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DISTINGUISHING THE FOLKLORE CHRONOTOPE IN A LITERARY TEXT: POETIC MARKERS AND TYPOLOGICAL CRITERIA

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ABSTRACT

This research article examines key theoretical methodological problems in identifying folkloric chronotopes in literature. It proposes genetic, structural, and semantic criteria for distinguishing folkloric patterns from other literary chronotopes. Roads, thresholds, otherworldly settings, and trials are interpreted through narrative functions. Examples from Alisher Navoi and Uzbek prose illustrate authors' distinctive transformations of traditional models. The study argues that folkloric chronotopes should be examined as poetic structures rather than isolated motifs.

Keywords: folklore chronotope, literary chronotope, poetics, genetic criterion, structural criterion, semantic criterion, transformation.

INTRODUCTION

In a work of art, space and time do not merely define the external circumstances of events. They bring together the direction of the hero's actions, the inner rhythm of the plot, and the author's vision of the world. In his views on the chronotope, M. Bakhtin stressed the artistic wholeness of space and time [1]. However, not all spatiotemporal relations in written literature arise from the same source: some are tied to a particular historical reality, some to individual psychological experience, and others to storytelling traditions that took shape over the long course of a people's history.

It is precisely this distinction that must be taken into account when applying the concept of the folklore chronotope. The fact that a literary work depicts a road, a threshold, a mountain, a cave, or an extraordinary world is not, on its own, sufficient scholarly grounds for labelling them a folklore chronotope at once. For example, in a realist novel the road may shorten social distance, in a psychological novella it may bring the stream of memory to the surface, and in a fairy tale it may lead the hero toward trial and transformation. The outward similarity of an image does not mean that its poetic function is the same.

The aim of this article is to identify the poetic markers that can be tested in order to distinguish the folklore chronotope in a literary text, and to propose a procedure of analysis based on genetic, structural, and semantic criteria. The study does not set the folklore chronotope against the general literary chronotope; it proceeds from the need to explain those particular forms of it that are connected with the folklore tradition.

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MATERIALS AND METHODS

The theoretical basis of the study consists of Bakhtin's concept of the chronotope [1], V. Propp's research on the functions in the plot of the wondertale [2], and Yu. Lotman's views on artistic space and the semantic boundary [3]. These approaches do not replace one another: the first reveals the unity of space and time, the second the recurring functions in the sequence of events, and the third the capacity of space to generate meaning.

The main methods are chronotopic analysis, comparative-typological observation, and structural-semiotic interpretation. The historical-poetic approach was also used to clarify the link between the folklore tradition and written literature. Alisher Navoi's epic "Sab'ai sayyor" ("The Seven Wanderers") and plot situations in Uzbek prose connected with the road, the threshold, and the other world were examined as methodological examples. These examples were chosen not to prove that the same folklore model is present in every text, but to show the limits of applicability of the proposed criteria.

The analysis was organized around three questions: does the spatiotemporal model depicted have a comparable form in the folklore tradition; how does this model organize the events and the hero's actions in the work; and is its traditional meaning preserved or altered in the author's interpretation? Each question is examined separately. Genetic similarity alone does not automatically imply structural correspondence, nor does structural correspondence automatically imply that folkloric semantics is preserved.

RESULTS

1. The genetic criterion: not the image, but the source of the traditional model

The first condition for distinguishing the folklore chronotope is to establish the connection between the spatiotemporal relation depicted and a specific model in oral folk art. Such a connection may manifest itself through direct reference to the plot of a fairy tale or legend, through the reworking of a traditional motif, or through the preservation of a folklore-specific order of reality. The researcher must therefore separate general resemblance from a historical-poetic link.

For instance, the hero's departure from home for an unknown destination is a widespread literary situation. In the folklore model, however, the departure is often tied to a breach of the customary order, a prohibition, a task, or a loss, and leads the hero into a space governed by different laws. The fairy-tale functions described by Propp are useful for identifying such a sequence, but it would be wrong to apply them to every written work as an unchanging template [2].

The practical value of the genetic criterion lies in the fact that it prevents folkloricity from being interpreted at the level of outward decoration. The appearance of an archaic name, a mythical creature, or a folk expression does not yet show that the spatiotemporal construction of a work rests on the folklore chronotope. For this, the existence of a traditional relationship among the images must also be established.

2. The structural criterion: the wholeness of space, time, and action

The second criterion concerns how the folklore model operates in the composition of a work. The folklore chronotope is not a sum of individual place

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names; in it, the change of space, the distinctive flow of time, and the hero's action are interconnected. Stages such as leaving one's own space, crossing a boundary, undergoing a trial, and returning form a stable plot trajectory in certain types of fairy tale. Not every folklore genre, however, follows this very sequence.

The boundary is an especially important component of this system. A threshold, a gate, a river, or a mountain pass may be an ordinary geographical point, or it may signify passage from one world to another. Lotman's conception of artistic space helps to analyse the semantic load of the boundary [3]. If crossing the boundary changes the hero's status, the rules that apply to him, or the time of events, it becomes an active element of the chronotope.

Time, too, should be viewed in this connection. The "three days", "forty days", or vague ancient times of a fairy tale often express the traditional rhythm of an event rather than calendar precision. In a written work, however, this model may merge with a historical date, individual memory, or psychological experience. In such a case it is necessary to separate the preserved and the reconstructed layers of folkloric time.

3. The semantic criterion: preservation and change of traditional meaning

The third criterion is directed at revealing the cultural meaning of the spatiotemporal model. In folklore, the home may often be depicted as a territory of selfhood and protection, and the alien space as an arena of danger, the unknown, or trial. Yet such meanings cannot be accepted as a strict rule for all samples of oral folk art: genre, local tradition, and the specific plot alter their function.

In written literature, an author may repeat the traditional meaning, complicate it, or interpret it in reverse. For example, it is entirely possible that the home, usually considered safe, turns into a space of estrangement, while the other world, which seemed frightening, becomes a place for grasping spiritual truth. In such a situation the folklore chronotope does not disappear; its direction of meaning changes under the influence of individual poetics. A conclusion about transformation, however, must rest on a precise comparison with the traditional model.

The seven palaces, the days of the week, and the alternation of stories in "Sab'ai sayyor" make it possible to observe the relationship between traditional storytelling and the complex composition created by the author [4]. Here the recurring order of space and time becomes an artistic principle that unites the stories. At the same time, instead of automatically calling each palace in the epic a folklore chronotope, one should separately examine the parallel models in traditional storytelling and their altered function within the epic.

DISCUSSION

When the three proposed criteria are applied together, the relationship between the folklore chronotope and the general literary chronotope becomes clearer. Both rest on the inseparable link of time and space with plot and image. The difference lies in the traditional source of the folklore chronotope, its recurring poetic structure, and its introduction of collective cultural meanings into the author's interpretation. For this reason, it is appropriate to study the folklore chronotope not as a parallel category standing outside the literary chronotope, but as its form connected with tradition.

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Here, a mismatch among the criteria can also yield a scholarly result. If a folkloric image is preserved in a work but its traditional plot function is lost, we are speaking of a folkloric motif or stylization rather than a full folklore chronotope. Conversely, if the departure–trial–return structure of a folktale is restored in a new historical or psychological content, a transformed form of the folklore model emerges. Such differentiation prevents the concept of the chronotope from being applied too broadly.

One more caution is needed in analysing a literary text: typological similarity does not always prove that a direct folklore source was used. Similar spatiotemporal situations may arise independently in different cultures. A conclusion that an author turned to a specific folklore sample must be confirmed by intertextual evidence, creative history, or reliable sources. Otherwise, it is more accurate to designate the observed closeness as typological rather than genetic similarity.

Applying the criteria requires a definite order of analysis: first, the active spatiotemporal nodes in the work are singled out; then the folklore samples comparable with them are selected; then the plot function and the semantic load are compared. Finally, it is shown which element the author has endowed with new meaning. This order makes it possible to connect a theoretical concept with concrete literary evidence.

CONCLUSION

In identifying the folklore chronotope, the mere presence of images such as the road, the threshold, the mountain, or the other world is not sufficient evidence. Its folkloric nature is revealed through its connection with a traditional spatiotemporal model, the way it organizes the plot and the hero's actions, and the preservation or alteration of its cultural meanings in the literary text.

When the genetic, structural, and semantic criteria are applied in interconnection, a basis emerges for distinguishing the folklore chronotope from other manifestations of the general literary chronotope. However, these criteria are not a mechanical classification: they must be used with regard to the genre, historical context, and individual poetics of each work. In further research, this approach can be tested by comparing specific folklore variants with their reworking in Uzbek novels.

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