



## A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SURVIVAL, HOPE, AND THE LOVE OF LIFE ACROSS CULTURES

Kakharova Mohigul Yusufovna

PhD teacher at Bukhara State University

[mohigulkaharova@gmail.com](mailto:mohigulkaharova@gmail.com)

Article history:	Abstract:
<b>Received:</b> 24 <sup>th</sup> February 2025 <b>Accepted:</b> 20 <sup>th</sup> March 2025	<i>The article analyzes thematic and lingua-poetic features of the stories "Love of Life" (Jack London) and "A Life Out of Thousands" (Abdulla Qahhor). Both protagonists in these stories confront the brink of death with unwavering resilience and an enduring love for life; Jack London portrayed a nameless traveler who struggled against the harsh Canadian tundra during the Gold Rush, emphasizing nature as an antagonistic force and survival as a primal instinct. Jack London and Abdulla Qahhor followed the principle of form and content when depicting the inner world of their protagonists.</i>
<b>Keywords:</b> Survival, culture, lexemes, cold condition, nature, main concept.	

### INTRODUCTION.

During the research process, it was determined that the artistic concept of Jack London in his "Love of Life" and Abdulla Qahhor in his "A Life Out of Thousands" are considered to be similar: the main character is deemed to be the traveler who faces difficulties in his life and his strong desire to live allows him to endure the long, arduous journey. The main theme of "Love of Life" is the love for life and the need to struggle for survival. The nature and environment appear as antagonists against the protagonist in the story of "Love of Life". It can be observed that the protagonist, in difficult circumstances, becomes isolated from society and is left alone. In "Love of Life", there are almost no dialogues; the coldness symbolizes the cruelty of nature, while the traveler's struggle to find food, consuming various foods (raw fish, fruits, bones), reflects the fight for survival.

### METHODOLOGY.

*Comparative Literary Analysis* – The core method involves a comparative study of two literary texts across different cultures and time periods. By examining narrative structure, thematic content, and character portrayal in both stories, similarities and contrasts were drawn between the protagonists and their respective environments.

*Psychological Analysis* – The emotional and psychological states of the main characters were interpreted using their actions, thoughts, and narrative cues. This method helped to reveal the inner transformation of each protagonist and their coping mechanisms in extreme conditions.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION.

The name of the protagonist is never mentioned in the story. Set in the late 19th century during the gold rush

in the United States, a traveler embarks on a journey to search for gold in the Canadian tundra with his partner, Bill. They find gold, but the return journey is harsh, and as a result, Bill abandons his friend. In the process of studying the plot of "Love of Life," it is advisable to break it down into five parts:

*In the first part*, when the two companions reach the barren land, they become exhausted, stoop down, and keep their eyes fixed on the ground. The sun shines through a misty veil on the horizon. When they reach the endless desert, Bill climbs over a hill and abandons his friend. The traveler counts the matchsticks in his hand. The traveler's habit of constantly counting the matchsticks in his pocket to keep track of time and to think about survival methods indicates changes in his mental state.

*In the second part*, it becomes clear that struggling to find food is more important for the protagonist than his inner emotions. The traveler drags himself along, passing through marshes and putting fruits in his mouth. By the time it reaches 9 o'clock, feeling exhausted and weak, he injures his foot on a sharp stone. The agony of hunger dries up his remaining strength, and the pain in his stomach tortures him. He strives to throw stones at some partridges in an attempt to catch them but fails. He dreams of reaching the Little Trees area in the north, though he no longer knows where he's heading. After his foot starts bleeding, he ties it with the blanket in his hand.

*In the third part*, the protagonist sees a bear and, seeing it, a savage cry comes out of his mouth. This situation expresses the protagonist's struggle to survive. He is afraid of becoming prey to wild animals. Along his path, he puts bones in his mouth and it seems as if he is tasting the flavor of meat.



The climax of *"Love of Life"* occurs in the *fourth part*, where autumn arrives, and snow and rainy days begin. The protagonist is described as heading northeast, moving farther away from the Dize River and arriving at the Copper Mine River Valley. The sea beside him was the Arctic Ocean. The traveler spots a hungry wolf on his path. He is afraid of becoming prey to this creature and realizes that his strength has almost dried up to the point where he can't fight. The traveler fights with the wolf and manages to defeat it. When he sees his reflection in the river, he cannot recognize himself. This section shows the transformation of the impatient main character into someone who has become a patient and tolerable person.

*In the fifth part*, the members of a scientific expedition called "Bedford" observe a strange creature from a distance. The scientists suspect that this creature might be a human. The traveler neither moves forward nor backward. After three weeks, he wakes up and, regaining his consciousness, tells the "Bedford" crew about the difficult adventures he has endured. The traveler rejoices at the abundance of food on the ship, constantly asking the captain how much food reserve they have. The traveler becomes overweight from eating too much. He adopts the habit of sitting on deck in the morning, begging sailors for food like a beggar. The scientists consider him to be a mad person, not realizing that the traveler is simply frightened to suffer from famine again.

Abdulla Qahhor's story *"A Life Out of Thousands"* was written in 1956, and it tells the life of a sick woman. The narrator, Mirahimov, Khodja Aka, and the storyteller themselves were patients at the hospital. However, the name of the narrator is never mentioned by the author. The patients hear about a sick woman named Mastura Aliyeva. Mastura has been bedridden for eight months, gravely ill. Mirahimov suggests to his partners that they should visit the sick woman. They find out that Mastura has been suffering from a disease called "Sob" for ten years, she cannot swallow anything, and doctors have been feeding her through a tube. The friends enter her room to see her. Mastura's husband, Akramjon, is described as a dark-complexioned man with large, burning eyes. Akramjon is portrayed as a devoted husband in the story. After taking care of his wife for ten years and continuing to live with her in the hospital, Akramjon's devotion is something that not every man can do. The writer describes Mastura's portrait in the hospital as follows:

*If the hand or foot of a deceased person lying still were to move unintentionally for some reason, what kind of condition would a person be in? The one who sees the eyes of Mastura, still gleaming beneath the shroud of death, would fall into this very state." "When Mastura saw, that people had come to see her, it seemed as though the veil of death had been lifted from her face."*<sup>1</sup>

Mastura lives with hope and faith in life. She was a patient and enduring woman who could face death without flinching. She even walks into the operating room on her own. The narrator, who speaks in the first person ("I"), sees Mastura walking into the operating room and he wants to encourage her. However, for some reason, Mastura takes no heed of him, and the author leaves the story unresolved at this point. Why did Mastura not pay attention to the person who came to see her? The author provides the answer in the final resolution of the story. Of course, this situation was related to Mastura's belief in life; if she had looked at the person who came to comfort her, perhaps the woman's hope to live would have been completely extinguished.

"Three years later, the narrator of this story encounters Akramjon at the exit of the center of the Guliston district during the cotton festival season. Abdulla Qahhor describes Mastura's portrait after her recovery as follows: *"A medium-height, graceful woman, her body radiating the energy and vitality of youth, stood by the roadside eating an apple on horseback, while Akramjon was tying his horse's reins again."*<sup>2</sup>

Mastura's complete recovery and transformation astonished the narrator-character. The author compares the woman to a flying falcon: *"I stood at a distance, watching Mastura and Akramjon, who seemed to be flying like a falcon along the desert."*<sup>3</sup>

However, the story takes an unexpected turn when the death of another character occurs. When the narrator-character returns to the city to tell Khoji aka that Mastura has recovered, he finds that Khoji aka has passed away.

The following conclusions can be drawn by making a comparative interpretation of the linguistic and poetic features of the stories *"Love of Life"* and *"A Life Out of Thousands"*:

*I. Unity of Time and Space* – The events in the story *"Love of Life"* happen at the end of the 19th century, during the flourishing era of gold prospecting in the United States, the life of travelers heading to the

<sup>1</sup> A.Qahhor. Anor. Toshkent: Ziyonashr, 2023. – B.114.

<sup>2</sup> A.Qahhor. Anor. Toshkent: Ziyonashr, 2023. – B.118.

<sup>3</sup> A.Qahhor. Anor. Toshkent: Ziyonashr, 2023. – B.119.



Canadian tundra to search for gold. Jack London's use of lexemes such as "rough-strewn rock," "icy cold," "Arctic circle," "Canadian Barrens," "Hudson Bay," and "flurries of snow" helps to imagine the Canadian tundra environment for a reader. After the two friends complete their gold prospecting operation, the hardships they endure during their return in the harsh cold conditions demonstrate that the story is set in the period when the search for natural resources in the United States was flourishing in the 19th century.

Abdulla Qahhor's story "*A Life Out of Thousands*" begins in a hospital and ends in the center of the Guliston district. The author's use of words related to the hospital such as "ward," "operating room," "blue gown," "medicine," "doctor," and "nurse" helps shape the reader's imagination about the hospital environment.

*II. Unity of Form and Content* – Jack London's choice to name the theme of his story "*Love of Life*" suggests

that, regardless of the circumstances, a person must love, cherish and value every moment of life.

The lexical units used in the text of "*Love of Life*" are appropriately chosen to coincide with the theme. Specifically, the lexemes that express changes in the protagonist's emotional world include the following:

At the beginning of the story, words and phrases reflecting the traveler's state of mind such as "without enthusiasm," "faint and dizzy," "a man with a desperation," "sheer weariness and weakness," "a dead man," "weary," "hungry," "he dreamt of feasts and banquets," "exhausted," "desperate courage," and "the last particle of endeavor" are used.

In the final part of the story, the protagonist transforms into a heavy, calm, and patient person capable of defending himself even in difficult situations, as reflected by lexemes such as "calm," "collected," "he had no sensation of pain," and "the thought of food was not pleasant to him."

The lexemes that show characteristic features of protagonists:

Nº	Characteristic features of a traveler	Characteristic features of Mastura
1.	Portrait "He had a calm and collected horrible face. He was blind, unconscious. He was squirmed along the ground like some monstrous worm..." <sup>4</sup>	Portrait ""Right before our eyes lay not a sick person, but a dead one – truly dead – with yellowish skin and bones, eyes sunken deep into the skull and wide open..." [113]
2.	patient	tolerant
3.	optimist	optimist
4.	greedy	She is not afraid of death.
5.	monstrous worm, blind, unconscious sane.	full of energy and enthusiasm

## CONCLUSION.

Abdulla Qahhor utilized specific lexical choices to express the protagonist Mastura's feelings of hope and trust in life in his short story "*A Life Out of Thousands*". Examples include: "*I have never awaited death,*" "*eyes full of life,*" "*facing with a smile on bloodless lips,*" and "*looking death straight in the face.*" Phrases such as "*a person gives strength to another,*" "*a faithful husband,*" "*sacrificing one's life,*" "*wishing for recovery,*" and "*hoping for a long life*" reflect Uzbek nation's human values aligning with the content of the story. Abdulla Qahhor calls the protagonist Mastura to portray her as a patient and resilient person who suffers from a serious disease. The use of expressions such as "*resilient to surgery,*" "*a soul like iron,*" and "*soaring like a falcon*" emphasizes the appropriateness of these descriptors for a sick woman undergoing treatment in a hospital.

Abdulla Qahhor hints that patients in every hospital may harbor feelings similar to those of Mastura. The themes in "*Love of Life*" and "*A Life Out of Thousands*" are thoroughly chosen to match the literary concept of the stories, demonstrating the harmony between content and form.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://americanliterature.com/author/jack-london/short-story/love-of-life/>



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