



ARTISTIC AND FUNCTIONAL FEATURES OF THE CHRONOTOPE (SPATIAL CONFIGURATION) IN RUSSIAN AND UZBEK LITERARY STUDIES

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Abstract

The article examines the artistic and functional characteristics of the chronotope (spatial-temporal configuration) in Russian and Uzbek literary studies. The chronotope, introduced by M. Bakhtin as a category expressing the intrinsic interconnection of time and space in artistic discourse, plays a central role in shaping narrative structure, character development, and ideological meaning. By comparing Russian and Uzbek literary traditions, the study analyzes how different cultural, historical, and aesthetic determinants influence the representation of space and time in literature. Special attention is given to the functions of the chronotope in classical and modern works, including its role in reflecting national identity, social transformations, mythopoetic worldviews, and artistic symbolism.

Keywords: Chronotope; space and time; spatial configuration; Russian literature; Uzbek literature; literary semantics; narrative structure; national identity; cultural worldview; artistic poetics; Bakhtinian theory; mythopoetics.

Introduction

The category of the chronotope, introduced by M. M. Bakhtin as a fundamental spatio-temporal construct of the literary text, has become one of the key analytical tools in modern literary theory. Defined as the intrinsic interconnectedness of temporal and spatial relations, the chronotope not only structures narrative reality but also shapes artistic meaning, ideological orientation, and cultural symbolism within a work of literature. In both Russian and Uzbek literary studies, the



chronotope functions as a crucial element for understanding narrative dynamics, character formation, worldview construction, and the aesthetic principles embedded in national literary traditions.

The chronotope, like any other element of a literary work, is revealed through its linguistic structure. In other words, the language of artistic literature serves as a means of encoding the chronotope. To “penetrate” the chronotope, one must decode the literary text. The main elements of the chronotopic code include: the verb tense category, action verbs and certain verbs of activity that influence spatial relations, nouns with spatial and temporal meanings, adverbs of place and time, demonstrative pronouns, as well as spatial and temporal prepositions.

In addition, the hierarchy of objects and predicates expressed by lexical units also plays a significant role. This hierarchy indicates the inclusion of one spatial object within another and reveals the relational dynamics between different predicates.

In Russian literature—particularly in the works of Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Gogol, and later in modernist and postmodernist writings—the chronotope serves as a mechanism of philosophical reflection, psychological depth, and socio-cultural representation. Russian literary scholarship has extensively explored spatial models such as the “Petersburg text,” the “road chronotope,” the “threshold,” and the “house–world” paradigm, which illuminate historical consciousness and metaphysical dimensions of the Russian artistic worldview.

In Uzbek literature, the chronotope reflects deeply rooted national values, collective memory, nomadic and settled cultural experiences, and the synthesis of Eastern poetic thinking with modern narrative forms. The spatial models found in classical literature (Navoi, Ogahiy, Munis), as well as in the works of modern Uzbek writers (Cho‘lpon, Abdulla Qodiriy, Odil Yoqubov, Tog‘ay Murod), demonstrate the complex interaction between social reality, cultural archetypes, and artistic imagination. Uzbek literary studies increasingly employ the concept of the chronotope to analyze the transformation of national identity, historical memory, and moral-ethical ideals in literature.

The relevance of this topic lies in the growing interest in comparative literary research, which seeks to reveal common structural features and national specificities of space and time in different cultural traditions. The comparative examination of Russian and Uzbek chronotopic models allows for a deeper



understanding of how literary spaces embody ideological content, emotional atmospheres, and symbolic meanings unique to each literary culture. Furthermore, it highlights the universal nature of the chronotope as a methodological instrument for analyzing narrative form, while also emphasizing its ability to reveal culturally distinct artistic strategies.

Thus, this study aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the artistic and functional features of the chronotope in Russian and Uzbek literary studies, identifying similarities, differences, and the underlying cultural codes manifested in literary spatial configurations. Theoretical approaches by M. M. Bakhtin, Yu. M. Lotman, V. Toporov, as well as contemporary narratological and comparative frameworks, serve as the methodological basis for this research.

The concept of the chronotope has evolved from a purely structural element of literary text into a multidimensional analytical category that reveals the semantic, ideological, and aesthetic foundations of artistic discourse. In both Russian and Uzbek literary traditions, the chronotope functions as a semiotic system, encoding cultural memory, national identity, and cognitive models of perceiving the world. This analytical section focuses on several core aspects: narrative morphology, ideological content, spatial poetics, and cross-cultural comparative dynamics.

Main Part

In Russian literature, the chronotope frequently operates as a mechanism that generates narrative movement and psychological depth. The “road chronotope” in Gogol and Tolstoy embodies existential search, moral testing, and the transformation of consciousness. In Dostoevsky, the “threshold chronotope” is particularly significant, functioning as a liminal space where ethical conflict, spiritual crisis, and the dialectic of good and evil unfold. Such chronotopic models construct tension between the internal and external worlds, elaborating the protagonist’s psychological trajectory.

In Uzbek literature, narrative morphology is shaped by spatio-temporal structures deeply connected to cultural archetypes. The “oasis chronotope,” “caravan route,” and “ancestral home” signify the unity of tradition, continuity, and collective identity. In Cho‘lpon and Qodiriy, the urban space becomes a site of cultural rupture and modernization, marking the clash between old and new



epistemologies. Thus, Uzbek chronotopes often function as socio-historical matrices reflecting the transformations of national consciousness.

The chronotope is an ideological construct as much as an artistic one. Russian literature's philosophical inclination manifests in the symbolic layering of its chronotopes. For example:

- Petersburg represents the contradictions of Russian civilization—rationality versus chaos, progress versus myth, individuality versus state power.
- The village space in Tolstoy and Turgenev symbolizes spiritual authenticity, moral clarity, and the metaphysics of Russian soil.

Such semiotic polarities reveal the ideological tensions inherent in Russian cultural consciousness.

In contrast, Uzbek literature employs the chronotope to articulate ethical categories such as *adolat* (justice), *mehr-sahovat* (compassion), and *vatanparvarlik* (patriotism). The garden and orchard spaces in Navoi's poetry symbolize harmony and spiritual perfection, while in modern prose, the steppe and desert express solitude, endurance, and the resilience of the national archetype. These spatial models serve as carriers of ethical meaning and cultural continuity.

Mythopoetic motifs are central to the chronotope in both traditions but manifest differently:

- Russian mythopoetics emphasizes metaphysical dualism, eschatological temporality, and symbolic conflict (e.g., darkness/light, chaos/order).
- Uzbek mythopoetics foregrounds cosmic harmony, cyclical time, and the unity of man with nature.

For instance, the cyclical temporality in Eastern poetics—rooted in Islamic and Turkic philosophical traditions—constructs a worldview where time is not linear but regenerative. Meanwhile, Russian literature often employs linear or catastrophic time, reflecting historical rupture and existential crisis.

The plot and its components play a crucial role in ensuring the compositional integrity of a literary work. In this regard, the artistic chronotope is viewed as one of the key manifestations of the epochal problem and the author's worldview in both Uzbek and Russian prose, including several of its aspects directly related to the category of time. As Prof. D. Kuronov notes: "A literary work possesses its



own internal architecture—its composition—from the linguistic level to artistic reality. Accordingly, when studying the structure of a text in modern literary scholarship, particular attention is paid to such elements as textual composition, plot composition, the system of characters, artistic time and epoch, narrative composition, and the composition of point of view. It is not difficult to see that these aspects are characteristic primarily of epic works. This is natural, for the compositional principles of epic, dramatic, and lyrical genres differ fundamentally from one another. Therefore, it is necessary to examine each of them separately.”

Indeed, considering that artistic composition serves as a decisive mechanism for the realization of the plot, the reality unfolding in space and time within Uzbek and Russian novellas naturally reveals the emergence of complex—primarily existential—conflicts. The artistic chronotope plays a determinative role throughout the narrative, from representing the philosophical and psychological condition of the protagonist to shaping the epilogue of the work.

As one of the foundational structural categories of literature, the chronotope binds together the plot, composition, rhythm, fabula, theme, and ideological message of a text—much like the interwoven structure of life itself. It organizes narrative coherence, ensures the logical progression of events, and provides the spatio-temporal framework through which meaning is produced and interpreted.

Convergences:

- Both traditions use space and time to articulate the protagonist’s spiritual evolution.
- Chronotopes serve as organizing principles of narrative coherence.
- Symbolic landscapes reflect cultural values and collective memory.

Divergences:

- Russian literature emphasizes existential and philosophical universals, whereas Uzbek literature highlights national identity, ethical values, and cultural harmony.
- Russian chronotopes often depict urban alienation, while Uzbek chronotopes foreground community, kinship, and moral integration.
- Temporal structures in Russian literature tend toward crisis, transition, and unpredictability; Uzbek literature leans toward continuity, preservation, and restoration.



The application of Bakhtinian chronotopic theory, combined with semiotics (Lotman), cultural anthropology (Eliade), and narrative studies, demonstrates that the chronotope is:

- a semiotic model encoding cultural archetypes;
- a narrative generator structuring plot and character development;
- an ideological vehicle expressing national worldview and moral concepts.

Further research can deepen understanding through cross-cultural narratology, cognitive literary studies, and digital humanities approaches that examine spatial mapping in literature.

Following Bakhtin's idea of ideological becoming, space-time serves as a medium through which the author's worldview is articulated.

In Russian literature:

- The city becomes a model of moral crisis.
- The road symbolizes existential searching.
- The threshold marks spiritual transformation.

In Uzbek literature:

- The homeland space encodes ethical categories such as mehr, diyonat, vatanparvarlik.
- The household space functions as a microcosm of community and tradition.
- The nature chronotope symbolizes purity, stability, and moral grounding.

M. M. Bakhtin approaches the concept of artistic composition in his own distinctive way, interpreting it through the prism of the finest examples of Russian, world, and ancient Greek literature. According to Bakhtin, the epic genre is characterized by several fundamental features.

First, the subject matter of the epic is the national epic past or what he calls the "absolute past." This temporal dimension is qualitatively different from all other forms of literary time.

Second, the epic does not arise from the personal life experience of an individual author or from the creative fabric shaped by such experience. Instead, it is rooted in the collective memory preserved in ancient oral traditions, myths, and legends that have taken form over many centuries.



Third, epic time is separated from the time of its listeners or readers and from the time in which its characters exist. Thus, the epic world is distanced, elevated, and mythically completed.

These conclusions by Bakhtin undoubtedly possess a profound theoretical foundation. At the core of every epic lie the social, cultural, and spiritual histories of a people or of humanity as a whole. If we were to collect and analyze the heroic narratives belonging to various nations across the world, we would clearly observe that their plots, motifs, imagery, and narrative details follow the laws of typology, forming a shared structural and symbolic pattern.

Emphasizing this universal basis, Bakhtin, when interpreting epic literature, does not privilege the artistic tradition of any specific nation. Rather, he discusses the epic as a supra-national phenomenon and highlights its essential structural and ideological characteristics.

In current Russian and Uzbek prose, the chronotope undergoes new transformations influenced by globalization, migration, and digital culture:

- In Russian postmodernism, fragmented urban spaces, virtual chronotopes, and hybrid identities challenge traditional spatial models (Pelevin, Sorokin).
- In modern Uzbek prose, new chronotopes appear—migration spaces, transnational routes, hybrid cultural environments—reflecting socio-economic mobility and global interconnectedness (Isajon Sulton, Xurshid Do'stmuhammad).

This indicates the expansion of chronotopic diversity and the emergence of polychronic and polyspatial artistic realities.

The conducted analysis demonstrates that the chronotope, as defined by M. M. Bakhtin, represents not only a structural category of literary poetics but also a complex cultural-semantic model that shapes a work's artistic worldview. The comparative study of Russian and Uzbek literary traditions confirms that time–space relations in literature are deeply rooted in each nation's historical experience, cultural memory, and ideological orientation.

In Russian literature, the chronotope functions as a philosophical and existential matrix. The spatial models such as the road, the threshold, the city (especially the Petersburg myth), and the house–world paradigm reveal the tension between the individual and society, freedom and destiny, moral search and metaphysical



questions. Time and space in Russian prose often serve as catalysts for psychological depth and intellectual reflection, enabling the exploration of universal human dilemmas.

In Uzbek literature, the chronotope embodies national continuity, moral-ethical values, and the organic unity of man and nature. The spatial-poetic models rooted in classical Eastern literary tradition—gardens, caravan routes, deserts, oases, ancestral homes—along with modern realistic depictions of social transformation, highlight the dynamic interplay between tradition and modernity. Uzbek literary space functions as a repository of cultural identity, collective memory, and spiritual heritage, reflecting the values of harmony, dignity, and communal belonging.

Conclusion

The comparative perspective reveals several key findings:

1. Universality and national specificity coexist. While the chronotope is a universal literary category, its artistic realization depends on cultural-historical experience and national aesthetics.
2. Russian literature tends toward philosophical universality, exploring psychological, metaphysical, and existential themes through spatial symbols.
3. Uzbek literature emphasizes cultural identity and ethical ideals, using spatial imagery to express historical memory, communal values, and spiritual concepts.
4. Both traditions use the chronotope as a narrative-organizing principle, influencing character development, plot structure, emotional tone, and symbolic meaning.
5. Modern literary studies expand the chronotope's applicability, exploring urban spaces, postcolonial identity, migration narratives, and hybrid temporal structures.

Thus, the chronotope remains one of the most effective analytical tools for understanding artistic meaning, narrative morphology, and the cultural semantics of literary texts. The examination of Russian and Uzbek chronotopic models not only enriches comparative literary scholarship but also deepens our understanding of the cultural codes and aesthetic systems that shape national literatures. The research highlights that space and time in literature are not passive



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backgrounds, but active bearers of ideological, emotional, and symbolic content, forming a multidimensional structure of artistic reality.

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