

## Space and Time as the Fundamental Elements of Kazakh World Image

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### Abstract

*The purpose of the paper: to reveal the meaning of space and time as basic elements of Kazakh world image; to discover the traditional world view of our ancestors in space and time using scientific approach to national psychology and racial memory of Turkic nomads; to show the social and historical roots of applied art. The article considers space and time not only as the main form of matter's existence but also as perception of the world, sage reasoning and spiritual feeling. The author states that the notion of space and time is reflected in national applied art and explains the meaning of space and time in Kazakh applied art.*

**Keywords:** space and time; eternity; the symbol of infinity; world view; applied art.

### 1. Introduction

Space and time belong to fundamental categories. They have been discussed in different scientific spheres for a long time. These discussions differ in content, aspects, purpose, general importance and the width of conclusions.

Common artisans do not think about the world in general logic notions, although they deeply apprehend space, time, eternity and motion in their world view. Folk crafts express people's material and spiritual culture.

The study of folk crafts directly in the environment of the guardians of centuries-old traditions and the creators of beautiful pieces of decorative and applied arts, and the scientific research of the state of crafts and traditional nomadic style promote further even more vigorous flowering of folklore. People reveal the most important features of their world view through applied arts.

To lead a nomad's life across the expanses of Eurasia, to bring a harmonious order in this life and to make this life a factor of human's stable existence it is first of all necessary to adopt such notions as space and time. Without this human's life in nomadic steppe would be uncontrolled and tangled.

In order to make their life decent, measured or even beautiful, nomads had to know all advantages and disadvantages of the space chosen for life and to correlate events occurring in this space with time.

While discovering the surrounding world with its real sense, benefit and positive features of space, nomads

perceived the world just through time parameters. This can be confirmed by examples. Maybe that is why Kazakh nomads did not separate time from space but established an interdependent fusion of these categories. Actually, only in natural phenomena one can efficiently trace the firm connection between time and space detected by people's consciousness.

## 2. Methods

In his research, the author used theoretical methods: the study of special literature on the subject; analysis and synthesis.

### 2.1 The notions of space and time in scientific research and dictionaries

Philosophical, historical, ethnographical and pedagogical investigations give the following definition for space and time:

- a) Space and time are philosophical categories which designate the forms of existence of things and phenomena. These categories reflect on the one hand their joint being (in space) and on the other hand the process of their alternation (in time) and the duration of their existence. Time and space are the load-bearing structure of any known world image (Gritsanov, 1998);
- b) Space and time are universal forms of matter's existence: space is "... a form of coexistence for material objects and processes (it characterizes the structure and extension of material systems). Time is the form and successive alternation of the state of objects and processes (it characterizes the duration of their being). Space and time have an objective character; they are inseparable from each other and eternal..." (SED, 1985);
- c) Space and time are "the forms of matter's existence which are characterized by duration and volume" (Ozhegov, 1989);
- d) Time is "...the duration of being" (Dal', 1978);
- e) Space is a symbolic function of prospective, and time is a vectorial system (Belyaeva, 1989).

Definitions in dictionaries allow understanding that space and time are the forms of matter's existence.

Space and time are studied from the viewpoint of philosophy, historical ethnography, folklore, ethnic culture and art:

- The meaning and national spiritual and cultural significance of space and time are deeply researched in the papers of such philosophers as Immanuel Kant (1964), A. Aitaly (2000), T. Gabitova (2006);
- Space and time in nomadic art were studied in the papers of historians and ethnographers (A.P. Okladnikov, A.G. Medoyev, A.A. Bogolubov, S.M. Dudin, B.V. Veimarn, V.G. Moshkova, V.N. Chepelev and M.O. Kagan);
- In folklore and literature, A. Kodar (1998) and Sh. Ibrayev (1993) studied the world view of nomads, while B. Kazykhanova (1977), A. Seidimbek (1997) and B. Baizhigitov (1994) paid attention to the aesthetic nature of art;
- Art historians (T.K. Basenov, M.S. Mukanov, U. Zhanibekov, A. Margulan, A. Tazhimuratov, S. Kasimanov, Kh. Argynbayev and K. Ibrayeva) study the semantics of space and time in Kazakh applied art.

Immanuel Kant stated that the essence of space and time is in pure forms of any perceptual graphic image. They are not the characteristics of things but are given before any experience (a priori) and are the forms of perceptual contemplation thanks to which we group our perception (Kant, 1964).

M.S. Kagan thinks that space and time have three interconnection aspects in art: ontological, gnosiological and psychological. The ontological aspect of art in space-time dimension means that a piece of art materializes in space and time in different viewpoints: a) as a spatial object (a picture, a sculpture an architectural structure); b) as a process in time (music, poetry); as an action in space and time simultaneously (theatre, dancing, cinema). The gnosiological aspect means that art reflects the space-time relations according to the needs of content expressed and to the resources of an art itself. The psychological aspect means that the perception of art works progresses also in space and time and in the perception of artistic time and artistic space which differ from relevant real notions (Kagan, 1993).

Foreign scientists consider different problems of space and time (Georg Hegel, Isaac Newton, Albert Einstein and N.I. Lobachevski). In the opinion of Hegel (1975), motion is a unity of space and time. Subjective idealistic philosophy studies space and time as subjective forms for the ordering of people's sensations. This point of view was supported by George Berkeley, David Hume, Ernst Mach, Richard Avenarius and others.

According to the views of objective idealists, space and time exist objectively and are the derivatives of nous, absolute idea and so on. These views are followed by Plato, St. Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Georg Hegel, neothomists and some other philosophers.

In the history of philosophy (Democritus, Epicurus and Isaac Newton) considered space and time as independent bases which exist together with matter and independently of it.

In physics and mathematics, Einstein assumed that they are parts of four-dimensional space-time continuum. His special theory of relativity (1905) stated that natural laws are the same in different moving systems but the speed of light is constant and does not depend on the speed of a human who watches it or on where the light shines from.

## 2.2 *Definitions of space and time in the papers of Kazakh scientists*

Kazakh scientists (Z. Serikkaliuly, A. Seidimbek, A. Kodar, Sh. Ybrayev, etc.) give their own definitions for the notions of space and time:

Literary critic Z. Serikkaliuly (1994): "Space... is an infinity which a man who saw a beauty feels by his soul... Time is an eternity of being – the past, presence and future...". The scientist states that the notion of infinity is interconnected with thinking. For example, space is a blue lake or a green pasture. Here the infinity of space and time are interconnected. So a human feels freedom through the image of real life.

Culture expert A. Seidimbek (2001) expressed "the historical development of people's world view..." and proved by certain examples that the reification of surrounding world is defined also by space and time. Firstly, mythic changes were connected with notions and ideas which are associated with the creation of the world. In this aspect, there were such expressions as "since the year dot", "ages ago", "in the days of old", "in old times", etc. Secondly, the correlation of real time and real space is directly connected with the life of nomadic Kazakhs and reflects their whole experience accumulated during centuries.

Scientist A. Kodar (1998) proves: "Space is visible, and time is sensible. Something seen is perceived immediately, but something heard is perceived some time later". It means "settled people choose plastic arts (architecture, sculpture and drawing) while nomads choose spiritual arts (music and poetry).

Folklorist Sh. Ybrayev (1993): "The notion of space is a philosophical and historical category. However even it obeys the poetic laws of epos. That is why the representation and enumeration depend on the character of subjective time". The scientist analyses the questions of epic space in two aspects: epic concept of space and its artistic peculiarities. The notion of space (the title of an area, a mountain, a river and so on) is a historical category, although it obeys the laws of epos. First of all it is full of events. Thus its representation and enumeration depend on the character of the story (Manas, 1005).

Turcologist S.G. Klyashtorny (1981) proves: "Time is a fate, infinity but space is a wide land, spaciousness". The scientist proved the features of space and time. The creation of the world is the beginning of time and space and an eternal sequence of beginnings. Tree is a symbol of infinity. This is a structure-making principle in Turkic world image. All spheres of being are connected vertically in this symbol. Tree is the axe of the world and its center. It is a reference point in temporal and spatial coordinate system. In the view of Xiongnu, tree, especially a high one, is a means of communication with the main god Tengri who lives in Heaven. The world tree embodies the unity of the whole world. It is a kind of model for the Universe and of man where every creature, thing and phenomenon has its own place. This symbol is reflected in Kazakh applied arts. This image can be drawn, curved in stone or in wood. For example, fire in yurt is an analogue of the world tree.

Ethnographer U. Zhanibekov (1990) gives examples from ancestors' life, their world view and lifestyle, and how people's ideas are reflected in space and time in yurt. Well-known scientist S. Kasimanov proves that space and time were handed down as a symbolic meaning in an ornament (1995). Space and time are expressed by colour, intervals, distances and seasons. For example, ancient Turks Tengrians considered the combination of light blue and yellow colours as the unity of earth and sky. On the national flag of Kazakhstan, this combination means the infinity of sky above the whole earth and people and it is also a symbol of general well-being, calmness, peace and unity.

The perception of space, motion and time is based on visual (space and motion) and acoustic (time) perception. When someone perceives space he evaluates the distance between objects and their remoteness from the observer, depth and three-dimensionality of objects and the direction of their allocation. This allows the observer not only to perceive space but also to orient oneself in it. For example, a living area in Kazakh yurt is divided into four parts. The place opposite the entrance ("tor") is the place of the biggest honour. Here guests and elder men sit. In this place, the piles of blankets, carpets and fur clothes were put on chests. It showed family's prosperity. Female zone is to the right from the exit. Here food and utensils are stored. Male zone is to the left where hunting and cattle-breeding accessories and harness hang just near the exit.

## 2.3 *The symbolic meanings of space and time*

Sacral symbols and vivid cheerful colours serve as a kind of invitation for a guest who is always welcome. The interior of

yurt has gorgeous colouration. Furniture and carpentry are painted in red and orange and covered with ornaments each of which is a good wish.

Literary critic Z. Serikkaliuly (1994): "During the artistic cognition, space and time are perceived at large, as a unique reality with the help of observation and the comprehension of the surrounding world. The artistic cognition has a certain specificity consisting in integral but not partitioned representation of the world and especially man in the world".

Scientists prove that infinity is a wonder world and a sign of ambiguousness and uncertainty. The world of infinity is an orientation. It envelops the whole nature and things that man both already knows and will cognize. Nomads oriented themselves by such astronomic objects as the Big Dipper ("Zhetikarakshy"), the Pleiades ("Urker") and the North Star ("Temirkazyk"). These objects helped them to estimate distances and travel direction in the night and to forecast weather.

In the arts, space and time are divided into unreality, conceptuality and perceptivity (Zobov, 1974). It is real objective realities of life. It is eternal and based on mythological space and time (2001). For example, a trinity of mythological signs Tengri and Umai-ana reflect the unity of the world and earth. Conceptual space and time are the nature and celestial bodies i.e. the notion of the surrounding world. For example, chronology and lunar calendar. Perceptive space and time are the perception and imagination.

The research features of analysis shows the notions of space and time in pedagogy that can be different. Their natural place is in pedagogical prognostics aimed at achieving the advance data as a means for the purposeful optimization of modern education (Gershunskiy, 1998). In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the quantitative approach to space and time is rejected. In this approach, time contains processes and space contains things, but both space and time are indifferent to what they contain. Instead of this "calculating" approach (M. Heidegger), scientists introduce a "substantial dimension": space is determined not only by things but also by their meanings; time flows not only inside or outside us but also thanks to us (1998).

It is especially important for pedagogy to comprehend these categories because it is aware of its humanist nature and humanist mission. Value and sense are the fundamental notions for this approach. They open truly humanist evaluation of pedagogic phenomena and underline the spiritual bases of education.

K. Levin was the first who raised a question of person's psychological time. He detected the link between the past, present and future when the past and future are included in the context of the present: the way man perceives his present situation is inevitably connected with his ideas, wishes and expectations about the past and future (Golovakha, 1984).

The understanding of person's development as a derivation of three time perspectives was expressed best by A.S. Makarenko (1972). The close perspective boils down to self-orientation in rapid everyday life; the medium perspective is in ascertaining the key areas when one can apply his abilities and forces; the distant perspective reflects the meaning and purpose of life and ideas of how one wants to see himself in the world and the world inside himself. Their harmony is an essential condition for man's mental health and his optimal and full-fledged life.

Real space and time are objective categories in applied arts. If the phenomena of conceptual space and time are a notion then they are collected in man's mind. Perceptive space and time correspond to changes in the psychological state of sense organs. For example, yurt as a widespread art work of folklore is a universal unit of space and time because it copies the world space. Its cupola designates sky; the space between uyk means time, fire signifies a happy life. Thus such wishes as "May the shanyrak be high", "Do not let the fire die out" and "May your fire be safe" have a great educational importance (Samuratova, 2014).

As scientists B. Baizhigitov states, the perceptive space and time are revealed not only in feelings and emotions but more likely depending on experience and empiric perception (Baizhigitov, 1999). There is a positive opinion that an artist firstly feels an object through his experience, and then he forms a national thinking system of the viewer because a phenomenon of the perceptive space and time in any art work correspond to the changes of viewer's mood. This phenomenon is a basis for behavior in life, however at the same time it is a relative and subjective notion. For instance, nomadic people considered their felt yurts not as an example of beauty deserving to be exhibited in museums but as a natural part of the huge space under the blue sky.

### 3. Findings and Discussion

In view of modern outlook, this problem forms a sense of perception of an art work in mind and national artistic system of thinking. In view of cognition, it forms common ethnic culture. In world culture, it forms linear representation. It should be noted that ornaments and colouration have aesthetic educational importance.

1. The phenomena of space and time began from the nomadic civilization in Soviet time had "national by kind and socialistic by importance" meaning. It passed several stages before the national culture was restored. These long and different stages originated culture and the notion of nomadic art. Scientist A. Seidimbek

detected two level categories: mythic and real space and time (Seidimbek, 1997).

The mythic timing has no succession. This time measures only the known limits of events. The meaning of the mythic time is not in the commensuration with real time but in explaining the creation of the world with its components and inhabitants. That is why real events describing mythic times are quite subjective. At the same time, the mythic time gives ancient myths a "social" meaning.

The real time correlated with real space is directly connected with the life of nomadic Kazakhs and fully reflects their experience accumulated during centuries.

This is inherent in visual arts as well, because the content of all times is represented mythically and really. Myth is the content of pictures on stones, while real phenomena are grouped in biological, situational, ethnographical, natural and historical space and time. They develop in close connection with folklore and enrich national spiritual culture.

Totemic notions in them become symbols and signs with the lapse of time and continue traditions. For instance, Kok Bori is a genealogical tree of Saka which was drawn as a symbol on military colours. In Turkic tribes there was a jump contest in honour of wolfs. This can be also seen in traditions of ancient Saks as "Kok Bori" and "Kyz Bori". Kazaks have national games based on these traditions: "Kokpar" and "Kyzkuu".

In order to define the notions of space and time, it is necessary to analyze art works in details. The sequence of events in time usually shows the plot content of notions. Here an event means an action. If there are actions, surely there is timing and a place in space which characterizes the essence and spirit of the epoch (Samuratova, 2010).

The time of epoch plays a special role in folklore. Geometric ornaments of the Stone Age, "the sign of beast" in the culture of Saka, the visual art of the middle age, national culture been forming until today – all this forms an image of a single epoch (Samuratova, 2012). In other words, an interpreter appears in art in the plot time of the epoch and in biological, situational, ethnographical, natural and historical space and time. They are closely connected; otherwise it would be very difficult to analyze art works.

After the analysis of results achieved by scientists, we can conclude the following:

1. Space and time are not only the main forms of matter's existence, but also the perception of the world, a wise reasoning and soul feeling.
2. The national and world view notion of unity of self-consciousness, intellect, feelings and riddles of humans.
3. The notion of space and time is reflected in folklore and applied arts.

The results of the study can be used to improve knowledge and skills of future specialists in this field.

The results of the study were discussed in the Department of Fine Arts and Drawing of the Aktobe Zhubanov State University (Aktobe) and the Gumilev Eurasian National University (Astana). The paper has Implementation Deeds.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Folklore and applied arts are the heritage of material and spiritual culture of nomads who lived in the Great Steppe. They developed in close connection with nomadic lifestyle of traditional Kazakh society, socio-economic position, people's self-consciousness and historical process.

Nomadic life is realized by passing through the spatial world and comprehending it. It means that nomads searched for their place and spiritual purpose in the world. It is reflected in Kazakh applied arts. Kazakh standards of life were to a large extent determined by national trades and crafts.

Applied arts are the second nature of the world of things created by the hands of masters. These are runic signs, stone statues, monuments, sculptures, jewelry, carpets, etc. The items of applied arts reflect ancient the world view of Kazakhs in a form of various ornaments and patterns.

The prospect is in further development of innovative methods and forms for the professional and creative training of specialists on the basis of Kazakh applied arts and further study of both theoretical and practical lines of such training.

The possible prospect of research in this field:

- The theoretical and practical bases for the use of such notions as space and time in ethnic culture and art for the training of specialists;
- The formation of artistic interest on the basis of such notions as space and time in folklore.

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