



## THE PORTRAYAL OF SOCIAL REALISM IN SELECT SHORT STORIES OF SULAIMAN LAYEQ: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF *THE DAWN OVER ABASIN*

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**ABSTRACT:** This study critically analyzes the contemporary Pashto literary work *The Dawn Over Abasin* (1983) by Sulaiman Layeq through the lens of Social Realism as a literary theory. The short story collection substantially employs social realist elements to portray fundamental aspects of Afghan society, particularly the systemic oppression of marginalized groups by dominant social forces in both rural and urban contexts. This qualitative research is based on relevant and authoritative Pashto books, scholarly articles, and credible online sources. A thematic analysis approach was adopted to ensure a comprehensive examination of social realist themes within the text. The findings indicate that Layeq demonstrates profound insight into Afghan society and systematically articulates social realism through compelling and illustrative narrative representations that both directly and indirectly reinforce the theoretical framework. The author consistently advocates for the poor, the exploited, and the oppressed, while explicitly condemning oppressive structures within society. For instance, in the short story “The Real Hero,” Layeq vividly depicts prevailing poverty and amplifies the voices of marginalized social strata.

**KEYWORDS:** Social Realism, Sulaiman Layeq, Short Stories, Poverty, Oppression, Exploitation.

## LA REPRESENTACIÓN DEL REALISMO SOCIAL EN RELATOS SELECCIONADOS DE SULAIMAN LAYEQ: UN ANÁLISIS CRÍTICO DE *EL AMANECER SOBRE EL ABASIN*

**RESUMEN:** Este estudio analiza críticamente la obra literaria contemporánea en lengua pastún *The Dawn Over Abasin* (1983) de Sulaiman Layeq a la luz del Realismo Social como teoría literaria. Esta colección de cuentos emplea de manera sustancial los elementos del realismo

social para representar aspectos fundamentales de la sociedad afgana, especialmente la opresión sistemática de los grupos marginados por parte de fuerzas sociales dominantes tanto en contextos rurales como urbanos. Esta investigación cualitativa se fundamenta en libros relevantes y autorizados en pastún, artículos académicos y fuentes digitales confiables. Se adoptó el enfoque de análisis temático con el fin de garantizar un examen exhaustivo de los temas del realismo social presentes en el texto. Los resultados indican que Layeq demuestra un profundo conocimiento de la sociedad afgana y articula de manera sistemática el realismo social a través de representaciones narrativas convincentes e ilustrativas que refuerzan directa e indirectamente el marco teórico. El autor defiende constantemente a los pobres, los explotados y los oprimidos, al tiempo que condena explícitamente las estructuras opresivas de la sociedad. Por ejemplo, en el cuento «El verdadero héroe», Layeq retrata vívidamente la pobreza predominante y amplifica las voces de los estratos sociales marginados.

*PALABRAS CLAVE:* Realismo Social, Sulaiman Layeq, Cuentos, Pobreza, Opresión, Explotación.

## **LA REPRÉSENTATION DU RÉALISME SOCIAL DANS DES NOUVELLES CHOISIES DE SULAIMAN LAYEQ : UNE ANALYSE CRITIQUE DE *L'AUBE SUR L'ABASIN***

*RÉSUMÉ :* Cette étude propose une analyse critique de l'œuvre littéraire contemporaine en langue pachtoun *The Dawn Over Abasin* (1983) de Sulaiman Layeq à travers le prisme du Réalisme social en tant que théorie littéraire. Ce recueil de nouvelles mobilise de manière substantielle les éléments du réalisme social afin de représenter des aspects fondamentaux de la société afghane, notamment l'oppression systématique des groupes marginalisés par des forces sociales dominantes dans les contextes ruraux et urbains. Cette recherche qualitative repose sur des ouvrages pertinents et reconnus en pachtou, des articles scientifiques ainsi que des sources numériques fiables. Une approche d'analyse thématique a été adoptée afin d'assurer un examen approfondi des thèmes du réalisme social présents dans le texte. Les résultats démontrent que Layeq possède une connaissance approfondie de la société afghane et qu'il articule systématiquement le réalisme social à travers des représentations narratives convaincantes et illustratives qui renforcent directement et indirectement le cadre théorique. L'auteur soutient constamment les pauvres, les exploités et les opprimés, tout en condamnant explicitement les structures oppressives de la société. Par exemple, dans la nouvelle « Le véritable héros », Layeq dépeint avec force la pauvreté dominante et amplifie les voix des couches sociales marginalisées.

*MOTS-CLÉS :* Réalisme social, Sulaiman Layeq, Nouvelles, Pauvreté, Oppression, Exploitation.

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Short Story in Contemporary Pashto Literature

A short story is a brief work of prose fiction that focuses on a single event, character, or theme. It is shorter than a novel and novella, which usually ranges from 1,000 to 7,500 words. It aims to create a strong impression with the help of concise storytelling, vivid characters, and a focused plot. In general, short stories contain key fiction elements such as setting, characters, conflict, climax, and resolution (Kennedy and Gioia, 2013). Short stories can be realistic, which depict believable events and characters, or they can be fantastical, which involve supernatural or imaginative elements. Writers like Edgar Allan Poe, O. Henry, and Anton Chekhov helped shape the short story as a modern literary form (May, 2002). In the same way, there are the same two kinds of short stories in the Pashto language as well. Some may be true and non-fictional, while others may be fictitious and composed upon non-realistic themes. Nowadays, the realistic (factual) short story is of great importance (Widmark, 2011). According to Edgar Allan Poe, a short story should be able to be read in one setting and should focus on a single, unified effect on the reader (Poe, 1846).

Over the last 150 years, the short story has come to figure conspicuously in the literature of several countries. Appearing in diverse periodicals as well as in books, it is probably the most widely read of all modern genres, and not only light-weight entertainers but also many distinguished fiction-writers during this period have found it congenial. Therefore, the history of the modern short story embraces diverse tendencies, some of which have stretched, shrunk, or otherwise altered previous conceptions of the nature of the form. For example, nineteenth-century critics insist on the need for a developed plot design in any true short story. This was part of their effort to make the form respectable in terms of current taste and to lift it beyond its lowly origins (Reid, 1977).

The position of Pashto literature contrasts with other languages such as Persian, Urdu, and English. Pashtun poets and writers, from the classic to the modern era, presented a vivid picture of the society where they lived (Caron, 2018). In fact, Afghan writers did not have a fixed term to call their works, however, some closely related Persian terms such as *afsana* (legend/myth), *qisa* (tale/story), *afsanae kochak* (short tale / short story), *hekyat* (anecdote/ parable), *fantazi* (fantasy), *roman kochak* (novella) and *dastan* (a general term for narrative prose/story) were used and since the 1960s, the term *dastan kotah* (short story) is used (Widmark, 2011).

Basically, the literary works in Pashto started to appear after the Islamic invasion of the Subcontinent, where Pashto, like all languages, has suffered a process of linguistic evolution as well as of its literature in its historical evolution (García and

Munir, 2016). Essentially, the outline of Mohammad Siddique Roohi – in terms of the division of Pashto literary periods – presents three literary periods: 1) classic period that starts from 8<sup>th</sup> c. or Amir Kror and ends in 16<sup>th</sup> c.; 2) the middle period that starts from 16<sup>th</sup> c. and ends in 20<sup>th</sup> c., and the modern period that starts in the second decade of 20<sup>th</sup> c. until up to date. More specifically, the modern period is subdivided into three major phases. For example, the enlightenment, the awakening, and the revolutionary phases (Bajawrai, 2021).

Broadly speaking, the beginning of the contemporary period and the establishment of modern Pashto prose writing more or less coincides with Afghanistan's independence from the British Empire in 1919. Thus, the emergence of Pashto literature owes much to the journal *Siraj al-Akhbar* (1911–1918) and the progressive ideas of Mahmud Tarzi (d. 1933) in Afghanistan (Widmark, 2011). Since at least the sixteenth century, Pashto literature has involved self-conscious participation at the moral and aesthetic fringes of empire. This has often been the case in the social space created by poetic networks, but in the late twentieth century prose has been interlinked to this realm as well (Caron, 2018) whereas historians have traditionally divided the evolution of Pashto literature into four stages or periods: 1) first period of literary evolution which is before 1500; 2) second period of literary evolution which is covered from 1500–1650; 3) the third or golden period of literary evolution which is from 1650–1900; and the last fourth period of literary evolution that started in 1900 until to date (García and Munir, 2016). On the other hand, the Pashto literature may be generally divided into three groups or streams, such as 1) folkloric, 2) classical, and 3) modern (Roohi, 2011). Thus, folkloric literature might have changed under the influence of social, economic, and political ups and downs. The classic styles are observable side by side with those of the modern literary methods, but seeing that classic literature forms a very small part of the modern Pashto literature.

In the history of modern Pashto literature, the policy for the development of the literary establishment is shown in the perspective of the subjective and objective conditions of those times. At the same time, attention should be paid to the fact that the literary history or political history should not be altered, though. For instance, in the literary phase of the *Enlightenment* or *Renovation*, the component of message and commitment of literature was very strong, and due to emphasis on its substance, the required attention was not given to its shape. Subsequently, the pioneers deliberately stayed away from the usage of aesthetic techniques of classic literature (Roohi, 2011).

During the 1930s, the promotion of Pashto continued. The short story and the novel were fully adopted during the 1940s and 1950s, along with the introduction of free verse (Widmark, 2011). Essentially, the modern Pashto short story emerged in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Specifically, the first recognized Pashto short story is “*Kunda*

*Jinai*” (The Widow Girl), written by Syed Rahat Zakheli and published in 1917 in the weekly Afghan newspaper (Dawn, 2017), which marked the beginning of Pashto fiction in prose form that is distinct from the earlier oral and poetic narratives (Anzor, 2022). As the novel emerged in Afghan Pashto literature primarily through a translation from the Persian language by Abdul Hai Habibi, who translated the great novel of French novelist Victor Hugo, *Les Misérables* (1862), with the name of *Binawayan* into Pashto titled *Biwazlan*, which was published in Tolo-e-Afghan Newsletter in 1932. Later on, the first Pashto novel was published by Burhanuddin Kashki in 1938 with the name of *Patta Mina* (The Secret Love) (Hashimi, 2010), which coincides with the fourth period (1900 - present), where the status of Pashto was improved by technological advances like radio, television, press, media, etc. Novels and plays are a product of this period. English novels and plays have been translated into Pashto and vice versa (García and Munir, 2016).

The further development of Pashto prose writing from the 1960s onwards is strongly linked to the political climate. Many Persian-Dari writers in the 1960s and 1970s turned to writing fiction not purely for its aesthetic value but as a form in which they could express their political and ideological viewpoints, a description which also can be applied to many Pashto writers at that time (Widmark, 2011).

Pashto short story is a modern literary prose genre where the first Pashto short story, “Shledali Panna” (The Torn Shoe) of Said Rahat Zakheli was published in 1913. Since the beginning of the short story, there have been some changes and development in the context of the Pashto short story (Sapand, 2019). Thus, the Pashto short story is reviewed in three historical periods or phases as follows: 1) The first phase (1917 to 1948) that covered ethics, social beliefs, tragedy, criticizing the worst culture, conflict between cruel and oppressed, the economy, and ethnic discrimination among the lower and upper level people in the Pashtun society. 2) The second phase (1949 to 1982), which is said to be a golden and historical movement where social life has been changed by the revolution and political struggle, freedom, free thought, equality, education, politics, and economy. 3) The third phase (1983 up to date), which mostly conveys the messages of war and its impacts since 1979, fighting, immigration, unfortunates, poverty, religious fuss, with a slight repetition of the first and second periods' contents. Above and beyond, the symbolic short story has been started in this period (Sapand, 2019).

In contemporary Pashto story writing, ‘History’ is considered a major subject. The well-known history of short stories in Afghanistan begins with the story of the late Abdul Hai Habibi, “The Brave Pashtun Lady,” which is based on the Anglo-Afghan War. Moreover, the historical narratives of the writers, Ghaus Khyber, and

Mohammad Ibrahim Atayi, Mustafa Jihad, Baryalai Bajauri, Zarin Anzoor, Nasir Ahmad Ahmadi, and others are worth mentioning (Anzor, 2022).

Even though the Pashtun authors for the first time started writing in social styles, they started struggling against the people who have given pains and problems in their society. In addition, they started seeking a cure for their society, which had suffered a lot. As a result, their efforts have made it possible to provide the color of realism in Pashto fiction. These fiction writers have looked at life as a reality and have a mature folk and social consciousness about life that has firmly connected them with the realities of their society and environment and has largely shunned the luxury of outdated fantasy and romance (ibid).

There are many similar topics, but the main ones could be:

1) women's problems, unhappiness, and violence – as a tragic aspect of Pashtuns' lives – are also present in the stories from Rahat Zakheli's "Widow Girl" to Farooq Sarwar's "Chains" which form the content as an integral part of the tragedy of Pashtuns' lives. In Pashtun society, the oppression of men against women, along with the ignorance, darkness, illiteracy, and poverty that women have to endure, covers the part of the historical consciousness of Pashtun writers. Although the male writers have written extensively in this series, the female writers, such as Mubarak Sultana Shamim, Salma Shaheen, Zaitoon Bano, Parveen Malal, Kubra Mazhari, Sayeda Hasina Gul, Fariba Zahir, Wagma Saba, Shafiqa Khpalwak, Jalalzai, and others have paid close attention.

2) The issues of poverty and the struggle between rich and poor in the society which can be social class writings, the idea of the reform of Pashtuns, and various other issues encouraged the authors to present aspirations of the freedom, security, harmony, equality, progress, and prosperity of the community to the people in the form of short stories (Asar, 2022). On the other hand, love and romance-related topics have taken special care of the specific Pashtun temperament; however, love is used as a basic issue of life. This is the reason that the new stories of the early Pashto period are also popular, reflecting reformist and revolutionary issues that provide Pashto fiction a unique position.

The spirit of resistance in Afghan literature strengthened when there was the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Many Afghan writers have written stories in this regard. After the withdrawal of the Soviet Union, the situation in Afghanistan brought new challenges to the nation, and several writers wrote and are still writing stories about this catastrophe of the war. Undoubtedly, such topics are the main themes of contemporary short stories in Afghan literature (Anzor, 2022).

### *1.2. The Literary Tradition of Sulaiman Layeq*

In modern Afghan Pashto literature, one of the most distinguished prose and poetry writers is Sulaiman Layeq (12 Oct. 1930 – 31 Jul. 2020), who is literally known as a revolutionary and rebelling poet for both Pashto and Dari (the Afghan Persian) languages. He wrote both in Pashto, his native language, and in Dari, his second language, as he was also skilled in Arabic and English either (Dupree, 1992). In addition, he has been awarded both nationally and internationally. For instance, he won first-grade national literary awards six times for Pashto poetry, prose, and short story writing, and Dari poetry and prose from 1958 to 1961. As Layeq wrote his first Pashto poem when he was in the third grade of Habibia School in Kabul (Adamec, 1979). In this regard, Abdul Latif Bahand further writes that among the Afghan contemporary poets, Layeq is the literary figure whose prominence is celebrated in poetry and prose, who was a vigorous, innovative, revolutionary, rebelling, adoring, and patriotic poet, and writer of Pashto and Dari languages both nationally and regionally. Thus, he was a great rhetorical figure whose eloquence was very influential in his poetry and speech; particularly, his poetry was very emotional (Bahand, 2005).

Layeq's love for the country and nation was very durable, which cannot be found in others. This love was obviously evident in his writings and poems as he had lived his life with purity, honor, his own people, intellectuals, and among literary associations (Azhar, 2020), whereas Layeq also wrote religious poems during the 1950s on Islamic unity (Dupree, 1992). In addition, Kawoon Toofani writes that Layeq is a unique poet who has bestowed great richness and beauty on Pashto poetry and literature. Also, Baraq Shafei writes that the poetic style of Layeq is the continuation of valuable and vital traditions of classic masters that have evolved into sound innovations which express a new and modern phase in the forms of Pashto poetry. Subsequently, Wasif Bakhtari appraises the standing of Layeq and his poetry in the Afghan Modern Literary Association as the apostle of renovation in the society (Bahand, 2005).

In general, his poems, prose, and all his essays were based on patriotism (Asar, 2022), as Amin Afghanistanpur writes that Layeq started struggling against oppression, injustice, and the remnants of colonization. Hence, he turned his face from lyrical poetry to epic poetry. Revolutionary Layeq has always remained a loyal and brave director among his people in the battlefield of laborers, peasants, and toilers. He struggled against oppression, regression, exploitation, and any kind of cruelty at the same time. Thus, his revolutionary and artistic personality fascinated the attention of foreign poets and belletrists and Pashto students abroad. This is why his poetry crossed the borders, and it is read, researched, and criticized outside of the country, which itself is a pride and honor of our poet, people, and art communities. Layeq is a poet of

underprivileged people and of vagrant and wandering nomads and strangers of years. Consequently, Akram Usman asserts that I don't exactly know to what extent Layeq is a poet but know exactly to what extent he is a human (Bahand, 2005).

Another most distinguished researcher and writer of the Pashto language, Abdul Rauf Benawa, also writes, "Sulaiman Layeq, among contemporary Pashto and Dari writers and poets, is a very mature writer and a sensitive poet. In his poetry and writing, humanistic affections, human emotions, and Afghan pains are greatly illustrated in the light of deep feeling. Particularly, when attention is paid to his poetry and writing, which are stated beautifully through beautiful expressions with his new style in modern literature. Most of his writings and poetry mirror humanistic and social reflections and the pains of his surroundings. Mr. Layeq is a master of both Pashto and Dari poetry and prose is a master. This is the facet of my life that I diagnose today" (Benawa, 2009, pp. 982-1083).

Layeq is one of the pioneering poets of both Pashto and Dari poems as a modernist (Zandagi Zebast, 2022), as no one has possibly denounced and objected to the rivals as Layeq did with his tone in the modern poetry (Ghazanfar, 2024). The reason behind it is that his poetry is very emotional in general, which cannot be felt in modern poetry elsewhere (Asar, 2022), he has both a prestigious position in the history of Afghan modern Pashto and Dari literature, and he is regionally considered to be a famous, acknowledged, academic, and cultural writer. As a result, he has gained this great position by the grace of his creativity (Ahmadzai A. , 2019). Layeq granted new beauty and splendor to modern poetry and has many innovations and creativities in Pashto literature (Pirzada, 2020). Among the pioneering poets of the second phase of modern period is Sulaiman Layeq who is one of the establishers of Pashto modern poetry (Liwal, 2015), thus Saedoddin Shpoon declares that Layeq motivates other poets, even if he sings for his peers but directs other youths, he makes them hear bloomed heralds to hope for the best, he carries messages about light and sunrise in darkness, and he gets them out of these obscurities (Bahand, 2005).

Regarding the style and literary tradition of Sulaiman Layeq, Abdul Hai Habibi writes that Layeq is a possessor of particular talent and literary enthusiasm whose new speech in Pashto poetry is the crown of a new movement. He has both conceptual aesthetics and seems rapid in creating a form and rhythm. He is a new youth and his thoughts are also new. The excitement, turbulence, movement, and dance, which are demonstrated with burning feelings in his poetry, go through his poem in a new form and rhythm. Overall, Habibi predicts that those poets who have calm hearts and undisturbed feelings in their poems will also stir and will certainly accompany him in their poetic movement (Habibi, 1981).

Shpoon additionally enlists five characteristic features of his modern poetry: 1) All the stanzas in a poem are logically related; 2) He is against worldliness or verbosity but seeks aesthetic meaning; 3) He depicted the living objects around him as a peculiarity of realism; 4) He employs blank and naked verse which is a sign of realism and a specific of modern poem; and 5) There is the peculiarity of naturalism and symbolism (Shpoon, 2019).

Throughout Layeq's life, he had written poetry, prose, and essays in the field of literature; however, he had written many political essays in the form of prose, leaving behind about 70 volumes of unpublished political diaries (Mashal, 2020). All in all, he published 12 anthologies of poems (AAN Obituary, 2020). In Afghanistan, the 1950s are particularly significant for story writing. In this period, some writers have fundamentally worked on Pashto short stories, because they were aware of world literature. They studied and experienced this literature. He additionally says, "Among these writers are Habibullah Taghi, Mirajan Siyal, ... Sulaiman Layeq and others wrote many great short stories in a short time ..." (Saydee, 2022, pp. 12-13). Baryalai Bajawrai also opines that Layeq is one of the splendid figures of the Pashto language and literature in the contemporary period in Afghanistan who has authority and fame for both poetry and prose, especially in short story writing (Zandagi Zebast, 2022).

The prose of Layeq is not adequately appreciated as his poetry is. Thus, apart from his poetry collection, the *Da Abasin Spede* (The Dawn over Abasin) is a collection of short-short stories, short stories, and prose pieces, whereas *Gharuna Aw Kasatuna* (The Mountains and Revenges) is a Pashto novel published in 1998 (Roohi, 2005). Layeq himself, in an interview, says that the '*Da Abasin Spede*' is an artistic prose. To him, it is a lucky book and has been translated into many international languages, such as English, Russian, Urdu, and probably Balochi language. In fact, this book deals with poverty, insufficiency, and other issues in short stories. He further adds that it is not a novella but a short story on one page or a half page. Importantly, there are some of his memories of his childhood in this book (Spogmai\_FM, 2012).

This study is limited to a collection of short stories entitled *The Dawn over Abasin*, which contains forty stories among Layeq's literary works. It is limited to stories like *The One Who Never Dies*, *The Dawn over Abasin*, *The Real Hero*, *The Factory Celebration*, and *O' Wayfarer* in the collection. Notably, this study does not tend to indicate the ideological approach of Layeq in the view of Socialist Realism but Social Realism.

## 2. Literature Review

Realism is a 19<sup>th</sup> century movement which in art is the accurate and detailed depiction of nature or contemporary life (McHenry, 2007), and Martin Coyle also argues, “The theory or practice in art and literature of fidelity to nature or to real life and to accurate representation without idealization of the most typical views, details, as well as surroundings of the subject” (Coyle, 1991, p. 933). Later on, a 20<sup>th</sup>-century movement in literature called ‘Social Realism’ is an offshoot of literary realism that is concerned with the realistic depiction of society in its true colors. We can find two terms in this literary theory or movement, the ‘Social’ which refers to society (Turnbull, 2010), and ‘Realism’ which is a method of picturing life as it really is and should be untouched by romanticism and rationalism. Moreover, Social Realism is a manner of writing as well that relies on the use of specific details to interpret life faithfully and objectively (Staff, 1998). Social realism does not only mean to characterize realism in the novels, but it also refers to the novelist’s way of dealing with realism or social facts and events of society for the novel’s sake.

Social Realism is also a technique by which truth is represented in an artistic way. It is most frequently present in historical novels, international issues, regional fictions, science fiction, and mystery novels (Madhavi, 2017). It aims to change the existing reality as interpretations of life emphasizing the realistic depiction of social problems such as hunger and poverty, social backwardness, and political subjugation.

To put it very simply, the Oxford Companion to English Literature defines it as a realistic, objective yet socially aware and detailed method of artistic presentation (Drabble, 1985). Importantly, the key to social realism lies in a conception of the relationship of the individual to society (Williams, 1968).

One of the distinguished foreign writers for Afghan studies, Nancy Dupree, writes about the Afghan political context where social realism was used as a psychological weapon by some writers of the time who were first mobilized to use it in their writings. Social themes in Afghan literature may be divided into six periods, among the last ‘Revolutionary Activism’ period, which was between 1953 and 1978, the writers used a strong revolutionary content in depicting life’s realities, while exposing despotism and oppression. Sulaiman Layeq is one of the most distinguished writers of the time (Dupree, 1985). And, Layeq has arranged all major incidents of his time in his poetry, and he has depicted, praised, denounced, and chronicled them with his poetry. Therefore, we can say that his poetry is the living history of the nation (Bahand, 2005).

According to some, Social Realism and Socialist Realism are used interchangeably; however, the first is the depiction of social reality, while the second

is the depiction of the social reality not as it is, but as it should be. As a result, the second kind of approach is a typical Marxist approach to literature (Dubey, 2021). Based on Dost Shinwari's assertion, it is hard to estimate what the first poems in Pashto social realism are, but we can undoubtedly say that the pride of the emergence and development of social realism in Pashto poetry is attached to the name of Sulaiman Layeq. We can observe the first complete examples of social realism in two poetic collections of Layeq in *Chunghar, 1962*, and *Yaduna Aw Darmanduna* (The Harvests and Memories, 1978), where he depicted and exposed social hatred and disgust artistically (Shinwari, 2014).

According to Roohi, the spirit of revolution and rebellion was fortified in the Awareness Phase of Pashto literature, and in spite of critical realism, social realism was also developed, which originated in the Khalq Democratic Party. The seeds of this realism were already sown in the Pashto Revolutionary Period. *Da Bang Musafari* (The Travel of Bang, 1957), and other short stories, written by Noor Mohammad Taraki, had numerous audience, and the songs of *Chunghar* written by Sulaiman Layeq are the preliminary murmurings of revolutionary poetry which are heard by the people living in the reign of King Zaher Shah (Saydee, 2022).

As a whole, the great Afghan poets and novelists of this socialist phase include Wasif Bakhtari, Baraq Shafei, Sulaiman Layeq, Noor Mohammad Taraki, Ghulam Dastagir Panjshiri, and others (Musleh, 2020).

Social realism can also be found not only in Layeq's poetry but in his prose narratives as well. Dost Shinwari, in the introduction to the first edition of *The Dawn over Abasin* engraves that Layeq shone like a star on the firmament of poetry in our revolutionary society. As a votary of Social Realism, Layeq has been in the vanguard of active struggle. Also, Ajmal Khatak writes that the book depicts social repressions, class struggles, and social injustices that disturbed the poet's mind. Layeq was familiar with the various aspects of Afghan society, and he knew the ups and downs of the history. In addition to the above notes, Manohar Singh Batra pens that Layeq masterly portrayed the plight of his people and their voice. He has given to their sentiments, joys, sorrows, deprivations, and achievements. (Layeq, 2011).

### 3. Methodology

This section outlines the research approach and techniques employed to critically analyze the social realistic themes portrayed in the select short stories of Sulaiman Layeq in 'The Dawn over Abasin'. The methodology employed is divided into several key components, such as research design, data collection, data analysis, and ethical considerations.

### 3.1. Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative approach to explore the portrayal of social realism in five select short stories mentioned earlier. The approach emphasizes gathering and analyzing textual data from various sources, including books, articles, websites, YouTube videos, and mainly the existing English literary texts in this collection, ‘The Dawn over Abasin’, to provide a comprehensive overview of the topic.

### 3.2. Population and Sampling

The population for this study was 40 short stories, among which at least five short stories were selected through a non-random sampling technique. It is noteworthy that not only these but also 35 other deselected short stories also have direct correspondence with the literary theory of social realism.

### 3.3. Data Collection

The data collection process involved two primary methods: 1) *Literature Review*, where academic articles, books, and websites related to the theory of social realism and the life and works of Sulaiman Layeq, particularly his short story collection *The Dawn over Abasin*, were reviewed. The focus was placed on identifying recurring themes and topics in relation to this theory. 2) *Translation Method*, where some of the most authentic and relevant data apropos to the topic were available either in Pashto or Dari, which were directly translated into English by the researcher. This short story collection ‘The Dawn over Abasin’ itself was professionally translated by a prominent Indian writer, Manohar Batra Singh, in 2011 publish in Delhi. Key topics examined included social realism theory, Sulaiman Layeq, and critiques about his use of social realism.

### 3.4. Data Analysis and Interpretation

Among the published works of Layeq, ‘The Dawn over Abasin’ was non-randomly selected for the data analysis. The collected data were analyzed through thematic analysis after reading the whole literary work. As a result, some key themes such as poverty and hardships, oppression and repression of the bourgeoisie or upper class, and exploitation of the middle class were identified in the light of the literary theory ‘social realism’ – particularly in the five select short stories. These stories were interpreted to support the research topic.

### 3.5. Ethical Considerations

All data collection activities adhered to ethical research guidelines. From the published sources, all the secondary data were appropriately cited to maintain research and academic integrity. Finally, this methodology ensures a thorough and reliable portrayal of the social realism in the five select short stories of Sulaiman Layeq ‘The Dawn over Abasin’, offering valuable guidance for researchers and critics in the field.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. An Analysis of Layeq’s Significant Publications

Layeq, in his seven-decade literary life, has written many literary and artistic works in the aspects of social, cultural, political, religious, and literary dimensions of Afghan society. He was famous for his revolutionary poetry, which, according to many accounts, was versed in a unique style compared to other contemporary Afghan writers and poets. It is important to note that Layeq’s works are published with various editions, and most importantly few of his works are translated into other prestigious languages of the world. He had published more than twenty books, starting from ‘Chunghar, 1962’ to ‘Da Folklore Shahey’ (The Beloved of Folklore, 2023). Below are the works published during and after Layeq’s life:

Table 1. Sulaiman Layeq’s Published Works.

No.	Transliteration	English Name	Language	Year(s) of Pub.
1	Chunghar	Chunghar	Pashto Poetry	1962; 1982; 2019
2	Kigdai	The Tent	Pashto Poetry	1975; 1981; 2019
3	Yaduna Aw Darmanduna	Memories and Harvests	Pashto Poetry	1978; 2019
4	Aaghaz Bedon e Aanjam	Beginning Without Ending	Dari Prose	1978
5	Badban or Daftar e Badban	The Chimney	Dari Poetry	1981; 2019
6	Kisay Aw Afsaanay Kisay Aw Zamanay	The Stories and Fictions The Stories and Eras	Pashto Poetry	1982; 2019
7	Da Abasin Spede	Dawn over Abasin	Pashto Short Story	1983; 2019
8	Shpealai	The Flute	Pashto	1983
9	Da Pashto Landay (coauthorship)	The Pashto Landay	Pashto Prose	1983

10	Sahil	The Beach	Pashto Poetry	1984; 2019
11	Samt e Rashaan Jadaha	Towards The Lights of Streets	Dari	1984
12	Mukhtasar Dar Bar e Qabayal e Pashtun	A Compendious Study of Pashtun Tribes	Dari Prose	1986
13	Shibay Aw Taranay	The Moments and Songs	Pashto	1987
14	Gharuna Aw Kasatuna	The Mountains and Revenges	Pashto Novel	1998; 2019
15	Sparghaki	The Small Well	Pashto Poetry	2004; 2019
16	Gasona: Da Zardasht Mianoyee Soroduna	The Gatha: The Songs of Zarathustra	Pashto Poetry	2009
17	Sandary Pa Saweyo Watono Ki	The Songs in the Burnt Streets	Pashto Poetry	2013; 2019
18	Da Ghulamanu Sorud	The Chant of Servants	Pashto Poetry	2015; 2019
19	Oqab e Gum Shuda	The Lost Eagle	Dari Poetry	2019
20	Dost Darm En Watan Ra	I Love This Country	Dari Poetry	2020
21	Mard e Az Kohistan	A Man From the Mountains	Dari Poetry	2020
22	Da Folklore Shahey	The Beloved of Folklore	Pashto	2023

The table above shows the transliterated names and the number of Layeq's works published chronologically, with the years when they were published in the first, second, and third editions. Moreover, it also shows that these works are written either in the Pashto or Dari language, prose or poetry.

#### 4.2. An Analysis of 'The Dawn over Abasin'

One of Sulaiman Layeq's well-known works in his literary life was a collection of short stories under the title of '*Da Abasin Spede*', written in the Pashto language as [د آبا سين سپډې]. It is originally written in the Pashto language and was published in 1983 by the Pashto International Research Center, Academy of Sciences of Afghanistan, in Kabul, containing more than 160 pages and 40 subtitles. At the end of almost every short story, there are the dates and locations where the author wrote these stories. Within this book, the sixteenth short story is also entitled 'The Dawn over Abasin'.

This book was prefaced by Ajmal Khattak in 1986 in the Pashto language. It became a second edition in 2011 when rendered into the English language by Manohar Singh Batra, who is an Indian literary fan of Sulaiman Layeq. The second edition, entitled 'The Dawn over Abasin', was published in New Delhi, India by M/s Printograph publisher. This version that has realistic tone as it had in Pashto language

either is written in almost 105 pages. Additionally, this version also contains a note written by Batra, who was a Deputy Director of All India Radio in India, who has nicely and professionally changed the exact tone of the Pashto into simple English, considering all the literary canons of short story writing in mind.

Furthermore, the last name of the author, ‘Layeq’, is spelled as ‘Laeq’, and the word ‘Pashto’ is spelled as ‘Pashtu’ in this rendered book. According to this edition, Mr. Batra had known Sulaiman Layeq since 1963, when Layeq used to be the Director General of News in Radio Afghanistan. When Mr. Batra first came to Afghanistan and wanted to learn Pashto as a foreign language in the Department of Pashto, Faculty of Literature at Kabul University he was succeeded to render and create this fantastic book containing realistic portrayals of Afghan society as Batra himself writes that the job of translation of the book was tough and the literary quality of Layeq’s creation was of very high order. In fact, he tried to identify himself with the pangs and sorrows of the poor humanity, which Mr. Layeq endeavored to portray so vividly through his crying soul. Most recently, this book was republished in 2019 by Aasem Publications located in Kabul. The short stories in the book are listed as follows (Table 2).

Table 2. The subtitles and years of the short stories in ‘*The Dawn over Abasin*’.

No	Subtitles	Year	No.	Subtitles	Year
1	Retribution	1958	21	Yellow Leaves	1960
2	Flute	1959	22	The Offended Shepherd	1959
3	Tears	1959	23	What Did The Hero Say?	1961
4	The Folk Dancer	1959	24	The Real Hero	1962
5	In The Shadows of The Mountains	1959	25	The Centuries Old Traveler	1978
6	In The Fathomless Sea of Time	1960	26	The Status Of History	1961
7	The Song of The Shepherd	1960	27	O Wayfarer!	1963
8	I	1961	28	The Swimmer	N/A
9	A Crying Orphan	1961	29	The Secret Love	1962
10	This Strange Man	1961	30	Sugar	1967
11	My Unfinished Song	1962	31	Buzkashi	1965
12	The Childhood	1969	32	The Prostitute	1964
13	The Last Tears	1958	33	The Corpse in The Mosque	1964
14	The Mute Bulbul	1962	34	The Factory Celebration	1968
15	The One Who Never Dies	N/A	35	Two Coolies	1967
16	The Eid Greetings	1967	36	The Grey Machine	1964
17	To Miss Chitra- The Bengali Dancer	1966	37	The River’s Melody	1969
18	Come, Let Us Sing Our Songs	1965	38	The New Conjugation	1978
19	Life’s Last Message	1957	39	The Penitent Soldier	N/A
20	The Dawn Over Abasin	1962	40	The Vagrant	1960

It can be assumed that above numbered short stories were originally written from 1957 to 1978 in the Pashto language in different locations and all rendered into English in 2011, which are the greatest representations of Afghan society where Layeq directly portrayed the literary theory of social realism. The analysis aims to present actionable insights for future social realistic theory in literary works.

### 4.3. *Analysis of Social Realism in Select Short Stories*

The five selected short stories below are assigned so that the themes of poverty and hardships, oppression and repression, and exploitation or subjugation are portrayed realistically by the author.

#### 4.3.1. *The One Who Never Dies*

One of Layeq's striking short stories, *The One Who Never Dies*, is quite autobiographical in its nature, which indicates the suffering of common people as the author sheds tears over the plight of the peasants, shepherds, and the destitute. Essentially, this story is about a poet whose art will never die because he doesn't have a mother, father, child, or any other relative. The story symbolically represents that the poet can only imagine the tribulations and the pangs of hunger and deprivation of orphans and widows. This story begins as the writer says, "He (the poet) was lying in a damp and dingy hut. The old coarse mat had lacerated his body. Nobody ever visited to ask about his welfare, nor had anyone a care about his life." What a poet possesses is only a hut and a book, but can talk to clouds in the sky and stars in the heavens. Thus, he has communion with the distressed and deprived people about their apprehensions and anxieties, as he says that he understands the people and knows about the joys and sorrows of everyone's life. Nevertheless, they were oblivious to his feelings and did not know about his sensitivities. Consequently, he sizzled over the fires of the trials and tribulations of others, but they were indifferent whether he cried over their miseries or afflictions. At the end, the writer writes a concluding line of the poem as such: "I am a poet, and I shall never die" (Layeq, 2011, p. 31).

#### 4.3.2. *The Dawn over Abasin*

The most famous short story, *The Dawn over Abasin* (1962), portrays freedom and independence, which is also a subtitle of the main book of the collection. Basically, the word in the title 'Abasin' in the Pashto language is the name of the Indus River. In fact, this short-short story is principally about the freedom of an

Afghan individual or a peasant who foresees it after spending a time of slavery. Thus, this freedom is anticipated by a peasant living in a village. In fact, the story starts as the writer says, “The dawn had just cracked when Abasin stirred up the latent sorrows, and the morning breeze, which synchronized with the turbulent waves of the river, unfolded hidden secrets” (Layeq, 2011, p. 47).

Subsequently, a peasant wakes up, rubs his eyes, turns on his side, stands up in his bed, opens his eyes, and sees the dawn. At that juncture, he stretches his body, yawning, comes out of his cottage, and witnesses the waves of Abasin. Later on, he looks up to the blue sky and stars. What happens here is, as the writer himself says, “Suddenly he became conscious of himself. His eyes rolled, his complexion changed, his lips quivered, his hand moved up and tore his shirt from neck downwards.” Surprisingly, his feelings have changed now, and he thinks that these waves will wash off the embossing labels of servility. Even then, he feels something different with an unknown sentiment as he says:

I am a captive in this vast and boundless world. My eyes have been blinded. My hands bound in chains, and a heavy burden has been cast on my shoulders. I live for others and shall die for others (p. 48).

At the end of the story, the narrator asks to be freed by requesting the sacred sun to rise and seeks, as the writer explicitly says, “Let me live free in the free world, living freely and dying freely” (p. 48).

#### 4.3.3. *The Real Hero*

Another autobiographical short story, *The Real Hero* (1962), shows a realistic picture of Afghan society by highlighting economic struggles such as poverty and the insufficient economic condition of a common poor man. Literally, this story is related to a hungry and penniless man who has come from a rural area to the city in search of money to buy a loaf of bread to live on. Accidentally, a walker confronts him and is quite sympathetic towards this stranger. In the meantime, the walker thinks that he is a beggar and wants to offer him some money. Fearlessly, the beggar refuses to take the money but asks for a job and a wage instead, by which he could resolve his very basic needs.

As the title suggests, this man, called the real hero, really encourages people living in Afghan society not to beg but to work. In fact, the story begins when this man is sitting on a rock on the side of the highway under the scorching summer sun. Additionally, his body was polluted with the road side dust, his sleeves worn out, elbows with holes, and his collar eaten away by dirt as Layeq writes, “He was gazing

at me and as soon as I approached him, he saluted me. Acknowledging his greetings, I stopped and asked him: You seem familiar to me” (p. 57).

Nonetheless, the man denies, and then the narrator moves forward, and he chases him. Now, the walker stopped walking and turned his face to the stranger and asked, “Do you want something from me?” This time, he answered positively and told him that he had no money and he was hungry. The walker wanted to give him ten rupees, but the stranger denied by smiling and said, “So far I have never lived on alms...” then the walker invites him, but the stranger says, “I cannot swallow the unearned food, lest it become my habit” (p. 59). At the very end of the story, the narrator says that the beggar took leave of him and disappeared. Consequently, many things in his heart remained unsaid. As a final point, Layeq says, “Overcoming my remorse, I understood that I had come across a real hero” (*The Dawn over Abasin*, p. 60).

#### 4.3.4. *O Wayfarer!*

A different short story, *O Wayfarer!* (12 January, 1969), is inscribed in Kabul that represents a realistic depiction of a class conflict in Afghan society – the worker and the bourgeoisie. In reality, this story is related to the patience and tolerance of a working man to bear the hardships and overcome the adversities. Thus, this story carries a message of status quo for the injustice, probably by the bourgeoisie of the Afghan society. For example, the thorn, highway robbers, as well as the devils are used as symbols for the hardships felt by the middle class through the upper class of society. As a matter of fact, it is designed in four paragraphs, among which in the first the writer asks eight various questions with ‘why’ about the sadness, doleful songs, complaint, fatigue, fear, blisters, intolerance with injustice, including loss of patience. Anon, Layeq suggests that let there be thunder, lightning, cruel rain, floods, and devils so that you will get fortified and have tolerance towards the adversities.

Consequently, Layeq at that moment commands to complete the song, create the epic of the new life of the working Man, tear apart the veils of fear, as well as spread the golden chain of hope on the path of the exploited man’s journey. At the end of the story, he writes, “O noble wayfarer, march ahead, march forward, and bring to completion the epic of the salvation of the working man” (p. 66).

#### 4.3.5. *The Factory Celebration*

One of the most heart-touching stories, *The Factory Celebration* (1968), is written in Kabul that basically relates to a factory inauguration and its festivity for which an old man – Ali Murad is very happy to celebrate it claiming that it is

completed based on the reason that we workers have made this factory and Ali lost his beloved young son in the process of its making.

In this connection, as the Marxist theory suggests, a class conflict arises in capitalist societies due to contradictions between the material interests of the oppressed laborers. There are two types of violence against the laborers, i.e., *the direct violence*, which is created for resources and cheap labor, and *the indirect violence*, which creates deaths from poverty, starvation, illness, or unsafe working conditions, and compulsion (Ram Janam, 2018). Thus, this story depicts the direct violence against Murad Ali, who is an honest man who believed in working hard for the factory. But, when the celebration day approaches, other suited and booted men first refuse to allow him into the factory and are beaten by the guards and policemen at the command of factory owner Najaf, who made Ali Murad accept that this factory is not for the workers.

Actually, the story begins when there are a few days remaining for the celebration of the opening of the factory. After time passes, there are announcements in the city, schools, and houses about its opening. An old man named Ali Murad is excessively happy for the day to arrive and celebrate it. In the meantime, he anguishes over his young son, Qambar, who lost his life in making the factory. When Sunday, the day of celebration, arrived, he prepared his grandson and walked towards the factory, where he saw unfamiliar men inside the factory. He was stopped and slapped by the guards and policemen, as the writer says:

The guards at the gate lost their patience, and they signaled to the policemen. A sturdy dark-faced police official hastened and slapped Ali Murad so hard, but the turban on his head fell a yard away. Another policeman hit him on his back, and Ali fell flat on his face. And, with him fell his grandson on the hard ground from his arms and emitted a pitiful scream. The defenseless and destitute worker was dumbfounded, and his vision was blurred with tears welling up in his eyes (p. 104).

Consequently, a man named Najaf, the factory owner, is the first to break the cordon of the workers and warns Ali Murad to change his mind by saying, "Be quiet, sit down, you old fool! All along, you have been deluding the gullible workers by telling them that the factory belonged to you!" After all, the workers surrounded by him laughed, and he confessed now I understand that it belongs to you. At the end of the story, Ali Murad tells all his fellows and workers, "Come, come, sons, get away from the scene of merry-making of the factory owners. We shall return here when the factory is ours" (p. 106).

## 5. Discussion

It was found that novel and short story writing in the Pashto language did not directly begin as an independent literary genre, but this new European literary genre was introduced first through translations from English into Urdu and Persian, and then Pashto versions were introduced to Pashto literature. As it is the same case for the short story writing as well. The short story and the novel were fully adopted during the 1940s and 1950s (Widmark, 2011). The first recognized Pashto short story, 'Kunda Jinai' (The Widow Girl), was written by Syed Rahat Zakheli, who was published in 1917 (Dawn, 2017), and the writer (1884-1963) was a very significant author and contributed to almost every literary prose genre. He published 'Mah Rukhi' in 1912, which was his first fictional novel (García and Munir, 2016). Furthermore, the novel in Afghan Pashto literature was translated by Habibi, and later the first Pashto novel 'Patta Mina' (The Secret Love) by Burhanuddin Kashki was published in 1938 (Hashimi, 2010).

Social realism is the interpretation of life to change the existing reality. It particularly interprets the social problems such as hunger and poverty, social backwardness, political subjugation, and more. The pride of the emergence and development of social realism in Pashto poetry is attached to the name of Sulaiman Layeq. Therefore, there are examples of social realism in 'Chunghar, 1962' and 'Yaduna Aw Darmanduna, 1978' which depict the social hatred artistically (Shinwari, 2014). It is because Layeq has higher education, a comprehensive study, and extensive experience in social, religious, literary, and political aspects of the country (Ahmadzai, 2019).

Apart from his social realist poetry, there are dozens of examples of social realism in his prose particularly in the short story collection named 'The Dawn over Abasin' about which in the preface Batra writes that Layeq masterly portrayed the plight of his people and the voice he has given to their sentiments, joys, sorrows, deprivations, and achievements and Ajmal Khatak also writes that this collection depicts social repressions, class struggles and social injustices because Layeq was familiar with the various aspects of Afghan society and he knew the ups and downs of the history (Layeq, 2011). Correspondingly, human affection, human emotions, and Afghan sufferings are greatly illuminated in the light of the deep sensibility of Layeq. Particularly, when attention is paid to his writing and poetry, which has a new feature in modern literature, and he, through his new style, writes new subjects with more beautiful words and expressions. Most of his writings and pieces of poetry mirror humanistic and social reflections and pains of his surroundings (Benawa, 2009).

In this collection, only five short stories are analyzed, which portray social realism very artistically by Layeq. For example, *The One Who Never Dies*, Layeq

symbolically uses the word ‘poet’ to represent that he has communion with the distressed and deprived people about their apprehensions and anxieties. He knows about the joys and sorrows of everyone’s life. This poet only sheds tears over the plight of the peasants, shepherds, and the destitute. It is about the poor and underprivileged situation of a poet living in Afghan society who can only depict the social aspects of poverty.

Furthermore, *The Real Hero* short story also presents a realistic picture of Afghan society, the poverty, and the insufficient economy. This story depicts a poor man’s hunger and pennilessness, but other people suppose him to be a beggar. This poor man denies begging money but asks for a job and a wage. In Afghan society, there can be found some real heroes who want to earn money in spite of being very poor. However, on the contrary, in this society, many men and women are seen begging for lifelong but never think of using their talents to earn money, as Kawoon Toofani writes. If Layeq has wailed and wept for his pains and sufferings, actually, he has wailed in favor of his time and society. The poetry of Layeq, like that of other realist poets of this recent time, is a mirror and reflection where not only his own feelings, sufferings, defeats and successes, grief and joys, and psychological peculiarities are depicted, but also the grief and joys, beauties and spoils of his time and society are also reflected (Bahand, 2005).

Similarly, ‘The Dawn over Abasin’ is basically about the freedom of an Afghan individual, spending time in slavery as a peasant in the village. He felt to throw himself into the murderous waves of the Abasin Ocean to wash off the labels of servility. He later asks to be let live freely in the free world because he wants to live freely and die freely. All because of the ongoing oppressions and repressions by the exploiters, as Hafizullah Emadi writes, the British supported and installed those rulers who defended their interests until Afghanistan gained its independence in 1919. Nonetheless, British influence, both direct and indirect, continued in the country’s political affairs, manifested in support of authoritarian and despotic leaders supportive of its policies (Emadi, 2010).

The short story *O Wayfarer!* is about the patience and tolerance of a working man who bears the hardships and overcomes the adversities. The social realistic message of the story is injustice, which is prevailed by the bourgeoisie or the hardships felt by the middle class through the upper class in Afghan society.

Finally, *The Factory Celebration*, which is about a factory inauguration and its festivity. The workers have made this factory, and Ali lost his beloved young son in the process of its making... but they are beaten by the guards and policemen at the command of the factory owner. This story really depicts the social realism of a working class and upper-class social elements. The oppressions made by the feudal

over the servants is a heart-touching aspect of the story, as the Marxist theory suggests that in capitalist societies, a class conflict arises due to contradictions between the material interests of the oppressed laborers. There are two types of violence against the laborers, i.e., *the direct violence*, which is created for resources and cheap labor, and *the indirect violence*, which creates deaths from poverty, starvation, illness, or unsafe working conditions, and compulsion (Ram Janam, 2018).

## 6. Conclusion

To conclude, short stories and novels are not the original literary forms or genres but were adopted by Pashtun writers in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Sulaiman Layeq, in his whole literary life, has written various artistic, philosophical, political, cultural, and religious works, among which are some very important artistic works that portray the realistic pictures of the Afghan society. Sulaiman Layeq was a vigorous, innovative, revolutionary, rebelling, adoring, and patriotic poet, writer of Pashto and Dari languages, both nationally and regionally. In general, his poems, prose, and all his speeches were based on patriotism. He has many innovations and creativities for Pashto literature. Layeq had published more than twenty artistic and literary works despite his political diaries. Layeq is also among those who created his two artistic works in Pashto prose narratives. *Da Abasin Spede* (The Dawn over Abasin, 2011), originally published in 1983, is a short story collection, and *Gharuna Aw Kasatuna* (The Mountains and Revenges, 1998) is a modern Pashto novel.

Sulaiman Layeq was the one who produced in almost all prevalent artistic or literary theories of the time, i.e., Romanticism, Naturalism, Modernism, and Realism in general and Social Realism in particular. There were thirty-five short stories in *The Dawn over Abasin* that dealt with the literary theory of social realism, and the five short stories did not directly deal with it. Different social realistic pictures of Afghan society are portrayed by the author through poverty and hardships of the poor people, the oppression and repression of the upper class over the oppressed and repressed, and finally the exploitation of middle class is evidently seen in the five short stories analyzed.

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