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**CONFERENCE ARTICLE**

**FRAGMENTATION OF CHRONOTOPE IN THE POSTMODERN NOVEL AND THE PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECT OF THE “PATCHWORK” SPACE-TIME AESTHETICS**

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**ABSTRACT**

This thesis investigates how postmodern fiction fragments the Bakhtinian chronotope and the psychological effects of a patchwork space-time on readers' cognition and affect. Building on theories of postmodernism and cognitive narratology, the study argues that spatiotemporal discontinuity functions not merely as a stylistic hallmark but as a deliberate apparatus that recalibrates attention, memory, and inference-making. Through close reading of representative postmodern novels and theoretical synthesis, the paper shows that montage-like juxtaposition, palimpsestic layering of locales, and recursive temporal loops produce controlled disorientation that prompts metacognitive monitoring, schema revision, and heightened self-reflexivity. Such texts simulate a mediated world saturated with heterogenous “times” and “places,” modeling life under cultural conditions of acceleration and pluralized realities. The conclusion frames patchwork chronotopes as laboratories for testing the limits of narrative coherence and as pedagogical devices that cultivate readers' tolerance for ambiguity and skill in navigating discontinuous information ecologies.

**Keywords:** Postmodernism; chronotope; patchwork aesthetics; narrative time; cognitive narratology; reader psychology; disorientation; metacognition.

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**INTRODUCTION**

Bakhtin's concept of the chronotope emphasizes the constitutive interdependence of time and space in narrative forms. Postmodern fiction stresses that interdependence by unfastening it. Instead of a stable novelistic world where social time thickens in determinate locales, the postmodern text presents a mosaic in which fragments of heterogeneous temporalities and geographies collide. This fragmentation responds to the historical experience of late modernity characterized by media saturation, global spatial compression, and the erosion of master narratives. The reader meets a world whose streets change names mid-walk and whose past interrupts the present not as memory but as an operative regime. The central question is not whether such disruption exists—its presence is widely noted—but how it works psychologically on readers and structurally within narrative to produce meaning without reintegrating into classical unity.

The aim of this study is to conceptualize the fragmented postmodern chronotope as a cognitive device and to describe the psychological effects of patchwork space-time on reading processes, including attention allocation, predictive inference, emotional orientation, and narrative identity construction.

The material comprises a theoretical corpus in postmodern literary studies and cognitive narratology, alongside close readings of emblematic postmodern novels characterized by spatial palimpsests, nonlinear temporalities, and intertextual montage. The method integrates three operations. First, a Bakhtinian baseline is reconstructed to specify what counts as chronotopic coherence in classical forms. Second, postmodern strategies—metalepsis, simultaneity, temporal recursion, and cartographic instability—are analyzed as transformations of that baseline. Third, findings are interpreted through cognitive frameworks involving schema theory, limited-capacity attention models, and metacognitive regulation. The approach is

hermeneutic but anchored in readerly phenomena such as disorientation, curiosity, and the felt need to repair coherence. Rather than experimental measurement, the study uses argument-by-modeling to identify functional relations between formal technique and psychological effect.

The fragmentation of chronotope in the postmodern novel manifests as a sustained refusal to grant a single scale of time or a sovereign map of space. Chapters relocate the narrative between incompatible cartographies, voices import the time of other texts into the present scene, and narrative present tense coexists with archival or speculative temporal layers that do not resolve into a chronology. Such procedures install a patchwork, where adjacency—not continuity—governs movement. The immediate effect is a recalibration of attention: readers shift from absorbing a pre-given world to constructing a navigational model on the fly. Instead of following a path through homogeneous narrative time, they select local anchors—motifs, typographical cues, repeating toponyms—around which provisional coherence can crystallize. The cognitive load is tangible yet productive, because it triggers metacognitive alerts that sharpen monitoring of inferences and recognition of unreliable frames.

Disorientation becomes a narrative resource rather than a deficit. When the novel withholds a master map, readers recruit cultural schemas to bridge gaps: detective logics, travelogue conventions, archival procedures, and gaming heuristics. Postmodern patchwork aesthetics makes these borrowed schemas visible by continually frustrating them, compelling adjustments that amount to schema revision. The text thereby trains the reader to tolerate uncertainty and to maintain multiple incompatible models simultaneously. Emotionally, the alternation between bewilderment and micro-epiphanies yields a rhythm akin to exploratory play, in which local integrations are

achieved and then strategically undone. This oscillation generates curiosity-driven persistence, with reward concentrated not in plot resolution but in moments of pattern-recognition across distant fragments.

Spatial fragmentation often appears as palimpsest: a single street or room carries colonial traces, media images, and fictional overlays, making place a stack of times rather than a container for events. Readers experience a thickened present in which ancestral, bureaucratic, and virtual times press upon one another. Temporally, recursion and montage replace linear progression. Flashforwards function less as foreshadowing than as competing presents; analepses refuse to explain causally and instead operate as parallel edits. The effect is to reframe causality as probabilistic association. Readers infer through analogy and resonance more than through chronology, a shift that privileges thematic connectivity and intertextual memory over event sequencing.

Patchwork chronotope also induces self-reflexivity. Because spatial and temporal rules mutate, readers routinely ask what kind of world this is and what counts as evidence within it. That question loops back to reading itself, and the novel becomes a manual for navigating fragmented media environments. The psychological payoff includes an expanded repertoire of interpretive stances: skeptical vigilance toward representational claims, comfort with layered frames, and a readiness to accept multiple truths as co-present rather than mutually exclusive. Far from dissolving meaning, the patchwork aesthetic reassigns meaning-making to the reader's constructive activity.

Importantly, fragmentation is not chaos. The mosaic is curated through leitmotifs, recursive images, and structural symmetries that function as hinges. A recurring map, a clock that refuses to keep time, or an architectural figure like a corridor can serve as a low-frequency conductor, distributing coherence across heterogeneous segments. Readers learn to listen for these bass lines, a practice that recalibrates attention toward deep structure rather than surface continuity. The chronotope, classically the guarantor of stable worldhood, becomes the stage on which worldhood is problematized and reassembled under contemporary conditions of mobility and mediation.

Postmodern novels fragment the chronotope to represent and rehearse living in a world of discontinuous spaces and times. The patchwork aesthetic produces controlled disorientation that mobilizes metacognition, schema revision, and interpretive pluralism. Readers are not merely dislocated; they are trained to construct flexible models, to value resonance over sequence, and to recognize the politics of mapping and timing. In this way, the postmodern chronotope is less a refusal of form than a reallocation of formal labor from text to reader, aligning narrative practice with the cognitive demands of late modern life.

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