## PROVINCAL TOWN CHRONOTOPE SPECIFICS IN G. FLAUBERTH'S "MADAME BOVARY"

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Abstract: The article is dedicated to understanding the chronotope of provincial town in Flaubert's novel "Madame Bovary". A provincial town chronotope has important plot significance in the novel. It is the organizing center of the main plot events of the novel, in which the plot nodes "are knotted and untied". The heroes of the novel live and act in a specific geographic space, which is characterized by the isolation and exaggerated length of the distances. In the chronotope of provincial town the fundamental importance has the images of a false home, a home hearth, a motif of sunlight. Throughout the work, a complex interaction of cyclical household and non-cyclic time is traced, which in turn are closely connected with household loci.

Keywords: Flaubert; 19th century French prose; novel; motive; "Madame Bovary"; chronotope; provincial town.

#### 1 Introduction

In the second half of the XIX century, cities flourished. Their population increases, they become the centers of industrial, political and socio-cultural life. The outstanding European and Russian prose writers - V. Hugo, O. de Balzac, G. Flaubert, F. Dostoevsky, E. Zola, M. Proust, B. Pasternak, M. Bulgakov, and others - addressed in their works to urban themes. Later it develops into the mythology of the city (Vasilyeva 2005; Ivanova 2014; Marinina 2007; Nabilkina 2014; Ruban 2004). We emphasize that the images of a particular city as a special topographic space, the location of the hero, the background of the development of plot collisions, have always been reflected in the literature. On the one hand, the city shaped its personality type, exerting a very significant influence on the formation of character, value orientations of this or that hero, but on the other hand, it was an independent living being, a certain social, cultural, political "organism" determined by a particular topography.

The theme of the city was one of the central ones in the work of G. Flaubert (from his early works to "Madame Bovary", "Feelings Education", etc.), who was one of the classics of realism, the predecessor of the "naturalistic realism" of Emile Zola school. His creative achievements go far beyond the limits of French literature. It is well known that among the writer's vast heritage, "Madame Bovary" (1857) comes to the fore; he is recognized as a true masterpiece of realism and is the apex of Flaubert's work. The central problem of the novel and (and the whole of Western European art of the second half of the nineteenth century) was the problem of personality. However, a fundamental aspect is the special background of the plot development - a provincial town with its oppressive boredom and vulgarity of provincial bourgeois life. In Flaubert's novel, the chronotope of a provincial city is of paramount importance. He is the organizing center of the main plot events of the novel, he sets the course of the plot development, determines the consciousness and the most important characteristics of the main and secondary characters.

## 2 Materials and methods

The perception of Flaubert's heritage In Russia begins in the nineteenth century, when "Madame Bovary" was highly appreciated by indigenous criticism (V.G. Belinsky, F.M. Dostoevsky, etc.). In the twentieth century the interest to master's prose has resumed: we can recall detailed studies of the poetics of his works both by Russian and foreign researchers. The writer's relations with Russia were particularly close thanks to I.S. Turgenev, his personal friend and associate in the arts.

In 1874, Turgenev was about to write a great article about Flaubert. In 1877 "Vestnik Evropi" journal published a translation of "Herodiad" with a preface where the Russian writer called Flaubert the head of the French realists and the heir to Balzac. Turgenev contributed to the appearance of translations "The Temptation of

Saint Anthony" and "The Simple Soul"; he conveyed this tale to E.I. Blamberg in 1876. By this time the Russian reader was already familiar with the translations "Madame Bovary" and "Salambo".

In 1897 "Education of Senses" was translated for the first time by E.G. Beketova. In particular, Turgenev wrote that the reader must be specially trained to understand novel mentioned and "The Temptation of Saint Anthony". In foreign criticism, significant interest has the articles of contemporaries of Flaubert, well-known writers as A. France, G. de Maupassant, E. Zola, Goncourt Brothers. In the XX century to his works addressed to André *Maurois*, S. Maugham, V. Brombert, R. Dumesnill, J. Gaultier, E. Fage (Brombert 1966; Brombert 1971; Danger 1973; Dumesnill 1928; Dumesnill 1932; Dumesnill 1961; Faguet 1899; Gaultier 1907; Williams 1973). The methodological basis of the study was the works by Mikhail Bakhtin on the novel theory and chronotope (Bakhtin 2000). The analysis of texts is based on the principles of comparative-typological and structural methods.

## 3 Literature Review

A keen interest in the famous French artist arose in the twentieth century, when his work became widely known. Despite the fact that Flaubert's literary heritage is considered in all textbooks on the history on Western European literature, in particular, French literature, and his name is mentioned in many articles on various aspects of the history of French realism, the number of studies directly devoted to his work in Russian is relatively small. In this aspect it is necessary to note the works of A. Ivaschenko, B. Reizov, T. Perimov, A. Puzikov, S. Zenkin (Ivaschenko 1955, 1967; Reizov 1965; Perimov 1934; Puzikov, 1972; Zenkin 1999). It is noteworthy that Mikhail Bakhtin also turned to comprehending the work of the French prose writer. In particular, the scientist attempted to write a separate article on Flaubert's aesthetic principles that were realized both in the writer's early works and at a later time, after Flaubert gained the status of a skilled stylist. The study was not completed: the literary critic died, but his main ideas were presented in a published outline to the lecture on Flaubert. Mikhail Bakhtin is one of the first to begin to develop the concept of chronotope in the novel. Accordingly, Flaubert's novel "Madame Bovary" is considered in the context of this problematic. But Bakhtin rightly points out that "Madam Bovary" is a novel that was supposed to portray an "ugly and sad" reality, "life and lifestyle, vulgarity and vulgarity" (perpetuate that which is devoid of any internal rights to eternity)» (Bakhtin 2000, p. 286).

In "Lectures on Foreign literature," Vladimir Nabokov examined the stylistic side of the novel. He noted that Gogol called "a poem" his "Dead Souls"; "Flaubert's novel is also a poem in prose, but it is better built, it has a more subtle and dense structure" (Nabokov 1999, p. 208). Nabokov, in particular, noted one of the author's artistic techniques - "the most smooth and elegant transitions from the image of one object to another within one chapter" (Nabokov 1999, p. 208). He called them "structural transitions." Along with the "structural transition", Nabokov identifies the "deployment method", i.e. stringing of visual details, one thing on another, with the growth of a particular emotion.

Ideologically biased literary criticism of the "Soviet" period has also got a number of works devoted to the heritage of Flaubert (Ivaschenko 1955; Perimov 1934). An illustrative example is the

monograph by T. Perimov, which in no way pretends to be a comprehensive and all-round study of Flaubert's work. Although the literary scholar notes that Flaubert is "an extremely interesting and significant writer," he emphasizes, above all, the "social and political" significance of his heritage in the general paradigm of "socialist realism." He notes that, along with the purely historical-literary interest excited by his work, the latter is also of great importance as part of that literary legacy, which must be critically interpreted by subsequent generations of readers. The monograph of A.F. Ivaschenko presents an overview of the writer's career, which has a significant place among the nineteenth-century French critical realists.

The researcher gives an analysis of the main works of Flaubert ("Madame Bovary", "Salambo", and «Feelings Education»). The work of Flaubert, by virtue of the well-known middle of the last century ideological attitudes, he considers in connection with the wide social movement of his time (Ivaschenko 1955). The main pathos of the work, according to the scientist, is "a great hatred of the bourgeoisie"; it is characterized by fierce denial of the figment in art, morality, social ideals, which the bourgeoisie imposes on society" (Ivaschenko 1955, p. 116). N. A. Solovieva pays special attention to understanding writer's world-comprehension and his aesthetic principles. (The History of French Literature, ed. N. A. Solovieva, p.10).

Boris Reizov, one of the largest Russian researchers of French literature, exploring the writer's work in the context of his life, devoted two his major works to Flaubert, (Reizov 1955, 1977). The chapters of the book, which are devoted to the novel "Madam Bovary", have the greatest interest for our research. Reizov presents to the reader the story of the creation of the novel, explains the reasons for choosing the plot: "The novel, according to Flaubert's plan, was to portray a grimacing, ugly and sad modernity" (Reizov 1955, p. 198). It is important to note that the image of Bovary created by Flaubert acquires an immense force of generalization and becomes a symbol of modernity. Reizov emphasizes the psychological basis of the image of Emma Bovary, thereby determining the psychological method of the artist.

A fundamentally new approach to the study of Flaubert's art is demonstrated by S. Zenkin in his book "Works on French Literature" (1999). There is also a chapter dedicated to "Madame Bovary". The researcher traces the theme of the relationship between the author and the hero, but also develops one of the key problems for the world humanities of the twentieth century the problem of body in culture. The author of the monograph analyzes the French literature in connection with the "old" literary criticism. This is due to the fact that "the tools for acquiring new truths can and should become the very traditions that were inherited from their predecessors - they simply should be reflected, understood as specific national features of the Russian national consciousness, that is a part of world culture" (Zenkin 1999, p. 9). Studying "Madame Bovary" Zenkin pays great attention to linguistic analysis and to the analysis of novel's composition.

Thus, despite a serious understanding of many problems of Flaubert's heritage, not all aspects of the writer's work find a detailed coverage. This concerns, first of all, to the study of the chronotope of a provincial town in "Madame Bovary".

## 4 Results and Discussions

For the development of the plot in "Madame Bovary" was created a special background – a provincial city with oppressive boredom and vulgarity of provincial bourgeois life. At the same time, researchers of the Flaubert's art have repeatedly noted that the picture of a provincial city is given without amplification, thickening of colors, but with documentary accuracy, rigorous detailing in the depiction of objects, people and even physiological states (Nabokov 1998; Reizov 1955).

Mikhail Bakhtin paid attention to the creativity of the French writer, although in his legacy "Flaubert is a rather unexpected

name" (Bakhtin 2000, p. 297). In particular, scientist wrote a "laboratory text" (on Flaubert), devoted not just for individual moments that were aesthetically significant for Flaubert's texts, but containing a number of philosophical and theoretical themes that were central to Bakhtin himself. In addition, the name of Flaubert, along with Balzac, Stendhal, Dostoevsky and Tolstoy is often found in the "Forms of Time and Chronotope in the Novel". In particular, they were used as an illustration of the reasoning about the "intersection" of the temporal and spatial series in the work: "Time (in the literary and artistic chronotope) is thickening, condensed, becomes artistic and visible; space is intensified, drawn into the movement of time, plot, and history. Signs of time are revealed in space, and space is comprehended and revealed by time.

An artistic chronotope is characterized by this intersection of the rows and the merging" (Bakhtin 2000, p. 10). As part of his research, the scientist gives an exhaustive description of the types of spatial-temporal relations, and also gives a classification according to which Flaubert's "Madame Bovary" belongs to idyllic novels: "The provincial bourgeois town with its stagnant appearance is an extremely common place for the accomplishment of novel events in the XIX century (both before and after Flaubert). This town has several varieties, including the very important one – the idyllic" (Bakhtin 2000, p. 181). The researcher describes the literary time in the novel as "everyday trivial cyclic common" (Bakhtin 2000, p. 182), and devoid of progress: "The day is never a day, the year is not the year, life is not life. Day after day, the same everyday actions, the same topics of conversation, the same words, etc. are repeated. People in this time eat, drink, sleep, have wives, lovers, have little intrigue, sit in their shops or offices, play cards, gossip" (Bakhtin 2000, p. 182). But at the same time, Bakhtin notes that this time cannot be considered as the main one in the novel, the authors use it, as a rule, as a side role, which should be intertwined with other "non-cyclic time" (Bakhtin 2000, p. 182). Speaking about the connection of this time with space, the scientist points out that the signs of this time "are simple, roughly material, firmly fused with everyday locales: with small town houses and rooms, sleepy streets, dust and flies, clubs, billiards, and so on. Time is devoid of events here and therefore it seems almost to have stopped" (Bakhtin 2000, p. 182). It is necessary to pay attention to the remark of the researcher about the relationship of human life and nature: "The combination of human life with the life of nature, the unity of their rhythm, a common language for natural phenomena and the events of human life" (Bakhtin 2000, p. 159).

At the same time, despite the attribution of "Madam Bovary" to the group of "idyllic novels", Bakhtin notes that in the works of nineteenth-century novelists the problem of chronotope realization is interpreted differently. "The matter here is <...> about the collapse and breaking of the idyllic worldview and psychology, which are inadequate to the new capitalist world. The collapse of the provincial idealism and provincial romance of the heroes in the capitalist center is depicted. These heroes are not idealized; the capitalist world is not idealized either: its inhumanity is revealed, the destruction of all moral principles in it, the disintegration (under the influence of money) of all previous human relations - love, family, friendship; degeneration of the creative work of a scientist, artist, etc." (Bakhtin 2000, pp. 167-168). The hero in the piece of art is also depicted differently: "The positive person of the idyllic world becomes ridiculous, pitiful and unnecessary; he either dies or re-educated and becomes an egoistic predator" (Bakhtin 2000, pp. 167-168).

Indeed, in the space-time continuum of "Madam Bovary" by Flaubert the chronotope of the provincial city of Ionville, whose life is devoid of any significant events, becomes the key-point. The provincial city is a place of cyclical domestic time, since there are no real events here, but only repetitive "events". This is a thick time, "creeping" in space, devoid of progressive historical course. It moves in narrow circles: the circle of the day, the circle of the week, the month, the circle of the whole life. Therefore, it can not be the main time of the novel. It is, indeed,

used as an accessory time; it intertwined with other, non-cyclic time series.

In this connection, the biography of Charles Bovary – not a cyclical time series — that is the central time of the novel, acquires a special significance. It is against the background of the life story of the hero that the main action takes place. According to Flaubert, this tragic performance is played out in a space with a narrow geographical framework. All of the few provincial settlements – Rouen, Toast, Ionville, Berto's farm, Vobiersart Castle (the last three are fictional places, but their location is quite certain) are located in the same department of the Lower Seine (now the Maritime Seine), within a circle with a radius of twenty kilometers.

The scenery of provincial Yonville appears in the second part of the novel and precedes the arrival of the Bovary couple: "The town of Ionville - l'Abbay (named after the long-ruined Capuchin Abbey) stands eight miles from Rouen, between the Abbeville and Beauz roads, in the valley of the Rielle River which runs into the Andel and near its mouth drives three mills in motion and in which there are some trout representing the temptation for the boys - on Sundays, lined up on the shore, they fish in it. In Boisier, you turn off a large road and climb a dirt road on a sloping hill Le; from there you can enjoy a wide view of the valley. The river divides it into two completely different areas: to the left – meadows, to the right, – arable land. Meadows stretch under the edge of the mounds and merge behind with the pasture of Brae. To the east, the plain, rising imperceptibly to the eye, expands and, as far as the eye can see, golden stripes of wheat are spread. The color of grass and the color of crops do not turn into one another - they are separated by a light ribbon of running water, and the field here looks like a huge raincoat spread out with a green velvet collar trimmed with silver braid" (Flaubert 1983, p. 89).

However, behind a similar picture of a serene rural happiness and external appeasement hides a contradictory content: "Normandy, Picardie and Ile-de-France converge here. This is a land of confusion, where speaking is devoid of specificity, and the landscape has no originality. They make here the worst Nevshatel cheese in the whole district, and it is unprofitable to engage in arable farming here – loose, sandy, rocky soil requires too much fertilizer" (Flaubert 1983, p. 89). A similar mood is present in the following lines of the novel, where the prose writer debunks the original affable look of the town: "Near the walls, through the plaster of which the black shingled diagonally looks out, stunted pears grow <...> the yards gradually become more and more narrow, the little houses are sculpted one to another, the fences disappear ..." (Flaubert 1983, p. 90).

The topography of Ionville is as unremarkable as the geography of the surrounding area. The city consists of a single street, "long no further than a flight of a bullet" (Danger, p. 92), and the only square that is the focus of social and "cultural" life takes place in a provincial town that spread out "on the shore, like a shepherd in the hour of the midday heat" (Flaubert 1983, p. 90). In the limited space of the town square is the notary's house. This is the most beautiful white house in the area. In front of him is a round lawn decorated with cupid. He put a finger to his lips. On both sides of the entrance are stucco vases. A metal plate glitters on the door. Twenty steps away, on the opposite side, the church stands next to the square. It is surrounded by a small cemetery with a low stone wall. It is so cramped that old, ingrown plates form a solid floor on which grass draws regular green quadrangles. In the last years of the reign of Charles X, the church was rebuilt. But the wooden vault at the top is already rotting, in some places dark hollows appear on its blue background. <...> a good half of the town square is occupied by a covered market. This is a tiled canopy, which stands on about twenty pillars. On the corner, next to the pharmacy, is the Town Hall, which was "designed by a Parisian architect." It represents a kind of Greek temple. Below - three Ionic columns, on the second floor - a gallery with a narrow arch, on the pediment there is a Gallic rooster with one paw rests on the Charter, and the other holds the scales of justice. But the pharmacy of Mr. Ome is especially striking. It stands opposite the Golden Lion tavern. In the evening, when the kenket is ignited, when the red and green orbs of the showcase creep along the ground, long colored stripes and on the balls, as if by a flash of Bengal fire, and then the shadow of the apothecary bent over the desk appears" (Flaubert 1983, p. 91).

The vulgarity, bad taste, the pretensions to luxury are obvious: the "cupids", lawns and Greek temples are located against the backdrop of a dusty country road and a dirty coach house, speaking in contrast to crumbling plaster and leaking roofs. Therefore, the words of Flaubert, which complete the description of the provincial little world, acquire a special satirical meaning: "There's nothing more to look at in Ionville" (Flaubert 1983, p. 91). Such a city becomes a trap for the main character – Emma Bovary, whose dreams are inspired by vulgar novels about the life of the capital's fashionable society. Emma buys the plan of Paris, "her Paris" is filled with the names of streets and boulevards; she reads magazines with the details of high-society life, and her ideal takes on concrete and complete forms.

Let's make a remark: the opposition of Paris and the provinces, the understanding of this opposition as a problem of French society was suggested by Balzac: he was the first to represent France as the opposition of Paris and the province. In the province, according to Balzac, there is still spiritual purity, morality, traditional morality. In Paris, the human soul is destroyed. Flaubert believed that all France was provincial. It is not by chance that in the novel "Madame Bovary" the image of Paris does not appear. The only road is the "big country road" (Flaubert 1983, p. 90), which leads from Ionville to Rouen, beyond which life is unthinkable, and even the characters' dreams do not extend beyond Rouen. The capital is not present in the minds of the characters, and the provinciality becomes a characteristic of their internal state, a criterion of their actions.

However, the artistic significance of space is not measured only by its physical characteristics. In a close provincial little world there are "force fields", the action of which determines the fate of the heroes. In this world, the spatial distance between the characters is a necessary condition for happy love. Proof of this is the story of the two marriages of Charles Bovary: his first wife was a resident of the same town as the tiny town of Toast, and this lack of distance predetermined the artificiality and worthlessness of their marriage. On the contrary, the story of Charles's marriage to Emma emphasizes the spatial distance of the bride and groom. To get to Berto, he has to overcome a considerable distance, and, as the commentators have found out, several times more than what the Toast and the village of Wassonville, next to which Papa Rouau's farm is located, divides. The prose writer fundamentally exaggerates, stretches the distance to make it more tangible to overcome. So, during his first trip to Berto, Charles wanders along the night roads, falls asleep in the saddle, and, having finally reached the goal, he seems to fall into the fabulous magic kingdom, where his betrothed is waiting.

To an even greater degree, the belief that the "right" love union must cover the distance is characteristic of Emma. Charlie's love was attractive to her only as long as they lived far from each other. But as soon as they settled together, love was supplanted by boredom and everyday life. Emma's first feeling for Leon quickly cools as well, since lovers are too close and live in the opposite houses. According to Flaubert, it is impossible to love "in the neighborhood," such a feeling is necessarily fleeting. The real passion flares up in the characters only when there is a between them - the distance that Emma overcomes during her trips to Rouen. Rodolphe Boulanger, it would seem, is a neighbor of Bovary, and his manor is located near Ionville. But the distance that separates them is symbolically accentuated: in order to go on rendezvous to her lover, Emma has to cross the river, overcome a dangerous crossing (the heroine walks over the cattle bridge, climbs over the plants, etc.).

But love lives not only by overcoming space - it expands it itself, expands the horizons. Love seems to Emma as an

opportunity to break out of the provincial narrowness: "Everything that surrounded her was village boredom, the dullness of bourgeois people, the misery of life seemed to her an exception, pure chance, she considered herself to be her victim, and beyond this chance she dreamed a vast edge of love and happiness" (Flaubert 1983, p. 80). As a result, Emma wants to go somewhere with Leon, then prepares to escape with Rodolphe, and then she is ready to run even with tenor Lagardi. However, all the aspirations of the heroine are in vain: the journey with Rodolph is replaced by a circular movement of fiacre with Leon; dreams of long journeys are replaced by everyday trips to Rouen, since Emma is firmly "inscribed" in the world of a provincial city, first of all, spiritually.

According to Flaubert, the motionless life of the heroine ("frozen", according to Bakhtin) is her provinciality, which is an essential attribute of the "bourgeois" way of life in general. Emma's husband complains about the constant travels that he is forced to make by virtue of his profession; Leon Dupuis also speaks about his love of homeland; a voluptuous notary, Guilomen, sits at Emma's fireplace, the heroine herself reaches for the hearth, sits in a daze for a long time, makes "fireplace tongs red-hot" (Flaubert 1983, p. 111). However, despite the motif of a warming fire that periodically occurs in the novel, marking the space of the Home, writer debunks the existing "mythology" of the home as a symbol of intimate privacy, comfort and security. In the house of Bovary, there is always a cold, "walls in trickles and a damp floor" (Flaubert 1983, p. 86), draws "cold lime" (Flaubert 1983, p. 102). Emma's attempts to buy fancy trinkets to periodically rearrange furniture to create coziness are vain. The image of a ruined, alien, and nonresidential house often appears in the text: "her life was cold as an attic with a dormer window to the north, and anguish wobble all corners of her heart in the shadow of a spider's web" (Flaubert 1983, p. 68); "The future seemed to her as a dark corridor that rested against a tightly closed door" (Flaubert 1983, p. 84). In our opinion, such images reflect not so much the experiences of the heroine, as they characterize her world, provincial, and narrow. The inability to live happily in a house is not just a subjective sensation of Emma, but it is her objective reality. It is not by chance that the picture of home comfort and luxury is presented to the heroine exclusively in other people's houses - in Vobjessar castle or in the notary's rich house, and Emma herself is compared to a poor passerby who "looks from the street to the windows of the once home and sees people at the table" (Flaubert 1983, p. 47).

The image of a home that arises in Emma's mind during her relationship with Rodolpho is an illusion: "they already were something like spouses who keep a steady flame in their home" (Flaubert 1983, p. 176). The same image appears in the episodes about Emma's meetings with Leon in the hotel "Boulogne": "They owned each other so completely that they thought it was their own home, where they would live forever as young spouses until the end of their days" (Flaubert 1983, p. 258). However, the home represented by the heroine is a fake, false house, since it was moved to the plane of not family love, but vulgar adultery. It is obvious that the chronotopic isolation of a provincial town and the narrowness of provincial existence of the heroine are marked in the novel by images of a false home and hearth. Only thrice the space expands due to the motif of sunlight. It is the motif of the "breaking in" light that marks the episodes of the transition of heroes from existence in a stupor to passionate animation. Thus, the decisive scene in the episode of Charles' acquaintance with Emma opens with a description of the "breaking in" light: "He went into the kitchen, but the shutters were closed, and he did not notice Emma at first. Making their way through the cracks in the walls, the sun's rays stretched in long thin strips on the floor, broke about the corners of kitchenware, and trembled on the ceiling" (Flaubert 1983, p. 49).

## **Summary**

The chronotope of a provincial town in Flaubert's novel has an important plot significance. He becomes the organizing center of

the main novel narrative events, in which, according to M. M. Bakhtin, plot nodes are "tied and untied". The heroes of "Madame Bovary" live and act in a specific geographical space, characterized by isolation and exaggerated length of distances. In the chronotope of a provincial town of Flaubert fundamental importance has the images of a false home, a home hearth, a motif of sunlight. Throughout the work, a complex interaction of cyclical household and non-cyclic time is traced, which in turn are closely connected with domestic loci.

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