

THE PROBLEM OF CREATING A REALISTIC IMAGE: THE REVELATION OF
CHARACTER IN THE STORIES OF A. QAHHOR AND J. LONDON

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Abstract: This article examines the issue of constructing realistic characters in the short stories of Abdulla Qahhor and Jack London. The study emphasizes the role of realism as a literary approach that reveals the social background and psychological depth of artistic heroes. The main focus is on the characters created by Qahhor and London, who reflect national characteristics while embodying universal human values. Through a comparative analysis based on the principles of realism, the study identifies similarities and contrasts in the writers' artistic techniques. The analysis shows that Qahhor pays special attention to everyday social realities, while London emphasizes the individual's conflict with nature and fate.

Introduction. The study of character creation has always been one of the central issues of world literature. Writers use various artistic strategies to portray their characters' inner worlds, social status, and psychological states. The famous Uzbek realist Abdulla Qahhor and the leading representative of American literature, Jack London, stand out for their mastery in depicting human experiences within cultural and historical contexts.

Realism, as a literary movement, strives to reflect life as it truly is, avoiding exaggeration and focusing on authenticity. In Qahhor's works, realism manifests through depictions of daily life, ordinary people, and their struggles within the socio-political environment of his time. In contrast, London emphasizes the conflict between man and the powerful forces of nature or destiny, portraying characters tested by endurance and willpower. Comparing Qahhor and London allows us to see how realism, as a universal method, adapts to different national traditions. Their characters, despite cultural diversity, embody both personal and collective experiences that reveal the unity of human nature. Therefore, comparing their stories is both relevant and valuable for understanding the problem of creating realistic characters in literature.

Realism developed strongly in Western literature during the 19th century as a reaction against Romanticism. While Romantic writers emphasized imagination, emotion, and ideals, realist authors sought to depict life truthfully and objectively. Writers such as Balzac, Dickens, and Tolstoy laid the foundations of realism in Europe, portraying social relations, poverty, class conflict, and human struggles in a rapidly changing world.

In American literature, Jack London became one of the most prominent representatives of realism and naturalism in the early 20th century. In his stories and novels such as *"To Build a Fire"* and *"The Call of the Wild,"* he depicted how people confront harsh natural environments and social challenges. London's realism is closely connected to naturalism, focusing on human instinct for survival and the laws of nature. His characters are not idealized; rather, they are portrayed as ordinary beings who must endure hardship, loneliness, and the struggle for existence. This approach reflects realism's commitment to depicting life in its most truthful and uncompromising form.



Realism in Uzbek Literature: Social and Artistic Roots (Through the Example of Abdulla Qahhor). In Uzbek literature, realism emerged in the early 20th century under the influence of both classical traditions and modern social transformations. Writers such as Abdulla Qodiriy and Choʻlpon laid the groundwork for a new literary approach that focused on the complexities of everyday life and aimed at social change. During the Soviet era, one of the leading representatives of Uzbek realism was Abdulla Qahhor, who continued this tradition. Qahhor's works often focus on the lives of ordinary people and their inner struggles within a changing socio-political environment. His short stories such as *"Anor"* ("The Pomegranate") and *"Bemor"* ("The Patient") feature characters who embody both the hardships of daily life and the universal search for dignity and meaning. Unlike London's conflict with nature, Qahhor's realism lies in his ability to depict the social realities of Uzbek society—family relations, poverty, moral dilemmas, and psychological depth. He avoided exaggeration and sentimentality, emphasizing truthfulness, sincerity, and a critical perspective on life.

A central feature of realism is the detailed development of character. Realist writers view their heroes as products of both individual psychology and broader social conditions. Jack London's characters often struggle against external forces such as the cruelty of nature or social inequality, shaping their inner strength and endurance. In contrast, Abdulla Qahhor portrays characters whose psychological and moral qualities are revealed through their relationships within the family and society. In both literatures, character creation becomes a mirror of reality. Thus, realism not only reflects life but also interprets it, giving readers a deeper understanding of the human condition in all its complexity.

Psychological Depth and Characterization. One of the most important aspects of realism is the creation of psychologically profound characters. Unlike romantic heroes who are often idealized or symbolic, realistic characters are rooted in social life, reflecting both human strengths and weaknesses. Both Abdulla Qahhor and Jack London pay great attention to their characters' inner worlds, although their approaches reflect their respective cultural and historical contexts.

London's characters are primarily defined by their relationships with external forces—particularly nature and survival. In *"To Build a Fire,"* the hero's psychological portrait is revealed not through introspection but through his actions and decisions in extreme conditions. London presents a man whose arrogance and ignorance before nature's power lead to his downfall. His realism aims to strip away illusions and show human vulnerability when faced with the raw force of the natural world. In *"The Call of the Wild,"* psychological depth extends beyond humans to animals, portrayed as beings with instincts, emotions, and will. London's heroes display courage, fear, endurance, and weakness—qualities that make them realistic and relatable. His ability to convey psychological struggle through action, rather than description, distinguishes his realist style.

Qahhor's approach to character creation, however, focuses more on social environment and interpersonal relationships. In stories such as *"Anor"* and *"O'g'ri"* ("The Thief"), Qahhor creates psychological portraits by exploring his characters' emotions, moral dilemmas, and internal conflicts. His heroes are not extraordinary figures but ordinary individuals whose lives reflect broader truths about Uzbek society. For instance, in *"Bemor,"* the hero's vulnerability is revealed through his daily struggles with illness and poverty, highlighting both resilience and despair. Qahhor often uses irony and subtle criticism to reveal contradictions in human behavior. His characters are shaped not only by personal traits but also by social norms, traditions, and historical circumstances. While London depicts psychological portraiture through survival in the face of external forces, Qahhor focuses on the internal struggles of individuals within society. Both authors succeed in creating multidimensional characters whose motives, weaknesses, and



strengths embody the essence of realism. Thus, psychological portraiture in their works becomes a central element in exploring human nature.

Comparative Study. A comparative analysis of Abdulla Qahhor and Jack London reveals that, while realism is essentially universal, it adapts to specific cultural and historical conditions. Both writers share the goal of portraying life truthfully, but their methods and themes differ according to their environments.

Jack London's realism is deeply tied to the conflict between man and nature. His characters often face extreme situations—frozen wildernesses, life-and-death struggles, or the social hardships of the working class. Through these settings, London highlights human resilience and fragility, emphasizing instinct and survival as key aspects of character. In contrast, Abdulla Qahhor situates his characters within the social and cultural fabric of Uzbek life. Instead of physical survival, his heroes face moral, social, and psychological challenges—poverty, injustice, family conflicts, and personal dilemmas. Qahhor's realism reflects the everyday struggles of ordinary people in a changing society.

London enhances the sense of realism through precise natural detail. He describes the environment with scientific accuracy, using nature to expose the limits of human control and create tension. His style is direct, dramatic, and often tragic, leaving readers with a sense of fate's inevitability. Qahhor, by contrast, uses irony, satire, and subtle psychological analysis. His characters are revealed through dialogue, inner thoughts, and social interactions. Instead of dramatic survival, his stories use realism as a mirror of social reality, depicting the quiet yet profound struggles of everyday life.

Both authors successfully combine universal human themes with national characteristics. While London's works explore global ideas of survival, endurance, and the power of nature, Qahhor's stories reflect Uzbek traditions, values, and social concerns. Yet both show how realism can transcend cultural boundaries by portraying characters whose emotions, fears, and hopes resonate universally. Thus, Qahhor and London represent two distinct yet complementary forms of realism—London's shaped by naturalistic conflict with the external world, and Qahhor's rooted in the social and psychological dimensions of human life.

Historical and Social Contexts. Jack London's realism must be understood in the social and economic context of early 20th-century America—a period of rapid industrialization, capitalist expansion, and the Gold Rush that drove thousands into the harsh landscapes of Alaska and the Yukon. This industrial era produced deep social inequality: on one side, wealthy industrialists; on the other, workers struggling to survive. Having experienced poverty and hardship in his youth, London possessed firsthand knowledge of the common man's struggles.

His short stories reflect these realities. In *"To Build a Fire,"* survival in a hostile environment becomes a metaphor for the broader human struggle against uncontrollable forces—nature or social injustice. In *"Martin Eden,"* London exposes the destructive consequences of capitalism and personal ambition. Critics note that London blends realism with naturalism, portraying characters not as romantic heroes but as beings shaped by environment and instinct. As M.H. Abrams defines realism as "the truthful representation of life" (*A Glossary of Literary Terms*), London's works exemplify this by stripping human experience of illusion and depicting its harsh truth.

Abdulla Qahhor's realism emerged in vastly different conditions. Writing during the Soviet era, Qahhor had to navigate censorship and ideological pressure while depicting the realities of Uzbek society. His stories reflect the complexities of life under socialism, often focusing on ordinary people caught between tradition, poverty, and the demands of a changing society. Unlike London, who depicted physical struggle with nature, Qahhor emphasized moral and psychological struggles shaped by social context.



Stories such as “*Anor*” and “*Bemor*” demonstrate Qahhor’s mastery in portraying the psychological portraits of ordinary people. He used irony and satire to criticize hypocrisy and injustice, while showing deep empathy for his characters. As Uzbek literary scholars note, Qahhor’s realism lies in his ability “to reveal the truth of life through the smallest details of everyday existence” (Rustamova, *The Portrait and Its Artistic Function in Qahhor’s Works*). His works reflect not only individual psychology but also the collective experiences of a society in transition. Both London and Qahhor, despite their differing contexts, exemplify the critical function of realism. London highlights the individual’s confrontation with external forces—nature and capitalist society—while Qahhor emphasizes internal conflicts within the collective environment. Together, they show how realism adapts to historical and cultural circumstances while maintaining its primary aim: depicting life truthfully and without embellishment.

Conclusion. A comparative study of Abdulla Qahhor and Jack London shows that while realism shares a universal foundation, it manifests differently across cultural and historical contexts. Both writers remain faithful to the truthful depiction of life, yet their approaches diverge significantly. London emphasizes the existential struggle between man, nature, and fate, creating characters whose resilience and vulnerability emerge under extreme conditions. His realism reveals the harsh realities of survival and the limits of human control over external forces. Qahhor, on the other hand, focuses on the social, moral, and psychological dimensions of human life. His characters are ordinary people whose inner conflicts and daily struggles reflect Uzbek society itself. Through irony, subtle critique, and deep psychological analysis, Qahhor portrays the contradictions of human behavior and the influence of tradition and social change.

Despite these differences, both authors succeed in creating realistic characters that resonate beyond their immediate cultural contexts. London’s heroes embody universal themes of endurance and confrontation with destiny, while Qahhor’s heroes highlight the dignity and complexity of individuals within society. Together, their works demonstrate the richness of realism as a literary method—capable of addressing both universal human concerns and culturally specific truths. The analysis confirms that realism remains one of the most effective means of revealing the truth of human experience. In the works of Qahhor and London, we see how literature bridges cultural boundaries while preserving national authenticity, emphasizing the continued relevance of realism as a tool for exploring character, society, and the human condition.

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