

**"SPATIAL AND TEMPORAL RELATIONSHIPS IN THE WORKS OF M.
BULGAKOV"**

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Annotation: The works of M. Bulgakov hold a significant place in the studies of Bulgakov scholars of the 20th and 21st centuries. This article focuses on the representation of artistic space and time (chronotope) in Bulgakov's writings, particularly in *The White Guard* and *The Master and Margarita*. The concept of the chronotope, as a cultural category, plays a crucial role in understanding the spatial and temporal dimensions of his literary world. Drawing on the theoretical foundations laid by A.A. Ukhtomsky and M.M. Bakhtin, the study examines how the intertwining of time and space in Bulgakov's texts reflects both the author's worldview and the reader's perception of reality. The literary chronotope, being a creative and conditional construct, transforms three-dimensional space into a multidimensional one, expanding and compressing in accordance with the narrative's sequence and events.

Keywords: chronotope, artistic space, artistic time, *The White Guard*, *The Master and Margarita*, literary analysis, Russian literature, cultural concept, spatiotemporal categories, M.M. Bakhtin, A.A. Ukhtomsky, philosophy of time and space, literary creativity.

The creative legacy of Mikhail Bulgakov occupies a special place in the research of "Bulgakov scholars" of the 20th and 21st centuries. Of particular interest is the study of the representation of artistic space and time (chronotope) in the writer's works. The cultural concept of the chronotope plays a significant role in Bulgakov's novels *The White Guard* and *The Master and Margarita* within the context of Russian literature.

As E.S. Kubryakova aptly notes, "Space and time are among the main ontological categories, representing two of the most essential forms of matter's existence understood by humanity. They are introduced into language both to speak of the universe's greatest mysteries and to comprehend basic forms of human orientation in specific places and times" [Kubryakova, 1997: 5]. Human beings perceive themselves and everything around them through the coordinates of time and space. To refer to this inseparable bond between time and space as manifested in literary texts, the term chronotope is used.

This term was first introduced into scientific discourse by A.A. Ukhtomsky, who wrote: "From the perspective of the chronotope, we are dealing not with abstract points but with living and indelible events of being. The dependencies (functions) through which we express the laws of existence are no longer abstract curved lines in space, but 'world lines' that connect past events with the present moment and through it—with the distant, vanishing future" [Ukhtomsky, 1973: 398].

M.M. Bakhtin later adapted Ukhtomsky's term to the realm of literary theory: "We call the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships, artistically assimilated in literature, the chronotope (literally meaning 'time-space')" [Bakhtin, 1975: 234].

The specific interplay of time and space categories in literary texts is defined by the author's worldview and perception of reality—what can be seen as the "third universality" of the text: the human element. The author, following their creative intention, constructs an imagined chronotope, while simultaneously creating the illusion of real time and place for the unfolding events. The conditionality of literary chronotopes results in “three-dimensional space, perceived by our senses, becoming multidimensional: it is capable of contracting and expanding depending on the world of events described, whether sequentially or non-sequentially” [Galperin, 1981: 97]. Based on the above, we can conclude that the chronotope is a model of spatial and temporal relationships in a literary work, shaped by the worldview the author seeks to convey and determined by the laws of the genre in which the work is framed. A particular spatial model is naturally combined with a certain temporal model and the nature of events described.

In Mikhail Bulgakov's novel *The Master and Margarita*, three distinct worlds are portrayed:

1. The eternal (cosmic, otherworldly),
2. The real (contemporary Moscow),
3. The biblical (the ancient city of Yershalaim, representing the past).

Through these interconnected chronotopes, Bulgakov reveals the dual nature of the human being. (See the works of B.M. Gasparov, V.G. Boborykin, and V.I. Sakharov.)

All three worlds in *The Master and Margarita* are interconnected (linked through the world of Satan) and possess their own temporal scales. These three realms correspond to three correlated sets of principal characters. The characters from different spatial layers form triads, united by functional similarities and analogous relationships with other characters in their respective worlds—sometimes even sharing physical resemblances. Temporal markers—both calendrical and diurnal—associated more with a mythological model of time, also contribute to the construction of imagery and the rhythm of artistic time.

In the novel *The White Guard*, the culturally significant concept of "City" (in this case, Kyiv) encompasses particular characteristics of a specific settlement:

“The year was great and terrible after the Nativity of Christ in 1918, and since the beginning of the second revolution. It was abundant in summer sun and winter snow, and two stars stood especially high in the sky: the shepherd's evening star Venus and the trembling red Mars.”

The city's spatial dimensions, its internal geography, urban realities, temporal and visual parameters, its interaction with the human being, as well as the city's sounds, type, and color palette—all depend on the perceptions of the main characters. From this we can conclude that the concept of the City is a vivid example of a chronotope that is deeply dependent on an individual's worldview.

The chronotopes in Bulgakov's prose are shaped by the concepts of Time and Space (including “Home” and “City”). The uniqueness of Bulgakov's literary prose lies in the coexistence of two types of chronotopes:

- The realistic chronotope, forming the basis upon which the plot and events develop, and
- The fantastic or surreal, which participates in transforming space.

The boundary between these two chronotopes in Bulgakov's world is very fluid; transitions between them may occur instantaneously. Both spatial models are constructed using a complex web of historical, mythological, biblical, cultural, and literary associations and allusions. One technique frequently employed is direct explication of intertextual references—such as

quotations—which serves to expand the temporal and spatial boundaries of Bulgakov's early works within a broader cultural context.

For instance, the image of the City is shaped by its perceived "exceptionalism"—it surpasses all other cities in the world in terms of external beauty

("And there were more gardens in the City than in any other city in the world")

and in terms of inner atmosphere

("In winter, as in no other city in the world, serenity fell upon its streets and alleys...").

Essentially, the described City forms a distinct world, separate from the rest of earthly space.

The central image of Home and City in *The White Guard* serves as a chronotope symbolizing the hearth. By gathering the characters together in one house on the eve of Christmas, Bulgakov contemplates the possible fates not only of the individual characters but of Russia itself:

"The year was great and terrible after the Nativity of Christ in 1918, and since the beginning of the second revolution..."

This is how the novel begins, telling the story of the Turbin family living in Kyiv, on Alekseevsky Descent. The younger generation—Aleksey, Elena, and Nikolka—are orphaned. Yet they have a Home, which preserves not only physical belongings but also a way of life, traditions, and national identity. The Turbin home was built on the "stone of faith" in Russia, Orthodoxy, the Tsar, and culture. Now, home and revolution have become adversaries. The revolution clashes with the old Home, seeking to leave the children without faith, shelter, culture, or identity.

In Bulgakov's final novel *The Master and Margarita*, the chronotope connects three layers:

1. The eternal,
2. The real (contemporary Moscow),
3. The biblical past (Yershalaim).

These layers are not only unified by the plot (the life story of the Master) but also by a central philosophical and ideological concept. Although these layers are chronologically and geographically separated, they constantly overlap and reflect one another. They are tied together by recurring motifs, themes, and archetypal images.

For example, not a single chapter in the novel lacks the motif of betrayal or secret surveillance—a deeply relevant topic during Bulgakov's era. This theme is resolved in two narrative modes:

- The playful, open mode (e.g., the investigation into Woland and his entourage, the absurd attempt to arrest the cat in the "unlucky apartment"), and
- The realistic, more covert mode (e.g., the interrogation of Ivan Bezdomny about the "foreign consultant," and the scene in Alexander Garden involving Margarita and Azazello).

Thus, the chronotope in Bulgakov's work represents spatial models developed through a complex network of historical, mythological, biblical, cultural, and literary associations and allusions. His method of intertextual referencing—including quotations—expands the temporal and spatial boundaries of *The White Guard* and *The Master and Margarita*, embedding them into a vast and multifaceted cultural context.

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