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THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF ARTISTIC TIME IN THE NOVEL

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Since human life represents a continuous process of movement, a person, to a certain extent, synthesizes all its features in their consciousness, while a writer embodies the most significant of them in a literary text. Interpretations aimed at revealing the human being and their destiny, spiritual and moral world, and psychology underlying reality come to the forefront. In the works of each author, the literary character, being in constant movement, manifests their activity within a specific space and time, and this is not accidental.

As the literary scholar B. Turaeva notes: "The concept of time, which reflects objective real time as a conceptually integral system, is extremely complex and has various approaches and interpretations in philosophy, physics, theology, and literary studies. Matter exists in constant motion. Motion represents continuous duration, which determines the physical essence of time. This essence, in turn, is conditioned by the cultural character of an epoch—civilization" [1, p. 12].

The interpretation of reality in a literary work, revealed more profoundly through the chronotope, contributes to the emergence of emotional intensity, which is based on the author's imagination and artistic mastery. The representation of space and time in a literary work not only brings to life the realities of a particular historical period but also serves as a means of understanding the human being and revealing their psychological and characterological features.

M. Bakhtin notes: "In the literary and artistic chronotope, spatial and temporal characteristics are fused into a meaningful and concrete whole. Time here becomes condensed, compressed, and artistically visible; space, in turn, becomes intensified and drawn into the movement of time, plot, and history. The signs of time are revealed through time. It is this intersection of temporal and spatial sequences and the fusion of their characteristics that defines the artistic chronotope" [2, p. 235].

Various forms of the chronotope manifest themselves in the artistic interpretation of contemporary novels, and this concept can conventionally be divided into linear and cyclical time. Cyclical time finds its artistic embodiment in a particular content and essence through its integrity, continuity, interconnectedness, and, most importantly, eternity. At the same time, it cannot be denied that time in artistic interpretation possesses the ability to move from yesterday through today toward tomorrow and the future.

Although the concepts of yesterday, today, and tomorrow are not rejected in theories of time, they pass into one another, complement one another, and gradually penetrate the spiritual world, psychology, and characteristic features of the literary character, reflecting events occurring within space. "At that time, darkness ruled over the world. There was not even a glimpse of light, nor a trace of movement. Perhaps there was existence, but it was immersed in darkness, in impenetrable gloom. And there was no one who could create it. There was only the Almighty Lord God. And the time came when He desired to become visible. And, tearing apart the darkness, He resolved to create the world" [3, p. 10].

The way reality and time are expressed, as they occur in human consciousness and imagination, is, in turn, represented in the form of a straight line. It is precisely this linear movement from yesterday through today toward tomorrow that reveals the distinctive characteristics of the laws governing artistic representation. "Mercy… mercy… I do not know whether they will consider it possible, whether they would. Life is passing here for nothing. But is it only life? What about

health? What about youth? In a month I will be thirty.
[01.10.2026 12:01] Зебона 2: Even in my worst nightmare could I have imagined that I would meet my thirtieth spring in prison? Strange life… no… cruel, merciless" [3, p. 11].

The complex dimensions of perception are synthesized and processed in human thought and subsequently reflected in a literary work as a product of imagination. All of this can be explained by the existence of a distinctive interpretation of time and space, as well as by their artistic function within a literary work. One of the outstanding representatives of world literature, Paulo Coelho, is distinguished by his distinctive approach to understanding the world and the human being. In his works, the writer seeks to interpret the experiences of the human soul, feelings arising in the subconscious, and to create an expressive gallery of literary characters. Paulo Coelho's novel *The Aleph*, published in 2010, became, like many of the writer's other works, one of his widely known novels. In the novel, the protagonist's spiritual suffering, his confrontation with the past, love, his desire to understand his own inner experiences, and ultimately his aspiration toward self-awareness are vividly revealed through the development of events.

In Paulo Coelho's *The Aleph*, various artistic functions of the chronotope receive convincing interpretation: "I am heading toward the sacred oak together with J., whom I regard as my teacher. For four hundred years now, this oak has silently witnessed human suffering. Its only concern is to shed its leaves in autumn and produce new ones in spring" [4, p. 10]. The distinctive feature of this interpretation lies in the fact that, through landscape imagery, the author seeks to focus attention on human psychology. Autumn is associated with the completion of human life, whereas spring serves as a symbol of renewal, rejuvenation, and spiritual rebirth. This is not accidental. The novel *The Aleph* is philosophical in nature, and the introduction of new perspectives on the world and the human being into the literary text encourages the reader to reflect and to perceive reality more deeply.

As the epigraph to the novel, the writer chose a statement by Jorge Luis Borges: "Although the Aleph itself was only two or three centimeters, it contained the entire Universe in its natural size, and each object, such as a mirror, consisted of an infinite number of objects that could be clearly seen from any point in the world." Indeed, life is complex, and human beings seek to comprehend its boundaries through thought and reflection. This reveals the primacy of the Universe, symbolically expressed through the image of the Aleph; the desire to understand its laws, infinity, and distinctive nature of existence; the unity of humanity and the world; and the harmony between natural phenomena and humankind.

From this perspective, symbolic interpretations, metaphorical expressions, complex processes of comprehending reality, and contradictions within the human inner world receive vivid artistic embodiment in the novel. The symbolism is already embedded in the title of the work itself. Aleph is the first letter of the Arabic alphabet and symbolizes fundamental properties of existence. It emphasizes unity, an original point, the integration of existence, and even humanity within a single point. By viewing the Aleph as a symbol of human unity, the author emphasizes the commonality of human qualities regardless of religion, race, or nationality. The interpretations presented in the novel emphasize the simultaneous unity of everything that exists, while the Aleph becomes a symbol of the connection between the past, present, and future within a single point.

The protagonist's journeys are also distinctive: "This time I will stay in London for only three days. I have autograph sessions, Indian and Lebanese restaurants, and conversations in hotel lobbies about books, writers, and bookstores awaiting me" [4, p. 27]. Here, the author's aspiration toward enlightenment, a deeper understanding of humanity and the world, as well as the complex aspects of self-knowledge, are reflected.

As Mikhail Bakhtin notes: “The heroes become involved in a whirlwind of accidental trials, while time ceases to obey the laws of astronomical, biographical, and biological time. Even after trials lasting for centuries, the biological age of the heroes does not change; they remain young and full of strength, and the fire of love continues to burn in their hearts. This is regarded as a characteristic feature of this type” [5, p. 29].

Although studies devoted to the theoretical analysis of various features of the novel have emerged throughout different historical periods, scholarly approaches to the artistic function of the chronotope continue to develop. Since each writer embodies their own conception in a literary text, various aspects of space and time become an important foundation for its interpretation.

As the literary scholar K. Yo‘lchiev notes: “The use of specific time and space to understand every object, phenomenon, and reality, as well as to express an attitude toward them, represents a process inseparably connected with the history of human thought. Reflecting on the relationship between the world and the human being, people perceive and express existence within the framework of space and time” [6, pp. 34–35].

Based on the theoretical propositions presented above, it can be argued that the interpretation of the chronotope within the structure of a literary work performs a distinctive function in revealing human character and the inner world. In a literary work, movement from one place to another exerts a significant influence on the psychological state of the protagonist. Such interpretations also contain symbolism expressing a person’s inner journey.

While physically changing space, the protagonist simultaneously strives toward spiritual self-knowledge, revives memories of the past, draws certain conclusions from them, and attempts to understand the causes of their own mistakes. As a result, their inner world is gradually enriched through this imagined journey. Thus, journeys in the novel can be regarded as one of the principal symbols of the human aspiration toward self-knowledge.

The Russian literary scholar M. S. Kagan notes: “Artistic space and time are ideal and illusory. They belong neither to the real world nor to the work of art itself as elements of reality, but rather to those figurative models of reality created in works of art. Therefore, artistic space and time depend, on the one hand, on the objective properties of the real spatial-temporal continuum and, above all, on the inseparability of space and time within it, and, on the other hand, on a number of subjective factors: the historical variability of society and, in particular, artistic consciousness” [7, p. 30].

Indeed, the chronotope in a literary work has developed as a distinctive philosophical category and makes it possible to perform specific functions within the structure of a text, uniting the author’s views into an integral artistic system. From this perspective, various symbols in Ulugbek Hamdam’s novel *Sabo and Samandar* also carry significant artistic meaning. The contradictions of the human “self” become even more deeply manifested in processes of the subconscious. In the interpretation of the work, the concept of the human being and their lifelong aspiration toward self-knowledge acquire particular depth through the contradictions encountered on the path of divine love. It is not accidental that the epigraph to the novel consists of Alisher Navoi’s lines: “Destroy me in love, O Lord!” In the novels *The Aleph* and *Sabo and Samandar*, which we have selected for comparative analysis, a dialectical unity can be observed in the interpretation of symbolism and the literary character’s aspiration toward awareness of their own essence [8, p. 42].

In both works, a distinctive unity can be observed in the interpretation of symbolism, self-knowledge, the dialectics of the soul, and spiritual contradictions, although their forms of artistic expression differ: “Night… Darkness enveloped the world. It seemed as though an enormous black cauldron had been overturned over the entire world. Not a single star or ray of light that could

penetrate from above was visible in the sky. Darkness engulfed not only the city streets but also the inner spaces-the houses. It seemed as though the entire city had been left without light and had forever sunk into a bottomless abyss of darkness" [8, p. 3].

The novel begins with the words: "Night… Darkness enveloped the world." As is well known, night is a symbol of darkness. In this work, it can also be regarded as a symbol of the inner darkness of the human soul. In Ulugbek Hamdam's novel, one of the oldest and simultaneously most complex human emotions love receives artistic expression. However, it is necessary to emphasize that love in the novel is not limited to relationships between individuals but is presented in a broader philosophical sense.

Through the theme of love, the author reveals the human aspiration to understand their own essence, the meaning of life, fidelity to life, and spiritual freedom. Symbolism plays a leading role in the plot and compositional structure of the novel. This is manifested in the names of the literary characters as well as in the artistic depiction of natural phenomena. The very names Sabo and Samandar constitute a distinctive key to understanding the content of the work. The word "sabo," in its literal meaning, is associated with the morning breeze and evokes associations with purity and innocence, whereas "Samandar" can be related to the image of a legendary bird that burns in its own fire and is reborn from it.

The chain of events in the novel *Sabo and Samandar* and its development through the characters of Sabo, Samandar, Nodira, Nilufar, Aziza, and Sherali reveal the themes of love, fidelity, and inner suffering. In the writer's works, the human being constantly faces a choice, since the author's artistic conception places at its center the aspiration toward the formation of a mature, free, and spiritually elevated personality.

Therefore, the artistic interpretation of human destiny, experiences, and joys occupies a leading position in such works. It should also be noted that in Ulugbek Hamdam's novel *Sabo and Samandar*, human inner experiences, the meaning and essence of human life, love, faith, and spiritual values receive a new artistic interpretation [9, p. 68]. The novel reveals the human aspiration to understand their own essence and recognize their responsibility toward love and life, whereas *The Aleph* places particular emphasis on feelings, cognition, and perceptions occurring within the human inner world.

Let us consider one of the interpretations in *The Aleph*: "Yes, talking to one's own heart is not easy. Perhaps there is no need to do so. We should simply trust it, pay attention to the signs of destiny, and live the life given to us. Sooner or later, even if we are unable to understand what this universal unity represents, we will realize that we are a part of it" [4, p. 29].

The characteristics of the image of Hilal in *The Aleph* and the symbolic meaning embedded in it testify to the function of the chronotope in the artistic understanding of humanity and the world. The symbolism of Paulo Coelho's *The Aleph* and Ulugbek Hamdam's *Sabo and Samandar* can be considered an artistic expression of the human aspiration to comprehend the world. In the interpretation of love and spiritual feeling in both novels, there is an aspiration toward the spiritual perfection of the individual, a synthesis of inner experiences, and a struggle with contradictions on the path toward self-knowledge. It should be particularly emphasized that the theme of love and spiritual feeling in both novels is revealed in a broad philosophical sense.

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