

Political Chronotopes as Propaganda Tools in Soviet Uzbek Novels /
Cronotopos políticos como ferramentas de propaganda em romances
soviéticos uzbeques

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ABSTRACT

Literature is an essential tool that reflects and shapes social dynamics. In many contexts, literary works have served propagandistic purposes by transmitting dominant ideologies. Socialist realism, a literary movement that emerged in the early 20th century in Soviet countries such as Uzbekistan, aimed to represent social problems realistically and advocate for systemic change. Within this framework, individual experiences are contextualized within broader social structures, giving voice to various segments of society. Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of the chronotope, which explores the interplay of time and space in narrative, provides a valuable lens for analyzing how literature encodes ideological meaning. Political chronotopes, in particular, reveal the social and political conditions of their time and facilitate the dissemination of propaganda. In Soviet Uzbek novels shaped by socialist realism, themes such as class struggle, collective identity, and social transformation are expressed through spatial-temporal constructs like the kolkhoz, prison, and public square. These chronotopes not only reinforce ideological discourse but also demonstrate literature's role as a political instrument.

KEYWORDS: Uzbek Novel; Chronotope; Propaganda; Socialist Realism

RESUMO

A literatura é uma ferramenta essencial que reflete e molda a dinâmica social. Em muitos contextos, as obras literárias foram utilizadas como meio de propaganda para transmitir ideologias dominantes. O realismo socialista, desenvolvido principalmente no início do século XX em países membros da União Soviética, como o Uzbequistão, visava abordar problemas sociais de forma realista e promover a transformação sistêmica. Nessa corrente, as experiências individuais são avaliadas dentro de estruturas sociais amplas, permitindo que as vozes de diferentes camadas da sociedade sejam ouvidas. O conceito de cronotopo, desenvolvido por Mikhail Bakhtin, examina como tempo e espaço se entrelaçam nas obras literárias e como contribuem para a construção de sentido. Em especial, os cronotopos políticos são fundamentais para refletir as condições sociopolíticas de uma época e transmitir de forma eficaz as ideologias propagandísticas. Nos romances do realismo socialista da literatura uzbeque soviética, os temas de crítica social, conflito de classes, consciência coletiva e apelos à mudança social revelam como o tempo e o espaço são moldados pelo discurso ideológico. Assim, os temas políticos são apresentados de maneira concreta e eficaz por meio desses cronotopos, revelando a função política da literatura.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Romance uzbeque; Cronotopo; Propaganda; Realismo socialista

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Introduction

Social conditions, historical events, and sociological factors are essential for creating literary works. Writers reflect these artistically through memory, revealing their cultural identity and ideological world (Cetinkaya, 2020, p. 2). In literature, time, space, culture, and ideology are intertwined; each work emerges from the social, political, and economic context in which it was born. Socialist realism aims to transcend personal emotion, expose social injustice, and serve as an ideological tool. Art, in this view, critiques the system, reveals class exploitation, and promotes change. Propaganda thus renders literature both descriptive and transformative, fostering class consciousness and collective struggle.

Socialist realism emerged in the 1920s and was systematically adopted in Uzbekistan from 1937 onward (Acik, 2012, p. 7), aiming to address social issues and build a socialist order through idealized “savior” heroes. This movement, especially after the October Revolution¹ and the Russian entry into Turkestan, imposed an ideological mission on writers (Mirzayev-Daniyarov, 1978, p. 24). Uzbek Soviet literature, aligning with the Russian School, embraced Soviet reality as the foundation of revolutionary literature. Under Gorky’s influence, writers developed the socialist realist method and produced ideologically driven works (Yokubov-Mamacanov, 1971, p. 12).

Analyzing Uzbek socialist realism is key to understanding how ideology and propaganda were shaped outside of Russia. Socialist values, glorification of labor, and the tension between tradition and modernity are core themes. Soviet novels often depict class struggle and collective identity through ideological spatial elements like kolkhozes,² meeting halls, and public squares, while prisons, corridors, and bribery scenes portray individual conflict. These spaces represent social transformation phases, shaped by revolution, war, and regime restructuring.

¹ It is the socialist revolution that took place under the leadership of the Bolsheviks on November 7, 1917 (October 25, 1917 according to the Julian calendar) and laid the foundations of the Soviet Union by overthrowing the Tsarist regime in Russia.

² In the Soviet Union, state-organized agricultural production cooperatives in which farmers worked collectively were popularized in the late 1920s and early 1930s as part of Joseph Stalin’s policies of forced collectivization.

Although chronotope theory (Vittorio, 2013, pp. 332–341) may seem at odds with socialist realism, it plays a crucial role in understanding it. While socialist realism foregrounds class conflict, Bakhtin sees chronotopes as revealing worldviews through time and space (Bakhtin, 1981, pp. 109–110). Chronotopes help trace ideological critique and personal transformation by integrating individual experience with historical-spatial dynamics.

This article explores how chronotopes function as ideological tools in Uzbek Soviet novels by revealing the spatial-temporal structures that embed propaganda. Focusing on four key Works—Muso Oybek’s³ *Qutlug Qon* [Holy Blood], Utkir Hoshimov’s⁴ *Nur Borki Soya Bor* [There is Light, There is Shadow], Askad Muhtor’s⁵ *Opa-singillar* [Sisters], and Said Ahmad’s⁶ *Jimjitlik* [Silence]—the analysis examines literary chronotopes such as the kolkhoz, prison, corridor, meeting halls, and public squares, and the corruption-bribery chronotope, which shape collective identity and reflect ideological tensions. Each of these authors employed socialist realism (Bilir-Yilmaz, 2023, p. 258) as a creative and ideological framework to depict class struggle, promote collectivism, and narrate Uzbek society’s transformation. Drawing on Bakhtin’s theory, the study argues that the intersection of time and space reflects socialist ideals while also exposing contradictions and ideological ruptures. Combining close reading with historical context, it shows how chronotopes both enable state messaging and reveal its failures.

The four novels were selected for their thematic range and representation of different historical stages of Uzbek Soviet literature. *Qutlug Qon* explores pre-revolutionary class conflict; *Nur Borki Soya Bor* critiques the late socialist period; *Opa-singillar* examines Soviet ideology’s impact on women; and *Jimjitlik* reflects individual conflict with a repressive state. These authors engaged with ideology in distinct ways,

³ Muso Oybek (1905–1968) – Poet, novelist and academic. He dealt with historical and social issues in his works.

⁴ Utkir Hoshimov (1941–2013) is one of the important writers of modern Uzbek literature. He deals with human psychology, family and social change in his works. He is known for his simple and impressive style.

⁵ Askad Muhtor (1920–1997) is one of the important writers and poets of Uzbek literature. He dealt with social change, human psychology and historical issues in his novels, stories and poems. He has gained an important place in Uzbek literature with his powerful narrative and deep observations.

⁶ Said Ahmad (1920–2007) is one of the important writers, playwrights and journalists of Uzbek literature. He included social issues, human relations and humorous elements in his stories and novels. He reached a wide audience with his simple and fluent style and made important contributions to Uzbek literature.

contributing significantly to their literary era. Their works allow for comparative analysis of chronotopes and their ideological functions in narratives.

1 The Relationship between Literature and Propaganda

The relationship between art and propaganda is longstanding, dating back to ancient empires that used visual symbols to assert power. While art's autonomy was emphasized in the 19th century, the 20th century revived debates on whether art loses its aesthetic value when used for propaganda (Clark, 2011, pp. 13–15). These debates often hinge on how both terms are defined and contextualized.

Clark (2011, p. 11) describes art as “an activity that aims to reach truth, beauty and freedom.” This definition is based on the romantic idea that art is an autonomous field and finds it contradictory to mention propaganda and art together. However, those who view art as a social tool argue that political messaging and aesthetic value can coexist. What distinguishes propaganda from politically engaged art is intent: propaganda deliberately sacrifices aesthetic concerns to manipulate, whereas literature may engage with ideology while preserving artistic merit (Akçay, 2015, p. 45).

Critics differ on this boundary. Orwell observed in the 1930s that literature had become ideologically charged, warning that aesthetic integrity was being undermined by political discipline (Orwell, 1941). Russian Formalists, such as Shklovsky, stressed literature's aesthetic independence and its power to defamiliarize perception (Shklovski, 1995, p. 72). Conversely, Marxist thinkers emphasized literature's ideological nature but maintained that political ideas need not diminish artistic quality (Eagleton, 1989, pp. 42-43).

Other theorists contribute nuanced views. Van Doren distinguishes literature as aesthetically truthful and propaganda as ideologically manipulative (1938). Eagleton rejects the notion of literature as ideologically neutral, framing it within broader cultural dynamics (1989, p. 36). Shpet regards the novel as rhetorical and possibly propagandist, though this underplays its artistic potential (1927, p. 215). Siniavski denounced state-directed art, arguing that propaganda limits creativity and imagination (1967, pp. 11-12).

Akpınar (2014, p. 9) emphasizes how states use propaganda to reinforce ideological norms through art, depending on political priorities such as religion or nationalism. Similarly, Bakhtin contrasts the novel's polyphonic structure with the monologism of propagandist texts, which limit diverse voices and reduce literature to a single ideological line (1981, p. 37).

2 The Usability of Chronotopes as Propaganda Elements

The chronotope, as formulated by Bakhtin, is the narrative unit where time and space converge, shaping not only the story's structure but also its ideological framework (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 251). Far from being neutral, chronotopes frame how ideological tensions are organized and made visible. Rachel Falconer (2010, pp. 111–112) notes that it is the clash of competing chronotopes—and by extension, ideologies—that gives them political force.

Bakhtin's spatially grounded chronotope categories help reveal the ideological underpinnings of narratives. Squares, for instance, serve as sites of collective action and political upheaval; corridors symbolize transitions and systemic changes; while spaces like prisons, *kolkhozes*, meeting halls, or administrative offices become centers where power crystallizes. Particularly, scenes of bribery and corruption are attached to specific places—offices, back rooms, and institutional settings—turning them into symbols of ideological failure. Here, corruption is not merely personal but a reflection of structural decay within a spatial-historical context.

In propaganda-oriented literature, chronotopes are not only narrative tools but also ideological signposts. They dictate how characters encounter or resist dominant ideologies and how narrative space is politicized. For instance, the square in revolutionary fiction becomes a symbol of collective hope, while bureaucratic interiors in authoritarian settings may represent repression and surveillance. Through these spatial configurations, chronotopes help construct the ideological architecture of the text and offer a critical method for examining how propaganda operates through time-space dynamics.

3 Uzbek Soviet Literature and Ideological Novels

Uzbek Soviet literature began integrating socialist themes with the early works of Hamza Hakimzada Niyazi,⁷ notably *Boy va Hizmatchi* [*The Rich and the Servant*] (1918), which reflected class struggle and revolutionary ideals (Mirzayev-Daniyarov, 1978, p. 24). From the October Revolution to independence, this literature evolved through distinct phases, mirroring the ideological and structural shifts of Soviet society (Sodik, 1976, p. 18).

Socialist realism became dominant in the 1930s, with writers like Ayni,⁸ Qadiri,⁹ Oybek, Gulam,¹⁰ and Qahhar¹¹ producing narratives that glorified socialism and patriotism (Mirzayev, 2005, p. 15; Yokubov-Mamajanov, 1971, p. 12). Under the influence of the All-Union Congress of Soviet Writers,¹² Uzbek literature was shaped by ideological directives and emphasized loyalty to the “socialist homeland.” While the literature occasionally incorporated psychological and national elements, it also reflected political pressure and censorship. Between 1980 and 1991, it experienced stagnation and declined after independence (Bilir-Yilmaz, 2023, p. 259).

Among the prominent figures of Uzbek Soviet literature, Muso Oybek masterfully employed the theme of class conflict, characteristic of socialist realism, in his novel *Qutlug Qon*; Utkir Hoshimov explored the theme of social criticism in *Nur Borki Soya Bor*; Askad Muhtor highlighted the theme of collective consciousness in *Opa Singillar* and Said Ahmad depicted the theme of a call for social change in *Jimjitlik*.

⁷ Hamza Hakimzade Niyazi (1889-1929) was one of the pioneers of modern Uzbek literature. He was a writer, poet and playwright who wrote works on social justice, education and reform. He supported the Soviet revolution, but was assassinated in 1929 because of his reformist ideas.

⁸ Sadreddin Ayni (1878-1954) was the founder of Tajik literature, a writer and historian. He addressed social inequality in his works and contributed to the development of the region's culture and literature.

⁹ Abdulla Qadiri (1894-1938) is one of the pioneers of modern Uzbek literature. He is known for his novels *Otkan Kunlar* (Bygone Days) and *Mehrobdan Chayon* (The Scorpion from The Altar). He was executed by the Soviet government in 1938 on charges of nationalism.

¹⁰ Gafur Gulam (1903-1966) was a poet, writer and translator. He stands out with his humorous and critical style in Uzbek literature.

¹¹ Abdulla Qahhar (1907-1968) was a writer of stories and novels. He masterfully handled human psychology and social change in his works.

¹² The First Congress of the Union of Soviet Writers, held in Moscow in 1934, declared the establishment of the union and adopted socialist realism as the official literary method. It strengthened ideological control over literature and guided writers toward promoting communist ideals. Although the congress was intended to convene every three years, it met only eight times between 1934 and 1986, and the 9th Congress was never held due to the Soviet Union's collapse.

Oybek's novel *Qutlug Qon* (1940) examines Uzbek society in 1917. The protagonist, Yolchi, is forced to work under harsh conditions by his landlord uncle, Mirzakarimbay. His beloved, Gulnar, is forcibly married off and later poisoned to death. These events shape the course of the novel, culminating in Yolchi's imprisonment due to false accusations. In prison, he meets the Russian revolutionary Petrov, who encourages him to rebel. However, Yolchi is killed in the square during the uprising, symbolizing the struggle against injustice.

Askad Muhtor's novel *Opa-singillar* (1955) underscores the Soviet ideology of women's emancipation. In the village of Naymancha, female weavers working for low wages begin working in a state-supported factory established after the revolution. The novel illustrates how women gain social and economic independence, demonstrating how Soviet ideology shaped women's rights.

Utkir Hoshimov's novel *Nur Borki Soya Bor* (1976) critiques the contradictions and corruption of the socialist system. The journalist Sherzad faces pressure for publishing a critical article and is hospitalized, where he observes social inequalities. Seyfullah and his son, whom he meets in the hospital, symbolize the corrupt officials of the system. Although Sherzad attempts to expose these injustices, societal fear prevents change. The novel serves as a critique of the socialist system's unfulfilled promises of justice and equality.

Said Ahmad's *Jimjitlik* (1989) explores the impact of the socialist regime on individuals through the life of Talibjon. Orphaned at a young age, Talibjon moves to Tashkent¹³ for education but is later exiled to Africa due to conflicts with the state. After losing his wife and son, he returns to Uzbekistan, only to find a society dominated by bribery and oppression. The novel portrays the individual's helplessness and the regime's repressive nature.

4 The Use of Chronotopes as a Propaganda Element in the Soviet Uzbek Novel

In Soviet-era Uzbek novels, chronotopes were deliberately used to merge time and space in ways that reinforced ideological messages. These spatial-temporal configurations reflected the values of the socialist regime and structured narratives

¹³ The capital of Uzbekistan.

around class struggle, positioning characters within shifting societal roles to promote collective consciousness.

Central to these novels is the dichotomy between oppressors and the working class. Spatial transitions—from villages to factories, from traditional neighborhoods to modern cities—symbolize broader social transformation under socialism. Characters navigate this ideological shift, caught between the values of the old order and the rise of collectivist ideals.

Social critique is also prominent, targeting feudal traditions, bureaucratic corruption, and the tension between self-interest and socialist principles. These narratives not only serve propagandist purposes but also function as literary documents chronicling the socio-economic changes of the Soviet era.

4.1 The Power of Revolutionary Ideals and Fighting Spirit: Prison

Prisons are not only sites of discipline but also chronotopes rich in social, emotional, and ideological meaning. As spaces shaped by individual experience and state power, prisons evolve with cultural codes and historical consciousness (Findikli, 2019, pp. 321–324). Since the French Revolution, prison narratives in literature have become prominent as spaces where social transformation and resistance take root (Akpınar, 2010, p. 22).

According to Olpak Koc (2011, p. 29), prisons function as microcosms of society, fostering ideological conflict and personal transformation. They represent institutionalized spaces where political dissent and free thought are punished, but also where intellectual and ideological maturation occurs—sometimes even becoming “schools” for political consciousness.

The prison functions as a chronotope in socialist realist novels, where class conflict becomes more pronounced, ideological transformation occurs, and social criticism intensifies. Foucault (1977, p. 336) defines prison as “surveillance, observation [which] has been the greatest support, in modern society, of the normalizing power.” However, according to Gramsci (2000, p. 153), the prison can also be “a system, a balance of concrete institutions, within which society develops a consciousness of its existence and its development and without which society could not

exist or develop at all.” In Bakhtin’s chronotope theory, prisons, similar to the threshold chronotope (1981, p. 249), are depicted as “a metaphorical meaning in everyday usage, and it is connected with the breaking point of a life, the momento of crisis, the decision that changes a life,” thereby adding strong dramatic intensity to the narrative. Therefore, in socialist realist novels, the prison is not merely a space of oppression but also a site where collective consciousness develops and the call for social change gains momentum.

According to Bakhtin, “*captivity* and *prison* presume *guarding* and *isolating* the hero in a *definite spot in space*, impeding his subsequent spatial movement toward his goal, that is, his subsequent pursuits and searches and so forth” (1981, p. 99). In this context, the concept of chronotope, if expressed in a different context, can be said to be the physical and historical characteristics of prisons that transform and determine to a certain extent the nature of the experience of spatial confinement in the prisoner’s mind.

The educational function of prison is a recurring chronotopic image—seen as a place of self-improvement, cultural transmission, and spiritual development (Findikli, 2019, p. 331). Many socialist realist writers portray time spent in prison as the price paid for a better future (Tahir, 1991, p. 374; Ran, 2016, p. 126).

In Oybek’s *Qutlug Qon*, the prison functions as a critical chronotope. The protagonist Yolchi is falsely accused and arrested after clashing with local elites. In prison, he meets Petrov, a Russian revolutionary, who becomes a mentor and inspires Yolchi to embrace socialist ideals. The prison thus transforms into a metaphorical school:

Petrov disciplines this brave man, Yolchi, who is crushed under the yoke of the rich. He is filled with hatred towards them with all his being and looks for a way to wrestle against them with the spirit and love of revolution. He enlightens his ideas with the fire of wrestling for the revolution.¹⁴

The prison chronotope in these passages represents the interaction between the characters’ ideologies, according to the socialist realist Soviet perspective. Yolchi’s experiences in prison reflect his class position and social struggle. At the same time, the

¹⁴ In Uzbek: “Boylarning bo’yinturug’i ostida obdan ezilgan, butun borlig’i ularga qarshi nafrat bilan to’lgan, kurash yo’lini qidirgan bu aqlli yigitni - Yo’lchini Petrov butun revolyutsion ruhi va sevgisi bilan tarbiyalaydi, revolyutsion kurash alangasi bilan uning fikrlarini oydinlashadi” (Oybek, 2021, p. 336).

influence of the Russian character Petrov on Yolchi represents the power of revolutionary ideals and fighting spirit, in accordance with the understanding of socialist realism.

Yolchi's complaints about the rich and the "rudeness!" he experiences in the teahouse are events that reflect social class conflicts. This situation reveals how the lives of the characters in the prison environment will continue and how their class struggles are shaped. The Russian character Petrov's encounter with Yolchi and his attempt to communicate with him show how the resilience and revolutionary unity in the prison environment can develop.

Therefore, the prison chronotope in the novel represents the interplay of the characters' social environment, class struggle, and revolutionary ideals from a Soviet perspective. In this context, the prison environment functions as a microcosm and an element of political propaganda, reflecting social change and struggle.

4.2 The Chronotope in which Conflicts, Discrimination and Power Relations between Social Classes Are Revealed: Kolkhoz

In Uzbek novels, the area that determines the entire socio-economic life of the society in the countryside is the winter quarters. Still, each winter quarter is a kolkhoz, or collective farm. "A kolkhoz is not a structure that makes the people happy and prosperous after the war" (Apaydin, 2016, p. 124). On the contrary, the kolkhoz is constructed as an institution where the leaders oppress the people and push them to despair for their interests. In the novels examined, it was noticed that the kolkhozes were actually at the center of social criticism through the crimes committed by the rulers. Regarding such situations, Bakhtin says,

Thus we see that the adventure sequence, governed as it is by chance, is here utterly subordinated to the other sequence that encompasses and interprets it: guilt—punishment—redemption—blessedness. This sequence is governed by a completely different logic, one that has nothing to do with adventure logic. It is an active sequence, determining (as its first priority) the very metamorphosis itself, that is, the shifting appearance of the hero (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 118).

In this respect, the kolkhoz chronotope has been evaluated as a political chronotope because it reveals the politically critical aspects of socialist realism.

In Uzbek Soviet novels, the kolkhoz chronotope represents the transition to collective production and exposes tyrannical and arrogant administrators who exploit this process. Within this chronotope, bureaucrats who corrupt socialist ideals, prioritize personal interests over collective labor, or oppress the people are subject to critique. These figures are portrayed as acting against the spirit of collectivization and are often exposed by conscious workers or peasants, ensuring the fulfillment of revolutionary justice. Thus, the kolkhoz becomes a space of social transformation and a stage where socialist ideals are tested, corruption is revealed, and true revolutionary values are reaffirmed. In this context, the kolkhoz chronotope serves as a narrative space that highlights class conflicts and exposes the bureaucratic decay that may emerge within the socialist system.

In the novel *Nur Borki Soya Bor*, the protagonist of the novel, Sherzad, who is sent to the kolkhoz to investigate the abuse of power in the Tiniksay Kolkhoz, arrives at the kolkhoz vineyard used by the chief as headquarters. The historical and social description of the vineyard, a social space, is made.

When important guests came, rugs and mattresses were spread around the pool. But no kolkhoz worker dared to go near the pergola. For some unknown reason, when the workers went to the vineyard, they would pass away from the pergola out of fear.¹⁵

In the novel, Sherzad's investigation into the Tiniksay Kolkhoz reveals social dynamics through the kolkhoz chronotope. The gazebo, located at the center of the kolkhoz, symbolizes power, privilege, and class hierarchy. Built by the Kolkhoz Chief on twenty hectares of appropriated land, the vineyard and its grand two-story structure—with a spacious upper floor used to host elite guests—highlight stark social divisions. While the chief enjoys this exclusive space, the kolkhoz workers are excluded, reflecting the novel's socialist realist themes of class struggle and inequality. The vineyard's arbor, used to protect the chief's interests, becomes a spatial marker of injustice, drawing invisible boundaries between the powerful and the oppressed.

¹⁵ In Uzbek: “Aziz mehmon kelganda hovuz atrofidagi so‘rilarga patgilamlar yoziladi, atlas-adras ko‘rpachalar to‘shaladi. Ammo shiypon yaqiniga kelishga biron kolxozchining haddi sig‘maydi. Negadir ko‘pincha ular boqqa kirishganda ham hadiksirab, shiyponni chetlab o‘tadilar.” (Hoshimov, 2021, p. 160).

A similar use of the arbor as a symbol of elitism appears in Said Ahmad's *Jimjitlik*. Here, the kolkhoz leader Mirvali maintains a private garden and arbor for entertaining dignitaries:

Mirvali had this arbor set up on the hill last year and would only bring important guests here. Uncle Nurmat would spread sheep manure on the half-acre land behind the arbor and plant melons. Uncle Nurmat had no other job than waiting for the guest who came once a month and looking after this garden.¹⁶

In his novel, the kolkhoz's gazebo is described as a space exclusively for the kolkhoz leader, Mirvali. The reception of important guests in the gazebo highlights differences in social status and power dynamics, thereby clarifying the hierarchy within social relations. Mirvali's chalet within the kolkhoz is a privileged area, a significant feature in socialist realism, reflecting conflicts, discrimination, and power relations between social classes.

In both novels, the arbor functions as a chronotope of social division, marking a space of exclusion where power and privilege are performed and reinforced. It becomes a visual and spatial metaphor for inequality, contradicting the ideals of collective labor and unity.

Thus, in Uzbek Soviet literature, the kolkhoz and its associated spaces—particularly the arbor—reveal the inner contradictions of the socialist project. These chronotopes serve not only as sites of daily life but as platforms for ideological critique, dramatizing the clash between collectivist ideals and the reality of bureaucratic authoritarianism.

4.3 Chronotope of Criticism of Public Services and Social Policies: The Corridor

The corridor, which Bakhtin considers to be a public space where crises and turning points occur, is one of the chronotopes where scandals and disasters erupt. Bakhtin states, “they are places where crisis events occur, the falls, resurrections,

¹⁶ In Uzbek: “Bu shiyponni adirning tepasiga o'tgan yili Mirvalining o'zi qurdirgan, faqat aziz mehmonlarnigina olib kelardi. Nurmat tog'a shiypon orqasidagi yarim gektarcha joyga selitrasiz, qo'y qiyi solib, qovun-tarvuz ekardi. Oyda-yilda bir keladigan mehmonni kutishdan va shu polizga qarashdan boshqa Nurmat tog'aning ishi yo'q edi” (Ahmad, 2023, s. 35).

renewals, epiphanies, decisions that determine the whole life of a man. In this chronotope, time is essentially instantaneous; it is as if it has no duration and falls out of the normal course of biographical time” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 248).

However, Bakhtin accepts such areas as the space of the novel and says, “the threshold, the foyer, the corridor, the landing, the stairway, its steps, doors opening onto the stairway, gates to front and back yards, and beyond these, the city: squares, streets, façades, taverns, dens, bridges, gutters. This is the space of the novel” (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 170).

Consistent with this information, the hospital corridor appears in the novel *Nur Borki Soya Bor* as the public space where crises erupt.

There was that coughing sound again from the corridor. ... “Why don’t they take the empty bed and come?” he thought. “Who is this place reserved for? Sherzad sensed something in the first four days he entered the hospital. Although this place’s organization rules were the same for everyone, there were also patients who chose the place and administrators who allocated beds according to the patients’ positions.¹⁷

This passage exemplifies how the corridor chronotope is used to expose the disparity between official policies and lived realities. Although the hospital is supposed to be governed by equal regulations, Sherzad’s observations reveal the informal exercise of political favoritism and hierarchical privilege. The hospital corridor, thus, becomes a microcosm of broader socio-political dynamics, reflecting structural injustices in resource allocation and public services.

Moreover, the spatial confusion and bureaucratic opacity Sherzad experiences illustrate how institutional architecture reinforces social inequality. His internal questioning about the organization of the hospital is a direct critique of how political power mediates access to basic rights such as healthcare.

The corridor as chronotope not only maps physical transitions but also stages the character’s ethical and ideological awakening. Sherzad’s confrontation with the hospital director, triggered by these injustices, further deepens the critique. His crisis highlights

¹⁷ In Uzbek: “Yo‘lak tomondan yana o‘sha yo‘tal tovushi keldi. ... ‘Nimaga joy bo‘sh turib, olib kirishmaydi? - deb o‘yladi u g‘ijinib. - Kimga saqlab turishibdi?’ U kasalxonaga tushgandan buyon o‘tgan mana shu to‘rt kun ichida bir narsani sezdi. Bu yerning tartib-qoidalarini hammaga baravar bo‘lsa ham, joy tanlaydigan bemorlar, kasallarning «mavqeyi»ga qarab joy taqsimlaydigan odamlar ham bor ekan” (Hoshimov, 2021, p. 7).

how spatial arrangements—who occupies which bed, who waits in the corridor—are determined less by need than by political capital.

Thus, the corridor chronotope in Soviet Uzbek novels functions as a narrative device to critique public institutions and social policies. Within the framework of socialist realism, it reflects the contradiction between the ideology of equality and the reality of systemic privilege, positioning space itself as a site of political tension and revelation.

4.4 Chronotope of Political Critiques, Class Struggles and Social Change: The Square

Bakhtin explains in detail through their roles in Dostoyevsky's novels that events in open spaces such as squares "bring about a significant change in the plot" (Sevgi, 2023, p. 72). In Dostoyevsky's works, threshold and related chronotopes; along with the chronotopes of the staircase, front hall and corridor, the street and square chronotopes that carry these spaces into the open space also constitute the main action scenes. They are the places where crises, the falls, rises, renewals, revelations and decisions that determine a person's life are experienced. Within this chronotope, time is felt as instantaneous; it seems to have no duration and to be separated from the normal flow of biographical time (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 169).

In Uzbek Soviet literature, the square chronotope is frequently used to depict class conflict, collective resistance, and ideological change. It becomes a space where social injustices are exposed, public resistance emerges, and the values of socialism—equality, solidarity, revolution—are exalted. The square thus embodies the contradiction between old social hierarchies and the new order advocated by socialist realism.

In *Qutlug Qon*, Oybek uses the square to embody the ideological and spatial dynamics of the revolutionary moment. The protagonist Yolchi, after witnessing the humiliation of an old farmer in a public square, becomes sensitized to class inequalities:

People gathered in the square. Some took pity, some just watched. At that moment, the grocer of the square also came. He wandered around like a hungry dog, examining the melons.¹⁸

¹⁸ In Uzbek: "Atrofda odam to'plandi. Ba'zilar achinadi, ba'zilar tomoshabin. Mana, shu guzarning o'spirin baqqoli ham yetib keldi, och itday alanglab, qovunlarni ko'zdan kechirdi" (Oybek, 2021, p. 40).

The scene emphasizes economic exploitation—the grocer, aware of the farmer’s desperation, offers a price well below market value for the farmer’s melons. The square here symbolizes both public visibility of suffering and the systemic injustice of unequal labor relations. Yolchi’s sympathy highlights the ideals of solidarity and resistance central to socialist realism.

Later in the novel, the square becomes the focal point of a mass uprising. After the Tsar’s¹⁹ decree to conscript only the children of the poor, the people gather in the square in protest. Yolchi, released from prison and now politically awakened by his mentor Petrov, organizes the crowd:

March on, brave men! Let’s go to the square and stand up for our rights! In the square, the women’s complaints and shouts, their curses at the oppressors, and the brave cries of the young people began to frighten some people.²⁰

The passage depicts the calls, screams, and applause of the women and young people in the square, reflecting their intense emotional reactions and anger. This collective outcry against oppression, combined with the dynamic progression of the square as a chronotope over time, vividly portrays concrete resistance. The crowd, led by Yolchi, comprises diverse social segments—farmers, day laborers, servants, and artisans—all uniting around a common goal (Oybek, 2021, p. 358). From a socialist realist perspective, this situation underscores the power and solidarity of people struggling together.

The cries emanating from the square reflect the desperation felt against oppression and war, revealing bitter societal realities. As a chronotope in a socialist realist novel, the square symbolizes the genesis of resistance against injustice and oppression, where various segments of society coalesce. Viewed from this socialist realist lens, the chronotope functions as an arena of rebellion against social inequalities

¹⁹ Russian Tsar is the title given to the rulers who reigned in Russia between 1547 and 1917. The first official Tsar was Ivan IV (Ivan the Terrible), and the last Tsar was Nicholas II. The Tsarist regime ended with the February Revolution of 1917.

²⁰In Uzbek: “Yuraver, yigitlar, yuraver! Maydonga ro‘yirost chiqib, haqimizni dov qilamiz!” Ayollarning yig‘i va xitoblari, zolimlarni qarg‘ashlari, yigitlarning mardona ovozlari ba’zi kishilarni cho‘chitib, olazarak qildi “(Oybek, 2021, s. 354).

and oppression, representing an environment where the oppressed, wronged, and persecuted unite and raise their voices.

In Askad Muhtor's novel *Opa-singillar*, the square chronotope functions as a space of rebellion and revolt, mirroring a parallel plot in *Qutlug Qon*. Petrov, Yolchi's mentor in *Qutlug Qon*, and Yefim, Sabircan's mentor in *Opa-singillar*, are presented as characters who cultivate a consciousness of rebellion and lead the people to the squares for uprising (Muhtor, 2023, p. 32). In *Opa-singillar*, this uprising takes place in the pre-revolutionary period, reflecting the social unrest that preceded systemic transformation. From the perspective of socialist realist novels, this highlights the functional aspect of squares as spaces of reckoning that confront social injustice between the oppressor and the oppressed, the ruler and the ruled.

The square symbolizes a stance against societal injustices, vividly depicting socialist realities. In this context, the square, as a chronotope, symbolizes social struggles and the search for justice within the framework of socialist realism. This place functions as a platform where people gather to rebel, struggle, and demand change.

In the section of the novel *Opa-singillar* that takes place after the revolution, the square appears as a political chronotope. Working women who established a textile factory in Naymança with the help of the Communist Party organize a meeting in the neighborhood square for the factory's opening on March 8. The political discourses at the meeting are interwoven with the propaganda elements of the communist government. The opening meeting of the factory, celebrated in a festive atmosphere in the large square, drags the novel into a carnival-like structure.

The meeting in the square took on the air of a friendly conversation. The words were met with applause, and the applause with passionate addresses. Some shouted from the bottom of the podium without taking the floor. The loud slogans shouted from afar were frequently interrupted by the sounds of urra.²¹

²¹ In Uzbek: "Miting qudratli, quvonchli, shovqinli, kattakon samimiy suhbatga aylandi. So'zlar qarsaklarga, qarsaklar otashin xitoblarga ulanib ketdi. Ba'zilar so'z olmasdanoq pastdan turib qichqirib so'zlab ketar, uzoqlardan baland ovoz bilan shiorlar notiqqlarning gapi 'Ura!' tovushlari bilan bo'linar edi" (Muhtor, 2023, s. 542).

Here, the square becomes carnivalesque, blending political discourse with communal celebration. Slogans, chants, and spontaneous speeches indicate the formation of a collective consciousness, shaped and performed in public space.

In both novels, mentors like Petrov and Yefim act as agents who lead oppressed characters toward political awareness, pushing them into the public square to rebel. These characters embody the ideological function of socialist literature, guiding individuals from passivity to action.

Ultimately, the square chronotope in Uzbek Soviet novels functions as a stage for historical change. It is where private suffering becomes public action, and where ideological transformation is spatially realized. The square operates dually—as a site of rebellion against pre-revolutionary authorities and as a venue for the post-revolutionary regime’s political propaganda. As a symbol of social struggle, political critique, and collective awakening, the square is central to the representation of revolutionary consciousness within the framework of socialist realism.

4.5 Chronotope of Social Decay: Bribery and Corruption

Corruption, as a form of social decay in literature, refers to the unlawful use of authority by public officials for personal or group gain, both material and symbolic. It includes behaviors such as bribery, nepotism, favoritism, and the misuse of public resources (Berkman, 1983, p. 16; Aktan, 1999, p. 38; Pellegrini, 2011, pp. 14–16). While often discussed under the umbrella of bribery, corruption encompasses a broader system of deviations from public duty for private interest (Tasar-Çevik, 2017, p. 141).

From a cultural perspective, studies suggest that corruption is more prevalent in collectivist societies, where shared identity and group loyalty often diminish individual accountability. People in such cultures may perceive bribery not as a moral failing but as a necessary action for securing future benefits, especially in times of instability (Fischer *et al.*, 2014). These tendencies are reflected in literature that critiques both systemic failures and the cultural norms that sustain them.

In socialist realist literature, corruption is not merely a moral lapse but a structural problem, symptomatic of ideological degeneration. Through Bakhtin’s concept of the chronotope, bribery and corruption are embedded in specific spatial and

temporal contexts—such as government offices, educational institutions, and kolkhoz farms—that serve as symbolic sites of social and moral erosion. These chronotopes illuminate the contradictions within socialist systems, dramatizing the betrayal of ideological ideals and mobilizing the reader toward critique and transformation.

As can be seen from the definitions above, the prevalence of corruption and bribery in collectivist cultures is also explored in the novel *Nur Borki Soya Bor*.

From that day on, Siraceddin never got two points in class. Of course, he didn't get five points either, but his teacher didn't give him two points either. When his father would occasionally ask, "How did your chemistry teacher tuck his tail like a dog?" Siraceddin would calm his father down by saying that everything was fine. "He will not bother you anymore, he will respect you," he said.²²

Siraceddin's academic success is artificially constructed through bribery, emphasizing how corruption permeates even educational institutions. His later university admission, too, occurs not through talent but manipulation: "Some 'hands' had pushed and shoved him into the university" (Hoshimov, 2021, p. 47). This narrative arc captures how favoritism and patronage undermine fairness and meritocracy, turning education into a transactional arena. The educational institution, in this context, becomes a chronotope of decay, where future generations are shaped not by learning, but by systemic corruption.

A deeper structural critique is presented in *Jimjitlik* by Said Ahmad (1988), which portrays the Soviet kolkhoz system in its final years. Through the character Hajimurad, the novel exposes institutionalized corruption in the agricultural sector. Fraudulent cotton reporting, manipulation of production figures, and undocumented land leases reveal the rot within one of the Soviet Union's most celebrated economic institutions.

Hajimurad's manipulation of production allowed the kolkhoz to receive awards and bonuses from the state, despite falsifying records. His leasing of land with informal agreements further illustrates systemic evasion of regulation (Ahmad, 2021, pp. 38–39).

²² In Uzbek: "O'shandan keyin u ikki olmay qo'ydi. Albatta, besh ham ololmasdi-yu, ammo ikki ham qo'yishmasdi. Dadasi ora-chora qalay, kimyo ma'liming dumini qisdimi, deb so'rab qo'yar, Sirojiddin hamma ishlar joyida ekanini aytib, dadasini tinchitar edi. 'Endi senga tegmaydi!- derdi Sayfiddin aka. - Endi seni hurmat qiladi'. Nihoyat oltinchi dars tamom bo'lganidan keyin zina oldida kimyo o'qituvchisiga ro'para bo'ldi" (Hoshimov, 2021, s. 46).

Here, the kolkhoz farm functions as a chronotope where official narratives of socialist productivity are contradicted by the lived reality of deception and exploitation. The spatial and temporal setting—the late Soviet period—is integral to understanding how the ideals of collectivism and shared prosperity had given way to self-interest and disillusionment.

Both Nur Borki Soya Bor and Jimjitlik adopt a socialist realist approach, portraying corruption not as isolated incidents but as reflections of broader societal decay. In both works, ideological critique is central: the moral erosion caused by bribery and nepotism is linked to the failure of socialist ideals. The institutions—school and kolkhoz—serve as chronotopes that foreground the contradiction between official discourse and lived experience.

Despite their shared themes, the novels differ in their cultural and historical focus. Nur Borki Soya Bor examines the micro-level impact of bribery in post-Stalinist Uzbek society, particularly in the realm of education and family ambition. In contrast, Jimjitlik captures the macro-level institutional collapse during the Soviet Union's final years, using economic corruption as a metaphor for state-wide disintegration.

In conclusion, the chronotope of bribery and corruption in these Uzbek novels functions as a powerful narrative device. It situates moral decay within identifiable institutions and historical moments, emphasizing the ways in which systemic failures reflect and perpetuate broader ideological breakdowns. These chronotopes thus offer not only a critique of societal injustice but also a call to confront the cultural norms and political structures that sustain it.

4.6 A Chronotope of Power Struggles, Hypocrisy and Critical Moments when the Fates of Individuals Are Determined: The Meeting

Bakhtin emphasizes the profound significance of meetings in literary works, mirroring their importance in real life. Such encounters in social and state life, especially diplomatic ones, are strictly regulated, with their time, place, and structure determined by the status of the participants. He notes that the meeting motif in different works can carry various nuances, including emotional evaluations, depending on the context, and can acquire multiple or single metaphorical meanings, becoming deep symbols (Bakhtin, 1981, pp. 97-98).

On the other hand, “within the chronotope of the everyday-adventure novel—by means of a road that winds through one’s native territory. And the positioning of the rogue (...) is the sharply intensified exposure of vulgar conventions and, in fact, the exposure of the entire existing social structure” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 165). In the novel *Nur Borki Soya Bor*, after irregularities in the Tiniksoy Kolkhoz are reported to the newspaper, the involved parties are summoned to a meeting in the Regional Committee building. All attendees are employees and writers of state bodies. The historicity of the meeting room, detailed through Sherzad’s descriptions, along with the mood and attitudes of those present, allows the meeting itself to function as a chronotope.

The district clerk began his speech briefly and clearly.
-A critical article titled “Who owns the school?” was published in the Jumhuriyet newspaper. The committee investigated due to this article.
If we listen to the committee report...²³

Initially, the chief’s allies defend him by citing his supposed achievements. However, Sherzad ultimately exposes the injustices and violations committed under his leadership, particularly the disregard for kolkhoz workers’ rights. The dialogue, evidence, and rhetorical dynamics of the meeting reflect a problem-solution-savior structure—a hallmark of the socialist realist narrative. The meeting concludes with the chief being held accountable, emphasizing a desire to restore social justice.

This scene serves as a socialist realist chronotope, dramatizing the confrontation between truth and power, institutional rot and moral conscience. It invites readers to reflect on the mechanisms through which society attempts to correct itself, often imperfectly, through formal but symbolically charged gatherings.

In contrast, *Jimjitlik* by Said Ahmad presents a more cynical portrayal of the meeting chronotope, where official gatherings mask hypocrisy and consolidate power. In a critical scene, Talibjon publicly condemns Minister Lokmanov for unjustly dismissing selfless workers. Talibjon’s speech earns applause, yet the source and sincerity of the clapping remain ambiguous—symbolizing the performative nature of public discourse.

²³ In Uzbek: “Obkom kotibi gapni lo‘nda boshladi: Jumhuriyat gazetasida ‘Maktabning xo‘jayini kim?’ degan feleton bosilgan edi. Shu feleton yuzasidan obkom komissiyasi tekshirish o‘tkazgan. Komissiya hisobotini eshitsak...” (Hoshimov, 2021, s. 203).

Despite the seemingly triumphant critique, Lokmanov remains unaffected and retaliates by exiling Talibjon, exposing the futility of moral resistance within a corrupt system. This meeting does not lead to justice but instead illustrates the entrenchment of power and the suppression of dissent.

The meeting chronotope here represents both the illusion of accountability and the grim reality of political repression. It functions as a narrative device through which the novel critiques state institutions, revealing how public performances of democracy can conceal deeper authoritarian impulses. The reader is left not with hope, but with a heightened awareness of systemic injustice.

When compared, the meeting chronotopes in *Nur Borki Soya Bor* and *Jimjitlik* differ in tone and outcome but share core thematic concerns. Both reveal power struggles, hypocrisy, and pivotal moments in which individuals' destinies are determined. While *Nur Borki Soya Bor* shows a scenario where institutional mechanisms may still bring about justice, *Jimjitlik* underscores the dominance of careerism and political manipulation.

Moreover, these meeting scenes reflect distinct focal points within the broader socialist realist critique. *Nur Borki Soya Bor* addresses grassroots corruption and its impact on the collective, while *Jimjitlik* focuses on the internal decay of the state apparatus. Each uses the chronotope of the meeting to structure its ideological critique and guide the reader's perception of justice, power, and social order.

In the context of Uzbek literature during the Soviet era, the meeting chronotope played a central role in conveying ideological messages. Under Soviet influence, the state was often portrayed as the architect of social progress. Official meetings, frequently featured in socialist realist novels, functioned not only as plot devices but also as vehicles of state propaganda, reinforcing collectivist ideals and institutional authority. At the same time, as seen in these two novels, they also became spaces for contesting official narratives, where authors subtly or overtly challenged the legitimacy of power.

In sum, the meeting chronotope in Uzbek socialist realist literature encapsulates the contradictions of Soviet ideological life. Whether offering hope for reform or exposing the hopelessness of resistance, these meetings dramatize the intersection of

personal fate and public authority, serving as crucial moments where ideological tensions are laid bare and society is both critiqued and imagined anew.

Conclusion

This study has explored how chronotopes function as ideologically charged narrative structures in Uzbek Soviet novels shaped by socialist realism. Through the analysis of six key chronotopes—*prison*, *meeting*, *kolkhoz*, *square*, *bribery and corruption*, and *corridor*—it has been shown that space and time are not passive settings but active instruments of ideological expression.

Each chronotope reflects a specific facet of the Soviet worldview. The prison serves not just as a site of punishment but of ideological rehabilitation. Meetings dramatize social injustice and power struggles, often reinforcing collective values or exposing systemic flaws. The kolkhoz represents collectivist ideals while simultaneously revealing internal contradictions. Squares serve as performative spaces for mass participation and ideological display.

By contrast, the bribery and corruption chronotopes expose the erosion of socialist ideals, revealing gaps between ideological claims and lived reality. Corridors, as transitional spaces, symbolize internal transformation and ideological ambiguity.

Together, these chronotopes demonstrate how ideology is embedded in narrative structure itself. They support themes central to socialist realism—social critique, class struggle, and collective consciousness—while also inviting reflection on ideological contradictions. Ultimately, these chronotopes function as sites where ideological tensions are dramatized, negotiated, or left unresolved, aligning with Bakhtin's view of chronotopes as active carriers of meaning shaped by their cultural and historical contexts.

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Research Data and Other Materials Availability

The contents underlying the research text are included in the manuscript.

Reviews

Due to the commitment assumed by *Bakhtiniana. Revista de Estudos do Discurso* [*Bakhtiniana. Journal of Discourse Studies*] to Open Science, this journal Only publishes reviews that have been authorized by all involved.

Review I

The manuscript presents an analysis of how chronotopes convey ideological stances in the novels of Soviet Uzbeki writers. In general terms I found the manuscript very interesting and well written but I would suggest some reorganization and expansion in order to make it better fit for publication.

One problem that I saw is that the author does not manage to link the different sections of the manuscript in a clear way. For example, the relationship between chronotopes/ideologies and propaganda should be highlighted as a central theme from the beginning and the author should also preview their main thesis in regard to the role of chronotopes in the novels and also describe in advance the chronotopes that will be examined and the novels that will be the focus of analysis. The conclusions should be the basis of the introduction as well.

The author should also further explain the choice of authors and novels. I feel that there needs to be a specific section where the author introduces all the writers and novels analyzed, summarizes their content and previews the chronotopes that are going to be the focus of the analysis. It is also important to give some more background on whether and to what extent Uzbek intellectuals, such as the writers analyzed here, bought into the ideology of the Soviet regime vis a vis the role of art. For example, in section 2 the author talks about Was Siniaski but does not explain who he was and whether he was an influential thinker

A second issue is the fact that the construct of the chronotope, so central to this article, receives so little attention in the introductory section of the article. The author needs to say more about Bakhtin's conception of the chronotope and needs to delve into the types of chronotopes being considered and what makes them chronotopes. For example, some of the chronotopes examined refer to space (the corridor or the square), but others are of a different nature (the chronotope of Social Decay). This ambiguity already comes from Bakhtin who saw chronotopes operating at different scales, but the author needs to explain this and point to the different kinds of chronotopes that Bakhtin proposed.

Some more minor points. Unfortunately no page numbers were given in the ms, so the author will need to locate the specific paragraphs.

1. Can the author expand on and clarify the following paragraph? I found it completely unclear.

“On the other hand, states use various propaganda tools to maintain the continuity of their ideology. However, ideologies prefer to use religious, moral and national

sensitivities depending on their political positions. This situation adds an additional dimension to their expressions and strengthens them even more” (Akpinar, 2014, p. 9).

2. In the following paragraph, explain and expand on why chronotopes are introduced

“As can be understood from these views, every national literature under the influence of the Soviets will inevitably resort to propaganda elements in the literary products produced. At this point, chronotopes emerge as a basic element in ideological novel analyses.”

3. What does the following mean?

“The human diversity it contains creates a natural environment, although it is necessary, and offers an experimental environment in a closed space for both those living in it and those looking from the outside.”

4. Can the author better explain the relationship between time/space and the chronotope in the following?

“Thanks to the depiction of the form and types of corruption, the characteristics of time and space are revealed as chronotopes. Considering the period in which the work was published, it is witnessed through the work that the Soviet Union, which was about to collapse, was decaying from within. Said Ahmad realistically expressed the theme of corruption, which is a reality of kolkhoz farms, through the chronotope in his work.”

REVISIONS REQUIRED [Revised]

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Reviewed on November 15, 2024.

Review II

The title “Political Chronotopes as Propaganda Tools in Uzbek Soviet Novels” reflects the theoretical framework applied to the examination of the political chronotopes presented in the study. Therefore, the title is appropriate for the article. Although the objective of the study was not clearly stated in the article's summary, it is possible to observe that the author aims to examine chronotopes from Bakhtin's perspective, in order to bring about a reflection on the political and social conditions of a specific period through realist novels. The idea is to show that these chronotopes in the novel allow for the effective transmission of propagandistic ideologies. This approach is present in a coherent manner in the development of the text. The text presents a productive dialogue with Mikhail Bakhtin's conception of chronotope, demonstrating up-to-date knowledge of the bibliography selected for the study. Given that the concept of chronotope, developed by Mikhail Bakhtin, examines how time and space come together in a literary work and construct meanings, the author focuses on political chronotopes present in essential political Uzbek Soviet novels. The work thus presents a contribution to the understanding of how the political and social conditions of a specific period allow the effective transmission of propagandistic ideologies. The text presents clarity and suitability of language for the standards of a scientific work. ACCEPTED

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