

NARRATIVE SPACE IN THE NOVELLA *A CHRISTMAS CAROL* BY CHARLES DICKENS

Tran Thi Da Thao; Nguyen Thanh Tin✉

Quy Nhon University

✉nguyenthanhtin@qnu.edu.vn

<https://doi.org/10.63506/jilc.0903.372>

(Received: 01/10/2025; Revised: 21/11/2025; Accepted: 29/12/2025)

Abstract: This study examines the narrative space in Charles Dickens's short story "*A Christmas Carol*" through the theoretical framework of Zoran (1984), which encompasses three levels: topographical space, chronotropic space, and textual space. By analyzing specific locations, the interplay between time and space, and the narrative's linguistic structure, the research highlights how space functions not merely as a setting, but as a symbolic and aesthetic system. The spatial elements reflect the psychological and moral transformation of the protagonist, Ebenezer Scrooge, and contribute to the story's depth in terms of its ethical and philosophical aspects. The findings suggest that narrative space in *A Christmas Carol* serves as a central expressive medium, shaping the reader's experience and understanding of the character's journey. This study aims to expand narrative literary analysis from a spatial perspective, opening possibilities for comparative studies with other literary works or integrating spatial and temporal analysis within the same text.

Keywords: A Christmas Carol; Charles Dickens; Zoran; narrative space; literature

KHÔNG GIAN TỰ SỰ TRONG TRUYỆN NGẮN *BÀI CA MÙNG GIÁNG SINH* CỦA CHARLES DICKENS

Tóm tắt: Nghiên cứu này phân tích không gian tự sự trong *Bài ca mừng Giáng sinh* của Charles Dickens dựa trên mô hình ba cấp độ không gian của Zoran (1984): không gian địa hình, không gian thời-không và không gian văn bản. Thông qua việc khảo sát các địa điểm, mối quan hệ thời gian – không gian và cấu trúc tràn thuật, bài viết cho thấy không gian không chỉ là bối cảnh mà còn là phương tiện biểu đạt mang tính biểu tượng và thẩm mỹ. Các yếu tố không gian phản ánh sự chuyển biến tâm lý và đạo đức của nhân vật Ebenezer Scrooge, đồng thời làm sâu sắc ý nghĩa tư tưởng của tác phẩm. Kết quả nghiên cứu khẳng định vai trò của không gian tự sự trong việc định hướng sự tiếp nhận của người đọc và mở rộng hướng phân tích tự sự.

Từ khóa: Bài ca mừng Giáng sinh; Charles Dickens; Zoran, không gian tự sự; văn học

1. Introduction

In contemporary literary studies, the examination of artistic elements such as time and space not only elucidates narrative structures but also opens up broader interpretive trajectories for engaging with the ideological depth and aesthetic resonance of a literary work. While time has long been regarded as a central component in narratology, space, once relatively overlooked, has increasingly been acknowledged as a significant structural element, particularly following the emergence of the term “spatial turn” in cultural and literary research (Podpora, 2011, p. 82).

Spatiality in literature is not merely a physical setting but a meaning-producing semiotic structure, closely intertwined with characters’ actions, interactions, and psychological transformations. According to Zoran (1984), space is a constructed process that involves the active participation of the reader, emphasizing the dynamic interplay between the text and its audience. Chatman (1978) distinguishes between “story space” and “discourse space,” thereby establishing a theoretical framework that parallels the temporal dimension of narrative.

Charles Dickens (1812-1870) is widely regarded as one of the most eminent writers in nineteenth-century English literature, renowned for his ability to fuse social critique with intricate psychological portraiture. Among his representative works, *A Christmas Carol* (1843) stands out not only for its powerful humanistic message but also for its distinctive narrative structure, which skillfully blends realism with the supernatural. The story centers on the transformative journey of Ebenezer Scrooge, an old, miserly, and emotionally detached man, through his encounters with three spirits representing the Past, the Present, and the Future. In the novella, space and time function not merely as physical settings or chronological sequences but as meaning-bearing constructs that contribute to shaping the protagonist’s psychological depth while conveying the moral message of awakening, compassion, and the human capacity for change.

Although numerous studies have approached *A Christmas Carol* from perspectives such as moral philosophy (Boyo, 2021; Sousa, 2014), social criticism (Chandra, 2022), or character analysis (Darshan & Suganya, 2023), examinations of spatial sensibilities as an interconnected aesthetic and ideological system remain relatively limited. Most existing studies tend to privilege thematic, moral, or socio-historical concerns, leaving the spatial architecture of the novella under-examined and theoretically undertheorized. This gap offers an opportunity to revisit the text through a fresh analytical lens, thereby elucidating the role of the spatial elements in structuring the narrative and advancing the novella’s central themes.

This article is structured into five main sections. The introduction outlines the rationale for conducting the study. The subsequent section presents the theoretical framework and key concepts related to narrative space in literature, along with analytical approaches to spatiality in storytelling. The third section discusses the research methodology employed in this study. The fourth section offers an analysis of the spatial structure in the work, ranging from realistic settings to the supernatural spaces of the “temporal journeys” that contribute to character development. Finally, the conclusion synthesizes the key findings and delineates potential directions for future research.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1 The concept of narrative space

The Oxford Dictionary offers a diverse range of definitions for the term “*space*.” Among these, the present study adopts the tenth definition: “the whole area in which all things exist and move.” Hoang (2003, p. 511) offers a similar explanation, defining space as “*khoảng không bao trùm mọi vật xung quanh con người*” [the expanse that encompasses all things surrounding human beings]. Both definitions conceptualize space, in its broadest sense, as a physical category that determines the position of human beings and objects within the empirical world.

However, when incorporated into artistic creation, space no longer retains its initial form as a purely physical category. Instead, it is reshaped and transformed through the artist’s unique aesthetic vision (Pham, 2019). Consequently, literary space extends beyond geographical coordinates or physical distance; it also operates as a symbolic and semiotic construct that carries multiple layers of figurative and interpretive meaning.

In literature, space functions not merely as a physical backdrop but as a meaning-generating structure that is intertwined with characters’ actions, interactions, and psychological development. As Lv (2024) notes, drawing on Zoran’s (1984) view, space is understood as a constructed process in which the reader plays an active participatory role (p. 1140). This participatory dimension suggests that narrative space does not pre-exist as a fixed container; rather, it is actualized through the reader’s imaginative engagement with textual cues. In other words, spatial meaning emerges through the interaction between the text and the reader’s interpretive activity.

In essence, literary authors transpose the dimensions of physical space into their narrative worlds, particularly within narrative and storytelling genres, in order to model the environments inhabited by fictional characters. Events, characters, and space constitute indispensable components of any narrative, providing the essential conditions for characters to exist and for events to unfold (Tran, 2018, pp. 178-179).

2.2 Typologies of narrative space

Chatman (1978), as cited in Lv (2024), proposes a distinction between two forms of spatiality in narrative: “*story space*” and “*discourse space*.” Story space refers to the fictional world in which characters and events exist – that is, the spatial framework of the story itself. In contrast, discourse space refers to the spatial orientation created by narrative discourse, encompassing the narrator’s perspective, focalization, and the spatial arrangement of information as it is presented to the reader. Building on this foundational classification, Zoran (1984, pp. 315-319) develops a more comprehensive theoretical model consisting of three hierarchical levels of narrative space: the topographical level, the chronotopic level, and the textual level. The characteristics of these three levels are summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1*Zoran's Three Levels of Narrative Space*

Level of space	Definition	Key features	Function in narrative
Topographical level	the physical, concrete space described in the text through language, imagery, dialogue, or action	- static - mappable and locatable - associated with specific settings	establishes the story's setting, enabling readers to visualize the fictional world and understand the characters' living environment
Chronotopic level	the integration of space and time, manifested through movement, transformation, and the relationships among events	- dynamic - connected to action and temporality - grounded in Bakhtin's concept of the "chronotope"	represents plot development, narrative rhythm, and the evolution of characters' journeys
Textual level	the space constructed by the linguistic and structural organization of the text, including point of view, lexical choices, and narrative sequencing	- abstract - dependent on linguistic structure - includes focalization, selectivity, and linearity	shapes the reading experience and influences how readers perceive and interpret spatiality within the narrative

The discussion of Bakhtin's chronotope is particularly relevant here because Zoran's second level of spatiality - the chronotopic level - explicitly draws on Bakhtin's notion of the inseparability of time and space. Thus, clarifying Bakhtin's framework helps illuminate the theoretical foundations upon which Zoran develops his model. In this subsection, the present study seeks to clarify Bakhtin's concept of the *chronotope*, a term often translated as "time-space." This concept is regarded as a central component of Bakhtin's theoretical framework. For Bakhtin, the chronotope serves as the medium through which the logical meaning of the unfolding events is articulated. Scholars such as Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist maintain that the chronotope operates as an analytical unit for examining language in proportion to, and in relation to, the temporal and spatial categories embedded within it. These researchers argue that Bakhtin's notion differs from other uses of time and space in literary analysis because neither category is endowed with a privileged status: they are inseparable and entirely interdependent (Keunen, 2010).

Meanwhile, in his study, Pham (2019, p. 99) identifies several types of narrative space, including: locational and situational spaces; lyrical space (which shapes the emotions and affective responses of the subject); orientational space (expressed through positional markers in language); symbolic space (conveyed through symbolically charged imagery); point space; linear space; and stereoscopic space. It can be seen that Pham's (2019) classification reinforces the idea that narrative space extends beyond physical geography into symbolic, emotional, and cognitive dimensions, which aligns with the theoretical orientations of both Zoran and Bakhtin.

In their study, Fang and Tally Jr. (2022) further develop the concept of narrative spatialization, proposing three conceptual approaches that broaden the role of space in literary analysis. First, space is no longer treated as a secondary backdrop but is elevated to a central narrative component, what the authors refer to as the foregrounding of space, acquiring its own autonomous meaning and thematic significance. In many modern literary works, space functions

as a dominant symbol that reflects a character's psychological state or existential orientation. The foregrounding of space thus enables readers to engage with the text through its spatial architecture rather than solely through plot progression or character development.

Second, space becomes the organizing principle through which narrative events are structured. In this view, the plot is not propelled primarily by a chronological sequence of events but by transitions, repetitions, or contrasts among different spaces. This produces a nonlinear narrative structure in which space operates as the central axis of organization. Space, therefore, governs the rhythm and progression of storytelling rather than merely serving as the setting in which events unfold.

Finally, in the third approach, space functions as a major source of meaning, becoming the site where symbolic images, sensory impressions, and spatial relations generate multilayered significance. Space not only mirrors the external world but also manifests the characters' inner worlds, philosophies, and value systems. From this perspective, space assumes philosophical and existential dimensions, providing a locus in which individuals confront both themselves and the world around them.

Regardless of classification, narrative space is consistently described as shifting from a physical domain to a symbolic and cognitive one, thereby underscoring its central role in shaping the ideological depth and aesthetic texture of the literary text.

3. Research methodology

In this study, the authors employ a qualitative descriptive method to explore the meaningful dimensions of narrative space in the novella *A Christmas Carol*. This approach enables an in-depth examination of how narrative elements are structured and interpreted within the text, thereby illuminating the symbolic layers that the author seeks to convey.

In addition, the analysis draws on Zoran's (1984) theoretical framework of narrative space, which comprises three levels that may manifest in the novella: the topographical level, the chronotopic level, and the textual level. This model is adopted due to its systematic structure, its capacity for stratification, and its high applicability in literary analysis. Zoran's tripartite spatial framework not only facilitates the identification of spatial representations within the text but also permits a nuanced analysis of the relationships between space and other narrative components, such as character, temporality, focalization, and narrative voice.

Unlike theoretical approaches that focus solely on physical or symbolic space, Zoran's (1984) model integrates all three dimensions, physical, temporal, and linguistic, thus offering a comprehensive analytical structure. This is particularly valuable in a work like *A Christmas Carol*, where space functions not merely as a setting but also as a medium of moral and psychological expression. The layered spatial approach proposed by Zoran enables the elucidation of Scrooge's internal transformation as it unfolds through the various spatial configurations presented in the narrative.

4. Three levels of narrative space in *A Christmas Carol*

In *A Christmas Carol*, Charles Dickens goes beyond portraying a narrative of individual repentance and instead constructs a narrative world in which space functions as a meaningful medium for articulating emotional, ideological, and moral concerns. Viewed through Zoran's

(1984) theoretical framework, the three levels of narrative space are not treated as separate categories but operate in close relation to one another. Their dynamic interaction contributes to the coherence of the narrative structure, resulting in a text marked by strong symbolic layering and philosophical depth.

4.1 Topographical space

The narrative's topographical space is constituted by familiar, everyday settings such as the office, the domestic interior, and the graveyard. However, under Dickens's narrative treatment, these locations extend beyond their material function and acquire symbolic significance, reflecting the psychological and moral conditions of the characters. This process of symbolic layering can already be observed in the opening sections of the novella.

The first location introduced is Scrooge's office, a cold, confined, and inhospitable environment. Dickens describes it as a place where "the clerk's fire was so very much smaller that it looked like one coal" and where Scrooge himself kept the office "as cold as he was" (Stave I). The image of Bob Cratchit "*trying to warm himself at the candle*" emphasizes the emotional sterility and moral frigidity embedded within this physical space. Similarly, the narrator remarks that Scrooge's demeanor was "as solitary as an oyster," a metaphor strongly anchored in the spatial atmosphere of the counting-house. The office thus becomes the architectural embodiment of miserliness and isolation, where physical coldness mirrors the protagonist's spiritual barrenness.

In stark contrast is the Cratchit household, a space glowing with warmth and vitality despite material poverty. Dickens describes the scene with palpable affection: "There was nothing of high mark in this. They were not a handsome family... but they were happy, grateful, pleased with one another" (Stave III). The Cratchits' modest home becomes a topographical symbol of familial love and communal resilience. The description of the Christmas goose, "the rarest of all birds; a feathered phenomenon," and the tenderness surrounding Tiny Tim, who "*bore a little crutch, and had his limbs supported by an iron frame*," enrich the emotional depth of this domestic space. The warmth of the Cratchit home directly opposes the bitterness of Scrooge's office, staging spatial contrast as a moral lesson.

The graveyard constitutes the final and most haunting topographical space. Here, Scrooge confronts the vision of his own neglected death. Dickens crafts this space with stark imagery: "Walled in by houses; overrun by grass and weeds, the growth of vegetation's death, not life" (Stave IV). When the Spirit points toward Scrooge's gravestone, "the finger pointed from the grave to him, and back again," reinforcing the claustrophobic inevitability of moral reckoning. This space, devoid of warmth or remembrance, symbolizes the logical end of a life lived without compassion.

Throughout the novella, topographical spaces serve not merely as narrative settings but as concrete manifestations of Scrooge's moral journey, from coldness and isolation (the office) to warmth and communal affection (the Cratchit home) to the existential void (the graveyard). Dickens's careful spatial construction allows physical locations to function as symbolic registers, mapping the protagonist's ethical and emotional transformation through vividly rendered environments.

4.2 Chronotopic space

One of the most striking features of *A Christmas Carol* lies in its temporal ruptures, movements across the past, present, and future, each of which is anchored in a distinct spatial configuration. In Bakhtinian terms, these temporal-spatial intersections form chronotopes that shape Scrooge's moral awakening. Dickens does not simply shift time; he restructures space to allow each temporal journey to function as a site of ethical revelation.

The spirit of Christmas Past leads Scrooge into spaces that reawaken long-buried emotions. The first of these is the deserted schoolroom, described as "a lonely room, with a feeble fire" where "a solitary child, neglected by his friends, is left there still" (Stave II). This moment is chronotopic because the spatial setting of the deserted schoolroom is inseparable from the temporal layer it evokes. The room does not merely exist as a physical location; it materializes a past moment that continues to shape Scrooge's present self. Time and space converge here as the adult Scrooge simultaneously occupies the present of the narrative and the remembered past embedded within the schoolroom. In Bakhtin's sense, the spatial emptiness becomes the vehicle through which a specific temporal experience - childhood loneliness - re-enters the narrative, allowing past and present to coexist within a single experiential frame. This bleak educational space becomes the physical chronotope of emotional abandonment, rendering Scrooge's childhood loneliness palpable. Dickens reinforces the affective power of this memory when the older Scrooge "sobbed" upon seeing his younger self reading alone, an emotional response anchored in the spatial emptiness of the past.

Another pivotal spatial-temporal site is Fezziwig's warehouse. The transformation of the space, from a workplace to a festive ballroom, illustrates the warmth of human generosity. Dickens vividly describes how Fezziwig "made their power light or burdensome... a pleasure or a toil" (Stave II), underscoring the moral contrast between Fezziwig's open, joyful space and Scrooge's later oppressive office. The past here becomes a chronotope of possibility, showing Scrooge the alternative path he once possessed. The scene functions as a chronotope because the transformation of the warehouse collapses different temporal registers - the memory of Scrooge's youth, the festive temporality of Christmas, and the contrast with his future miserliness - into a single spatial frame. The space becomes a site where time is thickened, allowing Scrooge to reinhabit a formative moment that reveals an alternative moral trajectory.

The Spirit of Christmas Present guides Scrooge into spaces defined by warmth and communal life. The Cratchit household, though materially modest, is described as filled with affection: "There was never such a goose... its tenderness and flavour, size and cheapness, were the themes of universal admiration" (Stave III). This vivid domestic chronotope exposes Scrooge to a spatial reality shaped not by wealth but by human connection. Tiny Tim's presence - "God bless us every one!" - gives the space moral weight, transforming an ordinary home into a site of ethical confrontation.

In contrast, the Present also reveals harsh social spaces, such as the miners' hut and the lighthouse, remote locations where even those battling the elements "made a fire... and sang a Christmas song" (Stave III). These settings expand the chronotopic scope, demonstrating that the spirit of compassion is spatially universal, unbounded by geography or class.

The third temporal journey transports Scrooge into a dark, foreboding spatial landscape that foreshadows the consequences of his actions. The future city streets are described as “wretched, abject, frightful” (Stave IV), establishing a chronotope defined by social decay and moral indifference. Most significant is the grim bedroom where Scrooge’s corpse lies: “plundered and bereft, unwatched, unwept, uncared for” (Stave IV). This claustrophobic space becomes the architectural manifestation of a life devoid of human connection.

The graveyard, the final spatial-temporal site, intensifies this sense of existential dread. Dickens writes: “The Spirit pointed from the grave to him, and back again” (Stave IV), trapping Scrooge within a chronotope of inevitability. Space and time converge to expose the culmination of a selfish life, compelling Scrooge to confront the trajectory of his moral decline.

Across these temporal layers, Dickens uses chronotopic construction to shape Scrooge’s ethical transformation. The past reopens emotional wounds, the present reveals the value of compassion, and the future exposes the grim consequences of moral failure. Each chronotope is defined by an interplay between time and the symbolic qualities of space, forming what may be called Dickens’s “moral architecture”, a structure in which spatial movement becomes synonymous with inward change.

4.3 Textual space

Textual space represents the deepest layer of the narrative, where language, narrative voice, and stylistic choices do not merely convey events but actively construct the reader’s ethical and emotional experience. Dickens shapes this space through shifts in tone, focalization, and narratorial commentary, allowing readers to journey alongside Scrooge’s transformation. From the outset, Dickens’s narrator adopts a tone of playful skepticism, creating an ironic textual space that both distances and engages the reader. The narrator famously states: “Old Marley was as dead as a door-nail,” before humorously adding: “I don’t mean to say that I know what there is particularly dead about a door-nail.” This metanarrative intrusion establishes a self-aware narrative atmosphere in which the narrator’s voice guides interpretation. At the same time, vivid descriptive choices - such as describing Scrooge as “a squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous, old sinner!” - create a textured linguistic environment that amplifies Scrooge’s inner barrenness. Together, these strategies demonstrate how textual space functions not only as narration but also as an interpretive framework that shapes readers’ ethical orientation toward the character.

As the narrative progresses, Dickens gradually reduces the ironic distance, shifting toward a more immersive focalization aligned with Scrooge’s perceptions. In the scenes depicting the Cratchit family, the narrator filters the details through Scrooge’s awakening empathy, softening the narrative tone as Tiny Tim’s blessing - “God bless us every one!” - resonates emotionally with both Scrooge and the reader. A more dramatic stylistic transformation occurs in Stave V. The sudden use of buoyant, simile-rich language - “I am as light as a feather, I am as happy as an angel, I am as merry as a school-boy!” - contrasts sharply with earlier harsh descriptions, signaling a transformed narrative consciousness. This stylistic shift marks the moment when textual space and Scrooge’s ethical renewal fully intersect, as the narration begins to echo the emotional rhythms of his rebirth. The narrator then confirms this metamorphosis by declaring: “He became as good a friend, as good a master, and as good a man as the good old city knew.” Here, textual space serves as a site of

affirmation, framing Scrooge's transformation not merely as personal change but as an ethically charged reorientation of narrative voice and perspective.

Across these shifts - from ironic detachment to empathetic alignment to celebratory affirmation - Dickens constructs a textual environment that mirrors and magnifies Scrooge's inner transformation. The narrative voice, rhetorical texture, and patterns of focalization collectively create what may be termed an "ethical textual space," in which language itself becomes a medium for moral discovery. Readers are thus not only guided through Scrooge's journey but also invited to inhabit the evolving emotional and ethical landscape that the text constructs.

5. Conclusion

Through the application of Zoran's (1984) theoretical framework of narrative space, this study has elucidated the ways in which Charles Dickens constructs and organizes spatiality in *A Christmas Carol* as an aesthetic and ideological system. The three levels of narrative space function not merely as physical settings or narrative devices but as meaning-bearing structures that reflect the psychological states, moral conditions, and inner transformation of Scrooge.

At the topographical level, spaces such as Scrooge's office, the Cratchit household, and the graveyard operate as symbolic oppositions - embodying coldness, warmth, and death - three central emotional and ethical registers in the protagonist's journey. Chronotopic space, characterized by the interweaving of past, present, and future, generates a nonlinear narrative structure in which time and space converge to catalyze awakening and self-awareness. Meanwhile, textual space - expressed through narrative voice, point of view, and lexical choices - creates a profound reading experience that enables readers to accompany and empathize with the character.

From the foregoing analysis, this study affirms that spatiality in *A Christmas Carol* constitutes not merely a physical backdrop but a philosophically and humanistically charged representational system. Dickens employs space as an artistic medium through which to mirror the interior world, shape a distinctive narrative architecture, and articulate themes of repentance, compassion, and the human capacity for renewal.

Although the three levels of spatiality have been discussed separately for analytical clarity, Zoran (1984) emphasizes that readers experience these layers simultaneously and almost indistinctly. In Dickens's novella, spatial meaning emerges from the interplay of physical environments, temporal structures, and narrative language. The cold austerity of Scrooge's office, for example, gains symbolic force when juxtaposed with the temporal ruptures of the ghostly visions and the tonal shifts that frame Scrooge's moral awakening. Considering these three levels in unity rather than isolation reveals a richer semiotic system in which symbolic, emotional, and philosophical meanings converge. This integrative view underscores how Dickens's spatial design functions not only as an aesthetic strategy but also as a vehicle for ethical introspection and humanistic insight.

Future research may extend this spatial inquiry by comparing Dickens's spatial poetics with those of other Victorian or postmodern works, or by exploring how spatial and temporal configurations jointly operate in broader narrative traditions. Such directions would contribute to ongoing discussions within spatial narratology and the humanities at large.

References

Boyo, R. O. (2021). A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens: An authentic didactic source for English language acquisition and moral value teaching. *International Journal of Current Science Research and Review*, 04(11), 1585-1591. <https://ijcsrr.org/single-view/?id=4654&pid=4586>

Chandra, C. (2022). *The analysis of the social condition portrayed in A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens* [Bachelor's Degree]. Hasanuddin University. https://repository.unhas.ac.id/id/eprint/36632/2/F041181348_skripsi_12-09-2022%20bab%201-2.pdf?utm

Chatman, S. (1978). *Story and discourse: Narrative structure in fiction and film*. Cornell University Press. https://ia902900.us.archive.org/4/items/StoryAndDiscourseNarrativeStructureInFictionAndFilm/chatman.seymour_story.and.discourse_narrative.structure.in.fiction.and.film1.pdf

Darshan, P. M., & Suganya, M. J. (2023). Spiritual transformation of Scrooge in Dicken's A Christmas Carol. *International Journal of Novel Research and Development*, 8(10), 381-385. <https://www.ijnrd.org/papers/IJNRD2310344.pdf>

Dickens, C. (2020). *A Christmas Carol*. Dover Publications, INC. New York. <https://www.amazon.com/Christmas-Carol-Charles-Dickens/dp/1503212831>

Fang, Y., & Tally Jr, R. T. (2022). *Spatial literary studies in China*. Palgrave Macmillan Cham. <https://www.amazon.com/Spatial-Literary-Studies-China-Geocriticism/dp/3031039130>

Hoang, P. (2003). *Từ điển tiếng Việt* [Vietnamese dictionary]. NXB Đà Nẵng. <https://www.Thuvienlamdong.org.vn/Files/Books/45807.pdf>

Keunen, B. (2010). The chronotopic imagination in literature and film: Bakhtin, Bergson and Deleuze on forms of time. In N. Bemong, P. Borghart, M. De Dobbeleer, K. De Temmerman, K. Demoen, & B. Keunen (Eds.), *Bakhtin's theory of the literature chronotope: Reflections, applications, perspectives* (pp. 35-55). Academic Press. https://publikationen.ub.uni-frankfurt.de/opus4/frontdoor/deliver/index/docId/24561/file/Keunen_The_Chronotopic_Imagination_in_Literature_and_Film.pdf

Lv, W. (2024). An analysis of three narrative spaces in Young Goodman Brown. *International Journal of Social Science and Education Research Studies*, 04(10), 1139-1145. <https://ijssers.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/06-3010-2024.pdf>

Oxford University Press (n.d.). Space. In *Oxford Learner's Dictionaries*. Retrieved on October 11, 2025, from https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/space_1

Pham, V. D. (2019). Không gian trong văn học yêu nước viết về nhà tù thực dân, đế quốc dưới góc nhìn từ sự học (Giai đoạn nửa đầu thế kỷ XX) [Spatiality in patriotic literature depicting colonial and imperial prisons: A narratological approach (The first half of the 20th century)]. *HNUE Journal of Science*, 64(5), 98-103. <https://vjol.info.vn/index.php/DHSPHN/article/view/47165/38197>

Podpora, A. (2011). Spatial turn in literary research, analysis and reading practices: Perspectives and limitations. *Topos* (18150047), 24(1), 81-90. <https://journals.ehu.lt/index.php/topos/article/view/605?utm>

Sousa, D. M. (2014). A view of morality in Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol. *Letras*, 56(90), 105-129. https://ve.scielo.org/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0459-12832014000100005&lng=en&nrm=iso&tlang=en

Tran, D. S. (2018). *Tự sự học, lý thuyết và ứng dụng* [Narratology: Theory and application]. NXB Giáo dục Việt Nam. <https://nxbgd.vn/bai-viet/tu-su-hoc-li-thuyet-va-ung-dung>

Zoran, G. (1984). Towards a theory of space in narrative. *Poetics Today*, 5(2), 309-335. <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/TOWARDS-A-THEORY-OF-SPACE-IN-NARRATIVE-Zoran/a001bc03783539b879237c523989af432024a9d1>

APPENDIX

Selected Excerpts from Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*

No.	Stave, Page	Context	Quotation	Function / Spatial Meaning
1	I, p. 7	Scrooge's counting-house	<i>"The clerk's fire was so very much smaller that it looked like one coal."</i>	Illustrates the topographical space of coldness and isolation, symbolizing Scrooge's emotional frigidity.
2	I, p. 8	Scrooge's personality	<i>"He carried his own low temperature always about with him; he iced his office in the dog-days; and didn't thaw it one degree at Christmas."</i>	Reinforces the symbolic layering of physical coldness and moral barrenness.
3	II, p. 18	Scrooge's childhood school	<i>"A solitary child, neglected by his friends, is left there still."</i>	Depicts chronotopic space of emotional abandonment, where time (past) and space (schoolroom) merge into a site of trauma.
4	II, p. 24	Fezziwig's warehouse	<i>"Yo ho, my boys! No more work tonight! Let's have the shutters up."</i>	Illustrates a transformation of space (workplace → festive arena), representing the warmth of generosity and community.
5	III, p. 35	The Cratchit home	<i>"There was never such a goose... its tenderness and flavour, size and cheapness, were the themes of universal admiration."</i>	Example of topographical warmth and domestic harmony, contrasting with Scrooge's cold office.
6	III, p. 38	Tiny Tim's blessing	<i>"God bless us every one!"</i>	The chronotopic moral center of the story, where family space embodies ethical transcendence.
7	III, p. 41	Lighthouse and miners' hut	<i>"They made a fire... and sang a Christmas song."</i>	Expands spatial universality, Christmas spirit transcends geography and class.
8	IV, p. 50	Scrooge's deathbed	<i>"Plundered and bereft, unwatched, unwept, uncared for."</i>	A claustrophobic chronotope of moral reckoning and existential isolation.
9	IV, p. 53	The graveyard scene	<i>"The finger pointed from the grave to him, and back again."</i>	The final spatial-symbolic site: convergence of time and space as Scrooge faces his mortality.
10	V, p. 58	Scrooge's transformation	<i>"I am as light as a feather, I am as happy as an angel, I am as merry as a school-boy!"</i>	Illustrates textual space of renewal, language and rhythm change to mirror inner transformation.
11	V, p. 63	Narrator's final comment	<i>"He became as good a friend, as good a master, and as good a man as the good old city knew."</i>	Represents the affirmative textual closure, spatially reuniting Scrooge with community and life.