

UNIVERSITY OF SZEGED
FACULTY OF ARTS
DOCTORAL SCHOOL OF LITERATURE
MODERN HUNGARIAN LITERATURE

KRISZTINA KOVÁCS

SCENIC AND SPATIAL IMAGES IN SÁNDOR HUNYADY'S
PROSE
(THESES)

MASTER OF THE THESIS: DR. HABIL. ZOLTÁN VIRÁG

TÁMOP-4.2.1/B-09/1/KONV-2010-0005

TÁMOP-4.2.2/B-10/1-2010-0012

SZEGED

2013

I. INITIAL SUPPOSITIONS AND THEORETICAL FOUNDATION OF THE PAPER

Analysis on the short stories, publicism, and novels of Sándor Hunyady from the spatial poetic standpoint is based upon the structural models of interculturality, the theory of provisionality, and the methods of art history. The dissertation explores the issues of embedding spatial images and theories into literary works, and gives systems and structures of analysis to sufficiently examine a spatially defined life-work which in effect aims to create spatial feeling.

Short stories of Hunyady are situated in the modern big city, which since Charles Baudelaire, Arthur Rimbaud and theoreticians of passage literature like Walter Benjamin can be approached from the aspect of a perpetually moving but undetected observer who wishes to give accurate accounts. This space, a thrilling medium for the publicist Sándor Hunyady, is interpreted from the view of narrative dimension and “being in the space.” These types vary from the city’s public, built-up areas to the continuously developing city’s figurable, fluctuant lines, built-up spaces and landmarks erected upon ruins.

The outlined and emblematic scenes of Hunyady-prose are the spatial shapes of streets, variations of labyrinths, where one vanishes or commingles the nighty adventures in the sky-lineless small town inseparable from the region. The author’s works can be regarded as metaphors of train travel and localism inseparably blending with the literary universe of *Nyugat*; they describe the experience of a short personal peregrination; the ship-like motif of the “no-place” experience floating over the ocean; the coffee house as a place of a steady spatial experience of the Monarchy and of East Central Europe; the biographical space based on the biographical events following one another, in which social types and physiques are touched upon.

In order to enumerate the culturally diverse life scenes in Hunyady’s works, the overview of the ideas and thesis on spacial-poetic locution is necessary. Accordingly, the writer applies theoretical discourse of art history, aesthetics, urbanistics, architecture, micro historic concepts (Jeremy Bentham, Walter Benjamin, Georg Simmel, Richard Sennett, Carl Edmund Schorske), and lines up aspects of philosophy, narratology, ethnography, and cultural anthropology of (Martin Heidegger, Ernst Cassirer, Gaston Bachelard, Gerard Genette, Hans Georg Gadamer, Jurij Lotman, Michel Foucault, Arnold van Gennep, Victor Turner).

II. THESES AND CHAPTERS OF THE PAPER

The First Chapter (I) of the dissertation explores the tradition of strolling scenes of big cities in world literature, the possible roles of the flaneur and examines his motions in regards to examples from fin de siècle French, English, German and American literature, while analysing the dividing lines between spaces and landmarks as well which help to express diversified identity markers. Pre-study is essential to understand how and how much the functioning mechanisms of French, English, German and American metropolises showed similarities with East Central European cities, and also to highlight the difference between these regions in terms of cultural patterns, sociocultural relations. Additionally, it can be pointed out that Sándor Hunyady's prose work shows thematic similarities to the West European writers pertaining to the social panorama and dimensions of modernity.

The Second (II) and Third (III) Chapters of the dissertation and their subchapters focus on the progression of Hungarian literature from the mid-19th century and of the issues with "reading" the developing and growing Budapest. The building rocks of metaphors of the city found in daily papers, drawings, genres of journalism, fictions, vignettes, and novel series, feed upon the topoi of dubious places, schemes of apotheosis of urbanisation, and the structures of liminal plasticity of the cities. Similar visions on city structures are found in the prosaic genres of Ignác Nagy, Lajos Kuthy, Miklós Jósika, József Kiss, Zoltán Ambrus, Adolf Ágai, Terka Lux, Tamás Kóbor, Gyula Krúdy, Ferenc Molnár, and Sándor Bródy. The turn of the century introduced a new wave of literary styles and traditions; however, certain tendencies remained in adapting and re-thinking the descriptions of the city. They are retraceable from the life-work of artists gathered around *Nyugat*, like Mihály Babits, Ernő Szép, Béla Zsolt, Dezső Szomory, András Hevesi, while the most resembling models of Hunyady's ideas are most authentically represented in the prose of Dezső Kosztolányi.

Artists who utilize the markings of regional poetic representation of modern squares, big cities, and the countryside are considered to be part of the spiritual environment incorporating sources, parallelism, and inspiration of Hunyady's prose.

The Fourth Chapter (IV) gives a brief outline on the author's prosaic universe, on the first hand, following the categorization of Irén Vécsei's work, it is the sole monographic summary, on the other hand, the chapter expands and corrects the strategies of re-published or collection of works which disregarded the aspects which were essential to understand the anecdotal features of the author's life-work.

The significant notions and review on theses of narrative of spatial poetry are imperious to record the living-space of the author's cultural mixture, thus Chapter Five (V) puts emphasis on how these models can be implemented in literary works, by applying the notions of representative theoreticians of the spacio-poetic discourse.

Sándor Hunyady's referential and imagist spatial shapes and locations can be transformed into interpretable scenes with the use of interpretational network based on arguments of theoretical apprehensions.

Chapter Six and Seven (VI, VII) of the dissertation explore the intertextuality and the narrative forms of prose works on the big city, while also examining the different aspects of personal mythology, mental and mythological space, the literary and biographical space, and Hunyady's possible strolling roles which all are crucial to sufficiently understand the life-work of the author. Spaces like brothels, apartment houses, and the sanatorium of the Hungarian city mobilize unique topography, secretive, sinful and macabre characteristics of urban nature in his prose. The following chapter (VIII), on one hand, gives an overview on structures of control and supervision, on the functioning mechanism of "no-places," resembling scenes of modernist texts, and on the other, the themes of the corresponding Hunyady prose.

The profound and rich identity markers, inseparable from Hunyady's conduct and living-space, can be understood through the locations discovered during his travels in Kolozsvár, Budapest, Bácska, the scenes from Partium and Transylvania, the dimensions at night, the images of fog (IX) and the mythological motifs of the small town (X). The next big chapter (XI) explores regionalism and the train motif linked to traveling and interculturality. With the categorization of the train station in the country-side, desolation, immobility, love affairs etc., and notions on cultural identity, the locations and scenes outlined in Hunyady's prose can be compared with and linked to the corresponding works of fin de siècle modernity and the outstanding figures of *Nyugat*.

The independent (XII) chapter explores the writer's travel metaphors. In regards to Hunyady's journey into the United States, the spacial network of the American city is explored from a Hungarian point of view with the methods of Hungarian literary tradition. The literary symbol of the Hungarian city, the coffee house, as an egalitarian and utopian place within the Austro-Hungarian Empire is an important literal representation. The corresponding chapter (XIII) of the dissertation compares the coffee house novel of Sándor Hunyady (*Szúrve, habbal...*) and its motifs with the similar works of Zsolt Harsányi and Lajos Nagy. The last chapter (XIV) closes the dissertation by examining the use of biographical

spatial motifs, having been discussed before, in the spatial dimensions in Hunyady's autobiographical novel, *Családi album*.

The dissertation does not focus on discussing theatre plays of Sándor Hunyady, a successful dramatist, since special conceptions elaborated in his life-work prose along with the corresponding motifs are less significant in the liminality of the opening and closing nature of the theatrical stage.

III. RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS OF THE PAPER

With a closer look to Hunyady's conception of space in his prose, it allows us to discover that a peculiar scrutiny is necessary to establish the correct direction in unveiling the modern metropolis, the junctions of rich network of fine arts, spacial forms and spacial interface. The categorisation of the artist's spacial forms focusing on the features and sensations of the moving and stationary crowd on the streets, the different contexts of the world and Hungarian literary scene, fine arts intertwining with the spacial dimensions of the prior, film and photographic results are all precious sources of examination.

After a deep analysis of this paper on the shapes and reflections of world literature that describes the city, we move to somewhat similar representations of the Hungarian literary scene by enumerating significant writers and closely related motives.

Parts of the thesis examining particular chapters of Hunyady's lifework take account of and observe the history of publication, philology, problematic in publishing spacial poetics. The paper continues to explore propositions of topics, modes of sensations, the usage of narrative forms, prefiguration, and inspirational base, which are all necessary to be touched upon. Intertextual and comparative studies show that the semantics of various spacial images indicate clearly defined tendencies that paint similar arrangements to those found in the horizon of expectations in Hunyady's volumes.

Characters observantly wandering in the streets contemplating on casual scenery are typical candidates for adequate roles for Sándor Hunyady's art. The embeddedness into the space in regard to the functioning of the prosaic world is a more specific characteristic of this paper than temporality. Most frequently occurring places (street, café, public house, pulmonary sanatorium, public baths, train, bus, ship) are freely accessible public spaces, which in their nature behold the patterns of exclusion and prohibition. Spaces in Hunyady's

novels are not only media in which things get arranged, but also media that push constituent parts into symmetry and system. Anecdotal structure in the representation of the city is the common endeavour of literary styles. Phenomena of the city appearing in the instance of a flashlight are unfolded by the storytelling strategies of the narration and oral tools of the prose. Different pieces of the life-work thread together are made universally plastic by the permeability of the genre borderlines. Typical locations of the authors prose are found in the liquid transitional lines. The apartment house, the pulmonary sanatorium, the no-places of the public house toured by the heroes and their behaviour depicted by the rules and working mechanism of the liminality can be deciphered by previous suppositions of the known theorems of cultural discourse on theories of liminality by Arnold van Gennep, Michel Foucault's ideas on anti-structural places, and Marc Augé's utopia conceptions. Hunyady's models of pre-suppositions, thus, can be underpinned by argumentative examples.

Detailed topics of the paper dealing with typical socio-cultural aspects along with the topography of the East Central European city reveal picturesque literary richness. The night, small towns, travel locations, the railway, ships are places governed by modern Hungarian literary principles. The sets of motives of Hunyady's prose found in the paper are closely related and reasoned through the intellectuality and literary publications of *Nyugat*. Literal texts reflect and reveal the spirit of the area's relief forms consistently following repetitive motives of directions. The railway condenses the un-abandonment, connecting rural experience. Actors breaking off from fixed social identities enter into a carnival like amusements, which show the unique experience of Sándor Hunyady's prose.

The dissertation deals with the author's short American adventure in a separate chapter organised into thematic order. In the conventions of the peregrination of Hungarian literary traditions, the author's spacial techniques and metaphors are reflected. Special writings based on the choice of the topic in the author's life-work do not change significantly the evolving spacial images.

The autobiographical space of the biographical novel in the last chapter is composed of elements of controllable textual space. Referential substance created in the imaginary texture receives high significance. To justify the interpretation of the text as action in which basic stories of Hunyady's novels are recognizable, the author applies the reflecting self-descriptive subject who creates his own actions in the light of external objects. The autobiographical narrator of the novel constitutes his identity by self-reflection in a way to represent the subject's changeable states not by showing different linguistic worlds representing various states of mind but by the clash of various places.

The dissertation on the spacial shapes in the prose of Sándor Hunyady is interpreted by significant experience of the era and area, the visions of spacial arrangements, and the field of tendencies of the universal modernity in literature.

IV. PUBLICATIONS OF THE THESIS

A)

1. A tér alakzatai (Hunyady Sándor Szűrve, habbal és Nagy Lajos Budapest Nagykávéház című regényében). Forrás 39 (2007) 10. szám 103-109.
2. A térbeliség mint az önéletrajzot szervező tényező Hunyady Sándor Családi album című regényében. Tiszatáj 62 (2008) 5. szám 75-80.
3. Térkép repedésekkel. (Táj és térképzetek Mészöly Miklós novellájában.) Forrás 41 (2010) 3. szám 89-99.
4. A nyilvánosság és az intimitás terei a Kosztolányi-prózában. Tiszatáj 64 (2010) 3. szám 45-53.
5. Vasút és irodalom. - A vonat rituális tere a modern magyar irodalomban. Műhely 33 (2010) 1-2. szám 153-159.
6. Among Cultural Models. The Metaphors of Journey, Strangers and Inhabitants in Sándor Hunyady's Oeuvre. Acta Universitatis Sapientiae, Philologica. 3, 1 (2011) 89-94.
7. A köztesség és a totalitás terei Hunyady Sándor novellisztikájában (bérház, nyilvánosház, szanatórium) Újvidéki Egyetem Magyar Tannyelvű Tanítóképző Kar, Tanulmánygyűjtemény. Szabadka, 2012. Vol. 6., N. 1. 32-41.

B)

1. Információs stratégiák és beszédmódok, a narratív identitás változatainak bemutatása a modernség irodalmának egy példáján keresztül (Város és vidék találkozása Hunyady Sándor prózájában). In: A varázsgyűrűtől az interkonfesszionális kommunikációig. Információtudományi metszéspontok bölcsészeti megközelítésben. Szerk.: Tóth Zsófia Anna. Primaware. Szeged 2011. 63-71.
2. Különleges terek Hunyady Sándor prózájában: Bérház, szanatórium nyilvánosház. In: A tér értelmezései, az értelmezés terei. – Erdélyi Múzeum Egyesület, Kolozsvár – Sapientia, Csíkszereda, 2012, 334-344.
- (3.) A tér alakzatai a kávéházi diskurzusban - a helyben utazás változatai Hunyady Sándor és Nagy Lajos regényében. In: Narratív szölamok és kulturális alakzatok - Elbeszélés-változatok a modernítésben. Szerk.: Kovács Krisztina – Novák Anikó. (Közlésre elfogadva)