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NAUČNI SKUPOVI

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JEZIK, KNJIŽEVNOST, PROSTOR

Tematski zbornik radova

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Niš, 2018.

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PLENARNA IZLAGANJA

SPACES, SPACES…

PROSTOR U SAVREMENOJ SRPSKOJ KNJIŽEVNOSTI

PROSTOR U SAVREMENOJ SVETSKOJ KNJIZEVNOSTI

PROSTOR KAO FIZIČKI, METAFORIČKI I DISKURSNI DOMEN U LINGVISTIČKIM ISTRAŽIVANJIMA

UDC 821.111(71).09-32 Gartner Z.
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SPACE REPRESENTATION IN ZSUZSI GARTNER'S *ALL THE ANXIOUS GIRLS ON EARTH*

Abstract: The idea behind this paper is to confirm the practicality of the instruments provided by a vast and interdisciplinary field of cognitive poetics by analyzing narrative discourse from the perspective that relies on the assumptions of cognitive studies, and potentially reveal their shortcomings. In addition to that, the paper deals with the issue of the unclear definition of space, and the potential problems pertaining to the two approaches in terms of cognitive poetics and literary criticism – the analytic approach, present in cognitive linguistics, and the synthetic one, more typical of literary criticism and cognitive poetics. In other words, the paper proposes that the interplay between the grammatical and lexical subsystems on the level of the narrative adds to the overall meaning and the manner in which spatial referents become narrativized. Additionally, the aim is to shed more light on how the text produces specific emotive, social, political, historical, ideological and other dimensions in relation to space, and how image schemas as culture-dependent or influenced by pervasive stereotypical features influence reception. For this reason, the methodological tools derived from the theoretical framework pertaining to cognitive linguistics and cognitive poetics will be applied to a selection of contemporary Canadian short stories belonging to the short story collection *All the Anxious Girls on Earth* by a Canadian author, Zsuzsi Gartner. The assumption behind the choice of corpus is that postmodern literature, indeterminate and style-unspecific, relies heavily on the reader's ability to recreate the story on the basis of textual cues – lexical or grammatical – and in cases where the discourse is dislocated or the flow disrupted, it is the mechanisms by which meaning is inferred by the reader that is of particular interest, and spatial elements play a crucial role in ultimate meaning construction.

Key words: spatial categories, mental space, image schema, cognitive poetics, contemporary short story, Zsuzsi Gartner

Introduction

The idea behind this paper is to confirm the practicality of the instruments provided by a vast and interdisciplinary field of cognitive poetics by analyzing narrative discourse from the perspective that relies on the assumptions of cognitive studies, and potentially reveal their shortcomings. The paper brings into question the definitions of spatial elements provided, although tentatively, by contemporary cognitive poetics scholars such as Stockwell and Ryan. By extension, the paper addresses the problematic nature of the synthetic definitions of space popular in cognitive poetics, among other fields. On a more concrete, and narratological level, the paper attempts to uncover whether indeed space in narrative fiction can be deemed a static (background) element, or whether, along with other narrative elements, spatial elements can participate in the dynamic shift

occurring in the narrative flow. In other words, the paper proposes that the interplay between the grammatical and lexical subsystems on the level of the narrative adds to the overall meaning and the manner in which spatial referents become narrativized. Additionally, the aim is to shed more light on how the text produces specific emotive, social, political, historical, ideological and other dimensions in relation to space, and how image schemas as culture-dependent or influenced by pervasive stereotypical features influence reception. For this reason, the methodological tools derived from the theoretical framework pertaining to cognitive linguistics and cognitive poetics will be applied to a selection of contemporary Canadian short stories with the assumption that postmodern literature, indeterminate and style-unspecific, relies heavily on the reader's ability to recreate the story on the basis of textual cues, and the paper proposes that narrative time (or temporality) and narrative space (or spatial elements) are both crucial for structuring experience. Moreover, the paper proposes that spatial references – lexical and grammatical units – present dynamic elements beyond a descriptive purpose and static element status.

In literary analysis, space and space-time are seldom approached analytically for it seems unnecessary to examine the spatial aspects of a text without the specific spatial referents being attached to a particular cultural or other property. On the other hand, synthetic approaches categorizing space have been present both in literary criticism and cognitive poetics for they are predominantly plot-oriented. For the purpose of closely examining specific categories of space in the selection of short fiction narratives, the paper will attempt to define space relative to cognitive studies – as a fundamental category of human existence and cognition, but also as relevant in the process of storytelling and reception. Furthermore, the paper will evaluate Peter Stockwell's propositions about space as a static background element (2005), and Mary Laure Ryan's synthesis of spatial categories (2014) with the objective of examining the mechanism of development of story-space and story-world in narrative time, but also the inscribing of cultural or emotive dimensions to representations of space. Therefore, by uncovering the manner in which spatial references interact to create a specific representation of a fictional world, it is possible to shed light on those cultural and socio-political elements that are present in the narrative discourse, but also account for those that are only inferred or assumed by the reader in the process of interpretation. What the paper aims to discover is how, and to what extent, spatial references in narrative discourse impact interpretation, and specifically, how this functions in the selected short stories from Zsuzsi Gartner's collection *All the Anxious Girls of Earth* (2000).

The Dynamic Space

According to David Herman in his study *Story Logic* (2002), narratives are explained not only as "temporally structured communicative acts" but also as systems "having a particular spatial structure" (264). The spatiotemporal dimensions of narrative have been outlined as the facilitators for the overall understanding and tracking of narrative movement – characters, objects, participants, etc. – and "cognitive mapping". This process is one by which the reader interprets discourse cues in order to re-create a story-world analogous to the context of the reader, and in itself it is essential for the understanding of any narrative. By means of cognitive mapping, the reader accomplishes

to visualize and track narrative movement. In *Cognitive Poetics* (2005), Peter Stockwell uses the well-known linguistic concept of the "figure and ground" dynamics to explain the concept of space as the static background, in general terms. Leonard Talmy, for example, defines figure as "a moving or conceptually movable entity whose site, path, or orientation (trajectory) is conceived as a variable the particular value of which is the relevant issue," and ground as "a reference entity, one that has a stationary setting relative to a reference frame" (2000: 184) that is the figure. Stockwell relates this dynamics to the literary concept of foregrounding and salience (2005: 14) rendering it a subjective matter dependent on the individual recipient's background. Therefore, the figure and ground dynamics in a literary text belongs to a general, higher level human cognitive capacity, for as humans we are able to perceive feature differences in objects; and, by extension, this capacity is transferred onto a literary texts and cultural artifacts of other sorts. The recipient of narrative discourse is able to perceive such changes in the make-up and the dynamics of narrative fragments in relation to the gestalt unit so as to recognize the rhetorical intention weaved into it (Stockwell 2005: 15). Any change in prominence of one object or element of the narrative discourse at the expense of another, so to speak, is reflective of the figure and ground dynamics. Stockwell additionally notes that "[I]n most narrative fiction, characters are figures against the ground of their settings" (2005: 15). However, Stockwell does not define setting - it is inferred that it is the socio-political, historical and overall cultural moment of the narrative discourse, which is taken to be a convenient premise in contemporary narratology and literary theory, as well as possible worlds theory. Setting is seen as the static backdrop against which the reader is able to perceive the movement of dynamic elements – characters, and it pertains to space and time, but also other aspects of the interaction in the said world. More precisely, it pertains to the notion of mental space – a concept provided by cognitive studies. Stockwell substantiates this view by attributing the implied understanding of static or ground structures, the background framework of narratives, to image schemas (2005: 16) – the embodied "mental pictures that we use as basic templates for understanding situations that occur commonly" (2005: 16) that inherently contain the figure and ground relation, and thus include such elements as the trajector and landmark. In contemporary studies of narrative, then, mental representations of space are understood as a synthesis of the way we intuitively understand the state of containment (in the world to which we belong), but also the elaboration of this schema in cultural contexts. Of course, containment is only one of the numerous image schemas. Talmy explains the process of schematization as the one which "involves the systematic selection of certain aspects of a referent scene to represent the whole, while disregarding the remaining aspects" (2000: 177). According to cognitive poetics scholars affiliated with cognitive linguistics, foregrounding and salience, as well as text attractiveness depend largely upon the embodied experience that provides the basis for the elaboration of more complex experiences by placing the elements participating in them in specific familiar and recognizable categories. Even though Stockwell does not provide a definition of space, but uses the synthetic one Ryan elaborates as setting, the idea that emerges from Stockwell's extension of how spatial properties are perceived and described in linguistics, and how the lexical system operates against the grammatical framework, does provide arguments in favor of salience, attraction and foregrounding as the basis for defamiliarization – the process by which concepts are presented in a novel manner so as to acquire an additional layer of meaning closely related to the context of the narrative. An analysis of grammatical or

lexical units that serve a referential role pertaining to space within the text would lead to a linguistic study but would disregard the rhetorical role of space in the narrative discourse. In the same vein, an exclusive focus on the lexical patterning in the text would perhaps provide an incomplete or partial literary and cultural analysis. However, showing how the interplay between the grammatical and lexical subsystems on the level of the narrative add to the overall meaning and how spatial referents become narrativized may shed more light on how the text produces specific emotive, social, political, historical, ideological and other dimensions in relation to space, but also how image schemas as culture-dependent or influenced by pervasive stereotypical features influence reception. By extension, and relevant to the objectives set in this paper, it is of importance to discuss whether indeed space in narrative fiction can be assumed to be only or exclusively a static (background) element. In his essay "Surreal Figures" (2003), Stockwell discusses such mental representations of space that are binary and potentially exclusive, and yet which coexist within a text precisely because they can be presented as dynamic and foregrounded elements (Stockwell 2003: 13). If mental representations of space possess such features that may take on the position of figure other than ground – exhibit properties pertaining to movement or path – then space in narrative fiction requires a more precise and inclusive definition, and categorization, that could be applicable in intersectional cognitive and literary studies.

As mentioned, Mary-Laure Ryan bases her categories of space on a synthetic approach, and distinguishes between spatial frames, setting, story-space, story-world and narrative universe[1]. Ryan defines space in the most general sense as "our intuitive sense of [space] as the universal container of things"[2]. The definition, even as metaphorical, or image-schematic, as it is, implies an embodied understanding of such a relation, and refuses a more objective or descriptive explanation that would not further complicate the very concept. In her essay *Possible Worlds and Mental Spaces*, Elena Semino contrasts the two approaches mentioned in the title and emphasizes the most significant difference as there being no "systematic consideration of how worlds are constructed in the interaction between the reader's mind and the linguistic stimuli, and no attention for the role of linguistic choices and patterns in texts in possible worlds theory" (Semino 2003: 89). Moreover, the mental space approach takes into consideration both the linguistic aspects, such as specific patterning, and the reader's background knowledge that provides for the possible inferences and differences in interpretations. Therefore, it "relates abstract nouns such as 'worlds' and 'virtual narratives' to the interaction between the reader and the text" (Semino 2003: 97). Furthermore, embodied experience implies the space-time relation because experience of any kind itself is contingent upon the lapse of time. In a narrative, space and objects operating 'inside' the given space are narrativized; that is, their sequencing of one or other kind creates the effect of time lapse. In itself, it is impossible to conceive of time-lapse without space – physical or a mental representation of it – in which the prerequisites for interaction would exist. Space, or multi-space, in narrative fiction takes on a metaphorical shape – it is in itself a container following the

[1] Ryan, Marie-Laure: "Space", Paragraph 5. In: Hühn, Peter et al. (eds.): *the living handbook of narratology*. Hamburg: Hamburg University, 2014. URL = http://www.lhn.uni-hamburg.de/article/space, [view date:12 Mar 2017]

[2] Ryan, Marie-Laure: "Space", Paragraph 2. In: Hühn, Peter et al. (eds.): *the living handbook of narratology*. Hamburg: Hamburg University. URL = http://www.lhn.uni-hamburg.de/article/space [view date:29 Jun 2017]

logic of the physical space that shapes our basic conceptual structures and therefore conceptual metaphors required for the comprehension of complex forms of interaction with the world that surrounds us.

Stockwell does not limit background elements to the spatial kind, but rather the category includes all the textual cues that are momentarily left undeveloped or inessential for relating meaning – cognitive neglect. This means that virtual narratives, character representation, or other, can all be at one point placed either in the background or foreground. Additionally, the role of such elements is not to have immediate impact, but rather to cumulatively influence reception. On the other hand, the shifts and fluctuations in the background elements – to which, arguably, space belongs – also serve to emphasize exactly those dynamic elements and show them in a different light. However, the plasticity of narrative fiction complicates the matter when one considers modern fiction – the stream-of-consciousness technique, for example; or the unnatural narratives that warp the space-time configuration of the narrative story-world. The figure and ground dynamic relationship between the elements making up the story is essential and responsible for the overall understanding of the text. According to Stockwell, the figure functions as the attractor, while "by contrast the rest of the ground is characterized by cognitive *neglect*" (Stockwell 2003: 16) creating the effect of foregrounding. If referential spatial elements in the text operate as the static background to the objects defined or described against it, then space simply serves a descriptive function. This paper proposes that elements pertaining to space extend their function further and that elaborated lexical substitutes for referential spatial units may be employed to represent dynamic spatial entities within narrative discourse.

Ryan defines setting as "the general socio-historico-geographical environment in which the action takes place"[3] and this spatial category may be considered stable. On the other hand, story-space and story-world, as spatial categories, may display dynamic features. Namely, story-space – as relevant to the plot – encompasses the space mapped out by the actions performed by characters, whether literally in the narrative discourse, or in the form of virtual narratives. In addition to that, story space includes all the story frames as well – the actual stated changes in location. Story-world, on the other hand, is a category that depends on the narrative discourse as much as it does on the imaginative capabilities of the recipient of the text. According to Ryan, story-space can be viewed as "completed by the reader's imagination on the basis of cultural knowledge and real world experience,"[4] whereby the world in which the plot takes place becomes an ontologically full, coherent and unified geographical location that may situate events and characters, as well as their circumstances and states of affairs. Ryan's spatial categories are produced from the perspective that strives to explicate how plot is developed, how specific discourse structures interact with each other, how specific formal elements are genre specific, etc. Undoubtedly, this approach may also be valuable in the cultural analysis of a text, but it is, in fact, based on the product of interpretation.

The remainder of the paper deals with the analysis of spatial elements in a selection of short stories, and it focuses on cultural references, the figure and ground dynamics, the overall interrelatedness of spatial elements within the given narratives,

[3] Ryan, Marie-Laure: "Space", Paragraph 5. In: Hühn, Peter et al. (eds.): *the living handbook of narratology*. Hamburg: Hamburg University, 2014. URL = http://www.lhn.uni-hamburg.de/article/space, [view date:12 Mar 2017]

[4] *Ibid.*

and all with the view of examining whether a synthetic approach proposed by Ryan is an effective tool; but also, with the aim of examining whether the instruments provided by cognitive poetics as viewed by Stockwell indeed can be considered methodologically consistent and relevant to literary analysis; and, ultimately, to discover whether such an interdisciplinary approach may effectively be used to produce a more comprehensive, valid and relevant literary analysis. The short stories selected for the analysis in this paper belong to Zsuzsi Gartner's collection *All the Anxious Girls on Earth*.

Representations of Space in *All the Anxious Girls on Earth*

All the Anxious Girls on Earth (2000) is Zsuzsi Gartner's collection of nine short stories featuring characters seemingly mundane, but actually refreshingly sincere and flawed, in search of meaning, almost despite inevitable daily failures. Zsuzsi Gartner's short fiction makes an effort to resists the postmodern tendency to obscure and de-center meaning. However, at the same time, and much in the vein of the typical postmodern refusal to abide by the conventional and traditional modes of representation, Gartner's characters' eccentricities explode with despair, misery and anguish which is reflected in her varied technique. This technique presents a special focus in the paper precisely because it is there that discontinuity or decentering occurs. For the purpose of illustrating the complex interrelatedness of narrativized character and space representation, the remaining sections of the paper will provide illustrations drawing on the selected stories from the said collection, and with the view of emphasizing the most prominent and intricate examples.

"How to Survive in the Bush"

In "How to Survive in the Bush", Gartner's play with spatiality is the most apparent, for the author juxtaposes and narrativizes two different spatio-temporal locations with a very specific rhetorical function which is to contrast the protagonist's urban past that she nostalgically places against the rural present. Both are charged with powerful cultural and political dimensions that are inferred from the subtle descriptions of the two landscapes.

The story actual world resembles that of the twentieth or twenty-first century Canada, and therefore, the setting is not alien to the contemporary reader. The base space of the story, however, is a specific location – or rather the mental representation of what rural Canadian landscape is to the narrator of the story. Firstly, the story is told from a first-person position and by a character-narrator. However, what is remarkable is Gartner's consistency in presenting each of the characters operating within the story world as related to a specific location within the story-world. Their individual descriptions are extended and completed by the descriptions of certain locations in the clear figure-ground relation. For example, this ironic story about a possible end of a romantic relationship opens with a description of the narrator's partner – a man who "reconstructs vintage aircraft in a hand-built hangar the size of a three-car garage" (Gartner 2000: 11). Throughout the story, this former pilot will be described against the backdrop of his obsessive hobby. In the

paragraph that follows, the narrator will use specific wording that further expands the space that is the hangar – the lover's space. The narrator-character will be "welcome aboard" (Ibid.) the hangar and the cockpit that the man reconstructs diligently, but never quite finishes. The irony-infused account of this scene is further extended with another spatial allusion that will be elaborated at the end of the story – "You will search for something in his eyes but will find only cumulonimbus clouds reflected from a turbulent sky" (Ibid.). The reader knows that the scene takes place in the hangar previously introduced as the location, for they are yet oblivious to the fact that the story takes place in a small remote town somewhere in the Canadian bush. It is quite impossible for the man's eyes to reflect the sky considering that the couple is inside the hangar, but, as will be the case throughout the narrative discourse, Gartner will use space as reflective of the characters' inner life. To be more precise, considering that the story is told by a character implicated in the events, from her subjective viewpoint – the focalizing subject – it is the narrator's inner life that is reflected against the backdrop of the personal spaces of other characters. The lover she refers to as the Aviator, lives "miles from anywhere" (Ibid, 14) which is at the same time the location of the character-narrator. Actually, it is from this position that the narrator projects the other, contrasted space. For example, in the excerpt that follows, the landscape that the story occupies – a portion of locations or spatial frames that make up the story-space – is lexically imbued, much in the vein of the previously referred to examples, for the purpose rhetorically directing what is seemingly only a geographical location.

> The contrasts will be more a matter of belief. You believe the bush is a place to go visit, not a place to live. It's unbearably quiet at night. But love, you will think – great big, gasping, groaning, slurping, sucking […] – will fill in that silence, make a wailing mess of the coniferous deciduous night that shrinks you down, makes you small. (Ibid, 12)

To the narrator, the bush is a void of sorts that she expects the Aviator to fill, and at the same time it is a threatening vastness. From the established position, and exaggeration of the description of "the bush" by which a spatial base is established, and the obvious position of the narrator, she goes on to develop the representation of space on the lexical level by using such patterning that turns the ambivalent and unbiased landscape into a figure that exerts force on the object – the narrator. It is further described as "jigsaw puzzles" and "something to labour over in musty cabins while outside the rain conspires to turn the vegetation even larger and more ominous" (Ibid, 13). In the scene where the character-narrator describes the process of writing letters using only the light from the front window, again the bush becomes a character in itself – a threatening entity or location "where ferns curl under cedars, their spores loud inside your head" (Ibid, 17). The narrator is somehow being devoured by her surroundings and, on the grammatical and imagistic level, this particular mental representation of space and the character herself are interpenetrated and the figure and ground relation seems to be reversed. The bush is further personified, so to say, as an enormous living organism "rumbling, forever rumbling" (Ibid, 17). Interestingly, the character will use a similar lexeme when describing another specific location – one that is projected by her, and related to the space that she feels she belongs to, which is the city and in her past:

> But in your mind you are already hugging the highway and he is hugging the sky. You will drive straight to the busiest intersection in the city, get out of your car and lie down on the sidewalk. There, with the rumble of traffic in your very bones, the nerves buried below your skin will rise to the surface again. (Ibid, 22)

The noise that she feels the bush produces to perturb and disturb her – the rumbling – is relatable to the sounds of the city intersection where the traffic rumbles. Rumbling and the rumble are contrasted as undesirable and desirable in relation to their spatiality, and, the lexical layer aside, it is also in the grammatical structure of the two mentions that inferences pertaining to the nature of her subjective experience can be seen. Also, in the above excerpt, spatial references play the role of the object but they are not merely the background to the narrator's realization that the "altitude" her lover seeks is diametrically opposed to her own desires. Actually, the highway and the sky seem to emerge from the spatial contrasts developed earlier in the story – characters in themselves with cultural and political dimensions. As mentioned, the author relates virtual narratives of other characters present in the story with the said landscape and other spatial references by blending clusters of socio-cultural stereotypes with a humorous effect, but ultimately, creating around the specific locations a distinctive aura. Susannah, her lover's ex-wife, becomes synonymous with the freedom that mountains offer, but the mountains "don't move you" (Ibid, 20) – the narrator comments on an unrelated topic. The character-narrator's subjective perspective and disposition are in close connection with her subjective experience of her present location. The rural present, "miles from anywhere" (Ibid, 14), is not placed in the twenty-first century setting but rather against it, and is reflective of the inner life of the protagonist, and the quality of the relationships she establishes there. The short story, being told in the form of a survival guide, not only contrasts the desired buzz of the urban counter-landscape, but illustrates the inner struggle of the main character who eventually comes to realize that her lover's hangar, as well as the bush, have become a prison.

"The Tragedy of Premature Death among Geniuses"

In "The Tragedy of Premature Death among Geniuses", Gartner is less interested in the pairing of spatial elements and their strategic, rhetorical, character-bound placement that projects additional content – characters as landscapes. Rather, here she relies on the representation of space to subtly emphasize the chaotic quality of the protagonist's thought process, and to create a humorous effect with spatial frames transitioning from mundane to surprising locations, in the context of the story. In "How to Survive in the Bush" the contrasted landscapes mirror the inner life of the character – the focalizing subject, and socio-cultural conflicts on a personal level – and in this story, set in similar general spatio-temporal setting which is the twentieth or twenty-first century small town Canada – spatial frames are narrativized to the extent of their smoothly flowing as the story develops. Central to the story are the main character's, Pearly's, visits to the library – the place where she collects trivia and fun facts about random things she is currently obsessing over. Pearly is a mentally challenged woman who becomes the legal guardian of a young boy of supposedly extraordinary physical talent – the Human Cheetah. Inferior and humble Pearly is troubled by the possibility of her nephew, orphaned in an unfortunate car accident, being a genius, for she learns that geniuses can possibly die prematurely. Spatial frames comprise a series of places, from the living room, the parking lot, the library, etc., all temporally tumbled to reflect the haphazard quality of the protagonist's, and focalizing subject's, memory, and cognition. Namely, the story begins in Pearly's garden, and then transitions to the house, or rather the porch: "Edgar

beats me to the porch, of course. He is the Human Cheetah" (Ibid, 23). Spatial references in this story are the appropriate backdrop to the scatter-brain Pearly, and Gartner plays with the idea of motion and speed which is a relative concept for Pearly who has difficulties processing information as quickly as an average person, as opposed to Edgar, the nephew, who cuts across the locations of the story often to disturb his unassuming aunt and legal guardian. The story continues to develop in a different spatial frame – the kitchen, which is only an inferred base, and further positions Pearly as well as the constraints movement-wise. The kitchen as implied by the script of breakfast and the mention of the kitchen table seem to be central to the relationship between her nephew and herself. On the other hand, Gartner employs the stream of consciousness technique which results in quick-paced shifts in locations that are often only inferred or assumed. The transitions between the domestic surroundings of Pearly and the library are crucial to the humorous effect in the story. Namely, Pearly's depression – which is also related by means of her isolation to the bathroom and bedroom – and her fear of death, lead her to the library in search of some kind of enlightenment and knowledge. The reader may find the situation both absurd and ridiculous for the librarian is focalized through an unexpected, bizarrely naïve and childish lens. Just like in the case of her leaving sheet music on the kitchen table (Ibid, 24), so is the space of the library invoked by the mention of the librarian. Pearly, too, is focalized in these locations which stand as contrast ground to her intellectual ability. Another snap at a different spatial frame – the living room – is introduced by "The TV people are at the door again" (Ibid, 26). Basically, Gartner's use of the stream of consciousness to show the disconnectedness of Pearly's thoughts allows or even necessitates the movement from one location to another and it is precisely with the use of this technique, this quick-paced dynamic shift that space is transformed into a figure, even if temporarily. Moreover, every dynamic-shift which places space in figure position comments on the focalizing subject. The representation of space, description or development-wise, is limited and scarce because it is a part of a glimpse into her, the character-narrator's, highly subjective and unique thought process. The imagery that the character-narrator allows to flow into the narrative discourse resembles almost damaged fragments of memory.

"The City of My Dreams"

"The City of My Dreams" deals with two contrasted spaces – that of the story, which is the actual world of the text and makes up the story space; and the second, a mental projection that is related to a particular location within this story space – an apartment in an earthquake-ready building. There is also a third space that is featured in the form of a projection – an apocalypse of sorts – when the ever-present concept of the earthquake is actualized in a vision-like day-dream of the protagonist. The spaces in which the protagonist operates also include other locations and topological spatial references – the house, the park, the street, the building, etc. Possible worlds theory has no trouble determining the terminology and categories which explain the nuances in the three mentioned mental spaces within the story-world. They would all be inter-worlds contained in the story (world) universe colliding and creating other particular worlds in their interaction. However, this approach tells little about the mechanisms operating within the short story which, genre-wise, always aims at a specific effect – an illumination

or epiphany. The story is narrated from the perspective of the protagonist, but by a heterodiegetic narrator. The setting, in Ryan's terms, is implied immediately after the ground is set: "this city by the mountains and the sea" (Ibid, 33) as that of the twentieth or twenty-first century Canada – a place where Jeopardy is a very popular TV show. The image is further elaborated by descriptions that illustrate the extent to which living in that particular place is considered desirable, "something that bordered on religious fervor" (Ibid.). Yet, the descriptions on the lexical level may be considered positive, whereas grammatically they are given in a negative context. The ground, which is the city, and the figure, that is, the protagonist – a woman called Lewis, are set in opposition. The description of the location in broader sense is given in the narrativized form, with ground being emphasized and taking a more prominent position than the purposefully omitted figure: "Trooping into the wilderness with foil packets of dehydrated food, like astronauts, determined to ride the rapids, scale icefalls, bounce down mountain faces with their feet bound to fiberglass boards, Dr. Seuss hats on their heads" (Ibid, 33-34). This linguistic deviation is only one of the instances that illustrate not only how foregrounding functions, but also how the grammatical subsystem nuances interpretation. By omitting the subject and figure that is, most probably, people or tourists, Lewis creates a dividing line between herself and others. In Ryan's terms, the story-space, then, is the city itself with its mentioned surrounding area. However, there are specific topological references within story-space through which the protagonist cuts through, like a bullet. The first spatial frame is the soap-store, and here is where an episodic yet significant character is introduced – the little green-haired girl who almost regularly visits the soap-shop in order to, bizarrely, taste the creamy substances sold there. The story then transitions to Lewis's bed, that is, the bedroom, which for Gartner, much like windows and porches, seems to be the location where the characters contemplate their affairs. This frame then moves to an unspecified location – which is not entirely unusual, except in the sense that the protagonist describes the position and events that transpired while she held the position of a programmer at the local film festival. This unspecified place – the space occupied by hippie, eccentric, hipster and similar wanna-be movie directors – is an excellent example of the reader's imagination role in filling in the gaps present. Moreover, by not specifying a location, by not placing the events in a specific geographical place, that is – setting, the narrator creates the effect of generalization that as such influences the further interpretation of events. The location relevant to her recollections, which are in turn relevant to the plot, must be inferred by the reader: "She moved down the hall and he followed, flapping the TV listings at her and wailing…" (Ibid, 35), in an instance where the narrator describes the usual behavior of rejected directors. From the location that may be an office, the story shifts to Lewis's home, and more precisely, the doorstep (Ibid, 37). The temporal specification related to the location provides additional information about the possible context in which a rejected female director disturbs Lewis's privacy and sets herself on fire – on a Saturday morning (Ibid.). The significance of the mentioned location not only provides the background and the ground for the scene taking place, but also suggests a crossing of a line – or threshold in Lewis's case – an invasion, much like that of the earthquake on the city. Gartner will retroactively create a contrast by describing her house as "cumin-smelling, cat-infested, spider plant-ridden co-op full of overly friendly Sesame Street-style neighbors" (Ibid, 41). The traumatic incident forces the protagonist into a self-imposed exile to the earthquake-ready building. Another peculiar detail that goes in favor of the argument that spatial references in the

narrative discourse may take on the figure position is the stylistic deviation in the description of the woman who sets herself on fire. Namely, she is described as follows: "Her eyes were a living room of despair, full of mismatched furniture and candles stuck in Chianti bottles, dripping all over the place, a syringe under the wicker chair, an Ouija board on the coffee table" (Ibid, 37). This particular excerpt would be termed merely descriptive in narrative discourse since it is not characterized by the feature of eventfulness per se. However, the very grammatical construction of the description suggests a social, cultural and psychological profiling – Chianti bottles, a syringe, the wicker chair, a Ouija board. At the same time, the narrator uses what would traditionally be considered a tool for establishing the background for the purpose of describing the character. The character is described through an image that format-wise resembles a gif, with candles "dripping all over the place" subtly introducing the plot trigger. Next, the plot is moved to the residential building previously mentioned – "The building balanced on a fat stick, like half a popsickle, and wobbled slightly when there was high wind" (Ibid, 39). Contrasted to the building as a specific location, a specific description full of allusions is given about the city as well: "at the very edge of a fault line […], the earth cracking painfully open, the ocean rearing up in towering sheets" (Ibid.). Again, the textual elements that are supposed to perform the function of ground stylistically become parallel to the figure – the description of the state of the city mirrors her own, and at one point later in the story, she further describes it as "aggressive mellowness like chicory coffee" (Ibid, 45). Following the elaboration of the city's aggressiveness, that she will later on enact in the park, is also the summation of another space – the projected space of the city of her dreams where "only small children rode bicycles" and "soap made you clean but not holy" (Ibid.). The story ends on an intense note – a sequencing of images of deaf school children sensing earthquake during recess as "they're out in the playground" and "even the girl hanging upside down on the monkey bars" (Ibid, 62); the image of birds rising up and darkening the sky, which is one of the less playful stylistic descriptions in the text (Ibid,); "tectonic plates shift and groan" beneath "carnivores and lacto-vegans" (Ibid.); "Chum salmon leap through the massive cracks in the concrete at the foot of the Cambie Street Bridge" (Ibid.); "a towering inferno of water swallowing pan pipes" (Ibid), etc. One of the final images in this projected world, the vision of the end, is there being "no cliff and [they're] all clutching at air" (Ibid, 63). The images of the city crumbling are infused with shifts in figure and ground in the blending of images – from the birds darkening the sky, to "piles of baby skulls, smooth as china cups, [heaving] out of vaults below Shaughnessy mansions that once housed convents" (Ibid, 62). It is not only that the figures are dynamic, but the ground against which they are presented is in motion as well – stylistically, and formally, the actual sequencing of such elaborated schemas creates a vibrant environment – their strategic placement with the varied use of figures, and different representations of space.

"Pest Control for Dummies™"

In "Pest Control for Dummies™", Daisy mourns the death of her unborn brother and projects a space in which the two connect. This location is the womb of her callous and estranged mother, only available to her in the privacy of her mind. However, the space itself is paradoxical and logically impossible – the womb is interchangeably her

own, her mother's, or an isolated and unspecified yet living space where she dances "around in warm amniotic fluid" (Ibid, 68). It is, at the same time, both illogical and conceivable, as contrasted to the story-space where other events of the text-actual world occur featuring herself and other characters. The space she projects is an imaginary location within a seemingly realistic world representation. It is both a mental projection of a depressed and grief-stricken character, as it is deictically absolutely necessary as the backdrop for the character of her brother – a materialization of a disintegrating psyche.

> Daisy wonders if she isn't hallucinating abduction. Maybe they've already stuck a tube down her throat and up her ass and shone bright lights in her eyes and scraped away enough tissue samples to create a whole new race of Uber Daisys. A Daisy chain. She laughs. Air bubbles spill out of her mouth and dance around in the warm amniotic fluid. The fetus bats at them with his little curled fists. (Ibid.)

The ground space in the excerpt can be understood both as unspecified – a surreal location; and it can also be inferred that it may be a womb of sorts. The jarring together of such images or concepts that logically do not fit is not an impediment in the process of reading. Rather, the reader is well-aware and informed about the nature of the location Daisy sees herself in – it may well be a hallucination or a dream state – and they are able to reconstruct, on the basis of given images, a blend of the provided imagistic information that allows for interpretation. As the narrative discourse progresses, Daisy will reveal that the fetus has been "teaching her to relax, to bob lightly in the fluid without tensing her muscles", and she goes on to describe the exploration of the "coral reef of their mother's womb" (Ibid, 70) as an adventure, with a morbid and humorous effect: "And there is her brother, reef urchin. Heart urchin. Sea biscuit. And it's all Daisy can do not to gobble him up" (Ibid, 71). The image of the womb, their mother's, is enriched in the blending with the image of a coral reef and creatures living inside it. The space-blend is may be impossible, but not inconceivable because the reader is able to effortlessly understand the correlation, as well as the ambiance and quality of Daisy's state in this imaginary location. A particularly interesting collision between Daisy's projected world and the story-space (and story-world) is found in the following excerpt:

> At that moment Daisy's mother must have stepped outside onto a porch flooded with sunlight, because suddenly the fetus is backlit, his outline edged in orange as if he were on fire. (Ibid, 78)

The projected world – the womb as a location and a world in itself – becomes intertwined with the real world of the story, and the spaces interlock for a brief moment. The character creates a space that only virtually exists in the story-world, but the space becomes entangled with story reality and operates both on its micro level, and on the level of the logic of the story-world. The fetus, previously oblivious to the concept of age and time, seems to acquire memories, of course, as projected by Daisy – in reality, merely a projection of the potential future that would never happen for he was never born. The fetus-brother describes his 'memories' as "a series of snapshots" of him "[standing] on a front porch bundled against the cold like a little astronaut", being "flat face in the snow and a laughing woman (their mother!) [reaching] for him", "under a Christmas tree", etc. It is only when Daisy places the fetus in specific locations, the space of the story – of the text-actual world – that she can come to terms with the fact that her brother is no longer present in the reality of the story, disregarding the fact that he simply never existed. The mechanism behind Daisy's mourning suggests the embodied nature of our existence

and the necessity to organize experience in space and time. Her virtual walk down the memory lane, through memories never takes place in the reality of her world, and yet it allows her to structure and work through the idea of her brother's not being alive, for a lack of a better expression. The story, inevitably, brings into question the nature of individual experience of reality.

Conclusion

Ryan's synthetic approach to spatial categories provides a useful tool for recognizing specific textual elements, and for understanding the mechanisms of plot development in narrative fiction. In "The Tragedy of Premature Death among Geniuses" the dynamic sequencing of spatial frames and their seemingly haphazard order creates the humorous and ironic effect in the short story. Moreover, it rightly relates the disposition of the focalizing subject – essentially a dislocated person. In "The City of My Dreams" Ryan's categories are also easily applicable, as illustrated, and relevant to the examination of the plot structuring. However, in such instances as found in "How to Survive in the Bush" and "Pest Control for Dummies™" spatial frames seem to be less valuable tools to explore than those provided by mental space theory. Namely, the latter two contain such instances of blending, and in the case of "Pest Control for Dummies™" surreal imagery, which participate in narrative progression not only as the backdrop to events happening in the story-world, but as entities that disturb the typical and common figure and ground relationship. Similarly, the earthquake from "The City of My Dreams", depending on the perspective, may be said to act as an unnamed figure upon the ground of clueless and indifferent city-dwellers, and upon the city itself, considering the deliberate omission of figures by the narrator of the story.

Zsuzsi Gartner's short stories illustrate the extent to which spatial elements not only facilitate, but are crucial for the development of characters, narrative progression overall, and most importantly, the incremental accumulation of meaning through their development. Moreover, rhetorically speaking, they allow for such inferences that are contained on both the grammatical and lexical levels of the narrative discourse. On the grammatical level, they provide the basis for the narration to express such conceptual constructs that almost defy the logic of the real world. On the lexical level, spatial references both serve as enriching to the story-world in the general sense, and are enriched themselves to provide a better contrast in the relation they have with the customarily dynamic elements of a story, such as the characters. The shift dynamics of spatial frames, and the strategic positioning and development of spatial references on the whole, add to the effect of text attractiveness by providing a background against which figures can be perceived in greater detail. Also, spatial references, on both the lexical and grammatical level, prove to be an invaluable element of such linguistic and stylistic variance and deviance that add to the prominence of unexpected figures, or become figures themselves. Moreover, these also enable for the process of defamiliarization in which the dynamic relation between the character and the space they occupy and operate in allows for the narrative discourse to both thoughtfully disrupt and regain its flow, and the actual text world of the story to maintain credibility.

In conclusion, literary analysis profits from spatial categories as elaborated by Ryan in as much as it provides a solid guide to how genre and structure-wise fiction may

be analyzed systematically. On the other hand, this approach seems to only scratch the surface of the multi-layer narrative discourse, and leave the nuances in meaning found on the grammatical – conceptual – and lexical level, to be interpreted on a subjective basis. Peter Stockwell's view on space as mere ground seems to unsatisfactorily cover all of the complex aspects of space. A more analytical approach reflected in mental space theory, as opposed to postulations on space in possible worlds theory and the yet undeveloped field of cognitive poetics, deals with the systems of networks that converge into the intended cognitive structure that is, ultimately, the received story. Examining narrative discourse from the perspective of the fundamental structures that make up its framework, and the lexical patterning that provides the content, gives insight into the process of storytelling. Additionally, examining this interplay gives inkling into how developed and undeveloped structures of meaning create networks with the result of incremental meaning building. In terms of representations of space in narrative fiction, a synthesis of approaches provides a more useful methodology precisely because it takes into consideration both the generic and conventional features of narrative discourse, and the minute variations in meaning, connotation, etc. Furthermore, the synthesis of the two approaches does not reject an interpretation that takes into consideration the reader's perspective and the overall profile of the interpreter – the nuances in individual interpretations being seen as relative to the reader's background and education, as well as cultural, social and political beliefs since narrative discourse in its process of creation is consciously or unconsciously influenced by the author's social, cultural and other beliefs.

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Sanja Ignjatović

REPREZENTACIJE PROSTORA U ODABRANIM PRIČAMA IZ ZBIRKE *SVE UZNEMIRENE DEVOJKE NA PLANETI* AUTORKE ŽUŽI GARTNER

Rezime

Glavna ideja ovog rada je da utvrdi u kojoj je meri praktično koristiti metode koje interdisciplinarno polje kognitivne poetike nudi, i predoči potencijalne nedostatke istih. Takođe, rad se bavi definicijom prostora, kao i mogućim problemima u dva pristupa prostoru – analitičkom, prisutnom u kognitivnoj lingvistici, i sintetičkom, prisutnom u književnoj kritici i kognitivnoj poetici. Drugim rečima, u radu se predlaže da interakcija između gramatičkih i leksičkih supsistema na nivou narativa doprinosi ukupnom značenju, kao i načinu na koji se prostorni elementi narativizuju. Šta više, cilj rada je da objasni mehanizam kojim se proizvodi specifično emotivna, društvena, politička, istorijska, ideološka ili druga dimenzija teksta u odnosu na prostor, kao i način na koji slikovne sheme kao kulturološki obojeni elementi utiču na recepciju teksta. Iz tog razloga, metodološki instrumenti koje nude kognitivna lingvistika i kognitivna poetika biće iskorišćeni u analizi odabranih savremenih kanadskih priča. Ove priče pripadaju zbirci *Sve uznemirene devojke na planeti,* kanadske autorke Žuži Gartner, a izbor upravo ovih priča napravljen je sa idejom da bi postmoderna književnost, odnosno poetika antitotalizacije i neodređenosti između ostalog ponudila nove uvide jer se u svom diskontinuitetu i dislokaciji oslanja na čitaoca koji pomno prati tekstualne znake – leksičke i gramatičke. Upravo u tim slučajevima u kojima je narativ dislociran, ili tamo gde je njegov tok prekinut, mehanizmi koje čitalac koristi kako bi došao do značenja posebno su bitni za temu ovog rada, a prostorni referenti i elementi upravo igraju ključnu ulogu u razumevanju takvih tekstova.

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JEZIK, KNJIŽEVNOST, PROSTOR
april 2017

Izdavač
Filozofski fakultet u Nišu
Ćirila i Metodija 2

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Prelom
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Format
17x24

Štampa
UNIGRAF X-COPY

Tiraž
150 primeraka

ISBN 978-86-7379-473-0

CIP - Каталогизација у публикацији
Народна библиотека Србије, Београд

81’37:114(082)
82.09:114(082)
821.163.41.09:114(082)
114:81’42(082)

JEZIK, književnost, prostor : tematski zbornik radova / urednice Vesna Lopičić, Biljana Mišić Ilić. - Niš : Filozofski fakultet, 2018 (Niš : Unigraf x-copy). - 778 str. : ilustr. ; 25 cm. - (Biblioteka Naučni skupovi / [Filozofski fakultet, Niš])

Radovi na srp. i engl. jeziku. - Tekst lat. i ćir. - Tiraž 150. - Str. 11-24:Reprezentacija i metaforizacija prostora u savremenoj nauci o jeziku i književnosti / Vesna Lopičić i Biljana Mišić Ilić. - Napomene i bibliografske reference uz tekst. - Bibliografija uz svaki rad. - Summaries; Rezimei.

ISBN 978-86-7379-473-0 (broš.)
1. Лопичић, Весна, 1959- [уредник] [аутор додатног текста] 2. Мишић Илић, Биљана, 1962- [уредник] [аутор додатног текста] a) Простор - Анализа дискурса - Зборници b) Семантика (лингвистика) - Простор - Зборници c) Компаративна књижевност - Простор - Зборници d) Српска књижевност - Простор
COBISS.SR-ID 262242572