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ARTISTIC TIME IN I. MURDOCH'S NOVEL "THE NICE AND THE GOOD"

Summary. The article has been devoted to the analysis of artistic time in Iris Murdoch's novel "The Nice and The Good" (1968). The concepts of the writer have been considered. They uniquely combine Plato's ideas about one great Circle of Time, where the temporary time and eternal time are merged with the Neoplatonic concept of the substantiality of the time and with the existentialist temporality of individual "discrete moments", "states of consciousness". The novel demonstrates all types of time identified by the researchers of the theoretical concepts, objective time (time of the world), subjective time of perception of an individual, where there is time of consciousness, and time objectified by him. In "The Nice and The Good" there is no flow of time given in a "linear sequence of continuous events", but intermittent, although not fragmented, as in postmodernism. I. Murdoch's novel dominates with the "artistic real", as a kind of time that has no chronology, no beginning, no end, a wide "now" ("modernity"), where there is a "strong sequence", i.e. there is no sharp temporal disconnection of events, and there are elements of "closed time". "Modernity" in Murdoch's novel is a special layer of time that needs accurate dating, synthesizing various temporal aspects (household, psychological, existential, etc.). Artistic time in "The Nice and The Good" has pictorial-semantic, structural-compositional conceptual functions. In "The Nice and The Good" everyday life appears, where the "here" and "now" existence of the heroes is emphasized, the whole range of their personal preferences regarding "The Nice" and "The Good" is included. The bearers of time (besides obvious temporality) are characters, everyday life, and space. Murdoch's reminiscence of the Renaissance pastoral modality, where the ethical concept of time reigns, reaching the archetype of the "golden age", does not lead to a combination of different eras. The main flow of time in this novel mainly has a linear orientation, although there is also an interspersion of the past. Story time is based on pastoral temporality, genetically mythopoetic, but does not openly reveal its connection with this cultural code, as postmodernists suggest. Mythopoetic feelings of space and time in "The Nice and The Good" are present mimetically and metaphorically.

Key words: artistic time, temporality, existence, chronotop, space, modality.

The formulation of the problem. V. Toporov divides writers into two groups: the artistic consciousness of some of them is more directed towards space, and others towards time [1, p. 251]. Murdoch seems to belong to the first group, it is characterized by what J. Genette called "a kind of fascination with space" [2, p. 279]. Yu. M. Lotman believes that the artistic space is capable of expressing not only temporal, but also a wide variety of meaningful concepts [3, p. 252–293], this is also under consideration by the author

of "The Nice and The Good". It has long been noted that accurate dating very often appears in fantasy works to create the effect of authenticity [4, p. 205], Murdoch avoids it, preferring an indefinite chronological sense to the category "modernity". In "The Nice and The Good" Murdoch does not "play" with "chronos" as many postmodernists do [5, p. 50]. Her concept uniquely combines Plato's ideas about one large Circle of Time, where the temporal and eternal are merged [6, p. 43–50], with the Neoplatonic concept of the substantiality of time and with the existentialist temporality of individual "discrete moments", "states of consciousness" [7, p. 69]. The novel contains all types of time identified by E. Husserl: objective time (time of the world), subjective time of perception of an individual, where there is a time of consciousness, and time objectified by him [8, p. 124]. In "The Nice and The Good" there is no flow of time given in "a linear sequence of continuous events", it is discontinuous, although not fragmented "into a series of repeating present", as in postmodernism [9, p. 77]. In Murdoch, the "artistic present" [10, p. 211] dominates, as a kind of continuous time that has no chronology, no beginning, no end, a wide "now" ("modernity"), where there is a "strong consistency", using the term of V.I. Cherednichenko [11, p. 157], i.e. there is no sharp temporal disunity of events and there are elements of "closed time" [10, p. 214]. Murdoch's "modernity" is a special layer of time that does not need exact dating, synthesizing various temporal aspects (domestic, psychological, existential, etc.).

The aim of the article is to analyze the time aspect in the novel written by a British writer Iris Murdoch "The Nice and The Good". Artistic time in "The Nice and The Good" has figurative and semantic, structural and compositional as well as conceptual functions. Murdoch, like other novelists of the twentieth century, describes the temporal reality of consciousness, where all three modes of time are present [12, p. 24]. She prefers fixing natural, "meteorological" temporality, although she also uses archetypal ideas about time, internally correlates "temporal and eternal". In "The Nice and The Good" everyday life appears, where the "here" and "now" of the characters are accentuated, the whole range of their personal preferences in relation to "The Nice" and "The Good" is included.

The bearers of time (besides the obvious temporality) are the characters, everyday life, space. Murdoch's echo with the Renaissance pastoral modality, where the ethical concept of time dominates, going back to the archetype of the "golden age", does not lead to the combination of different eras. In "The Nice and The Good" the English post-war modernity appears, endowed with temporal signs, but at the same time, through it, in the feelings and behavior of the characters, the eternal human desire for "The Nice" and "The Good" appears.

The presentation of the main material. Time in Murdoch's novel, echoing the mythopoetic "chronos" of the pastoral chronotope of the good spring/summer, is not exactly chronologically indicated, as in most of her other novels, which decisively distinguishing her, for example, from the poetics of the novel by W. Woolf "The Waves" (1933) with his exact dating. The time of the first "Neoplatonic" novel is related to the post-war reality of England through hidden temporality (memories of Willy's stay in the Nazi camp, mentioning the time of building a house, such everyday details as an abundance of cars in the streets of the capital, fascination with occult phenomena, etc.).

The action of the novel takes place in a rather amorphous socio-historical temporality, but the natural time, summer, appears in all its precise signs. In other novels of this writer, the season is not only astronomical, "meteorological" (rain, fog, cold) – for example, late autumn, winter in "The Time of the Angels", autumn in "The Bell") but also evaluative and metaphorical, psychological: it creates the general atmosphere of the work and corresponds to the psychological mood of the characters.

The time frame of "The Nice and The Good" is the natural time of the middle of summer without rains and cloudiness as a kind of almost unchanged temporality, although the plot time of the novel moves in the sequence of events. Socio-historical time can be determined approximately and indirectly: Mary visits the house "immediately built after the war" [13, p. 142], where she spent four years with her husband, it is noted that she lived with her son in Dorset for several years [13, p. 19]. Murdoch is almost not interested in historical time in its clear chronological dimension, since she constantly strives to reveal something primordial eternal, inherent in human nature, therefore historical determinism is not included in the circle of her artistic concerns.

She shares the Platonic category of temporality as the presence of the eternal in the temporal, conveys "duration" (according to Bergson) as a kind of eventful movement in the minds of the characters [14, p. 50–159], while stopping, like the existentialists, at separate temporal moments. But her artistic consciousness (which coincides with the Platonic way of thinking) is focused on the category of space, which she temporalizes. The novelist is interested precisely in existential, and not in socio-historical time. Murdoch believes that a person's "special life story" is important, as one of the heroines of the novel "The Sandcastle" (1957) formulates the idea.

The background of the characters is given fragmentarily, often through their own subjective memories: the writer focuses her attention on a certain time period in the lives of the characters, which are of great importance for their existence. But this period, "a segment of life" is not given in a strictly temporal dimension, although it is marked by a certain kind of eventfulness in a short period of time: in the group of novels with Gothic modality, this is most often the situation of "arrival-departure" within a clearly defined space ("The Bell", "The Unicorn", "The Time of the Angels"). In novels with a pastoral modality, psychological events prevail, the history of feelings, relationships between characters (they are also important for "gothic" works, but they are subordinate to the event layer, the motive for changing space). The main artistic time in "The Nice and The Good" appears as "real narrative" (Genette), adequate to real time, but (like the author of "Nausea") "indifferent enough to the flow of historical time" [15, p. 40]. And the past, as in the novel by

Sartre, who does not want to separate the past and the present [12, p. 86], is given fragmentarily in the sphere of the character's consciousness as separate memories, "temporal moments" (Merleau-Ponty).

However, Murdoch, with a system of characters of different ages (children, teenagers, mature people, old people), embodies temporality as an eternal property of being, which is also concentrated in natural time, which dominates in "The Nice and The Good". Time in her novel moves both at the level of the sequence of events, and at the level of fixations of days, time of day, etc. But everything is given within the framework of the existential time of individuals, not directly and completely correlated with the socio-historical time. Murdoch is not interested in the past – the "taken place" time, but in the developing of the real "present-time-plot" of the novel.

If the character of "Nausea" makes the category of time the subject of his reflection, discovers "the true nature of the present", comes to the conclusion that "the past does not exist, that there is no meaning, there is no conditioning, causality – the world is absurd" [15, p. 41], the characters of "The Nice and The Good" do not think about the time as an abstract category, they are absorbed in their momentary concerns, which, however, are correlated with the eternal problems of Love, Goodness, Truth – ethical and philosophical categories of human existence as such. Murdoch (unlike Sartre) comprehends not the philosophical category of time, but the eternal ethical, philosophical and existential problems (Goodness-Love).

For the author of "The Nice and The Good" matters natural time, marked by an eternal natural cycle, weather specifics of the season, meteorological features of England (rain, fog – transitional states of natural life), which are metaphorized, expressing the attitude of the characters ("autumn of the soul", rainy, fog – the motive of fatigue, emotional depression, burdensomeness, disappointment of the characters, the disharmony of nature is a mirror of their troubles, but sunshine brings goodness and joy).

In the first Neoplatonic novel, there are neither natural disasters nor a raging sea: natural harmony reigns in the suburban locus of summer Dorset. In "The Nice and The Good", as noted, a chronotope arises that is close to the pastoral, where "locus amoenus" is always correlated with "eternal spring" or "eternal summer" with its blessed sun. However, in the novel "midsummer" is named [13, ch. 12, 16], i.e. a certain temporal clarification was introduced, pointing to a temporal metaphor in the concept of "eternal summer", which removes the element of temporal conventionality inherent in pastoral modality.

The sun is constantly mentioned – the most typical natural attribute of summer, in which there is also its archetypal semantics of the source of life, light, etc., and the important Plato mythologeme – the Sun – the Good, about which I. Murdoch, as already been mentioned, wrote in a special article. Existential temporality is fixed not only through natural, but also through biological time – the age of the characters of the novel is indicated: Jessica is 28, but she looks 18 [13, p. 26], Barbara – 14, Pierce – 15, Ducane – 43, twins – 9, etc. It is more important for a writer to gather, in the space of her novel, people of different ages, gender, nationalities and socio-professional group, family status, which contributes to the creation of, within the framework of the "small" chronotope of Octavian's "estate" in Dorset, the "model" of the "House of Being", if we use the notion of G.D. Gachev [16, p. 198–227].

In the novel, time develops in a linear sequence of days in the flow of the present [13, ch. 1–40], but in some chapters the past appears as a general summary background of the characters, for example, Mary and Pierce before they appeared in Octavian's house [13, ch.2], separate references are introduced about Theodore's past life in Delhi [13, ch. 2], information is given about the past relationships of Jessica and Ducane [13, ch. 3], Paula and Eric Sears [13, ch. 5], there is a description of Ducane's first meeting with Willy [13, ch. 6], Jessica's past life [13, ch. 9], there are Willy's stories about his distant past [13, ch. 19], Mary about Alistair's death [13, ch. 25], Biranne about Radeechy and his wife [13, ch. 28], Paula's story to Ducane about the past [13, ch. 33]. In such an organization of narrativity in this novel, where the movement of plot time is stopped by the narration about the past, one can see the transformed genetic traces of the narrative structure inherent in the pastoral novels of the Renaissance, in which the "love stories" of the characters (their past) are included as independent "inserted short stories" into the novel presented in the narrative present.

In "The Nice and The Good" these background stories are very short, fragmentary, not separated into autonomous narrative and genre units, as in a pastoral novel, where they take up more space than the central plot, where "the narration in narration" was the main principle of unifying the past with the synchronous novel temporality. The past in "The Nice and The Good" is devoid of descriptions of biographical events, connected with "love stories": Mary recalls the appearance of Willy in her life [13, ch. 10], restores the "story" of his relationship with Pierce [13, ch. 17], as well as his four years of married life with Alistair [13, ch. 17]; Paula reminisces about Eric and Richard [13, ch. 14, 17].

The time of memories is associated with a rather distant past existence of these characters. Nevertheless, there is also the recent past: Ducane recalls the events of the day before [13, ch. 13], Jessica – about a recent proposal to visit Ducane's house [13, ch. 17], Ducane recalls the evening before [13, ch. 22], dinner with Willy [13, ch. 24], analyzes his recent visit to the basement-chapel of Radeechy [13, ch. 28] and associatively reflects on past events in connection with their invasion of the present (Jessica's letter, McGrath's call) [13, ch. 31], Mary's analysis of her feelings after the incident in the cave is also introduced [13, ch. 39], i.e. the past time is stratified as an existential time that has happened a long time ago, appears in the "present" time of the characters' consciousness. Thus, it has a double artistic and informative function: the past of the characters' feelings is introduced ("love story") and at the same time their psychological characteristics are created, which corresponds to neither everyday life nor psychological, not socio-historical, namely, existential time as a kind of concept of the relationship between the world and man. Future is less represented in the novel: it is drawn in the imagination of Kate and Mary [13, ch.14], but it is not realized.

The historical past (not events, but the realities of the era) appears only in the temporal consciousness of the characters as cultural details: this is a comparison of Mary's appearance with a Victorian governess [13, p. 18], a reference to the recipe for cooking eggs in Ancient Greece [13, p. 38], a note about that the old church was built in the 18th century. Each character seems to live in the time of "his" existence, but the intersection with the time of the life of the "other" affects him (the "regrouping" of love couples).

The mention of the war speaks of a closer socio-historical time: the house was built "immediately after the war" [13, p. 143], it also appears in Willy's memoirs about the concentration camp, where he betrayed a comrade [13, p. 354], there is also an allusion to the "colonial past" of England – Delhi in Theo's memoirs [13, ch. 2], where his encroachments on the newcomer led him to commit suicide [13, p. 358–359]. There are also "material", "objectified" signs of the past "cultural" time in the novel: these are the ancient works of Homer read by the characters, the text of the Catullus poem, the work of Propertius, which Willy explores, references to Renaissance artists (Titian, Bronzino), about the creations of painting and music of the New Age (Renoir, Mozart, etc.).

These "monuments" of the culture of the past are actualized in the minds of the characters of the twentieth century, characterize their spirituality, testify the influence of the culture of the past on them, which is so important for the "culturological" creative thinking of Murdoch herself. All three modes of time – past-present-future, where the present dominates, are most of all connected with the theme of Love, with the "story" of the true and imaginary feelings of the characters, their discovery of "true" love, which implements the central ideological core of "The Nice and The Good". Temporality in "The Nice and The Good" is represented by a system of universal temporal marks: "now", "before", "after", "earlier", "later", "long", "not long", "sometime" [17, p. 141] included in the "lasting present", differentiating it.

If "recurrence" (the modal word "always", "often") appears extremely rarely in the text of the novel [13, p. 24, 168, 232], the modal, temporal adverb "suddenly", conveying the main Murdochian concept of time as "unexpected", is used very often, fixing the unexpectedness of emotions, thoughts, conclusions or external movements, gestures and events. With the help of the adverb "suddenly", which captures the unexpected, the violation of the usual flow of time, the specificity of Murdoch's understanding of psychological, intellectual and emotional processes, the combination of logical and illogical principles in them, conveying the real complexity of the process of human emotions and thoughts, is conveyed. "Suddenly" – this word-sign – attracts the reader's attention, conveys the dynamics of the development of spiritual processes in Murdoch's characters, fraught with surprises, which the writer loves so much. She refuses to consistently apply the principle of determinism in describing the psychology of her characters, often introducing, not motivated by the logic of internal movement, their thoughts, feelings, experiences. Her "suddenly" testifies, although not a complete rejection of the identification of cause-and-effect relationships in the spiritual life of the characters, but does not reduce it all to them, widely allowing the "surprise" expressed by the adverb "suddenly".

The main flow of time in this novel is mainly linear, although, as mentioned, there are also inclusions of the past. Plot time is based on pastoral temporality, genetically mythopoetic, but does not openly reveal its connection with this cultural code, as postmodernists suggest doing [18, p. 167]. The mythopoetic sense of space-time, according to Cassirer, "always proceeds from the opposition of day and night, light and darkness" [19, p. 222], which are present mimetically and metaphorically in "The Nice and The Good".

Rather calm movement of temporality in the novel is interrupted only once by "catastrophic" time, where its course acquires a special meaning for the captive characters of the grotto-cave, waiting for the destructive tide, the natural time of which is

constantly and fixed, and not chaotically. The abundance of the use of the temporary adverb "suddenly" gives the general flow of "non-catastrophic" time a special dynamics and internal tension. In Murdoch's philosophy of time, there are points of contact with the concepts of Heidegger, on which the writer relies (or echoes), in particular, with his interpretation of time as an important attribute of being, human existence. Fixation of the flow of time (in different segments – minutes, hours, days) is constantly present, contributing to the movement of plot time, the development of narration.

The novel is dominated by natural and everyday time: a hot summer day is celebrated [13, ch. 1, 9, 10, 17, 19, 22, 33, 34, 35], morning [13, ch. 38], evening [13, ch. 13, 16, 21, 24, 27, 37, 39, 40], night [13, ch. 29, 36]. This is the predominance of the day and the sun (with its hidden archetypal and actually Platonic meaning), where even when indicating the evening, either the sunset is fixed [13, ch. 21], or a "sunny evening" is celebrated [13, ch. 39] – the weather grace of a country house and a natural locus in Dorset, creating a kind of light pastoral flavor.

Household time is given as leisure time: Saturday [13, ch. 4, 11, 31], Friday [13, ch. 30], lunch time [13, ch. 12, 17, 31]. Smaller and more accurate time intervals are recorded in the extreme situation of "adventure" in a cave, where life and death depend on time: 40 minutes, 15 minutes [13, p. 298]. There is also a material "sign" of time – hours. Ducane hears the ticking of the clock in Biranne's house [13, p. 202], looks at his watch [13, p. 300]; Barbara's gift to Octavian is also mentioned – a cuckoo clock [13, p. 65] as a reminder of the fleeting time of human existence.

But in general, the lifestyle of the characters living in Dorset, in "restful idleness" is subject to natural temporality, they do not follow the exact time, staying and fitting into the blissful calmness of the cycle of natural rhythms of time – day and night, which unites people with nature, by no means not openly hostile, as in "The Unicorn", or "unfriendly" because of its fogs, rains, nights, as in "The Time of the Angels". The "signs" of history, which appear in the depiction of houses and structures in "The Bell", "The Unicorn" and even "The Unofficial Rose", are almost absent in "The Nice and The Good". The time of the creation of the church and the old cemetery is mentioned – the 18th century, however, their sacredness, as it were, bears the stamp of eternity, although the heroes of "The Nice and The Good" do not specifically think about this, absorbed in their earthly concerns, problems of love, friendship, morality in general (for example, the choice of actions in relation to the blackmailer, the right to judge Radeechy, attitude towards Willy's past, who betrayed people, etc.). The present in its dynamics of the relationship of the "I" to the "other" has axiological significance, as Sartre also believed, but Murdoch does not at all reject, like a French writer-philosopher, the significance of the past, showing both the role of the memories of his characters and the role of the immortal past in the motif of the picture Bronzino.

The philosophical aspect of "eternal" time arises in connection with its interpretation, where allegorical Time appears in the pictorial space as the enemy of Love. If the Mannerist artist interprets time as an anti-aesthetic and negatively frightening category (the ugly Old Man), which threatens the Beautiful and Love, Murdoch's Time, correlated with Nature, given on the scale of a small temporal period, an "episode" in the life of the heroes of the novel, appears as one important but not hostile existential components of her novels. It is saturated with a general optimistic atmosphere of "good nature", close to pastoral, in which people appear who strive for the Good.

Conclusions. In this general picture of the world, time turns out to be a "blissful" factor, because time helps to clarify the intricate "love stories", helps the characters find true love, having gone through mistakes and delusions. Not the destruction of ties between people, which prevails in a number of Murdoch's novels of the 1960s, but the acquisition of bonds of love and friendship distinguishes "The Nice and The Good". The writer does not share the interpretation of Time in Bronzino's painting, but echoes the idea of a good "triumph of time" in Greene's pastoralized novel "Pandosto, or the Triumph of Time".

The original parameters of the artistic world of "The Nice and The Good" are internally figuratively correlated with the Platonic ideas and polemically opposed to Sartre's "picture of the world", echoing the pastoral transtext, but outwardly lifelike: the poetics of mimesis hides intertextuality. Murdoch refuses the demonstrative conventionality of the genre of the classical philosophical novel (Voltaire, Swift, etc.), although, as the great creators of the genre, she gives an important conceptual meaning to spatio-temporal relations.

At the same time, artistic space and time not only create a "continuum", but gravitate towards a kind of intergrowth – to the chronotope in Bakhtin's sense, it has a certain similarity, but not a complete coincidence with the genetic source – with the pastoral chronotope of the "good place" and "good natural time" – "an idyllic chronotope" (Bakhtin). The artistic time-space of "The Nice and The Good" is conditionally a prerequisite for an optimistic solution to the problems of the novel related to the humanistic concept of man.

However critically Murdoch denied the influence of Sartre on her, bravely arguing with him, appealing to the shadow of Plato, traces of his influence – even in the form of polemics – are very noticeable. The author of "The Nice and The Good" objectively shares, artistically embodying in his novels, the humanistic thought of Sartre, expressed in 1965, that "there is a man, his existence in the world...man is the depth of this world, and the world is in his depth..." [12, p. 291]. Erich Fromm wrote: "In the nineteenth century the problem was that God was dead; in the twentieth century it lies in the fact that a person has died" [20, p. 101].

Murdoch, with his work, seeks to resist popular varieties of "ethical relativism" and, in contrast to them, puts forward the idea of high moral demands on a person in the spirit of Kant's "categorical imperative" [21, p. 107]. Considering that it is extremely difficult to overcome oneself, to reject egoism [22, p. 219], the author of "The Nice and The Good" models the world of people who are able to move towards the Good and unselfish Love, giving "The Nice".

In conjugation of the main concepts of the novel, Platonic dialectics emerges, about which G. Deleuze said that "this is not a dialectics of opposites or contradictions, but a dialectics of "rivalry" [23, p. 226]. The entire artistic logic of this Neoplatonic novel Murdoch emphasizes not as a confrontation between "The Nice" and "The Good", but their "rivalry", fraught with coexistence, she wants to inspire hope in the possibility of the triumph of Good in a world saturated with Evil.

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Алісєнко О.М. Художній час в романі А. Мердок “Приємне і Благє”

Анотація. Статтю присвячено аналізу художнього часу в романі Айрис Мердок “Приємне і Благє” (1968). Розглядаються концепції письменниці, де своєрідно поєднуються уявлення Платона про одне велике Коло Часу, де злиті тимчасове та вічне з неоплатонічною концепцією субстанціальності часу та з екзистенціалістською темпоральністю окремих “дискретних миттєвостей”, “станів свідомості”. Роман демонструє всі типи часу, виділені дослідниками теоретичних концептів, об’єктивний час (час світу), суб’єктивний час сприйняття індивіда, де є час свідомості, та об’єктивований ним час. У “Приємному і Благому” немає потоку часу, даного в “лінійній послідовності безперервних подій”, але переривчасто, хоч і не фрагментовано, як у постмодернізмі. У Мердок домінує “художнє справжнє”, як якийсь час, що не має ні хронології, ні початку, ні кінця, широке “зараз” (“сучасність”), де є “сильна послідовність”, тобто, немає різкої темпоральної роз’єднаності подій, і є елементи “закритого часу”. “Сучасність” у Мердок – особливий пласт часу, який потребує точного датування, синтезуючи у собі різні темпоральні аспекти (побутові, психологічні, екзистенційні та інші.). Художній час у “Приємному і Благому” має образотворче-семантичну, структурно-композиційно концептуальну функції. У “Приємному та Благому” постає повсякденність, де акцентовані “тут” і “зараз” буття героїв, включається весь спектр їх особистісних переваг щодо “Приємного” та “Благого”. Носіями часу (крім явної темпоральності) виступають герої, побут, простір. Мердоківська переключка з ренесансною пасторальною модальністю, де панує етична концепція часу, сягаючи архетипу “золотого століття”, не веде до поєднання різних епох. Магістральна течія часу в цьому романі, в основному, має лінійну спрямованість, хоча виникає і вкраплення минулого. Час сюжетний ґрунтується на пасторальній темпоральності, генетично міфопоетичній, але відкрито не виявляє свого зв’язку з цим культурним кодом, як пропонують робити постмодерністи. Міфопоетичні почуття простору-часу в “Приємному і Благому” присутні міметично та метафорично.

Ключові слова: художній час, темпоральність, екзистенція, хронотоп, простір, модальність.