

Identity searching moments in Tóth Árpád's work
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THESIS of the PhD DISSERTATION

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1. The precedents of research, proposition

The results of the century-old Árpád Tóth reception concern a well-defined and therefore limited layer of his oeuvre. Studies are considered exceptional if the subject of examination is not the following: *Körúti hajnal*, *Esti sugárkoszorú*, *Lélektől lélekig*, *Elégia egy reketyebokorhoz*. A reduced image is arisen with identifiable elements such as melancholy mood of impressionism, one-dimensional thematics and the vibrant effect of synaesthesia.

On the basis of this methodology a poetics crystallise, which mainly can be linked only to the work of Juhász Gyula, and besides the French symbolists cannot be interpreted connecting to any other previous oeuvres. This one-sidedness is naturally avoiding the world of short stories and describes a circle, which keeps resulting in biographical studies. With the exception of the first monograph (Demeter Alice, 1932) all collective works are biographical motivated, consequently the research of texts is not the result of an autonomic interpretation. Therefore one of the mayor objective of this paper is the interpretative reveal of the oeuvre.

The other fundamental point of the dissertation is the validation of the concept of identity in analytical practice. The identity theories seem to agree in two directions in the scientific system. On the one hand based on Erikson oeuvre – looking from the perspective of psychology – usable definitions are available respecting the process of ego evolution, however, this literary projection found interest in a much narrower field (gender, minority, sexual orientation) On the other hand - mainly due to the work of Ricoeur – the identification processes on the level of narrative prose seem to be identifiable and just this decade launched these criteria analysis of the lyrical texts (Oszkár Boros, Sarolta

Osztrólcuczky, Antal Bókay, Katalin Szitár, Kornélia Horváth). These interpretive essays keep remaining at the particular oeuvre presentation of certain texts.

The objectives of my dissertation are twofold: on the one hand I strived to widen the highly constricted Árpád Tóth reception based on both a quantitative and a conceptual approach. The fundamental analytical aspects of the 4-5 canonized lyrical works, traditionally highlighted from the oeuvre, so far have focused on Impressionism and formal virtuosity, and ignored the contextual embeddedness of language use and the presence of short stories.

2. Research methodology, the structure of my dissertation

The first chapter of my dissertation examined the orientations of identity theories, providing a theoretical basis and formulating criticism of the shortcomings to the literary interpretations of this topic. I have started out at the basic texts of psychology (Carven and Gergen) and expanded the scope of research to essays in relation with the psychology of art, such as the texts of Ricœur, Danto and McAdams.

The detailed description of the Árpád Tóth reception also drew my attention to several phrasing-theoretical issues. Impressionism, the initial validity of one-sidedness terms (Karinthy, Babits), then their fixedness after the completion of the oeuvre became a source of many problems. Not only did I compare and contrasted critical texts of this issue, but also highlighted in subsequent analyses how unproven or narrow in scope certain theses are in their nature.

In the third unit I discussed the identity searching moments of the lyric texts, in which I stated that in addition to the thematic issues, imaging and stylistic procedures, along with rhythmic

in several texts show traits related to the demand of self-defining. In the selection of the texts I did not stick to the established literary tradition, but rather chose texts that are less known and characteristically show the poetic and work-psychological traits chosen to be the direction of the research. I validated four of the possible identification factors in this chapter: the role of God, the decisive role of the geographical space, the impact of philosophy and the inspirational power of the arts, artists. In order to avoid the risk of moving away from the text, I tried not to formulate general truths, instead I have given space for the statements regarding the given language material all the time. The result of the research shows that there is one text that shows a consistent self-image, *Isten oltókése*, the attempts of other texts end in failure, the resistance of language bears witness to unstable self-definition.

The fourth chapter brings the text analysis of eight short stories by Árpád Tóth, referring to the general features of the texts, but always preserving the text-centered reading technique. Since these small epic works are almost entirely unknown to the profession, I validated several factors (the start of the story, the effect of the use of records and verbalism on poetics) during the research, providing a basis for a possible series of interpretations in the future. I tried not to prove that these prose texts were equal with the works of great novelists of the era (Kosztolányi, Babits, Móricz), but my goal was to elevate this text group from complete obscurity.

For the sake of completeness an annex is inserted to the end of my dissertation representing the brief description of the three missing short stories.

At the beginning and end of the unit dealing with short stories – due to the absence of reception, moving away from the

thesis methodology – I provide summary, in which I sum up the features of lessons of the general prose texts and specific characteristics.

The last chapter summarizes – building on mainly the reception (Bóka, Fűzfa, Láng, Szentesi) – the connection of the canonical texts with identity language-themed appearance.

3. New results

In some of the examined lyrical works use (*Berzsenyi, Ady Endrének, Isten törött csellója*) imaging (metaphor, metonymy) other texts rithmical structures (Hej Debrecen), other elements use concealment (Prospero szigetén, Utókúra) to form a self, to construct a consistent self-image.

The effect of Bergson philosophy - previously connected with Babits - can be more clearly linked to Árpád Tóth (*A test csodája, Az ősök ritmusa*) and – previously treated like evidence – instead of the direction lyrical loneliness, Berzsenyi-Arany-Ady-Pilinszky line to language characteristics is outlining, in which Toth Arpad also can be inserted.

This thesis put new light on the technics of Toth Árpád's rithm making– leading to the poets of Nyugat - encouraging theorists to re-examine the level of iambic maturity - 75% accordance) (Krisztus-képre; Isten törött csellója, hallgatok). According to my research only one text can be highlighted from Árpád Tóth's work, which shows us a consistent self image: Isten oltó-kése, the attempts of other texts fail, the resistance of language demonstrates an unstable self definition.

Non of the short stories can be inserted to the archetype system of Frye, which gave new clarity to the universal considered categorisation. Tóth Árpád's prose writing enters into a dialogue with Umberto Eco and Jack Goody writings, showing the devastating nature of language in short stories.

4. Publications in connection with the theme

Publications

- *Olvasható ritmus – ritmikai olvasatok; Recenzió Horváth Kornélia tanulmánykötetéről*, Eruditio – Educatio, A Selye János Egyetem Tanárképző Kara tudományos folyóirata, Komárom, 2013. április
- *Az identitáskeresés mozzanatai Tóth Árpád Ripacs című művében*, Irodalomismeret online, 2014/1.
- *Tóth Árpád Arad és Hej, Debrecen... című versének identitáskereső mozzanatai*, Tiszatáj, 2014/3 és Tiszatáj Online, 2014. 05. 02.
- *Az énkép alakulása Tóth Árpád: Ady Endrének című versében*, bár (Társadalomtudományi és művészeti folyóirat), 2015/1-4.
- *Tóth Árpád műveinek recepciója*, Iskolakultúra, 2016/1.

Conferences, lectures

- *A krétikus szerepe Tóth Árpád Hej, Debrecen című művében*, Modern Líraelméleti és Líratörténeti Kutatócsoport (MLLK) 1. konferenciája, irodalomelméleti előadás, Pázmány Péter Katolikus Egyetem, Piliscsaba, Stephaneum, Pázmány terem, 2013. március 22.
- *Tóth Árpád, az elégikus hang költői mestere*, Magyary Zoltán Népfőiskola, Tata, 2015. 04. 30.