

THE PORTRAYAL OF PERSONAL ISOLATION AND SOCIAL ALIENATION IN THE GREAT GATSBY AND UZBEK INDEPENDENCE-PERIOD PROSE

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Abstract

In *The Great Gatsby*, alienation is connected with the collapse of the American dream, the dominance of wealth, moral indifference and the inability of the hero to find genuine human intimacy in a materialistic environment. In Uzbek novels of the Independence period, alienation is represented through the crisis of transition, social instability, moral uncertainty and the individual's search for spiritual balance in a changing society. The article argues that although Fitzgerald and Uzbek writers belong to different literary, historical and cultural contexts, their novels reveal a common artistic problem: the individual becomes alienated when society loses moral harmony and replaces human values with material, social or ideological ambitions. The comparative analysis demonstrates that the poetics of alienation in these novels is expressed through narrative structure, symbolic details, inner conflict, social contrast and the opposition between external success and internal emptiness.

Keywords: Alienation, society, individual, *The Great Gatsby*, Uzbek novels, Independence period, moral crisis, spiritual emptiness, social conflict, comparative literature.

Introduction

In literary studies, alienation is usually understood as the individual's estrangement from social environment, moral values, human relationships and even from the self. This phenomenon becomes especially visible in periods of historical transformation, when old values lose their stability and new social ideals have not yet been fully established. In such circumstances, the literary hero often feels isolated, misunderstood and spiritually empty, even when he or she outwardly belongs to society.

F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* is one of the most significant novels in American literature where the theme of alienation is artistically embodied through the fate of Jay Gatsby. Although Gatsby is surrounded by luxury, parties and social attention, he remains

deeply lonely. His social rise does not lead to spiritual fulfilment. On the contrary, the world of wealth and pleasure intensifies his isolation. Fitzgerald shows that the society which seems open and attractive is, in fact, morally closed and emotionally indifferent.

In Uzbek literature of the Independence period, the problem of alienation acquired a new artistic and philosophical meaning. The collapse of the Soviet ideological system, the emergence of new social relations, the strengthening of individual responsibility and the search for national and spiritual identity created a complex background for literary representation. Erkin A'zam's *Momaqaldiraq ostida sayr* and Ulug'bek Hamdam's *Muvozanat* reflect the psychological state of a person living in a time of social change. Their heroes are not merely passive victims of society; they are thinking, suffering and searching individuals who try to understand their place in the world.

The relevance of this topic lies in the fact that alienation is not limited to one national literature. It is a universal human problem, but every literature expresses it through its own cultural, historical and aesthetic codes. Therefore, the comparative study of *The Great Gatsby* and Uzbek novels of the Independence period helps to reveal both universal and national features of alienation as a literary phenomenon.

The concept of alienation has been widely discussed in philosophy, sociology, psychology and literary criticism. In classical sociological interpretation, alienation refers to the separation of the individual from meaningful social relations and from the products or values of social life. Melvin Seeman identifies several dimensions of alienation, including powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, isolation and self-estrangement¹. These dimensions are highly productive for literary analysis because the fictional hero often experiences alienation not in one form, but as a combination of social, moral and psychological conditions.

Erich Fromm interprets alienation as a state in which the human being becomes detached from genuine emotions, creativity and meaningful relations with others². This approach is especially relevant to *The Great Gatsby*, where characters communicate actively but rarely establish sincere human contact. Their relationships are shaped by money, status and desire rather than moral responsibility or emotional truth.

In the context of modern society, Zygmunt Bauman's idea of unstable modern life is also important. According to Bauman, modern social relations become fluid, temporary and uncertain, which weakens traditional forms of belonging and creates insecurity in the individual³. This idea can also be applied to Uzbek novels of the Independence period, where social transition produces psychological instability and moral hesitation.

In literary studies, *The Great Gatsby* is often interpreted as a novel about the illusion of the American dream, but its deeper structure also reveals a tragedy of alienation. Gatsby's

¹ Seeman, M. "On the Meaning of Alienation." *American Sociological Review*, vol. 24, no. 6, 1999, p. 783

² Fromm, E. *The Sane Society*. New York: Rinehart & Company, p.64, 1995.

³ Bauman, Z. *Liquid Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press, p.178. 2000.

dream is not only romantic; it is also social. He wants to enter a world that does not truly accept him. As a result, his identity is divided between past and present, dream and reality, self-creation and social rejection. Fitzgerald's novel demonstrates that social success without moral recognition leads not to integration, but to loneliness⁴.

Uzbek literary criticism has also paid attention to the artistic representation of the individual in the post-independence period. The hero of Uzbek prose after independence often appears as a person caught between social expectation and inner truth. In *Muvozanat*, Ulug'bek Hamdam portrays a hero who searches for balance in a society where spiritual and material values collide. The very title of the novel indicates the central philosophical problem: the individual needs harmony, but the surrounding world constantly destroys it [5].

Erkin A'zam's *Momaqaldiriq ostida sayr* presents a different but related form of alienation. The image of walking under thunder symbolically suggests instability, danger and inner tension. The hero's movement in such an atmosphere reflects the individual's attempt to survive and think independently within a socially and morally complicated environment⁵. The article uses comparative-literary, hermeneutic and socio-psychological methods of analysis. The comparative method allows us to identify similarities and differences between American and Uzbek literary representations of alienation. The hermeneutic method helps to interpret symbolic images, narrative situations and moral conflicts in the novels. The socio-psychological approach is used to study the relationship between the individual and society, as well as the inner consequences of social pressure.

The object of the research is the artistic representation of individual alienation in *The Great Gatsby*, *Momaqaldiriq ostida sayr* and *Muvozanat*. The subject of the research is the system of narrative, symbolic and psychological devices through which alienation is expressed. The article does not aim to prove direct influence between Fitzgerald and Uzbek writers. Rather, it examines typological similarity: different literatures may produce similar artistic problems under different social and cultural conditions.

In *The Great Gatsby*, alienation is closely connected with the world of wealth and social performance. Gatsby appears as a successful man who has created a new identity for himself. His mansion, parties, clothes and luxurious lifestyle are signs of social achievement. However, these external signs do not give him real belonging. People come to his parties, enjoy his hospitality and spread rumours about him, but they do not know him as a human being. This is one of the strongest artistic expressions of alienation in the novel.

Gatsby's tragedy lies in the fact that he believes social visibility can lead to personal recognition. He thinks that wealth will allow him to restore the past and win Daisy's love. Yet the society he wants to enter is built on invisible barriers. Tom and Daisy Buchanan

⁴ Fitzgerald, F. Scott. *The Great Gatsby*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1925.

⁵ Hamdam, U. *Muvozanat*. Toshkent: Sharq nashriyoti, 2007.

belong to the world of inherited privilege. Gatsby can imitate their lifestyle, but he cannot become fully accepted by them. Thus, his alienation is not only emotional but also class-based.

The East Egg and West Egg opposition in the novel symbolically expresses social distance. East Egg represents old money, inherited status and social confidence. West Egg represents new money, ambition and imitation. Gatsby's house is geographically close to Daisy's world but socially distant from it. This spatial symbolism shows that alienation is not always physical separation. Sometimes a person may live very near to the desired world and still remain excluded from it.

Nick Carraway, the narrator, also experiences alienation. He observes society from the inside and outside at the same time. He participates in the events, but morally he distances himself from the characters. His final judgement that Tom and Daisy are careless people reveals his ethical separation from their world [7]. Through Nick's perspective, Fitzgerald exposes the moral emptiness of the society that destroys Gatsby and then continues its life without responsibility.

Gatsby's alienation is also connected with time. He cannot live fully in the present because he is psychologically imprisoned by the past. His famous desire to repeat the past reveals not only romantic idealism but also existential displacement. Gatsby's dream is directed toward something already lost. Therefore, his life becomes a performance of hope rather than a real existence. He is alienated from society, from Daisy, from reality and finally from himself.

The parties in Gatsby's mansion are especially important in this regard. They create an illusion of community, but in reality they reveal emotional emptiness. The guests dance, drink and talk, but their communication lacks sincerity. The crowd does not reduce loneliness; it intensifies it. Fitzgerald shows that mass entertainment may hide alienation, but it cannot overcome it. Gatsby's house is full of people, yet Gatsby himself remains isolated.

The green light at the end of Daisy's dock is another central symbol of alienation. It represents Gatsby's dream, hope and desire, but it also marks distance. The light is visible but unreachable. It attracts Gatsby, but it does not bring him closer to real happiness. In this sense, the green light becomes a poetic image of modern alienation: the individual is motivated by an ideal that society itself makes impossible to achieve.

The Uzbek novels of the Independence period represent alienation in a different historical context. Unlike Fitzgerald's America of the 1920s, Uzbek society after independence experienced a complex process of political, cultural and moral transformation. The individual found himself between old and new value systems. This created a specific type of alienation: the person was not only separated from society, but also from stable meanings that had previously organized life.

In Muvozanat, the problem of alienation is expressed through the search for balance. The protagonist faces the pressure of social reality, material needs and spiritual expectations.

The novel does not present alienation as absolute separation from people. Rather, it shows the hero's painful awareness that society does not always support moral integrity. He wants to live meaningfully, but the surrounding world constantly forces him to compromise.

Ulug'bek Hamdam's hero is alienated because he cannot easily accept the new hierarchy of values. In a changing society, material success becomes increasingly important, while spiritual depth and intellectual honesty may seem powerless. This conflict creates inner tension. The hero is not against society as such; he is against the loss of moral balance within society. That is why his alienation has a philosophical nature.

The title *Muvozanat* itself is highly symbolic. Balance is not merely a psychological state; it is a moral and social ideal. The hero's search for balance reflects the broader search of post-independence society for harmony between tradition and modernity, material life and spirituality, freedom and responsibility. When this balance is absent, the individual becomes spiritually unstable and socially alienated.

In Erkin A'zam's *Momaqaldiriq ostida sayr*, alienation is represented through irony, symbolic atmosphere and the feeling of uncertainty. The image of thunder suggests disturbance and danger. Walking under thunder is not a normal or safe movement; it is a metaphor for existing in a world filled with tension. The hero's experience reveals that social life may become unpredictable, and the individual has to move through it without clear protection.

Erkin A'zam's artistic style is important in expressing alienation. His prose often uses irony, indirect psychological observation and sharp social detail. Instead of openly declaring the hero's loneliness, the writer shows it through situations, dialogues and symbolic images. This makes alienation more realistic and more deeply connected with everyday life.

In Uzbek novels of the Independence period, alienation is frequently connected with the crisis of communication. People may speak to each other, but they do not always understand each other. Social roles, family expectations, professional duties and moral obligations create pressure on the individual. As a result, the hero feels alone even among relatives, colleagues and acquaintances. This type of alienation differs from Gatsby's glamorous loneliness, but the inner result is similar: the individual cannot find a truly meaningful connection with society.

Another important feature of Uzbek literary alienation is its connection with conscience. In *The Great Gatsby*, society is morally careless, and Gatsby becomes a victim of his illusion. In *Muvozanat* and *Momaqaldiriq ostida sayr*, the hero often suffers because he still possesses moral sensitivity. He sees contradictions, injustice, artificiality or spiritual emptiness, and this awareness separates him from others. Therefore, alienation may also be interpreted as a sign of moral awakening.

The comparison of *The Great Gatsby* and Uzbek novels of the Independence period reveals several common features. First, in all these works, alienation is caused by the conflict between personal ideals and social reality. Gatsby believes in love, dream and self-creation,

but society treats him according to class and wealth. Hamdam's and A'zam's heroes seek meaning, dignity and moral balance, but the social environment does not always allow such values to function freely.

Second, all the novels show that external belonging does not guarantee inner harmony. Gatsby is socially visible, but spiritually lonely. The heroes of Uzbek novels may live within familiar national, family and social structures, but they still experience inner separation. This means that alienation is not only a matter of physical isolation. It is a deeper condition related to values, consciousness and human relations.

Third, the novels use symbolic space to express alienation. In Fitzgerald's novel, East Egg, West Egg, New York, the valley of ashes and Gatsby's mansion create a symbolic map of moral and social separation. In Uzbek novels, spaces of movement, home, street, workplace or social gathering often become places where the hero's inner discomfort becomes visible. Space is not neutral; it reflects the hero's relation to society.

Fourth, the novels connect alienation with moral crisis. Fitzgerald criticizes a society where wealth replaces responsibility. Uzbek writers criticize a society in transition where material pressure may weaken spiritual values. In both cases, alienation is not presented as a purely private psychological problem. It is rooted in the moral structure of society.

However, there are also significant differences. Gatsby's alienation is strongly connected with the American dream and class hierarchy. His tragedy grows out of the contradiction between democratic promise and social exclusiveness. He believes that anyone can become someone else, but the novel shows the limits of this belief. In Uzbek novels, alienation is more connected with social transition, the search for national identity and the need to preserve moral balance in a changing world.

Another difference is the treatment of hope. Gatsby's hope is romantic and retrospective; it is directed toward the recovery of a lost past. This makes his dream beautiful but destructive. In Muvozanat, hope is more ethical and philosophical. The hero does not simply want to return to the past; he wants to find a morally acceptable way of living in the present. In Momaqalldiroq ostida sayr, hope may appear through endurance, irony and the ability to continue moving despite social uncertainty.

Narrative perspective also differs. Fitzgerald uses Nick Carraway's retrospective narration, which creates distance between event and judgement. Nick's narration allows the reader to see both Gatsby's greatness and his illusion. Uzbek novels often rely on internal conflict, social observation and philosophical reflection. This gives the problem of alienation a more direct connection with the hero's moral consciousness.

The poetics of alienation in the analyzed novels is formed through several artistic devices. The first is contrast. In *The Great Gatsby*, the contrast between luxury and emptiness is central. Gatsby's beautiful mansion hides his loneliness. Daisy's charm hides moral weakness. The brightness of parties hides spiritual darkness. This contrast creates a powerful artistic effect: the more attractive society looks, the more alienated the hero becomes.

In Muvozanat, contrast appears between material necessity and spiritual aspiration. The hero's inner world is not fully compatible with external demands. This contrast gives the novel its philosophical depth. The person is forced to live in society, but he cannot completely accept the values that dominate it.

In Momaqaldiroq ostida sayr, contrast appears through symbolic atmosphere. Thunder, movement and uncertainty create a background in which the hero's social and psychological state becomes visible. The external environment reflects internal disturbance. This is one of the key features of modern prose: nature or atmosphere is not only decorative, but also psychological and symbolic.

The second device is irony. Fitzgerald uses irony to expose the emptiness of high society. Gatsby's guests admire his wealth but disappear when he dies. This tragic irony reveals the falseness of social relations. Erkin A'zam also uses irony, but his irony is more connected with national mentality, everyday speech and social behaviour. It allows the writer to criticize society without direct moralization.

The third device is symbolism. The green light, Gatsby's mansion, the valley of ashes, thunder, road, movement and balance all function as symbolic elements. They help to transform a social problem into a poetic structure. Alienation becomes not only a theme, but also a form of artistic organization.

The fourth device is psychological detail. The heroes' inner discomfort is often shown through hesitation, memory, silence, observation and dissatisfaction. Such details reveal that alienation is not always dramatic on the surface. It may exist quietly, as a constant feeling of not belonging.

The problem of alienation in The Great Gatsby and Uzbek novels of the Independence period shows that literature reflects not only individual psychology but also the moral condition of society. When social values become unstable or false, the individual loses a sense of belonging. This is why alienation becomes one of the central themes of modern and contemporary prose.

Gatsby is alienated because he builds his identity on an illusion. He believes that wealth and self-invention can overcome social boundaries and restore lost love. Yet Fitzgerald shows that a society based on privilege and carelessness cannot give genuine recognition to such a person. Gatsby's tragedy is that his dream is morally higher than the society in which he tries to realize it, but at the same time it is also unrealistic.

The heroes of Uzbek novels are alienated in a different way. They do not necessarily create artificial identities like Gatsby. Their alienation comes from moral sensitivity, social transition and the difficulty of preserving inner balance. They are not always defeated externally, but they suffer internally because they cannot find harmony between personal conscience and social reality.

This comparative perspective helps us understand that alienation is both universal and culturally specific. It is universal because every society may produce loneliness, misunderstanding and moral crisis. It is culturally specific because each literature

expresses alienation through its own symbols, historical experience and narrative traditions. Fitzgerald's America produces the alienated dreamer; Uzbek independence prose produces the reflective, morally searching individual.

The artistic value of these novels lies in the fact that they do not reduce alienation to simple social complaint. They show its complexity. Alienation may be painful, but it may also reveal the hero's depth. A person who feels alienated is often a person who has not lost the ability to think, feel and judge. In this sense, alienation becomes not only a sign of crisis, but also a sign of moral consciousness.

Conclusion

The analysis of *The Great Gatsby*, Momaqaldiroq ostida sayr and *Muvozanat* demonstrates that the problem of individual alienation from society is one of the most important artistic and philosophical issues in both American and Uzbek prose. Fitzgerald represents alienation through the tragedy of *Gatsby*, whose dream of love and social acceptance collapses in a morally indifferent world. Uzbek writers of the Independence period represent alienation through the individual's search for meaning, balance and moral stability in a changing society.

The comparative study reveals that these novels are united by a common concern: the individual becomes alienated when society fails to provide genuine moral connection. Wealth, status, ideology or external success cannot replace human sincerity, spiritual harmony and ethical responsibility. In *The Great Gatsby*, alienation leads to tragic destruction. In Uzbek novels, it becomes a process of moral searching and philosophical reflection.

Thus, the theme of alienation allows us to see the deep relationship between literature and society. The literary hero's loneliness is not merely personal; it reflects the crisis of the social world. At the same time, literature transforms this crisis into artistic meaning. Through symbols, narrative structure, psychological analysis and social contrast, the novels reveal the hidden drama of the individual who seeks belonging but encounters moral emptiness, instability and misunderstanding.

The problem of alienation in these works remains relevant today because modern society continues to face similar contradictions: material progress and spiritual emptiness, social communication and emotional loneliness, freedom and uncertainty. Therefore, the comparative study of Fitzgerald and Uzbek independence prose opens new possibilities for understanding the universal and national dimensions of the individual's relationship with society.

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