

**CHILDHOOD MEMORY AS A LITERARY DEVICE:
A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF CHARLES DICKENS "DAVID
COPPERFIELD" AND GAFUR GULOM'S "SHUM BOLA"**

Matyakubova Nilufar Kadam kizi

1st year master student at Asia International University

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.21332042>

Abstract. This dissertation will focus on the comparative analysis of Charles Dickens' "David Copperfield" and Gafur Gulom's "Shum Bola", two novels that rely heavily on childhood memory as an exposition technique. This study will analyze the importance of childhood memory in terms of the character, moral and cultural aspects of the novels. The book compares both authors' use of memories of childhood to depict society, emotion and the development of the self, and explains Dickens' use of memories of childhood to represent misery, moralism and ambivalence in Victorian British society. Gafur Gulom uses different methods in Uzbekistan: humor, vitality, and social realism in a cultural context. The study shows both generalized and culture-specific aspects of childhood memory in cultural narratives, and stresses its role in character development and as a source of meaning.

The poem's theme includes different cultural realities and social realities, childhood memory and experience, cultural tradition and social interaction.

Introduction. The exploration of childhood memory is a universal and important literary trait that outlines human psychology, emotion, and morality, and acts as a vehicle for the exploration of the effects of memory on personality and the social and cultural circumstances of memory. Authors have deployed memory of childhood to both forge a connection between the past and the present, and to use personal experience to highlight social issues.

Despite the differences of nationality and time, Charles Dickens "David Copperfield" and Gafur Gulom's "Shum Bola" provide similar studies of the effect of remembering childhood on the protagonists' self-development in semi-autobiographical texts, such as Dickens' "David Copperfield" or Gulom's "Shum Bola", narrating their childhood experience.

Childhood memory acts as a narrative device. In literary studies, memory is also seen as an important narrative device allowing the author to recreate emotional and psychological experience: the memory of childhood is presented as characterized by innocence and vulnerability and by first-hand encounters with injustice, responsibility, and social reality. Literature uses childhood memory to deepen the characterization of individuals, illustrate themes and morals, and to further develop the emotional connection between reader and text.

Childhood Memory in David Copperfield. Charles Dickens's "David Copperfield" also features childhood recollection as a source of emotional chaos and moral pondering. The neglect, cruelty, and loneliness that David recalls experiencing as a youth serve both to illustrate social injustices in Victorian Britain and explicate the source of his emotional sensibility, empathetic personality, and moral conscience. Dickens uses childhood memory as a way to explore his protagonist's moral development, examining how recollections of trauma shape his identity.

A Memory of Childhood in Shum Bola. In contrast to that, Gafur Gulom's Shum Bola dealt with childhood memories in a mixed genre of social realism with adventure, pranks and daily life. Despite poverty and difficult living conditions, childhood is free and has energy. Throughout, humor is used as a way to critique society, while also presenting the imagination and resourcefulness of the child.

Comparative Analysis. The comparative analysis demonstrates that both Dickens and Gafur Gulom employ childhood memory as a powerful literary device to shape character

development and reflect social realities. Dickens emphasizes emotional suffering and moral introspection, while Gafur Gulom focuses on humor, social interaction, and cultural identity.

Conclusion. In conclusion, childhood memory in both *David Copperfield* and *Shum Bola* functions as far more than a nostalgic backdrop: it operates as a structuring literary device that organizes narrative sequence, shapes characterization, and articulates each author's broader social and moral vision. Dickens filters the child's perception of hardship, betrayal, and isolation through an adult narrator's retrospective voice, turning private suffering into a critique of Victorian institutions such as the workhouse, the boarding school, and exploitative labor practices. Gafur Gulom, by contrast, channels childhood memory through humor, mischief, and communal life, using the resourceful figure of the "Shum bola" to expose social injustice while affirming the resilience and vitality of ordinary people under difficult conditions.

The comparative reading demonstrates that although the two authors write from different centuries, literary traditions, and cultural contexts, they converge on a shared conviction: that the self is constructed retrospectively, through the selective reconstruction of childhood experience. Both novels rely on episodic memory, discrete, vividly rendered scenes rather than continuous chronological narration, to dramatize turning points in the protagonists' moral and emotional development. This structural similarity suggests that childhood memory as a narrative device transcends national literature and reflects a broader, cross-cultural pattern in autobiographical and semi-autobiographical fiction.

At the same time, the differences between the two texts, Dickens' melancholic moralism versus Gulom's comic vitality, reveal how childhood memory can be shaped to serve distinct ideological purposes: one critiques an industrializing, class-stratified society from within, while the other celebrates communal resilience and cultural identity within a Central Asian context. These divergences enrich rather than undermine the comparative framework, since they demonstrate the flexibility of childhood memory as a device capable of accommodating both individual introspection and collective social commentary.

Overall, this study confirms that childhood memory remains a universally significant literary device for exploring identity, morality, and social critique, while also demonstrating its capacity to absorb culturally specific meanings. Future research could extend this comparative approach to additional authors from both English and Uzbek literary traditions, or examine how translation and adaptation affect the representation of childhood memory across languages and media.

References

1. Dickens, C. (1850). *David Copperfield*. London: Bradbury and Evans.
2. G'ulom, G'. (1936). *Shum Bola*. Toshkent.
3. Abrams, M. H. (1999). *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle.
4. Forster, E. M. (1927). *Aspects of the Novel*. London: Edward Arnold.
5. Eagleton, T. (2008). *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell.