

The Artistic And Philosophical Interpretation Of The Dichotomy Between Material And Spiritual Values In American And Uzbek Literature

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Annotation. This article explores the dichotomy of “material” and “spiritual” values in American and Uzbek literature. The study focuses on the artistic interpretation of wealth, social status, fame, moral responsibility, dignity, conscience, and spiritual emptiness in selected literary works. In American literature, the issue is analyzed mainly through F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby* and *Babylon Revisited*, where material prosperity is closely connected with the crisis of the American Dream, moral carelessness, and personal alienation. In Uzbek literature, the same problem is examined through Abdulla Qodiriy’s *O’tkan kunlar*, Oybek’s *Qutlug‘ qon*, Erkin A’zam’s *Momoqaldiraq ostida sayr*, and Ulugbek Hamdam’s *Muvozanat*. The article argues that although American and Uzbek literatures belong to different cultural and historical contexts, both traditions reveal that material success loses its value when it is separated from spiritual maturity, ethical responsibility, and human dignity.

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Keywords: material values, spiritual values, American literature, Uzbek literature, Fitzgerald, Uzbek prose, moral crisis, wealth, spirituality, dichotomy.

The relationship between material and spiritual values has always been one of the central problems of world literature. In different periods and cultures, writers have tried to answer one important question: what makes human life truly meaningful wealth, social status, fame and comfort, or conscience, dignity, love, loyalty and moral responsibility? This question becomes especially important in modern prose, where the individual often faces the pressure of society, money, ambition, class difference and moral uncertainty.

The concepts of “material” and “spiritual” values are usually presented in opposition to each other. Material values include wealth, property, money, social position, luxury, external success and physical comfort. Spiritual values include morality, faith, love, compassion, honesty, justice, responsibility, national identity and inner harmony. Literature shows that these two spheres are not always completely separated. Material prosperity can support human life, but when it becomes the highest aim, it may lead to moral decline and spiritual emptiness.

In American literature, this problem is vividly represented in the works of F. Scott Fitzgerald. His novel *The Great Gatsby* describes the world of wealth, parties, expensive houses and social ambition, but behind this beautiful surface there is loneliness, betrayal and moral emptiness. Fitzgerald presents the

American Dream as a dream that has been corrupted by materialism. Gatsby becomes rich, but his wealth cannot give him true happiness or restore the past.

In Uzbek literature, the problem of material and spiritual values is interpreted through national mentality, family relations, social justice and moral responsibility. Abdulla Qodiriy's *O'tkan kunlar* shows that social position and family reputation may destroy sincere love and human happiness when they are not guided by justice and wisdom. Oybek's *Qutlug' gon* presents the conflict between wealth and poverty, oppression and dignity, material inequality and spiritual awakening. In the works of Erkin A'zam and Ulugbek Hamdam, this opposition appears in the context of modern Uzbek society, where the individual faces moral choice, social transformation and the search for inner balance.

The aim of this article is to analyze the dichotomy of "material" and "spiritual" values in American and Uzbek literature. The article focuses on how writers from both literary traditions represent wealth, fame, moral crisis, spiritual emptiness and human dignity. The comparative approach helps to reveal both universal and national features of this artistic-philosophical problem.

The opposition between material and spiritual values is not only a literary theme but also a philosophical category. It reflects the conflict between external and internal life, possession and meaning, social appearance and moral essence. In literature, this dichotomy is often expressed through plot, character, conflict, symbolism and narrative structure.

Material values are usually visible and measurable. A person may have money, a house, a position, clothes, cars or public reputation. Spiritual values, however, are invisible but deeper. They are reflected in a person's behavior, moral choice, compassion, responsibility and attitude toward others. That is why literature often questions external success. A character may seem successful from outside but may be spiritually empty inside.

In Fitzgerald's works, material values are connected with the culture of consumption and social prestige. His characters often believe that wealth can solve emotional and existential problems. However, Fitzgerald shows that money cannot buy sincere love, moral courage or spiritual peace. In *The Great Gatsby*, wealth becomes a symbol of both hope and corruption. Gatsby's dream is beautiful because it is based on love and hope, but it is also tragic because it is built on money, illusion and social ambition.

In Uzbek literature, material and spiritual values are interpreted through another cultural system. Uzbek prose gives great importance to family honor, respect, conscience, national identity and social justice. A person's value is not determined only by wealth but by moral behavior and responsibility before family and society. In *O'tkan kunlar*, Qodiriy shows that spiritual purity and sincere love may be destroyed when society gives priority to reputation, jealousy and narrow-mindedness.

Thus, both American and Uzbek literatures treat the material-spiritual dichotomy as a moral test. Wealth itself is not always condemned. The main issue is whether material prosperity is connected with morality or separated from it.

American literature has often explored the tension between success and morality. The idea of success occupies a special place in American culture because it is closely connected with the American Dream. This dream originally meant freedom, opportunity, self-development and the possibility of building a better life. However, in many literary works, especially in Fitzgerald's fiction, the American Dream loses its spiritual meaning and becomes reduced to wealth and social status.

In *The Great Gatsby*, Fitzgerald creates a world where material prosperity is visually attractive but morally unstable. Gatsby's mansion, his expensive parties, his car and his elegant clothes represent external success. However, these things do not bring him true happiness. His wealth is directed toward one purpose to regain Daisy Buchanan. Gatsby believes that if he becomes rich enough, he can repeat the past and restore lost love. This belief becomes the basis of his tragedy¹.

Daisy Buchanan is one of the most important figures in the material-spiritual opposition. She is beautiful, charming and socially privileged. At the same time, she lacks moral courage. Fitzgerald describes her world as comfortable but spiritually weak. Daisy chooses safety and wealth rather than truth and responsibility. Her character shows that material comfort may become a form of moral imprisonment.

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

Tom Buchanan also represents the emptiness of wealth. He is rich and socially powerful, but he is arrogant, aggressive and careless. His wealth gives him confidence but not humanity. Through Tom, Fitzgerald shows that material superiority does not mean moral superiority. On the contrary, wealth may protect a person from social punishment and allow moral irresponsibility.

The valley of ashes in *The Great Gatsby* is an important symbol. It represents the hidden cost of material prosperity. While rich people enjoy parties and luxury, poor people live in a gray and lifeless space. This contrast shows the social and moral division of American society. The bright world of wealth exists together with the dark world of suffering. According to Bloom, Fitzgerald's novel remains powerful because it exposes not only Gatsby's personal tragedy but also the moral crisis of American civilization².

In *Babylon Revisited*, Fitzgerald presents the same problem from another angle. Charlie Wales looks back at his past life of luxury, pleasure and irresponsibility. He understands that his earlier material prosperity destroyed his family life and moral balance. The story shows that wealth and pleasure, when separated from self-control and responsibility, may lead to personal loss³. Thus, American literature, especially Fitzgerald's prose, represents material prosperity as an unstable value. Wealth can create beauty and comfort, but it cannot create spiritual wholeness. When a person measures life only through money and status, he loses inner harmony.

Uzbek literature has a long tradition of emphasizing spiritual values. In classical and modern Uzbek literature, concepts such as honor, conscience, loyalty, justice, faith, wisdom and respect for family play an important role. A person is evaluated not only by social position but by moral character. This feature is clearly seen in Uzbek prose of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Abdulla Qodiriy's *O'tkan kunlar* is one of the most important works in Uzbek literature. The novel presents historical reality, family relations, love, social conflict and moral responsibility. Otabek is not only a romantic hero; he is also a person of dignity, reason and progressive thinking. His value is determined not by wealth alone but by his moral qualities. Kumush represents purity, loyalty and sincerity. Their tragedy shows that spiritual values may be destroyed when society is ruled by jealousy, suspicion and false reputation.

In Qodiriy's novel, the family is not simply a private space. It is a moral institution. The happiness of the individual depends on the ethical condition of the family and society. When family relations lose justice and trust, tragedy becomes inevitable. This differs from Fitzgerald's individualistic world, but the philosophical meaning is similar: without spiritual responsibility, human life becomes unstable.

Oybek's *Qutlug' qon* presents material and spiritual values through social conflict. The novel shows poverty, inequality and oppression, but it also reveals the moral strength of ordinary people. In Oybek's artistic world, poverty does not necessarily mean spiritual weakness. On the contrary, suffering may awaken dignity, courage and social consciousness. Wealth, when connected with oppression, becomes a sign of moral corruption.

Naim Karimov emphasizes that Uzbek prose developed by connecting personal fate with national and social problems⁴. This feature is important for understanding the Uzbek interpretation of material and spiritual values. Uzbek writers usually do not isolate the individual from society. A person's moral crisis is connected with family, nation, history and social justice.

In modern Uzbek prose, especially in the works of Erkin A'zam and Ulugbek Hamdam, the problem becomes more psychological and philosophical. The individual lives in a changing society and faces the pressure of modern values, ambition, fame, instability and moral confusion. In this sense, Uzbek prose moves closer to modern world literature, including Fitzgerald's artistic world.

The comparison of Fitzgerald's works and Uzbek prose shows that both literary traditions present wealth as a moral test. The question is not whether wealth is good or bad by itself. The question is how a person uses wealth and what place it occupies in human life. If wealth serves justice, dignity and responsibility, it may be useful. If it replaces conscience and love, it becomes destructive.

In Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, Gatsby's wealth is both a symbol of hope and illusion. He does not want money only for material pleasure. He wants to use wealth to reach Daisy and restore the past. However,

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

³ Fitzgerald F. S. *Babylon Revisited and Other Stories*. – New York: Scribner, 1996.

⁴ Karimov N. XX asr o'zbek adabiyoti taraqqiyoti. – Toshkent: Fan, 1999.

this dream fails because it is based on a false belief: that material success can solve spiritual problems. Gatsby's tragedy proves that the past cannot be bought and love cannot be forced through wealth.

In Qodiriy's *O'tkan kunlar*, the tragedy of Otabek and Kumush is not connected with wealth in the same direct way. However, it is connected with social position, family interest, reputation and external pressure. Here material and social values oppose spiritual values such as sincere love, loyalty and justice. The result is tragedy because society fails to protect moral truth⁵.

In Oybek's *Qutlug' qon*, the opposition is more social. Material inequality creates suffering, but spiritual dignity remains with the oppressed people. Oybek shows that human greatness is not measured by wealth but by moral courage and social consciousness⁶.

In Erkin A'zam's *Momoqaldiraq ostida sayr*, the problem of values is connected with modern life, psychological tension and the individual's inner struggle. The title itself symbolically suggests movement under pressure, anxiety and instability. Material life, social expectations and personal desires create a complicated moral atmosphere. The characters often face the question of how to preserve inner honesty in a changing world⁷.

Ulugbek Hamdam's *Muvozanat* also directly reflects the search for balance. The title means "balance," and this idea is closely connected with the opposition between material and spiritual life. The modern individual needs material stability, but he also needs spiritual harmony. When one side dominates, the person loses balance. Therefore, Hamdam's novel may be interpreted as a philosophical search for the right relationship between social life and inner life. Thus, in both American and Uzbek prose, the dichotomy of material and spiritual values appears in different forms: wealth and love, status and conscience, fame and emptiness, social pressure and dignity, comfort and responsibility.

One of the important forms of material value is fame. Fame is not always connected only with money; it is also connected with social recognition, public image and prestige. In modern literature, fame often becomes a source of moral crisis because it encourages people to live for appearance rather than truth.

In Fitzgerald's world, Gatsby's parties create fame around his name. Many people know Gatsby, talk about him and attend his parties, but very few people understand him. His fame is superficial. It does not create real friendship or human closeness. This is one of the strongest examples of spiritual emptiness in American prose. Gatsby is surrounded by people but remains deeply lonely.

This problem is also relevant to Uzbek prose. In modern Uzbek literature, social prestige, career, public opinion and external reputation often influence the destiny of characters. In traditional Uzbek society, reputation has always had strong social value. However, literature shows that reputation becomes dangerous when it is separated from justice and truth. In *O'tkan kunlar*, social opinion and family reputation play a destructive role in the fate of Otabek and Kumush.

In *Muvozanat*, the problem of social balance includes the question of how a person can remain honest in a society where external success becomes important. The individual tries to find harmony between social demands and spiritual needs. This gives the novel a philosophical character⁸. Therefore, fame and social prestige are presented as problematic values in both traditions. They are not rejected completely, but they are criticized when they become higher than morality.

The dichotomy of material and spiritual values is also expressed through love relationships. Love is one of the most important spiritual values in literature. However, love can be destroyed when material interests, class difference, social pressure or moral weakness interfere.

In *The Great Gatsby*, Gatsby's love for Daisy is idealized, but Daisy's world is materialistic. Gatsby believes in love as a spiritual force, but Daisy is unable to leave the protection of wealth. This creates a tragic contradiction. Gatsby gives spiritual meaning to Daisy, while Daisy remains connected with material comfort and social safety.

⁵ Qodiriy A. *O'tkan kunlar*. – Toshkent: Sharq, 2019. – 368 b.

⁶ Oybek. *Qutlug' qon*. – Toshkent: G'afur G'ulom nomidagi nashriyot, 2018. – 484 b.

⁷ A'zam E. *Momoqaldiraq ostida sayr*. – Toshkent: Sharq, 2010.

⁸ Hamdam U. *Muvozanat*. – Toshkent: Sharq, 2007.

In *O'tkan kunlar*, the love between Otabek and Kumush is sincere and morally pure, but it is destroyed by social and family conflicts. Their tragedy shows that love needs not only personal sincerity but also social justice. If society is morally unhealthy, even pure love may not survive.

The comparison shows one important point: in both American and Uzbek literature, love becomes a test of spiritual responsibility. Daisy fails this test because she chooses comfort. Some characters in Qodiriy's novel also fail because they allow jealousy and social pressure to dominate truth. Thus, love reveals the moral quality of both individuals and society.

The difference between American and Uzbek literature becomes especially clear when we analyze national mentality. Fitzgerald writes within the context of American individualism, capitalism and the American Dream. His characters often want personal success, romantic fulfillment and social recognition. Their crisis is connected with individual ambition and the emptiness of consumer culture.

Uzbek prose, however, gives more attention to family, community, national values and social responsibility. A person is not viewed as completely separate from society. His moral behavior affects the family and community. This is why Uzbek literature often interprets spiritual values through collective categories: honor, shame, respect, duty and justice.

In Fitzgerald's fiction, the main danger is the loss of moral meaning in a world of wealth and luxury. In Uzbek prose, the danger is broader: spiritual values may be damaged by social injustice, ignorance, jealousy, false reputation or the imbalance between tradition and modernity.

This difference does not prevent comparison. On the contrary, it makes the analysis richer. The same philosophical problem. the conflict between material and spiritual values receives different national forms. Fitzgerald connects it with the American Dream, while Uzbek writers connect it with national mentality, family ethics and social justice.

Writers often express the material-spiritual dichotomy through symbols. Fitzgerald's symbols are especially strong. Gatsby's mansion symbolizes wealth and loneliness. His parties symbolize social glamour and emptiness. The green light symbolizes hope, desire and unreachable dream. The valley of ashes symbolizes the moral and social cost of material success.

In Uzbek prose, symbols are often connected with home, road, land, family space and natural environment. In *O'tkan kunlar*, the home and family become symbols of moral order. When this order is broken, tragedy begins. In *Qutlug' qon*, land and labor symbolize social reality and human struggle. In *Muvozanat*, the very idea of balance becomes symbolic: a person must find harmony between external life and inner values.

Symbolism helps writers show that material and spiritual values are not abstract concepts. They exist in places, objects, relationships and actions. A house may be a symbol of comfort or loneliness. A road may symbolize search. Wealth may symbolize power or emptiness. Love may symbolize spiritual truth or illusion.

The philosophical meaning of the material-spiritual opposition is that human life cannot be reduced to external success. A person needs material stability, but material stability alone is not enough. Without spiritual values, wealth becomes empty. Without morality, success becomes dangerous. Without responsibility, freedom becomes destructive.

Fitzgerald's works show this idea through tragedy. Gatsby's life is externally successful but internally broken. Daisy's life is comfortable but morally weak. Tom's life is powerful but spiritually poor. Charlie Wales in *Babylon Revisited* understands too late that pleasure without responsibility destroys human happiness. Uzbek prose expresses the same idea through ethical and social categories. Otabek and Kumush's tragedy shows that sincere love must be protected by justice. Oybek's characters show that poverty may exist together with dignity, while wealth may exist together with oppression. Erkin A'zam and Ulugbek Hamdam show that modern people need inner balance in a changing society [5; 6]. Therefore, literature teaches that material and spiritual values must not be separated. True prosperity is not only economic; it is also moral. A person is truly rich when he possesses not only material resources but also conscience, love, dignity and responsibility.

Conclusion

The analysis of the dichotomy of "material" and "spiritual" values in American and Uzbek literature shows that this issue has universal literary and philosophical significance. In F. Scott Fitzgerald's works, especially *The Great Gatsby* and *Babylon Revisited*, material prosperity is shown as attractive but spiritually

dangerous when it is separated from morality. Fitzgerald criticizes the corruption of the American Dream and demonstrates that wealth cannot replace love, conscience or inner peace.

Uzbek literature interprets the same problem through national mentality, family ethics, social justice and moral responsibility. Abdulla Qodiriy's *O'tkan kunlar* presents spiritual purity and love as values that can be destroyed by jealousy, social pressure and false reputation. Oybek's *Qutlug' qon* shows that material inequality reveals the need for dignity and justice. Erkin A'zam and Ulugbek Hamdam continue this theme in the context of modern Uzbek society, where the individual searches for moral balance and spiritual meaning.

The main similarity between American and Uzbek literature is that both traditions reject the idea that material success alone can make human life meaningful. The main difference lies in cultural interpretation: Fitzgerald connects the problem with individual ambition and the American Dream, while Uzbek prose connects it with family, community, national values and social justice.

Thus, the dichotomy of material and spiritual values remains one of the most important problems of comparative literary studies. It shows that literature is not only a mirror of society but also a moral and philosophical guide. True human value is measured not by wealth, fame or status, but by conscience, dignity, love and responsibility.

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