

## BAKHTIN'S CHRONOTOPE: THEORIZING SPATIOTEMPORALITY

Virtual workshop: a joint collaboration between Erfurt University and Fordham University  
To register free, send a request for virtual access to Jakob Schuld (email) before May 3, 2021.

Friday, May 7, 2021, 9:00 am – 2:30 pm (EST)

This workshop invites its participants to consider how useful Bakhtin's term "chronotope" might be for current literary, theoretical, and cultural studies. What are its strengths, what are its weaknesses? How might Bakhtin's use of the term be elaborated? What alternative theoretical paradigms might be developed?

In "Forms of Time and Chronotope in the Novel" (1937-1938, with supplemental "Concluding Remarks" in 1973), Mikhail Bakhtin borrowed the term "chronotope" from Uxtomskij's use of the term in biology, while also crediting its mathematical use to Einstein's Theory of Relativity: "We will give the name *chronotope* (literally, "time space") to the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature" (84). "Chronotopes," he writes in the Concluding Remarks "are the organizing centers for the fundamental narrative events of the novel. The chronotope is the place where the knots of narrative are tied and untied" (250).

Critics have drawn on Bakhtin's term to various different ends. Paul Gilroy famously makes use of Bakhtin's more narrowly literary term to apply to a cultural studies project, specifying "the image of ships in motion across the spaces between Europe, America, Africa, and the Caribbean" as "a central organising symbol" for focusing attention on the "middle passage" and developing the conceptual field defined in his title, *The Black Atlantic* (1993). Srinivas Aravamudan, in *Enlightenment Orientalism* (2012), elaborates on the generic significance of Bakhtin's term in theorizing the "geography of novelization" (as opposed to "a history of a specific national genre deemed *the novel*" [35]); and goes on to supplement Bakhtin's term with another theoretical term, the "xenotrope" in reconceiving the transnational coordinates of novel forms. Calling attention to a more general use of Bakhtin's term informing the project of "SpatioTemporality/RaumZeitlichkeit," the editors of *SpaceTime of the Imperial* (Holt Meyer, Susanne Rau, and Katharina Waldner, 2017) gloss Bakhtin's term in relation to a particular epochal formation: "One of the most well known models of spatiotemporality is the concept of the 'chronotope', derived from the thought of Mikhail Bakhtin ..., which strives to find a modelling of space and time which is characteristic of a particular epoch or formation" (4).

The workshop will be organized into three parts, beginning with two case studies in the theory and practice of Bakhtin's "chronotope." In the first part, Chris GoGwilt (Fordham University) will give a short presentation on his use of the term for a book on Conrad that examines "chronotopes" of romanization. Anna Förster (Erfurt University) will give a brief response. In the second part, participants are invited to discuss their own responses to the question of how we might develop and/or move beyond Bakhtin's "chronotope." (Participants who would like to send short statements in advance of the workshop are asked to send their comments by April 30 to: [raumzeitforschung@uni-erfurt.de](mailto:raumzeitforschung@uni-erfurt.de).) In the third part, Holt V. Meyer (Erfurt University) will give a short set of "chronotopic" reflections on punctuation in Pushkin. John Miele (Fordham University) will give a response.

**Erfurt/Fordham Workshop**  
**Friday, May 7, 2021**

**Bakhtin's *chronotope*: theorizing spatiotemporality**

To register, please email [jakob.schuld@uni-erfurt.de](mailto:jakob.schuld@uni-erfurt.de) by May 5.

9:00 – 9:30: Introductions

9:30 – 11:00 “Chronotopes of Romanization in Conrad”: Chris GoGwilt (Fordham University);  
Respondent: Anna Förster (Erfurt University) + Discussion

11:00 – 11:30 Break

11:30-12.30 General participant discussion on the chronotope. Participants who would like to send short statements in advance of the workshop are asked to send their comments by April 30 to: [raumzeitforschung@uni-erfurt.de](mailto:raumzeitforschung@uni-erfurt.de).

12:30 – 1:00 Break

1:00 – 2:30 “Chronotopic Reflections on Pushkin”: Holt Meyer (Erfurt University);  
Respondent: John Miele (Fordham University) + Discussion