



## The Poetic Function Of The Chronotope In Character Representation In Somerset Maugham's And Abdulla Kahhor's Short Stories

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### ABSTRACT

This study investigates the poetic function of the chronotope in the short stories of Somerset Maugham and Abdulla Kahhor, focusing on its role in shaping character poetics. Drawing on Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of the chronotope, the research examines how the interaction of artistic time and space contributes to the representation of literary characters in Maugham's "Sanatorium" and Kahhor's "The Patient." Rather than comparing the stories by plot or motif, the study analyzes each writer's use of the time-space framework as a poetic device. The findings show that, in both writers' short fiction, this artistic structure serves as an essential means of revealing characters' psychological, social, and moral dimensions. However, Maugham primarily emphasizes individual psychological experience, whereas Kahhor foregrounds social reality and historical context, demonstrating both common and distinctive approaches to character poetics.

**KEYWORDS:** Chronotope, character representation, comparative literature, poetics, artistic space, artistic time, realism, psychological chronotope, social chronotope.

### INTRODUCTION

The chronotope has become one of the key concepts in modern literary studies for examining the relationship between artistic time, space, and literary characters. Introduced by Mikhail Bakhtin, it refers to the intrinsic interconnectedness of temporal and spatial relations artistically expressed in literature. As Bakhtin states, "We will give the name chronotope (literally, "time-space") to the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature." [1] In realist fiction, the artistic organization of time and space functions not merely as the setting of events but as a poetic element that shapes characters and conveys artistic meaning. The short stories of Somerset Maugham and Abdulla Kahhor provide valuable material for exploring this concept. Although they represent different literary traditions and cultural backgrounds, both writers employ artistic time and space as significant means of character representation. However, their artistic approaches differ. Maugham mainly uses the artistic organization of time and space to reveal the individual's psychological experience, whereas Kahhor relates this narrative framework to social reality and historical context. Rather than comparing the stories by plot or motif, this study examines how each writer employs this artistic device and identifies the common and distinctive features of its role in shaping character poetics.

The poetic function of the this artistic device is clearly manifested in Somerset Maugham's "Sanatorium." The story is dominated by a psychological-local chronotope, since almost all

events take place within the limited space of a mountain sanatorium. This isolated setting is not merely a location for medical treatment; it becomes an artistic environment that shapes the characters' worldview and psychological condition. The opening description, "It was mid-winter. The sanatorium stood on the top of a hill and from it you had a spacious view of the snow-clad country," immediately establishes an atmosphere of isolation and uncertainty. The cold winter landscape symbolically reflects the patients' loneliness and constant awareness of death. Consequently, the sanatorium functions as a liminal space between life and death, where the characters reassess their values and relationships. Time in the story also acquires a psychological dimension. McLeod's statement, "I've been here for seventeen years," together with "Time passes very quickly. I like it here. It's my home now," [2] illustrates that time is measured not by ordinary daily life but by illness, treatment, hope, and uncertainty. This artistic framework therefore becomes an essential poetic mechanism that reveals the characters' inner transformation. Templeton's final decision to leave the sanatorium with Ivy Bishop, despite knowing that it may shorten his life, demonstrates how artistic time and space shape moral choice and character development. Thus, this poetic mechanism not only organizes the narrative but also serves as one of the principal means of constructing character poetics.

A different artistic treatment of the chronotope appears in Abdulla Kahhor's "The Patient." Here the dominant form is a social-historical one, where time and space expose the harsh realities of poverty and social inequality. The central spatial contrast between Sotiboldi's impoverished home and the modern hospital carries significant symbolic meaning. Although the hospital represents hope and medical care, it remains economically inaccessible to the protagonist. In this way, artistic space reflects not only physical distance but also social injustice. The poor household, described through silence, illness, and exhausting daily labour, becomes an artistic environment that intensifies the tragic condition of the characters. The temporal structure of the story gradually develops the heroine's inevitable death through expressions such as "The patient became worse," "One night she suffered terribly," and "She died at dawn." [3] Particularly significant is the symbolic opposition between night and dawn. While dawn is traditionally associated with hope, in the story it ultimately marks irreversible loss, giving artistic time a profound emotional and symbolic function. Consequently, the time-space framework becomes an effective poetic device for revealing not only the characters' psychological suffering but also the social circumstances determining their fate.

Although Maugham and Kahhor employ different artistic strategies, both writers assign the chronotope a central role in character representation. In Maugham's fiction, artistic time and space primarily reveal the individual's psychological experience and existential choices. In Kahhor's stories, the chronotope is closely connected with social reality, historical circumstances, and the living conditions that shape human destiny. Despite these differences, both authors transform the artistic organization of time and space from a narrative background into a poetic mechanism that deepens characterization and strengthens the artistic meaning of the short story.

The analysis demonstrates that the chronotope performs a significant poetic function in the short stories of both Somerset Maugham and Abdulla Kahhor. In both writers' works, artistic time and space extend beyond the role of a narrative setting and become essential elements in shaping character poetics. Through the interaction of temporal and spatial dimensions, this artistic framework reveals characters' psychological states, moral choices, and social

circumstances, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of their personalities. Despite this common artistic function, the two authors employ Bakhtin's concept of time and space in different ways. Maugham primarily uses psychological and spatial time-space structures to explore the individual's inner world and existential experience, whereas Kahhor emphasizes social and historical time-space structures to portray the influence of poverty, social inequality, and historical reality on human destiny. Thus, the study confirms that the chronotope serves as a fundamental poetic mechanism of character representation and constitutes one of the key artistic components of realist short fiction in both English and Uzbek literature.

### References

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