

The Realism Literature in the West and the East: A Contrastive Critical Thesis on Classification with a Focus on Uzbek Realism

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Annotation. Realism in literature has been a dominant mode of artistic expression in both Western and Eastern traditions, though it manifests differently due to cultural, philosophical, and socio-historical influences. This study critically examines the classification of realism in Western and Eastern literary traditions, contrasting its themes, techniques, and philosophical underpinnings. A special focus is given to **Uzbek realism**, a literary movement shaped by historical transformations, Soviet influence, and indigenous storytelling traditions. This research explores realism's evolution, key figures, and classifications in both traditions, emphasizing the contrast in their approaches to portraying reality.

Keywords: realism, Western literature, Eastern literature, Uzbek realism, social critique, Soviet influence, National identity

Реализм в западной и восточной литературе: Сравнительно-критическое исследование классификации с акцентом на узбекский реализм

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Аннотация. Реализм в литературе является доминирующим способом художественного выражения как в западной, так и в восточной традициях, хотя он проявляется по-разному под влиянием культурных, философских и социально-исторических факторов. Данное исследование критически рассматривает классификацию реализма в западных и восточных литературных традициях, сопоставляя их темы, художественные приёмы и философские основы. Особое внимание уделяется узбекскому реализму – литературному направлению, сформированному под влиянием исторических преобразований, советской идеологии и местных устных повествовательных традиций. В исследовании анализируется развитие реализма, ключевые фигуры и классификация в обеих традициях, подчёркивая различия в подходах к изображению реальности.

Ключевые слова: реализм, западная литература, восточная литература, узбекский реализм, социальная критика, советское влияние, национальная идентичность

G'arb va Sharq adabiyotida realizm: O'zbek realizmi misolida taqqoslovchi tanqidiy tadqiqot va uning tasnifi

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Annotatsiya. Realizm adabiyotda G'arb va Sharq an'alarida hukmron badiiy ifoda usuli bo'lib, u turli madaniy, falsafiy va ijtimoiy-tarixiy omillar ta'sirida har xil shakllarda namoyon bo'ladi. Ushbu tadqiqot G'arb va Sharq adabiy an'alarida realizmning tasnifini tanqidiy tahlil qiladi hamda ularning mavzulari, uslublari va falsafiy asoslarini taqqoslaydi. Ayniqsa, tarixiy jarayonlar, sovet mafkurasi va mahalliy og'zaki hikoyachilik an'analari ta'sirida shakllangan o'zbek

realizmiga alohida e'tibor qaratilgan. Tadqiqot davomida realizmning taraqqiyoti, asosiy namoyandalari va turli tasniflari o'rganilib, har ikkala adabiy an'anada voqelikni tasvirlashdagi yondashuvlar orasidagi farqlar yoritib beriladi.

Kalit so'zlar: realizm, G'arb adabiyoti, Sharq adabiyoti, o'zbek realizmi, ijtimoiy tanqid, sovet ta'siri, milliy o'zlik

Introduction

Realism, as a literary movement, emerged in the 19th century as a response to Romanticism and idealistic portrayals of the world. However, realism did not evolve uniformly across cultural contexts. While **Western realism**, shaped by Enlightenment thought and industrialization, often focuses on social critique, objectivity, and an empirical depiction of life, **Eastern realism** integrates spiritual, philosophical, and historical elements with social realism. A specific case within Eastern realism is **Uzbek realism**, which reflects **both pre-Soviet traditions and Soviet socialist realism**, presenting a unique fusion of **folk narratives, historical struggles, and modernist concerns**.

This divergence raises significant questions:

How do Western and Eastern realism classify reality differently?

What key themes define each tradition?

How do socio-political conditions shape realism's trajectory?

What role does Uzbek realism play within Eastern realism?

Understanding realism's classification within both traditions reveals not only literary techniques but also deep-seated worldviews about reality, representation, and human experience.

Methods

This study employs a **comparative literature analysis**, drawing on primary and secondary sources to classify realism across Western and Eastern traditions. Primary sources include major realist novels and theoretical essays, while secondary sources include critical analyses, literary reviews, and philosophical commentaries. The approach is **contrastive and analytical**, highlighting key differences and points of convergence.

For **Uzbek realism**, specific works by **Abdulla Qodiriy, Oybek, Said Ahmad, and Pirimqul Qodirov** are examined to understand how realism evolved in **Uzbek literature, particularly in response to Soviet ideology and post-independence themes**.

Results

1. The Classification of Western Realism

Western realism can be categorized into three main branches:

a) **English Realism: Social Critique and Psychological Exploration**

English realism, particularly from the **Victorian era**, played a crucial role in shaping **Western realism** by highlighting:

- ❖ **Industrialization and its social effects.**
- ❖ **Class divisions and economic struggles.**
- ❖ **Psychological depth and character development (Eliot, 2009).**

Key Authors and Works

Charles Dickens – *Hard Times* (1854)

- ❖ Exposes the **dehumanizing effects of industrial capitalism.**
- ❖ Criticizes **factories, mechanization, and class disparity (Dickens, 1854).**

George Eliot – *Middlemarch* (1871-72)

- ❖ A masterpiece of **psychological realism**, exploring **social ambition and personal morality.**
- ❖ Represents **the struggle between individual desires and societal expectations (Levine, 2001).**

Thomas Hardy – *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891)

- ❖ Criticizes **Victorian morality and fatalism.**

❖ Highlights **gender inequality, fate, and rural hardships** (Casagrande, 1982).

William Makepeace Thackeray – *Vanity Fair* (1848)

❖ A satirical novel that **mocks social climbing, hypocrisy, and ambition**.

English realism emphasized **complex character psychology**, showing how **social environments and personal struggles intersect**.

b) European Social Realism: Class Struggles and Economic Disparities

❖ **Émile Zola’s *Germinal* (1885) (France)** – Examines **miners’ working conditions and labor uprisings** (Zola, 1885).

❖ **Fyodor Dostoevsky’s *Crime and Punishment* (1866) (Russia)** – Analyzes **moral dilemmas and psychological depth** (Frank, 2010).

c) Naturalism in Western Realism

Naturalism extends realism’s deterministic perspective, portraying characters as products of their environment and hereditary conditions.

❖ **Thomas Hardy’s *Tess of the D’Urbervilles* (1891)** – Explores **fate and injustice in rural England** (Casagrande, 1982).

❖ **Émile Zola’s *Thérèse Raquin* (1867)** – Examines **human instincts and social determinism**.

2. The Classification of Eastern Realism

Eastern realism, particularly in **China, Japan, India, and Uzbekistan**, often blends **philosophy, history, and socio-political critique**.

Its classification includes:

a) Social and Political Realism – Influenced by Marxism and anti-colonial resistance.

Example: Lu Xun’s *Diary of a Madman* (1918) critiques feudalism (Lu, X. 1918).

Example: Premchand’s *Godan* (1936) reflects rural struggles in India (Premchand, M., 1936).

b) Aesthetic and Symbolic Realism – Uses poetic elements to depict reality.

Example: Natsume Sōseki’s *Kokoro* (1914) blends psychological and symbolic realism (Natsume, S., 1914).

Example: Rabindranath Tagore’s *The Home and the World* (1916) critiques nationalism (Tagore, R., 1916).

c) Spiritual Realism – Merges realism with metaphysical or Buddhist-Daoist thought.

Example: Yasunari Kawabata’s *Snow Country* (1947) intertwines Zen aesthetics with realism (Kawabata, Y., 1947).

Example: Lao She’s *Rickshaw Boy* (1937) presents social critique alongside existential reflection.

d) Uzbek Realism: A Fusion of Historical, Social, and Soviet Influences

Uzbek realism can be divided into **three major periods**:

1. Pre-Soviet Uzbek Realism (Early 20th Century)

This period reflects **historical realism and social critique**, influenced by national identity and colonial struggles under the Russian Empire.

Abdulla Qodiriy’s *O‘tkan Kunlar* (1926) (“Bygone Days”) – The first Uzbek realist novel, depicting the socio-political tensions of the 19th century with a focus on national consciousness (Qodiriy, A., 1926).

2. Soviet Socialist Realism (1930s–1980s)

This phase was shaped by **Soviet ideology**, emphasizing collectivism, industrial progress, and the glorification of socialism.

Oybek’s *Qutlug‘ Qon* (1940) (“The Sacred Blood”) – A novel about class struggle and socialist transformation in Uzbekistan (Oybek, 1940).

Said Ahmad’s *Kechikkan Hayot* (Late Life) (1963) – Critiques the rigid Soviet bureaucracy while adhering to socialist realism (Ahmad, S., 1963).

3. Post-Soviet and Contemporary Realism (1991–Present)

With Uzbekistan's independence in 1991, realism shifted toward themes of **historical revisionism, identity crisis, and political critique**.

Pirimqul Qodirov's *Yulduzli Tunlar* (1981) ("Starry Nights") – A historical realist novel about Amir Timur's leadership, reflecting post-Soviet national consciousness (Qodirov, P, 1981)

Tog'ay Murod's *Otamdan Qolgan Dalalar* (1994) ("The Fields Left by My Father") – A post-Soviet realist novel reflecting rural struggles and disillusionment with modernization (Murod, T., 1994).

Discussion

Key Differences

Aspect	Western Realism	Eastern Realism (Including Uzbek Realism)
Philosophical Roots	Empiricism, materialism, Marxism	Confucianism, Buddhism, Uzbek national consciousness
Themes	Industrialization, class struggle, individual psyche	Historical change, social harmony, resistance to colonialism
Representation of Reality	Objective, often stark depiction	Blends realism with poetic and symbolic elements
Influence of Society	Critique of capitalism and modernity	Reflection on tradition, modernity, and national identity
Narrative Style	Linear, detailed, psychological depth	Layered, often allegorical or introspective

Uzbek Realism's Unique Contribution:

- a) Bridges Soviet socialist realism and national realism
- b) Reflects both collective struggles and individual identity crises
- c) Influenced by oral storytelling traditions and Sufi mysticism

Conclusion

This study reveals that realism, while globally significant, is not a monolithic concept—it adapts to cultural, political, and historical contexts. Western realism is materialist, socio-critical, and empirical, whereas Eastern realism, particularly in Uzbek literature, is philosophical, historical, and symbolic.

Key Insights from This Study:

1. Western realism is more focused on individual psychology and social critique, whereas Eastern realism integrates collective identity, national struggles, and spiritual elements.
2. Uzbek realism stands as a bridge—it reflects both socialist ideals (from the Soviet era) and nationalistic-historical consciousness (from post-independence literature).
3. English realism significantly shaped Western literature, emphasizing industrialization's effects, psychological realism, and moral dilemmas.
4. Realism is fluid—it adapts to historical contexts, making it a dynamic literary mode rather than a fixed category.

This contrastive classification demonstrates that realism is more than a literary technique—it is a reflection of cultural identity, history, and ideology. Future research should explore how contemporary globalization influences modern realism across these traditions.

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