

REALISM AND NATIONAL IDENTITY: DICKENS' URBAN SOCIETY AND GAFUR
GULOM'S FOLK CHARACTERIZATION

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Annotation: *this article analyses the connection between realism and national identity through a comparative analysis of Charles Dickens and Gafur Gulom. Dickens, a leading Victorian novelist, employed realism to reveal the stark paradoxes of capitalist urban existence in nineteenth-century England. Conversely, Gulom, a pivotal character in twentieth-century Uzbek literature, utilised realism alongside folk humour and oral traditions to underscore the cultural resilience of his people against Soviet domination. Despite originating from different historical and ideological backgrounds, both authors demonstrate that realism serves not merely as a literary device but as a tool for social critique and a method of reinforcing communal identity.*

Keywords: *Realism, national identity, satire, folk culture, literature, society.*

Realism is acknowledged as a cultural portrayal that elucidates societal dynamics, rather than merely a stylistic choice in writing. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, realist literature emerged as an essential means of illustrating social hierarchies, quotidian challenges, and the ideals that influenced communities. The literary contributions of Charles Dickens and Gafur Gulom, despite their geographical and ideological disparities, both exemplify realism's ability to express national identity. Dickens reveals the difficulties inherent in industrial capitalism in England, whereas Gulom highlights Uzbek folk traditions under the Soviet context. Their writings illustrate that realism attacks repressive structures while yet preserving the cultural essence of a society.

Dickens is universally acknowledged as the archetypal Victorian realism. Novels like *Bleak House* (1853), *Hard Times* (1854), and *Oliver Twist* (1838) illustrate the intricacies of London life, encompassing socioeconomic disparity, legal intricacies, and middle-class hypocrisy. His portrayals of clerks, orphans, and factory workers exemplify both the material hardships of the impoverished and the ethical shortcomings of a profit-driven society (Flint, 2012). Dickens's realism transcends mere documentation; it possesses an ethical dimension aimed at stimulating public consciousness. According to Ledger and Luckhurst (2000), his London epitomises both advancement and destitution, exposing the contrasts intrinsic to industrial modernity.

While Dickens's realism evolved inside the framework of Victorian capitalism, Gulom's formed within the ideological limitations of the Soviet Union. His literary approach amalgamated realistic observation with humour, sarcasm, and oral traditions inherent to Uzbek culture. Works like *Shum bola* (*The Mischievous Boy*, 1936) attack irresponsibility and societal deficiencies while simultaneously celebrating perseverance and ingenuity among the common populace. Gulom frequently utilised proverbs and idiomatic idioms, anchoring his narratives in the cadence of peasant life (Suyunova, 2018). In contrast to Dickens, who emphasised individual alienation in urban settings, Gulom employed

realism to reinforce national identity and communal values among the challenges of modernisation and socialist ideology.

Both Dickens and Gulom possess a satirical inclination, albeit employing distinct methodologies. Dickens critiqued inefficiencies within judicial systems and the myopia of the bourgeoisie, employing sarcasm to reveal institutional shortcomings. Conversely, Gulom employed humour interwoven with folk wisdom to critique carelessness and injustice in daily life (Ravshanova, 2025). In both instances, satire served as a moral instrument, prompting readers to interrogate societal conventions. However, the scope of critique differs: Dickens emphasises urban isolation, whereas Gulom highlights community spirit.

The comparison underscores that realism adjusts to national situations instead than operating as a neutral framework. London in Dickens's works is marked by social stratification and swift industrial transformation, but Gulom's Uzbekistan is portrayed via the resilience of folk humour and traditions. Realism fulfils two concurrent roles: a reformist critique in Dickens's work and cultural preservation in Gulom's. Lodge (1992) asserts that realism is inherently contextual; its structure mirrors the ideological and cultural demands of its culture. In this regard, both Dickens and Gulom illustrate how literature navigates the interplay between critique and affirmation—questioning power institutions while reinforcing national identity.

In conclusion, the literary paths of Dickens and Gafur Gulom demonstrate the versatility of realism across cultural and temporal boundaries. Dickens's urban realism and Gulom's folk storytelling demonstrate that realism may reveal injustice while concurrently preserving cultural identity. Their works illustrate that literature serves both as a reflection of life and as a lens through which nations articulate their beliefs and affirm their national identity. In comparative analysis, realism functions as both a critical and constructive influence, influencing communal self-perception throughout history.

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