai-Cozma, Ed. Grafycolor, Cluj -Napoca, 2006.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Legend: (at = anti-tonics; s = subdominant; t = tonics; d = dominant)

#### Ex. 35



Both the segments, through the mixture process that is adopted by the chorded chaining and also through the sequential harmonic successions and the intervallic parallelisms reveal the musical specification of the fifteenth to the sixteenth centuries.

Ex. 36

#### (m. 67-72.)



**The Third Section (C)** begins in tempo *Solenne* in the measure 86. The ascending chords in the values *brevis* make a visual suggestion through the graphics of the score (rectangular notes) entire rows of marble steps. Above a low tone of the pedal, these rows are reeling in the first segment of the section **C** (the measures 86 - 94) which is purely diatonic (only the white keys of the piano). They produce a metallic tonality that seems to emit a white light.

(m. 56-60.)

Ex. 37



In the musical discourse of the section C, one can notice a series of referring to the section A as follows: the gradual evolution of the clusters on the tone F, the re-engaging of the central tone on C, the re-engaging under the chord form of the tones of the glissando scale:





# Purgatorio – II. (Canto XVIII - XIX)

Table 11



Ede Terényi: Dantesca, Purgatorio, "The Weak People"<sup>10</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Terényi, Ede, *Dantesca*, Ed. Echinox, Cluj, 2004, p. 41.

The second part of the **Purgatorio II** is imagined under the form of a chain that has the following form:

Α	В	С	D	CODA
(Adagio)	(Libero)	(Molto agitato	(Appasionato)	(Libero)
		e misterioso)		
(m.1-14.)	(m.15-25.)	(m.26-33.)	(m.34-45.)	(m.46-50)

From this assembly, the median section **C** is highlighted through its concentration as a dimension and on the other hand, through the tempo contrast that is made towards the previous *Adagio* and also by the *Libero* that follows.

**Section A – "The intellect, created quick to love".** The musical expression of "the soul" can be revealed from the first measure. The word *L'animo* is already intoned by the vocal soloist on an ascendant fifth that is followed by a descendant fifth.



After the author's view, the fifth as a perfect interval is the expression of the soul whereas the third and the sixths are the intervals of the embodied world (through their steadiness they represent the body, the living soul). These intervals prevalently dominate the entire musical discourse of the debut section of that part. The metrics 8/2 stays steady along the entire part. The tonal centre of the section is the tone *D*.



Ex. 40



Section B – "The moon arising late, almost at midnight, Made the stars look scantier to us, For it was glowing like a burnished bucket" brings back in the forefront the fifth interval that is rich in melodic ornaments. The section is dominated by the vocal party, the motifs of the vocal solo alternate to the motifs that are sustained from the accord point of view and they are frequently made of an arpeggio. In the solo party it is seen the frequency of the division of the quintolet.

Ex. 42



The tonal axis of the section is made of  $gis - h - \underline{D} - f - as$ . To the end of the section, the author makes the musical discourse of a gradual acceleration of the tempo that is accompanied by the dynamic amplification (*crescendo*).

**Section C** – it makes the musical description of a feminine grotesques figure under the form of a dream image, by gesticulation. The weird pantomime of the woman is represented by the aleatory *glissandos* of the harp.





This episode quotes the remembering of the grotesque scherzo of the second part of the Inferno. The chords of the piano remind us of the ostinato of the scherzo. The pedal is maintained under the form of a *brevis* mark (see the previous example) that fixates the tonal centre of this section on the tone G.

In Section D – in the tempo Appassionato – this grotesque figure receives a voice and it sings. Dante seems to be charmed by the song of this gnome:





The symbol of the perfect fifths is extinguished in the *ostinato* of the fundamental tones of the major – minor chords of the accompaniment, in a total harmonic imponderability.

Ex. 45



(m. 41-45)

The entire musical discourse of this section is developed on this axis.

# c# - e - G - b flat - d flat

In the **Coda** (*Libero*) – an insidious hand seems to pull the veil from the figure of the feminine gnome by uncovering the real horrible personality. the composer characterizes this being through a very strange chord in his construction and his sonority.



In this context, the perfect eighth *d* flat minor of the closing of the part do not create the consonance relationship. The tonal centre of the section of Coda *d* flat = c sharp. The tonality *d* flat is into itself a dark sombre tonality, that suggests the completion into the nothingness.





# Purgatorio – III. (Canto XXVII)

Ede Terényi: Dantesca, Purgatorio, "The Paradise of the Earth"<sup>11</sup>



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Terényi, Ede, *Dantesca*, Ed. Echinox, Cluj, 2004, p. 45. 274

The form of the third part of the **Purgatory** that emits into itself a Notturno atmosphere and it is built in a chain type.

# A + B + Parlato (transition) + C + Parlato (transition) + D

**Section A.** The Chapter XXVII of *Divina Commedia* of Dante, in the translation of Babits Mihàly (a Hungarian edition) got the title of "*Starry Night*". According to the references of the text:

"But in that little I observed the stars 90 Brighter and larger than they usually are.

> While ruminating, and admiring them, Sleep overcame me, sleep which often knows What is the news before events occur."

The impression is created by these lines they represent the inspiration source of the composer in the composition of this first section of the part three of the Purgatorio. It is a dreamily music, into a calm tempo *Andante maestoso*, at the end of the road of a long and tired life. the sonorous material of the musical discourse gravitates around the tonal centre D (*minor*).





**The Section B** makes its debut in the measure 16 in an *Allegro deciso* tempo. This is a hymn with a festive character with bangs of the bells (Gong). *Quassi organo* – the song of the divine angel sounds under a coral corded form in the piano party. The pastoral colour of the tonal centre *F major*, by the tone *b* receives the tonality of the idyllic mode.



The following section (**C**) is preceded by two measures of **transition** that contain a successive chorded alternation: *D* major, *d* minor, *A* major, *a* minor, *A* flat major, *e* flat minor, *B* major, *b* flat minor, in the degrees of extreme dynamics: sff - pp. the tonal axis of the transition is situated on the tone *D*.



Section C constitutes the symmetry axis of the part that musically symbolizes the immersion into the purifying fire. At the anti - pole of the tone D we can come across the perfect fifth a flat – e flat – the leitmotif interval of the soul that seems to suggest the entering of the soul into the fire. The tone a flat is that which extinguishes (that is sonorously extinguished) the tone D. the tonal centre of the section C is a flat:

Più mosso, agitato (m. 31.)	Ex. 51

Two **transition** measures in *Parlato libero* make the connection between the section **C** and the final section **D**. this is a simple *parlato* whithout any other sonorous background. Vergilius leaves Dante by himself at this time.

Libero	o (m. 51-52.)	Ex. 52
Parlato		
() Il temporal fuocoe l'eterno Veduto hai figlio	e se'venuto imparte Ov 'io per me più ol	ltre non discern

**Section D** a hymn Allegro deciso brings back under a varied form the sonorous material of the section B (the measures 16 - 28). However, they symbolize at this time the crowing of Dante. Vergilius says the following:

140. Your will is straightened, free, and whole — and not To act upon its promptings would be wrong: "I crown and miter you lord of your self."

The festive tonality of F major alternates to the tonality A major. The closing chord A major that is reported to the chord and also to the tonal centre F major is a height into itself.



(Translated by: Maria Cozma)

The follow-up of this study will be published in the next issues (2/2009) of the *Studia Musica* review.

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