

Eötvös Loránd University
Faculty of Humanities
Hungarian Literature Ph.D. School
Ph.D. thesis

SULYOK BERNADETT

WHICH IS ETERNAL AND WHICH IS FLEETING

The myth critical and narratological interpretation of János Kodolányi's mythical tetralogy (*The Flood, New sky, new Earth, The burning wild rose, It's me*)

Abstract of the thesis

2007, Budapest

The theme of the Ph.D. thesis

János Kodolányi is one of the novelists in the XXth century, which could not get into the literary mainstream, that's why it is necessary to discuss about his place and his importance in Hungarian literary history. In this thesis we try to analyse the writer's ancient historical-mythical tetralogy in a myth critical approach. First we explore the cultural history of these four novels, and their reception till now. The interpretation concentrates on Kodolányi's world view, the background of mythical novels, the narrative structure, the repeated motives and their story-organising roles. Beside the merits of the novels we don't want to ignore their shortcomings, realizing that the genre of mythical novel can function as a bridge between ancient times and present.

Cultural history, theoretical and methodical frames

The first part of the thesis (I-IV. chapters) deals with the biographical and historical background of the mythical tetralogy, their genesis, and the literary establishment of our approach. We present Kodolányi's writing career after the second world war, we present some contemporary artists and novels, which influence his world view (László Vatai, Nándor Várkonyi, Lőrinc Szabó, Béla Hamvas, Sándor Weöres). We describe the genetic circumstances of the tetralogy, the reviews, the reception so far. In the chapter titled „Myth and literature” we present the cardinal pillar of our approach, the myth critical school. In Russian structuralism Loszev and Meletyinszkij dealt with the relationship between myth and literature.

The Canadian Northrop Frye is one of the most important representatives of myth critical literary interpretation. According to his theory myth is the union of rite and dream in a grammatical communication. He suggests to use the phrase „myth” to the narration, and the phrase „archetype” to the meaning. In fact he melts literature in myth. The archetypical analysis collects systematically the elements of collective unconsciousness. Frye, as the heir of West-European culture in North-America, takes in central point the Greek–Jewish–christian mythology, and its coherent attitude towards life. The myth builds collective meaning into literature as a structure. The original myth usually deals with gods and demons, it has totally metaphorical identification, it is divided into two conflicting worlds. The two forms of this metaphorical organization are called apocalyptic and demonic. Frye remarks that

the myth critical interpretation, the latent apocalyptic and demonic figures are just one part of the total critical analysis. So he admits the borders and limits of his interpretation. In my opinion every critical analyser must consider this. Literary works naturally have several different meanings, they are endless, that's why we always approach them in various ways again and again. They are supposed to get contact with our own world, masterpieces make us think and discuss common problems.

In the third chapter we describe the other, complementary theoretical pillar, the points of view of narratology. Narratology has realized that stories are not the contents of acts, but the forms of acts, that is why they focus on the way how events become stories. Paul Ricoeur's vast experiment connects structural analysing method with hermeneutical philosophy using them as constructive interpretation. In this thesis Kodolányi's tetralogy is analysed in a text-conscious and tradition-centered method. These are the most important aspects of our approach: the origin time of the novels, their time planes, the differences and contrasts between origin time and reception, interpretation time, the relationship between the narrator and the characters, the story-organising roles of rite, dream, archetypes and symbols.

The world view background of the tetralogy is outlined in the following chapter. Kodolányi makes his own poetical vision about eternal human themes in his four mythical novels: the human soul itself, the searching of the meaning of life, the relationship between human and transcendence, the origin of culture, friendship, love, self-sacrifice, betrayal – are all exposed in the tetralogy. From this point of view they are philosophical novels, representing different conceptions and ideas about the world. In the author's opinion a long time ago, before historical time there was a golden age, a state of Paradise, which had been come to an end by something – this something called the Fall in sacred traditions. From that point human has been dug into this imperfect world. The protagonists, heroes in mythical novels try to lead their people to the onetime state of Paradise. The mythical world view and the universal traditions build the paradigm and philosophical frame of the mythical tetralogy.

Kodolányi and the similarly thinkers look for the common ancient seed and root in every culture. Nándor Várkonyi studying the different sacred texts and stories realized that every culture has a God experience from the beginning, and the farther we look back into the past, our experience is the clearer and directer. There are two cardinal questions in Kodolányi's world view: where the place of human is in the universe, and which role myth plays in this. He follows a conception, which neither in his age, nor nowdays is accepted about the origin of human: he agrees to Edgar Dacqué's theory against Darwin's evolution, he first read about it in Várkonyi's book titled Siriat's columns. According to this human as a

tribe is not the final result of a developing process, but is is a prototype, it has lived through several Earth periods.

Kodolányi puts mythical and scientific world explanations to the same level, they are equivalent as symbolic systems. They are the basis of each culture. He supposes that religion and science did not devide in ancient human knowledge, myth united them. We also think that they can be equivalent as symbolic systems. Myth is the production of man's symbol-making talent. According to Kodolányi human could not be without myth, it remains the memory of man's normal and total state, the memory of man's ideal relationship with society, nature, cosmos ans transcendency.

Kodolányi was fond of esoteric theories, he tried to know the real face of the world. In her study Éva Szalai states that the writer could not be related to any dogmatic religion, he believed in a universal love-religion. István Jelenits supposes that Kodolányi adored his own God since his childhood. This God isn't the nomad's bloodthirsty idol, isn't Christ's affectionate and graceful Father. In Kodolányi's opinion both god theories are fractions of the one, that can't be seen, described by words, just suspected – and it is very-very hard to get close to it. We call Kodolányi a XXth century mystic, he led back each different religion to one absolution with his dialectic and analogic thinking: to the not-revealing God, Who contains the possibility of everything. He trained himself hard to the role of modern spiritual leader, he can be described with physical-psychical puritanism, all his readings and his consultations with friends served the knowing and understanding of esoteric secrets.

The leading motives of the tetralogy are the astrological world epochs and their heroes. According to Kodolányi's theory the history of human culture can be measured in thousand years, human history is actually timeless. The representatives of asthrological thinking presume based on their astronomical observations that there are cosmic epochs in the history of universe in accordanse with horoscopes, but in backward order. *The Flood* original title was *Aquarius*, the author changed it in the following editions because it was mistakable. His asthrological knowledge enlarged, so he realized that the Flood didn't happen in the zodiac Acquarius, but six thousand years earlier, when the sun went into the constellation Taurus from Gemini. That was the time of Atlantis' sinking according to Plato's *Timaios*, which is equivalent with Aztlán's disappearing in Kodolányi's novel. After the Flood the new world is the Taurus epoch (its hero is Gilgames – *New sky, new Earth*), that is followed by the Aries epoch (its announcer is Mózes – *The burning wild rose*), then by the Pisces epoch (its hero is Jesus – *It's me*).

The Messiah humantype is actually man in God, or rather God in human, which is a connecting bond between our frail humanity and our opening to infinity. The one who discovers God in his soul, gets an ancient knowledge. There is a repeated motif in every creation-myth: the Creator „breathed on” his creature. Hereby there is a divine spark in every human, that is realized by Messiah humantypes.

By forgetting the ancient union it is more and more harder to find our place in the world: one of the central problems to Kodolányi’s heroes is to find again the feeling: „I am home”. All the heroes are lonely, even if they do not live separately: Utnapistim cannot make anybody to understand his right – except his family –, Gilgames becomes lonely with his gorgeous plans, his surroundings are too little for him, Mózes though he’s a popular leader and a legislative, hasn’t got a companion in his fighting with God, Jesus also meet misunderstanding and obtuseness.

There is another central motif in Kodolányi’s mythical tetralogy: the concept of single God; according to a theological hypothesis there was one ancient monotheism, it was divided into polytheisms, which fight against each other, trying to get supremacy. The mythical tetralogy is part of the modern world literature, that synthesises the results of modern sciences and researches: this school reflects the effects of psychoanalysis, ethnology, prehistory, cosmology, metaphysics, religionhistory, comparative tale and myth research. The view of time mixes ancient and nowdays, it has not got a historical approach. It widens and loosens the borders of personality, the self-consciousness of its heroes are identical with ancestors and descendants, reincarnation is a natural process. Hereby it recreates the mythical world view, a new novel model appears, which is similar to Thomas Mann’s pursuits in the world literature. These literary works have several different layers, they can be read in many ways. *The Flood* and *New sky, new Earth* can be interpreted as actual-political stories of their origin time: the battle between Erech and Szurippak is the bloody satire of the second world war, the World tower building king refers to the twisted building of socialism. Hidden social criticism, indictment against overdone ideologies and political systems can be discovered.

They can be approached as paraphrases of different mythological stories. Kodolányi mixes the *Gilgames-epic* and Noah’s escape, we can recognize Babel’s tower from the *Bible* in Lugal’s World tower. The asteroid, Nannar, approaching to the Earth, then falling into, is identical with the Red Dragon from *Apocalypse*. The writer uses the motives of other religions to tell Gilgames’ story: Gilgames’ arriving to Uruk is a real triumphal march, his caricature describes him as a human-fisherman; Jesus’ followers are also fishermen, the Master promises them that they will fish man till now.

The mythical background is the basis of sacred numbers, laws and structures, which the world, the life, the main of human characters and lots build onto, the perceptible nature, the rythm and harmony of physical and psychical life all reflect these structures. But at the time of changing zodiacs even the harmony of these eternal and thought unchangeable celestial forces breaks down. The consequence is to look further than they are, if man wants to free from transitoriness.

The novels are paraphrases of old mythological stories in different tones. *The Flood* is the satiric approach of the mythical story, *New sky, new Earth* is the ironic approach of the mythical story, *The burning wild rose* is the heroic-tragic paraphrase of the mythical story. *It's me* is the dialectic telling of the mythical story, its tone is definitely duplicated, its narrative structure has two poles: one part represents Jesus as we know him from the Gospel, in dignified tonality, the other, Jehuda's part is the contrast, Jehuda reverses, doubts his own experiences, so Jesus' holyness. Beside these parts we concentrate on the narrative structure, the characteristics of space and time. We represent the leading roles and the important figures, their relationships, we reveal the function of repeated motives – using the method of myth critical interpretation.

The satiric approach of the mythical story: *The Flood*

In Frye's genre theory satire has a properly demonic tonality, it reverses the usual ethical associations of archetypes. *The Flood* has a definitely satiric part. Besides satire there are several other parts and stylistic means, but in brackets or queried: it combines vulgar and devout, holy and erotic, elegiac and sarcastic tonality, it counterpoints pathos with irony. Its describing method is dreamlike: nything can happen in a dream, the story freely rolls in space and time, the unreal, the fantastic seem to be natural – at least the dreamer can be amazed. The novel has a lot of grotesque elements, that's why it is a parabola and a parodie at the same time. The whole story reflects a coherent, organically built mythical world view: there are an almighty God, a worl-destructing dragon, a pantheon of gods and godesses, a circle of initiateds and some sandglass-people.

The peculiarities of several genres can be found in *The Flood*. This is a history-philosophical work, interpreting the process of history, the unique and the repeated events, situations, it projects to each other history and mythical cosmology and apocalypse. BesideS the battles of mythical heroes can be seen the contemporary events of origin time (second world war). Gilgames' growing and his character continue th tradition of educational novel.

The story of *The Flood* is based on the *Gilgames-epic*, which remained on cuneiform tables. Sándor Rákos translated the whole text into Hungarian language. The story of *The Flood* can be read on the XIth table. It builds into the novel, but this is just a short episode among the events. The novel is divided into 50 chapters, the catastrophe of the Flood can be read in the 48-49th chapters. It has a favoured place in narration, because the story telling changes from past tense to present tense in these two chapters – it emphasizes the weight of events, the despair of characters, the demolition of almost a planet.

The novel takes from the myths of ancient cultures, which are about different natural catastrophes, they hint that cataclysms are the consequences of becoming guilty, hurting nature, breaking divine laws. Plato told the same in connection with Atlantis' ruin in his dialogues titled *Timaios* and *Kritias*. Cataclysms are punishments, on the other hand they are signs of intellectual-psychical destruction in the material world, which happened earlier in the human community.

The Moon, approaching to the Earth, causing the catastrophe of the Flood, is Nannar in the novel, a moon-godness, he's Enlil's first son in the nether world. According to the *Gilgames-epic* Enlil took revenge on the people causing the catastrophe. Because Nannar is Enlil's son, that is why he became the asteroid in the novel. The *Apocalypse* is also an important source for the story, Saint John's vision tells an earlier world catastrophe in Nándor Várkonyi's approach.

The analysis deals with the following structure-organising elements: the different points of view – parallelisms, complementary and contradictory qualities, Utnapistim and his friends, monarch types (Lugal, Azag-Aja), Gilgames' character, two types of relationships between man and woman (Utnapistim – Szabitum, Gilgames – Nurma).

The ironic approach of the mythical story: *New sky, new Earth*

The Flood ended with a witty little poem, which announced the sequel. The part of *New sky, new Earth* is different than the previous novel's, it is not so biting and satiric, but there are a lot of nuances of irony. The importance of elegiac elements has grown, which relates to Gilgames' mature age, the experience of passing, short life. He cannot carry out his imposing and monumental dreams, plans, he becomes disappointed about his vain desires, he fails in searching love and immortality. He gives up love (in Bilala-episode), he loses immortality. The mixture of irony and elegy points to one way: it displays that human desires and ambitions are futile and unavailable. Irony emphasizes that desires and ambitions are petty

and useless, while elegiac details underline that disappointment and unfulfillment can hurt badly.

It is more common that some elements of the novel cannot be inserted in neither the apocalyptic symbolism, nor the demonic: these relate to Gilgames' unique, creating acts and rules, people don't know their mythical models. While *The Flood*'s characters lived in a dissolving world epoch, here we can see the birth of a new mythical world view, Gilgames introduces the Taurus' age all by himself. From genre theoretical approach the novel combines a lot of novel types. It describes a character, the central hero is Gilgames. His family members, Uruk's people also appear, hereby it can be considered a social novel in ancient time. The final part of the story, which begins with Gilgames' campaign, is close to the picaresque novel, his visitation is the other world refers to the journey inside the soul. Gilgames' continuous grips make us think of the psychological novel type.

There is a similarity between the two novels: Utnapistim and Gilgames are old when their stories begin. The first scene is just like we are brought back to the idyll of golden island in *The Flood*, but the characters are more experienced and more clever. But the Flood couldn't clean the people's old bad features. The first part of this novel is an enlarged exposition (1-28th chapters): Gilgames introduces the Taurus' cult, he builds vast buildings, people become more and more uncomprehending and dissatisfied. Uruk's people have inexact, sometimes false knowledge about the before-Flood cultures. Gilgames is the only one, who knows authentically what happened once. This long exposition lasts until Enkidu appears, this is the real intrigue (29th chapter). The last two chapters of the story (48-49th chapters) are in favoured position, just like in the previous novel: *The Flood*'s narrator also told the story of the Flood in two chapters (48-49th). Gilgames' visitation at Utnapistim and his quest to the fountain of immortality get the central function in *New sky, new Earth*.

There's a turn in the 21st chapter: at this time a seditious inscription and a caricature appear figuring Gilgames as a human-fisherman. Jesus' followers are also fishermen, the master makes them human-fishermen. This has a positive meaning in the Gospel, but in Gilgames' case this has a negative connotation. The second turn is in the 28th chapter, when Gilgames dismisses his officials, who hid the rebellion, but he does not settle accounts with them. From that point the conspiracy, some people's private case becomes a general turbulence. Enkidu arrives to a city that waits him pleased and supports him as the monarch's enemy.

The analysis represents the existence and time approach of archaic human, the relationship between the narrator and the heroes, the interpretation of events, deals with

Gilgames, the motif of the Taurus, two female characters (Nurma is the supporter and the critic of the central hero, Risat-Ninlil is a wise interpreter of dreams), the portrayal of two artists (Diggin and Kalab-Ea), and Gilgames' campaign, then his quest.

The heroic-tragic approach of the mythical story: *The burning wild rose*

Though *The burning wild rose* is written later than *It's me*, our analysis deals with it earlier. This decision is explained by two points of view. First, by the order of astrological world epochs: The burning wild rose takes place in the Aries "world month" (approximately two thousand years), *It's me*'s story is in the following, Pisces epoch. Second, by the different quality and part of mythical world views in the two novels. The central hero of *The burning wild rose*, Mósze's life approach is basically tragic: he tries to get close to the Single, the unrevealing God, he becomes guilty and he has unachievable demands against his surroundings, his character holds his own necessary fall. At the same time we look appreciatively at his elevated intentions – he teaches his chosen people the ancient harmony between God and human –, at his generous acts – he leads his oppressed people's escape from despotism –, we honour his resolute persistence and his gorgeous efforts. The part of *It's me* is basically determined by the two tones of narration. The narrator outside of the story combines objective description with pathos in Jesus' representation. The other tone is Jehuda's point of view, he sees Jesus more and more as a demon, as the back of myth, in ironic mood. The unique atmosphere of the story comes from the tension of these two contradictory approaches. Jesus, announcing the closing Heaven becomes a False-Messiah, who endangers the future of Jewish people and religion for Jehuda. According to his point of view he's consistent when he reaches betrayal, hereby he saves the others. He realizes too late that he misjudged Jesus and he did a terrible outrage.

In *The burning wild rose* we can take the transition from one world epoch to the next in the apocalyptic and the demonic symbolisms. Mósze sees the Taurus' age, the symbols of a disappearing epoch as dark forces, while the attributions and symbols of the new "world month" are God's revelations for him.

Princess Szetamon's poem is a special lyric insertion in the epic novel, which she wrote just before Mósze's birth. Its part is elevated, like an ode, because it's about a decisive hour, the chance of life or death, the mystery of birth. The poem becomes one of the central motives in the story, it appears when Mósze's life is in change. The author's concept puts Mósze's story to the 16th century B. C., he is Eknaton's and Szekaré's contemporary.

According to the historians the withdrawal happened one century later, during the reign of Ramszesz IInd or Merneptah. The writer uses two things from Freud's study about Mozes: his origin and birth, and the way of his death. The narrator names his concrete sources at the beginning of Third book: Josephus Flavius, a Roman Jewish writer's work titled *Contra Apionem*, and Menthos or Manethon, an old-egyptian high priest's fraction of historical work. He refers to Dacqué's thoughts twice, in his opinion the Jahveh-religion is a monotheist heathenism. The narrator agrees with this, because the prophets who followed Mósze could not elevate the people from Já's and other idols' monotheist heathenism for a long time.

The structure of the novel is divided into three parts and 101 chapters. The first two books build of 33-33 chapters, the third book builds of 35. So the structure-organising role of number three is clear. Mósze's and Eknaton's simultaneously narrated lives split off the background of corrupted, sensual royal court. There are a lot of satiric elements in the description of the royal court. From the point of view of the story the chapter, where the narrator tells Mósze's temptation by Nefertiti, is a needless digression. The world of Second book is much more balanced. The description of Mósze's adult age – his acts as a governor, his murder and his escape, his years in Midián – has a comprehensive social background. *Maror and Selomith* is a short-story-like insertion, which demonstrates how Jewish people are oppressed, it motivates Mósze's murder. The manslaughter is a decisive turn in Mósze's life, from that point his life can be divided into periods based on his chosen social and family roles. In Third book Mósze realizes the great work with heroic determination like an obsessed. His confidant, Jósuah and his armed men put down and demolish rudely the participants of idolatry, the dissatisfied several times, they suppress the rebellion leaded by Korach, Dathan and Abiram.

The novel is a monumental social, historical and philosophical story, at the same time it is one man, Mósze's fictitious biography. The central hero was 120 years old when he died, the novel contains the social and political events of this period. This is also a history-philosophical novel, because the crisis of old-egyptian empire or the oppressed Jewish people represent universal mechanisms.

We describe Mósze's life according to his different roles, using the lessons of a particular existential reading. In Mósze's life always other features and ambitions come to the front, their importance changes time after time. He always chooses different roles (family, religious, friendly, social), because his interest is always in change. But the inside seed stays constant. Here are the chapters of interpretation: his dual growing – Jewish family and the doctrines of Aton's priests, his government in Gósen, Eknaton and the monotheism, two high

priests (Amram and Jethro), God's chosen one, Mósze's chosen roles – husband and father, the rescuer of his people, the tribune, the legislative.

The old rabbi, Jochanán ben Geula tells one of his followers Mósze's story, sitting under a flourishing olive-tree; the listener makes notes diligently. The rabbi acts like a historical chronicler in the first chapters (1-11th): he represents the tribes, talks about the throne discords, which were for the reign above Egypt, he considers Abraham as the symbol of a tribe whose ancestor was the Moon. The central problem of the relationship between trancendency and human is that men have lost their consciousness about the only God they adore some of his reflections instead. The symbolic content of official religious ceremony has blured, but the role of formalitieshas grown. According to the rabbi he must hand down the real knowledge about God to the younger generation, and must return to Eden, to the union with God.

The interpretation deals with the narrator's function, the encyclopaedic structure, the mentioned motif, Szetamon's poem.

The dialectic approach of the mythical story: *It's me*

The part of *It's me* is basicly determined and separated by the two tones of narration from the other pieces of tetralogy. The narrator outside of story combines objective description with pathos in Jesus' representation he's elevated to the sphere of myth, while jehuda is represented ironically. The other tone is Jehuda's point of view, he sees Jesus more and more as a demon, as the back of myth, in ironic mood. The unique atmosphere of the story comes from the tension of these two contradictory approaches. In Jehuda's point of view the apocalyptic symbolism turns into demonic symbolism, but the external narrator describes him with infernal symbols, as the travestor of myth. The drama of the situation keeps on growing, because Jehuda does not realize his own demonic features. Jesus continues the mythical worl view, he reinterprets the myth of Old Testament, he fulfills and surpasses it at the same time. The narrator approaches Jehuda's character psychically, its instrument is inside monologue, we can know his thoughts, his feelings, his plans and dispairs, we can watch how he becomes a traitor. This is the psychology of myth.

Similar tot the world of *The Flood* the transcendentaland the demonic symbolic systems appear on many various levels in this novel, sometimes crashing into each other, sometimes projecting into each other. Jesus, who announces the closing Heaven becomes a False-Messiah for Jehuda, endangers the future of Jewish people and religion. According to

this point of view he's consistent, when he reaches betrayal, hereby he saves the others. He realizes too late that he misjudged Jesus and he did a terrible outrage.

The change of narrating time from past tense to present tense underlines the importance of betrayal: the narrator uses verbs in present tense in the 71st chapter from that point, when Jehuda arriving with the soldiers notices Jesus, it takes to the end of the story, to the 75th chapter. It shows the eternal validity of the two types, the situation of traitor and betrayed. That is when Jehuda commits the archetypic sin, why he was born. Later he has a guilty conscience, then he brightens up, he realizes the last consequence for himself. The present tense narrated events lead from the betrayal through the compunction to the conversion.

Jehuda's mystery induces a lot of paraphrases, which were written by several XXth century novelists. Jehuda is the archetype of betrayal, his psychological description is motivated by the century political features. The various dictatorial systems divide into observers nad observed, informing becomes an accepted instrument of power-practicing. Perhaps one of the most memorable paraphrase of the *Bible* is Bulgakov's *The Master and Margaret*, Ha-Nokri's and Pilate's plot thread. Here Judas is a grasping, comfort-loving young man, he does not commit suicide he dies because of his desire for a young woman. Nikosz Kazantzakis turns Judas into a positive character in his novel titled *The last temptation of Christ*. So the interpretations are very different from the grasping, sneaky traitor to the most understanding follower of Christ.

The problem of betrayal plays central role in other biblical stories: Adam and Eve betrays each other to god after the Fall, Kain kills his own brother, Abel, because his jealous, denying the order of fraternal love, Jacob defeats Esau, the firstborn with a bowl of lentil and gets the blessing of their father, Joseph is thrown into a well by his own brothers. The characters of these stories all betray the divine order of love and justice.

Jehuda, the traitor is an educated, cultivated man, a scientific trader. He is unable to convert, unable to make decisions as an intellectual. Jehuda always asks this during his entire life: who am I? He looks for the answer in different schools, circles, roles he always thinks that he can't reach the inner circle of followers. His story is the not-noticing of truth, from this point of view becoming a traitor is the tragedy of an intellectual. At the same time Jehuda is the critic of a certain intellectual type, which can't approach the world and himself just from his confirmed point of view, which is tended to judge others, but cannot look his point of view objectively as an outsider. He is the prisoner of his prejudices, his interpretational canon and his reflexions.

The interpretation is divided into the following chapters: the narrator outside of the story, the insertion-story – Jehuda bar Simon’s recollection, Jesus’ describing in two points of view – the objective narrator and Jehuda, the motives of cave and mountain, visiting magus Simon, Jesus’ attributions – the expression of identity (It’s me), Jehuda’s personality, the process of becoming a traitorthe end – punishment and/or conversion.

Conclusions

The mythical novel is a very important genre, its starting-point, the myth gives the largest perspective to describe basic human questions. Though there are basic differences between mythical and modern thinking – for example archaic consciousness is instinctive, intuitive, modern intellectual, philosophical approach can’t describe it just from outside – still archaic and modern thinking also have metaphors and symbols, they provide the continuity between the two forms of consciousness. There is an important divergence in the identity of characters: while the mythical hero is identical with his role, the mythical character in a modern novel needs psychology, motivation. So the archetype of traitor, Jehuda gets psychological interpretation in *It's me*, hereby he can get in connection with modern people, who lost their identity, change their roles as masks. From this point of view Jehuda’s life leads from loneliness and discrimination through hate to discord.

Kodoányi represents the conflict of old and new, dissolving and arising world views in the four mythical novel, he is interested in the problem of transition and crisis. His mighty cultural and historical knowledge, his specialized literature provide the genuineness of novels, his knowledge spreads from society and politics to lifestyle and habits. His philosophical and religion-historical familiarity can be seen in the description of mythical world views, beliefs and superstitions. His writing inventiveness and his fantasy can be observed in the forming of characters, situations and battles.

The young Gilgames looks for his mission and his place in *The Flood*, he is partly belong to the old, disappearing, partly to the future, forming world. As the founder of the new world period (*New sky, new Earth*) he can’t find his psychical peace, he wants more, immortality. Mósze is Kodolányi’s biggest novel character (*The burning wild rose*), his severe greatnesssometimes oppresses mercifulness. Jehuda follows Mósze’s traditions as a formal habit system in *It's me*, he can’t follow the hero of the new “world month”, the Pisces, he comes to a deadlock between the two epochs.

Among the four mythical novels we place to the top of Kodolányi's oeuvre *The Flood* and *It's me*. *The Flood*'s unique value is that the satiric approach of the mythical story is combined with complex narration. Several mythical beliefs and conceptions get place, beside the central heroes – Utnapistim, Lugal, Gilgames – the initiated friends are real characters too. We can separate well the characters' consciousnesses, the tone of Unapistim and Lugal, or Utnapistim and Gilgames, the different judges and interpretations of one situation. The part moves on a large scale from humour to killing satire through the nuances of irony. The speciality of *It's me* is in the dialectic approach, in the two antagonists, Jesus' and Jehuda's contradictory world views. Jesus' two portraits, from the narrator and from Jehuda oppose with each other, Jehuda sees the Messiah in demonic symbolism, putting him into infernal sphere. The atmosphere of the story is dramatic, full of conflicts, Jesus' followers and his attackers are in opposition, the two interpretations are totally contradictory. Jehuda sinks more and more deeper, he becomes a traitor, then beyond the lowest point he lightens up, these stations are motivated by psychological and archetypic symbols.

The structures of *The Flood* and *It's me* are much more balanced than the structures of *New sky, new Earth* and *The burning wild rose*. In these two novels some neutrals, repetitions, unorganic digressions slow down the events, they are hardly indifferent from the point of view of the story. In our opinion *The Flood* and *It's me* realizes the XXth century mythical novel, they function as a bridge between archaic and present. The heroes who lived in ancient times, their problems, their questions can be interesting for us nowdays too, these are the basic questions of human life: where we come from, where we go, is there an object in life, if there is, how can we realize it. Why does human soul desire for God, can we know God, can we dialogue with the transcendency, why is harmony just temporary, why must we always fight for it? For the heroes God existence is a certainty, they always want to unite with God, but they can never reach transcendency. Kodolányi's characters would like to find again the lost Eden, bring back the golden age.