

# THE TIME-SPACE PARADIGM IN THE FILM ADAPTATION OF A LITERARY WORK

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**Abstract:** The present study sets out to analyze the temporal-spatial paradigm in literary film adaptations. The objective is to illuminate the process by which the narrative structures of literary texts are transferred into a visual medium and the subsequent impact on the perception of time and space. In the context of film adaptations of literary works, temporal perspectives and spatial arrangements play pivotal roles in character development as well as thematic progression within the narrative. The literary work is characterized by complex, non-linear narrative structures, including retrospective (flashbacks), analepses, prolepses and parallel storylines, which enable the reader to understand character and plot progression. This study therefore investigates how the temporal and spatial perspectives of a literary work change in the process of film adaptation. The analysis revealed that time cannot exist without space and vice versa. However, it is commonplace for film adaptations to diverge from the temporal and spatial perceptions of the literary work, due to the unique technical demands of the cinematic medium.

**Keywords:** Time-Space Paradigm; Film adaptation; Intermediality.

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**Introduction:** In the modern, progressive era, the boundaries between different media forms or spaces have become increasingly permeable. In this context, the film adaptation of a literary work assumes significance, frequently incorporating elements from literature, cinema, theatre, and occasionally even video games, comics, and animation. Such adaptations often amalgamate narrative storytelling and visual techniques.

Literary works assume diverse forms, extending beyond films and television series to encompass podcasts, radio plays, theatrical productions and opera libretti. This diversity in media forms allows for varied expressions of the same story, catering to different audiences. The concept of intermediality emerges in such cases, signifying that the transformation of a literary work into a different media format, such as film or theatrical production, gives rise to a new context. This new context, in turn, has the capacity to influence and potentially alter both the context and the meaning of the original work.

**A review of extant literary sources and methodology:** With regard to the subject of the research, it was deemed suitable to depend on the pioneers of the concept of intermediality, that is to say, researchers of intermedial processes such as I. Rajewsky and J. Peach. Moreover, we have employed the comparative method. In order to elucidate the temporal and spatial relationships and present the problem with greater clarity, we will draw upon the perspectives of Genette, Bakhtin and Lotman.

**Discussion and Results:** The subject of our research is the analysis of the temporal-spatial paradigm in literary film adaptations. The objective is to illuminate the process by which the narrative structures of literary texts are transferred into a visual medium and the subsequent impact on the perception of time and space. In the context of film adaptations of literary works, temporal perspectives and spatial arrangements are pivotal elements that influence both character development and the thematic unfolding of the narrative. The literary work is characterized by complex, non-linear narrative structures, including

flashbacks, prolepses and parallel storylines, which enable the reader to understand the development of the characters and the plot. This study therefore examines how the temporal perspectives of a literary work change in the process of film adaptation.

Space is just as symbolically charged as time and often reflects the inner conflicts of the characters. It is given great attention and importance in the narrative of the film. Colors, light and camera angles help to create a spatial mood, an atmosphere. For example, a dark, narrow room can symbolize danger and distance, exclusion, while an open, bright room can symbolize freedom and new possibilities. Furthermore, a confrontation of real and fictitious spaces is to be expected. Visual techniques thus serve as a key to interpreting the plot and the characters. We focus on the similarities and differences between the literary work and the film adaptation.

In the contemporary film industry, which is characterized by the proliferation of technical genres, film adaptations of literary texts are frequently employed. In these adaptations, screenwriters often draw upon the narrative structure of the source text. In contradistinction to a literary text, a film employs visual storytelling techniques through various scenic methods. It is also important to note that when a literary text is adapted for the screen, the temporal-spatial relationships, the sequence of action, the content and the linguistic structure are subject to change. This is because the relationship between two different media implies this change from the outset, where the contrast that expresses the specificity of a particular type of text and genre becomes clear.

Theoretical contributions of the French literary critic and narrative theorist Gérard Genette. In addressing temporal aspects, the author underscores several pivotal elements and introduces novel concepts, including narrative sequence, duration, and frequency. The narrative can be structured in various sequences and temporal orientations, a phenomenon that is particularly relevant to our research topic, given that the events are characterized by flashbacks, analepses, or forward movements, a form of prolepses, as evidenced by the editing techniques employed in cinematography (ბერძული, 2019: 44-46). The concept of duration pertains to the narrative and plot time. The author distinguishes between several forms: a story stretched over a longer period of time, where the narrative time is longer than the plot time of the text; a summary narrative, where the narrative time is shorter than the narrated time; an elliptical time, where the narrative seems to stop at one point while the action or plot time continues; and a pause, where the narrative continues, but the action is stopped. In terms of frequency, the narrated story can occur once or several times. Genette's theoretical framework distinguishes between recurrent narrative discourse, defined as the repeated telling or mentioning of something that has happened once, and iterative narration, characterized by the mention of a story that has been told once several times. Focalization – From which perspective is the story told? The author highlights the following points: No focalization: The narrator possesses knowledge or information that exceeds that of the other characters; Internal focalization: The narrator does not say more than the character knows! And finally, external focalization: The narrator says less than the character knows! A significant facet of our research agenda pertains to the voice that accompanies the text, manifesting, for instance, in the roles of the author, narrator, or character (the act of storytelling, encompassing both the subject and the storyteller, as well as the relationship between the storyteller, the character, and the reader) (Schumann: 1-4).

The concept of space, as defined by the French author Maurice Blanchot, is characterized by the notion of literary space, which is formed between the author, the reader and the work. This concept represents a closed, intimate world in which „the worlds are intertwined“ (Blanchot, 1955: 46, as cited in გუჯაბიძე, 2021: 10). Blanchot's vision is predicated on a rejection of the notion that space is merely a decorative element, a background, or even a means of description. Consequently, it is no longer reduced to the function of a harmless stage on which the fate of the character unfolds, but rather appears as a structural agent or guiding vector. It becomes the driving force of intrigue, a kind of means of transportation between worlds (გუჯაბიძე, 2021: 10).

Mikhail Bakhtin proffers his own variants of time-space paradigms. Firstly, he proposes the term „chronotopos“, a concept that is etymologically derived from the Greek: „chronos“ denotes time, „topos“

space. The concept of chronotope, as Bakhtin expounds it, captures the notion of „temporal-spatial entanglements,“ thereby offering an alternative framework for comprehending the intertwined nature of time and space. While the concept of space is well-understood, those of time and movement are less so. The unification of the categories of time and space into a single term underscores Bakhtin's conviction in the inseparability of these elements within artistic structures. For Bakhtin, as for Lotman, space is a reflection in which the vision of the world is mirrored. A literary text, in this sense, functions as a refracting lens that alters the spatial model through which reality is formed; if it does not precisely reproduce this model, it imbues reality with a heightened poetic quality (Bakhtin, 1986: 160-161).

In addition to the author, there are also storytellers in novels, the narrators, since the author is considered the ideological and artistic center behind all voices. Bakhtin meticulously differentiates between the author and the narrator by distinguishing three types of narrative orientation: the author's narrative, the narrator's or storyteller's narrative, and the character's narrative (რაჭიანი, 2008: 46 as cited in გუჯაბიძე, 2021: 13).

The term „chronotopos“ is employed to denote the relationship between time and space as it is artistically represented in the medium of literature. It is presented as a form-content category. In this paradigm, the concept of time undergoes a process of condensation, becoming artistically visible. Concurrently, space undergoes an intensification, growing over the course of time, thereby serving as the medium through which the theme, the story, the narrative, and the plot are developed. The characteristics of time manifest themselves in space. The concept of chronotope, as employed in this study, pertains to the artistic text in its entirety. Bakhtin distinguishes between the chronotope of the idyll, which he defines as the family idyll. The concept of the idyll is characterized by the organic merging of people's lives and specific events within a single locale, namely the home, which is delineated by distinct corners and sides, evoking imagery of mountains and valleys, and the presence of houses. The ideological dimension of human existence and the process of life (language, morals and customs) is described in detail (Bakhtin, 1986: 160). This microcosm fosters the formation of an uninterrupted chain of generations, a phenomenon that is profoundly influenced by the unity of the locale, given the centuries-old connection to it. This phenomenon serves to dissolve the conventional boundaries and limitations imposed by time, thereby facilitating a harmonious and cyclical rhythm of time, characterized by the proximity of concepts such as cradle/birth and grave/death (Bakhtin, 1986: 161).

Furthermore, the author distinguishes between mysterious chronotopes, carnival chronotopes, street chronotopes and marginal chronotopes, although it is acknowledged that each literary work has its own special chronotope. The author ascribes to these chronotopes the role of plot developers and describes them as an artistically significant category. The significance of these moments lies not in any temporal or spatial constraints, yet the pursuit of meaning remains contingent upon the lens of the chronotope (ჭრავაძე, 2004: 16-17).

The literary critic and semiotician Juri Lotman emphasizes the constant struggle with time and space during the filmmaking process. Cinematography, as a medium, engenders a representation of the world. The artist endeavors to demonstrate the world in the context of space and time. Conversely, cinematography imposes the correspondence of objective space and objective time with the system of the outside world on the artist prior to the commencement of the creative act. The artist is faced with the choice of either confronting this reality and overcoming it with cinematic means, or surrendering to its constraints.

The frame is limited by certain parameters. Beyond these confines, the realm of cinema becomes nonexistent. The technique of close-up shooting is regarded as a means of transgressing these boundaries. The concept of metonymy is exemplified by the transformation of an isolated detail into a symbol of the whole. This isolated detail, in its ability to alter the entire composition, becomes a metonymy, representing an unchanging part of the whole. The image is formed in many dimensions. In the cinematic language, the close-up of the eyes is characteristic, serving as a metaphor for conscience and a symbol of moral judgment, a motif that recurs throughout the scene. Cinema, with its limitation by frames, paradoxically creates an unlimited space. This dynamic interplay between limitation and expansion, conflict

and struggle, is a fundamental aspect of cinematic expression. The shots that fill the artistic space try to break through it, to overcome its boundaries (Lotman: 124-128).

This paper will examine the novel „Steppenwolf“, written by German author Hermann Hesse, and the film adaptation of the same name by Fred Haines. The focus will be on significant chronotopes, defined as the temporal structure of a given narrative. 1. The first chronotope to be analyzed is that of the city, which is characterized by its alienation, modernity and pervasive sense of depression. It is a milieu of isolation and detachment, which reflects the protagonist's attitude towards life. The urban space thus serves to underscore Haller's sense of alienation from the prevailing societal norms. This sense of alienation is further compounded by the pervasive sense of loneliness that pervades his interpersonal relationships. The city, in this sense, serves as a metaphor for the challenges and difficulties inherent in modern life. Haller's position is thus one of being caught between romantic ideals and the uncompromising reality of urban existence. The city also symbolizes an inner conflict within Haller, embodied by the Steppenwolf, a figure that represents an insatiable quest for freedom.

2. The salon is the place where Haller encounters Hermine, Pablo and other characters. Dialogues ensue, facilitating Haller's process of resolving internal contradictions. The salon thus functions as a space for discussion and reflection. In this setting, Haller engages with a variety of philosophical and existential concepts, facilitating his self-discovery and the establishment of his personal identity. Hermine's role as a guide facilitates Haller's acquisition of new experiences. Consequently, the salon functions as a catalyst for self-discovery. It is here that Haller comes to the realization that he is not alone in his personal struggles.

3. The forest is a site that is imbued with a sense of the mystical and that is often charged with symbolism. It is in this environment that Haller finds both refuge and resistance. It is a location conducive to introspection as well as being a site of potential peril, wherein Haller engages with his most intimate fears and yearnings. The forest provides a space for solitude, enabling Haller to disengage from the demands of city life and its incessant rhythm. In this environment, Haller experiences an uninterrupted state of introspection and contemplation. Within the confines of the forest, Haller is compelled to confront his primal instincts, which are symbolized by the wild wolf. The natural environment is seen to reflect both his inner wildness and the danger that accompanies these instincts. The forest thus becomes a site of personal transformation, wherein Haller is presented with the opportunity to acknowledge and accept his dual nature. It is in this environment that he undergoes a profound process of self-discovery and identity formation.

4. The magic theatre is presented as both a real and illusory space. Within this realm, Haller finds himself enmeshed in a phantasmagoric universe. The theatre functions as a medium through which Haller can unveil various dimensions of his personality. The fusion of reality and illusion that characterizes the magic theatre serves as a metaphorical backdrop against which Haller's personal journey unfolds. This ambiguity is reflective of Haller's internal conflict, ultimately leading him to the realization of his own identity. The chronotopes of „Steppenwolf“ are intricate and considerably influence the evolution of the characters and the thematic intricacy of the novel. These reflect Haller's internal struggle and search for identity, belonging, and meaning in an alienated world. Through the various spaces and their symbolic meanings, readers are able to comprehend the intricacies of human existence and the challenges of modern life.

Prior to embarking on a detailed examination of the film's narrative structure, it is pertinent to acknowledge the introductory treatise, which asserts, „Once upon a time, there was and is not, there was a certain Harry, named the Steppenwolf“ (Licht, 2005: 56). This immediately signals the customary commencement of a fairy tale, the author's intention, and Hesse's endeavor to situate this book within another literary world – a fairy tale, a poetic fiction, a narrative work grounded in a fantastic narrative yet connected to reality by means of idea, theme, motifs, plot and linguistic features.

A parallel may be drawn between the 'magic theatre' and the 'laterna magica'. The so-called magic lantern, in which images printed on glass plates enclosed in a metal, wooden, or cardboard frame are

projected through an optical system and the front lens of the device, was considered one of the predecessors of cinema and an attractive spectacle at „fairs.“

In the film, the magic theatre is presented as a setting in which an imaginary reality is created behind every door through which people enter and exit, and which is observed by the viewer like a film frame. The film-like impression is further enhanced by the text inscriptions on the doors, which resemble the text panels of silent films. Haller's initial reaction upon encountering the door bearing the inscription „Departure on a happy hunt!“ „Hunting for cars“ (Licht, 2005: 78). This serves to reinforce the filmic associations in the reader's mind. The author, Haller, is transported into a „noisy and chaotic world“ (Licht, 2005: 78). On the eighth page, the author allows his protagonist to become an active participant in a narrative characterized by its wild and grotesque elements.

The wall is presented as a mysterious border between possible transformations, which can be crossed or through which all is possible. Upon Haller's departure from the wall through the imagined portal, „a series of colored letters“ emerge before him, positioned above the reflective asphalt (Licht, 2005: 72). These letters coalesce to form the motto that initiates Haller's notes: „Only – ; for the crazy – –!“ (Licht, 2005: 72). „The complete longing for the gate of the magic theatre, only for the crazy“ (Licht, 2005: 72), „The magic theatre is not for everyone to enter – not for everyone“ [...]“ For Haller, cinema is „for everyone“, for normal people.

The gate, as a mystical symbol of passage to another world, had been utilized in various forms of folklore and mythology prior to its introduction in cinema. The „gate/door“ does not exclusively belong to the realm of myths and fairy tales, nor is it a characteristic element of film. Nevertheless, it was in the medium of silent films, within various symbolic contexts, that the motif came to life with such intensity that it inspired the author to create certain passages in „The Steppenwolf“.

This example clearly demonstrates that media experiences must be considered in the context of historical circumstances. The contemporary viewer no longer perceives the „door/gate“ as mystically significant. Nevertheless, the symbolic act of passing through a door, as exemplified by the experience of attending a cinema, continues to represent a substitution of our perception of reality in favor of that which is portrayed on the screen. A similar phenomenon is observed in Haller's experience, where he transitions through the gate of the cinema, only to find himself „suddenly in the middle of the Old Testament“ (Licht, 2005: 73).

The film adaptation of the treatise commences with a scene in which Haller, traversing the city by night, encounters a figure bearing a poster and a suitcase shop suspended from his abdomen, reminiscent of the manner in which vendors at „fairs“ would traditionally do so, bearing merchandise for sale. While in the book the reader perceives this scene as a real encounter, Hesse attempts to emphasize the unreal or magical, while the director imposes a different emphasis in the film: at the moment when Haller takes the booklet from the man, the vendor disappears for the viewer like a magic trick. This visual technique serves to suggest to the viewer that Haller is a real person. The flickering of the letters on the magic theatre alludes to fictitiousness, imagination, phantasmagoria and visions, reaching its climax with the sudden disappearance of the figure. In this scene, Haines employs exaggerated external effects to portray Haller's inner, dreamlike state. The auditory backdrop serves to heighten the impact of this visual deception.

This is followed by an act in which the title of the magazine is displayed in italics. The screen is filled with the title of the treatise, thereby engendering a sense of the viewer becoming a reader along with Haller. The reproduction system establishes a relationship with the book, thereby creating the impression of reading. Rajewsky describes this phenomenon in the context of media alternation (Rajewsky, 2003: 62).

Upon the act of turning the page within the confines of the frame, the viewer is presented with a portrait that has been meticulously crafted by Haller. Concurrently, the words of Hesse's text resonate from within the off, creating a symbiotic auditory and visual experience. In this instance, the experience of reading is amalgamated with the observation of images and illustrations, the audible reading and the manipulation of the pages, thereby evoking the act of reading, despite the fact that the illustrations



are perceptible. The text and the drawings are not synchronized with each other, but rather reflect the problem of polarity. When we encounter the text „he walked on two legs, wore clothes and was a man“ (Licht, 2005: 92), for instance, within the confines of the frame, the viewer is presented with an image of a wolf. The subsequent page of the book is then revealed, inscribed with the words, „But in reality, he was a Steppenwolf“ (Licht, 2005: 92), and the viewer is presented with a montage of the preceding two individual drawings. Haines employs a conventional illustration technique for the treatise, which subsequently introduces the concept of animated films. This approach enables a discussion of the concept of a film within a film. The simple, trivial animated version provides a strong contrast to Hesse's literary text, but the director creates his own unique work of art, which exposes the problem of the Steppenwolf to the viewer, revealing it – the conflict between psyche and instinct. As the animated sequence concludes, the camera makes its entrance through an open doorway, and the scene is accompanied by a voiceover that reads, „And the door closed.“ This transition serves to shift the focus from the realm of animation narratives to the more realistic elements of the film.

In this passage, the focus will be directed towards the blue background, otherwise referred to as the blue screen. This arduous process in the contemporary film industry has been predominantly supplanted by computer technology, yielding considerably more efficacious outcomes and regarded as a cinematic standard at present. By way of comparison, the images of the magic theatre appear to the modern viewer to be of a rather amateurish standard, which may have been deliberately conceived in this way by the director, so that the viewer would perceive Haller's feelings and adventures in the magic theatre as a dream-like state, and not as the reality of the film.

It is noteworthy that the intermedial relation to the medium of music as a binding element of the text is a constant presence in Hesse's oeuvre. Alongside Mozart, other composers and musicians are featured, including Bach, Brahms, Beethoven, Schubert, Chopin, Wagner, and the jazzman saxophonist Pablo. The book contains many references to the medium of music, even mentioning the radio and the gramophone, and according to Rajewsky, this aspect may be considered an explicit reference to the system in the text (Rajewsky, 2002: 79).

**Conclusions:** It can thus be concluded that the time-spatial parameters in film adaptations of literary works are characterized by elements of the cinematic medium. Nevertheless, the decision to adhere to the original literary plot, content, and form is contingent upon the director's prerogative. The analysis of this film reveals that time is compressed, events quickly follow each other, and there is frequent play with time and in time, perhaps to show that the main character is lost, alienated, and unable to determine whether he is in reality or in a dream. With regard to space, the concept of the „magic theater“ was identified, encompassing intermedial relations such as film and animation, comics, film and music, and film and cinema. It is noteworthy that the plot remained unaltered, with the spaces that played a leading role in Hesse's work also being brought to the forefront in the film. However, it should be noted that in this case, we are looking at the director's interpretation and perception, while another image and picture may come to life in the reader's imagination. As Joachim Peach observes, the author or director functions as an intermediary between the domains of literature and film (Peach: 335).

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