

Disrupted temporality as a mechanism in the construction of psychological chronotope

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Abstract: The relationship between time and consciousness has become one of the most significant concerns in modern literary studies. Within narrative discourse, temporal organization frequently moves beyond linear progression and enters the sphere of subjective perception. This article explores disrupted temporality as one of the principal mechanisms involved in the construction of psychological chronotope. Special attention is given to the ways in which fragmented temporal sequences, recollective narration, and emotional shifts reshape narrative structure. The study argues that temporal disruption enables literary texts to represent inner experience with greater precision by transforming external chronology into an individualized temporal reality. As a result, psychological chronotope emerges as a dynamic intersection of emotional consciousness and narrative form.

Keywords: psychological chronotope, disrupted temporality, narrative structure, subjective time, literary consciousness

Introduction

Time in literary narrative is rarely limited to its objective chronological function. In many works of fiction, temporal movement becomes inseparable from the internal world of characters, reflecting memory, anticipation, trauma, and emotional fluctuation (Ricoeur, 1984). The concept of chronotope, introduced by Bakhtin, provides a theoretical framework for understanding how temporal and spatial dimensions operate within literary texts (Bakhtin, 1981). While Bakhtin primarily emphasized the unity of time and space in narrative composition, later literary criticism expanded this idea toward psychological interpretation (Morson & Emerson, 1990).

Psychological chronotope differs from conventional chronotope because it is shaped not only by physical setting but also by mental perception. In such narratives, time ceases to function as a stable sequence of events and instead becomes subjective, unstable, and deeply personal (Genette, 1980). One of the most effective means of producing this effect is disrupted temporality.

Disrupted temporality refers to the intentional disturbance of chronological order through flashbacks, anticipatory moments, repetition, and temporal compression (Currie, 2007). These techniques reveal how characters experience time internally

rather than externally. Therefore, examining disrupted temporality allows a deeper understanding of how psychological chronotope is constructed in literary discourse.

Theoretical Background of Psychological Chronotope

The notion of chronotope has traditionally been associated with the interaction of time and space in narrative (Bakhtin, 1981). However, in psychological prose these categories acquire additional complexity. Time becomes a reflection of consciousness, while space often acquires symbolic meaning connected with emotional states (Zoran, 1984). Psychological chronotope can be understood as a narrative model in which external reality is filtered through the inner world of a character. In this context, temporal order becomes less dependent on historical sequence and more dependent on mental association (Fludernik, 1996). The past may suddenly invade the present, and future possibilities may shape current perception. Such temporal fluidity creates a literary representation of consciousness that resembles actual human thought (Humphrey, 1954).

Because human memory itself is nonlinear, literature frequently reproduces this condition through fragmented temporal patterns (Poulet, 1972). Consequently, disrupted temporality functions not simply as a stylistic device but as an essential principle of psychological narration.

Disrupted Temporality and Subjective Experience

The disruption of temporal order often mirrors the instability of human consciousness. Characters who experience emotional conflict rarely perceive time in a regular manner. Anxiety can prolong a single moment, while grief can collapse years into a brief recollection (Poulet, 1972). In such cases, temporal structure becomes a direct expression of psychological condition.

Narrative interruption frequently occurs through memory. A present action may evoke an earlier experience that reshapes the meaning of the current moment. This movement between temporal layers allows the reader to perceive events from within the consciousness of the character rather than from an external perspective (Herman, 2002).

Similarly, anticipatory narration projects consciousness into the future. Fear, desire, and uncertainty can transform imagined events into narrative realities (Currie, 2007). This blending of temporal dimensions demonstrates that psychological time is not measured by clocks but by emotional intensity.

Through these disruptions, narrative time acquires depth. It no longer serves merely as a framework for events; instead, it becomes part of character construction itself (Richardson, 2002).

Emotional Structure of Narrative Time

Emotional states play a decisive role in shaping psychological temporality. Every strong emotion modifies the way time is experienced. Joy often shortens perceived

duration, whereas suffering can extend it (Ricoeur, 1985). Literature reflects this phenomenon by altering the rhythm of narration. Writers may slow narration to emphasize moments of emotional significance or accelerate it to suggest psychological avoidance (Toolan, 2001). Such variation in narrative pace contributes to the formation of psychological chronotope. The reader experiences temporal movement in a way that corresponds to the emotional life of the character. This emotional restructuring of time distinguishes psychological prose from traditional realism. Rather than reproducing objective chronology, the text reconstructs lived experience (Bal, 1997). As a result, the chronotope becomes internalized, transforming narrative space into a mental landscape.

Conclusion

Disrupted temporality represents one of the central mechanisms in the construction of psychological chronotope. By destabilizing chronological sequence, literary narrative gains the ability to portray consciousness in a more authentic form (Fludernik, 1996). Memory, anticipation, emotional intensity, and temporal fragmentation collectively reshape the relationship between time and narrative.

The analysis demonstrates that psychological chronotope is formed not only through the connection of time and space but also through their transformation within subjective consciousness (Bakhtin, 1981). For this reason, the study of disrupted temporality remains essential for understanding the deeper structures of psychological narrative.

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