

Title: The City that Inspires: Mikhail Bulgakov's Kyiv Narrative
Author: Nataliya Shpylova-Saeed, Indiana University

Abstract:

In his famous essay “The House of the Turbins,” Viktor Nekrasov attempts to outline the geography of Mikhail Bulgakov’s play *The Days of the Turbins*. This attempt to reconstruct the Kyiv geographical layout of the play is constantly interrupted by the life fragments that belong to Bulgakov. The overlapping of the fictional and biographical becomes symbolic for Nekrasov’s essay.

This paper explores how topography develops into multilayered dimensions that contribute to the boundary blurring which appears characteristic of a number of Bulgakov’s works. Although there is some unanimity regarding duality that Bulgakov’s chronotope exemplifies, the diversity of the space and time dimensions that the writer’s works generate invites further elaborations. This examination focuses on the Kyiv narrative, the city that evokes a myriad of private memories and imaginative escapades: *The Master and Margarita*, “The City of Kyiv,” and *White Guard* are the main sources for this inquiry.

This analysis relies on Mikhail Bakhtin’s interpretation of chronotope as such that absorbs and combines a multiplicity of chronotopes. This understanding illuminates Bulgakov’s Kyiv narrative that activates minor chronotopes that function as separate units, subverting the binary opposition of the dominant and the dominated; it serves to explicate some sense of rebellion and freedom. Additionally, Kyiv fragments allow to consider Bulgakov’s structuring of “artistic” (*tvorcheskii*) chronotope that integrates both biographical and artistic/fictional presence of the writer.

Bakhtin, Mikhail. “Formy vremeni i khronotopa v romane. Ocherki po istoricheskoi estetike.” *Voprosy literary i estetiki*. Khud. lit., 1975, pp. 234-407.

Bulgakov, Mikhail. *Belaya Gvardia*. Pravda, 1989.

---. “Kyiv-Gorod.” *Polnoe sobranie p’es, fel’etonov i ocherkov v odnov tome*. Alfa-kniga, 2014.

---. *Master i Margarita*. Azbuka, 2015.

Nekrasov, Victor. “Dom Turbinykh.” *Novyi mir*, no. 8, 1967, pp. 132-142.