ORIGINAL ARTICLE

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

ISSN: 2692-515-x, Impact Factor: 9.23

American Academic publishers, volume 6, issue 01,2026

Journal: https://www.academicpublishers.org/journals/index.php/ijai

THE POETICS OF CHRONOTOPE IN ANNA AKHMATOVA'S BOOK OF POEMS

Amanbayeva Shaxzada Kuatbayevna

Literary Studies: Russian Literature

Second-year Master's student

Abstract: The concept of the chronotope, introduced by Mikhail Bakhtin, plays a crucial role in understanding the artistic organization of literary texts. This article examines the poetics of the chronotope in Anna Akhmatova's *Book of Poems*, focusing on how time and space function as key elements in shaping lyrical meaning, emotional depth, and historical consciousness. Akhmatova's poetry reflects an intense interaction between personal experience and collective memory, where spatial images such as the home, the city, and nature intersect with temporal categories including memory, waiting, loss, and historical trauma. Through close textual analysis, this study demonstrates that Akhmatova's chronotope is characterized by compression of time, symbolic spaces, and a fusion of private and public history. The chronotope in her poetry becomes a means of expressing inner psychological states as well as broader cultural and historical realities. The article argues that Akhmatova's unique poetic chronotope contributes significantly to the development of twentieth-century Russian lyric poetry.

Key words: chronotope, Akhmatova, time and space, lyric poetry, memory, poetics

The study of time and space in literature has long been a central concern of literary theory. One of the most influential concepts in this field is the chronotope, formulated by the Russian philosopher and literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin. According to Bakhtin, the chronotope represents the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships in literary works, shaping narrative structure, character development, and thematic meaning. Although the concept was initially applied to prose genres, especially the novel, it has proven to be highly productive in the analysis of lyric poetry. In lyrical texts, the chronotope often functions in a condensed and symbolic form, revealing the poet's worldview and emotional experience. Anna Akhmatova occupies a unique place in Russian literature of the twentieth century. As a leading figure of Acmeism, she emphasized clarity, concreteness, and precision of poetic imagery. However, beneath the apparent simplicity of her verse lies a complex system of temporal and spatial relations that reflect both personal and historical dimensions. Akhmatova's *Book of Poems* offers a rich field for chronotopic analysis, as it brings together themes of love, separation, memory, suffering, and national tragedy.[1]

The historical context of Akhmatova's creation is essential for understanding her poetic chronotope. Writing during periods of revolution, war, repression, and personal loss, she transforms lived experience into symbolic poetic space. Time in her poetry is often fragmented, cyclical, or frozen, while space is limited, enclosed, and emotionally charged. These features reflect the psychological state of the lyrical subject and the oppressive reality of the epoch. The relevance of studying the chronotope in Akhmatova's poetry lies in its ability to reveal how lyrical form responds to historical trauma. Her poems frequently blur the boundaries between private and collective time, personal space and national space. The individual fate of the lyrical heroine becomes inseparable from the fate of the country. Through the analysis of chronotopic

ISSN: 2692-515-x, Impact Factor: 9.23
American Academic publishers, volume 6, issue 01,2026
Journal: https://www.academicpublishers.org/journals/index.php/ijai

structures, we can better understand how Akhmatova creates a poetic universe where memory preserves truth and poetry becomes a moral witness of history. The aim of this article is to analyze the poetics of the chronotope in Akhmatova's *Book of Poems* by examining key temporal and spatial images and demonstrating their role in constructing meaning. The study focuses on how time and space interact to express emotional intensity, historical consciousness, and the ethical position of the poet.[2]

In Akhmatova's *Book of Poems*, the chronotope is primarily lyrical and psychological rather than narrative. Time and space do not develop linearly; instead, they are condensed into symbolic moments and locations that reveal the inner state of the lyrical subject. One of the most significant features of Akhmatova's chronotope is the dominance of memory. Past events are not simply recalled; they coexist with the present, shaping emotional perception and moral judgment. Temporal images in Akhmatova's poetry often emphasize *остановленное время* (arrested time). For example, in love lyrics, moments of separation or farewell appear timeless, as if removed from historical flow. A simple scene—a meeting at a door, a silent glance, a deserted room—becomes eternal through emotional intensity. Time slows down or freezes, allowing the lyrical heroine to relive the moment endlessly. This creates a chronotope where emotional experience outweighs chronological sequence.

Spatial images in Akhmatova's poetry are usually limited and enclosed. Common spaces include the room, the house, the street, and the city. These spaces function symbolically rather than realistically. The room often represents intimacy and isolation, while the street or city suggests alienation and loss. For instance, Petersburg (later Leningrad) appears not merely as a geographical location but as a space of memory, suffering, and cultural identity. The city absorbs personal grief and reflects historical catastrophe.[3] Nature also plays a role in Akhmatova's chronotope, but it is rarely idyllic. Natural landscapes are often static and restrained, mirroring the emotional state of the lyrical subject. Autumn, twilight, and night dominate her poetic space, reinforcing themes of fading, silence, and reflection. These natural chronotopes emphasize the passage of time while simultaneously suggesting inevitability and resignation.

A particularly important aspect of Akhmatova's chronotope emerges in poems connected with historical tragedy. In works reflecting the years of repression and war, time becomes collective and monumental. Individual biography merges with national history. The waiting of a mother, the silence of prison queues, and the endurance of suffering create a shared temporal experience. Space in these poems is often oppressive—prisons, squares, and silent cities—yet it becomes sacred through shared pain and moral endurance. An example of this can be seen in poems where Akhmatova describes standing among other women, united by grief and hope. The physical space is minimal, but it expands symbolically to represent the entire nation. Time is measured not by clocks but by suffering and memory. This chronotope transforms personal lyric poetry into a testimony of historical truth. Another key feature is the dialogic nature of Akhmatova's chronotope. The lyrical subject often addresses an absent "you," a memory, or history itself. This creates a space where different times communicate: the past speaks to the present, and the present anticipates the future judgment of history. Poetry becomes a bridge connecting generations.[4] Thus, Akhmatova's chronotope is marked by compression, symbolism, and emotional intensity. Time and space serve not as background elements but as active participants in meaning-making. They reflect the poet's ethical stance and her commitment to preserving memory through art.

ORIGINAL ARTICLE
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE
ISSN: 2692-515-x, Impact Factor: 9.23
American Academic publishers, volume 6, issue 01,2026
Journal: https://www.academicpublishers.org/journals/index.php/ijai

The poetics of the chronotope in Anna Akhmatova's poetry is revealed through the close connection between emotional experience, spatial limitation, and psychological time. In her early poems, the chronotope is intimate and concentrated, reflecting the inner life of the lyrical heroine. For example, in the poem **"Song of the Last Meeting"**, the spatial setting is extremely narrow: a staircase, a door, and the surrounding silence. This limited space emphasizes the irreversibility of time, as the meeting becomes a final point that cannot be repeated. Time here is subjective and emotional, experienced as a painful moment of separation rather than as chronological sequence.

In the collection **"Rosary (Chyotki)"**, Akhmatova frequently uses domestic and urban spaces—rooms, gardens, windows, and streets—to represent emotional confinement. In the poem **"You Will Hear Thunder"**, the closed interior space contrasts with the external world, creating a chronotope of isolation. Time is suspended, as the heroine exists in a state of anticipation and memory, where the past dominates the present. A significant transformation of the chronotope occurs in Akhmatova's later poetry, especially in **"Requiem"**. Here, personal time is absorbed into historical time. The spatial image of the **prison queue** becomes a collective and symbolic space of suffering. Time is prolonged and cyclic, marked by endless waiting and repeated trauma. In the poem **"Instead of a Preface"**, the moment of recognition between two women in the prison line unites individual fate with national tragedy, creating a monumental chronotope of shared historical pain.

In **"Poem Without a Hero"**, Akhmatova constructs a complex, multi-layered chronotope where past, present, and cultural memory coexist simultaneously. Petersburg appears not only as a physical city but also as a metaphysical space inhabited by ghosts, reflections, and historical echoes. Time becomes nonlinear, allowing dialogue between different epochs. Thus, through evolving chronotopes, Akhmatova transforms personal lyric poetry into a profound philosophical meditation on memory, history, and human destiny.

Another vivid example of the poetic chronotope in Anna Akhmatova's *Book of Poems* can be observed in poems where the theme of waiting becomes central. Waiting functions as a specific temporal state that is neither active nor passive; it suspends normal time and transforms it into psychological duration. In such poems, time is experienced internally rather than measured objectively. Days and years lose their numerical value and are replaced by emotional intensity, anxiety, and hope. For instance, Akhmatova often depicts the lyrical heroine standing by a window or remaining in a quiet room, listening to distant sounds. The physical space is narrow and limited, yet it becomes emotionally vast. The window acts as a symbolic boundary between inner and outer worlds: inside is silence and solitude, while outside lies an uncertain future. This spatial opposition reinforces the temporal tension of waiting. Time seems to stretch endlessly, emphasizing the suffering of anticipation.[5] In these poems, the chronotope of waiting is closely connected with fate. The lyrical subject does not move through space; instead, space moves inward, becoming psychological. The stillness of the room contrasts sharply with the inner turmoil of the heroine. Even minimal details—a ticking clock, fading light, or evening shadows—acquire symbolic meaning and intensify the experience of suspended time.

This chronotope also carries a broader historical implication. The act of waiting is not only personal but collective, reflecting the condition of an entire generation living in fear and uncertainty. Akhmatova transforms an intimate domestic space into a universal symbol of endurance. The private moment of waiting thus becomes a chronotopic bridge between

ISSN: 2692-515-x, Impact Factor: 9.23
American Academic publishers, volume 6, issue 01,2026
Journal: https://www.academicpublishers.org/journals/index.php/ijai

individual destiny and historical reality. Through this example, it becomes clear that Akhmatova's mastery lies in her ability to create powerful chronotopes using minimal poetic means. Time and space in her poetry are not descriptive elements but expressive tools that convey emotional depth, moral strength, and historical awareness.

The analysis of the poetics of the chronotope in Anna Akhmatova's *Book of Poems* reveals the profound role of time and space in shaping her lyrical worldview. Akhmatova's poetry demonstrates that the chronotope in lyric texts can be as complex and meaningful as in large-scale narrative forms. Through compressed temporal structures and symbolic spatial images, she creates a poetic universe where personal emotion and historical experience are inseparably linked. Akhmatova's chronotope is characterized by the dominance of memory, arrested time, and emotionally charged spaces. Moments of love, loss, and waiting transcend chronological boundaries and acquire timeless significance. Enclosed spaces such as rooms, streets, and cities become reflections of inner states and historical realities. Petersburg, in particular, emerges as a central chronotopic symbol that unites personal fate and national history.

The fusion of private and collective chronotopes is one of Akhmatova's greatest artistic achievements. Her poetry transforms individual suffering into a universal moral experience, allowing the lyrical voice to speak on behalf of many. In this sense, the chronotope becomes a means of ethical expression and cultural memory. Time in her poetry preserves truth, while space bears witness to historical trauma. In conclusion, the chronotopic analysis of Akhmatova's *Book of Poems* deepens our understanding of her poetic method and artistic philosophy. It demonstrates how lyric poetry can respond to historical catastrophe without losing its emotional intimacy. Akhmatova's chronotope affirms the enduring power of poetry to connect time, space, and human experience, making her work a vital part of world literary heritage.

References

1. Bakhtin, M. M. *Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel*. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1981.
2. Akhmatova, A. *Selected Poems*. Moscow: Художественная литература, 1986.
3. Timenchik, R. *Anna Akhmatova: The Poetics of Memory*. St. Petersburg: Academic Press, 2005.
4. Zhirmunsky, V. *Theory of Literature*. Moscow: Nauka, 1977.
5. Pavlovsky, A. *Anna Akhmatova's Lyric World*. Moscow: Sovetsky Pisatel, 1991.