

THE AESTHETICS OF POETIC AND NARRATIVE CONSTRUCTIONS OF CHILDHOOD IN UZBEK AND ENGLISH LITERATURE.

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Annotation: This article explores the aesthetic dimensions of childhood representation in Uzbek and English literary traditions through a comparative qualitative approach. Drawing on the poetic works of Abdulla Oripov, Erkin Vohidov, and Khurshid Davron, alongside English texts by William Blake, Charles Dickens, and R.J. Palacio, the study highlights how literary form shapes cultural meanings of childhood. Uzbek poetry constructs childhood as a timeless, collective emblem of purity, national memory, and continuity, whereas English narrative prose presents it as an individualized and developmental stage marked by psychological struggle, resilience, and social inclusion.

Key words: purity, moral clarity, empathy, individual identity, national endurance, heritage, innocence, psychological growth.

Introduction.

Childhood has consistently appeared as a key motif in world literature, representing ideals of purity, moral clarity, and cultural belonging. In English works such as R.J. Palacio’s *Wonder*, childhood is depicted through themes of empathy, inclusion, and the challenges of personal growth. By contrast, Uzbek literature, particularly in Khurshid Davron’s childhood cycle and prose reflections, presents childhood as a poetic symbol of memory, heritage, and homeland. From Victorian novels to present-day young adult fiction, English literature often situates childhood within narratives of personal struggle and resilience. Through authors such as Dickens and Palacio, the child becomes a lens for examining society’s challenges and the shaping of individual identity. In contrast, Uzbek literature—emerging from oral traditions and enriched by lyrical expression—positions childhood within a symbolic and collective frame.

Methods.

This study applies a comparative framework that integrates multiple analytical perspectives:

- Poetic and Textual Analysis – exploring figurative language, imagery, rhythm, and stylistic patterns that construct the representation of childhood.
- Narratological Examination – investigating how plot structures and character functions position the child within wider moral and social frameworks.
- Linguocultural Reading – interpreting cultural codes and symbols to uncover the deeper meanings attached to the child motif in Uzbek and English traditions.

This research also adopted a comparative qualitative design, drawing on literary hermeneutics alongside thematic analysis.

Corpus Selection:

- Uzbek texts included Abdulla Oripov's verses that idealize childhood and innocence, Erkin Vohidov's lyric poetry centered on memory and national identity, and Xurshid Davron's prose enriched with poetic sensibilities.
- English texts comprised William Blake's Songs of Innocence and Experience, Charles Dickens' David Copperfield, and R.J. Palacio's Wonder.

Analytical Approach:

1. Aesthetic Examination – attending to figurative language, imagery, rhythm, symbolic devices, and narrative perspective.
2. Thematic Mapping – tracing recurring motifs such as innocence, morality, resilience, cultural heritage, and social belonging.
3. Comparative Reading – identifying points of overlap (e.g., childhood as a symbol of purity) and divergence (childhood as a communal versus an individual experience).

The purpose of this framework was not only to describe how childhood is represented but also to reveal the aesthetic principles through which each tradition articulates its cultural imagination.

Results.

The analysis demonstrates three key dimensions of childhood representation:

1. Innocence as an Aesthetic Ideal – Both literatures construct childhood as a symbol of purity, though with differing emphases: Palacio highlights the child's personal courage and resilience, whereas Davron situates innocence within nature and the shared memory of the community.
2. Ethical-Aesthetic Dimension – In English works, moral values such as kindness and empathy define the child figure. In contrast, Uzbek texts tie ethical development to filial devotion, reverence for elders, and loyalty to the homeland.
3. Cultural-Aesthetic Dimension – In the Anglo-American tradition, childhood is framed as a universal and inclusive human experience; in the Uzbek tradition, it is elevated into an artistic metaphor of national memory, identity, and continuity.

In Uzbek literature, poetic constructions of childhood are deeply rooted in symbolism and metaphor. The child is often described through natural imagery, particularly as bahor (spring), a season that connotes renewal, purity, and the promise of future growth. Such metaphoric representations elevate

childhood from a personal stage of life to a cultural archetype, embedding it within the wider symbolic framework of nature and national identity.

In contrast, English literature, particularly through its narrative traditions, emphasizes the temporal and psychological dimensions of childhood. Dickens' *David Copperfield* offers a prime example: childhood is depicted as a stage marked by hardship, vulnerability, and moral testing. Through psychological realism, Dickens dramatizes the process by which adversity shapes both character and moral consciousness, reflecting the harsh social conditions of industrial England. Childhood here is not eternalized but portrayed as a journey with struggles and turning points, inseparable from the process of identity formation.

These distinctions also point to differing aesthetic functions. In Uzbek literature, poetry eternalizes the child as part of the nation's cultural memory, embedding childhood within timeless values and shared identity. In English literature, narrative dramatizes the child's journey as a human experience, emphasizing growth, struggle, and resilience as central to personal and social formation.

Discussion.

The comparative perspective highlights that childhood embodies both shared and culture-specific dimensions: on the one hand, it symbolizes innocence and moral guidance universally; on the other, it functions as an artistic construct that mirrors the particular social values of each tradition. While Palacio's narrative frames childhood within the aesthetics of personal struggle and diversity, Davron's works transform the child into a lasting emblem of heritage and nationhood.

The study demonstrates that representations of childhood are inseparably bound to the cultural aesthetics in which they are produced. In Uzbek literature, where oral-lyrical traditions and national consciousness play a defining role, childhood emerges as a collective emblem that fuses individual memory with communal identity. The lyrical mode reinforces a sense of permanence, positioning childhood as a symbolic bridge that links inherited traditions with the aspirations of future generations.

By contrast, English literature—anchored in narrative realism and psychological depth—frames childhood primarily as an individual journey. Dickens portrays the hardships of poverty and survival through the experiences of children, while modern authors such as Palacio shift the focus toward inclusion, empathy, and diversity, reinterpreting childhood within a global, multicultural framework.

These contrasting approaches highlight two distinct aesthetic orientations:

- In Uzbek writing, childhood is tied to memory, cultural continuity, and enduring values.
- In English writing, it is associated with individuality, resilience, and social integration.

Despite these divergences, both literatures converge in portraying childhood as a universal moral and symbolic category, demonstrating literature's enduring power to articulate human values across cultural and temporal boundaries.

Conclusion.

This comparative study of Uzbek and English literary traditions demonstrates that childhood is far more than a natural phase of human development; it is an aesthetic and cultural construct charged with symbolic meaning. In the works of Uzbek poets like Abdulla Oripov and Erkin Vohidov, childhood is transformed into an enduring metaphor of purity, continuity, and national spirit. By contrast, English narrative traditions—as seen in Dickens’ *David Copperfield* and Palacio’s *Wonder*—portray childhood as a personal journey defined by psychological growth, social interaction, and resilience. These divergent portrayals reveal how cultural frameworks shape the literary imagination of the child.

The results indicate that the literary aesthetic of childhood operates simultaneously on universal and particular levels. Universally, both literatures view childhood as a marker of innocence, fragility, and moral vision. Culturally, however, Uzbek writing privileges collective memory, permanence, and shared identity, whereas English writing highlights individuality, temporality, and pluralism. Such contrasts demonstrate that childhood should be read not merely as a recurring motif, but as a critical lens through which societies articulate their values, anxieties, and aspirations. The analysis also underscores the decisive role of form in constructing meaning. Uzbek poetry, through its metaphorical richness and lyrical timelessness, elevates the child to a cultural archetype. English prose, with its narrative emphasis on time and development, renders childhood as an evolving experience embedded within social and psychological realities. These aesthetic strategies reflect the deeper epistemologies of the two traditions: the communal and memorial orientation of Uzbek culture versus the individual and experiential orientation of English literature. The juxtaposition of narrative and poetic depictions in English and Uzbek literature reveals that the child image extends beyond a mere stylistic motif, operating instead as a cultural marker. This cross-cultural reading emphasizes how literature encodes collective values and identities, while simultaneously affirming universal human ideals through the figure of childhood.

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