



**THE DIALECTICS OF MATERIAL WEALTH, FAME, AND SPIRITUAL
EMPTINESS IN F. SCOTT FITZGERALD’S THE GREAT GATSBY, ERKIN
A’ZAM’S A WALK UNDER THE THUNDERSTORM, AND ULUGBEK
HAMDAM’S BALANCE**

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Abstract

This article analyzes the dialectics of material wealth, the pursuit of fame, and spiritual emptiness in F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby*, Erkin A’zam’s *A Walk under the Thunderstorm* (Momoqaldiraq ostida sayr), and Ulugbek Hamdam’s *Balance* (Muvozanat). The study focuses on how American and Uzbek prose represent the conflict between external success and inner dissatisfaction. In Fitzgerald’s novel, material wealth is closely connected with the corrupted American Dream, social prestige, class difference, and moral carelessness. In Erkin A’zam’s prose, the crisis of personality is interpreted through modern social pressure, irony, psychological instability, and the tension between external appearance and inner truth. In Ulugbek Hamdam’s *Balance*, the problem is presented as a philosophical search for harmony between material life and spiritual values. The article argues that all three works reveal a common literary-philosophical idea: when wealth, fame, and social recognition become higher than conscience, love, morality, and self-awareness, the individual experiences spiritual emptiness.

Keywords: Material wealth, fame, spiritual emptiness, Fitzgerald, Erkin A’zam, Ulugbek Hamdam, American Dream, Uzbek prose, moral crisis, comparative literature.



Introduction

The problem of material wealth and spiritual emptiness occupies an important place in modern world literature. In many literary works, wealth is not interpreted only as money, property, or economic power. It becomes a symbol of social ambition, personal desire, illusion, and moral testing. A person may become rich, famous, and socially recognized, but this external success does not always lead to inner peace. On the contrary, literature often shows that the pursuit of wealth and fame may cause alienation, loneliness, moral decline, and spiritual emptiness.

This problem is especially significant in the prose of F. Scott Fitzgerald. His novel *The Great Gatsby* presents the bright but morally unstable world of the American Jazz Age. Gatsby's mansion, parties, expensive car, and luxurious lifestyle create the image of success. However, behind this success there is loneliness, illusion, and tragedy. Gatsby becomes rich, but he cannot achieve real happiness. Daisy and Tom Buchanan possess social privilege, but their wealth does not make them morally responsible. Fitzgerald shows that material prosperity without spiritual depth leads to emptiness and destruction¹.

A similar artistic-philosophical problem can be found in Uzbek prose. Erkin A'zam's *Momoqaldiriq ostida sayr* and Ulugbek Hamdam's *Muvozanat* represent the crisis of the individual in modern Uzbek society. In these works, the human being faces the pressure of social expectations, ambition, reputation, moral uncertainty, and the search for identity. The pursuit of external success becomes dangerous when it separates a person from inner truth, conscience, and spiritual balance.

The aim of this article is to analyze the dialectics of material wealth, fame, and spiritual emptiness in *The Great Gatsby*, *Momoqaldiriq ostida sayr*, and *Muvozanat*. The word "dialectics" is used here to mean the internal conflict between two opposite forces: material prosperity and spiritual poverty, fame and loneliness, social success and moral crisis, external appearance and inner emptiness. Through comparative analysis, the article reveals both universal and national features of this problem in American and Uzbek prose.

Material wealth in literature is not a simple economic concept. It often performs symbolic, psychological, and philosophical functions. Wealth may symbolize freedom, power, opportunity, beauty, and success. At the same time, it may also

¹ Fitzgerald F. S. *The Great Gatsby*. – New York: Scribner, 2004. – 180 p.



symbolize arrogance, illusion, inequality, moral carelessness, and spiritual decline. Therefore, the representation of wealth in literature is always connected with the writer's moral and aesthetic position.

Fame is another important category. Fame means recognition by society. It can give a person status and influence, but it can also create artificial identity. A famous person may be known by many people but understood by nobody. Literature often shows that fame may increase loneliness because it replaces genuine human relationships with public image.

Spiritual emptiness refers to the lack of inner meaning, moral stability, emotional sincerity, and existential harmony. A spiritually empty person may live comfortably but feel internally lost. He may possess wealth, position, or fame, but he lacks peace, love, faith, moral responsibility, or self-understanding. This concept is central to modernist and postmodern prose, where the individual often feels alienated from society and from himself.

In *The Great Gatsby*, Fitzgerald presents all three categories together. Gatsby's wealth creates his fame; his fame attracts people to his parties; however, his inner world remains lonely and dependent on an impossible dream. In Uzbek prose, especially in Erkin A'zam and Ulugbek Hamdam, wealth and fame are often connected with psychological tension, moral imbalance, and the search for authentic identity. Uzbek literary critic Umarali Normatov notes that modern Uzbek prose often pays attention to the inner world of the person and to the moral-philosophical meaning of social reality.

Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* is one of the most famous literary interpretations of wealth and spiritual emptiness in American literature. The novel describes a society where people are fascinated by luxury, parties, beautiful houses, expensive clothes, cars, and social status. However, Fitzgerald does not present this world as a true paradise. He shows that the world of wealth is full of moral weakness, emotional emptiness, and social inequality.

Jay Gatsby is the main figure of this contradiction. He becomes wealthy, but his wealth is not an end in itself. It is a means of reaching Daisy Buchanan. Gatsby believes that material success can help him recover lost love and repeat the past. His mansion, parties, and elegant lifestyle are all created for Daisy. In this sense, Gatsby's wealth has romantic motivation. However, this romantic dream is built on material illusion. Fitzgerald shows that money cannot restore time, love, or moral truth.



Gatsby's tragedy lies in the contradiction between his spiritual dream and the material means he uses to achieve it. He believes in love, hope, and transformation, but the society around him believes in money, class, and social advantage. Gatsby tries to enter Daisy's world through wealth, but he never truly belongs to it. His newly acquired wealth cannot overcome the invisible borders of class. This is why his dream remains incomplete.

Daisy Buchanan is a symbol of beauty, wealth, and moral weakness. Gatsby idealizes her, but Daisy herself is not spiritually strong. She chooses safety, comfort, and social privilege rather than moral responsibility. Her famous association with money shows that she belongs to the world where human emotions are influenced by wealth and status. Daisy's voice is described as being "full of money," and this phrase reveals the deep connection between love, desire, and class in the novel.

Tom Buchanan represents old wealth and social arrogance. He is rich, powerful, and confident, but he lacks compassion and moral responsibility. His wealth gives him protection. He can hurt people and then return to his comfortable life. Through Tom and Daisy, Fitzgerald criticizes the wealthy class that enjoys privilege without accepting responsibility. Nick Carraway's judgment that they are "careless people" expresses the moral center of the novel.

Thus, in *The Great Gatsby*, material wealth is not condemned simply because it is wealth. It is criticized because it becomes separated from morality. Wealth without responsibility creates carelessness. Wealth without love creates loneliness. Wealth without truth creates illusion. This is Fitzgerald's main philosophical message.

Fame plays an important role in Gatsby's identity. Gatsby is known by many people, but he remains mysterious. His parties are crowded, yet his personal life is empty. People attend his parties, drink his alcohol, enjoy his music, and gossip about him, but they do not truly know him. This contrast between public fame and private loneliness is one of the strongest artistic features of the novel.

Gatsby's fame is artificial. It is created through luxury and spectacle. His house becomes a stage, and his parties become performances. However, this performance does not bring him emotional closeness. In fact, fame separates him from real human contact. People are interested in Gatsby's wealth, but not in his soul. They consume his hospitality but do not share his destiny.

This aspect of the novel reveals the emptiness of social recognition. Fitzgerald shows that fame can be superficial and unstable. When Gatsby dies, most of the people who



attended his parties disappear. Their absence proves that Gatsby's social world was false. His fame was wide but shallow. His wealth attracted crowds, but it did not create loyalty.

Harold Bloom emphasizes that Gatsby's greatness is connected with his extraordinary capacity for hope, but this hope is placed in a morally corrupted social environment². Therefore, Gatsby's fame becomes tragic: it is the external form of an inner dream that society cannot understand.

The pursuit of fame in *The Great Gatsby* is also connected with the American Dream. Gatsby wants not only Daisy but also recognition. He wants to prove that he has become someone important. His life is a self-created myth. However, Fitzgerald shows that self-creation becomes dangerous when it depends only on image, money, and social performance. Gatsby creates a brilliant external identity, but this identity cannot save him from spiritual loneliness.

Erkin A'zam's *Momoqaldiriq ostida sayr* represents a different cultural and artistic context, but it also deals with the crisis of personality in a changing society. The title itself. *A Walk under the Thunderstorm* has symbolic meaning. A thunderstorm usually suggests anxiety, danger, psychological tension, and instability. A walk under the thunderstorm may symbolize the movement of a person through a morally and socially complicated world.

In Erkin A'zam's prose, the individual often faces contradictions between external life and inner truth. Social expectations, reputation, ambition, personal desires, and moral hesitation create psychological tension. Unlike Fitzgerald's glamorous world of American wealth, Erkin A'zam's artistic world is more ironic, everyday, and socially recognizable. However, the main problem is similar: a person may lose inner harmony when he becomes dependent on external evaluation.

Material wealth in *Momoqaldiriq ostida sayr* is not represented through the same luxurious imagery as in *The Great Gatsby*. There are no Gatsby-like mansions or endless parties. Instead, the focus is more on social behavior, personal ambition, moral confusion, and the subtle forms of spiritual emptiness in ordinary life. This difference is important because it shows the national specificity of Uzbek prose.

² Bloom H., ed. *F. Scott Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby*. – New York: Bloom's Literary Criticism, 2010. – 182 p.



Spiritual emptiness is not always born from luxury; it may also appear from social hypocrisy, internal dissatisfaction, and the loss of sincerity³.

Erkin A'zam's characters often live in a world where appearance matters. People may try to protect their reputation, maintain social image, or adapt themselves to changing circumstances. This creates a form of inner division. A person behaves in one way publicly but feels differently inside. Such a contradiction becomes the source of moral and psychological crisis.

The dialectics of fame in Erkin A'zam's prose is also different from Fitzgerald's. Fame here may appear not as glamorous celebrity status, but as social recognition, reputation, or the desire to be respected by others. In Uzbek cultural context, public opinion has strong influence on personal life. Therefore, the pursuit of recognition may become a burden. A person may sacrifice inner truth for external respect.

This makes Erkin A'zam's work comparable with Fitzgerald's novel. Gatsby performs wealth in order to be accepted by Daisy and society. Erkin A'zam's characters may perform social correctness or personal success in order to be accepted by their environment. In both cases, performance replaces authenticity, and this leads to spiritual emptiness.

Spiritual emptiness in Momoqaldiraq ostida sayr is expressed through psychological discomfort, irony, and moral uncertainty. Erkin A'zam does not always describe crisis directly. He often reveals it through details, dialogues, behavior, and the inner contradictions of characters. This gives his prose a subtle psychological quality.

The spiritual crisis in this work may be interpreted as a crisis of sincerity. When a person lives according to external expectations only, he gradually loses connection with his inner self. He may continue to function socially, but internally he becomes uncertain and fragmented. This is one of the main features of modern prose.

In Fitzgerald, spiritual emptiness is often hidden behind wealth and beauty. In Erkin A'zam, it may be hidden behind ordinary social behavior. The difference of artistic form does not remove the similarity of philosophical meaning. Both writers show that a human being needs inner truth. Without it, social success becomes empty.

Another important point is irony. Erkin A'zam's prose often uses irony to expose false values. Irony helps the writer show the distance between what people say and what they really are. This method is especially useful for criticizing social hypocrisy and

³ A'zam E. Momoqaldiraq ostida sayr. – Toshkent: Sharq, 2010.



moral weakness. Fitzgerald also uses irony, especially through Nick Carraway's narration, but Erkin A'zam's irony is more connected with Uzbek social mentality and everyday life. Thus, Momoqaldiraq ostida sayr presents material and social ambition not as open tragedy but as an inner storm. The thunderstorm becomes a metaphor for the unstable moral condition of the individual and society.

Ulugbek Hamdam's Muvozanat is very important for the topic of material wealth and spiritual emptiness because the title itself means "balance." The idea of balance is directly connected with the relationship between material and spiritual values. A person needs material stability, but he also needs spiritual harmony. When one side dominates the other, crisis begins.

In Muvozanat, the modern individual faces the challenge of finding harmony in a changing social environment. Economic needs, personal ambitions, family responsibilities, moral values, and spiritual questions all influence human life. The novel can be interpreted as a philosophical reflection on how a person can preserve inner integrity while living in a society full of contradictions⁴.

Unlike Gatsby, Hamdam's characters are not simply chasing luxury. Their crisis is more existential and moral. They are searching for meaning, stability, and self-understanding. Material life is important, but it cannot answer all questions. The title Muvozanat suggests that the solution is not complete rejection of material life, but the correct balance between external and internal values.

This idea is very close to Uzbek moral-philosophical tradition. Uzbek literature often emphasizes moderation, responsibility, family duty, and moral harmony. In this sense, Hamdam's novel continues national literary tradition while also addressing modern problems. The person of the modern period must live between old and new values, material needs and spiritual demands, social pressure and individual conscience⁵.

In Muvozanat, spiritual emptiness appears when this balance is broken. A person who focuses only on material success may lose inner peace. A person who ignores social reality may also suffer. Therefore, Hamdam's philosophical position is complex: human life requires both material foundation and spiritual meaning. But spiritual values must guide material life, not disappear under its pressure.

The comparison of The Great Gatsby, Momoqaldiraq ostida sayr, and Muvozanat shows that all three works deal with the crisis of the individual under the influence of

⁴ Hamdam U. Muvozanat. – Toshkent: Sharq, 2007.

⁵ Fitzgerald F. S. Babylon Revisited and Other Stories. – New York: Scribner, 1996.



external values. However, each writer presents this crisis differently. Gatsby's crisis is romantic and social. He wants to recover the past through wealth. His tragedy is caused by illusion, class difference, and the moral emptiness of the rich world. Gatsby's wealth creates fame, but fame does not bring him love or belonging.

In Erkin A'zam's prose, the crisis is more psychological and ironic. The individual is not necessarily surrounded by luxury, but he is surrounded by social expectations and moral ambiguity. Spiritual emptiness appears through the loss of sincerity and the dominance of external appearance.

In Hamdam's Muvozanat, the crisis is philosophical. The main question is how to preserve balance between material life and spiritual values. Hamdam's heroes are searching for inner harmony in a world where values are changing. The similarity between these works lies in the fact that all of them criticize false success. Gatsby's success is false because it cannot give him spiritual happiness. Erkin A'zam's characters face false social appearances. Hamdam's characters struggle against the false belief that one side of life can replace the other.

The difference lies in cultural and historical context. Fitzgerald writes about American capitalism and the collapse of the American Dream. Erkin A'zam writes about modern Uzbek social psychology, irony, and the contradictions of everyday life. Hamdam writes about the philosophical need for balance in the post-Soviet and independence-period Uzbek context.

In all three works, material wealth or external success functions as a moral test. It reveals the true nature of characters. Gatsby's wealth reveals his hope but also his illusion. Daisy's wealth reveals her weakness. Tom's wealth reveals his arrogance. In Fitzgerald's world, wealth exposes moral emptiness rather than hiding it.

In Erkin A'zam's work, social success and public reputation also test the character. A person's reaction to social pressure shows whether he has inner independence or not. If he depends completely on external judgment, he becomes spiritually unstable. In this sense, reputation becomes similar to wealth: it is useful only when it does not destroy inner truth.

In Muvozanat, material life tests the person's ability to maintain balance. A person must work, live, support family, and exist in society, but he must not lose moral and spiritual orientation. Hamdam's philosophical message is that material life should serve human dignity, not control it. This idea has universal significance. Literature does not deny the importance of material life. It criticizes the absolutization of



material values. Wealth, fame, and prestige become dangerous only when they become higher than conscience, love, responsibility, and truth⁶.

The relationship between fame and loneliness is especially clear in *The Great Gatsby*. Gatsby is famous among party guests, but emotionally he is alone. His social visibility does not mean personal closeness. This is one of Fitzgerald's most powerful criticisms of modern society: a person may be surrounded by people but remain spiritually isolated.

In Erkin A'zam's prose, loneliness may appear in another form. A person may live among relatives, colleagues, or acquaintances but still feel internally alienated. Social closeness does not always mean spiritual understanding. This problem is very important in modern Uzbek prose, where the individual often faces the contradiction between collective expectations and personal truth.

In *Muvozanat*, loneliness is connected with the search for meaning. A person who cannot find balance may feel alone even within society. *Hamdam* shows that spiritual loneliness is not solved by external success. It requires inner clarity and moral orientation. Thus, fame and recognition are not enough. A person needs genuine human connection. Without sincerity, fame becomes noise, and recognition becomes emptiness.

Space plays an important role in all three works. In *The Great Gatsby*, Gatsby's mansion symbolizes wealth, spectacle, and loneliness. The parties create an atmosphere of abundance, but the mansion is spiritually empty. The valley of ashes symbolizes social destruction and the hidden cost of prosperity. East Egg and West Egg symbolize class division.

In *Momoqaldiriq ostida sayr*, the image of walking under a thunderstorm has symbolic meaning. It suggests movement through crisis, uncertainty, and inner tension. The thunderstorm may be understood as a metaphor for psychological and social instability. The space is not merely physical; it reflects the state of the human soul.

In *Muvozanat*, space is connected with the idea of balance. The external world and the internal world must be harmonized. The novel's symbolic system suggests that human life becomes meaningful only when a person finds a stable moral position in unstable reality. The symbolic spaces of these works differ, but their function is

⁶ Mizener A. *The Far Side of Paradise: A Biography of F. Scott Fitzgerald*. – Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1951.



similar. They show that the external environment reflects inner crisis. A mansion, a storm, or a search for balance becomes a sign of the person's spiritual condition.

Although the three works share common themes, their national specificity must be emphasized. Fitzgerald's novel reflects American culture, especially the idea of self-made success and the American Dream. Gatsby believes that he can create himself through effort and wealth. His tragedy shows the limits of this dream in a society controlled by class and money.

Erkin A'zam's work reflects Uzbek social psychology. The individual is connected with community, reputation, and social expectations. The crisis is not only personal; it is also related to the moral atmosphere of society. His prose often uses irony to reveal contradictions in social behavior.

Ulugbek Hamdam's Muvozanat reflects the spiritual and philosophical questions of the independence period and modern Uzbek society. The search for balance is connected with changing values, social transformation, and the need to preserve national and spiritual identity. Therefore, the same general problem appears in three different forms: American material glamour, Uzbek social-psychological irony, and Uzbek philosophical search for balance.

Conclusion

The analysis of material wealth, the pursuit of fame, and spiritual emptiness in *The Great Gatsby*, *Momoqaldiroq ostida sayr*, and *Muvozanat* shows that American and Uzbek prose share a deep concern with the moral condition of the modern individual. In Fitzgerald's novel, material wealth and fame are connected with the corrupted American Dream. Gatsby's luxurious life cannot give him true love or spiritual peace. Tom and Daisy's wealth protects them socially but exposes their moral emptiness. In Erkin A'zam's *Momoqaldiroq ostida sayr*, the problem is presented through psychological tension, irony, social pressure, and the crisis of sincerity. Spiritual emptiness appears not only in luxury but also in ordinary social life when people lose connection with inner truth. In Ulugbek Hamdam's *Muvozanat*, the issue becomes philosophical: the individual must find balance between material needs and spiritual values.

The comparative analysis proves that wealth, fame, and social recognition are not negative by themselves. They become destructive when they replace conscience, love, sincerity, responsibility, and self-awareness. The main similarity between Fitzgerald,



Erkin A'zam, and Ulugbek Hamdam is their belief that external success without inner meaning leads to emptiness. The main difference lies in artistic and cultural interpretation: Fitzgerald connects the problem with the American Dream and class society, Erkin A'zam with social psychology and irony, and Hamdam with the philosophical search for balance.

Thus, the dialectics of material wealth, fame, and spiritual emptiness remains one of the most important problems in comparative literary studies. These works remind readers that true human value is not measured by wealth or public recognition, but by spiritual integrity, moral responsibility, and inner harmony.

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