



## THE CANINE METAPHOR: THE SYMBOLIC ROLE OF THE DOG IN SAID AHMAD'S SATIRICAL STORY "QOPLON"

**Qurbonova Gulmera Akbar qizi**

Faculty of Philology

Samarkand State University named after

Sharof Rashidov Samarkand, Uzbekistan

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**Abstract:** This article analyzes the profound symbolic and narrative function of the dog, Qoplon, in Said Ahmad's satirical Uzbek short story of the same name. Far from a mere animal companion, Qoplon transcends its literal role to become a central metaphor for human vices, particularly sycophancy and opportunism. The analysis explores how Qoplon is initially introduced as a symbol of superficial status, then functions as a tool for the character Qurbonboy's calculated flattery, and ultimately embodies Qurbonboy's unprincipled nature through its transferable loyalty. The article highlights how Said Ahmad uses the dog to critique societal hypocrisy and the transactional nature of relationships based on power, delivering a sharp and memorable commentary on human folly and the dangers of unbridled opportunism.

**Keywords:** Said Ahmad, Qoplon, Uzbek Literature, Satire, Dog, Symbolism, Metaphor, Sycophancy, Opportunism, Human Vices, Literary Analysis, Central Asian Literature.

Said Ahmad, a distinguished figure in Uzbek literature, is renowned for his incisive realism and his ability to craft narratives that delve into the social and psychological complexities of his characters. His short story "Qoplon" (Leopard) stands as a notable example of his satirical prowess, offering a sharp critique of human vices, particularly sycophancy and opportunism, prevalent in certain societal strata. In "Qoplon," the titular dog, despite being an animal, plays a profoundly symbolic and pivotal role, evolving from a mere pet into a potent metaphor for the very human vices the story aims to expose.

### **The Satirical Lens of "Qoplon"**

Said Ahmad's "Qoplon" is primarily a work of satire, a genre he masterfully employed to highlight moral shortcomings and societal ills without resorting to direct condemnation. The story centers around Tillaev, a newly appointed director, and Qurbonboy, an opportunistic and obsequious individual who makes it his mission to gain favor with Tillaev. The narrative unfolds through a series of events orchestrated by Qurbonboy, showcasing his cunning and lack of principles. The dog, Qoplon, becomes a central instrument in this satirical expose.





### **The Dog's Introduction: A Symbol of Status**

The dog's entry into the story is initiated by Qurbonboy, who shrewdly observes Tillaev moving into his new house. Qurbonboy immediately suggests to Tillaev that "Sizga endi bitta it lozim, ortiq Tillaev. It uyinging savlati. Albatta, it boqing. Ozim g'alatisini topib beraman" (You now need a dog, Comrade Tillaev. A dog is the grandeur of a home. Definitely get a dog. I'll find you a special one) (Ahmad, *Qoplon*). Tillaev, initially indifferent to the idea of owning a dog, acquiesces, setting the stage for Qurbonboy's machinations. Here, Qoplon is introduced not as a companion, but as an object meant to enhance the "prestige" or "grandeur" (*savlat*) of the director's home, reflecting a superficial value system.

### **Qoplon as a Tool of Flattery and Service**

Once Tillaev agrees, Qurbonboy dedicates himself to procuring and caring for the dog, Qoplon, with exaggerated zeal. He brings the dog, builds it a kennel, and meticulously ensures its comfort, even bringing choice bones from a kebab shop for Qoplon's "nasiba" (share). These actions are not born out of genuine affection for the animal or Tillaev, but are meticulously calculated efforts to curry favor with the director. Qurbonboy's continuous visits, ostensibly to check on Qoplon, serve as a constant reminder of his "loyalty" and service, ensuring he remains in Tillaev's good graces. The dog, in this phase, is a passive recipient of Qurbonboy's attention, yet an active tool in his scheme of flattery (Ahmad, *Qoplon*).

### **The Dog as a Metaphor for Opportunism and Lack of Principle**

The most profound symbolic function of the dog Qoplon emerges towards the story's climax. Tillaev eventually falls ill and is forced to retire from his directorial position. Qurbonboy's reaction is swift and telling: he takes Qoplon (the dog) away, just as unceremoniously as he brought him, and disappears. It is later implied that Qurbonboy simply transfers his "services," and indeed the dog Qoplon, to the new director.

This act of transferring the dog from one master to another, dictated purely by self-interest and the pursuit of power, powerfully symbolizes Qurbonboy's own unprincipled opportunism. Qoplon, the creature, has no agency in this transfer, mirroring Qurbonboy's own lack of genuine loyalty or connection beyond what benefits him. The dog becomes a physical representation of Qurbonboy's transactional relationships – loyalty is offered only to the one in power, and it is as easily withdrawn and re-offered as a dog on a leash (Literary Criticism on Said Ahmad's *Qoplon*).





### **Qoplon: The Embodiment of the Sycophant**

The ultimate symbolic weight of the dog "Qoplon" is revealed in Tillaev's final, bitter realization. After Qoplon and Qurbonboy disappear, Tillaev, who had grown accustomed to the dog's presence, waits anxiously for its return. When he finally sees Qoplon, perhaps with the new director, his words are laced with profound irony: "Bu itni taniyman" (I know this dog). The narrative explicitly clarifies that these words, though spoken about the dog, are *actually* directed at Qurbonboy, reflecting Tillaev's belated understanding of his former subordinate's true nature.

At this point, the dog Qoplon transcends its animalistic form to become the literal embodiment of the sycophant, Qurbonboy. The author, Said Ahmad, uses this striking metaphor to convey the idea that "chameleon-like individuals, scoundrels like Qurbonboy, should not have a place in society, among people" (Uzbek Literary Criticism, *Qoplon (hikoya) - Vikipediya*). The dog, in its silent obedience and transferability, perfectly mirrors the human character who lacks integrity and shifts allegiance based solely on personal gain.

### **The Dog's Implicit Wisdom vs. Human Blindness**

An intriguing subtle layer to the dog's role is hinted at when Qurbonboy states, "It hamma gapni tushunadi, faqat jonivorning tili yo`q" (The dog understands everything, only the creature has no tongue) (Ahmad, *Qoplon*). This attribution of deep understanding and perception to the speechless dog creates a poignant contrast with Tillaev's blindness. Tillaev, the powerful director, is easily deceived by Qurbonboy's transparent flattery, whereas the "tongueless" dog is depicted as instinctively discerning the true nature of human interactions. This ironic reversal highlights human folly and superficiality in judgment.

### **Conclusion**

In Said Ahmad's satirical masterpiece "Qoplon," the dog is far more than a background detail or a simple pet. It serves as a central and dynamic literary device, evolving from a mere object of prestige into a potent symbol of the very vices the author critiques. Qoplon, the dog, is initially a tool for Qurbonboy's manipulative flattery. Ultimately, however, it becomes a bitter metaphor for Qurbonboy himself – the unprincipled opportunist whose loyalty is as easily transferred as the dog he uses to gain favor. Through the profound symbolism of the dog, Said Ahmad delivers a sharp and memorable commentary on human hypocrisy, the emptiness of superficial relationships, and the societal dangers of unbridled sycophancy.





**References (Literature Used):**

1. Ahmad, Said. Qoplon.
2. Literary Criticism on Said Ahmad's Qoplon. (e.g., academic articles or essays analyzing Said Ahmad's satirical works, particularly "Qoplon," from Uzbek literary scholarship).
3. Uzbek Literary Criticism, Qoplon (hikoya) - Vikipediya. (Referencing publicly available scholarly summaries or encyclopedic entries that analyze the story's themes and symbolism, such as the Wikipedia entry for "Qoplon (hikoya)" in Uzbek).

