

A COMPARATIVE CHRONOTOPE ANALYSIS OF TIME AND SPACE IN THE FANTASTIC AND SURREAL WORLDS OF KHUDOYBERDI TUKHTABAEV AND LEWIS CARROLL

Sa'dullayeva Gulnoza Quvondiq qizi

Doctoral student, Tashkent State Transport University

Email: sgq151226@gmail.com Tel: +998 95 059 26 11

ORCID number: <https://orcid.org/0009-0002-6981-6801>

Abstract

The article examines the artistic organisation of time and space in the fantastic worlds created by the Uzbek children's writer Kh. Tukhtabaev and the English writer L. Kerroll. The study is based on a comparative analysis of Kh. Tukhtabaev's *Riding a Yellow Genie* and *The Death of the Yellow Giant* and L. Kerroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass*. The theoretical framework draws primarily on M. M. Bakhtin's concept of the chronotope and is supplemented by T. Todorov's theory of the fantastic, V. Propp's structural approach to the folktale, and Y. M. Lotman's theory of artistic space and spatial boundaries. The analysis focuses on the ways in which the protagonists cross from everyday reality into fantastic space, how time functions after this transition, how the fantastic world is spatially organised, and how the child protagonist interacts with the transformed environment.

Keywords: Chronotope, fantastic literature, children's literature, time, space, fantastic-surreal world, threshold, comparative analysis.

Introduction

Time and space are among the basic elements through which a literary work constructs its fictional reality. Events cannot exist independently of the places in which they occur or the temporal sequence through which they develop. In fantastic literature, however, this relationship becomes particularly important because the transition from the ordinary world to the fantastic often involves a simultaneous transformation of both time and space.

The concept of the chronotope, introduced into literary studies by M. M. Bakhtin, provides an effective framework for examining this relationship. M. M. Bakhtin understands the chronotope as the artistic unity of temporal and spatial relations. From this perspective, space is not simply a location in which an event happens, while time is not merely a chronological measure. Their combination influences the movement of characters, the structure of events and the reader's perception of the fictional world.

This principle is especially relevant to children's fantastic literature. A child's movement into an unfamiliar world usually changes more than the geographical location of the protagonist.

The rules governing distance, movement, duration and causality may also change. Consequently, the fantastic world becomes a space in which the child's ordinary understanding of reality is either challenged or developed.

The prose of Kh. Tukhtabaev and L. Kerroll provides an interesting basis for such a comparison. The writers represent different literary and cultural traditions, yet both make the child protagonist the centre of a fantastic narrative. In L. Kerroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass*, Alice encounters spaces in which ordinary logic is repeatedly reversed. Size becomes unstable, familiar objects acquire unexpected functions, movement does not always produce expected results, and chronological time can cease to operate according to ordinary rules.

In Kh. Tukhtabaev's *Riding a Yellow Genie* and *The Death of the Yellow Giant*, fantastic elements are likewise introduced into the protagonist's everyday experience. Magical objects and extraordinary events enlarge the possibilities of the fictional world. However, the fantastic is more closely connected with the protagonist's actions and movement through a sequence of adventures.

The present study therefore focuses not simply on the presence of fantasy in the works of the two writers but on the organisation of the fantastic world itself. The main question is how time and space are structured in these works and what role this structure plays in representing the child protagonist.

The study pays particular attention to four aspects: the threshold between ordinary and fantastic reality, the treatment of narrative time, the organisation of fantastic space, and the protagonist's relationship with that space. These aspects make it possible to identify both common features and significant differences between the two literary models.

Literature Review

The theoretical foundation of the research is M. M. Bakhtin's concept of the chronotope. In his discussion of literary forms, M. M. Bakhtin identifies several important chronotopic structures, including the road and the threshold. The road is associated with movement, encounters and changes that occur during a journey. The threshold, on the other hand, marks a moment of transition and often carries a sense of crisis or transformation.

The threshold is particularly significant in fantastic literature. When a child leaves an ordinary environment and enters a fantastic one, the transition itself becomes part of the narrative meaning. Y. M. Lotman's theory of artistic space is useful in this regard because it draws attention to boundaries separating different semantic areas of a literary world. Crossing such a boundary may alter the protagonist's position and change the rules according to which the fictional space operates.

T. Todorov's theory of the fantastic provides another important perspective. T. Todorov associates the fantastic with hesitation between natural and supernatural explanations of an unusual event. This concept is particularly useful in the analysis of L. Kerroll's fiction because Alice repeatedly attempts to understand extraordinary events using the categories of her ordinary experience. The narrative, however, does not always provide a stable explanation.

The structural theory of V. Propp is also relevant, particularly when examining the organisation of adventure in Kh. Tukhtabaev's prose. V. Propp's analysis of the wonder tale demonstrates that traditional narratives frequently organise the hero's experience through movement away from the initial situation, encounters and trials, and eventual return. Although a modern literary work cannot simply be reduced to this structure, the model helps identify the connection between physical movement and narrative development.

R. Jackson's interpretation of fantasy as a mode that can challenge established categories also contributes to the analysis of L. Kerroll's works. B. Attebery's understanding of fantasy as a flexible literary category and F. Mendlesohn's classification of fantasy rhetorics provide additional ways of discussing the transition between ordinary and fantastic worlds.

The present study does not attempt to apply all these theories independently. Instead, they are used selectively to explain particular features of the texts. M. M. Bakhtin's chronotope remains the central analytical concept, while the theories of T. Todorov, V. Propp and Y. M. Lotman are used to clarify the nature of the fantastic threshold, narrative progression and spatial organisation.

Materials and Methods

The primary material consists of four works: Kh. Tukhtabaev's *Riding a Yellow Genie* and *The Death of the Yellow Giant*, and L. Kerroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass*. The works were examined comparatively, with attention to episodes in which ordinary spatial and temporal relations are changed.

The analysis follows four main parameters.

First, the study examines threshold situations, that is, moments when the protagonist passes from ordinary reality into a fantastic environment or when an ordinary environment itself becomes fantastic.

Second, attention is given to narrative time. The study considers whether time remains linear, whether its progression is interrupted, and whether the narrative creates situations in which ordinary temporal relations lose their stability.

Third, the research analyses fantastic space. Particular attention is paid to the relationship between separate locations, the direction of movement, spatial boundaries and the degree to which the protagonist can orient himself or herself within the fictional world.

Fourth, the study examines the relationship between the protagonist and space. This includes the protagonist's ability to understand, influence or change the surrounding environment.

The research employs comparative literary analysis and close reading. The comparison is not based on the assumption that the works of the two writers are identical in structure. Instead, similarities are considered as points of contact, while differences are treated as evidence of different ways of constructing the fantastic world.

Results and Discussion

1. The Threshold as the Beginning of the Fantastic Experience

The movement from ordinary reality into a fantastic environment is one of the most noticeable common features in the works under consideration.

In Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, Alice's encounter with the White Rabbit prepares the transition before she physically enters Wonderland. The rabbit behaves in a way that immediately differs from the ordinary world: it speaks, wears human clothing and carries a watch. This unusual image is followed by Alice's descent into the rabbit hole.

The rabbit hole is important from a chronotopic perspective because the descent does not function like an ordinary fall. Its duration is unexpectedly extended, and Alice encounters familiar household objects during the descent. The spatial situation is therefore already different from the rules of everyday reality before she reaches Wonderland.

The transition in Through the Looking-Glass is constructed differently. Alice passes through a mirror and enters a space that resembles her familiar surroundings while simultaneously functioning according to different rules. The mirror therefore does not merely separate two places. It establishes a relationship between an ordinary space and its transformed counterpart. In Kh. Tukhtabaev's Riding a Yellow Genie, the fantastic element is associated with a magical object. The cap does not necessarily transport the protagonist into a completely separate universe in the same way as Alice's rabbit hole or mirror. Instead, it introduces extraordinary possibilities into the existing world.

This is an important distinction. L. Kerroll tends to create a noticeable spatial break between the familiar and the fantastic, whereas Kh. Tukhtabaev allows the fantastic to become incorporated into the protagonist's existing environment.

In Riding a Yellow Genie, movement is particularly important. The fantastic element is connected with the journey itself, and the protagonist's experience develops through movement from one place to another. Consequently, the transition does not simply end when the fantastic world is reached. It becomes the beginning of a longer process.

From the perspective of M. M. Bakhtin's theory, the difference can be described as a contrast between a threshold that separates and a threshold that initiates movement. L. Kerroll's threshold marks a strong disruption of the ordinary world, while Kh. Tukhtabaev's fantastic device more directly becomes part of the protagonist's subsequent journey.

2. The Transformation of Time

The treatment of time is one of the clearest differences between the two writers.

L. Kerroll repeatedly challenges the reader's expectations about chronological order. In Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, the Mad Tea-Party is a particularly striking example. The characters' relationship with Time does not correspond to ordinary experience, and the situation at the tea table appears to be permanently fixed.

The significance of this episode goes beyond humour. Time ceases to function as a neutral measure of events. Instead, it becomes part of the absurd logic of Wonderland. The characters cannot simply rely on the assumption that one moment follows another in a predictable way.

Alice's changes in size also contribute to this transformation. Her physical state changes rapidly, and the changes affect her understanding of herself and her surroundings. Time, body and space are therefore connected in a way that differs from ordinary experience.

Through the Looking-Glass continues this tendency. The Red Queen's country provides a paradoxical relationship between movement and temporal progress. Alice may move with considerable effort and yet remain in essentially the same position. The relationship between movement, time and result is consequently reversed.

In Kh. Tukhtabaev's works, time generally retains a stronger connection with the development of events. The protagonist encounters one situation, responds to it and proceeds to another. The fantastic element changes the possibilities available to the protagonist, but it does not normally destroy the basic sequence of events.

This difference can be expressed in terms of narrative function. In L. Kerroll, distorted time often becomes a means of questioning the reliability of ordinary logic. In Kh. Tukhtabaev, fantastic events generally remain connected with the progression of the adventure.

Therefore, although both writers transform ordinary reality, they use temporal transformation differently. For L. Kerroll, time itself becomes one of the categories placed under question. For Kh. Tukhtabaev, time more often supports the development of the protagonist's experience.

3. Fantastic Space: Labyrinth and Road

The organisation of space makes the difference between the two authors particularly visible.

Wonderland does not provide Alice with a stable system of orientation. She moves from one location to another, but the relationship between these locations is often unexpected. The Caucus-Race, the Duchess's kitchen, the Mad Tea-Party, the Queen's garden and the trial scene each create a different spatial and social environment.

These locations are not simply stages in a conventional journey. Alice does not acquire a single set of rules that would allow her to understand the whole world. Instead, every new environment introduces another contradiction.

For this reason, Wonderland may be described as having a labyrinthine chronotope. The term does not necessarily mean that Alice is physically trapped in a maze. Rather, it refers to a space in which orientation is difficult because the relationship between cause and effect, movement and result, and familiar and unfamiliar categories remains unstable.

The spatial organisation of *Through the Looking-Glass* is more visibly structured. The chessboard provides a system through which Alice moves. Yet this apparent order does not make the world more familiar. The rules of the chessboard create another form of artificial organisation that differs from ordinary spatial movement.

Kh. Tukhtabaev's fantastic worlds demonstrate a stronger connection with the road chronotope. The protagonist moves through a sequence of events and locations, and this movement contributes to the development of the narrative.

The importance of the road in Kh. Tukhtabaev's prose lies in the relationship between movement and experience. A new location usually means a new encounter, a new problem or a new opportunity for action. Spatial movement therefore has narrative consequences.

This creates a distinction between the two models. L. Kerroll's spatial movement is often associative: one strange situation leads to another without necessarily producing cumulative progress. Kh. Tukhtabaev's movement is more often cumulative: the experience acquired in one situation becomes relevant to subsequent events.

The contrast can therefore be formulated in terms of the spatial organisation of the two authors' fantastic worlds: L. Kerroll constructs a predominantly labyrinthine and associative space, in which the protagonist's movement leads from one unpredictable situation to another, whereas Kh. Tukhtabaev tends to organise fantastic space around the road, where movement is more sequential and cumulative, and each new stage of the journey contributes to the protagonist's experience. Although this distinction is not absolute, it provides a useful framework for understanding the different functions of fantastic space in the works of the two writers.

4. The Protagonist's Relationship with Fantastic Space

The way the child protagonist responds to the fantastic environment is closely connected with its chronotopic structure.

Alice enters Wonderland without a clear understanding of its rules. She attempts to use familiar knowledge to interpret what she sees. She thinks about geography, remembers lessons, reflects on her identity and tries to make sense of changes in her physical size.

These attempts are significant because the narrative repeatedly shows their limitations. Alice is an active character, but she cannot fully control the world around her. She must respond to situations whose rules are frequently beyond her expectations.

The fantastic space therefore becomes a place of interpretation. Alice's task is not simply to reach a destination. She must continually decide how to understand what is happening.

The protagonists of Kh. Tukhtabaev's works are positioned somewhat differently. The magical elements provide opportunities for action. The protagonist is able to make choices and experience their consequences. The fantastic environment therefore becomes a space in which personal qualities can be revealed through action.

This does not mean that Kh. Tukhtabaev's fantastic world is simply a moral testing ground, nor that L. Kerroll's world has no connection with personal development. The difference concerns the dominant narrative emphasis.

In L. Kerroll's works, the protagonist's relationship with space is primarily characterised by interpretation and adaptation. In Kh. Tukhtabaev's works, it is more closely connected with action and experience.

Consequently, the chronotope affects the representation of the child character. The labyrinthine environment places Alice in a position where she must question her assumptions, while the road-based environment gives Kh. Tukhtabaev's protagonist a more direct opportunity to act within the narrative world.

5. Comparative Interpretation

The findings can be summarised through the following comparative model:

Aspect	L. Kerroll	Kh. Tukhtabaev
Main transition	Rabbit hole and mirror	Magical object and journey
Spatial boundary	More clearly disruptive	More permeable
Time	Unstable and paradoxical	Mainly sequential
Space	Labyrinthine and inverted	Road-based and episodic
Movement	Associative	Cumulative
Protagonist's role	Interpreter and responder	Active participant
Main function of fantasy	Questions familiar categories	Creates opportunities for experience
Dominant effect	Uncertainty and transformation	Adventure and development

The comparison demonstrates that the similarities between the writers are strongest at the structural level. Both place a child character in an environment where ordinary spatial and temporal expectations no longer function in their usual form.

The differences become clearer in the subsequent development of the narrative. L. Kerroll's fantastic world tends to preserve instability. The protagonist can move through it, but she cannot easily impose a stable order upon it. Kh. Tukhtabaev's fantastic world, while also containing extraordinary events, is more closely connected with a developing sequence of experiences.

The two models can therefore be understood as different uses of the fantastic chronotope. In one, the transformed world challenges the protagonist's system of understanding; in the other, it becomes an environment in which the protagonist gains experience through movement and action.

This distinction is particularly significant in children's literature because the representation of space is closely connected with the representation of childhood. A child character who enters an unstable world experiences reality primarily as a problem of interpretation. A child character who travels through a sequence of fantastic spaces experiences reality as a field of action and discovery.

Conclusion

The comparative examination of Kh. Tukhtabaev's *Riding a Yellow Genie* and *The Death of the Yellow Giant* and L. Kerroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass* demonstrates that time and space are central to the construction of their fantastic worlds.

Both writers use a movement beyond ordinary reality as an important narrative device. The rabbit hole and mirror in L. Kerroll's works and the magical elements in Kh. Tukhtabaev's prose perform different versions of the same broad function: they allow the child protagonist to enter an environment in which familiar relationships are transformed.

The main difference appears in the subsequent organisation of this environment. L. Kerroll constructs a chronotope in which space is unstable, movement may become paradoxical and time can lose its ordinary continuity. His fantastic world therefore places the protagonist in a

situation of continuous interpretation. The child must respond to a reality whose rules cannot always be predicted from previous experience.

Kh. Tukhtabaev, in contrast, connects fantastic space more strongly with the chronotope of the road. Movement through space is accompanied by encounters, difficulties and experiences that contribute to the development of the narrative. The fantastic element is not separated completely from the protagonist's ordinary world but becomes part of his experience and action.

Thus, the comparison suggests two dominant models of fantastic chronotope: the labyrinthine model associated with instability, inversion and uncertainty, and the road model associated with movement, experience and cumulative development.

The significance of this distinction lies not merely in the description of two different narrative techniques. It also shows how the organisation of time and space influences the representation of childhood. In L. Kerroll's works, the child encounters a world that constantly questions established assumptions. In Kh. Tukhtabaev's works, the child is more directly involved in a journey through which experience is accumulated.

The chronotope therefore functions as more than a background for fantastic events. It determines the rhythm of the narrative, the nature of the protagonist's movement and the manner in which the child encounters reality. A comparative chronotopic approach consequently provides a productive way of examining similarities and differences between children's fantastic literature belonging to different cultural and literary traditions.

Further research may extend this analysis to a larger corpus of Uzbek and English children's fantasy and may examine how particular lexical, syntactic and narrative features contribute to the construction of fantastic time and space.

References

1. Attebery, B. (1992). *Strategies of Fantasy*. Indiana University Press.
2. Bakhtin, M. M. (1981). *Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel*. In M. Holquist (Ed.), C. Emerson & M. Holquist (Trans.), *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* (pp. 84–258). University of Texas Press.
3. Doležel, L. (1998). *Heterocosmica: Fiction and Possible Worlds*. Johns Hopkins University Press.
4. Jackson, R. (1981). *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion*. Methuen.
5. Lotman, Y. M. (1977). *The Structure of the Artistic Text*. University of Michigan, Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures.
6. Lotman, Y. M. (1990). *Universe of the Mind: A Semiotic Theory of Culture*. I. B. Tauris.
7. Mendlesohn, F. (2008). *Rhetorics of Fantasy*. Wesleyan University Press.
8. Nikolajeva, M. (1988). *The Insignificance of Time: "Mio, My Son" and a Swedish Way of Treating Time*. *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*, 13(4), 167–171.
9. Nikolajeva, M. (2000). *From Mythic to Linear: Time in Children's Literature*. Scarecrow Press.

10. Propp, V. (1968). *Morphology of the Folktale* (L. Scott, Trans., 2nd ed.). University of Texas Press.
11. Ryan, M.-L. (1991). *Possible Worlds, Artificial Intelligence, and Narrative Theory*. Indiana University Press.
12. Todorov, T. (1975). *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre* (R. Howard, Trans.). Cornell University Press.
13. Zoran, G. (1984). Towards a Theory of Space in Narrative. *Poetics Today*, 5(2), 309–335.