

Title: Muratova's Human Comedy: A Postmodernist Chronotope
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Kira Muratova's film *Chekhovian Motifs*, based on two works by Anton Chekhov – "Difficult People," a story, and *Tat'iana Repina*, a play – is at once a thoughtful dialogue with Chekhov and a scathing commentary on humanity. The film's postmodernist chronotope initially frustrates its audience, but ultimately rewards it with aesthetic delight. My paper investigates Muratova's relationship with Chekhov's texts through the film's manipulations of time and space.

Chronotope fuses spatial and temporal indicators into one carefully constructed whole, charged with implied moral values. What I mean by a postmodern chronotope is one that represents disillusionment with conventional moral values and artistic forms and a focus on the alienation of the individual and the meaninglessness of human existence. The postmodernist chronotope of *Chekhovian Motifs* manipulates time and space in order to create a farcical quasi-contemporary world devoid of communication, love, or hope. The nonlinearity and unpredictability of time creates a sense of fierce dislocation; space, inseparably linked to ritual, becomes a torturous cage for the film's protagonists.

While Muratova's film, marked by exaggeration, offers a jarring counterpoint to Chekhov's understatement, her message appears to be strangely similar, in the end, to his plea for authenticity. Muratova's postmodernist chronotope imbues her depiction of the decaying world of contemporary humanity with unforgettable farcical power. Unexpected disclosures and biting satire, together with the emphatic exaggeration and numbing repetitiveness permeate many elements of the film's story and discourse. In the guise of a timeless farce, Muratova's portrayal of contemporary Russia shocks the viewers and reminds us of the need to love, to believe, and to act, that is, to strive for an authentic life.