

**The Chronotope of Paris in the Poetry of First-Wave Russian Emigrants: A Case Study of Irina Knorring's Poems / *O cronotopo de Paris na poesia da primeira onda de emigrantes russos: um estudo de caso dos poemas de Irina Knorring***

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**ABSTRACT**

This article proposes to use the concept of chronotope in analyzing the literary works of first-wave Russian emigrants in France. It focuses on the artistic representation of the world within the Russian émigrés community in Paris by exploring the poems of Irina Knorring, a representative of the younger generation of first-wave Russian emigrants. In these poems, the figure of the Russian emigrant assumes a central position. By examining them, this research identifies recurring motifs and images with spatial and temporal meanings and discusses the specific features of the chronotope of Paris. In her poems, Knorring not only delves into the inner world and uniqueness of individuals but also reflects upon the collective experiences and shared destiny of Russians in exile. The chronotope in the poet's works serves as an indispensable element, establishing a cohesive spatial and temporal unity that enables readers to perceive the image of Russian emigrants in Europe (specifically Paris) through the perspective of a Russian vagabond. The chronotopic analysis presented in this article offers a comprehensive spatial and temporal representation of the life trajectory of Russian émigrés in Paris, encompassing both their individual experiences and the broader context of Russian emigration as a whole.

**KEYWORDS:** Chronotope; Russian diaspora; Poetry; First-wave Russian emigrants; Irina Knorring

**RESUMO**

*Este artigo propõe o uso do conceito de cronotopo para analisar a obra literária de emigrantes russos da primeira onda na França. O artigo se concentra na representação artística de mundo da comunidade de emigrantes russos em Paris, ao explorar os poemas de Irina Knorring, uma representante da jovem geração da primeira onda de emigrantes russos. Nesses poemas, a figura do emigrante russo assume uma posição central. Ao examiná-los, esta pesquisa identifica os motivos e as imagens recorrentes, dotados de sentidos espaciais e temporais, e discute aspectos específicos do cronotopo de Paris. Em seus poemas, Knorring explora não só o mundo interior e as particularidades dos indivíduos, mas também reflete sobre os acontecimentos da vida e*

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*sobre o destino comum dos refugiados russos no exílio. Nas obras da poeta, o cronotopo serve como um elemento indispensável, estabelecendo uma unidade espacial e temporal coesa, que permite aos leitores perceberem a imagem dos emigrantes russos na Europa (Paris) pelos olhos do andarilho russo. A análise cronotópica presente no artigo oferece uma representação espacial e temporal abrangente da trajetória de vida de emigrantes russos em Paris, abarcando tanto as experiências individuais, quanto o contexto mais amplo da emigração russa como um todo.*

*PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Cronotopo; Diáspora russa; Poesia; Emigrantes russos da primeira onda; Irina Knorring*

## **Introduction**

Developing a holistic view of the poetic style characteristic of works by Russian emigrants has become one of the topical areas of study in Russian contemporary philology. Examining the lives and literary contributions of Russian emigrants in France, particularly in Paris, entails an endeavor to reconstruct their daily life during that period. It involves studying the characteristics of the interplay between reality and the artistic conceptualizations of it and recreating the process of entry into reality, which is reflected in poets' works, particularly those of the younger generation.

This study focuses on exploring the chronotope of Paris in the poetry of first-wave Russian emigrants by using works of Irina Knorring (1906-1943), a representative of the younger generation.

Researchers have formulated a well-defined perspective on Knorring's works, perceiving her art as a poetic diary that encompasses the events of the poet's biography (Sokolova, 2011; Koznova, 2019). As it is known, the key themes, images, motifs, and plots of poems reflect poets' walks of life, and Knorring's poetry predominantly explores themes such as Russia, emigration, the plight of refugees, and profound personal experiences. Her creative style is distinguished by minimalism and marked by the clarity of the lyrical canvas of space and time, along with a heightened attention to the intricate details of the objective world.

Irina Knorring's poems served as *the material* for the study. *The purpose of this article* is to explore, based on M. M. Bakhtin's concept of chronotope, the processes through which the representation of time and space in the diasporic canon of Russian poetry transforms into a vivid portrayal of the world of exiles. Specifically, the focus is placed on Irina Knorring's poems written during her time in Paris, with their themes,

motifs, and images guided by a specific chronotope. By delving into the creative exploration of Paris, this study illuminates the spiritual yearnings of emigrants.

One of the conceptually significant ideas in contemporary humanities is the notion of chronotope, which traces its roots back to the works of Mikhail Bakhtin, the Russian philologist and philosopher. Bakhtin introduced the concept of chronotope to encapsulate the interconnectedness of space and time, referring to it as time-space. According to Bakhtin, the genres and genre types of literary works are shaped by the chronotope. As Bakhtin asserts, within the literary chronotope, time clearly dominates space, lending it greater significance and measurability (Bakhtin, 1981).<sup>1</sup> Expanding on this concept and applying it to the portrayal of individuals (both authors and characters), Bakhtin emphasized that as a formal and substantial category, the chronotope greatly influences the portrayal of characters in literature; their portrayal is inherently chronotopic (Bakhtin, 1981).<sup>2</sup> The reference to ancient texts allowed M. M. Bakhtin to identify three novel chronotopes: the alien world in the adventure novel, the chronotope of the adventure novel, and the chronotope of the biographical novel. The scholar also characterizes the chronotope of the chivalric novel, the Rabelaisian and idyllic chronotopes and comes to the conclusion, important for the analysis of an artistic text, that any entry into the domain of meanings is made through the chronotopes (Bakhtin, 1981).<sup>3</sup>

The chronotope plays a crucial role in structuring information about both the world and individuals, thereby defining the parameters of the author's worldview within the text and giving it a distinctly dual nature.

From a formal standpoint, the chronotope serves as a framework for conveying operational information, acting as a scheme that allows for the identification of specific spatial and temporal components, which are largely influenced by the genre of the work. Simultaneously, within a literary text, the chronotope operates in diverse spatio-temporal configurations, condensing and specifying time within a particular spatial context (Shchukina, 2019, p. 12).

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<sup>1</sup> BAKHTIN, M.M. Forms of Time and the Chronotope in the Novel. In: *The Dialogic Imagination*. Edited by Michael Holquist. Translated by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981, pp. 84-258.

<sup>2</sup> For reference, see footnote 1.

<sup>3</sup> For reference, see footnote 1.

As a contribution to the theoretical exploration of this subject, a study by Brazilian researchers can be highlighted, which sheds light on the significance of context within the works of M. M. Bakhtin and his circle. In particular, the researchers have identified an aesthetic context within the realm of artistic communication, with its boundaries encompassing the author and characters in novels, as well as the lyrical subject and their “other” in poetry (Stella; Brait, 2022).

The chronotope serves as a fundamental analytical tool in modern philological research, applied to various types of texts, including both fiction and non-fiction. For instance, when examining the chronotope in narratives about the Russian North, it is evident that the space-time continuum constructed by the author closely aligns with reality. This is achieved through composition, the inclusion of the author as narrator and a participant in the events, and the utilization of a substantial amount of factual information (Kornilova et al., 2020). By engaging with actual narrative texts, the significance and subjective aspects of the chronotope are accentuated. According to W. Schmid, the narrator’s spatial domain can be either limited by their position within the text or boundless, extending across the entirety of the narrative (Schmid, 2003). In her article, M. S. Mozzherina discusses the features of the subjective artistic representation of space and time, proposing the term “chronotope of subjective reality” in relation to the novels of Lena Eltang (Mozzherina, 2022).

Focusing on the examination of chronotopes, Ana Lúcia Macedo Novroth provides a description of the socio-political structure of society in the dystopian novel *Incidente em Antares* [*Incident in Antares*] by the Brazilian writer Erico Verissimo. Novroth identifies political polarization and oblivion as integral elements of the chronotope within the text. Additionally, she emphasizes that individuals carry within them the unity of spatio-temporal experience and memory, with the chronotope serving as the driving force behind the characters’ unique experiences, often leading to a reassessment of their identities (Novroth, 2023). In a similar vein, linguist P. Yu. Povalko concludes through the exploration of Russian dystopian novels that modern literary texts prompt a reinterpretation of the concepts of time and space, with the chronotope having the semantic function and holding significance within the literary context (Povalko, 2016).

In the context of the modern world, the challenges surrounding a person's spatio-temporal orientation take on new dimensions. It has been observed that the rapid emergence and intrusion of novelties into one's existence engender chronic anxiety and uncertainties regarding the validity of one's life's purpose (Shestakova, 2022). Urban spaces, in particular, assume a significant role, as exemplified by the issue of monotowns, which are dominated by a single industry or company (Fomin, Bezzubova, 2022). E. Y. Burlina highlights that each city has its distinctive chronotope. Burlina's research focuses on the historical and existential chronotope of the city, which interweaves its various historical epochs with the cultural landscape and transforms them into a continuous spatio-temporal stream (Burlina, 2017).

The spatial and temporal organization of poetic texts allows us to explore one of the key aspects of our study: the reflection of the author's personal experiences. The autobiographical dialogue started emerging in Russian poetry in the 18th century (Maslova, 2018, 2019). When identifying the key trends in the literature of first-wave Russian emigrants in France, professor A.V. Ledenev emphasizes that memoirs and autobiographical prose, including diaries and poetic texts, served as its stylistic foundation, representing a "synthesis of factual accounts and self-reflection" (Lednev, 2013, p. 128). Contemporary humanities actively engage in the study of factual sources, including ego-documents that provide reliable personal information. For example, when exploring the events of the Civil War in Russia in the 1920s, memoirs of direct participants in the events in Crimea (Kalinovskiy, Samylovskaya, 2022), diaries, letters, and memoirs of individuals involved in the White movement in northwestern Russia are utilized (Tropov, Konkin, 2022).

Therefore, it is evident that the chronotope plays an important role as it establishes the artistic cohesion of a literary work in its connection to reality. Consequently, it enables us to comprehend the distinct aspects of the author's worldview, unveiling fragments of the worldview's content.

## 1 Issues of Identity Among First-Wave Russian Emigrants in Paris

In the realm of exploring the poetry of the Russian diaspora, the literary legacy of Russian authors who emigrated to Europe is a topic of special interest and a subject that continues to captivate readers and researchers alike. The largest waves of Russian emigration to France occurred in 1921 (with over 32,000 individuals) and 1926 (with 67,000 individuals) (Schor, 2019). According to Catherine Gousseff, the refugees of the 1920s were part of the extensive population movements that contributed to the formation of a “foreign France” (Gousseff, 2023). Initially labeled as political refugees, they later became known as “Russian emigrants,” a term reflecting the profound drama of their forced exile. In our article, we utilize the terms “vagabond” and “exile” which have broad evaluative connotations when referring to the emigrants of the first wave. This choice aligns with the prevailing tendency in contemporary social discourse studies to select words that encapsulate pivotal moments in political, economic, and cultural development (Gagarina, Goncharova, Mikhaylova, 2022). Among these exiles were renowned writers such as Ivan Bunin, Vladislav Khodasevich, Georgy Adamovich, and others.

The study of the Russian diaspora today is closely intertwined with the challenge of preserving its cultural and ethnic identity. In her analysis of the language used by Russian exiles, E. A. Zemskaya notes that first-wave emigrants and their descendants were predominantly highly educated individuals proficient in multiple languages: “They shared common characteristics in terms of language, psychology, and their connection to Russia. Their parents exhibited a deep devotion to Russia and a strong desire to maintain their ‘Russianness’” (Zemskaya, 2001, p. 36). For example, N. V. Letaeva highlights the significance of the chronotope of Christmas in the prose of the Russian diaspora, as it encapsulates the inherent values associated with this religious holiday and etches them into the collective and cultural memory (Letaeva, 2020). In different periods of societal life, collective memory is closely connected with the mechanisms of social self-identification, intergenerational value-based interaction, and the transmission of social heritage (Kornilova, 2022).

Contemporary French scholars have also been studying the issues surrounding the identity of individuals from the Russian diaspora. Coline Saintherant’s article, *Le*

*renouveau identitaire des écrivains russes exilés en France* [The Identity Renovation of the Exiled Russian Writers in France], focuses on the personalities of Russian writers who moved to France between the Russian Revolution and the outbreak of World War II. Through an examination of the autobiographies of approximately forty emigrant authors from diverse backgrounds and social statuses, the researcher unveils the heterogeneous nature of the Russian emigrant population, defying attempts to categorize them as a homogeneous group. Despite this fact, identity reconstruction processes experienced by those people exhibit similarities. The authors grappled with common questions: the writerly identity, national affiliation, and the emergence of mythologies. However, their answers diverge: definitions of the writer in exile vary, the myths they create differ, and their paths in the new host country do not always align (Saintherant, 2021).

In his work *Les écrivains russes blancs en France. Un entre-deux identitaire* [The White Russian Writers in France. An In-Between Identity] (1919-1939), Ralph Schor indicates that many emigrants had a dual identity, both Russian and French. Wanting to remain loyal to Russia and at the same time seize the opportunities offered by France, young emigrants were torn between the two parts of their identities, with many experiencing serious difficulties. Most Russians in exile complained about the feeling of loneliness and isolation they endured. In addition, they struggled to find their audience and sources of inspiration; they doubted their Russian identity and the possibility of maintaining their Russian essence and creating works in Russian while being far from their homeland (Schor, 2019).

According to D. Y. Dorofeev, the philosophical exploration of human identity begins with the fundamental question of what defines a person as a person. Ancient philosophers, including Plato, have already provided an answer to this question. Plato believed that “the understanding of human existence is intricately tied to the workings of the mind, which, in turn, is influenced by an individual’s choices and self-perception” (Dorofeev, 2019, p. 253). Expanding on the theme of self-understanding, Dorofeev highlights that human life unfolds as an inherent process of self-organization, guided by the principle of cyclicity. “This principle <...> is manifested in the

chronotope of a sedentary lifestyle, but its elements such as day and night changes can be found even in a vagabond's life" (Dorofeev, 2022, p. 131).

Exploring the lives of Russian emigrants in Paris entails an attempt to resurrect their daily experiences, shedding light on their interactions within the diaspora and the intricate realms of national and creative identity. E. Volodina, a modern researcher, notes the disillusionment experienced by Russian emigrants in Paris: "Rather than finding a land of celebration, enjoyment, and abundance, they found themselves on the outskirts of Paris, with parties gone and only mundane workdays left" (Volodina, 2015, p. 46). Born into a family of first-wave Russian emigrants, Elena Menegaldo emphasizes that emigrants "are unable to shake off the unsettling feelings associated with leaving their native homes, no matter how destitute, and the fear of embracing change" (Menegaldo, 2001, p. 247).

The memoirs of first-wave emigrants serve as a poignant continuation of the tradition of psychological poetry from the turn of the century. They provide a means to learn about others and oneself within the unconventional environment experienced by Russian emigrants, where unique connections were formed between the self of a Russian emigrant and France as a realm of existence.

## **2 The Chronotope of Paris in Irina Knorring's Poems (Early Parisian Period)**

The question of identity and creative self-determination weighed heavily on the younger generation of first-wave emigrants. These individuals, who departed Russia during their childhood and adolescence, found themselves in challenging circumstances, residing in a foreign land while still holding onto their national identity. Poet Irina Knorring (1906-1943), who resided in Paris from 1925, belonged to that generation. In her poetic works, the exploration of time and space emerges as a central theme. Drawing from the events of her personal biography, the verses she composed can be categorized as "diary poetry."

In Paris, Knorring actively immerses herself in the cultural life of Russian emigrants, and the theme of France becomes a recurring motif in her poems and diary entries. Within her writings, France is portrayed as a rainy, foggy, and gray-colored country. In one of her early Parisian poems, Knorring directly addresses the city and



expresses her attitude towards it: “You, *gray, cold, and austere*, / Paris I longed for so long” (*Shumyat mne vetvistye kleny* [Branchy Maples Make Noise to Me], May 25, 1925).<sup>4</sup> Here are a few lines from the poem *V vagone* [In the Carriage] (1925): “Villages, factories, tunnels, and slopes, / Woolly, *gray dust*. / Wheels knitting in a scattered dactyl, / Telling a dreadful story” (Knorrning, 2014, p. 322).<sup>5</sup> She arrived in “the city of *gray buildings*” and “the city of new strange anxieties,” with “a blurry mass of giants – / *gray houses*” –Throughout her observations in Paris, the poet encounters gray houses, streets, alleys, and squares: “It’s getting cold in Paris, and the children are freezing in the *gray alley* ...”<sup>6</sup>

Knorrning observed and captured this feature of her surroundings in her art, as noted by V. A. Sokolova, who wrote about the poetry of the 1920s:

The main color she employs in her palette is gray. *Rain* and *fog* often serve as the backdrop in her works. Her poems often depict states of severe fatigue, insomnia, or agonizing drowsiness, semi-delusion, and both moral and physical pain associated with illness (Sokolova, 2011, p. 263, emphasis added).

The prevalence of gray in the description of Paris can be attributed to both the city’s actual appearance, with its predominantly gray stone buildings, and the literary tradition of depicting it (for instance, the rhyme *Paris – gris* [Paris – gray] is frequently found in French poems) (Mazur, 2011, p. 434). In Russian poetry of the Silver Age, which greatly influenced Knorrning, the gray color symbolized melancholy, hopelessness, and spiritual emptiness, as exemplified by the works of Alexander Blok and Andrei Bely. While Blok employed gray when describing St. Petersburg, where the city’s “gray and stony” body lies beneath the “gray sky,” Bely delved into the symbolic nature of the color, stating that gray represents the embodiment of non-existence into being, imbuing the latter with a ghostly quality (Bely, 1994, p. 201). In portraying the “gray” Paris, Knorrning follows and expands upon this established tradition. Gray signifies ash, smoke, and fog; it is derived from the blending of two primary colors:

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<sup>4</sup> Original in Russian: “Ty, seryi, kholodnyi i strogii, / Tak dolgo zhelannyi Parizh.”

<sup>5</sup> Original in Russian: “Poselki, zavody, tunneli, otkosy, / Mokhnataya, seraya pyl. / Rasseyannym daktilem vyazhut kolesa, / Kakuyu-to strashnyu byl.”

<sup>6</sup> Original in Russian: “V gorod serykh zdanii;” “V gorod novykh strannykh trevog;” “Mutno slitnye gromady – / Serye doma;” “V Parizhe nastupayut kholoda, i deti merznut v pereulke serom ...”

black and white. In the poems of the young poet who newly arrived in Paris, the gray color reflects the uncertainty, melancholy, and painful state of the lyrical subject.

Hence, it can be deduced that while Knorring's early Parisian poems have a clear location (the name of the French capital is mentioned repeatedly), this location lacks a defined timeframe (seasonal indications are absent; evening scenes prevail) and is veiled by rains and fogs. The gray color intensifies the ambiguity of the city's portrayal, reminiscent of Impressionist paintings like Camille Pissarro's *The Boulevard Montmartre on a Winter Morning*. Knorring's chronotope of Paris is subjective, conveying the inner state of the lyrical subject.

The evolution of the young poet's perception of the city can be viewed as a shift in the chronotope of Paris within her mid-1920s poetry. In this phase, iconic locations of the city center come into view: palaces, castles, cathedrals, museums, and squares, which serve as symbols of Paris.

In *Stikhakh o Parizhe* [Poems about Paris] (November 30, 1925), Knorring portrays her perception of the city center. She highlights significant landmarks such as the *Carnavalet Museum* of history and archeology, the *Cluny Museum* of medieval art located on *Saint-Michel*, the auditoria of the *Sorbonne* where Knorring pursued her studies, and the *Conciergerie*, a castle and prison situated in the heart of Paris. She mentions the iconic "two gray towers" of *Notre Dame*, the cathedral on the *Île de la Cité*, the *Tuileries Palace* of the French Kings, and the central square of Paris, the *Place de la Concorde* (Knorring, 2014, pp. 336-337). In her diary titled *Povest iz sobstvennoi zhizni* [A Tale from My Own Life] covering the months of May to August 1925, Knorring reflects on her initial encounters with notable Parisian landmarks, including the *Conciergerie*, the *Place de la Concorde*, *Sorbonne*, the *Carnavalet museum*, and the *Louvre Museum* (Knorring, 2009; 2013).

The poem is composed of two distinct parts, each reflecting a different time component of the chronotope. The first part is devoted to the city and country's past, which is reflected by phrases such as "centuries have passed," "preserving the legends of old times," and "the era of fiery dawn, beautiful words, and the guillotine."<sup>7</sup> The second part portrays the contemporary reality of Paris, where the boulevards are

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<sup>7</sup> Original in Russian: "stoletiya proplyli", "khranyat predanya stariny", "epokha plamennoi zari, krasivyykh slov i gilotiny."

adorned with “lanterns turning purple in the darkness,” couples walk around, “the breast walls loom black,” and the Place de la Concorde “rumbles, shines, and spins.”<sup>8</sup> This division is further reinforced at the metrical level, with the first part written in iambic tetrameter and the second part adopting anapaest and trochaic meter. These two parts are interconnected through the depiction of Parisian locations in a zoom-in mode, from the broader Paris to the center of Paris and finally the Place de la Concorde. Additionally, they share a common backdrop, which is *foggy gray*, *dark*, and *gloomy*, against which the central square of the city, Concord, shines brightly like a “clockwork toy.” The opening lines of the first part, “In a *foggy gray*, and *stuffy* haze,” and its concluding lines, “Two *gray towers of Notre Dame* / Like two wings in a *dark sky*,”<sup>9</sup> establish a circular composition that emphasizes the prevalent gray color and haze. It can be said that for Irina Knorring, the city of Paris has become a mirror reflecting her own emotions and experiences.

France remains an “alien” space for the lyrical subject, which may explain the frequent use of poetic imagery depicting *pain*, *longing*, and *loss*. Furthermore, the experiences of the lyrical subject are accentuated by images of *silence*, *darkness*, and a *quiet melancholy* (Sokolova, 2011), which are central to Knorring’s poetic works. With anguish and shame, she recalls her departure from Russia amidst the chaos of civil war, yearning to return to her homeland while being forced to remain separated from it. Even in her later poems, the imagery of darkness persists, intertwined with the recurring motif of silence. In the poem *Okno v stolovoj* [Window in the Dining Room] (1938), she writes: “A cigarette. The flame of a match, / *Darkness* and *silence*.” “How many tired minutes have quietly passed here, ... / How much pain has been mirrored / By the *dark glass*...” (Knorring, 2014, p. 574).<sup>10</sup> Within Knorring’s poetry, silence is depicted as something inevitable for a solitary soul.

Over time, the chronotope of Paris and the depiction of the city become increasingly complex. On the one hand, it remains a monotonous, dreary, and gray-

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<sup>8</sup> Original in Russian: “liloveyut vo mgle fonari;” “cherneyut vystupy sten;” “grokhozhet, blestit i kruzhitsya.”

<sup>9</sup> Original in Russian: “v tumanno seroj dushnoj mgle;” “dve serykh bashni notr dam kak dva kryla na nebe mglistom.”

<sup>10</sup> Original in Russian: “Papiroso plamya spichki, / mrak I tishina; skolko zdes minut ustalykh, ... / skolko boli otrazhalo / tyomnoe steklo...”

toned city. Simultaneously, the image of the everyday life of Russian emigrants in France is introduced in the poems written in the late 1920s and early 1930s. This life appears alien to the lyrical subject as it lacks sincerity, genuine emotions, and true interpersonal connections. In the poem *Monparnas* [Montparnasse] (1931), she writes: “It started to feel boring, even scary. / We are waiting for someone to come / And tell us, for the hundredth time, / A caustic literary anecdote” (Knorring, 2014, pp. 498-499).<sup>11</sup>

On the other hand, Knorring’s exploration of the city is intertwined with the theme of nature. Alongside Paris, she also depicts its suburbs and surroundings. The contemplation of the natural world brings genuine happiness to the lyrical subject, allowing her to escape the burden of the gray everyday life.

In the second half of the 1920s, the chronotope of Paris is characterized by its profound connection to the theme of love in Knorring’s poetry. Love emerges as the powerful emotion that grants the lyrical subject the strength to resist the drab and hectic nature of earthly existence. The city’s space, encompassing boulevards, embankments, squares, and garden avenues, as well as the space of Versailles, is open to the poet, who dedicated several poems to the palace in 1927. Here are a few lines from the poem *Versal* [Versailles]: “We passed all the canals, / the Grand and Petit Trianon. / The sun fluttered above us / And illuminated the sky” (Knorring, 2014, p. 397).<sup>12</sup> The plural personal pronoun “we” signifies the union of the lyrical subject and her loved one. It appears five times throughout the poem, with four instances of “we” and one occurrence in the phrase “above us.” This pronoun forms the poem’s central theme and contributes to the creation of a biographical chronotope. The state of mind of the lyrical subject is reflected by the landscape, with the palaces and canals of Versailles.

In the poem *Zacvetayut v parizhe kashtany* [Chestnuts are Blooming in Paris] (April 15, 1927), the arrival of spring in Paris is portrayed. The depiction captures many of the defining elements of the Parisian chronotope in Knorring’s poetry: a city draped in shades of gray, enveloped in fog and gloom, permeated with moist air and rain (as indicated by the mention of the “rusty fence”). However, as the narrative unfolds, the

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<sup>11</sup> Original in Russian: “stanovilos skuchno strashno dazhe. / zhdem chto kto nibud sejchas pridet / I so smakom v sotyj raz rasskazhet, / zloj literaturnyj anekdot.”

<sup>12</sup> Original in Russian: “My minovali vse kanaly, / bolshoj I malyj trianon. / nad nami solnce trepetalo / I ozaryalo nebosklon.”

city undergoes a transformative change and reveals its beauty. With the advent of spring, Paris awakens to a display of blooming flowers and trees. They infuse the city with light and an array of colors. The blossoms of chestnut trees are likened to candles that illuminate the otherwise somber surroundings, while lilac blossoms add a touch of purple to the color palette. Furthermore, the arrival of spring in the poem is linked to the awakening of the senses, with anticipating love. The lyrical subject has learned to perceive the city's beauty, marking a new chapter in the poet's life where the pursuit of love holds profound meaning and significance.

Chestnuts are blooming in Paris  
Like austere wedding candles.  
A foggy evening descends,  
A hazy spring evening.

Behind the misty garden  
The dusk is languid and lazy.  
The rusty fence is hiding  
The purple of lilacs starting to bloom.

There is a shift in my heart,  
A newfound stir, a curious lift.  
For chestnut trees in alleyways  
Look like wedding candles.  
(Knorring, 2014, p. 395).<sup>13</sup>

In contrast to the preceding texts where the city is predominantly depicted in shades of gray, the poem above presents a different perspective. The author and the lyrical subject view their surroundings through the lens of love, imbued with vibrant colors symbolized by the blossoming trees. For her, Paris has become a different city, prompting a heightened attentiveness to the world around. She no longer simply observes the blooming flowers; rather, she is captivated by the unfolding process itself. As an enamored woman, she exhibits a fervent curiosity, embracing the novelty and intrigue that permeate her surroundings.

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<sup>13</sup> Original in Russian: “Zacvetayut v parizhe kashtany/ Kak venchalnye strogie svechi/ Opuskaetsya vecher tumanny/ Po vesennemu dymchatyj vecher// Za ogradoj tumannogo sada/ Sumrak polon tomlenem I lenyu./ Liloveyut za rzhavoj ogradoj/ Chut rascvetshie kisti sireni.// A uzh serdce byt prezhnim ne mozhet,/ Stalo novym vzvolnovanno strannym./ Ottogo chto v alleyakh kashtany/ Na venchalnye svechi pokhozhi.”

In this poem, the use of verbal forms captures the dynamic nature of the depicted scenes (blooming, hiding, starting to bloom). The lyrical subject perceives everything as an ongoing process, embracing the essence of movement itself. From this newfound perspective, she has discovered the meaning of life, and her gaze upon the world is transformed accordingly. Elements of the poem resonate with this mood, such as blossoms, wedding candles, foggy weather, and lilac hues. At the lexical and grammatical level, there is a subtle indication of the future, hinting that the present has not yet fully arrived, and only the process is currently unfolding. The line “The purple of lilacs starting to bloom”<sup>14</sup> projects a sense of directionality toward the future.

Contemporary psycholinguistic researchers study the cognitive functions of inner speech, which permeates the mental realm of individuals. This serves as a foundation for understanding the interplay between thinking, speech, and human consciousness. “Inner speech is conditionally verbal, as it draws upon the author’s personal experiences and self-observations” (Koltsova, Kartashkova, 2018, p. 59).

The theme of love is introduced through the comparison of chestnut blossoms to wedding candles, thereby presenting Paris as a cathedral where the sacrament of marriage is to be celebrated. In Christian traditions, candles symbolize the strength, purity, and enduring grace of love between the bride and groom, as well as the grace of God. The choice of plants mentioned in the description may hold particular significance in this context. The connection between spatial characteristics and the characters’ emotions and experiences becomes evident, especially in the final stanza. The blooming chestnuts are viewed as a reason for the lyrical subject experiencing new and unfamiliar emotions. The repetition of words carries conceptual significance. The phonetic and semantic associations created by them and their surrounding words highlight the lyrical subject’s harmonious relationship with the urban space of Paris. The use of repetitions in the first and last stanzas forms a circle, which can be interpreted as an additional reference to the wedding ceremony, where the exchange of rings symbolizes the union of two individuals.

This demonstrates that the chronotope of Paris in Knorring’s love lyrics undergoes a transformation. It becomes a city of blossoming spring, where the lyrical subject and her loved one stroll through parks, gardens, and boulevards. The depiction

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<sup>14</sup> Original in Russian: “Liloveyut za rzhavoj ogradoj.”

of space is characterized by harmony, lending the chronotope of Paris a heightened emotional intensity and a sense of universality.

## **Conclusion**

The chronotope of Paris in early poems by Irina Knorring exhibits a dynamic portrayal that captures both the issues of national, cultural, and creative identity common among first-wave emigrants and the specific experiences, events, and dates associated with Knorring's personal development and her perception of the city and its suburbs.

Three complementary variations of the chronotope of Paris have been explored. Initially, the chronotope presents a gray evening Paris, shrouded in uncertainty and depicted through verses infused with rain, fog, and haze. Later, specific Parisian locations, particularly the architectural and historical landmarks of the French capital, emerge against the backdrop of the gray and hazy city. In Knorring's perception, the city becomes intertwined with the history and culture of the country, with its landmarks holding cultural and historical significance. The chronotope of Paris demonstrating garden landscapes and the Versailles has a highly subjective nature as it is connected with the theme of love. The exploration of the city and its surroundings, encompassing gardens, boulevards, and parks, contributes to the development of the love narrative, infusing the chronotope of Paris with both subjectivity and universality.

At the grammatical and lexical level, the chronotope in Knorring's poetry aligns with three temporal indicators: yesterday, today, and tomorrow. However, none of them are stable or definite. Knorring does not bid farewell to the past but instead looks to the future with a sense of anxiety and longing, uncertain about what awaits her there. In the present, she occupies a space that feels distant and detached, dominated by shades of gray and characterized by a state of physical and spiritual imbalance. Subsequently, the chronotope of Paris undergoes a transformation alongside the anticipation of love that envelops the lyrical subject, marking a new stage in Irina Knorring's life and artistic journey.

In summary, the evolution of the chronotope of Paris in the early works of Irina Knorring demonstrates a shift from external to internal space, from historical to personal time, and from objective accounts of events to their subjective perception and evaluation. The chronotope of life's journey in Knorring's works represents an exploration of one's destiny and poetic calling.

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### **Statement of Authors’ Contribution**

All authors contributed to: the conception and design of this study, acquisition of data, or analysis and interpretation of data; drafting the article or revising it critically for important intellectual content; the final approval of the version to be published. All authors are accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

### **Research Data and Other Materials Availability**

The contents underlying the research text are included in the manuscript.

### **Reviews**

Due to the commitment assumed by *Bakhtiniana*. Revista de Estudos do Discurso [*Bakhtiniana*. Journal of Discourse Studies] to Open Science, this journal only publishes reviews that have been authorized by all involved.

### **Review I**

1. Appropriateness to the theme of the work proposed

The work is fully consistent with the stated theme.

2. The explicit objective of the study and coherent development of the text

The author clearly formulates the purpose of the work and the resulting tasks and consistently offers the necessary solutions. The chronotope of Paris in the poetry of Irina Knorring is reconstructed on the basis of a sufficient number of representative

examples. The article presents a wide literary and cultural context, which makes the author's final conclusions convincing.

3. Compliance with the proposed theory, demonstrating current knowledge of relevant literature

The author relies on the theory of chronotope of M. Bakhtin, which makes it possible to convincingly reconstruct the image of Paris in the poetry of Irina Knorring. Highlighting the chronotope of the city follows from the corresponding position of Bakhtin's work on chronotope and allows a deep and clear analysis of the specifics of poetic vision of Paris by Irina Knorring and her contemporaries, techniques and means of creating the image of Russian Paris. The author makes extensive use of Russian and foreign works on chronotope, including those published on the pages of *Bakhtiniana*. At the same time, it is regrettable that the article has almost no references to the relevant English-language studies.

4. Originality and contribution to the field of knowledge

Although the problem of the chronotope has been the focus of research attention for many years, there are many scientific aspects waiting to be explored. The chronotope of the city in a poetic text is one of them. By reconstructing the image of Paris in the poetry of a little-known even in her home country Russian poetess, the author contributes to the solution of this problem, which determines the scientific novelty and importance of the article.

5. Clarity, correctness, and appropriateness of language in a scientific work.

The language and style meet the requirements for scholarly articles.

While appreciating this article in general, the reviewer would like to make a few specific comments:

1. I'm sure that for the English-speaking reader, it would have been much more convenient to obtain quotations from Bakhtin from already available English translations.

2. it would be useful to include Bakhtin's definition of the chronotope of the city as one of the types of chronotope. Perhaps a reference to Bakhtin's book on Rabelais, in which Bakhtin offered his version of the reconstruction of the chronotope of Paris in the text of the French writer, would be appropriate.

3. It might be worth saying a few words about how the chronotope of Paris is created in the work of other Russian émigré poets, how similar or different it is from Irina Knorring's version. ACCEPTED WITH SUGGESTIONS

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## Review II

The article approaches the Bakhtinian concept of chronotope in the poetry of Irina Knorring, part of the *émigré* literature in Russian language. This is an original and underexplored theme. Referenced by V. Khodassiévitch as part of “women's poetry” in the Russian language, Knorring's work reflects the feelings of first wave emigrants, especially in relation to their perception of the French capital. I only recommend

*Bakhtiniana*, São Paulo, 18 (4): e62187e, Oct./Dec. 2023

bringing all quotations, as well as the titles of the poems, also in the original language (Russian), transliterated (according to the journal's orientation) to facilitate its location.  
APPROVED

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