

Title: Two Tales of Death: Dostoevsky's "Gentle Creature" and Petrushevskaja's *Time: Night*
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This paper relates two novellas, Fedor Dostoevsky's "Gentle Creature" (1876) and Liudmila Petrushevskaja's *Time: Night* (1992), and analyses their distortions of chronotope. This analysis demonstrates that deviations in time tropes open the narrative to different perspectives on death, and that disfiguration of space corresponds to ugliness of characters, which ultimately leads to death. The paper also argues that this open narrative structure is typical of both Dostoevsky and Petrushevskaja, and is the major cause of Dostoevsky's impact on recent literary discourse.

The idea of *chronotope*, initially developed by Mikhail Bakhtin in his "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel" (1937-38) connects time and space in a narrative in a systemic whole (*The Bakhtin Reader* 184). *Time: Night* is a family history that follows the lives of three generations of women. The story has a remarkably complicated plot and goes back and forth in chronological time. *Kairos*, the narrative time, intrudes on *chronos* at crucial points in the narrative when the reader is reminded of death. A good example of such intrusion in *Time: Night* is the sound of bones being crushed by a neighbour of Anna Andrianovna, the story's protagonist and main narrator. The sound of the clock's pendulum in the ending of the "Gentle Creature" takes the protagonist-pawnbroker away from his dreamland, and forces him to re-acknowledge the fact of his wife's suicide. Both novellas also begin and end with death, albeit a symbolic one in *Time: Night* – a long list of names of the family members Anna Andrianovna has lost from her life. The list itself is like a prayer, and is suggestive of the commemoration of departed relatives in the Orthodox liturgy.

References

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