

## GAFUR GULOM'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE REPRESENTATION OF THE CHILD IMAGE IN UZBEK PROSE

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**Annotation.** *This article analyzes the features of creating the child image in G'afur G'ulom's novel "Shum bola" ("Naughty Boy"). In the work, the child is portrayed as a symbol of playfulness, ingenuity, and cheerfulness, embodying the endurance of the people and their optimistic outlook on life. The author employs the child image not only as a means of humor and satire but also as an effective tool for addressing the complex socio-political problems of the era. Thus, G'afur G'ulom elevated the representation of the child in Uzbek prose to a new stage, transforming it into a stable poetic hero of national literature.*

**Keywords:** *child image, Gafur Gulom, Shum bola, humor and laughter, realistic depiction, national character, philosophy of childhood, social environment.*

## РОЛЬ ГАФУРА ГУЛЯМА В ФОРМИРОВАНИИ ХУДОЖЕСТВЕННОГО ОБРАЗА РЕБЁНКА В УЗБЕКСКОЙ ПРОЗЕ

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**Аннотация.** *В статье анализируются особенности создания образа ребёнка в романе Гафура Гуляма «Шум бола» («Озорник»). В произведении ребёнок изображён как символ озорства, находчивости и жизнерадостности, воплощающий стойкость народа и его оптимистический взгляд на жизнь. Автор использует детский образ не только как средство юмора и сатиры, но и как эффективный инструмент для отражения сложных социально-политических проблем эпохи. Таким образом, Гафур Гулям возвёл репрезентацию ребёнка в узбекской прозе на новый уровень, превратив его в устойчивого поэтического героя национальной литературы.*

**Ключевые слова:** *образ ребёнка, Гафур Гулям, «Шум бола», юмор и смех, реалистическое изображение, национальный характер, философия детства, социальная среда.*

## O'ZBEK NASRIDA BOLA OBRAZINI YARATISHDA G'AFUR G'ULOMNING TUTGAN O'RNI

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**Annotatsiya.** Ushbu maqolada Gʻafur Gʻulomning “Shum bola” qissasida bola obrazini yaratish xususiyatlari tahlil qilinadi. Asarda bola quvnoqlik, topqirlik va shodlik ramzi sifatida tasvirlanib, xalqning bardoshi va hayotga boʻlgan optimistik qarashlarini mujassam etadi. Muallif bola obrazidan nafaqat hazil va satira vositasi sifatida, balki davrning murakkab ijtimoiy-siyosiy muammolarini yoritishda samarali vosita sifatida ham foydalanadi. Shu tariqa, Gʻafur Gʻulom oʻzbek nasrida bola obrazining tasvirini yangi bosqichga koʻtardi va uni milliy adabiyotning barqaror poetik qahramoniga aylantirdi.

**Kalit soʻzlar:** bola obrazi, Gʻafur Gʻulom, “Shum bola”, hazil va kulgi, realistik tasvir, milliy xarakter, bolalik falsafasi, ijtimoiy muhit.

## INTRODUCTION

In Uzbek literature, the image of the child has always held a special artistic and aesthetic significance. Through the depiction of children, writers have sought to reveal the national character, highlight social issues, and promote human values. Therefore, the child figure has appeared at various stages of Uzbek prose as an important artistic device reflecting the spirit of the people. The image of the child holds a significant place in both world and Uzbek literature. In particular, in European literature, the child figure is considered one of the most ancient symbols. It appears in various forms—from fairy tales and myths to modern novels and short stories. For writers, the image of the child serves as a means of expressing innocence, naturalness, purity, and a tool for highlighting social problems.

In world literature, many renowned authors have depicted the figure of the child since ancient times. In particular, in ancient mythology, the child symbol embodied divine power and the promise of the future. For example, in Greek mythology, the childhood of Zeus, or the depiction of Hercules as a symbol of strength even in infancy, serve as vivid illustrations of this idea. In medieval literature, however, the image of the child more often appears in a religious-didactic context—as a symbol of purity and obedience.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Furthermore, among European writers, Charles Dickens is regarded as one of the most advanced in portraying child figures. In his novels, the child character occupies a central role as a victim of social injustice. In *Oliver Twist*, through Oliver's life, the tragic fate of orphans in 19th-century England is depicted. Another author

who masterfully portrayed children is Mark Twain. In his *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, the child figure becomes a symbol of mischief, adventure, and freedom. Through these child characters, Twain critiques the false moral norms of society.

In Uzbek oral folklore, the image of the child is widely encountered in fairy tales, epics, and legends. The depiction of the child as brave, honest, and clever was primarily aimed at educational purposes. Figures such as the “mischievous child” and the “clever child” in folklore embodied the ideals, aspirations, and noble qualities of the people.[3]

From the 1920s–30s onward, the child figure in realistic prose acquired new social and artistic significance. One of the most prominent writers of this period, Gafur Gulom, in his work *Shum bola (Naughty Boy)*, portrayed the child within the socio-political environment of the Soviet era. Through the child’s playfulness, cheerfulness, and sometimes humorous pranks, the hardships of the period are overcome with laughter. In addition, in Abdulla Qahhor’s works, the child figure is more often portrayed within the family environment, as a victim of social injustice. For instance, in his stories, the pure, innocent gaze of children becomes an important tool for exposing the flaws of adults.[4]

## METHODOLOGY

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, literary analysis, comparative study, and contextual interpretation. The aim is to investigate Gafur Gulom’s unique contribution to the development of the child image in Uzbek prose, with particular focus on his well-known work “Shum bola”.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Through the child symbol, Gafur Gulom succeeded in addressing the socio-political issues of society with light humor and playfulness. At the same time, the figure of *Shum bola* artistically embodies the cleverness, resilience, and cheerfulness of Uzbek children, becoming a source of moral and educational inspiration for the younger generation. In this respect, Gafur Gulom’s work elevated the image of the child not only to the level of a literary phenomenon but also to that of a cultural and spiritual value.



*Shum bola*, as an image embodying the resilience and cheerfulness of the people, has become a universal figure in Uzbek prose. His mischievousness and cleverness inspire the younger generation toward values such as courage, honesty, and friendship, while reminding adults of the importance of laughter and optimism in the face of life's hardships. For this reason, the child image created by Gafur Gulom goes beyond the boundaries of literature, retaining pedagogical, spiritual, and philosophical significance as well.

In the work, children are depicted as symbols of mischief and cheerfulness, with various traditional Uzbek games being mentioned:

Mahallamizning bir tomoni Tikonli mozor, bir tomoni Qo'rg'ontagi. Uzun ko'chaning o'ng, chap tomonidagi pastqam, tor ko'chalarda o'g'il va qiz bolalar to'planib, har xil o'yinlar o'ynaymiz. Kurash, "botmon-botmon", "oq terakmi-ko'k terak", "qushimboshi", "mindi-mindi", "o'g'ri keldi", "bekinmachoq" degan o'yinlarimiz bor.[1,6]

Here is the translated version of this part:

*We had many games such as: "Wrestling", "Botman-botman", "White poplar or Blue poplar", "The Head of my Bird", "Ride-ride", "A Thief came" and so on.*[2,7]

The games reflecting the national mentality are expressed through the speech of the protagonist, and we shall examine some of them below:

*... 'och poyga' degan o'yinimiz yaxshi o'yin. Ikkita do'ppini chakkalarimizga bog'lab, otning qulog'iga o'xshatib orqa etaklarimizni tugib dum qilib, turli masofaga kim o'zarga yugurishamiz. Bizniki Tikonli mozor, Qoratosh, Yalanqari, Olmazor, Devonbegi, Qo'rg'ontagi, yana Tikonli mozor mahallalari bo'ylab o'tgan masofada – taxminan, uch chaqirimcha keladigan bir doirada o'tkaziladi. Oldin kelgan bolalarga chapak chalib, barakalla aytib, hurmat ko'rsatamiz. Ikkinchi poygagacha u zo'r hisoblanib yuraveradi.* [1,7]

Translation:

*Our "Naked Race" game was the best one. We lighted two hats on our heads, made a tail of a bird and ran far to get the farthest first.* [2,9]

A passage is presented in the story that depicts the unity and harmony of the neighborhood children:

- *Bolalar, xalfana qilamizmi?*
- *Bo'pti, qilamiz.*
- *Qayerda?*
- *Rizqi xalfaning ko'chib ketgan hovlisida.*
- *Bo'pti.*

*Xalfanaga palov qilmoqchi bo'ldik. Masavur otaliqning nabirasi Omonboyning o'g'li Husnibiy oshpaz bo'ladigan bo'ldi. Qozon, cho'mich, tuz, qalampir, suv – undan qolgan masalliqlarini shu yo'sinda taqsim qildik: guruch bilan sabzi – Yo'ldoshdan. Go'sht – Abdulla do'lvordan. Yog' – mendan. Qolgan-qutgan narsalar – Po'latxo'ja mug'ambirdan. [1,10]*

Let's analyze translated version:

- *Boys, let's do clubbing, shall we?*
- *All right.*
- *Where?*
- *At the yard of Rizki halfa.*
- *All right.*

*We were going to make palov. Husni, Masavur's grandson, and Omon's son were going to be cooks. We gathered dishes and products: rice and carrot were supposed to be brought by Yuldosh, meat was on Abdulla, and oil was on me. The rest of things were on Pulat. [2,10]*

From the passage, it becomes clear that the children had previously engaged in *halfana*—a communal activity in which food was prepared collectively by gathering ingredients from each household. Every child contributed some product from home, and together they would cook a shared meal. In fact, Shum Bola's very first adventures began when he had to secretly take oil from his house for this *halfana*.

In other parts of the work, there are also skillfully written episodes that reflect the protagonist's ingenuity and quick-wittedness. These fragments effectively reveal the essence of the national character. For instance,

*Biror soat sanqiganimizdan keyin, Omonning ketmoni bilan mening yog'och kuragimni sotishga ulgurdik. Shunda ham o'rtaga dallollar tushdi.*

– *Qani, ha, uka, baraka de,– deb yarim soatcha qo'l siltab savdolashgandan keyin ketmonni yarim so'mga, kurakni bir yarim tangaga "bor baraka top" qildik (Yoz bo'lgani uchun kurakning bozori kasod edi, attang, arzon ketdi).* [1,21]

*After some time we managed to sell our goods by the help of a broker. But we were able to sell only Omon's hoe and one of my goods.* [2,17]

This passage depicts Shum Bola's adventures in the market together with his friend Omon.

In the story, Shum Bola's ability to find clever solutions in every situation is depicted:

*Kechgacha odatdagicha ixlos bilan xizmat qildim.*

*Kechqurun ketishga tayyorlana boshladim. Shomdan keyin odatdagi o'zim yotib-turadigan yerda ko'rpacham, yostig'im taglarini – xazinamni tozalab, yengsiz to'n yoqasiga tika boshladim. Ikkita o'n so'mlik, uchta besh so'mlik tilla. Hoji bobo bergan bitta uch so'mlik qog'oz pul, qolganlari bir so'mlik, yarim so'mlik so'lkavoy, tanga-chaqa aralash edi. Tanga-chaqalarni tikkanim yo'q. Jamuljam qirq ikki so'm oltmish ikki tiyin bo'lgan edi. Katta davlat. Urush bo'lmaganda o'nta qo'y olsa bo'lar edi. Ha, mayli... [1,149]*

*In the evening, I prepared for the departure. I cleaned my place and began to sew my treasure into my collar. Two ten sums, three five sums by gold. One three sum by paper money, the rests were coins. I didn't sew coins. All are together 42 sums and 62 coins. It was a big treasure. I could buy ten sheep if there wasn't war.* [2,124]

From the perspective of literary studies, *Shum Bola* elevated Uzbek realism to a new artistic stage. In it, the child figure appears not merely as a passive observer of social life but as an active participant in events. This transformation turned the child character into a dynamic social hero. G'afur G'ulom's artistic mastery lies in his ability to reveal the deep layers of national character through childhood mischievousness, while skillfully embodying folk humor and satire in the child's speech and behavior.

## CONCLUSION

In the creation of the child image in Uzbek prose, G'afur G'ulom occupies a particularly important place. His famous novel *Shum Bola* reinterpreted the image



of childhood in Uzbek literature, transforming it into a symbol of mischief, sincerity, and social activity. The figure of Shum Bola not only introduced a new artistic dimension into national prose but also became a vivid embodiment of the people's spirit, life wisdom, and national character. Thus, G'afur G'ulom's work expanded the artistic and aesthetic possibilities of the child image in Uzbek prose, elevating it to the level of both national and universal values. The character of Shum Bola created by the writer established a unique literary school in the history of Uzbek literature and continues to serve as an exemplary model for subsequent generations of writers.

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