

Idyllic Chronotope as One of the Principles of Organizing Time and Space: The Example of Handel's "Alcina" Staged by Katia Korabelnik

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Idyllic is a space of increased orderliness, harmony, concentrated happiness.
—Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*

An operatic work is a complex assemblage of different arts. Space-time in an operatic work is organized as a set of scores of all participating arts and is based on the conventions of their chronotopes. Each score is part of the system. At the same time, it is also relatively independent and flexible and can become a leading component for building the structure of the work. The chronotope of an operatic piece has several levels: (1) A dramaturgical source (a musical score with a libretto) that creates the spatial-time system of the work. This is a musical and poetical text whose chronotope transfers it into a stage text, placing it as the chronotope of the performance. (2) A spatial-time-stage director system. A stage work is a material object and is also the original idea of its creator, their spiritual perception. Being so, we discover the dual reality—a physical space-time of the work and a metaphysical space-time of its idea. A spatial-time system is the stage language of the work, the coordination between its external and internal art form. The external form is a set of expressive representations and the internal form is a logical structure, the space-time of the director's perception. (3) Spatial-time-singer system. The singer integrates into this system partially in a way that is conditioned by the parameters of the chronotope in the spatial-time system. (4) A time-spatial system—an observer. Here a synergistic situation is created in which the show at the time of its ending (disintegration) moves into the space-time of the viewer and changes their inner world. In the ever-growing mosaic of contemporary art, in a rich variety of different currents, there is a need to look for universal values—the fundamental things that produce a sense of uniformity and completeness of the artistic work. A temporal analysis, that is, the analysis of the chronotopes of an operatic work can become a starting point for different approaches that investigate the contemporary processes taking place in an operatic work, and can also show new directions in the development of the operatic genre itself.

Keywords: chronotope, idyllic, opera, baroque

Introduction

At the junction of eras, changes occurred in the concept of the artistic and scientific picture of the world in step with the integration of technical progress and humanities knowledge.

Art synthesizes all languages of culture and therefore responds rapidly to changes in world. Therefore, it is here that problems in the emergence of new paradigms are the first to be actualized.

Theatrical art in general and opera in particular, fit most actively into human social activity and respond to changes in spiritual life rapidly and acutely. This being so, identifying new approaches and searching for new artistic forms becomes especially relevant. To enable this, it is important to determine a coordination system where all human activity takes place in each era, one that allows the artist to navigate the dynamics of the artistic processes. The space-time system, as the basis for the concept of an artistic picture of the world, can act as such a system.

The Meaning of Chronotope

In the 20th century, Ukhtomsky's idea of chronotope, based on theories by H. Minkowski, A. Einstein, and C. Sherrington (Chebanov, 2015), introduced the term chronotope (space-time). This theory moved from the field of mathematics, first to biology and then to aesthetics, literary criticism, and musicology.

As of the 20th century, science is based on the proposition that space and time are determined by the processes that arise and develop within them. "To comprehend and analyze the characteristics of the chronotope, it is essential to understand the structure of the objects in it." (Bakhtin, 1975, p. 300) In practical creative activity, this requires understanding the very essence of the structure formation processes, primarily for constructing the means for creating a work that meets the criteria of the virtual-electronic age.

The history of musical theater requires an understanding of the design and architectonics of an operatic work. The emergence of directing as a professional activity and authorship in the 20th century introduced new questions in the structure formation of a work of art. This forced artist to be aware of the processes occurring in the general flow of the phenomena of their time and to understand how this vector moves.

This may explain the revival of interest in Baroque opera in the 20th century, the mixture of high and low, pathetic and farcical that is present in Baroque opera. The desire to embrace everything and build a universe from the most bizarre elements could not have been more consistent with the principles of theatrical and artistic thinking of the 20th century.

Therefore an artistic phenomenon like a Knight's opera that combines the Renaissance Knightly novel and musical culture of the Baroque era, provides the artist with the opportunity to model the space-time continuum. It builds logic into the work and the opportunity to find its intuitive depth perfectly meeting new trends in the search for new artistic forms and means of expression. Obviously, this can explain the renaissance of operas such as Handel's *Alcina*, *Oriodante*, *Orlando Furioso*, and Vivaldi's *Olympia*.

The art picture of the world, the spatio-temporal parameters of the artistic structure are always based on a specific, characteristic perception of the world at a given moment. When analyzing a work of art, together with the idea of the structure of the object, we also reveal the structure of the author's consciousness. "The artistical paradigm of an era is based on the principles and methods of cognition that distinguish each era of culture". (Bakhtin, 1975, p. 373)

Research Purpose

"Idyllic is a system of feelings or the type of artistic consciousness in a literary work that gives rise to characteristic types of time-space, characters and plots" (Siska, 2016, p. 325). This article attempts to look at the

spatio-temporal parameters of the art structure of the Knightly opera Alcina through the prism of the idyllic chronotope as one of the principles of spatio-temporal organization using the example of Alcina's opera production staged by Katya Korabelnik. The logic of such an analytical consideration is justified both by the aesthetic principles of the era and by the principle of theatrical art, expressed in dialog with the general paradigm of its era and the works of other eras.

Knight Baroque Poem

The text of the Knightly poem "Orlando Furioso" by Ludovico Ariosto, starting in 1516, became the basis for over 100 operas which indicates the significance of this artistic phenomenon. However, no opera gained popularity as did Alcina by George Friderich Handel-Britannica (<https://www.britannica.com/biography/George-Frideric-Handel>). The poem "Orlando Furioso", which became the basis for the libretto of the opera, is one of the most colorful phenomena of Italian literature. The poem intertwines motifs from medieval epics, ancient poets, and the works of short story writers; it serves as a continuation of Boiardo's (1441-1494) poem "Orlando Innamorato".

Ariosto describes numerous adventures and deeds of chivalry. Alcina's libretto includes many elements of a chivalric romance, working in adventurous times. The action in a chivalric novel, as M. Bakhtin noted, "breaks down into a number of segments-adventures, within which it is organized in an abstract and technical manner; its connection with space is also technical." (Bakhtin, 1975, p. 376). Testing heroes for loyalty in love plays an organizational role, as seen in Bradamante's devotion and Oberto's fidelity to his filial duty. Inevitably, moments related to the idea of identity appear: recognition-misrecognition, such as dressing up Bradamante in a man's dress and replacing her name with the name of her brother Ricciardo. Motives of an oriental fairy-tale nature appear. All types of charm that temporarily turn a person off from events, transport them into another world. The powers of witchcraft (here Alcina's magic) are magical objects that show the hero the world in a different light (Ruggiero comes to his senses under the influence of a magic ring). Elements of fabulousness and the miraculous correspond to the principles of the Renaissance, chivalric romance. These simultaneously also reflect new trends of the Baroque era, which constantly compare and replace two planes—real and imaginary.

Idyllic as the model of world order as a chronotope and artistic modality, has extremely clear and recognizable spatio-temporal characteristics, simultaneously referring to two ideals - the spatial ideal of Arcadia and, more broadly, the Garden of Eden, and the temporal the ideal of the Golden Age. (Siska, 2016, p. 325)

The magical world of the island, is completely real for its inhabitants, although in fact it is only an illusion created by the spell of Alcina.

Baroque Idyllic Concept

Despite the presence of strong elements of a chivalric romance, the emphasis is still not on them. Handel moves the action to a pastoral love idyllic, a key example of the Baroque. In Handel, the idyllic is abstract; a world appears before us that has no connection with reality—this is a conventional Arcadian world. The pastoral idyll of love's enchantment evokes special features of the storytelling method. The flow of time becomes single, continuous, approaching boundless, mysterious time. All events in the lives of the heroes are inseparable from a specific space—the island of Alcina. The space here is one. The heroes are organically attached to the island.

The island, like their world, is closed and fenced off, but at the same time it is for them their own small and native world. Different generations live on the island. These are Oberto, his father, and Ruggiero, and Alcina. There is no continuity of generations, which is so characteristic of the rural idyll. All the inhabitants of the island ended up on it either by chance or at the request of Alcina, which reflects the artistic paradigm of the time.

Another feature of the idyllic chronotope is the awareness of the eventual coloring of music. Time is compressed or stretched at the request of the composer. It is understood as an alternation of heterogeneous processes that have different affective meanings, for example, in Alcina's first aria, "Di' cor mio", written in the B-dur key which symbolizes ideal love in this opera. The composer, through the use of musical elements such as the sigh motive, divides the phrase into short replicas, tonality, and tempo designations to convey sensation heroines.

A similar interpretation of the semantics of the B-dur scale also exists in the opera "Acis and Galatea" by Handel and in his oratorio "Messiah". The composer uses this scale to create an atmosphere of peace, complete harmony, idyll and to show a lack of conflict in the pastoral world. Morgana's final aria, "Tornami a vagghiegiar" from Act I, is also written in the same key. In this aria, Handel uses numerous sequences, decorations, and a high register to convey the emotional structure of the heroine. The principle of movement and dynamism characteristic of the Baroque finds its vivid embodiment in the musical language of opera. Handel was not interested in social, economic, or class conflicts; for him, the analysis of the hero's personal experiences became especially important. Consequently, all attention is focused on the main character, the sorceress Alcina, who succumbed to the spell of love. Alcina, despite her mythical nature (she has lived on earth for over 1000 years), acquires sensuality and passion, which makes her real, bringing her closer to human nature. This process is reflected in the heroine's musical language. Therefore, for example, in the aria "Si, son quella" uncertainty, pain-emotions inherent in people are manifested. The modal coloring, a-minor, dance meter rhythm, and internal structure of the melody emphasize this.

The destruction of the idyllic chronotope occurs with the destruction of the cyclical rhythm of idyllic time. This time is disrupted by the appearance on the island of a hero alien to this magical world. Bradamante, dressed in a man's dress, thanks to her feminine nature, is not subject to Alcina's charms. Bradamante's musical language differs dramatically from Alcina's. The range of emotions—anger, irritation, thirst for revenge—sharply contrast with the gentle, sensual intonations of the middle-aged sorceress, for example, already in the first aria, written in D major, a key far from the tonality of ideal, illusory love.

The illusory world created by Alcina is destroyed, since a real, deep feeling coming from the heart is always stronger than witchcraft. Alcina loses her magical powers as she learns what love is. Through suffering, she goes through the path of purification to ultimately become kind to man-nature.

This interpretation of "the rustic, domestic utopia" (Murphy, 2020, p. 62) can be found in Rousseau's *Julie, or the New Heloise Letters of Two Lovers Who Live in Small Town at the Foot of the Alps*.

The elements of the ancient complex nature, love, family and procreation, death are isolated and sublimated in philosophical terms. These elements are given to the disconnected consciousness as healing, cleansing and calming forces to which it must submit. (Bakhtin, 1975, p. 243)

Symbolism, naturalism, and a combination of styles in Baroque theater are perfectly suited to the art paradigms of theater of the 20th and 21st centuries.

Baroque and Modern Theatre Models in the K. Korabelnick Opera Production

For Katya Korabelnik, the strangeness, illusoriness, and symbolism of the Baroque became the starting point of her concept. The emotional side of the heroes—love, hatred, jealousy—everything that is the most important aspect for Handel. Fragments of reality, characterized by different temporal features (fancy chandeliers, as the clearest example of luxury) are part of a mosaic structure that tends to be polylogue.

The boundaries of the spatial-plastic structure of the performance open up into everyday life. The action of the opera is transferred to the “Burning Man” Festival of Freedom and Self-Expression, taking place in the Nevada desert. Katya unites the paradigm characteristic of modern art. The value spectra of artistic forms of different eras are found not only in a single historical time, but the entire vertical development of the artistic form is drawn into the point of the present.

Here sand, as a symbol of eternity and at the same time transience, impermanence, indicating the energy of time—a representation of the medieval understanding of the subject as the radiation of a higher meaning, is adjacent to an attempt to penetrate and study the emotional world of man, characteristic of the paradigm of the New Age.

The line of reality and the lines of tradition are erased, making it impossible to define a clear and fully exhausted meaning. Elements are not assembled into sequential episodes, but vertically, creating a completely different type of interaction. Space becomes imaginary, it is not intended to designate a specific place. As a result, freedom in space and time becomes absolute, and the viewer is required to be able to complete different segments of space in their mind.

Conclusion

In the growing mosaic of contemporary art, in a rich variety of different currents, there is a requirement to look for universal values, that is, fundamental things that produce a sense of uniformity and completeness of the art work. A topic-temporal analysis, i.e. an analysis of chronotopes of an operatic work can become a starting point for different approaches that investigate the contemporary processes occurring in the operatic work that also show new directions in the development of the operatic genre itself. Treating the cultures of the past as a dialog in a one time-eternity allows us to find the key to the catharsis of our time.

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