

Title: Andrei Platonov and the Chronotope of the Body
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One of the fundamental characteristics of many of the works of Andrei Platonov is their focus on the human body, a focus, as Thomas Seifrid has pointed out, that is not unconnected to Platonov's linguistic and formal innovations as well as to his parodying of the utopian schemes of the early Soviet period. In discussing Platonov's treatment of the body as expressed in his novel *Kotlovan*, Seifrid has defined Platonov's relentless preoccupation with the human body as embodying a "fundamental antagonism" between being and matter and the alienation of the soul from the "dead" and "inorganic" material of the body that encases and therefore traps it (Seifrid, 371).

Additionally, however, I would argue that in *Kotlovan* Platonov constructs the body so that it becomes a materialization of time and space. In *Kotlovan*, Platonov repeatedly observes and emphasizes the bodies of his characters: their physical states, as well as acts of eating, sleeping, death, etc. Rather than viewing this insistence on the body and references to it as "seemingly egregious" (Seifrid, 371), however, one fruitful way of reading the novel may be to read the body in terms of its narrative function as a chronotope, i.e., as the location and substantiation of the nexus of time and space in the novel. Throughout *Kotlovan*, Platonov consistently connects the body to both time and space, allowing us to read the body as an almost literal manifestation of Bakhtin's definition of the chronotope when he states, "Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history" (Bakhtin, 84).

Bibliography

Bakhtin, M. M. "Forms of Time and Chronotope in the Novel." *The Dialogic Imagination*. Trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Ed. Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981.

Seifrid, Thomas. "Writing against Matter: On the Language of Andrej Platonov's *Kotlovan*." *Slavic and East European Journal* 31.3 (Autumn 1987): 370-387.