

THE ARTISTIC EXPRESSION OF SOCIAL-CRITICAL IDEAS THROUGH HUMOR
IN GAFUR GULOM'S PROSE

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Abstract: This article analyzes the artistic-aesthetic and social functions of humor in the works of Gafur Gulom, one of the prominent representatives of Uzbek literature. In the writer's prose, humor is interpreted not only as a means of laughter, but also as an artistic device that exposes social vices, reveals human character, and encourages the reader to reflect critically. In addition, the article examines the way moral, spiritual, and social problems of society are depicted through humor in such works as "Shum Bola". As a result, it is substantiated that the writer's socio-critical ideas expressed through humor played a significant role in the formation and development of Uzbek realism.

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to identify the social and critical ideas expressed through humor in the prose of Gafur Gulom, to reveal their artistic and aesthetic significance, and to analyze the writer's evaluation of social vices, human relationships, and moral values through laughter.

Materials and Methods: The methodological basis of this research consists of an integrated application of literary analysis, comparative study, and contextual interpretation methods. In the course of the research, on the one hand, Gafur Gulom's literary heritage particularly the work "Shum bola" and related prose texts—was subjected to direct analysis; on the other hand, existing literary studies, scholarly articles, monographs, and critical commentaries focusing on this work and its depiction of the child image were examined. Such an approach makes it possible to reveal more deeply the author's distinctive poetic mastery in creating the image of the child and to evaluate it within the broader context of artistic processes in Uzbek prose.

The role of Gafur Gulom in the formation of Uzbek literature is invaluable. In his works, life truth, rich folk language, and a social-critical spirit conveyed through humor are harmoniously combined. The writer uses laughter as an artistic weapon that not only entertains the reader but also exposes shortcomings within society.

Through the image of the child, Gafur Gulom succeeds in portraying the social and political problems of society with light humor and playfulness. At the same time, the figure of "Shum bola" artistically embodies the ingenuity, resilience, and cheerfulness of Uzbek children, becoming a source of moral and educational inspiration for the younger generation. In this respect, Gafur Gulom's creativity elevates the image of the child not merely to a literary phenomenon, but to the level of a cultural and spiritual value.

As an image that embodies the endurance and optimism of the people, *Shum bola* became a universal character in Uzbek prose. His playfulness and cleverness encourage the younger generation to uphold values such as courage, honesty, and friendship, while reminding adults of the importance of laughter and a positive outlook in the face of life's hardships. Therefore, the child image created by Gafur Gulom extends beyond artistic literature and remains relevant from pedagogical, moral, and philosophical perspectives.

In the prose works of Gafur Gulom, humor serves as an echo of the life of the people. Through the sharp-witted, mischievous, and optimistic image of the protagonist in "Shum bola", the

writer highlights social imbalances alongside human virtues by means of laughter. In the work “*My Little Thief Son*” (*Mening o‘g‘rigina bolam*), humor is combined with the ideas of compassion and forgiveness, emphasizing the humanistic foundation of Gafur Gulom’s humor. Through laughter, the writer analyzes the social conditions of his time and artistically depicts changes in the spiritual life of the people. His humor is not harsh satire, but rather a critique expressed with kindness.

Below, we analyze excerpts that reflect elements of folk humor in the work:

Men shu xayollarda ekanman, “g‘iyq” etib eshik ochildi-da, bir kishi oyoq uchi bilan yurib keldi. Men sekin-sekin go‘yo darchaning pardasini tortganday, loytuvoqni ustimga yopdim. Keluvchi kishi men yotgan tandirning ustiga o‘tirdi-da, hushtak bilan muzika chala boshladi.

To‘g‘ri, muzika yaxshi narsa, men qarshi emasman. Tinchlik vaqtda har qayerda eshitishim mumkin. Lekin o‘zingiz o‘ylang, birovni tandirga qamab, ustiga o‘tirib muzika chalsin, deb qaysi qonunda yozilgan ekan? Mumkinmi shu?..

In this passage, the main character narrates his mischievous and cheerful nature while facing the trials of life. The boy hides inside a tandoor, but someone unexpectedly comes and sits on top of it. That person, as if nothing unusual is happening, begins to “play music by whistling.” The writer presents this situation humorously through the child’s perspective. The scene itself is absurd: a person is lying inside a tandoor, while another sits above him and plays music. This life paradox symbolically reflects injustice, indifference, and the inability to feel others’ suffering through irony.

The language of Gafur Gulom in this passage is folk-like, vivid, and natural. Descriptive expressions such as “giyq,” “came walking on tiptoe,” and “started playing music by whistling” create a realistic atmosphere. These words draw the reader directly into the event and allow them to experience the child’s emotions firsthand.

In another passage, the humorous representation of the protagonist’s inner psychological experiences is conveyed with remarkable artistic clarity:

O‘zim sog‘-salomatman. Qo‘lim ixtiyorimda. Oyog‘im ra‘yim bilan yuradi. Ko‘zim ixtiyorimda. Xunuk narsalarga istamasam qaramayman. Og‘zim, jag‘im, tishim jodudek, istagan xashakni qirqib chiqarishga yaraydi. Ammo badan da bir sarkash a‘zo bor, u mening ixtiyorimdan tashqari, o‘zboshimcharoq. Unga mening hukmim o‘tmaydi. Bilmaganlar bilsin va ogoh bo‘lsinki, u a‘zo kamdan-kam kishilar ga vafo qilgan – qorin. U badan mulkining hokimligini ba‘zan qo‘limdan olib qo‘yadi. Boshqa a‘zolar ham uning isyonchi talablariga qo‘shila boshlaydi. Ko‘zim noshar‘iy, harom luqmalarga tusha boshlaydi. Qo‘l qorin hukmi bilan ba‘zida eng past kishilarga tama kapgiriday cho‘ziladi. Oyoq kutmagan joylarga olib boradi.

This passage is characteristic of the style of Gafur Gulom’s stories written in a philosophical-humorous tone. The writer animates the parts of the human body, attributing to them human behavior, character, desires, and a sense of willful struggle. He presents himself as a healthy and independent person, stating that “my hands, my feet, my eyes are under my control.” However, control is lost over one organ - the stomach, which symbolizes greed and uncontrolled desire.

The humor in this passage is outwardly comic but inwardly critical and philosophical. Portraying the stomach as a “rebellious organ” and as one that incites other organs toward disruption is a metaphorical form of irony. This humorous personification first brings a smile to the reader’s

face and then leads to deeper reflection. The writer depicts desire as an internal enemy within the human body, a force that disrupts moral balance.

This is a form of pure moral and social criticism in which human inner weakness is revealed through humor.

This passage is one of the deepest examples of Gafur Gulom's social-critical humor. Through the image of the "stomach," he exposes not only individual human weakness but also social vices such as greed, moral emptiness, and excessive materialism.

The passage reveals the struggle within a person's inner world the conflict between willpower and desire. Through humor, the writer advances an enlightening idea: a person must be in control of both body and desire. This idea is also relevant for society as a whole, reminding readers of the necessity to preserve spirituality in an environment where material interests dominate.

Qissada mahalla bolalari ahil-inoqligini tasvirlovchi parcha keltirilgan:

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

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 masalliqclarini 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.

From the passage it is clear that the children had previously also prepared *halfana*, that is, a meal cooked collectively by gathering ingredients together. Everyone brought some product from home and prepared food jointly. The real adventures of Shum bola actually began when he had to secretly take oil from his home precisely for this *halfana*.

In other parts of the work, passages reflecting the protagonist's resourcefulness and quick-wittedness are also written with great skill, and these sections reveal the national character. For example,

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).*

This passage embodies the life-based, philosophical, and social functions of humor in the prose of Gafur Gulom. While depicting the mischievous adventures of children, the writer conveys deeper ideas of human freedom, a cheerful outlook on life, and an inner rebellion against psychological pressure within society. Through the image of Shum Bola, Gafur Gulom transforms humor into an artistic means of expressing social truth.

From a literary-critical perspective, *Shum Bola* elevated Uzbek realism to a new artistic level. In the work, the image of the child is presented as a direct witness to social life and an active participant in events. This transformed the child figure from a passive observer into an active social character. Gafur Gulom's artistic mastery lies in his ability to reveal deep layers of national character through childish playfulness, successfully expressing folk humor and satire through the child's speech and behavior.

Gafur Gulom occupies a special place in the creation of the child image in Uzbek prose. His famous work *Shum Bola* introduced a new interpretation of childhood in Uzbek literature, turning it into a symbol of playfulness, sincerity, and social activity. The image of Shum Bola not only established a new artistic stage in national prose but also became a vivid embodiment of the people's mentality, life wisdom, and national character. Thus, Gafur Gulom's creative work expanded the artistic and aesthetic potential of the child image in Uzbek prose, elevating it to the level of national and universal values. The figure of Shum Bola created by the writer formed a distinctive artistic school in the history of Uzbek literature and continues to serve as a model character for later generations of writers.

CONCLUSION: In Gafur Gulom's prose, humor is not merely a tool for amusement but a powerful artistic means expressing deep spiritual and social meaning. Through humor, the author exposes social defects, human weaknesses, and moral dilemmas while encouraging the reader to think critically and engage in self-reflection. His humor is imbued with humanism, kindness, and sincerity. In works such as "Naughty Boy" humor becomes an artistic force that reveals the truth of life, reflects the spiritual world of the people, and portrays the national character. Gafur Gulom's humor-rich style enriched Uzbek realism and introduced a new aesthetic direction in literature.

Thus, the artistic expression of social and critical ideas through humor in writer's works represents not only his personal creative achievement but also a significant stage in the socio-aesthetic evolution of Uzbek literature.

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