

THE HARMONY OF TIME, SPACE AND NATURE IN THE WORKS OF THOMAS HARDY AND KHURSHID

DO'STMUHAMMAD

Qodirova Madina Boynazar qizi

Teacher, General Secondary School No. 31, Karshi, Uzbekistan

Email: madinaqodirova@webster.edu

ORCID: 0009-0001-3771-6382

Abstract

This article investigates the harmony of time, space and nature in the prose of Thomas Hardy and Khurshid Do'stmuhammad from a comparative-typological and chronotopic perspective. The study proceeds from the premise that literary time and literary space become aesthetically meaningful when they are organized through recurrent natural rhythms, landscape structures and symbolic environmental images. The research material includes Hardy's *The Return of the Native* and *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* together with Do'stmuhammad's *Bozor*, *Jajman* and *Donishmand Sizif*. The methodology combines M. M. Bakhtin's theory of the chronotope, close reading, comparative poetics, hermeneutic interpretation and elements of ecocritical analysis. The findings demonstrate that Hardy constructs Wessex as a spatial-temporal system in which geological duration, seasonal recurrence, agricultural labour and human destiny intersect. The study concludes that the unity of time, space and nature is a central organizing principle in both authors' poetics, although Hardy tends toward environmental continuity and cyclical duration, whereas Do'stmuhammad favors symbolic condensation and subjective temporality.

Keywords: Chronotope, literary time, literary space, nature, landscape, Wessex, symbolic space, cyclical time, psychological time, comparative poetics, Thomas Hardy, Khurshid Do'stmuhammad.

Introduction

In literary narrative, time and space are not neutral containers within which events simply occur. They determine how events are perceived, how characters are positioned in relation to history and environment, and how the reader understands movement, memory, loss and change. Nature intensifies this relationship because landscape, season, weather, light, darkness, vegetation and material objects provide visible forms through which narrative time can be experienced. For this reason, the triad of time, space and nature may be treated as a structural principle rather than as three independent descriptive categories.

M. M. Bakhtin's concept of the chronotope provides an especially productive framework for such analysis. In his theory of the novel, time and space are artistically fused: temporal relations become perceptible in spatial form, while space acquires meaning through movement and historical duration [1]. The importance of this approach lies in its capacity to connect narrative structure with the material world. A road, field, town, marketplace or mountain is therefore not merely a location; it may also embody a particular rhythm of life, a historical stage, a pattern of repetition or a crisis in human consciousness.

Thomas Hardy's fiction offers a particularly rich example of this interdependence. His Wessex is geographically recognizable and yet deliberately fictionalized. It contains heaths, valleys, farms, woods, villages and towns whose physical qualities are inseparable from the temporal experience of the characters. In *The Return of the Native*, Egdon Heath appears older and more durable than individual human intention; in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, agricultural cycles, changing seasons and the movement from one rural environment to another form a temporal map of Tess's fate. Hardy's landscapes therefore possess not only visual density but also duration: they preserve traces of the past, register social transformation and expose the disproportion between human plans and larger natural rhythms.

Khurshid Do'stmuhammad approaches the same fundamental problem through a different artistic system. His prose often works with condensed symbolic spaces, unstable temporal boundaries and philosophical motifs. The market in Bozor is simultaneously a concrete social location and a model of continuous human circulation; the market world in Jajman repeatedly awakens, fills, disperses and returns; Donishmand Sizif moves beyond ordinary calendar time toward a mythical and existential temporality organized around mountain, stone, ascent and repetition. Thus, space becomes symbolic without losing material concreteness, while nature is transformed into an active medium of reflection.

The relevance of comparing Hardy and Do'stmuhammad lies not in claiming direct influence or identical aesthetic principles, but in identifying typological correspondences between two different literary traditions. The English Victorian novel and contemporary Uzbek prose emerge from distinct historical and cultural contexts. Nevertheless, both authors repeatedly use spatial environments and natural rhythms to question the stability of human plans. Their characters experience time not only as chronology but also as recurrence, delay, memory, expectation, exhaustion and renewal.

Existing scholarship has paid considerable attention to Hardy's landscape and environmental symbolism. Cristina Chifane, for example, argues that nature in Hardy's Wessex fiction is deeply bound to the lives and destinies of the characters and can function almost as a character in its own right [4]. Uzbek criticism of Do'stmuhammad has likewise emphasized the symbolic capacity of such spaces as the market and the author's tendency to transform everyday environments into philosophical models. Yet a focused comparison of the time-space-nature complex in Hardy and Do'stmuhammad remains

underdeveloped. The present article addresses this gap by placing chronotopic organization at the center of analysis.

The aim of the study is to determine how time, space and nature form an integrated artistic system in selected works by Thomas Hardy and Khurshid Do'stmuhammad. The objectives are: (1) to identify the dominant temporal models in the selected texts; (2) to examine the semantic functions of landscape and spatial organization; (3) to reveal the role of natural rhythms in the development of plot and character; (4) to compare Hardy's environmental continuity with Do'stmuhammad's symbolic and subjective temporality; and (5) to formulate the main typological convergences and divergences between the two writers.

The research material consists of Thomas Hardy's *The Return of the Native* and *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, as well as Khurshid Do'stmuhammad's *Bozor*, *Jajman* and *Donishmand Sizif*. These works were selected because each contains an especially clear interaction between temporal structure, spatial organization and the natural or material environment. The selection also allows the comparison of rural, urban-symbolic and mythical spaces rather than restricting the analysis to one type of setting.

The theoretical foundation is Bakhtin's chronotope, understood as the artistic interconnection of temporal and spatial relations in narrative [1]. The study does not mechanically assign a fixed chronotope to each work. Instead, it uses the concept as a methodological lens for observing how narrative time becomes visible through particular places and how space carries traces of duration, repetition and change.

Close reading is employed to analyze recurrent spatial markers, temporal signals, seasonal structures, weather phenomena, roads, thresholds, fields, market movement, mountains and stones. Comparative-typological analysis is used to identify functional similarities between literary systems that belong to different national traditions. Hermeneutic interpretation clarifies the philosophical implications of repetition, natural continuity, human limitation and symbolic environment. Elements of ecocritical analysis are used where the environment possesses agency or resists purely anthropocentric interpretation. The analytical procedure was organized around five parameters: (1) the dominant form of time - linear, cyclical, historical, mythical or psychological; (2) the scale of space - open landscape, cultivated land, social space or closed symbolic locus; (3) the role of nature - background, mirror, antagonist, rhythm-giver or ethical measure; (4) the relationship between human movement and environmental continuity; and (5) the narrative effect produced by the fusion of these components.

The study is qualitative. It does not claim statistical frequency or corpus representativeness. Its purpose is to formulate a comparative model that can later be expanded through broader corpus-based research on chronotope, landscape and environmental poetics in English and Uzbek prose.

The first result of the analysis is that both Hardy and Do'stmuhammad convert abstract time into perceptible material form. This process is central to chronotopic organization. Time is rarely presented as an empty sequence of dates. Instead, it is registered by paths

walked, fields harvested, darkness falling, crowds gathering, stones being pushed, bodies becoming tired, and spaces changing their social meaning.

In Hardy, the natural world often provides a temporal scale larger than individual biography. The opening movement of *The Return of the Native* establishes Egdon Heath as a space whose darkness, antiquity and resistance to modernization diminish the apparent centrality of human beings. The heath can absorb the presence of particular characters without losing its identity; it therefore produces a form of environmental time that exceeds personal desire. The human drama unfolds within an already existing duration rather than creating the temporal world from nothing [2].

Do'st Muhammad frequently reverses this relation. Rather than expanding human time into geological continuity, he often compresses social or psychological experience into a symbolically saturated place. The market in Bozor appears to move continuously: people enter, exchange, search, desire and leave, while the market as a structure seems to persist beyond them. This repetition produces a cyclical social time comparable, at a functional level, to Hardy's environmental recurrence. Yet the source of repetition is different. Hardy's recurrence is grounded largely in season, agriculture and landscape; Do'st Muhammad's is often grounded in human appetite, habit, memory and moral repetition [6].

Hardy's Wessex unites geographical concreteness with fictional transformation. This dual status is important: because the region is recognizable, it carries social and historical depth; because it is artistically reconstructed, it can operate as a coherent symbolic geography. Roads, heathlands, farms, valleys and villages become connected zones through which characters move not only spatially but also between different forms of time.

In *The Return of the Native*, Egdon Heath is the most concentrated expression of this principle. Its vastness slows perception. Human action appears temporary against a landscape associated with darkness, ancient continuity and repetitive seasonal life. Bonfires, paths, storms and night journeys do not simply decorate the plot; they organize the rhythm of encounter and separation. The heath acts as a temporal regulator: distance takes time, darkness changes visibility, weather alters possibility, and the physical environment resists the immediacy of human intention.

The harmony of time, space and nature in this novel is therefore not a peaceful harmony. It is a structural harmony produced through tension. Eustacia Vye experiences Egdon as confinement, while other figures possess a more organic relation to it. The same place generates different psychological times. For one character, the heath seems monotonous and static; for another, it is work, familiarity and continuity. This demonstrates that chronotope is simultaneously objective and subjective: the environment possesses material duration, but characters interpret that duration through desire.

Tess of the d'Urbervilles develops a related model through mobility. Tess's life is linked to a sequence of rural environments - Marlott, Talbothays, Flintcomb-Ash and other locations - whose natural qualities correspond to different stages of experience. The movement

between spaces becomes a movement through emotional and social time. Fertility, warmth and growth are associated with moments of possibility, whereas severe weather, exhausted land and mechanized labour intensify hardship. Hardy thereby allows landscape to narrate transition without reducing nature to a simplistic emotional symbol [3].

The crucial point is that natural cycles continue regardless of individual catastrophe. This continuity produces one of Hardy's characteristic tragic effects. The world is neither fully hostile nor benevolent; it simply possesses rhythms that do not coincide with the moral expectations of the characters. Nature can nurture, expose, delay, exhaust or renew. Its temporal independence prevents human experience from becoming the sole measure of reality.

The analysis also shows that Hardy uses nature to control narrative tempo. Seasonal progression creates long duration, while storms, darkness or sudden changes in weather accelerate crisis. Agricultural labor creates repetitive time: sowing, milking, harvesting and threshing organize life according to cycles rather than abstract clock measurement. Such rhythms connect body, work and place.

This cyclical temporality is especially significant because Hardy writes during a period of technological and social transformation. Traditional rural time encounters mechanized time. The machine introduces speed, repetition of another kind and an impersonal discipline. The resulting tension is not merely technological; it is chronotopic. Different temporal systems compete within the same landscape. The field may still belong to seasonal nature, but the labor performed on it is increasingly governed by mechanized regularity.

Chifane's observation that Hardy's natural world is inseparable from character and destiny helps explain why descriptions of landscape carry narrative weight rather than functioning as ornamental pauses [4]. The environment participates in the formation of plot because it determines what can be seen, how far someone can travel, when work can occur and how long a character must wait. Time becomes spatially embodied in the conditions of movement.

In Do'stmuhammad's prose, the chronotope is often more compressed and metaphorically charged. Bozor presents the marketplace as a concrete urban-social environment but also as a model of worldly circulation. The market is filled with voices, transactions, desires, losses and repetitions. Its spatial density produces a specific form of time: crowded, continuous, restless and circular. Individuals change, but the logic of buying, selling, searching and competing returns.

This feature becomes even clearer when Bozor is read alongside Jajman. In Jajman, the market wakes with the morning, fills with movement and noise, and becomes a stage on which human instinct and social habit are repeatedly exposed. The temporal movement from dawn to activity is not only chronological; it is ritual-like. Each new day renews the same social energy. The market therefore functions as a social equivalent of a natural cycle,

but one distorted by appetite and excess. Do'stmuhammad's symbolic method transforms daily routine into a philosophical pattern [5].

Nature enters this urban-symbolic space in fragmented forms: animal imagery, bodily instinct, light and darkness, morning and evening, organic decay and grotesque metamorphosis. Unlike Hardy's expansive landscapes, Do'stmuhammad's nature may be condensed into a sign. A single image can carry the semantic burden of an entire environment. This produces a high degree of symbolic density and reduces the distance between physical description and philosophical interpretation.

The harmony of time, space and nature is consequently achieved through condensation. The market is both location and temporal mechanism; the natural sign is both material image and moral indicator; repetition is both daily routine and existential condition. In this respect, Do'stmuhammad's chronotope tends to be semiotically concentrated.

Donishmand Sizif provides the clearest example of Do'stmuhammad's transformation of chronotope into philosophical form. The narrative reworks the myth of Sisyphus through an Uzbek intellectual and ethical perspective. Ordinary calendar time loses stability. The repeated ascent, the mountain and the stone construct a world in which duration is measured through effort rather than through dates.

The novel explicitly draws attention to the crisis of temporal perception. Sizif experiences a condition in which year, day, hour and minute lose their ordinary organizing power; the thought that "Vaqtini unutgan o'zini ham unutadi" - "one who forgets time forgets the self" - turns temporal consciousness into a condition of identity [7, p. 271]. This short statement reveals the essential unity of time and subjectivity in the novel.

Space is equally significant. The mountain creates verticality: below and above, descent and ascent, defeat and renewed effort. The stone is not a neutral object but the material center of the chronotope. It has weight, resistance and recurrence. Through it, time becomes bodily. Each movement of the stone measures effort, pain, memory and will. Nature therefore becomes the physical medium through which philosophical time is experienced.

This differs sharply from Hardy's Wessex, yet the difference itself reveals a typological similarity. In Hardy, human intention is tested by an environment that possesses long continuity. In Do'stmuhammad, human consciousness is tested by a deliberately concentrated natural-material structure. Heath and stone operate on different scales, but both refuse to become passive scenery. Each limits, shapes and interprets human action.

The comparative analysis makes it possible to summarize the dominant functions of the chronotopic triad in the selected works. The differences are not absolute; rather, they indicate prevailing tendencies in each writer's poetics.

Analytical parameter	Thomas Hardy	Khurshid Do'stmuhammad	Shared function
Dominant time	Seasonal, historical, geological, agricultural	Psychological, cyclical-social, mythical, suspended	Human destiny is measured against a larger temporal order
Dominant space	Heath, field, farm, village, road, Wessex region	Market, threshold, road, mountain, symbolic enclosed locus	Space becomes a carrier of ethical and existential meaning
Role of nature	Autonomous environment and rhythm-giver	Condensed symbol, material trial, philosophical sign	Nature actively shapes perception and action
Narrative tempo	Expansion, gradual seasonal transition, delayed movement	Compression, repetition, sudden symbolic concentration	Tempo is generated by interaction between body and environment
Human position	Temporary being within enduring landscape	Consciousness tested by recurring symbolic structures	Human control over the world is relativized

The table shows that both authors create an integrated system rather than an accidental coexistence of temporal, spatial and natural motifs. Hardy tends toward expansion: large environments absorb individual stories into longer durations. Do'stmuhammad tends toward concentration: a limited place or object is charged with multiple temporal and philosophical meanings. In both cases, however, the environment functions as an active principle of narration.

The results suggest that the most productive basis for comparing Hardy and Do'stmuhammad is not thematic similarity alone but the different ways in which each writer materializes time. A thematic comparison might simply note that both authors describe nature, social conflict or human suffering. A chronotopic comparison reveals a deeper structural correspondence: landscape and natural objects become mechanisms that organize duration, movement and consciousness.

Hardy's dominant model may be called environmental continuity. Wessex exists before the immediate action and seems capable of continuing after it. This effect is created through extensive landscape, historical suggestion, seasonal rhythm and recurrent labor. Characters enter an environment that already has memory. The past is therefore not merely recollected; it is spatially present in roads, fields, old customs, names and patterns of work. This is one reason why Hardy's tragic plots often produce a sense of temporal disproportion. Human crises are intense but brief when measured against the duration of place.

Do'stmuhammad's dominant model may be described as symbolic condensation. Rather than creating a broad regional geography comparable to Wessex, he often intensifies meaning within a limited locus. The market becomes a miniature model of the world; the mountain becomes a vertical map of struggle; the stone becomes a measure of time and bodily endurance. Such concentration is closely connected with his modernist and philosophical narrative strategies. The environment does not lose reality, but it becomes highly interpretable.

The role of nature also differs in scale. Hardy's nature is frequently ecological in the broad sense that it forms a network of weather, land, animals, work and seasonal recurrence. Do'stmuhammad's nature is often semiotic: an animal figure, a stone, darkness, wind or organic image may become the center of a symbolic structure. Yet these two modes are not mutually exclusive. Hardy also uses symbolic landscapes, while Do'stmuhammad also preserves concrete physical environments. The distinction concerns predominance rather than exclusivity.

Another important point concerns subjective time. In Hardy, characters often experience the same place differently. Egdon may signify permanence, oppression, familiarity or freedom depending on the observer. In Do'stmuhammad, subjective time becomes even more explicit because perception itself may distort chronology. In Donishmand Sizif, repetition threatens to abolish ordinary temporal measurement. The protagonist must recreate meaning within recurrence. Thus, while Hardy often dramatizes the conflict between personal desire and environmental duration, Do'stmuhammad dramatizes the struggle to preserve consciousness inside repetitive time.

The contrast between horizontal and vertical space is also significant. Hardy's characters frequently move horizontally across roads, fields and regional landscapes. Their journeys connect social spaces and expose the distance between aspiration and reality. Do'stmuhammad, particularly in Donishmand Sizif, intensifies vertical movement: ascent and descent become moral and philosophical categories. The spatial direction itself carries temporal meaning because every ascent repeats previous effort and anticipates another fall.

From the perspective of comparative poetics, this distinction may be formulated as follows: Hardy temporalizes landscape, whereas Do'stmuhammad often spatializes philosophical time. In Hardy, the reader feels time through environmental change. In Do'stmuhammad, the reader encounters time through symbolic structures that make repetition visible. Both operations produce a unity of time, space and nature, but the artistic route toward that unity differs.

The findings also have implications for the study of national literary models. Hardy's Wessex is rooted in the historical transformation of English rural life, the tension between traditional communities and modernity, and the persistence of local landscape. Do'stmuhammad's symbolic spaces reflect the conditions of late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century Uzbek prose, where philosophical allegory, grotesque imagery, mythic

reinterpretation and psychological experimentation became important means of representing social and existential change. Comparative study therefore does not erase cultural specificity; it makes specificity more visible.

Finally, the time-space-nature triad creates an ethical perspective in both authors. Environments test the limits of human self-sufficiency. The human subject is never completely sovereign. In Hardy, weather, distance, season and land continually complicate intention. In Do'stmuhammad, recurring space and resistant matter expose the limits of desire, greed, fatigue and self-deception. Nature is thus connected to ethical knowledge not because it speaks in simple moral formulas, but because it confronts human beings with realities that cannot be reduced to immediate will.

A further comparative result concerns the relationship between memory and place. Literary space becomes chronotopic not only when it contains visible movement but also when it preserves what has already happened. In Hardy, places frequently retain emotional and historical residues. A road recalls an earlier journey; a field carries the trace of former labor; a village name evokes social memory; an old landscape makes the present appear temporary. This memory is not always expressed through explicit recollection. It may be embedded in the physical persistence of the environment. The result is a layered temporality in which the present scene remains open to the pressure of previous events.

Do'stmuhammad's prose often internalizes this process. A space becomes meaningful because consciousness repeatedly returns to it, interprets it or reconstructs it. In the market chronotope, repetition makes the same types of movement appear both familiar and morally unstable. In Donishmand Sizif, repetition acquires a stronger existential character: the route upward is physically similar, yet every renewed effort contains accumulated memory. The same mountain is therefore never exactly the same space, because the consciousness confronting it has been altered by previous ascent, failure, pain and reflection.

This distinction clarifies the role of recurrence in the two poetics. Hardy's recurrence often reveals the persistence of the world beyond the individual; Do'stmuhammad's recurrence often reveals transformation within the individual despite outward sameness. The first model emphasizes continuity of environment, while the second emphasizes renewal of interpretation. Both, however, undermine a purely linear understanding of narrative time. What matters is not only what happens next, but what returns, what remains, and how the same place is perceived after experience has changed.

Threshold spaces are equally significant. Hardy repeatedly uses doors, roads, field boundaries, village edges and transitional landscapes to mark moments when a character moves between social or emotional states. Such thresholds connect spatial passage with temporal transition. Do'stmuhammad also relies on border-like structures, but often in more concentrated symbolic form: entrance into the market, movement toward or away from a center, ascent from one level to another, and the repeated crossing between

exhaustion and renewed effort. In both writers, the threshold is meaningful because it transforms motion into decision.

Consequently, the harmony of time, space and nature should not be understood as static balance. It is a dynamic process in which environment stores memory, repetition changes consciousness, and movement through space generates new temporal meaning. This observation strengthens the comparative model proposed in the study: Hardy and Do'stmuhammad differ in representational scale, but both create narrative worlds where place remembers, matter resists, and time becomes visible through embodied movement.

CONCLUSION

The comparative analysis demonstrates that the harmony of time, space and nature is a fundamental structural principle in the works of Thomas Hardy and Khurshid Do'stmuhammad. The three categories do not operate independently. Time becomes visible through landscape and material objects; space acquires meaning through duration and repetition; nature regulates narrative tempo, psychological perception and ethical interpretation.

In Hardy's prose, particularly *The Return of the Native* and *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, Wessex functions as a temporally layered environment. Seasonal cycles, rural labor, weather, distance and historical continuity create a world in which human lives are temporary but intensely meaningful episodes within a larger natural order. The environment is not reducible to background: it structures possibility, delay, movement and tragic disproportion.

In Do'stmuhammad's *Bozor* and *Jajman*, social space is organized through repetitive daily movement, while natural and bodily images intensify symbolic meaning. In *Donishmand Sizif*, the interaction of mountain, stone, ascent and recurrence produces an existential chronotope in which ordinary calendar time is suspended and identity depends on the ability to create meaning within repetition.

The principal typological convergence between the writers is the active status of environment. Heath, field, market, mountain and stone participate in narration. They regulate tempo, shape consciousness and test human intention. The principal divergence concerns scale and method: Hardy favors environmental expansion, cyclical natural duration and regionally grounded space; Do'stmuhammad favors symbolic condensation, subjective temporality and philosophically charged loci.

This comparative model broadens the study of both authors by moving beyond landscape description toward the structural unity of temporal, spatial and natural poetics. Further research may extend the model to other Hardy novels and Do'stmuhammad's short fiction, examine translation of chronotopic imagery, and use corpus methods to trace lexical markers of season, movement, place and temporal perception in English and Uzbek literary discourse.

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