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THE POETICS OF TIME AND SPACE IN LITERATURE: A STUDY OF WORLD AND UZBEK PROSE WORKS

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Abstract: The article explores the poetics of time and space in world and Uzbek prose. It offers a comparative analysis of the artistic representation of temporality and spatiality in the works of Dostoevsky, Kafka, and Nazar Eshonqul. The study further examines the concept of the metamorphic chronotope and discusses its distinctive features, drawing scholarly conclusions based on the selected authors' works.

Keywords: World literature, Russian literature, Uzbek literature, prose, short story, novel, artistic space, artistic time.

Introduction. In literary works, particularly in prose, the choice and depiction of artistic space is of significant importance. Unlike poetic works, prose narratives are constructed around plots that unfold within a defined time and space. Characters are selected to fit the setting, or conversely, the space is shaped to suit the characters. In general, space serves as a central element that not only creates the setting for events but also defines the uniqueness of the plot, the characters' personalities, and the author's style. Therefore, the topic of artistic space has long remained one of the pressing issues in literary studies [1]. It is well known that artistic space reflects the characteristics of real space. It can manifest in open or closed forms, depending on its structural boundaries [Рыбальченко Т.Л. 3:53]. In modern works, however, space is not merely a location for events but also a medium for expressing the protagonist's inner world and the author's worldview within the text. As Yuri Lotman states, "Artistic space is a model of a specific authorial world, represented through the language of spatial images" [Лотман Ю.М. 2:252-253]. Additionally, closed space often evokes an impression of a "warm," "safe place" in most works. However, in the context of Fyodor Dostoevsky, Franz Kafka, and Nazar Eshankul's creations – analyzed in this article – such spaces take on symbolic and psychological meanings.

The genre that forms the core of Fyodor Dostoevsky's creative oeuvre is the novel. The primary artistic space in his novel Crime and Punishment is the city of Saint Petersburg. Events predominantly take place in the impoverished areas of the city. Dostoevsky's vision of Saint Petersburg differs markedly from its portrayal in the works of other authors (e.g., Gogol). Dostoevsky's depiction of Saint Petersburg is filled with the destitute; its streets resemble dim and narrow prison corridors, while the city itself appears as a somber and hostile stage, set to the tune of some melancholic and aggressive melody. Taverns and brothels in his works serve as spaces that illustrate both the moral and economic decline of society. Raskolnikov's room in the novel can be considered a closed space where his plan for murder is devised. He seeks refuge in this confined space from the cramped and chaotic world of ordinary life. Notably, after committing his crime, Raskolnikov begins to distance himself from the external world, becoming more alienated. This highlights the way in which the psychological state of the character is intricately aligned with the organization of the artistic space. "Dostoevsky's characters constantly feel a sense of oppression

and confinement in the spaces assigned to them. They are always striving to escape and attain freedom" [Koshechko Anastasia Nikolaevna, 4: 38]. Overall, psychological time predominates in Dostoevsky's works, especially in his novels. Due to the characters' internal spiritual turmoil, the significance of external time and space diminishes for them. Instead, the external temporal and spatial dimensions recede in importance compared to the emotional conflicts within the characters (internal time and space). Similar observations can be made about Kafka's "The Metamorphosis".

The transformation of the protagonist, Gregor Samsa, into an unidentified, large insect and his quick acceptance of this condition is a characteristic feature of absurd literature. Gregor's metamorphosis into an insect symbolizes his reduced value as a physical being – he has become a useless entity, no longer the financial provider for his family. Initially terrified by his transformation, his parents and sister gradually shift from fear to disgust and even hatred. Gregor's fragility and insect-like instincts further isolate him, deepening his loneliness. Kafka's narrative poignantly illustrates how a person can undergo a transformation in society, becoming a repulsive creature forgotten and discarded even by their own family. The transformation in The Metamorphosis unfolds as if it were an inevitable occurrence, portrayed naturally. However, the process itself—how it happened and over what period of time – is not explained in the text.

The events take place within the Samsa family's home, primarily within a single room (Gregor's room). This microcosmic setting evokes the impression that the narrative's implications extend beyond this confined space to encompass the entire society—a macrocosm. This realization, in turn, shapes the thematic breadth of the story. The narrative unfolds in two distinct temporal rhythms: the lifestyle within the Samsa household progresses in a steady artistic timeframe, despite the family's growing financial difficulties. For Gregor, however, time appears to have come to a standstill. Time within his room slows down significantly. His insect-like behaviors disrupt the flow of artistic time because, for him, the state of metamorphosis is a period of realization. The depictions associated with Gregor serve to expand the socio-psychological scope of the story, as autobiographical elements typical of Kafka's artistic world emerge in the narrative: the harsh father, and the protagonist's yearning for affection and attention from loved ones, ultimately lead to Gregor's demise.

The artistic space in the story is represented as a closed space. Gregor's room was a separate, secure place solely for him and his thoughts. Descriptions of his room are paradoxical: the closed space symbolizes both sacrifice and freedom. On the one hand, the protagonist suffers from loneliness and a lack of understanding from others; on the other, he feels as though he is shielded from people and relieved of external pressures: "The depictions of the room are paradoxical: the closed space symbolizes both dedication and freedom. On the one hand, the protagonist suffers from loneliness and incomprehension; on the other – he feels as though he is free from people and protected from undue pressures" [Татаринова, Жигулёва, www.gramota.net/materials/2/2016/6-3/12.html].

Kafka's protagonist is both an outsider to society and a figure yearning for freedom. Gregor's metamorphosis is also defined by spatial characteristics. That is, he hides under the bed like a true insect, and crawls along the walls and ceiling of the room. This spatial boundary symbolizes the protagonist's social attributes: alienation, psychological decline, and the constraints of social relations.

Similar interpretations can be applied to the artistic space in the short story Treatment by Uzbek writer Nazar Eshankul. The closed, isolated setting in Treatment—a hospital—is built for the purpose of "treating" patients. However, this hospital differs from typical hospitals, as do its patients. In this hospital, treatment is carried out through beatings: "– Beating has always been

condemned in medicine, – continued the professor. – But because we are doing this solely for the health and future of the person, our treatment is beneficial. Our latest experiments have shown that regulating blood flow and nerve activity through beatings could become one of the necessary factors in curing diseases" [Eshankul N. 4:145]. It appears that the hospital in the story is depicted not as a warm, safe place for healing, but rather as a setting that crushes the spirit through physical pain. The purpose of the hospital is to eliminate the patients' "free world" from their minds by inflicting bodily torment. In reality, this closed space symbolizes the punitive institutions characteristic of the oppressive Soviet regime, which targeted the "enlightened" individuals of the Uzbek nation. The depiction and condition of the characters reflect these notions: "The third stage is the most difficult for the patient, as at this stage, he may lose consciousness, but the beatings must not stop. During this stage, the patient cries out and pleads, his beloved 'free world' in his mind gradually begins to disintegrate, and our whips destroy it completely. In its place, his entire being is filled with pain, and the menacing whizzing of the whip echoes in his ears" [Eshankul N. 4:148]. By illustrating the state of the characters through the chosen setting, the author successfully conveys his critical stance toward this process. Through his satirical view of the events in the story, the author tragically portrays the bleak past and shattered dreams of a nation's freedom-loving citizens. The descriptions of the enormous building, the desolate courtyard, and the stopped clock tower not only define the specific characteristics of the setting but also represent the tyranny of the former regime and the stagnation of spiritual vitality. This environment fosters the growth of ignorance and greed, paving the way for the proliferation of avaricious individuals. The central theme in the author's story The Hand is also centered around this issue.

The setting in The Hand is similarly confined – a closed space, namely the home of Salom the Miller. The main events in the story unfold within this household. In the narrative, a strange hand appears in Salom the Miller's house. This hand, already intruding into the barely manageable life of the miller, becomes a rival to his livelihood. It consumes the food and bread from his table: "The strange hand truly existed. It ate along with them, took the broken bread, shared the meat, even tasted the fruit, and if there was no food left on the table, it would disappear" [Eshankul N. 4:441]. Through this symbolic portrayal, the author alludes to parasitic, immoral individuals who live off others without fear, indulging in despicable acts. The invisible thieving hand in the story could also be interpreted as the "hand" of those who offer to help Salom the Miller rid himself of it. This is because individuals such as Azim the Chairman, the old fortune-teller, Keldiyor the Mullah, and the neighborhood inspector, who all claim to assist the miller in getting rid of the hand, end up benefiting from his feasts and becoming as much of a burden as the hand itself. They drain the poor man's energy to the fullest. At the end of the story, they turn the miller's house into a ruin under the guise of freeing him from the hand. As a result, the miller, who sought help to get rid of the hand, ends up completely devastated, even losing his home. The neighborhood chairman, accustomed to eating off the toil of others, presents the miller with a tent as "aid" after the destruction. The story, in essence, critiques the deep-rooted social problems of injustice, corruption, and greed. The closed setting—the home of Salom the Miller—serves as a metaphor for an entire society or even states. Thus, when closed space is employed symbolically, it has the capacity to expand and take on broader connotations.

All events in Nazar Eshankul's novella "Bars of the Night" take place within a single house—a room. The protagonist's only connection to the external world is through the room's window. The chronotope in this novella unfolds in a synthetic form. In other words, the merging of real time and space with unreal time and space demonstrates the synthetic nature of the novella's chronotope. Aside from the faint images of Tersota village that "surface" sporadically within the narrative or

the chronotope of the rented house that dimly reflects the personalities of the tenant mother and daughter as an "old, inevitably decaying house," there is no other real space present in the narrative. The vagueness of the locations where the protagonist meets Sulaymon (in a garden) or where he encounters the leader of the demons (in some basement-like room) also suggests that the events are not taking place in a specific, identifiable setting; these places are not depicted as concrete, geographically precise locations. The chronotope of the protagonist's current residence (the rented house) intertwines and merges with the abstract chronotope depicted in his thoughts and reflections.

Through a retrospective flow of time, the protagonist revisits his past, his childhood, and the space of Tersota village. He then returns to the present, where the time-space becomes more concrete: "The demon appeared in my room during just such a summer night, long before I met Sulaymon, during those 'restless nights'" [Eshankul N. 5:164]. By employing these unreal depictions in the plot of the novella, the author skillfully blends the time-space in which the protagonist "lives" with the primordial time-space (in which figures such as Prophet Sulaymon, Antony, Caesar, and Cleopatra existed). This vast and expansive chronotope is masked by the primary temporal dimension in which the events unfold—the night. As expressed by the protagonist: "At night, a life unlike any other begins for me. At night, I meet my past and my future: they pass before my eyes, one by one, like fading stars" [Eshankul N. 5:163].

In general, the changes in space over time; the transformation of the protagonist's perception of space; and, most importantly, the unfolding of events within the boundaries of the cosmos, open up the spatial dimension in the poetics of the plot-fabula structure of the literary work. The narrative field (the plot) not only represents a "circle of events," but also describes the spatial environment (objective, natural, social) that either hinders or facilitates the actions of the characters. Thus, in analyzing the plot, it is crucial to consider the correspondence between the location of actions and the timing of events [Рыбальченко Т.Л. 3:57]. The night, solitude, and the closed space of the house serve as clear reflections of the protagonist's psychological state. This, in turn, clarifies the underlying theme of the story and the author's viewpoints.

Therefore, in Bars of the Night, two distinct chronotopic lines are evident. The first is a real (objective) chronotopic line that harmonizes with another, second line – a chronotope that is unreal from the perspective of the plot's timeframe, thereby creating a sense of generality (universal time-space). This phenomenon is linked to the author's "self" and his literary ideal.

Nazar Eshankul's short story "Free Birds" also portrays the image of a wandering individual deprived of their home. In the story, the home is depicted not only as a warm, safe place – a "symbol of images that support or provide the illusion of stability" [Башляр Г. 1:23] - but also as a cherished and revered space where values and memories are preserved, serving as a symbol of the homeland. In this narrative, aside from the closed space of the home, Q. Square is also mentioned. While the closed space conveys a sense of belonging and defined boundaries, Q. Square symbolizes freedom, liberation, and spiritual expansiveness.

Conclusion. Space in literary works generally fulfills two roles in enriching the content: first, the environment in which events unfold is perceived through the thoughts of the protagonist as they analyze and synthesize the occurrences, providing the objective meaning of the narrative. Secondly, artistic space functions as a psychological shell, clarifying the author's intent with greater precision. Nazar Eshankul's approach to maintaining an impartial, neutral narrative voice and his technique of revealing the authorial worldview indirectly – through the consciousness of the protagonist – are evident in his selection of artistic space. The symbolic meanings embedded in the artistic space add an additional layer of interpretation to the narrative.

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