

## DREAM

CHRONOTOPE OR PLOT VARIATIONS WITH CHRONOTOPIC MOTIFS  
IN TURKIC HEROIC EPICS**CRONOTOPIA DE SUEÑOS O VARIACIONES DE TRAMA CON MOTIVOS CRO-  
NOTÓPICOS EN EPOPEYAS HEROICAS TURCAS**Jannatova Gunel Kamran <sup>1</sup>Email: [gunel.jannatova@gmail.com](mailto:gunel.jannatova@gmail.com)ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8216-1435><sup>1</sup> Folklore Institute at Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences (ANAS), Azerbaijan.

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## ABSTRACT

One of the points of interest within the analysis of the expression forms of the time-space continuum in Turkic heroic epics is related to the potential of the dream chronotope to be realized in a different medium. As it is known, the concept of chronotope itself performs both plot-creating and plot-deriving functions and also determines the idea-composition and genre characteristics of the work. In this sense, the analysis of Turkic heroic epics in the context of chronotope theory allows us to reveal many interesting points. Analysis of "Book of Dede Korkut," "Maaday-Qara," and other Turkic heroic epics reveals that the oneiric chronotope has an important plot-forming feature here. It turns out that the oneiric chronotope includes dreams, evaluation of sleep, nightmares, apparitions, and other situations that have such mental and psychological differences. These are fundamentally different from the time-space continuum format in a person's sober state and psycho-emotionally and mentally stable state. In the analyses carried out within the framework of the article, the actualization situation of the oneiric chronotope element is analyzed using the image of Khizir as an example, and the principles of its appropriate inclusion in the reality of the oneiric chronotope are clarified. In addition, there is an explanation of the symbolic coding in the evaluation of sleep books specific to the Turkic mental identity. It turns out that in Turkic epics, the oneiric chronotope (by the plot-content loading of this type of chronotope) is important in terms of the expression of both predictions and subconscious evaluations related to past events (for example, unspoken resentments). Also, it is known that the oneiric chronotope in Turkic heroic epics can be realized based on the activity or inactivity of the characters in a state of stupor within the plot.

**Keywords:** Turkic heroic epics, Chronotope, Oneiric/dream chronotope, Nightmare, Time-space continuum.

## RESUMEN

Uno de los puntos de interés dentro del análisis de las formas de expresión del continuo espacio-temporal en las epopeyas heroicas turcas está relacionado con el potencial del cronotopo onírico para realizarse en un medio diferente. Como se sabe, el concepto de cronotopo en sí mismo cumple funciones tanto de creación como de derivación de la trama, y también determina la idea, la composición y las características de género de la obra. En este sentido, el análisis de las epopeyas heroicas turcas en el contexto de la teoría del cronotopo nos permite revelar una serie de puntos interesantes. El análisis del "Libro de Dede Korkut", "Maaday-Qara" y otras epopeyas heroicas turcas revela que el cronotopo onírico tiene aquí una importante característica argumental. Resulta que el cronotopo onírico incluye sueños, evaluación del sueño, pesadillas, apariciones y otras situaciones que tienen tales diferencias mentales y psicológicas. Estos son fundamentalmente diferentes del formato continuo espacio-temporal en el estado de sobriedad y el estado psicoemocional y mentalmente estable de una persona. En los análisis realizados en el marco del artículo, se analiza la situación de actualización del elemento cronotopo onírico tomando como ejemplo la imagen de Khizir, y se aclaran los principios de su adecuada inclusión en la realidad del cronotopo onírico. Además, en la evaluación de los libros del sueño se explica la codificación simbólica específica de la identidad mental turca. Resulta que en las epopeyas turcas el cronotopo onírico (de acuerdo con la carga de contenido de la trama de este tipo de cronotopo) es importante en

términos de la expresión tanto de predicciones como de evaluaciones subconscientes relacionadas con eventos pasados (por ejemplo, resentimientos tácitos). Además, se sabe que el cronotopo onírico en las epopeyas heroicas turcas puede realizarse basándose en la actividad o inactividad de los personajes en estado de estupor dentro de la trama.

**Palabras clave:** Epopeyas heroicas turcas, Cronotopo, Cronotopo onírico/sueño, Pesadilla, Continuo tiempo-espacio.

## INTRODUCTION

The concept of a chronotope is a fascinating idea that merges time and space. It is often used to describe hypothetical situations where these dimensions combine, creating a complex and dynamic environment. This notion is common in literary studies giving rise to imaginative and intriguing scenarios, but it is also present in other fields (De Fina, 2022). For example, within the framework of Einstein's theory of relativity, chronotopes can be thought of as areas where time and space are distorted due to gravitational fields or high-speed motion. This distortion can produce unusual effects such as time dilation, where the passage of time appears to vary depending on the observer's position (Brandão, 2006). However, the concept of chronotope usually refers to how people perceive and experience time and space, and it is more associated with social and/or literary studies. Thus, someone's space-time perception can be influenced by their cultural background, personal experiences, and emotional state, resulting in diverse interpretations of these dimensions (Martsinkovskaya & Balashova, 2017; Politov, 2020). The concept of a chronotope provides a rich and complex framework for exploring the interaction between time and space and it can be used to create imaginative and provocative scenarios in science fiction, as well as to better understand the human experience of time and space (Bakhtin & Steinby, 2014).

It is recognized that the concept of chronotope, introduced by Mikhail Bakhtin, is fundamental to understanding the narrative structure and characters' perception of their environment in literary works. For example, the study by Lysanets et al. (2023) on literary and medical discourse in the USA reveals how the chronotope influences the representation of medical settings in fiction, affecting not only the reader's perception of doctor-patient relationships but also reflecting and shaping cultural expectations about healthcare. The chronotope here functions as a bridge between institutional reality and its literary representation, potentially influencing how society understands and

relates to the healthcare system. The exploration of the metaphysical chronotope in Karl Ristikivi's work in Kepp (2014) demonstrates how the fusion of time and space in literature can transcend mere physical description to delve into the philosophical and existential. The use of natural elements and landscapes as vehicles to express spatio-temporal relationships suggests that the chronotope can be a powerful tool for exploring abstract and metaphysical ideas in the narrative. The analysis of Chekhov's "Three Sisters" and Bukreeva's "The Black Storm" illustrates how the chronotope can be crucial for understanding character identity and their relationship with their environment. The motifs of high and low places, isolation, and cyclicity not only structure the narrative space but also reflect and shape the psychological and emotional development of the characters, reaffirming that the chronotope is fundamental to the construction of complex and believable characters (Mariakhina, 2023).

The comparison of Elena Popova's works with other playwrights of the Russian "New Wave" demonstrates how the chronotope can be used to explore social and existential themes. The way these authors handle time and space in their works reflects the complexities of post-Soviet society, suggesting that the chronotope can be an effective tool for social criticism and exploring tensions between the individual and society (Lepisheva, 2018). On the other hand, the study in Zhurcheva (2022) on the "new drama" in Russian dramaturgy shows how changes in the handling of the chronotope can signal broader transformations in literary movements. The evolution of narrative techniques and the representation of time and space in these works reflect the social and cultural changes of post-Soviet Russia, indicating that the chronotope can be a useful indicator of broader literary and social trends. Together, these studies demonstrate the versatility and depth of the concept of chronotope. It is not only a tool for literary analysis but also a means to explore philosophical, social, and cultural issues. The chronotope can reveal the complexities of human experience, from everyday interactions in institutional settings to existential struggles and large-scale social transformations. Furthermore, its application in diverse literary and cultural contexts suggests that it is a concept that transcends national boundaries and literary genres, offering a valuable framework for comparative literary study.

According to the chronotope theory, movement within the time-space continuum forms the relevant genre specificity and fulfills the internal mission of the plot. The sleep chronotope is especially worthy of attention among the subtypes distinguished according to the specifics of genre and content and in the chronotopic divisions, which cover

the segment of the realization of a certain process (its limitation within the framework of time-space coordinates). The concept of chronotope, by its very nature, can include different layers of text both in terms of typological characteristics and universal features, which can reveal the time-space characterization of processes taking place at the topographical, psychological, and metaphysical levels (Alimbochka, 2014, pp. 461–462). Namely, as one of the chronotopes with a complex internal structure that can fit such characteristics together, the dream chronotope reveals the potential to realize the topographic, psychological, and metaphysical representation of both the real world and the surreal (imagined, desired, or possibly feared, as in nightmares). With this in mind, the objective of this work is to analyze the manifestation/use of the concept of chronotope in Turkish heroic epics.

## DEVELOPMENT

### 1. Narration format interpretation of dream in the context of chronotope theory

#### 1.1. About the forms of the artistic realization of oneiric chronotope

Emphasizing that the concept of chronotope has a sufficiently synthetic, multidisciplinary nature, researchers have noted that the oneiric chronotope has a special place among the types of chronotopes that require multi-parameter analysis, as one of the clearest examples of this (Golovin, 2013, pp. 52–54). Researchers conducting oneiric chronotope or oneiric motive evaluations often note: 1) that it includes retrospection, i.e., retrospective description, interpretation, and different interpretation of past events; 2) that it is a forerunner of a parallel course of events; 3) that based on the description of unreal events, symbols serve to make certain warnings in conditions of charged meaning; and 4) that it presents the predictability of events that are repeated in the same way in the next plot line (Fedunina, 2013, pp. 31–32).

H. Ziai, a prominent American scholar of Iranian studies, also noted that dreams themselves are manifested in two types, distinguishing between the set of images and plots seen in a dream state and dreams seen in an awake or semi-awake state (in fact, dream-like states) (Ziai, 2011). In other words, the interpretation presented by Ziai does not characterize dreams as a situation in which human consciousness stops its activity during a certain period of rest (for example, night sleep, fatigue sleep, etc.). The scientist also refers to nightmares during periods when consciousness is partially active, hallucinatory visions typical of revelation, and feelings of foresight that appear as an element of sharp intuition, to the concept of sleep in

general. This can be characterized as an assessment in favor of the modern chronotope classification and the fact that researchers who consider the sleep chronotope in a broad sense act from a more adequate position.

#### 1.2. The abstract imagery of the oneiric chronotope

One of the main missions of the oneiric chronotope is based on its ability to reveal to the reader (as well as the listener) what is really important, valuable, significant, or even decisive for the hero (see: (Ilyina, 2016, pp. 14–17)). That is, through dreams, nightmares, and hallucinations that appear due to the dimness of consciousness, even in a state of stupor, a person's inner desires, fears, and excitements find expression. In many cases (for example, in the epic "Maaday – Qara"), sharpened intuition in such a situation becomes a harbinger of the future. Scientists who have studied the nature of dreams note that the chances of experiencing a psycho-traumatic experience in a dream are greater, and they also add that at this time, a person's subconscious and unconscious can realize their wishes, desires, and instincts with certain symbols and metaphors (Beskova, 2005, p. 190).

Naydish, who studied the development of the human cognitive apparatus over time, the sharpening of cognitive abilities, and the mutual conditioning of empiric consciousness and the creative process, emphasized that the formation of the critical-rational approach began to find expression in the forms of folklore considered as a simplified form of mythology. On this basis, the inseparable close connection of folklore creativity with everyday empirical experience was established, which, according to the researcher, made it possible for ancient people to revive emotional images somewhat outside the logical rational ground (Naydish, 2011, p. 21). Dream chronotopes or chronotopic motifs, which can lead to important transitions in the plot frame (in the plot itself, backbone) of heroic epics, among the plot progressions that may seem irrational at first glance and are based on emotional images, also attract attention.

### 2. Different forms of realization of oneiric chronotope in Turkic epics

#### 2.1. The theme of nightmare in the reality of the epic - as the realization of an alternate time-space continuum

The formation of ideas about the fact that the chronotope takes on the essence of an abstract image of a certain time and place has encouraged researchers to establish ideas of chronotope generalization and species differentiation, which are conditioned by different value systems and cultural paradigms. That is, the time-space continuum, while maintaining its abstraction, acquires a certain figurative

framing. As a result, different chronotope models emerge: chronotope of repentance, chronotope of sorcery, chronotope of adventure, chronotope of meeting, chronotope of farewell, chronotope of separation, chronotope of idyll (based on the idyllic approach that characterizes the retrospective view of childhood or youth), chronotope of the road, and so on. Such chronotopic distinctions emerge where both topos and chronotopes can be of interest as equal research objects (Semenov, 2018, pp. 38–42). For example, while the fortress where Bamsi Beyrey spent his captivity has the essence of topos, the sixteen-year captivity contains both topos and the time-space continuum as a whole, forming the corresponding chronotope of captivity based on organic connection and mutual conditioning.

Drawing attention to the fact that one of the interesting forms of realization of the dream chronotope in oral folk literature – nightmares that appear to the eye – researchers note that it was also used very skillfully in later authored literature (Chudinina, 2004, p. 12). In this sense, in Turkic heroic epics, we can generalize the images that appear to the eyes at different moments, especially in situations of difficulty, trials of one character or another, in the struggle with death, and the functions performed by them, to the order of structural components of the oneiric chronotope, and characterize those plot clashes as a chronotope. For example, in the story of “Bugac - the son of Dirsā Khan”, Khizir with the gray horse appeared in the eyes of Bugac, who was mortally wounded by his father's arrow. His healing touch, as well as the salve he (Khizir), utters for the hero's bloody wound, are all distinctive components of the dream chronotope we are talking about - the chronotope of visibility. Namely, the element of unreality, the composition of the ointment, as well as the alleviation of the pain of a fatal wound with a caress, alleviating its complications – all these listed reveals that this plot twist is not the realization of an ordinary dream chronotope.

When the boy fell there, Khizir the Gray Rider was ready by the boy's side. He caressed the wound three times with his hand and said: ‘Boy, don't be afraid, you will not die from this wound. Mountain flower and mother's milk are ointments for wounds.’ He said and disappeared” (Zeynalov & Alizade, 1988, p. 137). The sudden arrival of Khizir Ilyas (his readiness at the moment when he is needed, next to the wounded Bugac), and then his sudden disappearance adds some mysticism and magic to the dream-fancy chronotopic realization, which determines its manifestation in a more diverse format. It is also interesting that here we see the good news given to Bugac that he will live, which also repeats the motifs of the prescient dream chronotope. This is because chronotopes have the peculiarity of being closely connected with each other and

transitioning into one another, an idea that M.M. Bakhtin himself had voiced (see more about this: (Bakhtin, 2000, p. 177)). This idea is once again clearly expressed in this passage.

## **2.2. Khizir – as an element of fantastical-miraculous dream chronotope**

Here, we would like to draw attention to an interesting point: the mystical figure of Khizir, appearing as a fantastical-miraculous chronotope element, adds an atmosphere of mystification and magic to the motif of visibility in the dream chronotope. As noted by I. Elsever, the image of Khizir, presented in Turkic mythology, as well as in the texts of the “Book of Dede Korkut” epics, performs many functions as a god of nature. Specifically, in Bugac's miraculous healing (actually his resurrection) and the plot line, Khizir, according to the folklorist researcher, realizes the “birth” or creation of the new Bugac from the old Bugac in the process of initiation, as a resident of the liminal (transitional, intermediate) world. That is, by ensuring that Bugac, who is already considered dead, is resurrected with a magical touch and a miraculous ointment, Khizir, according to the theory of monomyth, also provides one of the most important stages of the Hero's path - through initiation, he meets his real “I”. This ultimately (again in the theory of the Hero's path) makes it possible for the conflict between father and son to end in reconciliation and for the Hero to be subjected to the initiation ritual in terms of a new title and a new status by attaining the virtues he deserves. Let us remind you that Bugac, the son of Dirsā Khan, also gets a lordship and a throne, and as is known from J. Campbell's teachings (see more about this in (Campbell, 2004)), he becomes a “father”.

T.A. Polyakova, who studied the forms of the artistic realization of the oneiric chronotope, draws attention to the existence of the chronotopic genre of insight dreams. Analyzing the expression forms of the dream chronotope, the researcher notes that it takes place and draws attention to the fact that this chronotope is located at the border crossing between sleep and wakefulness (Polyakova, 2011, pp. 90–93). In this sense, we can confirm that this type of dream chronotope realization has a similar essence to the hallucinatory dream chronotope realization. It turns out that not only foresight takes place in this type of chronotope, but also the moment of opening the eyes of insight to truths, the moment of understanding what the real truth consists of, due to the meaning of the signs and symbols that exist but are not noticed. For example, Maaday-Qara's hallucination dream about the fate that awaits Altay's hand is actually both a precognitive dream and a dream of insight and shows a connection with both directions of progress in the plot line (plot progress).

### 2.3 Evaluation of sleep – as oneiric chronotope motifs

Oneiric space is manifested in the form of dreams, fantasies, imaginary images, imaginary situations, nightmares, hallucinations, and drunkenness, and is directly related to the hero's extreme fatigue, any mental-psychological disorder, or simply falling asleep (Farino, 2004, p. 376). Sometimes even the state of intoxication can lead to the emergence of a pseudo-oneiric (supposedly oneiric) state, not a oneiric chronotope. For example, the forty rascals who provoked Dirse Khan to kill his son with their manipulations and misdirections gave false information to Dirse Khan's wife who asked where her son (Bugac) was. This is explained by the fact that Dirse Khan is in a drunken state and is not able to answer her questions due to drunkenness ("Don't be afraid, don't be afraid, the beg is drunk, he won't answer" (Zeynalov & Alizade, 1988, p. 38)). However, at that moment, Dirse Khan was in a state of oneiric essence - a state of stupor and emotional stagnation. Thinking that he was the murderer of his son, Dirse Khan fell into a state of emotional numbness and stupor in front of his wife's questioning. Dream chronotopic motive plot branching or plot progression, actually serves to provide a different course of the plot based on the imitation of some functions performed by the dream chronotope. In other words, it makes it possible for the epic hero (heroes) to use the dream state (despite the state of physical existence in that time and space, mentally and psychologically out of those time-space coordinates) to get out of a certain situation.

We encounter the chronotope of sleep in "The boy where Salur Ghazan's house was looted". As is known, in situations where the elements of reality and dream syncretism are observed throughout the text of the epic, since the future scenes "shown" to the image in the oneiric chronotope are taken seriously, cause panic, and have a certain thought-provoking effect, in most cases we see the Oghuz heroes sharing their dreams with other people and asking them for an opinion. Here, too, the dream chronotope contains informative honorific chronotope motifs that reveal the foresight of calamities and disasters that will occur in Oghuz and warn of the future. So, the night before Salur Ghazan's house is to be looted, he wakes up with a disturbed sleep and fear. Salur Ghazan expresses concern about his dream of foresight essence and that the symbols here indicate danger. The falcon and bird symbols in Kazan Khan's present dream chronotope point to his enemy and through his enemy to his son Uruz, who was lost from Salur Ghazan, that is, taken from him as a father: "I saw a hawk fluttering in my fist, taking my bird away from me" (Zeynalov & Alizade, 1988, p. 142). In the subsequent plot of the epic, the course of events that the

dream chronotope has prepared its listener (reader) for, that is, rooted in emotional-mental terms, becomes clear as these characters point to the moment of Uruz's captivity. Other symbols in the dream of Salur Ghazan, as an object of his inner fear-fuss, point to his family and home: "I saw lightning from the sky above my high house. I saw a thick, black fog covering my camp. I saw rabid wolves burrowing into my house. I saw that my black hair stretched to the front, covering my eyes as it grew. I saw my ten fingers covered in blood" (Zeynalov & Alizade, 1988, p. 142).

As mentioned in Egazarov's dictionary of symbols, hair was considered a symbol of power from the time of ancient Greek culture. Although many values in European culture changed with the arrival of Christianity, the tradition of recognizing hair as a sacred private object remained unchanged. The practice of tonsure, i.e., the tradition of partially shaving one's hair when being accepted into the priesthood, had a certain sacred symbolic value (Egazarov, 2007, p. 181). Thus, a person who engages in worship in the way of God, by moving away from everyday concerns, moves away from the everyday problems of the ordinary mortal world, carnal desires, and dreams, and devotes himself from worldliness to the path of eternity, to the service of eternal values. In this sense, hair is perceived as a symbol of immediate care, daily household concerns of ordinary mortal life. Therefore, while interpreting Salur Ghazan's dream, his brother Qaragune is not at all wrong when he expresses that Ghazan Khan's hair suddenly growing long indicates unexpected sadness. In the progress of the plot, the looting of Salur Ghazan's house and the increase in his worries reveal that this symbol in the dream chronotope is rooted in the prospect in terms of the sequence of the time-space continuum. C. Cooper's Encyclopedia of Symbols, based on the material of a large number of world myth and myth texts, suggested that disheveled hair symbolizes grief or mourning [Cooper]. At this point, it reveals the symbolic (semiotic) mission of long hair in the symbolization of events based on the symbiosis (unity) of care and sadness.

"Qaragune said: the black cloud is your destiny. The black rain is your army. Hair is care and pain. Blood is sadness. I can't interpret the rest, God interprets" (Zeynalov & Alizade, 1988, p. 142). The expression "black rain" here, no doubt, refers to the fact that the symbol of the color black has been assimilated into the meaning of "big, strong" in Turkic languages. If we take into account that Salur Ghazan himself mentions lightning from the sky (over his house) in the interpretation of his dream, then it becomes clear once again that heavy rain is indicated in the symbolism. According to the encyclopedia of symbols



compiled by Egazarov, heavy rain was characterized as a manifestation of God's anger and as a punishment in world mythology (Egazarov, 2007, p. 277). After this comment, Salur Ghazan, whose heart and mind were filled with even more anxiety, expressed the need to return from the hunt and find out about his village. It is interesting that at this point, in the language of Salur Ghazan, we are rooted in the reality of the adventure chronotope of the time-space continuum, revealing that anxiety and excitement are at their peak: By saying that he will cover the three-day journey from his home to the agban's house in Ich Oghuz in a single day, Ghazan khan expresses the extent of his apprehension and excitement.

## CONCLUSIONS

Based on the analysis, it is shown that the oneiric chronotope was widely used in Turkic heroic epics. At this time, the developer, the narrator of the epic, or if we call it by a general name, the verbal expresser of the epic thought, used the dream-oneiric chronotope for the transition to the next plot line, in a way, for the announcement of expected events. Also, the oneiric chronotope was used as a liminality factor for unexpected transitions in the plot line. Specifically, Bugac's recovery from the clutches of death can be characterized as his reincarnation, a rebirth. This, in turn, created the conditions for Bugac to be selected and included in the limited circle of the elect, taking his rightful place among the Oghuz khans, thanks to the initiation in the next plot line. The fact that Bugac, who conflicted with his father, won the right to live again within the framework of the oneiric chronotope made it possible to evaluate Khizir, who gave him this right, as a special fantastic-miraculous plot-chronotype element. In the plot line related to the interpretation of Salur Ghazan's dream, it was revealed that the oneiric chronotope is rich in serious coding elements.

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