

**CHRONOTOPIC ORGANIZATION OF THE SHORT-STORY  
BY NIKOLAI GOGOL “ST. JOHN’S EVE”**

**Anna Pavelieva<sup>1</sup>**

**Tetiana Kushnirova<sup>2</sup>**

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**Abstract.** The goal of research is the comprehensive analysis of spatio-temporal relations in the short-story by N. V. Gogol “St. John’s Eve”, the categories of literary time and literary space as plot-forming and character-creative characteristics and as important structural elements of the romantic worldbuilding of Gogol’s short-story. The subject of investigation is spatio-temporal worldbuilding of Gogol’s short-story “St. John’s Eve”. The theoretical and methodological basis of the study are the works of S. D. Abramovich, M. M. Bakhtin, N. G. Gey, A. B. Yesin, V. Ya. Zvin-yatskovsky, Yu. M. Lotman, L. A. Sofronova, V. E. Halizev, A. Ya. Esalnek and others. The article states that the chronotope in this short-story has heterogeneous and combined character, and temporal and spatial movements are carried out thanks to the image of the narrator. The article discusses real/irreal space and story-line, calendar, abstract and historical time; inn chronotope and the spatial demoniacal vertical framework, along the axis of which the plot action unfolds. In Gogolian narrative both the image of the fern and the treasure hunting motive are inextricably bound up with the spatial demoniacal vertical framework. The dream motive is considered as the author’s technique for the transition of a character from irreal time and space into real. Particular attention is paid to the subjective “time of the character” (or the so-called “individualization of time”) – in other words to the emotional and psychological perception of the time of narration by Petrus Bezrodnyi. Thus, the night is considered in the article as the time of taking life-changing steps, the time of doubts, fear and internal struggle

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<sup>1</sup> Candidate of Philological Sciences,

Associate Professor at the Department of Germanic Philology and Translation, Poltava National Technical Yurii Kondratyuk University, Ukraine

<sup>2</sup> Doctor of Philological Sciences,

Professor at the Department of Germanic Philology and Translation, Poltava National Technical Yurii Kondratyuk University, Ukraine

within the self. The authors of the study emphasize the disastrous nature of space in the story and analyzes the deformation of spatio-temporal boundaries and condensation of space and time in this literary work. The article also studies day-night cycling of events, literary chronology (movement from the wedding, joy, to melancholy and despondency, from summer blossom to spring sadness) and temporal discretisation as a means of psychologization and dynamization of the plot. According to the authors, irrational time in the short-story “St. John’s Eve” is associated with fairy-tale images (the witch Baba Yaga, a hut on the chicken’s legs) and the motive of metamorphosis (transformation of the witch Baba Yaga into a dog and a cat, Petrus into a madman, gold into smithereens, inn – into the “resident evil”, etc.).

### **1. Introduction**

In recent decades, in Ukrainian literature studies there has appeared a number of interesting research works on literary time (“artistic time continuum” – according to M. M. Bakhtin) and literary space (“artistic space continuum” – according to M. M. Bakhtin) in the works of N. V. Gogol, which offer various approaches to the comprehension of this complex literary phenomenon. Among numerous academic pursuits, the subject matter in which are the categories of literary time and / or literary space in the writer's works, most of works are devoted to the road/route chronotope, historical time, fantastic space, the image of the city. As for Gogol’s works, the “epic poem in prose” (as Gogol himself saw it) “Dead Souls”, the cycle “Petersburg Tales”, and his comedy “The Government Inspector” (“Revisor”) were most often subjected to chronotopic analysis.

Nevertheless, the spatio-temporal structure of Gogol’s cycles “Evenings on a Farm Near Dikanka” and “Mirgorod” remains one of the least studied aspects of the problem under consideration. Based on the material from the first short-story collections of the writer, the researchers partially examined the fantastic space and the opposition “Dikanka/St. Petersburg”, “our/their” space in the “Evenings on a Farm Near Dikanka”, the heroic chronotope in the novel “Taras Bulba” and particular characteristics of spatial organization in the horror novella “Viy”.

Despite the fact that some aspects of literary space and literary time were partially covered in the dissertations of I. F. Zamanova, O. S. Karandashova, V. O. Korkishko, I. I. Merkulova, A. K. Pavelieva, many components

of spatiotemporal worldbuilding in Gogol's early prose has not attracted the attention of researchers yet.

Thus, the problem of studying literary time and literary space in the cycles by N. V. Gogol “Evenings on a Farm Near Dikanka” and “Mirgorod” is not scientifically exhausted, it requires further research, and certain scientific concepts related to it need to be reviewed, elaborated and specified.

**Actual scientific researches and issues analysis.** Literary space and time, chronotopes and landscapes’ functions in the short-story by N. V. Gogol “St. John’s Eve” (“Vecher nakanune Ivana Kupala”) were partially considered by Ukrainian and Russian Gogol scholars. For example, V. I. Matsapura elucidates the mythopoetic image of Gogol’s Ukraine and researches the synthesis of pagan and Christian motifs, which at the same time are given as opposite poles [13]. A. S. Kichenko examines the mythologization of space and traditional spatial and temporal oppositions [10], V. D. Denisov studies “an alien world – night, underground world” [6], M. A. Novikova and I. N. Shama reveal different forms of interconnection and the interdependence of characters and space in Gogol’s short-story under examination [14]. In her dissertation, I. F. Zamanova analyzes the oppositions of “our/theirs” and “right/left” in the symbolism of space, the function of dream, the two-worldness/bi-worldness (real and unreal, magical and everyday household space), the forest as the border between two worlds, the transition of the main character of the story Petrus Bezrodnyi (in some translations – Pyotr Kinless) into the “alien” world [7]. According to L. A. Sofronova, St. John the Baptist’s day (the so-called Kupala Night) and folk-beliefs, related to it, primarily determine the content of the short-story “St. John’s Eve”, and holy days and the circle of seasons are analyzed as chronotopical landmarks (reference points) that characterize certain temporal stages of characters’ life in this Gogolian short-story. The researcher also separately reviews the perception of natural time by the characters of the story, the “dangerous time of day” and peculiarities of time fragmentation in terms of mythopoetics. The deformation of the ideal space and the color scheme of the world in short-story “St. John’s Eve” are examined by A. G. Kovalchuk [11]. Mystical time, mystical space and the mystical chronotope as the crucial components of this literary work, as well as the relationship of the narrator and the characters with literary space and literary time in this Gogol’s literary writing, became the objects of study in the works of A. K. Pavelieva [16; 17].

Nevertheless, the categories of literary time, literary space and the chronotope in the short-story by N. V. Gogol “St. John’s Eve” have not been soundly-based and comprehensively investigated and require further detailed study.

**The goal of research.** As it appears from the name of Gogol’s short-stories collection “Evenings on a Farm near Dikanka”, the categories of literary time and literary space fulfil plot-forming and character-creative functions in the stories of Gogol’s first cycle. Therefore, the purpose of our article is the comprehensive analysis of spatio-temporal relations in the short-story by N. V. Gogol “St. John’s Eve” as the most interesting object of research from the point of view of chronotopical coordinates of a literary work.

To achieve this goal it is necessary to solve the following **tasks**: to find out any and all varieties of literary time, literary space, chronotopes, toposes, loci and chronotopical motifs in the short-story by N. V. Gogol “St. John’s Eve”; to identify their role and functions in the specified literary work; to analyze the mutual influence of characters and space / time in the imaginative world of Gogol’s story.

**Research methodology.** The theoretical and methodological basis of the study are the works of S. D. Abramovich, M. M. Bakhtin, A. B. Botnikova, S. N. Broitman and V. I. Tyupa, N. G. Gey, A. Ya. Gurevich, I. A. Yesaulov, A. B. Yesin, V. Ya. Zvinyatskovsky, A. S. Kichenko, N. F. Kopystyanskaya, D.S. Likhachev, Yu. M. Lotman, A. N. Loy, Yu. V. Mann, V. I. Matsapura, I. I. Merkulova, S. Yu. Neklyudov, I. B. Rodnyanskaya, L. A. Sofronova, N. D. Tamarchenko, V. N. Toporova, F. P. Fedorov, P. A. Florensky, V. E. Halizev, A. Ya. Esalnek, T. V. Kushnirova.

**Research methods.** The study is based on the usage of historical-literary, cultural-typological, structural-functional, systemic, and statistical methods and approaches.

## **2. Statement of basic materials. Major points of spatio-temporal worldbuilding in the short-story by N. V. Gogol “St. John’s Eve”**

Literary time and literary space are the plot-forming structural elements of the short-story by N. V. Gogol “St. John’s Eve”. In the context of this story, place and time are symbolic, and this contributes to the fact that this short-story is perceived by readers as a heroic epic ballade.

Transitions from the narrative-declarative into the plot-story line mysti-

cal time are easily and freely made by means of the image of the narrator/storyteller (who is always vitally important in Gogol's works). The narrator "compresses" the time (from Basavriuk's tricks to romantic rendezvous of Petrus Bezrodnyi and Pidorka), "stretches out" the time (in the episode when Petrus looks forward to the approaching of the evening) and, on the contrary, stops it (for example, when describing Pidorka's appearance or when telling about how "weddings in the old days were no comparison with ours").

The chronotope of the short-story by N. V. Gogol "St. John's Eve" has unhomogeneous and combined character. So, for example, at the beginning of this short-story uneventful time prevails – these are the narrator's recollections about Foma Grigorievich and his manner of storytelling. They are followed by sexton's retelling of the story, which he heard in childhood from his grandfather. Here we can point out such characteristics of the author's chronotope as abstractedness and multilayeredness. We do not know either when Foma Grigorievich shared his memories with Rudy Panko (Rusty Panko), or where it happened. The writer only mentions that everyone "moved closer to the table and he began". In addition, three time layers simultaneously appear in front of the reader: Rudy Panko once heard a story told by a sexton, and he, in his turn, heard it as a child from his grandfather who claimed that this story happened "way, way back, more than a hundred years ago". Since the described events took place in the distant past, the author describes abstract time: "he would ...", "he used to ...", "one day...", "a while back...", "one time..." and etc.

The events the sexton tells about took place in the open space – "in the middle of a field", where there were "some dozen huts, cobless, roofless, stuck up here and there", in historical time – in the days "before hetmanate". Most likely, this was the era of Lithuanian-Polish rule: "almost everybody then went Cossacking and got no small amount of goods in other lands <...>. What folk weren't hanging about then: Crimeans, Polacks, Litvaks! It also happened that bunches of our own would come and rob their own. Everything happened" [1, p. 36]. This village, located "maybe no more than a hundred paces from Dikanka", was then a poor farmstead of a dozen roofless huts. Such spatio-temporal "aging" and "shrinking" of the borough creates the impression of "prehistoric" events, giving the story the tone of a legend. Moreover, this space is ghostly – "there's no trace left now" of

this hamlet. In addition, it is unreal – the demonic man Basavriuk comes here from nowhere and disappears without a trace. “In this farmstead a man often appeared, or, better, a devil in human form. Where he came from and why he came, nobody knew” [1, p. 36].

The mythological time that arose in archaic world models goes in the opposite direction: from the present to the past. For the narrator, past events are of immediate interest and do not belong to another time period, according to I. B. Rodnyanskaya [18, p. 488]. Therefore, mythological time is not inconvertible and linear and allows to turn back the clock and to open into the future known only to the narrator. Mythological time is often associated with the motif of eternity (“A Terrible Vengeance”), trial motif and the motif of paying a price in blood for the transition into the demonic world (“St. John’s Eve”, “The Lost Letter”), “temporal superstitious beliefs”, for example, beliefs that the treasure, mined on St. John’s Eve, will not bring happiness. Mythological time in Gogol’s works is characterized by inhomogeneity, conventionality, relativity; the symbolic significance of calendar time and time of day; personification, as well as the use of demonological, biblical and mythological images and motives.

The short-story “St. John’s Eve” is marked by cyclicism of events: after Petrus’s death, life in the hamlet resumed its natural everyday course, and the devil again began to “play” with space, reviving inanimate objects filling it (“the fried lamb raised its head”, “the glass bowed to the ground”, “a huge tub suddenly jumped away” and etc). That is, the story begins with the description of Basavriuk’s tricks and hankey-pankeys and ends with them – on the day of Petrus’s death, Basavriuk again appeared in the hamlet. In addition, the cyclical time in the short-story is presented by the change of seasons.

Dropping the curtain, Foma Grigorievich concluded that the tavern on Oposhnyanskaya Road “was fixed up by the unclean tribe at their own expense for a long time afterwards”, but “now, for instance, on this same spot where our village stands, everything seems quiet” [1, p. 44].

### **3. Mystical time and mystical space as the chronotopical basis of the story**

Mystical time is the time from sunset to the third rooster’s crow inclusive, filled with supernatural, inexplicable, mysterious events and characters that do not belong to the human realm (witches, water-casters, sor-

cerers, spirits, monsters, beasts, gods, evil spirits, mythological creatures, etc.). You can also consider to be mystical such semi-Christian, semi-pagan holidays like Christmas, Whit Sunday, St. John the Baptist's day, rusalyi – ancient Slavic spring holiday which commemorates the dead, etc. Mystical time, combined with the trial motif, is often intertwined with adventure time and time of day (midnight). This time is unfavorable for the hero of a story, so the actions taken by the character at this time may be unsuccessful, or may have bad consequences. So, the treasure found by Petrus Bezrodnyi in the short-story “St. John's Eve” at mystical time – the dead of night, did not bring him luck and happiness.

The key mystical time in this story is the night at which Petrus Bezrodnyi made a deal with the devil, the mystical space is the hamlet where the main characters live (as complementary, but separate components of the spatio-temporal worldbuilding); mystical chronotope – midnight in Bear's Gully on John the Baptist (as a merging, interlacing of mystical time and mystical space). All of the above-mentioned components of the spatio-temporal structure of this short-story play the key role in the contexture of Gogol's work.

The title of the short-story itself – “St. John's Eve” – indicates that the time component of the spatiotemporal worldbuilding plays center stage in its structure, because the main plot action takes place on the night of July 6 to July 7 – on the most mysterious and mystical night (in accordance with folk beliefs). The space in Gogol's story is secondary. In the early works of Gogol St. John the Baptist's is the night of devilish, evil, demonic forces, when, according to Slavic mythology, all evil spirits come out of the water to the land, and the herbs are endowed with magical powers. The time in the short-story “St. John's Eve” is subject to evil spirits, who “turn” it against the characters – Petrus and Pidorka. The “the evil one prompted him – without taking a good look around the front hall, to plant a hearty kiss, as they say, on the Cossack girl's rosy lips, and the same evil one – may the son-of-a-bitch dream of the Holy Cross! – foolishly put the old coot up to opening the door” [1] at that very moment. As a result, Petrus was kicked out, his beloved was forced to marry the unloved rich Polack, and the poor man had no choice but to plod straight to the tavern in order to drown his grief.

The setting of events, as envisioned by the author, occurred “at an hour when good people go to church” [1], and the climax is on St. John's Eve.

Twice in mystical time, the main character made false steps in a journey through life. Exactly at the mystical (night) time, Petrus Bezrodnyi agreed to pact with the Devil and cooked his own bacon (ruined himself). The hero's character, appearance and his fate are revealed precisely in these two decisive nights more than through his actions before and after them.

Mystical time is usually related to mystical space. In Gogol's short-story, the main dramatic events take place in Bear's Gully, in a devilish place, in the presence of a witch, a "devil" (Basavriuk) and "hideous monsters", which leaped before Petrus in throngs. It is noteworthy that in "St. John's Eve" there are two types of mystical space. At first glance, the hamlet in which Korzh, Pidorka and Petrus lived and in which Basavriuk played the rogue, seems to be everyday household space. However, we believe that the heroes' habitat – the key topos of the short-story – is not at all ordinary household, but it is mystical space, as evidenced by some of its features. Firstly, the bounds of humans' space and time in the indicated work are flagrantly violated by evil spirits ("the very next night some friendly visitor from the swamp, with horns on his head," [1]) and by Basavriuk, "a devil in human form". Basavriuk would "prowl the streets of the hamlet" and present "pretty girls" with demonic gifts. That is, the devil (fiend/ Basavriuk) deforms the space of the hamlet, muddying the water, putting fear in everyone's heart and animating different objects (fried lamb, glass of fire-water, a tub with dough).

The latter is of prime importance as these are things, from the point of view of N. I. Ischuk-Fadeeva, that connect the daytime, visible, and understandable world with the terrible evening world [9, p. 245]. A. G. Kovalchuk also noted that in the space on which Satan's shadow falls, the behavior of the material world strikes by its illogicalness: the devilish ring or necklace thrown into the water would come "floating right back to your hands" [11, p. 29]. It can be argued that this is Basavriuk's space, in which it is he who dominates (or rather, commits excesses with impunity), and not the local priest. No wonder that the first version of this short-story was entitled by the author as "BIS-avryuk, or St. John's Eve". "Bis" in Ukrainian is a devil, demon or an evil spirit, thus, a name of the character, including the word "bis" emphasized his nature of the beast and the devilry underlying the plot.

Secondly, the fact, that this settlement was located "maybe no more than a hundred paces from Dikanka" [1] is of particular concern, as it is well known that Dikanka, as well as Kiev, are peculiar positive centers of the



worldbuilding in Gogol's cycles "Evenings on a Farm Near Dikanka" and "Mirgorod", positive toposes, around which devilry is grouped, and to which all Gogolian negative characters are drawn. In Gogol's texts, Dikanka and Kiev are surrounded by mystical spaces, hostile to humans, with "demonic" characters inhabiting them. D. S. Burago emphasizes that Gogol's positive toposes are surrounded by pagan space, where under the thin layer of Christian civilization there lurked long-standing horrors of folk demonology, and terrifying two-worldness looms on the border of such spaces [2, p. 12]. Therefore, it seems that it is not without reason that the plot-story line time in the short-story "St. John's Eve" unfolds in a lost, godforsaken hamlet near Dikanka, in which evil spirits seamlessly play pranks, and ends with the mentioning of Kiev Pechersk Lavra, where Pidorka went to pray for forgiveness of her husband's sins. In other words, the main plot action in the Gogolian story begins in the space of the devil, though "in human form", and ends in the space of God.

The fourth, the affirmation that the mentioned hamlet is mystical space is evidenced by the fact that neither Father Afanasy nor the presence of the "church of St. Panteleimon" can protect it from evil spirits. V. Ya. Zvinyatskovsky emphasizes the symbolism of the implication of the villagers, including Petrus Bezrodnyi, to St. Panteleimon. This saint was invoked for "sickly and insomnolent", therefore, from the researcher's point of view, the author gives the readers the cue that even powerful St. Panteleimon will not be able to cure Petrus from a disease to which he has been reduced by his union with evil spirits. According to V. Ya. Zvinyatskovsky, it is precisely this motive of depletion of once powerful sanctuaries before the day of doom that Gogol develops in his horror novella "Viy". M. Ya. Weisskopf thinks that "the matter, apparently, is that the carnal, material side of the church in Gogol's short-stories completely absorbs or displaces the spiritual side" [3, p. 112].

As noted earlier, the mystical chronotope in Gogol's short-story "St. John's Eve" is represented by the space of the Bear's Gully and time (from midnight) of Midsummer Night. The road to the Bear's Gully, as in Russian folk tales, leads through a dense, impenetrable forest. Foma Grigorievich's grandfather, the central character of Gogol's short-story "The Lost Letter", will get into the demons' den through the similar forest. Khoma Brut will also bushwhack through impenetrable wilds, trying to escape from the chief's farmstead.

The terrene through which Petrus and Basavryuk made their way has markedly fatal and disastrous character, because the Bear's Gully is a dark, "deep ravine", with thickets of blackthorn, on which the travelers got hooked, with "boggy marsh" and Baba-Yaga's dwelling – "a hut on chicken's legs". Blackthorn is a typical plant for magical, mystical and fantastic spaces. Making their way through the thickets of blackthorn, the characters of fairy tales, myths, legends, and true stories, and, in particular, Petrus Bezrodnyi in the short-story "St. John's Eve" and Foma Grigorievich's grandfather in the "The Lost Letter" symbolically pay for the transition into the unreal world, into the alien, hostile, cursed, devil's space. Marshes in the mythology of many cultures, including Slavic mythology, are considered deathtraps, bad, god-forsaken, sinister, unclean places, the habitat of the swamp "evil spirits" (hobgoblin, "vodyanoy", folklore kiki-mora, "mavkas", etc.). "The hut on chicken's legs" is the only example of a fairy-tale witch's house in the short-stories, compiling Gogol's cycles "Evenings on a Farm Near Dikanka" and "Mirgorod". In all the other works included in the writer's first collections of short-stories, the pandemonium and witch's residence are only slightly different from the human dwelling.

Descent down metaphorically means a descent into the underworld, into the hell. Consequently, the descent into the Bear's Gully through the forest, through the blackthorn, past the swamps, and even with a guide to the other world (the Off-world), symbolically means Petrus Bezrodnyi's transition into the demonic world or hell. It is noteworthy that the hero at first sold his soul to the devil really, while spatially (physically, bodily) he went to hell at first not for real, in pretence, as if he received a chance to improve the situation, and only after the murder was accomplished he ended up in hell truly, having turned into a "a heap of ashes".

On a mysterious night in the Bear's Gully there appeared before him "a whole bank of flowers, all wondrous, all never seen before", not typical for this area. Such spatial "anomalies", "oddities" in Gogol's literary works usually serve as a sign of a shift in the border between the human and demonic (forbidden and usually inaccessible to humans) worlds. In addition, in Gogol's short-stories, another feature of the mystical chronotope is its "animativeness": nature, landscape, plants and objects, the earth and the sky – everything comes to life and moves, seems to be no less "alive" than human heroes.

In mystical midnight minutes, the spatio-temporal boundaries of the area are broadened and deformed. When Petrus extended his hand to the fern flower, the really visible and imaginary become inseparable. Petrus saw “hundreds of hairy hands stretching toward the same flower from behind him, and something behind him was running to and fro”. After Petrus pulled out a flower, there appeared “blue like a dead man” Basavriuk and it “seemed” to him that grass, flowers and trees were talking to each other.

Gogol’s mystical space is distinguished not only by spatial “oddities” and the elements unusual for the customary landscape, but also by horrendous and chilling sound filling. A. G. Kovalchuk noted that the sound image of the other world is formed in the framework of threshold states [11, p. 30]. In the Bear’s Gully there is either breathless silence, or the devilish deafening cacophony thunders. “But now a whistling was heard, at which everything went cold inside Pyotr, and he fancied that the grass rustled, the flowers began talking to each other in voices thin as little silver bells; the trees rumbled, pouring out abuse...” the author writes [1]. These sounds are the harbingers of the appearance of the witch-Baba-Yaga.

The color scheme of this mystical space is dark and gloomy: “it was blind dark”, “wild weeds stood blackly around...” [1], etc. In the demonic space-time, the world turns red, the color of blood, exactly after Ivas’s murder: “Everything before him was covered with red. The trees, bathed in blood, seemed to burn and groan. The sky, red hot, was trembling ... Fiery spots, like lightning, came to his eyes” [1].

That is, such spatial landmarks as a forest, blackthorn, swamps, unusual flowers, a “hut on chicken’s legs”, strange and scary sounds, dark colors show the irreality of the space of the Bear’s Gully, its demoniac nature.

#### **4. The two-worldness in the short-story “St. John’s Eve”**

As you know, both heavenly and underground space belong to supernatural forces. Demons, according to folk legends, live in the underworld, below: in steep banks (ravines), gorges, abysses, etc. For example, in Gogol’s short-story “St. John’s Eve”, the bygone connection of the devil with the sky was, as rightly been said by M. Ya. Vajskopf, “dissolved in the general mysteriousness, the otherworldly nature of his origin” [3, p. 62]: “Where he came from and why he came, nobody knew” [1]. We believe that the author two more times drops some strong hints at the discredited “heav-

enly” past of the underground inhabitant. For the first time – when he mentions Basavriuk’s sudden appearance in the hamlet: “then suddenly vanish into thin air, without a trace. Then, lo and behold, again he’d as if fall from the sky” [1]. For the second time we encounter such a hint in the description of space after Ivas’s murder: “The sky, red hot, was trembling...” [1]. That is, the deed of horror, committed in the depths of the earth, in the ravine, as if echoing, is “spatially” reflected in the sky, in the heaven.

In the short-story “St. John’s Eve”, one can also find two demonic verticals, which are a kind of transformation of the World Tree model. Both the fern and the treasure chest are on the demonic vertical – underground. Petrus went down into a deep ravine, where “the chest started sinking into the ground, deeper, deeper; and behind him came a laugh that more closely resembled the hiss of a snake” [1]. It is no coincidence that the author mentions the viperous hiss. In accordance with mythological ideas, snakes are usually located at the roots of the World Tree. The details of the text indicate that the treasure was in the lower space in relation to the human world, and Petrus was in the lower world in relation to the upper (heavenly) world. When the man was standing on this demonic vertical and saw untold riches under his feet, “his eyes glowed ... his mind darkened...” and he killed an innocent child. Bloodshed deforms the space again: in Petrus’s eyes everything turned red, and the sky trembled.

We can find the second demonic vertical at the end of the short-story, when Gogol writes: “Smoke poured from the sooty chimney in a column and, rising so high that your hat would fall off if you looked at it, poured hot coals all over the steppes, and the devil – no need to mention that son-of-a-dog – sobbed so pitifully in his hovel that the frightened jackdaws rose in flocks from the nearby oak grove and with wild cries dashed about the sky”[1]. In mythology, birds (in this short-story – jackdaws) are associated with the head of the World Tree, a man is associated with the trunk (in Gogol’s short-story – “a good man couldn’t pass by the ruins of the tavern”), a snake is associated with the root (in Gogol’s works this is a devil whom the author calls in his cycle “the enemy of the human race”). The devil is also distinctive in that he often disappears. Using this plot detail, the author emphasizes that Basavriuk periodically is forced to return to the lower world.

In the short-story “St. John’s Eve”, as in many myths, during the hero’s movements along the devil’s vertical from the upper world into the lower

one it is forbidden to look back. Therefore, Basavriuk warns Petrus against looking backward.

### 5. Literary time, literary space and the characters

Sojourn in another, unreal, demonic world does not pass without a trace for the heroes. Petrus Bezrodnyi “grew wild, shaggy, frightening” [1]. “The character’s appearance reflects the dependence on the terrible power that controls him...”, says V. Sh. Krivonos [12, p. 137]. After the infanticide, Petrus, in our opinion, is in a “threshold” state. As a result of his tribulations in the Bear’s Gully in St. John’s night, he “fell out” of his real time: ordinary, everyday life passed by him. He paid for the transition into the demonic dimension with dementation. Bodily, physically, spatially, he was still in this world, and with his mind and soul he already belonged to the demonic world. The main hero turned into a kind of a robot, lost his human face, which symbolizes his transition from “his” world into the “alien” one.

Another author’s hint at the hero’s susceptibility to the influence of evil spirits, from the point of view of V. Ya. Zvinyatskovsky, is a mention of his rootlessness, as the main character was called Petrus Bezrodnyi (Kinless) for good reason. According to folk legends, a person without kith or kin becomes an easy prey for demonic forces [5, p. 402].

Describing Petrus’s expectation of sunset, the author depicts *the subjective time of the character*. It is intended to emphasize the degree of the hero’s despair and his itch for money. It is necessary to clarify that “*objective*” time gives the narrative traits of credibility, emphasizes its historicism or documental character. That is, such time creates the illusion of the realness of the described events, presents them as those that actually happened. “Subjectively experienced” time is characterized by the fact that the hero is sensitive to the ordinary course of events, in his perception time slows down or accelerates, or vice versa a second can stop and last for ages, depending on different types of space or the emotional and psychological feelings of the character. So, Petrus Bezrodnyi barely waited for the cherished night. For him, on the eve of a magical night, time dragged on infinitely slowly – days, weeks, months fly by as one instant.

In Gogol’s cycles, in the mystical space-time, there traditionally appear the corresponding characters. So, the author mentions how “hundreds of hairy hands stretching toward the same flower from behind him”, and “hid-

eous monsters leaped before him in throngs". Basavriuk, who in the human world – in the hamlet – was in no way different from other Cossacks, became "all blue like a dead man" [1]. That is, it can be assumed that when moving into another space, demonic creatures undergo some transformations. In mysterious midnight minutes, after Petrus plucked a fern, the space of the Bear's Gully is also deformed, the line between reality and irreality becomes indistinguishable. The hero saw visions: "he fancied that the grass rustled..." [1], etc. It is noteworthy that in the mystical chronotope of "St. John's Eve", the high intensity of time coincides with the extreme saturation of space with demons, wonderful flowers, magic objects, etc.

But the main "resident" of the mystical chronotope in this short-story is the witch Baba-Yaga in a triune form, who, like the witches in the short-stories "May Night, or the Drowned Maiden" and "Viy", has the ability to transform. Basavriuk's accomplice can turn into a cat, a dog or a wrinkled old woman. A hint at witch's shapeshifting was in the name of the area in which her "hut on chicken's legs" is located – "the Bear's Gully". She, like the Drowned Maiden's stepmother from the short-story "May Night, or the Drowned Maiden", like Solokha from "Christmas Eve" and the witch, chief's daughter from the short-stoty "Viy", lives in two worlds simultaneously: in the real (human) and the unreal (mystical, demonic). But, unlike the aforementioned witches, the witch Baba-Yaga in the short-story "St. John's Eve" in different chronotopes not only looks differently, but also performs various functions. At night, she, in the form of an old woman "with a face as shriveled as a baked apple" panders to Basavriuk in his demonic affairs, and during the day she is a sorceress "who, as rumor had it, could heal any illness in the world" [1].

The author emphasizes that from the witch's sorcery the fern, having been thrown up, "did not fall straight back but for a long time looked like a fiery little ball amidst the darkness, floating like a boat in the air; at last it slowly began to descend and fell so far away that the little star was barely visible, no bigger than a poppy-seed" [1]. Due to the witch's manipulations with the flower, over which she "whispered something for a long time", time and space "become denser". The fern's fall does not just slow down – the flower "floats" through the dense space.

It is noteworthy that the witch also deforms everyday life (real) space. With the advent of the old healer (Baba-Yaga), the space of the house is

also deformed – suddenly the phantom of Ivas appeared, which “became all bloody from head to foot and lit up the whole room with a red glow” [1].

### 6. Classical chronotopical motives in Gogol’s short-story

The road chronotope in Gogol’s short-stories with mystical dominance (“St. John’s Eve”, “May Night, or the Drowned Maiden”, “The Lost Letter”, “Christmas Eve”, “A Terrible Vengeance”, “A Bewitched Place”, “Viy”) leads the hero to evil spirits, “transfers” him into another world subject to demonic forces, smoothly flows into mystical or fantastic chronotope. Accordingly, the motive of the road in such works is certainly associated with trials, adventures, troubles, and fear.

In Russian literature, the space of the tavern, inn, barrel shop, public house by the road often acts as a platform for conflict and tragic events. Yu. V. Vetchinkina noticed that the most important sign of a tavern locus is the tendency of its visitors to sinful acts [4, p. 255]. In Gogol’s short-story “St. John’s Eve”, as well as in “The Lost Letter” and “Viy”, the mystical chronotope is preceded by the motive of meeting in a tavern. In “St. John’s Eve”, the tavern is located in remote space – outside the hamlet, on Oposhnyanskaya Road. It is not without reason that subsequently evil forces have completely seized this space. Petrus came there late at night, in the midst of evil spirits’ tricks. The unity of mystical time and “unclean” space is enhanced by calendar time – the hero finds himself in a tavern on St. John’s Eve. Such merging of temporal and spatial coordinates led to tragic consequences – to filicide, Petrus Bezrodnyi’s insanity and his death. It is noteworthy that Gogol’s story ends with the mentioning of this demonic, “unclean” tavern.

The tavern chronotope in Gogol’s Ukrainian tales is presented by the author as “an unclean place”, “a cursed place” (as, for example, at the end of the short-story “St. John’s Eve”). However, it is at the same time the locus of temptation, within which not only the devil/ dickens/ witch appears, but also a contact / deal with the human hero is made. Examples of such a plot usage of the tavern chronotope can be found in Gogol’s tales “Sorochintsi Fair”, “St. John’s Eve”, “The Lost Letter”, “A Bewitched Place”, “Viy”. Yu. V. Vetchinkina fairly indicates that in the “Evenings on a Farm Near Dikanka” the tavern is endowed with the status of boundary space and serves as a place of contact between the demonic and everyday worlds [4, p. 255].

The fairy-tale image of the fern in the story is closely connected with the locus of the treasure chest, which is located on the demonic vertical – underground. The mystical space, subject to Basavriuk and the witch, stretches vertically down. In this fragment of the text, the author uses the mirror-world motive – the underground possessions of evil spirits are clearly, nice and neatly visible to Petrus and his accomplices as if through glass: “blue flame burst from the ground; its whole inside lit up and looked as if it were molded from crystal; and everything under the ground became visible as in the palm of your hand” [1].

From the point of view of V. Sh. Krivonos, Gogol often uses the principle of personification of the border, developed in folklore, in the image of a creature, object or place [12, p. 135]. So, it is gold that is such a moral and ethical border between the human and demonic (mystical) worlds in the short-story “St. John’s Eve”. In particular, the border is personified in the image of the Basavriuk the tempter, who encourages Petrus Bezrodnyi to cross the invisible line between the righteous and the sinful.

The motive of metamorphosis is also associated with the mystical space-time in the story: the transformation of the witch Baba Yaga into a dog and a cat, Petrus Bezrodnyi – into a madman and a heap of ash, gold into shards, a tavern on Oposhnyanskaya Road – into a “resident evil”, etc. The motive of metamorphosis is also manifested in the tragic denouement of the story. “The means obtained with the help of the devil unilaterally materialized and became the antithesis of the goal, replaced it, and the target object underwent spiritualization”, writes M. Ya. Vajskopf [3, p. 98]. This leads to the situation when rich Petrus forgets Pidorka and becomes an avid gold-keeper. What was originally a means of gaining happiness replaces this very happiness (in the person of Petrus’s young wife).

An important element of the mystical chronotope, along with the motive of metamorphosis, is also the trial motif. N. O. Osipova claims that Gogol’s heroes on their way “overcome a lot of obstacles, the main among which are they themselves” [15, p. 224].

Returning home, Petrus fell asleep. The dream motive is not accidental in the context of the work. Typically, this motive is used in literature to provide the hero with the opportunity to move into another dimension. In Gogol’s short-story, on the contrary, Petrus through a dream returns from fantastic, diabolical space to everyday life. Using the dream motive, the



author separates real events from unreal ones. Petrus woke up only on the third day after the events of Midsummer Night. The magic number three also emphasizes the metamorphoses that occurred with the hero.

Gogol's chronotopes often act as a text-forming category. So, for example, the spatial image of the table performs an important function in the story. It was exactly the table that triggered the memoirs of Foma Grigorievich's recollections.

The artistic chronology of this story is also very symbolic: the movement from wedding, joy, to melancholy and despondency, from summer flowering to spring sadness – the hero's emotions “fade” and “darken” with “decreasing” of time. Less than a month after the wedding passed as Petrus changed. The hero's consciousness again and again returned to St. John's Eve – he “dropped out” of real time and space: ordinary life went “past” him. So the summer, autumn, winter passed. Such temporary discreteness serves as a powerful means of psychologism and dynamizing of the plot. Stressful plot time is replaced by measured calendar time. But calendar time only exacerbated Petrus's disease. The author describes how quickly summer and autumn flashed in the agricultural concerns for the villagers, and Petro “thinks all about one thing”. While other people's lives flow peacefully, Petro lives in his subjective, closed time, which revolves around the events of July night and torments him.

Almost a year passed between the events of July night and the second meeting with Baba-Yaga. But the events of these months are not shown in the text of the story. Instead, the author focuses on the mental state of Petrus and the feelings of Pidorka. The time interval enhances the sad mood and prepares a tragic ending.

### **7. Conclusions and offers**

So, spatio-temporal parameters, skillfully and productively used by N. V. Gogol, play a big role in the implementation of the author's intentions and, accordingly, in the reader's perception of the short-story “St. John's Eve”. The unravelling of the plot action within the framework of mystical time, mystical space and mystical chronotope enhances the effect of the tragic ending of the short-story.

However, the combination of unreal, fantastic and real, everyday time plays an important role in the construction of the story. The author empha-

sizes that unreal events are a thing of the past. In the finale of the story, the unreal chronotope is replaced by the real one, since the time of a fairy tale is a deliberately conditional past, fictional time and a space of unprecedentedness. There is no place for fairy-tale time and space in the measured, prosaic life of the church sexton.

The title of the short-story emphasizes its temporal features. “St. John’s Eve” is special time, the intensity of which coincides with the extreme saturation of the space where the fern grows. This time is characterized by complex and implicit fluctuations, changes, length, speed and perception of it by the hero. St. John’s Eve is unreal, fairy-tale, fantastic, mythological, calendar, daily, cyclic, moving and still time at the same time. Among the spatial coordinates, we should mention the Oposhnyanskaya Road, Dikanka Church, the hamlet “maybe no more than a hundred paces from Dikanka”, the Bear’s Ravine.

Among the chronotopic motifs and images in the story, the tavern chronotope, the loci of the tavern, table, ravine, forest, “a hut on chicken’s legs”, the motif of inaccessible treasure, the time of midnight on St. John’s Eve, house locus (enclosed space in which Petrus lives in his close time) deserve special attention.

The categories of literary time, literary space and chronotope are extremely important in the composition of the story and are plot-forming and character-creating elements of Gogol’s literary work. Therefore, the significance of these categories and their relationship with the plots of other stories in the spatio-temporal world model of Gogol’s “Evenings on a Farm near Dikanka” requires further study.

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