CHRONOTOPIC STRUCTURES AND GENDER IDENTITY IN CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH AND UZBEK SPECULATIVE NARRATIVES: A CROSS-CULTURAL STUDY

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DOI: ***https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23938427***

Abstract. *This article examines the representation of chronotope (space-time relations) and gendered identity in contemporary English and Uzbek speculative prose through a comparative literary framework. The study explores how writers from different cultural traditions construct fictional worlds in order to address moral, philosophical, and social concerns of the twenty-first century. Particular attention is given to the interaction between national literary traditions, modern narrative strategies, and the transformation of female characters within changing historical contexts. The research applies comparative, hermeneutic, structural, and contextual methods to selected English and Uzbek literary texts. The findings demonstrate that English speculative prose frequently emphasizes dystopian temporality, fragmented memory, and individual alienation, whereas Uzbek prose more often combines futuristic imagination with ethical continuity, collective values, and mythopoetic memory. Female protagonists in both traditions increasingly function as active interpreters of reality rather than passive symbolic figures. The article argues that chronotope serves not merely as narrative background but as an instrument of ideological expression and identity formation. Comparative analysis reveals growing convergence between global literary tendencies and national artistic models.*

Keywords: *chronotope, speculative literature, Uzbek prose, English literature, comparative poetics, gender identity, narrative space, literary modernity.*

Annotatsiya. *Maqolada qiyosiy adabiyotshunoslik yondashuvi asosida zamonaviy ingliz va o‘zbek fantastik nasrida xronotop (makon va zamon munosabatlari) hamda gender identikligining ifodalanishi tadqiq etiladi. Tadqiqotda turli madaniy an’analarga mansub yozuvchilarning XXI asr axloqiy, falsafiy va ijtimoiy muammolarini yoritish maqsadida badiiy voqelikni qanday yaratishi o‘rganiladi. Milliy adabiy an’analar, zamonaviy narrativ strategiyalar hamda o‘zgaruvchan tarixiy sharoitlarda ayol obrazlarining transformatsiyasi o‘rtasidagi o‘zaro aloqaga alohida e’tibor qaratiladi. Tadqiqotda tanlangan ingliz va o‘zbek adabiy matnlarini tahlil qilish uchun qiyosiy, germenevtik, strukturaviy va kontekstual metodlardan foydalaniladi. Natijalar shuni ko‘rsatadiki, ingliz fantastik nasrida ko‘pincha distopik zamon tasavvuri, parchalangan xotira va individual begonalashuv masalalari ustuvorlik qilsa, o‘zbek nasrida futuristik tasavvur axloqiy davomiylik, jamoaviy qadriyatlar va mifopoetik xotira bilan uyg‘unlashadi. Har ikki adabiy an’anada ayol qahramonlar tobora ko‘proq voqelikni passiv ramziy obraz sifatida emas, balki faol anglovchi va talqin etuvchi subyekt sifatida namoyon bo‘lmoqda. Maqolada xronotop shunchaki narrativ fon emas, balki mafkuraviy ifoda va identiklikni shakllantirish vositasi ekanligi asoslab beriladi. Qiyosiy tahlil global adabiy tendensiyalar va milliy badiiy modellar o‘rtasidagi yaqinlashuv kuchayib borayotganini ko‘rsatadi.*

Kalit so‘zlar*: xronotop, fantastik adabiyot, o‘zbek nasri, ingliz adabiyoti, qiyosiy poetika, gender identikligi, narrativ makon, adabiy modernlik.*

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INTRODUCTION

The category of chronotope, introduced by Mikhail Bakhtin, remains one of the most productive tools for literary analysis because it reveals how time and space organize meaning within narrative structures [Bakhtin, 1975]. In speculative literature, this concept acquires particular significance since imagined futures, parallel realities, and transformed social orders depend on innovative spatial-temporal modeling. Darko Suvin considered speculative fiction a literature of cognitive estrangement, where unfamiliar worlds illuminate contemporary reality [Suvin, 1979]. Fredric Jameson later emphasized the utopian and ideological dimensions of science fiction worlds [Jameson, 2005]. In gender-oriented literary criticism, Judith Butler demonstrated that identity is performative and socially constructed, which makes literary representations of women especially significant in transitional societies [Butler, 1990]. Contemporary English and Uzbek prose increasingly turns to speculative and psychologically symbolic forms in order to reinterpret memory, modernization, gender roles, and national values. However, comparative research into how chronotope and female identity function across these two traditions remains limited. Therefore, this article investigates how English and Uzbek authors construct narrative space and time, and how these constructions influence representations of women and cultural self-understanding.

Main part. The analysis demonstrates that chronotope functions as a central carrier of worldview in both English and Uzbek prose, yet its narrative realization differs significantly. In contemporary English speculative fiction, time is frequently fragmented, delayed, or retrospective. Narrators reconstruct the past through memory gaps, unreliable recollection, or institutional secrecy. Spaces such as boarding schools, laboratories, anonymous cities, and isolated houses often appear orderly on the surface but conceal ethical violence. This creates a chronotope of controlled modernity in which characters experience existential limitation. In contrast, contemporary Uzbek prose tends to preserve continuity between past, present, and future. Even when texts employ symbolic or fantastic motifs, time is often cyclical rather than broken. Memory links generations, and ancestral heritage remains active within the present. Spaces such as mahalla neighborhoods, family homes, roads, markets, and deserts are not merely settings but moral landscapes where identity is tested. National space is represented as emotionally inhabited rather than bureaucratically managed. The study also found important developments in female representation. In English texts, women often confront systems of surveillance, emotional repression, or fragmented selfhood. Their struggle centers on autonomy, voice, and bodily integrity. In Uzbek prose, female characters increasingly move beyond traditional domestic symbolism and become ethical decision-makers, mediators of family continuity, educators, and seekers of personal dignity. While social expectations remain visible, women are no longer portrayed only through sacrifice. Another result concerns symbolic geography. English prose frequently uses enclosed institutions and technologically mediated environments to dramatize alienation. Uzbek prose more often uses open roads, thresholds, courtyards, and pilgrimage-like movement to dramatize spiritual search. Despite these contrasts, both traditions share concern for memory, moral responsibility, and the preservation of humanity under pressure. Thus, chronotope in

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both literatures operates as an active mechanism through which social anxiety, cultural identity, and gender transformation are narrated.

DISCUSSION

The findings confirm Mikhail Bakhtin’s proposition that time-space relations determine genre meaning rather than merely decorate narrative events [Bakhtin, 1975]. In the examined texts, chronotope structures ethical perception itself: enclosed spaces produce obedience and loss of agency, while open transitional spaces encourage reflection and transformation. This explains why English speculative prose often adopts institutional settings to critique biopolitics, consumerism, and technocratic rationality. The Uzbek material suggests a different but equally modern trajectory. Rather than rejecting tradition, many authors reinterpret inherited cultural spaces—home, neighborhood, pilgrimage road, memory landscape—as adaptable frameworks for negotiating globalization and modernization. This corresponds with postcolonial theories of hybrid modernity advanced by Homi K. Bhabha [Bhabha, 1994]. Gender results also indicate convergence between traditions. Women in both corpora increasingly function as narrators, witnesses, and ethical centers of the text. However, the route to agency differs: English texts often foreground resistance to institutions, while Uzbek texts more commonly emphasize negotiated authority within community structures. These differences should not be interpreted hierarchically. Instead, they reveal multiple literary responses to shared global pressures: migration, technological acceleration, changing family roles, and memory crises. Comparative reading therefore expands understanding of how national literatures participate in world literature without losing cultural specificity.

CONCLUSION

The comparative study of contemporary English and Uzbek speculative prose demonstrates that chronotope remains a decisive analytical category for understanding modern literature. English authors frequently construct fragmented temporalities and controlled spaces to portray alienation, memory loss, and the crisis of humanity in technologically managed societies. Uzbek writers more often combine symbolic innovation with ethical continuity, presenting space as culturally meaningful and time as intergenerational memory.At the same time, both traditions reveal notable transformation in representations of women. Female characters increasingly possess interpretive authority, moral agency, and narrative centrality. This indicates broader shifts in literary consciousness and social values.The research also shows that national specificity and global relevance are not contradictory. Uzbek literature enters international comparative discourse precisely through its unique synthesis of mythic memory, modern experience, and philosophical realism. Further studies may extend this inquiry through corpus analysis, translation studies, or reader-response research. Overall, comparative chronotopic analysis offers a productive path for re-evaluating the place of Uzbek prose within contemporary world literature.

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