



Social Attitude Through Image And Character In The Prose Of J. London And U. Hoshimov

Isakova Barchinoy Ne'matovna

English language teacher at the Academic Lyceum of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Fergana, Independent researcher at Fergana State University, Uzbekistan

ABSTRACT

This article examines how Jack London and Utkir Hoshimov express their attitudes toward society through the images and characters they create in their prose. Drawing on London's *Martin Eden* and Hoshimov's *Ikki eshik orasi* (Between Two Doors), the study applies comparative-typological and descriptive-analytical methods to identify how each writer encodes social criticism, belonging, and alienation in character behavior. The findings show that London's characters embody an individualist, often confrontational stance toward a stratified, competitive society, while Hoshimov's characters express attitude toward society through collective belonging, mutual responsibility, and quiet endurance within a close-knit community. Both authors use character and image not merely to entertain but as vehicles of implicit social commentary, though the moral direction of that commentary differs sharply between the two literary traditions. The results are of value for comparative literature studies and for teaching world literature in higher education.

KEYWORDS: Society; character; image; social attitude; individualism; collectivism; social criticism; comparative literature.

INTRODUCTION

Literature has always served as a mirror of the society that produced it, and the writer's attitude toward that society is rarely stated outright — it is embedded in the images and characters through which the narrative unfolds. Two writers separated by continent, language, and century — the American Jack London and the Uzbek Utkir Hoshimov — offer a striking case for comparison precisely because their social environments were so different, yet both used the resources of prose fiction to render a coherent judgment on the society around them through character rather than direct statement.

The relevance of this study lies in the fact that comparative scholarship has rarely placed American naturalist prose and Uzbek lyrical-psychological prose side by side on the specific axis of social attitude. Doing so reveals two contrasting strategies by which prose fiction can carry ideological weight: one built on the isolated, self-made individual pitted against a stratified society, the other built on a communal self embedded within networks of mutual obligation.

The aim of this article is to compare how J. London and Hoshimov express their attitude toward society through the construction of image and character. The objectives are: (1) to identify the markers of social attitude in the protagonists of *Martin Eden* and *Ikki eshik orasi*; (2) to examine how secondary characters and collective images (family, neighbourhood, class) refract each



author's social stance; (3) to determine the artistic devices through which this attitude is conveyed rather than declared; and (4) to draw general conclusions about individualist versus collectivist models of social commentary in world prose.

The object of the research is the prose of Jack London and Utkir Hoshimov, primarily *Martin Eden* and *Ikki eshik orasi*. The subject of the research is the artistic means — character construction, imagery, and narrative voice — through which social attitude is expressed in these texts.

Methodology

The study employs the comparative-typological method to identify structural similarities and differences between two literatures that share no direct genetic influence. This method is well suited to isolating recurring narrative strategies — such as the confrontation between an individual and a social class, or the embedding of a character within a communal structure — regardless of the national tradition in which they arise.

A descriptive-analytical method, based on close reading of key episodes, was used to trace how social attitude is encoded in specific scenes: the dinner-table scenes and library episodes in *Martin Eden*, and the mahalla and family scenes in *Ikki eshik orasi*. A biographical method supplements this analysis, since both works carry autobiographical weight — London's own working-class origins and Hoshimov's wartime childhood directly inform the social perspective of their protagonists [3; 4].

The source base of the study consists of the primary texts of *Martin Eden* and *Ikki eshik orasi*, together with critical and biographical studies of both authors and works on comparative literary theory. Findings were organised by thematic category — class, community, alienation, and symbolic imagery — and the two authors were compared within each category before general conclusions were drawn.

Results

1. The Individual Against the Class Structure

In *Martin Eden*, London constructs his protagonist as a working-class outsider whose attitude toward society is expressed through relentless upward struggle and eventual disillusionment. Martin's attempt to enter the Morse family's world exposes the artificiality and shallowness he finds there; his social criticism is not spoken as authorial commentary but performed through his growing discomfort at their dinner table and his later contempt for the very success he once desired [1, 44]. London's own working-class background gave this critique its documentary edge [3, 21].

Hoshimov, by contrast, situates his child-narrator not in opposition to a class above him but inside a community of shared hardship. The boy's attitude toward society is expressed not through confrontation but through observation and gradually deepening loyalty — to his mother, to the neighbours who share bread during wartime scarcity, to the mahalla as an extended family [2, 12]. Where London's protagonist rises out of his class, Hoshimov's protagonist grows more deeply rooted within his.

2. Alienation versus Belonging



Alienation is the dominant emotional register through which London expresses social critique. Even after Martin achieves literary success, he remains estranged from both the working class he left and the bourgeois class he infiltrated, a condition London renders through Martin's silence at gatherings and his retreat into solitary reflection [1, 66]. This alienation ultimately becomes fatal, and the sea — the space of his origin — becomes the site of his final rejection of society altogether [1, 598].

Hoshimov's characters express the opposite trajectory: belonging deepens rather than dissolves. The mother figure, the neighbours, and the boy himself are bound by mutual responsibility; even loss and hardship are absorbed communally rather than borne alone [2, 24]. Social attitude here is expressed as an affirmation of interdependence, not as rejection of it.

3. Symbolic Images as Vehicles of Social Commentary

Both writers rely on recurring images to carry social meaning without direct statement. In London, the library and the sea function as symbolic poles — the library representing the intellectual capital that class society withholds from the poor, the sea representing an indifferent natural order that ultimately outlasts social ambition [1, 5]. In Hoshimov, the door — foregrounded in the very title of the work — becomes an image of threshold and transition: between childhood and adulthood, but also between the private world of the family and the public world of the mahalla and the nation at war [2, 3]. The image of shared bread and the family hearth further encode a social ethic of distribution and care that stands in implicit contrast to the competitive individualism dramatized in London's prose.

4. Secondary Characters as Social Types

London populates Martin Eden with secondary characters who function as social types: Ruth Morse as the sheltered product of bourgeois respectability, Mr. Morse as the guardian of class boundaries. These figures give Martin's isolation its social specificity — his conflict is not with individuals as such but with the class positions they occupy [1, 44]. Hoshimov's secondary characters — neighbours, relatives, schoolteachers — are rarely drawn as antagonists; even flawed or difficult figures are absorbed into the fabric of communal life rather than opposed to the protagonist, reflecting a fundamentally different, non-adversarial model of social relations.

Discussion

The results indicate that London and Hoshimov encode two structurally opposite models of social attitude through character and image. London's naturalistic prose expresses society as a stratified, often hostile structure that the individual must either conquer or be destroyed by; social commentary is carried through the protagonist's alienation and, ultimately, his self-destruction. This aligns with London's broader body of work and his documented socialist sympathies, which surface even more explicitly in texts such as *The People of the Abyss* and *The Iron Heel*, though *Martin Eden* remains his most character-driven treatment of the theme [3, 3].

Hoshimov's prose, formed within a different historical and cultural context — wartime and postwar Uzbek society — expresses social attitude through the opposite pole: not the isolated individual against society, but the individual constituted by society. Critics of Hoshimov's work

have consistently emphasised his ability to render the ethics of the mahalla and the family with psychological precision and warmth, treating collective belonging not as a constraint on the individual but as the very source of his moral formation [4, 82].

This contrast should not be read as evidence that one author is more socially critical than the other. London's criticism is explicit and confrontational, targeting the visible injustice of class division; Hoshimov's is quieter and affirmative, implicitly criticising any social order — including the hardships of war — that threatens the bonds of community, precisely by showing how much is gained when those bonds hold. Both, in other words, use character and image as instruments of an ethical argument about what society should be, even though one argument is voiced through rupture and the other through cohesion.

The comparison also illuminates a broader typological distinction in world prose between individualist and collectivist models of social commentary — a distinction of continuing relevance to comparative literature, since it allows scholars to classify works from otherwise unrelated traditions according to the structural position their protagonists occupy relative to the surrounding society [6, 34].

Conclusion

The study leads to the following conclusions. First, Jack London expresses attitude toward society chiefly through the alienation and eventual self-destruction of an individualist protagonist who cannot reconcile himself with a stratified class structure. Second, Utkir Hoshimov expresses attitude toward society through a protagonist whose identity is formed by, and remains loyal to, a communal structure of mutual care. Third, both authors rely on symbolic imagery — the library and the sea in London, the door and the shared hearth in Hoshimov — to carry this social meaning without resorting to direct authorial statement. Fourth, secondary characters function in London's prose as representatives of opposing class positions, whereas in Hoshimov's prose they function as extensions of a shared communal ethic.

Taken together, these findings show that the artistic expression of social attitude through image and character is not confined to any single ideological form: it can be built on confrontation as readily as on belonging. The comparison of London and Hoshimov therefore offers a productive model for further comparative study of how world literatures encode social value through the architecture of character, and it may serve as a practical resource for courses in comparative and world literature.

References

1. London J. *Martin Eden*. — New York: Macmillan, 1909.
2. Hoshimov O'. *Ikki eshik orasi [Between Two Doors]*. — Tashkent: G'afur G'ulom Publishing House, 1986.
3. Labor E. *Jack London: An American Life*. — New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2013.
4. Rasulov A. *Ardoqli adib: O'tkir Hoshimov hayoti va ijodiga chizgilar [A Cherished Writer: Sketches of O'tkir Hoshimov's Life and Work]*. — Tashkent: Sharq, 2001.
5. Karimov H. *O'tkir Hoshimov*. — Tashkent: Yozuvchi, 2002.
6. Xolbekov M., Vali E. *Qiyosiy adabiyotshunoslik: Yurtimizda jahon adabiyoti ta'limi mazmuni bir nazar [Comparative Literary Studies]*. — Samarqand: SamSIFL Press, 2020.