



THE EARLIEST SIGNS OF THE CHRONOTOPE IN UZBEK LITERATURE AND THE UNIQUENESS OF ITS INTERPRETATION

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ABOUT ARTICLE

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Abstract: It should be noted that at the beginning of the 20th century in Uzbek literature, Abdulla Qodiriy's novel "O'tgan kunlar" gained significant recognition and attracted readers' attention from the time of its publication. The chronotope forms in the novel manifest themselves in the events taking place between Tashkent and Margilan—on the road, in space, and in time. In particular, the meeting chronotope is depicted with a keen eye. The meeting of Otabek and Kumush comes vividly to life in the reader's imagination when this aspect is discussed.

INTRODUCTION

Many studies have been written about the artistic value of the novel. Among these, valuable insights and opinions have also been put forward regarding its chronotope forms. As Prof. U. Juraqulov notes: "In the novel 'O'tkan kunlar,' the Tashkent–Margilan road serves as a means connecting the destinies of the characters. Due to fate (trading was his destined occupation), Otabek ends up in Margilan. There, he finds his beloved, as well as rivals and friends. As Bakhtin said, his path intersects with the life paths of various people. However, unlike traditional European novels, the events of 'O'tkan kunlar' do not actually occur on the road. In this novel, the road serves only as an abstract, generalizing means that maintains the rhythm of space and time. With few exceptions, there are virtually no depictions of events taking place on the road. On this road, the characters do not meet, do not find or lose each other. The road merely functions as a route that leads them toward a specific goal, a specific space-time."

In addition to the cited source, it should be noted that the destiny that begins with the unique sincerity of Otabek and Kumush's meeting leads to the winds of fate and the unexpected life adventures of these two young people. The protagonists of the novel face various trials. These trials put the characters through many life tests along the Tashkent–Margilan route. The triumph of pure love, hope, and trust

in the hearts of the two young people leads to the discovery of a special “space” in the novel’s architecture:

“The gathering was held at Ziyo Shohichi’s house in honor of Otabek’s hospitality; in addition to the names mentioned above, Homid, Rahmat, and Hasanali were also present. After introductions, Otabek and the qutidor began to exchange glances frequently. Although the qutidor pursed his lips to ask Otabek something, Akram Haji and Ziyo Shohichi kept their conversation going. On their third exchange of glances, the qutidor smiled and asked:

– Do you remember me, bek?

Otabek looked at the qutidor attentively and replied:

– No, uncle.

– How old are you?

– Twenty-four...

The qutidor calculated something to himself and said:

– Indeed, you do not remember me, – he said. – When I was a qutidor in Tashkent, you were about five or six years old... It seems as if I was just in Tashkent yesterday, as if I was just a guest at your house... But in reality, fifteen or twenty years have passed, and you have grown into a young man. Life is like an arrow shot from a bow.”

In the brief meeting and conversation between Mirzakarim Qutidor and Otabek in the novel “O’tkan kunlar,” we observe how the details of space and time, depending on subsequent developments, lead to the complication and deepening of the narrative. The question about Otabek’s age and Homid’s teasing questions in the previous conversation are ways in which the author subtly introduces many underlying “issues.” In this short and seemingly trivial conversation, Homid begins to take a special interest in Otabek’s character, his reasons for wandering, and his future. The pivotal moment of the novel occurs precisely here: in the meeting chronotope, the author presents an ideal reality. Thus, Otabek’s arrival for trading and Mirzakarim Qutidor’s kind attitude toward him serve to quickly reveal the plot and move it toward its climax:

“— Have you been to our house?

— I have visited many times, said Qutidor. In those days, your grandfather was also alive.

Listening to their conversation, Hasanali, who was sitting aside, joined in:

— When your uncle used to come to our house, you were just a young boy, bek, he said. Your uncle would also take you to the palaces.

Otabek smiled shyly at Qutidor and replied:

— Unfortunately, I do not remember, he said. Qutidor wanted to say something else, but Akram Haji did not let him.

— What is our Haji brother busy with these days?

Otabek:

— He is staying with the Tashkent beg as a guest.”

At the heart of Otabek and Mirzakarim Qutidor’s conversation lie acquaintance, unity of purpose, and shared interests. Hasanali’s support of certain events, Homid’s attentive observation of the process, and the specific arrangement of objects and things also acquire a certain reality and weight. “Abdulla Qodiriy, in his works, studies the settings of events down to the smallest details and describes them tirelessly (just recall the description of Qutidor’s yard). Moreover, the writer thoroughly studies his sources and, if he plans to write about a particular place, visits it several times; he pays attention even to the smallest items—for example, if there is a tree there, he observes whether it is old or new, and if

there are any birds, he even notes how they perch. 'In general, small details inspire trust in the reader,' the writer emphasizes. In this sense, there is no doubt that Abdulla Qodiriy visited the Kokand Palace several times and walked around its perimeter."

Thus, the most important aspects of life are embedded in concise details. The reality that unfolds within these details reveals the main character's goals and aspirations, as well as the writer's talent, skill, and creative power. In particular, artistic space and time create a large "field" for the writer to construct unique images. At the same time, the events unfold so smoothly that the unexpected qualities of conflicts, struggles, and confrontations serve to present the reader with ever-new "formulas" of life. From this perspective, we see a modern approach to fully interpreting the criteria of artistic prose, especially in Uzbek prose and novel writing at the beginning of the 20th century. This allows us to consider the mutual influence of Western and Eastern literary traditions, the fluidity of plots, and the organic nature of events. The result is that, on the basis of the artistic chronotope, the phenomena of the world and human beings are also revealed:

"The palace was calm, and it was midnight. Hasanali opened the long twisted lock of the room, went inside, lit a candle, made Otabek's bed, and waited for him to enter. But for some reason, Otabek did not come in. Although the door of the room was open, the candle was lit, and the bed was ready, he stood leaning against the pillar as if unaware of all this."

Hasanali waited for quite a while, and when Otabek still did not enter, he left the room and said: "I have made your bed, bek."

The bek entered his room and sat down next to the made bed. Hasanali was waiting for him to undress and lie down, but Otabek just sat and began to think deeply about something.

His behavior—standing outside as if he had lost his senses, leaning against the pillar, and now sitting by his bed, lost in thought—aroused suspicion in Hasanali's heart. It was not only this instance, but there had been other times that had made Hasanali suspicious. However, this particular incident renewed his earlier doubts and now made him even more anxious and uneasy. As he closely observed Otabek's every thought, he asked: "Don't you need anything from me?"

It is in this chronotope of thought and love, under the relentless pressure of time, that we sense Otabek's state—breathing, almost unknowingly, in a mysterious emotional state. Hasanali paid close attention to Otabek's long and forgetful reveries, striving to understand what was truly happening beneath the surface. The forms of the chronotope here open the way for further developments in the novel's events. Now, Otabek is not merely a merchant or a traveler; he reveals himself as a lover who, deep inside, begins to look at life with a new light. The emotional experiences reflected in his face, actions, and thoughtful moods made Hasanali firmly believe: "The bek has become a lover." At this moment, Hasanali interpreted the spiritual transformations of his merchant-master as best he could and tried not to intrude upon Otabek's thoughts. As a result, his suspicion and doubt gradually gave way to emotional and conscious understanding, realizing that he needed to seek the reasons for Otabek's passionate heart. In this context, Otabek, unknowingly, takes on the role of a truly enamored lover. No matter how much he tries to keep it secret, his face and movements betray him, and only a devoted companion like Hasanali could notice this. The transformation of the merchant's excuse into the rank of a lover marks a turning point in the concept of the novel—demonstrating the coherence of Qodiriy's creativity, inner love, and the consistency of the plot. This sincere and gentle depiction takes place before the more complex events in Otabek's fate occur in the introduction of the novel. After all, the literary chronotope here reflects not only influences from English prose, but also modes inspired by the experiences of

Arabic, Turkish, and European novelists. The writer focused on these emotional nuances, knowing that literary depiction must be enriched by national mental characteristics and that, in revealing characters, one must rely on Uzbek customs and traditions. Qodiriy managed to achieve this impressively with his own skill.

“It is well known that J. Zaydon was nourished by Western European literature, particularly the works of writers like W. Scott and V. Hugo. Historically, from the second half of the 19th century, there was increasing contact between the West and the East. During this period, European colonial expansion into the East began, and as a result, some examples of Western literature also began to enter Arab countries. From 1888 onwards, three novels by Alexandre Dumas were published in Lebanon in Najab Haddid's translation. Later, in the ‘Majallat Arabi’ journal, the works of Western European literary classics were published regularly. This, in turn, influenced local writers, including J. Zaydon himself. Later, J. Zaydon, inspired by W. Scott, wrote 19 historical-chronicle novels.”

This very reference alone demonstrates that the literary chronotope had a broad influence on the literature of European, Arab, and Turkish peoples, and that the conceptualization of the novel at a new stage was significantly expanding and taking shape.

These interpretations, which began as a unique conceptual literary work in A. Qodiriy's “O'tkan kunlar,” were later developed further in the work of other Jadid thinkers. The main characteristic of this movement was that the Jadids broadened the scope of each work, paid serious attention to artistic value, space and time, and sought to ensure its timelessness. Thus, the writer rightly acknowledges that his conditional place and role in literature are inspired by European and other national novelists. With complete confidence, it can be said that they also focused on the relationship between word and reality in their interpretations. At the same time, inspired by his own passionate talent, the writer managed to develop his own style, concept, and skill. All of this continues to be studied today by scholars and researchers. As a result of such research, it is encouraging that writers in the years of independence are also drawing inspiration from the flourishing era of 20th-century English prose and are paying great attention to renewing modes of style and form. Indeed, it becomes clear that literary art does not develop by itself and that the forms of the chronotope are diverse and should not be forgotten.

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