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MEANS OF NARRATIVE SPACE CONSTRUCTION: A COGNITIVE PERSPECTIVE

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The article deals with the problem of spatial orientation and discourse factors that influence the way narrative space is constructed in Gothic fiction. The focus in the article is made on the locative construction, which within the framework of construction grammar is taken as the main means of expressing spatial relations both on the syntactic and the semantic levels. The distinctions between different spatial frames, reference and coordinate systems are used to account for the peculiarities of spatial organization of the narrative. The article concludes that the way space in a Gothic narrative is constructed is influenced both by the way we as human being tend to perceive and relate the locations of objects to each other and ourselves and the literary conventions pertaining to the genre, which create certain expectations that a given narrative ought to comply with.

Key words: locative construction, allocentric and egocentric coordinate systems, narrative space, literary discourse, Gothic fiction, spatial frame, frame of reference, container image-scheme.

У статті проаналізовано проблему просторової орієнтації та дискурсивних факторів, що визначають конструювання просторової структури готичної прози. Увагу автора зосереджено на вивченні локативної конструкції, яку в конструкційній граматиці вважають основним виразником просторових відношень на семантичному та синтаксичному рівнях. Принципи просторової організації наративу висвітлено в термінах просторових фреймів, референційних та координатних систем. На основі виконаного аналізу зроблено висновок про те, що специфіка конструювання простору в готичному наративі зумовлена притаманними людям особливостями сприйняття простору й усталеними жанровими конвенціями.

Ключові слова: локативна конструкція, алоцентрична та егоцентрична координатна системи, наративний простір, художній дискурс, готична проза, просторовий фрейм, образ-схема контейнеру.

Cognitive linguistic research in the last decades has touched upon a number of important subjects, one of them being the way the world's spatial organization is reflected in our minds. Major scholars working in this field include J. Zlatev, E. Pederson, S. Levinson, B. Tverski with their analysis of the semantics of spatial constructions; T. Tenbrink, J. A. Bateman, D. R. Montello and A. Klippel who looked into how the problems of giving directions and space orientation are dealt with in situations of live communication and likewise studied the correlations between the spatial and temporal categories. Other scholars, who have contributed to our understanding of the way the perceived world is reflected in the language structure through diverse cognitive processes, include (R. Langacker) with his Cognitive grammar approach, who has researched the correlations between the grammatical structure of a language and the realization of the main cognitive roles; A. Tylor and V. Evans with their analysis of the vast semantic networks of spatial and non-spatial senses that the prepositions in the English language are part of; T. A. van Dijk's study of the information structure of discourse.

Despite voluminous research accounts of the ways spatial relations are realized in different languages, not much attention has been given to how literary discourse factors influence the spatial organization of a given narrative, which was for this reason chosen as the topic of this article. Our

aim is to demonstrate the peculiarities of space construction in literary discourse, that is, give an overview of the correlations that exist between the general narrative strategies and literary conventions of Gothic fiction and the grammatical means employed in constructing the spatial structure of the story. A mystical short story *Old Nurse's Story* (1852) by Elizabeth Gaskell, which loosely fits into the Gothic genre, was chosen as material for the analysis.

First of all, it is expedient to consider the main features of Gothic literature. The term, when applied to literature, refers to a certain kind of atmosphere or aesthetics [9, p. 16], which presupposes a story following a plot of suspense and mystery, which often describes supernatural events or events that the characters have no control over.

Setting, in which much of the spatial information is stored, is one of the key elements to understanding the 'Gothic' in the Gothic fiction. Its role is often comparable with that of the characters themselves for it creates the atmosphere of the story and defines both their possible interactions and the events that occur. A set of common spatial features or motifs can be singled out as typically pertaining to a Gothic story. Those are gloomy, decaying setting (haunted houses, castles with secret passages, hidden rooms), ascent (up a high staircase), descent (into underground chambers), falling off the precipice [6; 13]. Other important theme is that of isolation – as shown further it not only serves to create a feeling of hopelessness and desperation, but also has considerable implications as far as the grammatical plane is concerned.

There doubtless might exist almost any arbitrary configuration of the spatial plane, but the structure of the represented world determines which arrangements of objects and features make sense [15, p. 201]. In other words, as far as the literary discourse goes the narrative world has to meet certain requirements posited by the genre. The reader, in their turn, has certain expectations about the story, which are derived from a set of schematic representations of the genre's typical structural properties and content [11, p. 159–160].

In this article we shall concern ourselves with spatial expressions, i.e., those having to do with location or translocation of an entity [17]. Syntactically, those spacial relations manifest either in lexemes, carrying spatial meaning, such as adjectives with spatial semantics, or, in a more pronounced and clear way, in locative constructions.

Let us first briefly define the notion of a construction. As stated by A. Goldeberg, one of the founders of construction grammar, any language entity is a construction if a certain aspect of its from or function does not follow from the meaning of its constituents or other existing constructions [5]. It is to be noted that often a construction acts as a constituent within the scope of some other construction, which may, in turn, be referenced to a higher level construction. As far as the construction grammar view goes, the only relations possible within the lexico-grammatical continuum of language are the part-whole relations between the constructions forming it [8].

In any discussion of the grammatical level from the cognitive perspective it is necessary to understand the function of the three main elements, which define the way that a certain spatial scene is construed. Those are a) an entity that is a referent of a spatial expression (the Figure, a term borrowed from Gestalt-psychology), trajector (R. Langacker., S. Svorou) or locatum (T. Tenbrink, J. A. Bateman)); b) an entity in relation to which the trajector's position is defined (the Ground, landmark or relatum)[10, p. 66–75; 12]; and finally c) a reference point that defines perspective (origin, perspective) [2; 17].

The above-mentioned spatial relations manifest themselves in a certain frame of reference, based on whether the landmark and the origin coincide (projective or intrinsic), differ (relative) or whether the reference system is grounded in fixed geographical positions such as the cardinal directions (absolute). Accordingly, the existence of three spatial frames is posited: a.) the object-oriented frame, which always has a landmark and expresses topological or projective relations, b.) the viewpoint-oriented frame, which may or may not have an explicit landmark (e.g., *Come here*! or *Come there*! where the deictic centre of the utterance is of relevance) and c.) the geocentric frame, which employs the horizontal and the vertical planes [17].

One should not overlook, when analyzing spatial discourse, that much spatial information is expressed by means of particles, which relate to a certain (usually motion) verb. This is seen as a distinctive feature of the satellite-framed languages [16] such as English, in which the manner of motion is encoded within the verb, with the path information provided outside of it. E.g., in the expression *we drove **up**, the road went **up***, which directly precede the first major exposition of the setting (that is, the description of the old ancestral house), the absolute frame of reference is employed. Based on the conventions of the Gothic genre we can argue that such preliminary positioning of the house (and for that matter, the setting of the story) hints at its being separated from the outside world.

Before going any further it is necessary to discuss the ways the objects' locations are perceived in more detail. To do that we have to touch upon the distinction between the two coordinate systems: the egocentric and the allocentric one. The former references the position of objects to the position of the perceiving self and the latter, albeit employing information derived from egocentric spatial perceptions, represents space independently from the transient position of the perceiving ego, that is, represents spatial organization as the positioning of objects in respect to one another [4; 1].

The importance of making this distinction can be evinced from the fact that the story under consideration is told from the perspective of a first-person unreliable narrator (also a recurring feature of the genre), for whom the events are already significantly removed both temporally and spatially (as the deictic expressions *there*, *there at that time* clearly demonstrate). Thus, it is of some interest to look into the way the information is accessed.

As the setting is being for the most part introduced from the first-person perspective (though not always explicitly) it is quite obvious that the major part of the spatial relations are going to be expressed by means of the route presentation strategy [14], that is, spatial information is given dynamically from a moving perspective as we have to follow the narrator's line of sight.

First of all, the Manor House, which is the book's main locale, is introduced by roughly locating it *at the foot of the Cumberland Fells*, *in Northumberland* and characterizing it as a *very grand place*. The use of spatial language outside of the context of a locative phrase is of some interest, because such epithets, which recur all throughout the story, establish a certain image of the mansion's size and maze-like properties. According to the discourse space theory recipients open up a mental space, in which the properties of the current discourse are represented along three axes: the temporal, the modal and the socio-spatial axes [7, p.335]. That is, spatial information can bear additional societal meaning, in this case, to indicate status and aristocratic tradition (e.g., *the **great** and **stately** house, the **great** front entrance*). This correlation is reflected in a primary conceptual metaphor IMPORTANCE IS SIZE [3, p. 305].

Before any extensive description of the house itself is given its immediate surroundings are introduced: firstly, a general statement (*with many trees close around it*), then a more detailed characterization (*their branches dragged against the walls, some hung broken down*).

This kind of allocentric perspective is maintained during the whole of the initial description of the house. The mansion is given its own intrinsic orientation and thus is perceived as a salient landmark (*in front of the house*). Nonetheless, the description quite obviously follows the narrator's perspective. First along the already singled out front region (*nothing was allowed to grow **over** the long, many-windowed **front***), then specifying other major parts of the house, all with respect to the already mentioned front region (**at both sides of which** a wing **projected**, which were each the **ends** of other **side fronts**); again, such an extensive description, even to the point of being a bit redundant and tautological as far as the wording goes (*sides of which... side fronts, wing[s]... the ends*), serves to emphasize the size of the Manor (*for the house, although it was so desolate, was even grander than I expected*). One can argue that certain iconicity is present in such a way of presentation, the description imitating the way a person examines his or her surroundings, first sketching out the general outline and then specifying the space around the foregrounded features.

The allocentric description is concluded with defining the space behind the house (***behind it*** *rose the Fells*). Another important landmark is the garden, presented from the egocentric point of view (and **on the left hand of the house**, as **you** stood **facing** it, was a little, old-fashioned flower-garden). Put in projectile terms (*left hand*), which implies an intrinsic frame of reference, and then defined from a relative perspective (*as you stood facing*) with the origin coinciding with the spectator, this description seems to break the previous pattern of presentation, but the positioning of the garden is already presupposed to be in the proximity of the Manor House and a bit removed temporarily (*as I found out* ***afterwards***); in the next sentence it is anchored to both the Manor and the geocentric frame (*a door opened out upon it from the* ***west front*****).**

Before proceeding, it has to be outlined how the narrative space as such is construed. The narrative space, very much like any other spatial representation, is comprised of separate spatial frames. Those can be defined as the immediate surroundings of the events in the narratives and are hierarchically organized by relations of containment [14].

In other words, the basic cognitive scheme actualized in narrative descriptions of space is a container image scheme. The minimum requirements for a container are as follows: the interior, the boundary and the exterior [4].

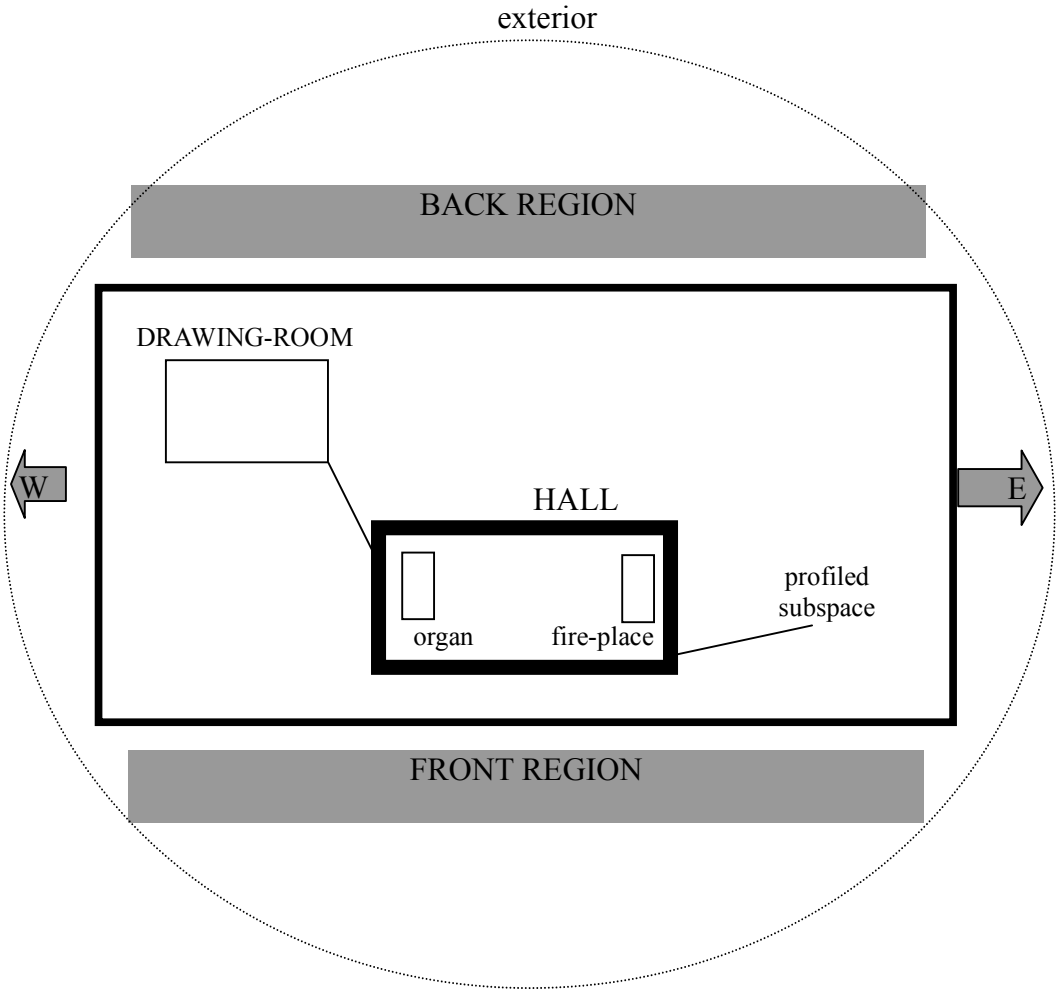
After the exposition in which some background information is presented ends, the actual story starts with crossing a certain boundary (*[we] were then* ***inside*** *the gates of a large wild park*) and moving towards the main goal – the house, which is, in its turn, construed as being enclosed within this larger space. The container scheme is, though, mainly embodied in the Manor House, within the walls and the immediate exterior of which (the garden, the foot of the Fells) the events take place.

The house is further subdivided into smaller subspaces (rooms), contained within it. The house acts as a conceptual base for the rooms, which are foregrounded against it or, using Langacker's term [10, p. 66–70], profiled. That is, a specific structure within the general scope of a narrative space is given prominence. Within each container room, as the reader gains access to them, a certain landmark becomes the focus of the narrator's attention and thus profiled in its own conceptual space. This is schematically represented in Figure 1.

To demonstrate, how this is accomplished, we shall analyze three successive descriptions of the rooms' interiors. The access to the house and its first subspace (the hall) is obtained (*we drove up to the great front entrance, and went* ***into*** *the hall*) and its general properties are expressed by means of spatial adjectives: *it was so* ***large****, and* ***vast****, and* ***grand***. After these preliminary impressions are given, an actual description commences with an existential phrase of the type There+V+NP (***There*** *was a chandelier all of bronze, hung down from the middle of the ceiling*), thus the most general landmark is employed to set the ground, against which a certain salient feature is foregrounded [18].

Thereupon the two major landmarks (the fireplace and the organ), both introduced with the use of spatial adjectives (large, great) are singled out against the general geometry of the hall (its boundaries) and set against each other: ***at one end of the hall****, was a* ***great*** ***fire-place****, as* ***large*** *as the sides of the houses in my country; a****t the opposite end of the hall*** *[…] was an* ***organ*** *built into the wall, and so* ***large*** *that it* ***filled up*** *the best part of that* ***end***. Notable is the use of the marked structure with the locative phrase (the Ground) preceding the NP. In the case of the organ, its position is further specified both in the relative and the absolute frames of reference (**to the left** as **you** went in – on the **western** side – was an organ). Other objects mentioned are located with respect to these two major entities: *and* ***by*** *it* [the fireplace] *were heavy old-fashioned sofas*; *b****eyond*** *it* [the organ], ***on the same side****, was a door*; here the two are cross-referenced: *and* ***opposite*** *[the organ], on* ***each side*** *of* ***the fire-place*** (it is given intrinsic orientation), *were also doors leading to the* ***east*** *front (*a geocentric orientation to reference its position in the house).

Figure 1. The house as a conceptual base for its subspaces



The next salient subspace (the drawing room), which is not the one into which the hall doors lead (*led us through several **smaller halls** and **passages** into the west drawing-room*), is first associated with the organ (took us in through the door **at the further side of the great organ**) and then located in connection with house's geocentric orientation (the **west** drawing-room). This room is given a brief description, which first sets it along the modal axis (*The west drawing-room was very **cheerful-looking***) and then mentions a few objects, without specifying their concrete location (*with a warm fire **in** it, and plenty of good, comfortable furniture **about**)*.

Next, a quick tour of the house ensues. Comparable to the other important subspace (the hall) in the story the drawing-room is given the epithet *great*. The narrator's progress is described in terms of in- and egress from one container-like subspace into another *(So we went **out of** that great drawing-room, and **into** another sitting-room, and **out of** that*), movement up the vertical axis (*and then **up** a great flight of stairs*) and along a horizontal vector (*and along a broad gallery*) before finally reaching the end-point (***till** we **came to** our rooms*). This kind of motion is conceptually represented by the SOURCE-PATH-GOAL image scheme, another conceptual representation at the basis of our spatial perception [4].

It is interesting to note the correlation between the emphasis on the extension along the horizontal axis and the amount of additional information provided. While the first two rooms in the succession of spaces are given one attribute (***great*** *drawing-room,* ***another*** *sitting-room*), the gallery, whose container-like properties are less salient than its path properties, is described in some detail (*which was something like a library, having books all down one side, and windows and writing-tables all down the other*). The stairs act simply as a link between two horizontal planes. The personal rooms of the narrator are first located against the kitchens (*were just over the kitchen*), which highlights them positively (*I was not sorry to hea*r) as juxtaposed to the Manor's labyrinthine qualities (*I began to think I should be lost in that wilderness of a house*). The two rooms then are described in a linear fashion (***There*** *was an old nursery* […] *and* ***out of that room*** *was the night-nursery*), with attention to the smaller objects, which do not suffice to be used either for locating the rooms within the spatial scope of the house by giving them geocentric orientation or simply for outlining the room's own geometry. The location of those objects within the rooms are either unspecified *(a pleasant fire burning in the grate, and the kettle boiling on the hob, and tea-things spread out on the table*) or referenced with similar objects (*a little crib for Miss Rosamond close to my bed*).

To conclude, we have to state that still this succinct analysis in no way exhausts the potential that the underresearched subject of spatial structure of the literary discourse possesses. Inasmuch as the space of a single article would allow, it was possible to single out some important characteristics of how the spatial structure is constructed and construed. First of all, the genre expectations play an important role in the way the setting of the story is laid out, that is, some typical motifs and literary conventions would almost certainly be present. In the story under analysis the motifs of isolation and being lost in the grand intricate structure of an old mansion evoke more clearly than it would otherwise manifest the image-scheme of a container. Secondly, on a cognitive level the narrative space of the house acts as a container in respect to its subspaces (the rooms), which are first accessed sequentially and characterized with the use of spatial language (attributes, locative phrases and spatial particles accompanying the verb) as having particular links to each other and set in a certain way in relation to the general geometry of the house. Lastly, the way each narrative spatial frame is constructed can be shown to follow this pattern: first, the container subspace is accessed, then the most general description is given (often with the use of the general landmark *there*, i.e., by an existential phrase), thereupon a few distinctive features are foregrounded, which outline the general geometry of their respective subspace, often with the accompanying information about the subspace's positioning within the house; finally, other minor objects within the subspace are located in relation to the major foregrounded ones. This reflects the natural order of perception: from larger, more prominent objects set clearly against the ground to the lesser ones.

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