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The Alien City Chronotope within the Scope of Toni Morrison's *Jazz*

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ABSTRACT

The research observes the representation of the alien city chronotope in Jazz (1992) by a contemporary American writer Toni Morrison. The narration of the novel occurs in Harlem (New York) in the 1920-s, however, because most characters' identities originate in the mid-19th-century American South, time and space frames extend. Focusing on the city space in the novel Jazz we regard the city as a social and cultural phenomenon of America, an independent live character that enters into a dialogue with the novel's protagonists and, at the same time, contributes to their alienation within its frames. Harlem of 1920s functions not only as sociohistorical background but also as a unique narrator that relates the urban experience of African-Americans. We deduce that the chronotope exhibited in the novel in question combines several places and embodies narration about protagonists' roots, their original habitat and a new conflicting environment that both attracts and repels them. The intrinsic ties of time and space in the literary work discussed in the article are presented on the level of the city, which represents alien and fragmentized reality. Thus we are convinced that the alien city chronotope in the novel is shaped by the opposition of ethnic and cultural identities of characters within their changing world. The characters' illusions and aspirations are guided by the dubious and forceful voice of the city and none of the protagonists is able to escape the traumatic labyrinth of time and space tracing their memory.

Keywords: chronotope; city space; alien; identity; novel

INTRODUCTION

The publication of Morrison's early novels *The Bluest Eye* (1970) and *Sula (1973)* coincided with the growing civil rights movement and reflected the writer's response to "Black is Beautiful". The author explores the psychological side of black feminist issues spanning childhood and womanhood.

With *Song of Solomon* (1977) and *Tar Baby (1981)*African American myths, folklore and black ancestral archetypes enter Morrison's narrative and become a hallmark of her writing. Milkman Dead and Jadine Childs are both involved in spiritual quests for their roots and the search for "blackness" becomes a tool for survival in an alien world. The endings of *Song of Solomon* and *Tar Baby* as well as of subsequent novels remain predominantly open, evoking the dialogic forms of call-and-response technique central to African-American oral tradition. The early novels' realist discourse represents a more conventional narrative form, chronological ordering and explicit didactic voice that educates the reader through plot and characters about racism, oppression, love, gender. As Morrison herself explains in an interview with A. Koenen in 1980: "I think that is because my mode of writing is sublimely didactic in the sense that I can only warn by taking something away" (TaylorGuthrie1994, p. 74).

The Pulitzer prize winning *Beloved* (1987) explicating the aftermath of slavery and traumatized memory marked a clear shift towards a less conventional narrative and more intricate interplay with the text calling the reader for their response and challenging their preset values. The first novel a trilogy (*Beloved, Jazz* and *Paradise*) served as a springboard

and a point of reference for a series of later novels of the 20th century's *Mercy (2008),* and *God Help the Child (2015)*, that revisit the questions of slavery, race and motherhood.

Following the *Beloved,* Morrison's novel *Jazz* (1992) continues the theme of haunting past and spans the period of early 20th century migration to New York. While *Beloved* is set during Reconstruction era in the post-Civil War South, *Jazz* shifts to the urban beat of "the City" in the roaring 1920s with flashbacks to 1870s.

We assume that in this novel the city is conceived as a representation of protagonists' alien and extrinsic space. A particular protagonist's identity we focus on is initially a constituent of another habitat which both determines the way they behave and react to the environment portrayed in the novel.

The foundation for the choice of the novel is not only the fact that Morrison belongs to a literary generation acting in the very period of the world fiction development when cultural, philosophic and literary paradigms clash. She determines the nature of development of contemporary American fiction, the state of a modern American novel, as well as patterns of a narrative and its changing structure. Toni Morrison owns a status of a canonical writer. She originates in realism, starting her literary career with *The Bluest Eye* in 1970, but later she is transforming her style and settling in the new literary era creating conditions for a postmodernist paradigm where the opposition of "own" / "alien" is represented at different levels. The further she explores the problem of alienation and alien spaces focusing on modernity, urbanism and contemporary setting in her fiction, the more significant the points of convergence between her novels and alien city chronotopes.

So, we intend to deal with the theoretical and historical framework that is essential for understanding the complexity that shapes the notion of the alien city space and develop an understanding of the Bakhtinian implications of chronotope within the frames of*Jazz*.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE CHRONOTOPE AND SPACE

Space is one of the lenses through which we comprehend and measure life events. The notion of space or place in a literary work denotes a part of chronotope, a wider term elaborated by M. M. Bakhtin. Within a formal analysis of the Bakhtinian concept of chronotope we refer to the space of a city as a fusion of relevant narrative elements:

> "In the literary artistic chronotope there is a fusion of spatial and temporal attributes in an intelligible and concrete whole. Time here thickens, condenses, becomes visible in space; space is intensified and drawn into the movement of time, place, history. This intersection of axes and fusion of indicators characterizes the artistic chronotope".
>
> (Bakhtin 1981, p. 84)

According to M. Bakhtin, there are transparent or vague points where time and space are contiguous, they touch, interrelate and determine each other. Upon these points the narration formally concentrates. Most elements of a particular plot and composition often come together in these common locations which in turn play a structure-forming role. The scholar claims: "It can be said without qualification that to them belongs the meaning that shapes narrative" (Bakhtin 1981, p. 250).

Within the scope of related and other literary theories in literary scholars' minds Bakhtin occupies an entirely definite place, in the last half a century his ideas come into the foreground resulting in so called "Bakhtin industry" (Emerson 1994). The concept of chronotope as well as other Bakhtin's terms and ideas has undoubtedly become one of the most studied topics in literary research.

The significance of the Bakhtinian concept is equally important outside the philosopher's criticism. It is applicable to innovative questions in literary criticism. The

chronotope, initially developed by Bakhtin, was then analyzed and extended by scholars with diverse views and approaches, for instance, such prominent Bakhtin specialists as Joseph Frank, Michael Holquist, CarylEmerosn, Gary Soul Morson, and others. Their works explore the implications of Bakhtin's concept of the chronotope for a variety of theoretical topics such as literary spatial forms (Frank 1945), the chronotope in relation with dialogism, literary and dialogic imagination (Holquist 1990), genres and temporality (Morson 1991), the generic chronotope (Morson, Emerson 1993), the epic chronotope (Falconer 1997), etc.

The reception and analysis of Bakhtin's ideas represent extensions and applications of his theory. One of the most prominent remarks is about an intrinsic connectedness of time and space by Michael Holquist, who writes: "an event is always a dialogic unit in so far as it is a co relation: something happens only when something else with which it can be compared reveals a change in time and space" (Holquist 1990, 116).

Initially M. Bakhtin distinguishes between ten types of chronotopes in a novel, relying on different genres where chronotopic relations between time, setting, action and characters are approximately regular. Morson and Emerson later observe: "different aspects or orders of the universe cannot be supposed to operate with the same chronotope" (Morson, Emerson 1990, p. 368). The mentioned researchers also single out a generic chronotope, which they regard as "an integral way of understanding experience, and a ground for visualizing and representing human life" (Morson and Emerson 1990: 368).

Oleg Osovsky, a Russian literary scholar, a specialist in Bakhtin's studies, who investigates the reception of Bakhtin's theories, points out a question of understanding and interpretation of the philosopher's terms: "Negative reactions of a wide range of 'narrow specialists' who accept neither breadths nor freedoms of M. M. Bakhtin's generalizations and a number of his contemporaries, requires its explanation. The point is not even in what Bakhtin himself called weakening of the curb of methodologies, but rather in the productivity of creative freedoms of ideas, a particular type of thinking" (Osovsky 2017, p. 252). O. Osovsky looks into historical-literary and historical-cultural analysis of Bakhtin's ideas as those are possible to be applied, though cautiously, to modern and post-modern literary works, as well as elaborating them within the frames of typological aspects, taking into account principles and traditions of academic literary scholarship (Osovsky 2018).

Similarly, Lily Alexander, focusing on Bakhtin's ideas about chronotopes and narrative architectonics, notes researchers' goals to discover chronotopes (Alexander 2007, p. 28). The process is definitely justified by the openness of the philosopher's theories within the frames of various historical periods, cultural and literary and paradigms, as well as genres, which, according to Bakhtin, are determined in many ways by a chronotope (Bakhtin 1981, p. 95).

It is worth mentioning the studies of Dostoyevsky's novels which trace back to Bakhtin's ideas expressed in his works. Henk van der Liet while analyzing the chronotope in Peer Hultberg's novel *ByenogVerden* (1992) appeals to Bakhtin's reminiscences of Immanuel Kant. Guided by his philosophy Bakhtin "reminds us of the fact that time and space are fundamental categories – a priori circumstances – that precede all forms of cognition" (Liet van der 1994, p. 207). As specified by Bakhtin, "the narrative in Dostoyevsky is often concentrated around certain points in the temporal development of the story which are also linked to clearly discernible spatial signs (Bakhtin 1994, pp. 169-170). A significant addition made by Henk van der Liet, as well as by other scholars is the fact that such form of exploring space and time in fiction in fact may be called a semiotic approach, which Bakhtin develops in 1975. Here he defines chronotope as "the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature" (Bakhtin 1981, p. 84).

Yet studies of time and space can be found in both literature and art studies. Thus Janice Best claims, "that the chronotope constitutes at once a metaphor of society and one of

the principle generators of artistic meanings in both literature and painting" (Best 1994, p. 291). Myth, folklore, national and ethnic identities, and moreover fantastic features are the points taken into account by other scholars who study the way chronotope functions in a novel (Crichfield 1991, Dick 2010).

For a discussion of a Bakhtinian concept of chronotopeit is relevant to point out certain examples which are supposed to be entitled to fulfill "a concrete whole". In chronotope "spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole" (Bakhtin 1981, 84). Thus, the chronotope of the city is apparent especially in contemporary literature. In this research this "concrete whole" is the city space.

Cities are the product of urbanization. They imply specific space, and time usually represents particular historical periods in the development of societies. The city space is inevitably studied in multiple theories, not only literary studies, but those of philosophy, psychology and sociology. In this regard, sociologists investigate the phenomena of city and urban space. The question was, for example, addressed by a well-established French sociologist Henry Lefebvre, who considers daily routine the main perspective from which to refer to the city. He evolves the idea of a vivid city comprised by everyday practices:

> "In the legendary, monstrous city, everyone has some route of his own (from flat to school, the office, the factory) and does not know the rest very well. These familiar journeys are part of the everyday, practical and reassuring, narrower in many respects than the old neighborhood life. And the representation (image) of the city? … Representation of the city, for the great majority of people, is restricted to banalities about the big department stores, about places that are 'in' or 'out', to be visited or avoided" (Lefebvre 2003, p. 152)

Other sociological theories of city space encompass Max Weber ideas who regarded the city as a critique of metropolis (Weber 1922), following and expanding ideas of Ferdinand Tönnies and Georg Simmel's ideas of metropolis as the paradigm of an inhuman (Tönnies 1963, Simmel 1950). Their ideas of social domination within a city space have received response in other observations of scholars. For this study these works' theses are relevant in a way of representation of a metropolis in perspectives of the discussion of alienation within metropolis chronotope.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

Speculating on Bakhtin's typology of chronotopes, the openness of his ideas for contemporary as well as newly exposed in contemporary literary studies, we single out the alien city chronotope as a key basis of this research. The material for this research is Toni Morrison's novel *Jazz*. The city in this novel was an object for research among a variety of scholars (Folks 1999, Pattison 2017, Leise 2017, etc.). The attention is well-justified as New York is definitely one of major categories shaping the novel's aesthetics.

It is relevant to mention national and ethnic issues tackled by the writer, as they form other types of chronotopic relations concerning national and ethnic identities central to her fiction. We will cite other studies of national and ethnic in their connection with a novel's chronotope and explain why we discuss another type of the chronotope. Peter Hitchcock regards the time/space of a nation which he considers conductive for comparatism, multiculturalism, and postcolonialism in particular. "The difficulty, however, is that to problematize the nation for theories of the novel, one must have a fairly precise sense of what constitutes a nation, linguistically, geographically, historically, ethnically, politically and even technologically" (Hitchcock 2016, p. 198). Likewise, concerning multicultural societies and multiethnic environments (Eckhard 2011; Hassan, Raihanah, Hashim 2017; Leise 2017;

Morgan 1996, etc.) it is crucial to take into account what may comply with characters' habitual time and space, embody their native or home chronotope.

In literary studies of the last decades issues of multiculturalism have been widely explored, especially within the frames of modernist and postmodernist paradigms. Thus the chronotope of multiculturalism and ethnic identity are the objects of speculation in research of Dawn Morgan (1996). The reason why we mention this type of research is a question of an alien space chronotope, when a scene of action is extrinsic and in many ways conflicting to a protagonist.

In this respect it is worth mentioning the research of the chronotope of the uncanny conditioned by the notion of "the uncanny", that "has traditionally been associated with imagery of the fantastic, such as vampires, doubles, zombies and Gothic mansions, today the uncanny also qualifies an unthematizable element in day-to-day life and in the subject's relationship to the most familiar environments: the home, the family and the self" (Connon 2010, p. 9).

One more research addressing "the uncanny" is P. Eckhard's book "Chronotopes of the Uncanny Time and Space in Postmodern New York Novels". The author does not only rely on ideas of Bakhtin, but those of S. Freud and T. Todorov. "Characters continuously transgress spatial, temporal, and semantic boundaries. Both authors concentrate on surfaces, physical and psychological, but also make clear that these surfaces appear alien and unfamiliar because the characters' perceptions of them are filtered through their unconscious mind" (Eckhard 2011, p. 184). The author defines the narrative which refer to the chronotope of the uncanny as unpleasant and shocking "experiences that we repress and choose not to articulate" (Eckhard 2011, p.13). It is remarkable, that the author touches upon *Jazz* by Toni Morrison as one of the objects for research either.

The notion initially corresponds to S. Freud's psychoanalytical idea of "Uncanny" (*Unheimlich*) or estrangement which is actually related to alienation. However similar the terms "uncanny" and "alien" may seem, we regard them as separate categories, as we follow the idea that the chronotope of the uncanny involves supernatural and strange experiences, difficult to explain and speak of, whereas the alien chronotope suggests being naturalized, adaptation and assimilation to other conditions, remaining somebody else's, making characters feel devoid of home and their own space.

According to Irving Louis Horowitz "at its source, the word 'alienation' implies an intense separation first from objects in a world, second from other people, third from ideas about the world held by other people. It might be said that the synonym of alienation is separation, while the precise antonym of the word is integration" (Horowitz 1966, p. 231). This is also one of the core categories of Marxism. Horowitz writes: "It was Marx himself who made the clear and decisive break with the philosophical tradition of explaining alienation. No longer was alienation a property of man or of reason, but it became a specific property of select classes of men in factory conditions who were, as a result of these conditions, deprived of their reasons . . ." (Horowitz 1966, p. 231).

As Karl Marx stated:

> "What then, constitutes the alienation of labor? First, the fact that labor is external to the worker, i.e., it does not belong to his essential being; that in his work, therefore, he does not affirm himself but denies himself, does not feel content but unhappy, does not develop freely his physical and mental energy but mortifies his body and ruins his mind. The worker therefore only feels himself outside of his work, and in his work feels outside himself. He is at home when he is not working, and when he is working he is not at home. His labor is therefore not voluntary, but coerced; it is *forced labor".*
>
> (quoted in Horowitz 234)

In modernist writings alienation has transformed into the notion of the existential terror. The term "alienation" altered substantially and has become a significant issue within

the scope of ideas of existentialist authors, such as Camus and Sartre, and became a category reflecting a post-war France suffering after WWII (Sartre 1995). Then the model of alienation has been broached by deconstructionists and other philosophers within multiple scopes of applications.

We do deal with the notion of alienation, but rather with its derivative – alien – which is regarded as foreign, unfamiliar and distasteful. We have reached the notion of "the alien city chronotope" via the study of types of chronotopes according to M. Bakhtin, who refers to "the adventure chronotope", for instance, in reference with the ancient Greek romance and the adventure novel of ordeal, and states that the space of the Greek romance is an "abstract-alien" world (Bakhtin 1981, 108). "Everything in it is indefinite, unknown, foreign. Its heroes are there for the first time; they have no organic ties or relationships with it; … in this world, therefore, they can experience only random contingency" (Bakhtin 1981, 100–101).

We do not operate with the adventure chronotope as the Morrison's novel lacks other features inherent to it. Yet, we borrow its intrinsic characteristic, as the novel's environment is alien for the characters in a sense of their roots, personal and collective memory, both conscious and unconscious.

THE ALIEN CITY CHRNOTOPE IN *JAZZ* BY TONI MORRISON

The image of the city has been central to the literary imagination of American novelists. In an attempt to convey the African-American urban experience, writers have created texts that have generated complex and diverse portraits of the urban landscape. In her essay *City Limits, Village Values: Concepts of the Neighborhood in Black Fiction* (1981) Toni Morrison addresses the ambivalence of the African-American writer towards the city.

Morrison's attitude provided in the essay mentioned above gives an important insight into the historical and cultural specificity of the setting and chronotope of *Jazz*. Morrison observes that modern African-American literature is suffused with an "affection" for "the village within" the city, black neighborhoods which are "repositories for life-sustaining community values" (Morrison 1981, p. 37**).** The writer places her characters in a larger urban space that had gathered former slaves, American citizens by then, from all over the United States. It formed the center of the black cultural community, the heart of new melodies and rhythms that rapidly spread far beyond New York and the USA and will have shaped in many respects American music henceforth. Other ethnic communities were displaced by the African-American population, so the district received the status of "the village within" the city. It was predominantly a black neighborhood, which will have very soon transformed into a nest of ill-being, crime and violence.

That space was a new home and a safe refuge for them:

> "Alone, yes, but top-notch and indestructible – like the City in 1926 when all the wars are over and there will never be another one. The people down there in the shadow are happy about that. At last, at last, everything's ahead. The smart ones say so and people listening to them and reading what they write down agree: Here comes the new. Look out. There goes the sad stuff. The bad stuff.The things-nobody-could-help stuff".
>
> (Morrison 2004, p. 7)

However, it did not belong to them, it was initially unfamiliar, alien, and required caution:

> "Nobody says it's pretty here; nobody says it's easy either. What it is is decisive, and if you pay attention to the street plans, all laid out, the City can't hurt you… You have to understand what it's like, taking on a big city: I'm exposed to all sorts of ignorance and

> criminality. Still, this is the only life for me. I like the way the City makes people think they can do what they want and get away with it". (Morrison 2004, p. 7)

In her essay Morrison notes that black writers have neither glorified nor rejected the city, although stressing that the American city in general has often induced a sense of alienation in many African-American writers. Therefore, the chronotope is intermittent in a way of narrative techniques, as the author tends to shift her characters recollections towards their roots, the lands of their birth and memory, and then back to New York. It is important to note, however, that the lands of their memories implied trauma and were originally hostile to them and alienating:

> "Part of why they loved it was the specter they left behind. The slumped spines of the veterans of the 27th Battalion betrayed by the commander for whom they had fought like lunatics… The wave of black people running from want and violence crested in the 1870s; the '80s; the '90s but was a steady stream in 1906 when Joe and Violet joined it. Like the others, they were country people, but how soon country people forget".
> (Morrison 2004, p. 33)

It is clear that the major chronotope of the novel involves New York at the end of 1925 and the first days of 1926. Although never mentioning the geographical name of the City, the author makes no attempt to conceal that this is Harlem; a lot of identifying names, such as Lenox Avenue and the numbered streets of Manhattan, appear throughout the pages of this book. For both the narrators and the characters calling New York "the City" enhances the eloquent embodiment of an alien city. Their tone is deferential and proves to some extent that they are not important in the grand scheme of things, occupying the lower position, but it is alive for them, it recognizes them and gives some meaning to their lives. Still, it is difficult or impossible to cognize the City. It remains apart of their nature and identity.

It may be presumed that the city space is interchangeable in the novel as, for instance, in what Bakhtin describes as the adventure chronotope: "what happens in Babylon could just as well happen in Egypt or Byzantium and vice versa" (Bakhtin 1981, p. 98). Nevertheless, however alien and unaccustomed the City is, its chronotopic features create an easily recognizable environment, which embodies the Promised Land for its new residents. By the time Violet and Joe arrived this environment had already honored its pledges to many of the tired and the poor, "huddled masses yearning to breathe free", as promised by inscribed on the Statue of Liberty Emma Lazarus' sonnet "The New Colossus" (1883).

In a social and cultural context, the City manages African-American identity, reshapes it and predetermines their future already known to the writer by the time she published the novel. Nevertheless, the current chronotope implicated premises for cultural and social growth. Thus, the writer focuses on the new quality of the emerging black urban culture and on the eminent cultural significance of Harlem, which at that time "was already much more than just a black neighborhood within Manhattan; it was not even a city within the city, but the capital of black America" (Paquet-Deyris 2001, p. 219). A destination of thousands of black migrants from towns and villages throughout the southern states, Harlem is where Joe and Violet Trace settle, and it becomes the focal point of the action in *Jazz*.

Just as in the example of Beloved, which was based on a documented story of a woman who murdered her daughter to save her from beings enslaved, *Jazz* was prompted by a similar case. A photograph of a young girl in a coffin, reprinted in *The Harlem Book of the Dead*in 1926,determined the period, the narrative line and the place, as Morrison wrote in her forward to the novel (Morrison 2004, p. XI). The photographer recalled how the girl, shot at a party by her lover with a noiseless gun, refused to tell anyone why she was bleeding, giving her lover the chance to escape.

The seed of a plot is a love triangle between Violet and Joe Trace, the middle-aged couple, who join the Migration from the racist South during Harlem Renaissance, and Dorcas Manfred, Joe's young lover, an orphan, raised by her modest and controlling aunt Alice. In this novel Morrison focused on exploring love between a couple, "the reconfiguration of self … the negotiation between the individuality and commitment to another" (Morrison 2004, p. XIII). Although the theme of romantic love and relationship within the triangle is central to the novel, Dorcas is murdered at the inception of the novel. Joe shoots her with a silent gun at a party but escapes the prosecution. The grieving Violet is determined to injure the girl's corpse with a knife, but unsuccessful, releases all her birds "to freeze or fly, including the parrot that said, "I love you." (Morrison 2004, p. 3). Violet then becomes obsessed with the girl and borrows her picture from Alice Manfred to look at during the nights, the couple slowly try to come to terms with their crisis and personal problems, complicated by the stresses of the city.

The writer unveils the entire plot on the first pages of the novel, modeling the novel's rhythm and narration on the principles of *jazz* music where the main melody is performed and supplemented by different players and instruments. As Morrison explained: "Although I had a concept, its content, a plot line, characters, data, I could not establish the structure where meaning, rather that information, would lie …the essence of the so-called *Jazz* Age" (Morrison 2004, p. XIII).

The major characters all share the traumatized memories caused by destructive power of racism, orphanage, loss of a family. All the characters have their own voices and tell their stories of the past inviting other members of the orchestra, Rose Dear, Wild, Golden Gray True Belle, etc., to come into play.

Choosing to use the Harlem Renaissance as a background for the novel's chronotope, Morrison questions a cultural layer that has always been regarded as a cultural mecca for African Americans. She focuses her narrative not on the sophistication of lives of the country's best and brightest black intellectuals, but on the lives of very ordinary people who work hard at humble jobs to provide themselves with their basic needs. Thus, for them and particularly for Morrison's characters this alien environment had become a relocated habitual land, with traumas unforgotten, roots abandoned but kept in memory, fresh traumas and hurdles of their new urban dwelling.

While the splendor of the *Jazz* Age and African-American political and cultural confidence are well-known, what has remained unspoken have been "the less-than-splendid existence teeming with economic uncertainty, internal color-line issues, sexism, depression, and the violence people assumed they had left behind" (Stave 2007, p. 60-61). The writer has declared her interest in exploring the immigrant's experience in the City:

> "I was fascinated by the thought of what the city must have meant to them … I was interested in how the city worked. How classes and groups and nationalities had the security of numbers within their own turfs and territories, but also felt the thrill of knowing that there were other turfs and other territories, and felt the real glamor and excitement of being in this throng" (Schappell 2008, p. 82)

The excitement of the writer is the one her characters in *Jazz* experience. In the first chapter the narrator lyrically celebrates New York:

> "Daylight slants like a razor cutting the buildings in half. In the top half I see looking faces and it's not easy to tell which are people, which the work of stonemasons which are people, which the work of stonemasons … A city like this one makes me dream tall and feel in on things." (Morrison 2004, p. 7)

This energized description of the urban environment reveals the mixed excitement and danger of the northern hub. Let us return to the city chronotope representation in the

novel, and again have a look at it as a space making the characters feel devoid of it and bear in mind that it is not a space of their own. The novel is about the capital "C" City, and the emphasis on capital "C" enables the reader to look at New York City as the key part of the novel's imagery. Even if not quite a character in the novel, the City is certainly a powerful element in *Jazz*. It is described as almost a living entity that engages into a dialogue with the novel's protagonists; it speaks and grows along with its inhabitants: "And the City, in its own way, gets down for you, cooperates … sending secret messages disguised as public signs … covering your moans with its own" (Morrison 2004, p. 64).

The personification of the City on an aesthetic level places the characters in the position of those who as a result of its domination and their longing to be imbued with the city feel isolated and estranged. The absence of ability to own it as "their own" proves once more its alien nature.

An impossible to penetrate image of New York is further developed with action and emotions attributed to the City. Through the extensive use of metaphorical expressions and male pronouns rather than inanimate ones, Morrison infuses the City with magic: "There is no air in the City but there is breath, and every morning it races through him like laughing gas brightening his eyes, his talk, and his expectations" (Morrison 2004, p. 34); and "At some time the city sky is changing its orange heart to black" (Morrison 2004, p. 38); and "The City thinks" (Morrison 2004, p. 50).

What draws our attention best concerning a category of being alien or allied is the way characters aspired to it before they got acquainted with it. Their premature feeling home will mix with that of always feeling out of place. Notwithstanding this fact they keep loyalty to it, partly because of its association with their culture brought and integrated into it. Morrison portrays the characters' relationship with the City as a romance, or in some way as love. Joe and Violet are in love with the city, even before getting there:

> "They weren't even there yet and already the City was speaking to them…And like a million others, chests pounding, tracks controlling their feet, they stared out the windows for the first sight of the City that danced with them, proving already how much it loved them. Like a million more, they could hardly wait to get there and love it back"
> (Morrison 2004, p. 32)

The couple are delighted with the City, where "they feel more like themselves, more like the people they always believed they were," (Morrison 2004, p. 35) and the bright opportunities it can offer. Being placed in a new urban environment they acquire better understanding of their own selves, strength and independence: "I'm strong. Alone, yes, but top-notch and indestructible – like the City in 1926 when all the wars are over and there will never be another one" (Morrison 2004, p. 7). The above quotation underscores that not only African Americans but the whole nation, even the world, believed that their dreams would come true. This dream However, Joe and Violet, like many other blacks who migrated from the South, had other reasons as well. What they left behind was the dehumanizing conditions blacks suffered under slavery, the racism and segregation, and what is more important, they tried to leave behind the memory of the repressive past:

> "When they fall in love with a city, it is for forever, and it is like forever. As though there never was a time when they didn't love it. The minute they arrive at the train station or get off the ferry and glimpse the wide streets and the wasteful lamps lighting them, they know they are born for it" (Morrison 2004, p. 33)

As Joe and Violet have left their rural past in the South behind, they have also left the sad and slow blues-life and entered the more progressive *jazz*-life of the urban present. On the other hand, the narrator's journeys from New York to trauma sites show evidence of their still being a part of its chronotope.

Within the plot development the alien city chronotope is enhancing. The overpowering City frames the story and influences the lives of its inhabitants. As J. Chadwick-Joshua points out, Morrison's depiction of the city "deliberately does not provide a neatly-wrapped, contained and linear world view…rather this world teems with contradiction and loving and history as well as herstory" (Chadwick-Joshua 1995, p.177). In order to bring to life some of the promises of the City, Joe and Violet have to develop as individuals, develop alien for their ethnicity features of personality, and adapt themselves to the flow, the pace and the rhythm of city-life in all its plenitude which "resists the attempts of its residents to put down roots, to establish a secure life" (Stave 2007, p. 61). The love to the City gradually turns into disillusionment and emotional alienation between husband and wife, which leads to the tragedy. Violet concludes that after coming to Harlem, she lost herself and understanding of the world. "I messed up my own life. Before I came to the North I made sense and so did the world. We didn't have nothing and we didn't miss it" (Morrison 2004, p. 207).

Morrison is interested in disclosing various aspects of the City that need to be explored from multiple perspectives. She juxtaposes the euphoria about the novelty and energy of the northern metropolis with occasionally inserted details about the realities of continuing discrimination and inequality. The Trace's neighborhood has no high schools and no banks, Dorcas dies before an ambulance arrives in time to save her: "the ice, they said, but really because it was colored people calling" (Morrison 2004, p. 210). At the end of the novel the original uniqueness of the City seems to have disappeared. Harlem is no longer the City that loved the newcomers. Morrison reveals New-York's alien nature by employing the trope of contradiction. The narrative states:

> "It's the time of year when the City urges contradiction most, encouraging you to buy street food when you have no appetite at all; giving you a taste for a single room occupied by you alone as well as a craving to share it with someone you passed in the street. Really there is no contradiction – rather it's a condition: the range of what an artful City can do" (Morrison 2004, p. 118)

This contradiction is also evident on a stylistic level: "There is no air in the City but there is breath … the City is … warm, scary … a city sky presses and retreats" (Morrison 2004, pp. 34-35). The northern metropolis is presented as M. Weber has described it – inhuman and indifferent. It offers access to freedom while at the same time constrains the degree of that freedom so that the characters have an illusion of being in control of their lives but in fact are victims of predetermination: "That's the way the City spins you. Makes you do what it wants, go where the laid-out roads say to … letting you think you're free … you can't get off the track a City lays for you" (Morrison 2004, p. 120). In this regard deterministic ideas of the universe being indifferent to a human emerge and prompt to mention roots again. The roots, traumas and memories of the past prevent the characters from integrating into the space of the City though wishing it. So, negative correlation between free will and predetermination is one more feature creating the alien city chronotope of the novel.

In the deployment of the narrative, Morrison emphasizes the City's decisive power and contradictory qualities. Harlem of 1920s functions not only as sociohistorical background but also as a unique narrator that relates the urban experience of African Americans through the portrayal of individual lives as they, being residents of New York and folks of their former habitats and native lands, are utterly alien and alienated. They wander through alien world among alien people convincing themselves the space and its inhabitants are intimate rather than familiar and habitual to them. So, as Bakhtin refers to alien worlds in his description of the chronotope, characters have no *organic ties* or relationships with the City.

CONCLUSION

As we can see, extrinsic city space characterized by different than those of characters' identities features and layers makes them react in a very strict way. Flexibility and adaptability within the frames of alien chronotope result in the development of extraneous reality and unnatural aspirations of protagonists. The plot and the structure of the novel with this type of the chronotope can be the evidence of the clash of literary paradigms and postmodernist reality. The novel's chronotope is chaotic, multi-national, polyphonic, open and decentered. These may further imply the study of the novel regarding other Bakhtin's ideas, such as dialogism / monologism and polyphony.

Toni Morrison refers to the equivocal approach of an African-American writer towards the city. It has always been both their protagonists' goal or a dream and alien space. A sense of community within a wider society has conflicted with a sense of being a part of another space, such as a village or a neighborhood. It created prerequisites for a particular type of the chronotope in Morrison's novel *Jazz*, the alien city chronotope.

Morrison's formula of the alien city chronotope is multifold. Her city in *Jazz* is dependent and limited, while the whole world is alien for characters, narrators and partly the writer herself. The setting of *Jazz* is an array of places while the dominant one is New York. So the chronotope is more expanded and mythologized. Morrison's city correlates with Harlem Renaissance which had an impact on the whole American culture and as a consequence it will contribute to the image of an African-American as a unique and cultivated citizen, a constituent and integral part of American culture. So within the plot development this environment partly transforms into a new home environment, familiar and allied to character's identities. They consider it "their own". This metamorphosis of the "alien" into the "own" and vice versa occurs on pages of other novels by this author either.

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