

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUMAN CHARACTER DEPICTION AND NATIONAL MINDSET

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Abstract. *The study of human character has always been intertwined with the cultural and intellectual traditions of a society. Every nation develops a specific worldview—its national mindset—that shapes the way individuals perceive reality, behave in social environments, and express moral or ethical values. This article explores the deep relationship between the depiction of human character and the national mindset, tracing how cultural norms, historical experiences, and collective memory influence the representation of personality traits in literature, folklore, and social communication. The analysis demonstrates that character portrayal is not simply a psychological category, but a cultural phenomenon reflecting the worldview and value system of a particular society.*

Keywords: *human character; character depiction; national mindset; cultural worldview; milliy tafakkur; cultural values; personality traits; folklore; literature; collective consciousness; moral ideals; cultural identity; historical memory; social norms; linguistic worldview; cultural psychology; national character; proverbs; tradition; mentality.*

Human character, often understood as a combination of moral, emotional, and psychological qualities, develops within a specific sociocultural context. Likewise, national mindset—referred to as milliy tafakkur in Uzbek scholarship—embodies the shared ways of thinking, perceiving, and interpreting the world that are common among members of a cultural group. The relationship between these two concepts is not accidental. The depiction of character in any society is influenced by its cultural expectations, traditions, norms, and collective experiences. At the same time, representations of character in literature, proverbs, epics, and everyday discourse shape how a nation understands itself. This reciprocal influence reveals that character and national mindset are mutually reinforcing.

While character has universal psychological foundations, its expression is culturally conditioned. Each society has its own criteria for what is considered virtuous,

noble, or immoral. These differences form the cultural lens through which human behavior is interpreted.

For example:

- In collectivist cultures, qualities such as humility, patience, obedience to elders, and self-restraint are often highlighted as admirable.
- In individualistic societies, independence, assertiveness, and personal achievement may be more valued.

Thus, character depiction is not merely descriptive; it is evaluative and culturally informed. Writers, thinkers, and ordinary people depict individuals by selecting traits that resonate with national moral standards. This means that character portrayal becomes a tool for transmitting cultural ideals. National mindset refers to the collective patterns of thought shared by a group of people bound by common history, language, and cultural values. Scholars generally highlight several components: Centuries of shared experiences—struggles, migrations, victories, and losses—shape a nation’s worldview. These historical events influence which traits are admired or criticized in people. Language is not only a communication tool but a vehicle of cultural consciousness. Proverbs, idioms, and folk sayings encode the mental patterns of a nation. They often express standards of good character. These norms guide appropriate behavior within the society. Concepts such as hospitality in Uzbek culture, honor and courage in Arab traditions, and self-control in East Asian cultures form part of the national mindset. Religious beliefs and philosophical teachings offer a deeper ethical framework that influences personality ideals.

Collectively, these factors determine how character is conceptualized and portrayed within the national culture. Human character is depicted in accordance with the expectations and ideals of society. For example, Uzbek literature often portrays characters who demonstrate *adolat* (justice), *sabr* (patience), *kattalarga hurmat* (respect for elders), and *or-nomus* (honor and dignity). These traits are not random; they reflect deep-rooted national values formed through centuries of cultural development. Similarly, European literature might emphasize individual heroism or personal freedom, shaped by the Enlightenment and humanist philosophies. When literature, proverbs, and oral narratives portray certain traits as desirable, they reinforce cultural expectations. Children grow up hearing stories and sayings that shape their understanding of good and bad behavior. Thus, character portrayal functions as a moral teaching mechanism and helps reproduce the national mindset in future generations.

For example, Uzbek proverbs such as “*Yaxshilik qil, daryoqa tashla*” (Do good and throw it into the river) promote altruism and modesty—traits highly valued in the culture. The same personality trait may be evaluated differently depending on cultural background. For instance, assertiveness may be seen as a sign of confidence in Western societies, while in some Eastern cultures it may be viewed as rudeness or

disrespect. This demonstrates that interpretation of character is deeply tied to national worldview. Folklore is one of the oldest sources for analyzing national mindset. It reflects the values, fears, hopes, and ethical ideals of a society. Characters in epics (dostonlar), tales, and legends embody traits the community admires or condemns.

For example:

- Heroes in Turkic epics (e.g., Alpamysh) represent bravery, loyalty, and honor.
- Wise elders or mothers symbolize compassion, wisdom, and moral guidance.

These depictions create moral models for individuals and define what it means to be a good member of the nation. Writers often express the psychological and moral qualities of their characters through the lens of their cultural environment. Many Uzbek authors—such as Abdulla Qodiriy, Cho'lpon, Oybek, or O'tkir Hoshimov—emphasize the conflict between traditional values and modern change. Through character experiences, they document the evolution of national mindset. Thus, literature serves both as a reflection and shaper of cultural identity. National mindset influences not only how characters are depicted in texts but also how individuals behave in daily life. Social practices—hospitality, respect for elders, modest behavior, close family ties—shape expectations for personal character. These behaviors are internalized over time and become part of the individual's self-identity. In turn, individuals who embody these traits reinforce the cultural norms and pass them to future generations.

This cyclical process demonstrates the dynamic interaction between character depiction and national mindset. While the relationship between character depiction and national mindset is strong, it is important to recognize that some aspects of human character are universal. Virtues such as honesty, kindness, justice, and courage appear across cultures. However, their expression and cultural significance differ.

-Honesty may be morally absolute in one culture, but situational in another. Hospitality may be a social requirement in some societies but a private choice in others. Patience and humility may be viewed as strengths in the East but as passivity in the West. Thus, character traits have both universal psychological foundations and culturally specific manifestations. The depiction of human character and the national mindset are deeply interconnected. Character portrayal reflects the cultural, historical, and moral values of a society, while the national mindset shapes the way individuals are understood and represented. This relationship is especially evident in literature, folklore, and proverbs, where cultural ideals are encoded in the depiction of heroes, wise figures, and moral lessons. As nations evolve, their values and worldview may shift, leading to new understandings of character.

Ultimately, studying character depiction through the lens of national mindset not only deepens our understanding of culture, but also highlights the rich diversity of human ways of thinking, feeling, and behaving. It reminds us that character is not only a psychological construct, but a cultural mirror reflecting the soul of a nation.

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