

NARROTOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF ARTISTIC TIME AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SPACE IN THE SHORT STORIES OF SHUKUR KHOLMIRZAYEV

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Abstract

This article provides an in-depth scholarly analysis of the narratological features of artistic time and psychological space in the short stories of Shukur Kholmirezayev. The study examines the relationship between the time of events and narrative time, subjective time, memory mechanisms, retrospection, closed and open spatial models, and their artistic functions in revealing the characters' inner worlds. The findings demonstrate that in Kholmirezayev's prose, time and space function not merely as compositional elements but as leading narrative categories that express the human inner world, spiritual conflicts, and psychological dramatism.

Keywords: Narratology, artistic time, psychological space, chronotope, subjective time, psychological prose, Shukur Kholmirezayev.

Introduction

In the development of Uzbek literature, the second half of the twentieth century stands out as a period marked by an intensified focus on the individual and the inner world of human beings. During this era, prose shifted away from broad panoramic depictions of social reality toward a deeper exploration of human psychology, spiritual crises, and internal conflicts. Shukur Kholmirezayev is considered one of the most prominent representatives of this aesthetic direction. In his short stories, the progression of events depends not on external action but on the characters' internal states. Consequently, artistic time and space in his works differ from those of classical realist literature, manifesting instead in subjective and psychological forms. This characteristic necessitates an analysis of Kholmirezayev's works from a narratological perspective.

Modern literary studies view narratology as an approach that examines literary texts not merely as sequences of events but as systems of narrative mechanisms. Within this framework, artistic time and space are central categories. Artistic time is not a simple reflection of real time; rather, it is a reconstructed form of events shaped by human consciousness—particularly through the perception of the character and the author. Therefore, time in literary texts becomes subjective, selective, and multilayered.

French narratologist Gérard Genette provided a systematic scholarly treatment of artistic time, distinguishing between the time of events and narrative time. According to Genette, “Narrative never reproduces the time of events exactly; instead, it transforms it.” This observation clearly illustrates the constructive nature of artistic time. Narrative time determines the order, perspective, and rhythm through which events are presented. As a result, literary texts achieve psychological depth, internal dramatism, and emotional tension.

Regarding artistic space, Mikhail Bakhtin’s theory of the chronotope holds particular methodological significance. Bakhtin defines the chronotope as “the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships in literature,” stating that “In the chronotope, time becomes thickened and takes on flesh, while space becomes charged with meaning” (Bakhtin, 1975). This definition indicates that time and space in literature do not function merely as background elements but serve as active semantic factors that shape the characters’ destinies.

In psychological prose especially, the chronotope is closely linked to characters’ inner experiences. Here, space transcends its role as a physical location and becomes psychological space. Psychological space represents a spiritual field transferred into the character’s inner world, where memory, emotion, internal monologue, and thought processes dominate. Through psychological space, the character’s inner conflicts, spiritual quests, and psychological states find artistic expression.

Artistic time occupies a central position in the narratological structure of Shukur Kholmirezayev’s short stories. For the writer, time is not a simple chronological sequence of events but a complex artistic category that expresses the characters’ inner worlds, emotional experiences, and spiritual searches. Consequently, achronological and subjective interpretations of time prevail in his prose. In many of Kholmirezayev’s stories, the time of events is brief and clearly limited—often

encompassing a single day, night, or even a moment. However, narrative time is not confined to these limits. Through memory, events connect to the past, and in some cases, internal reflections and moral conclusions extend the narrative toward the future. Thus, time in the literary text is organized achronologically rather than linearly.

From a narratological perspective, such a temporal structure indicates the author's focus on psychological states rather than plot progression. The sequence of events is relegated to the background, while the characters' inner experiences become the primary object of representation. In this way, time functions as a narrative mechanism that reveals the characters' inner worlds.

One of the defining features of Kholmirzayev's prose is the dominance of subjective time. In his stories, time often appears to "slow down" in connection with the characters' emotional states. During moments of psychological tension, suffering, and internal conflict, mere seconds or minutes expand into an artistic space encompassing an entire life experience. This phenomenon demonstrates the discrepancy between psychological time and objective, real time.

Through subjective time, the author conveys spiritual crises more deeply and effectively. The flow of time seems to halt, allowing the reader to enter directly into the character's inner world. Thus, subjective time emerges as a crucial artistic device that ensures psychological depth.

Memory and retrospection are also key tools in constructing artistic time in Kholmirzayev's stories. Through retrospection, characters reassess the past from the perspective of the present, assigning new meanings to past events. Time thereby acquires moral and psychological significance rather than serving as mere chronology. Retrospective scenes reveal the characters' inner worlds and justify their current emotional states, ensuring the dynamic and multilayered structure of artistic time.

Although space has traditionally been interpreted as a physical setting for events, modern literary studies—particularly narratology—approach it as a complex semantic field. In psychological prose, space functions primarily as an expression of the characters' internal states, emotions, and spiritual experiences.

In Kholmirzayev's stories, psychological space is a defining feature. Closed spaces—such as rooms, narrow courtyards, workplaces, and confined areas—serve as narrative tools that reveal characters' psychological conditions. These spaces

symbolically represent isolation, internal pressure, and separation from the external world. Within closed spaces, characters are deprived of movement and left alone with themselves, intensifying internal monologues, memories, and reflection.

From a narratological standpoint, closed space acts as a catalyst that activates internal conflict. External events diminish, while internal dramatism intensifies. Suffering, hesitation, and remorse become more acute within such spaces, making closed space an active artistic element rather than a mere backdrop. In contrast, open spaces—natural landscapes, wide fields, and rural environments—form an opposing semantic pole. Open space symbolizes psychological relief, inner balance, and spiritual purification. Through nature imagery, the author connects human psychology with harmony and tranquility. Narratologically, open space often triggers a turning point in the character's inner life, helping them escape internal tension and achieve self-awareness.

Psychological space in Kholmirezayev's prose is also closely linked to personal identity. Space becomes intertwined with memory, life experience, and national mentality. Specific locations transform into spiritual fields saturated with past experiences and moral values. Thus, space functions as a means of self-recognition and becomes an essential component of both personal and national identity. In Shukur Kholmirezayev's short stories, time and space jointly determine the characters' destinies. Through the chronotope, spiritual crises, internal conflicts, and moral choices are revealed. The rural chronotope, in particular, reflects the harmony between national consciousness, tradition, and personal fate.

This study aimed to identify the narratological characteristics of artistic time and psychological space in Kholmirezayev's short stories and to elucidate their functional role in revealing characters' inner worlds. The analysis demonstrates that time and space in his prose function not merely as traditional compositional elements but as leading narrative categories that express spiritual searches and psychological states.

The findings confirm that artistic time in Kholmirezayev's stories is predominantly subjective and achronological. While the time of events is often brief and limited, narrative time expands through memory, internal monologue, and reflection. Time thus becomes an aesthetic tool for revealing psychological states rather than advancing the plot.



Overall, narratological analysis deepens our understanding of the psychological essence, aesthetic innovation, and artistic vision of Shukur Kholmirezayev's prose. The unity of artistic time and psychological space—the chronotope—enables the author to portray human destiny, moral choices, and internal conflicts with depth and emotional impact. The results confirm narratological analysis as a productive and promising methodological approach for studying Uzbek psychological prose.

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