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SPECIFIC FEATURES OF PROTAGONISTS IN STORIES

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Abstract. *This article explores the complexity of character creation in literary works through a comparative analysis of Jack London's "The Grit of Women" and Abdulla Qahhor's "Horror". The main characters in "Grit of Women" and "Terror" both exhibit the feminine qualities of patience and endurance, as well as an appreciation for every moment in life – reflecting a shared cultural trait between American and Uzbek societies. Both stories end tragically. Passuk sacrifices her life for her husband, symbolizing the loyalty of Native American women, while women of the past like Unsin, who would never go against their husbands' will and endure hardships, reflect a particular aspect of Uzbek culture.*

Keywords: *portrayal, themes, cultural values, realistic short stories, concept.*

INTRODUCTION.

Creating protagonists in a literary work is a very complex process, in which the writer always tries to use various methods during his literary activity. The plot, development of events, and diverse portrayal of characters in American and Uzbek stories are considered to be important factors. In this sense, the literary hero is the main image that defines the ideological and artistic concept of the work. The writer depicts protagonists according to his artistic concept. Indeed, the tradition and evolution of character creation in American and Uzbek prose continues gradually in its own distinctive way. Jack London used a unique artistic idea, clearly and vividly depicting both the external and internal worlds of each character in his "The Grit of Women".

"The Grit of Women" tells the story of Sitka Charley, a traveler of the northern wilderness. As he sits in a tent surrounded by curious, eager men, he recounts one of his most unforgettable journeys through the harsh, snowbound frontiers. Preparing for a grueling expedition, Charley finds himself in need of a companion. Though he had never depended on a woman before, he ended up acquiring a young woman named Passuk. She is quiet, modest, and devoted – portrayed as a obedient wife.

Charley's mission is to deliver sealed letters to whaling ships frozen in among the glaciers near the great Mackenzie River. Naturally, he sets out on the journey with his wife and a tall young man named Jeff. Passuk cooks food and takes care of the dogs. The travelers march through deep snow; they grow weak, go hungry, and continue forward in a state of despair. The tall Jeff cannot endure the hardships of the road. Meanwhile, Passuk constantly looks after her husband with care.

At last, the weary group reaches Saltwater. There, they encounter a stranger – a Native man whose language Charley cannot understand. They speak to this man by Passuk; and ultimately, unexpected twist, the man is revealed to be her long-lost brother.

However, Passuk wants her husband to survive even more than her own brother. When Sitka asked his wife whether they should give food to the Indian, Passuk rejected her husband's suggestion, saying, "The road is still very long, and death awaits us at every step."

That night, weighed down by anguish, Passuk wept until dawn. Sitka had never seen his wife cry before; when he witnessed her silent sorrow and the turmoil etched across her face, he was struck with wonder. It was the first time he truly glimpsed the depth of her inner world.

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METHODOLOGY.

The research methods applied in this article include comparative literary analysis and lingua-poetic analysis. Comparative literary analysis is used to examine the differences and similarities in character portrayal, themes, and cultural values between Jack London's *"The Grit of Women"* and Abdulla Qahhor's *"Horror"*. Through this approach, the study highlights how American and Uzbek literary traditions represent women's roles, emotional depth, and social struggles.

Furthermore, lingua-poetic analysis is employed to explore how specific lexical choices, stylistic devices, and narrative techniques contribute to character development and emotional expression. This method focuses on how language forms (phrases, expressions, epithets) align with the content to enhance the stories' artistic and ideological meaning.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION.

Man is forever locked in a struggle to live. To Sitka Charley, life itself resembled a game – but one in which no one truly triumphs. People labor until they grow old, enduring hardship and pain. Life passes, marked by sorrow and worry. And through it all, man clings to life, loathing the shadow of death.

Sitka Charley and Passuk pressed on, walking side by side and talking quietly, as if the world around them were deserted, emptied of all living things. The piercing cold had turned the river into ice; the snow shimmered like scattered diamonds. Their provisions grew thin. Hunger gnawed at them. In the end, drained of all strength, Passuk collapsed in the snow, her body giving way to exhaustion.

Before her death, Passuk expresses the deepest feelings of her heart and passes away in her husband's arms. The author portrays the woman's genuine loyalty and devotion to her husband by the character of Passuk. Even in the moments when Sitka was performing tasks voluntarily, she would always be by his side. Passuk placed her husband above all other men; she was captivated by Sitka's wisdom and honesty. She saw the man she loved with her whole heart as radiant as the sun. However, Sitka Charley felt no emotions toward his wife; Passuk knew this, yet she still cherished him. Passuk's love for her husband was so powerful that she sacrificed her own brother's life for him. Before her death, she hands a pouch to Sitka Charley. In that pouch, she had eaten half of her allotted food and saved the other half for her husband. "Now Passuk's journey in life is ending, while yours continues," she says as she passes away.

The author suggests that Sitka Charley may continue his life's journey, but emphasizes that he may never meet someone as loyal as Passuk again. In the character of Passuk, the writer has embodied the qualities typical of American women.

Abdulla Qahhor was deemed to be the founder of the Uzbek realistic short stories; moreover, his unique stories are still widely appreciated by everybody. His stories, which portray the harsh realities of life through powerful irony, sometimes appear humorous, sometimes sad, and sometimes tragic.

A. Qahhor's story *"Horror"* belongs to the category of tragic stories. He drew upon folk oral traditions while writing this story. The themes of courage, fortitude, and heroism – are presented with clarity and in an emotional way in the story of *"Horror"*. The author took the events of *"Horror"* from the lives of the people. Most of Abdulla Qahhor's stories begin with an epigraph, the lives of women were extremely difficult in the past. Depicting the suffering and hardship experienced by women was a goal of the writer. The author began the story with a description of nature.

Olimbek Dodkhoh's wives were too afraid of him as they dared not to say anything against his will. Among his wives, the eldest, Nodirmohbegim, was an intelligent and wise woman; she endured her

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husband's beatings and continued to live with him. One day, Dodkhoh and his wives gathered around the *sandal* (a traditional heated table). Nodirmohbegim told a story she had heard in her youth:

*"One day, 3 young men made a bet in the wind – it was said that whoever went to the cemetery and stabbed a knife into Asqarponsot's grave would win a sheep. One of the young men went to the cemetery, but he never came back. When his friends went to look for him, they found him dead beside Asqarponsot's grave. It turned out that when he stabbed the knife, he had pinned his coat along with it. Thinking someone was pulling at his coat, he died from fright."*¹

This incident has a profound effect on the listeners. Everyone gets goosebumps. The protagonist of the story, Unsin, was the eighth wife of Olimbek Dodkhoh. She had only been married for five months and was still a junior wife. Thinking about her own freedom, Unsin is the first to express her heartfelt desire to her husband. She fearlessly shares her opinion about the person who was stabbed in the cemetery: "How a silly and worthless man he was! He sacrificed his life for a sheep?!"²

Unsin's courage and bravery are evident from the fact that she dares to ask Dodxoh to return her freedom. It is stated that if Unsin fulfills the task given by Dodxoh, her freedom will be returned. The author portrays Dodxoh as a very cruel and merciless person, emphasizing that he would not feel pity for the life of his young wife. Dodxoh mocks Unsin saying: "You are the miller's daughter," and burdens his wife with an extremely hard task. Torturing their wives, beating them without mercy, and humiliating them were typical characteristic features of wealthy men like Dodxoh. The story reflects how the honor of women and girls was trampled in the past.

Unsin emerges in the reader's imagination as a brave and fearless woman. She is afraid of nothing; she enters through the cemetery gate and comforts herself by thinking: "The dead have no soul." In her heart, she longs to return to her homeland, Ganjiravon, to the embrace of her parents and friends, and this thought soothes her. Unsin is unafraid of darkness and gloom; even though she forgets to gather firewood, she collects reeds and thistles at hand and starts a fire. Eventually, when the kettle boils, she brews tea and returns home. On her way back, she pays no attention to the various ghosts in her imagination. However, she seems to hear an unfamiliar sound. In this world, a heartless man like Dodxoh sends his monkey to the cemetery to scare Unsin. The animal clings to Unsin's shoulder, tormenting her, and someone strikes the girl with a heavy object, causing her to lose consciousness. When Unsin regains consciousness, she grabs her teapot and quickly walks home. She places the teapot on one side of the brazier, and closes her eyes joyfully, as if a lifelong dream is finally coming true. However, the water given by her co-wife, Nodirmohbegim, cannot heal Unsin. The next day, Unsin passes away. Nodirmohbegim appears in the story as a kind and patient character; she pleads with her husband to forgive the young girl Unsin. However, Dodxoh severely beats Nodirmohbegim. Lingua-poetic analysis of the stories "*Grit of Women*" and "*Horror*" is one of the key aspects of this study:

Table №1.

№	Characteristic features of Passuk	Characteristic features of Unsin
1.	brave	Strong, mighty

¹ A.Qahhor. Dahshat. – Toshkent: Adabiyot uchqunlari, 2019. – B.12.

² .Qahhor. Dahshat. – Toshkent: Adabiyot uchqunlari, 2019. – B.12.

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2.	timid	strong-willed
3.	proud of her man	-
4.	careful	-
5.	patient	patient
6.	devoted	-
7.	loyal	-
8.	obedient	uncomplaining
9.	risky	risking her life for her freedom
10.	-	optimist

Table №2.

№	Characteristic features of Sitka Charley	Characteristic features of Olimbek dodxoh
1.	His heart was cold	merciless
2.	kind	cruel
3.	wise	heartless
4.	true	He tortures his wives
5.	fair	greedy
6.	His heart did not go out to the woman	He does not respect women.

The unity of form and content – in the story “*Horror*,” to depict the torment experienced by the main character, Abdulla Qahhor repeatedly used the phrase “the dead have no soul,” reflecting the protagonist’s state of fear. Jack London, in his story “*Grit of Women*,” conveys Passuk’s distress at not being able to feed her brother with the words “she wept, cooked.” He attempts to express Passuk’s pure love for her husband by phrases like “I grew proud of you, you filled all my heart, you were as the midsummer sun.”

CONCLUSION.

J.London and A.Qahhor had carefully chosen words and word collocations for the characters in their literary works to show the distinctive traits of their protagonists. Readers strive to imagine either positive or negative characters by means of these specific lexemes. Both writers followed the principle of the unity of form and content in lingua-poetics.

The unity of time and place in the story “*Grit of Women*” unfolds in the remote northern region, more precisely in the Klondike Gold Rush valley, in Canada’s Yukon territory during the 1890s. Most literary works created during this period depict the lives of protagonists who embark on journeys in search of adventure. Jack London attempted to use lexical and grammatical elements to indicate this period, such lexemes as “fair trade,” “the snow, deep cold was bitter,” “Sitka Charley is Sivash,” “ice-bound by the great Mackenzie,” and “golden trail,” all of which are appropriately chosen for the time and setting.

In contrast, the story “*Terror*” represents a real-life example of the past in the 20th century. The events of the story begin and end in the Dodkhokh household. In this story, Abdulla Qahhor used expressions like “placing her shroud into the chest,” “formless darkness,” “pitch-black old sycamore,” “co-wives,” and “veil shadow” to depict the harsh life of women in the past – where a girl, married off to a polygamous man, would obediently serve him throughout her life, ultimately sacrificing her own life for her freedom.

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