

RESEARCH ARTICLE

A Comparative Study Of Imagological Issues In The Works Of A.P. Chekhov And A. Qahhor

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Abstract

This article presents a comparative study of imagological issues in the works of A.P. Chekhov and Abdulla Qahhor. Imagology, as a branch of comparative literature, focuses on the representation of national, cultural, and social images in literary texts. The works of Chekhov and Qahhor, though belonging to different literary traditions—Russian and Uzbek—demonstrate striking similarities in their depiction of social types, national character, and everyday life. At the same time, each author reflects the specific historical and cultural realities of his society. This study analyzes how both writers construct images of the individual, society, and “the Other,” and how these images function within their artistic systems. The article argues that Chekhov and Qahhor employ realistic narrative techniques, psychological depth, and subtle irony to create enduring cultural images that transcend national boundaries while preserving distinct cultural identities.

KEY WORDS

Imagology, comparative literature, Chekhov, Abdulla Qahhor, national image, realism, literary representation.

INTRODUCTION

Comparative literature increasingly emphasizes the study of cultural images and representations across national traditions. Imagology, a discipline within comparative literary studies, investigates how literary texts construct and transmit images of nations, cultures, and social groups. Rather than examining historical facts, imagology focuses on textual representations and the ways in which literature shapes perceptions of identity and otherness.

Anton Pavlovich Chekhov (1860–1904), a major Russian realist writer, and Abdulla Qahhor (1907–1968), a prominent Uzbek prose writer, belong to different literary and cultural traditions. However, both authors are known for their acute psychological insight, realistic depiction of everyday life, and critical portrayal of social problems. Their short stories, in

particular, reveal complex images of the individual within society.

This article aims to conduct a comparative analysis of imagological aspects in Chekhov’s and Qahhor’s works. It will explore how each author constructs images of national character, social types, and moral values, and how these representations reflect broader cultural and historical contexts.

Theoretical Framework: Imagology and Literary Representation

Imagology emerged in the 20th century as part of comparative literature studies. It examines how literature constructs images of foreign nations (hetero-images) and self-images

(auto-images). These images are not objective reflections of reality but culturally conditioned representations shaped by ideology, historical context, and artistic intention.

Key concepts in imagology include:

- Auto-image: the image of one's own nation or culture.
- Hetero-image: the image of another nation or culture.
- Stereotype: a simplified or conventional representation.
- National character: a literary construction reflecting perceived collective traits.

In the works of Chekhov and Qahhor, imagological elements appear primarily through depictions of everyday life, social relationships, and moral conflicts. Both writers focus less on direct national confrontation and more on internal social structures and psychological portraits, yet their texts implicitly construct images of Russian and Uzbek societies.

The Image of Society in Chekhov's Works

Chekhov's prose is characterized by subtle realism, psychological depth, and understated irony. His stories often depict provincial Russia, small-town officials, doctors, teachers, landowners, and peasants. Through these characters, Chekhov constructs a complex image of Russian society at the end of the 19th century.

1. The Provincial World

In stories such as *The Man in a Case*, *Ward No. 6*, and *Ionich*, Chekhov portrays a stagnant provincial environment marked by spiritual emptiness, routine, and moral indifference. The image of Russia that emerges is not heroic or romantic but deeply human and flawed.

This imagological representation functions as a form of social critique. Chekhov's Russia is a space of unrealized potential, where individuals struggle with conformity and isolation. The "little man" becomes a central figure, symbolizing both vulnerability and moral complexity.

2. The Individual and Psychological Image

Chekhov avoids overt moral judgment. Instead, he creates multidimensional psychological portraits. Characters such as Belikov (*The Man in a Case*) represent fear and conservatism, while others embody passivity or quiet suffering.

Through these images, Chekhov constructs an auto-image of

Russian society characterized by introspection, intellectual tension, and moral ambiguity. His imagology is internal rather than external: it focuses on self-examination rather than opposition to foreign cultures.

The Image of Society in Qahhor's Works

Abdulla Qahhor is one of the leading figures of 20th-century Uzbek prose. His stories reflect the social transformations of Uzbek society during the Soviet period. Like Chekhov, Qahhor focuses on everyday life and ordinary people.

1. Depiction of Social Change

In stories such as *The Thief*, *Pomegranate*, and *The Patient*, Qahhor portrays the moral and social conflicts arising from modernization and ideological transformation. His characters often face ethical dilemmas shaped by poverty, bureaucracy, or traditional norms.

The image of Uzbek society in Qahhor's works is dynamic and transitional. Unlike Chekhov's depiction of stagnation, Qahhor's texts frequently emphasize movement, reform, and social struggle.

2. National Character and Humor

Qahhor uses satire and humor to depict social shortcomings. His characters often represent recognizable social types: the cunning opportunist, the naïve villager, the self-important official.

Through these portrayals, Qahhor constructs an auto-image of Uzbek society that combines warmth, resilience, and moral sensitivity with critical self-awareness. His imagology is closely connected with national identity and cultural values such as hospitality, dignity, and communal solidarity.

Comparative Analysis: Similarities and Differences

1. Realism and Psychological Depth

Both Chekhov and Qahhor employ realism as their primary artistic method. They focus on everyday situations and avoid exaggerated heroism. Their characters are ordinary people whose inner lives reveal broader social truths.

Psychological analysis plays a crucial role in both authors' imagology. Rather than presenting abstract national symbols, they depict individuals whose experiences reflect collective realities.

2. Social Criticism

Chekhov's criticism is subtle and often melancholic, emphasizing inertia and existential dissatisfaction. Qahhor's criticism, while also nuanced, is more directly connected with social reform and moral instruction.

This difference reflects historical context: Chekhov wrote during the late imperial Russian period, marked by social stagnation, whereas Qahhor wrote during a time of ideological transformation in Central Asia.

3. Construction of National Image

Chekhov's image of Russia emphasizes intellectual introspection, emotional restraint, and moral complexity. Qahhor's image of Uzbekistan highlights social solidarity, humor, and resilience amid change.

Despite these differences, both writers avoid simplistic stereotypes. Their national images are multifaceted and humanized.

The Image of "the Other"

Although neither Chekhov nor Qahhor centers their works on intercultural confrontation, the concept of "the Other" appears implicitly.

In Chekhov, "the Other" may be represented by social outsiders—madmen, marginalized individuals, or those who challenge norms. In Qahhor, "the Other" often appears as a moral deviation: corruption, hypocrisy, or ignorance.

Thus, in both authors, otherness is internal rather than external. It represents moral or psychological difference within the same cultural space.

Imagological Significance and Literary Legacy

The imagological value of Chekhov's and Qahhor's works lies in their ability to create enduring cultural images. Their stories transcend national boundaries while remaining deeply rooted in specific historical contexts.

Chekhov's influence extends worldwide, shaping modern short fiction. Qahhor's contribution to Uzbek literature is similarly foundational, establishing psychological realism and social satire as key elements of national prose.

From an imagological perspective, both authors demonstrate that national identity in literature is constructed through everyday detail, character psychology, and narrative tone rather than explicit ideological statements.

CONCLUSION

The comparative study of imagological issues in the works of A.P. Chekhov and Abdulla Qahhor reveals both shared artistic principles and distinct cultural perspectives. Both writers employ realism, psychological depth, and subtle irony to construct complex images of society and national character.

Chekhov's works reflect a contemplative, introspective image of late 19th-century Russia, marked by spiritual stagnation and moral ambiguity. Qahhor's prose portrays a transforming Uzbek society, emphasizing social responsibility and ethical awareness.

Despite differences in historical context and cultural background, both authors contribute to the formation of national self-images through nuanced and humanistic representation. Their works demonstrate that imagology is not limited to depictions of foreign cultures but also encompasses internal reflection and cultural self-definition.

In conclusion, Chekhov and Qahhor, each within his literary tradition, create powerful imagological models that continue to shape cultural perception and literary discourse.

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