Western European Journal of Linguistics and Education
Volume 4, Issue 2, February 2026
https://westerneuropeanstudies.com/index.php/2
ISSN (E): 2942-190X Open Access| Peer Reviewed

"ATTITUDES TOWARD ENTREPRENEURSHIP DURING THE SOVIET ERA AND ITS REFLECTION IN PROSE WORKS"

Farida A. Toshboyeva
Independent Researcher at the Department of
Uzbek Language and Literature,
Denau Institute of Entrepreneurship and Pedagogy
ORCID: 0009-0008-4251-9907
Email: toshboyevafarida46@gmail.com

Abstract: The article analyzes the image of an industrialist, factory owner, and entrepreneur reflected in Russian and Uzbek fiction. It proves that this image has negative features and forms negative stereotypes. These include, for example, the understanding of the world of business people as a "dark kingdom". Industrialists and factory owners are depicted in connection with moral decline. The author, citing examples, proves that Russian literature contributed to the formation of a social stereotype that it is impossible to earn big money in an honest way.
Keywords: image of an entrepreneur, Russian literature, Uzbek literature, Soviet era, Jadidism, capitalism, socialist realism, negative stereotypes, spiritual crisis, ideological influence, comparative analysis.

Introduction

Literature has always served as a mirror of society; in particular, socio-economic relations and the emergence of new economic classes find their reflection in literary works. In this context, the artistic interpretation of the entrepreneur—an individual striving to accumulate wealth through production, trade, and financial activities—stands as a significant object of research in 19th and 20th-century Russian and Uzbek literature. In both literatures, the formation and evolution of this image are inextricably linked to specific historical, socio-political, and cultural conditions, depicted with diverse nuances and contradictions across different periods. While the image of the entrepreneur in Russian literature was often portrayed as a catalyst for moral crisis and a threat to traditional values, in Uzbek literature, it was initially expressed as a symbol of national awakening and progress, later transitioning into a reflection of socio-political shifts.

This article comparatively examines the artistic evolution of the entrepreneur's image in 19th and 20th-century Russian and Uzbek literature, the factors influencing its formation, the authors' attitudes, and the similarities and differences between the two literary traditions. Furthermore, this study explores theoretical approaches to the concept of the "literary image." It analyzes the broad and narrow applications of the term "literary image" within literary studies, emphasizing its function in representing the human persona as a central concept, while other images serve to complement the depiction of the individual. This framework allows for the study of the entrepreneur not merely as an economic agent but as a personality characterized by profound psychological and moral conflicts.

The article pays particular attention to the attitudes toward entrepreneurship during the Soviet era and its manifestation in prose works. It provides a detailed analysis of how socio-

Western European Journal of Linguistics and Education
Volume 4, Issue 2, February 2026
https://westerneuropeanstudies.com/index.php/2
ISSN (E): 2942-190X Open Access| Peer Reviewed

political changes in Russia, the ideological demands of the Communist Party on literature and art, the condemnation of private property, and the construction of the "class enemy" archetype influenced the artistic interpretation of the entrepreneur. It demonstrates that during this period, entrepreneurship was either almost entirely eradicated from literature or portrayed in a purely negative light, which consequently reinforced negative social stereotypes regarding entrepreneurial activity. By comprehensively examining the image of the entrepreneur in 19th and 20th-century literature, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of society's historical relationship with economic and spiritual values.

The shift in socio-political formations in Russia and Uzbekistan has exerted a profound influence on the artistic domain of literature. Changes in values, protagonists, and thematic focuses were heavily dictated by ideological factors and economic realities. Consequently, to adequately evaluate the concept of "industry" (and entrepreneurship by extension), it is appropriate to categorize literary analysis into comparable historical periods.

Initial analyses indicate that in 19th-century Russian literature, the image of the entrepreneur was predominantly negative. In N.V. Gogol's *The Government Inspector* and *Dead Souls*, corruption among officials and the character of Chichikov epitomized fraud, greed, and spiritual poverty. Similarly, in I.A. Goncharov's *A Common Story* and *Oblomov*, characters such as Pyotr Aduyev and Andrey Stolz, despite their drive for wealth and activity, were depicted as having hollow inner lives, lackluster existences, and moral deficiencies. In the plays of A.N. Ostrovsky, merchants were often portrayed as "predators" who masked their true nature under a veil of piety, evaluating everything solely by monetary standards. This led to the formation of a persistent social stereotype in Russian society: that substantial wealth could not be acquired honestly and that entrepreneurship was an inherently immoral activity. Within the pages of Russian literature, the "industrialist, factory owner, and entrepreneur" became part of the "dark kingdom," serving as symbols of moral decay and reinforcing negative public perceptions.

In contrast, the image of the entrepreneur in Uzbek literature followed a different developmental path. During the Jadid period, the entrepreneur was idealized as a driving force for national awakening and progress—an enlightened and active individual. However, the character of Miryoqub in Abdulla Cho'lpon's novel *Night and Day* (*Kecha va Kunduz*) demonstrated the complexity of this ideal. Although Miryoqub was educated and proactive, his personal egoism, manipulative behavior, and moral contradictions signaled a critical perspective toward the "new man" of that era. This suggests, much like in Russian literature, that human and moral flaws could be hidden behind material achievements.

A sharp departure from these literary traditions occurred during the Soviet era. Through Party congresses and Central Committee decrees on ideology, the Soviet leadership strictly mandated that literature and art must embody "partisanship" (*partiynost*) and "popular appeal" (*narodnost*). As emphasized in the CPSU program: "The main path for the development of literature and art consists of strengthening the bond with the life of the people, truthfully and with high artistry reflecting the richness and diversity of socialist reality, inspiredly portraying the new, truly communist reality, and exposing everything that hinders the forward movement of society."

Literature and art adhered strictly to this "main path" set by the Party, aligning with Leninist principles of partisanship. Being "partisan" in literature meant creating consistently for the benefit of the Party, the people, and the interests of communism, producing ideologically and artistically superior works that resonated with public taste and served to

Western European Journal of Linguistics and Education
Volume 4, Issue 2, February 2026
https://westerneuropeanstudies.com/index.php/2
ISSN (E): 2942-190X Open Access| Peer Reviewed

educate the younger generation in a communist spirit. To fulfill this high duty, the Party provided the necessary conditions for creators, offering broad opportunities to reflect the truth of socialist life and the heroism of the people in the struggle to build a communist society. These ideological priorities fundamentally transformed the attitude toward private entrepreneurship, property ownership, and free competition. Attempts to create an entrepreneurial protagonist were almost entirely suppressed, or these individuals were depicted as "class enemies"—exploiters, fraudsters, and negative characters harmful to society. Consequently, the analysis of the entrepreneur's image in Soviet and contemporary Russian and Uzbek literature requires a distinct approach, as their artistic interpretation during these periods was based on entirely different criteria and values.

Born into a merchant family and a graduate of the Moscow Commercial School, I.A. Goncharov was well-versed in the nuances of commercial activity. This firsthand knowledge allowed him to portray the generation of business-minded individuals in his works with considerable detail. His novel *A Common Story* introduced a completely new type of character to Russian literature: the entrepreneur-hero. However, despite his wealth and status, this character evokes nothing but pity. In *A Common Story*, Goncharov passes judgment on the newly emerging generation of business people, suggesting that their views are utopian and that their drive for success and labor leads only to a colorless and empty existence. Although the novel portrays an entrepreneur who acquired substantial capital through legal means, the author is less interested in the successful professional career of Pyotr Aduyev, the porcelain factory owner, than in his inner spiritual world. Goncharov repeatedly emphasizes that the character's most defining trait is his ability and willingness to bring everything—including other people's feelings and private lives—into the realm of commodity-money relations. V. Belinsky described Pyotr Aduyev as "an egoist, cold by nature, and incapable of noble actions."

Unlike other writers, Goncharov does not question the hero's honesty, principles, or industriousness; however, the author profoundly disagrees with Aduyev's value system, which is rooted in the material world rather than the spiritual. Consequently, the author demonstrates that such "wrong" values lead to the character's self-destruction.

To understand the author's attitude toward the protagonist, another important episode must be recalled. Stolz tells Oblomov about an acquaintance—a gold industrialist who is exceptionally successful in business, earning millions, investing in lucrative concessions, opening new deposits, and building mines. Oblomov listens to his friend with boredom and suddenly asks a question for which Stolz has no answer. This is a characteristically naive, typically "Oblomovian" question: why does the gold industrialist do what he does? How many millions does a person need? What is the point of earning them? For Oblomov, whose meaning of life lies in freedom and love, it is truly incomprehensible why one should expend life force on the things that Stolz deems successful. Surprisingly, Oblomov receives no answer from Stolz; Stolz simply does not have one. His life's goal is activity for activity's sake. But in Oblomov's world, the values are entirely different.

There is also a certain dissonance in Stolz and Olga's seemingly good marital relationship: Olga feels that in her husband—an honest, kind, and noble man—there is something missing in his soul and his life. She recalls Oblomov with sadness, as he possessed all those deep and delicate meanings and emotions. Thus, Stolz—though an honest, intelligent, and active figure—appears somewhat deficient in Goncharov's work. Why? Because "where your treasure is, there your heart will be also," and "treasure"—defined as activity and busyness—is not accepted by Goncharov.

Western European Journal of Linguistics and Education
Volume 4, Issue 2, February 2026
https://westerneuropeanstudies.com/index.php/2
ISSN (E): 2942-190X Open Access| Peer Reviewed

Critics denied the vitality and authenticity of Stolz's character, criticizing him for being dull and artificial. It was precisely Stolz's industriousness, pragmatic mind, and sober outlook on the world that Goncharov's contemporaries viewed as flaws. They perceived Stolz as a machine distinguished only by its functionality. For instance, A. Druzhinin called Stolz an "ordinary man." N.A. Dobrolyubov stated that "Stolz has not yet reached the ideal of a Russian public figure." P. Vail and A. Genis described him as a "homunculus created in a literary test tube" and an "ethnographic German-Russian cocktail meant to make the crude Russian machine work."

This distrust toward Stolz from both critics and readers can be explained as follows: "For the Russian mentality, the bourgeoisie represented a beginning that excluded spiritual values—the priority of which was unquestionable throughout Russian history." Unfortunately, the focus of Russian writers rarely fell on the fact that business people were carriers of progress who contributed to the country's development and prosperity through qualities like business acumen, entrepreneurship, and hard work. Instead, attention was primarily focused on the material and monetary side of the commercial-industrial class, rather than the inner nature of the successful individual. Often in literature, members of this class were depicted as generalized types, while their individuality was neglected by authors.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the artistic interpretation of the entrepreneur's image in 19th and 20th-century Russian and Uzbek literature evolved in inextricable connection with the specific socio-historical development stages, cultural values, and dominant ideologies of both national literary traditions. This portrayal serves not only as a literary reflection of economic shifts but also as a complex artistic expression of the individual's inner world, moral choices, and social responsibility.

In Russian literature, the depiction of the entrepreneur was primarily critical and contradictory. During the 19th-century "Golden Age," this was manifest in Nikolai Gogol's corrupt officials (*The Government Inspector*) and the fraudulent Chichikov (*Dead Souls*), as well as in Alexander Ostrovsky's ignorant and greedy merchants (*The Storm*, *Without a Dowry*). In I.A. Goncharov's *A Common Story* and *Oblomov*, characters such as Pyotr Aduyev and Andrey Stolz—despite embodying activity and industriousness—are exposed for their spiritual shortcomings, inner voids, and tendencies toward self-destruction. Russian literature reinforced a negative social stereotype that substantial wealth was often acquired through dishonest means and that entrepreneurship was an inherently immoral pursuit. Industrialists, factory owners, and merchants were portrayed as components of the "dark kingdom," largely serving as symbols of moral decay.

In contrast, the image of the entrepreneur in Uzbek literature followed a distinct and somewhat later developmental trajectory. During the Jadid period of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the entrepreneur was transformed into a positive ideal—a symbol of national awakening, economic independence, enlightenment, and the liberation of society from stagnation. Jadid thinkers such as Fitrat and Munavvarqori Abdurashidkhanov promoted the archetype of the educated, honest, and patriotic entrepreneur, recognizing that political independence and national progress were unattainable without economic self-sufficiency. However, the character of Miryoqub in Abdulla Cho'lpon's novel *Night and Day* provided a complex and contradictory interpretation of this ideal. While Miryoqub possessed modern knowledge and initiative, his personal egoism, manipulative behavior, and spiritual poverty reflected a profound scrutiny of the internal struggles and flaws of the "new man" in Uzbek

Western European Journal of Linguistics and Education
Volume 4, Issue 2, February 2026
https://westerneuropeanstudies.com/index.php/2
ISSN (E): 2942-190X Open Access| Peer Reviewed

society. His portrayal illustrated a deviation from Jadidist ideals, highlighting the consequences when material interests override spiritual values.

References

1. Eshonqulov, A. (2021). *Adabiy matnda konflikt turlari* [Types of Conflict in Literary Text]. Tashkent.
2. Karimov, B. (2020). *Qiyosiy adabiyotshunoslik asoslari* [Fundamentals of Comparative Literature]. Tashkent.
3. Djumaydillayevich, Suxrob S. The Development Of The Realistic Story In Usa And Uzbek Literature And The Creation Of O. Henry. (2024). Czech Journal of Multidisciplinary Innovations, 30, 28-32.
4. Lotman, Yu. (1992). *Adabiy matn va madaniyat* [Literary Text and Culture]. Saint Petersburg.
5. Djumaydillayevich, Suxrob S. "Artistic Perception of Reality in Stories Detail and Illustration." American Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Sciences, vol. 25, 21 Jun. 2024, pp. 134-138.
6. Smetanin, S. I. (2014). *Istoriya predprinimatel'stva Rossii: kurs lektsiy. Osnovy predprinimatel'skoy deyatel'nosti* [History of Entrepreneurship in Russia: A Course of Lectures. Fundamentals of Entrepreneurial Activity]. Moscow: KNORUS.
7. Belinsky, V. G. (2010). *Izbrannoe* [Selected Works]. Compiled by E. Yu. Tikhonova. Moscow.
8. Djumaydillayevich, Suxrob S. "The Problem of Comic Type Creation in O'henry's Works." American Journal of Pedagogical and Educational Research, vol. 22, 7 Mar. 2024, pp. 7-9.
9. Zarubina, N. N. (2000). *Khozyaystvennaya kul'tura kak faktor modernizatsii* [Economic Culture as a Factor of Modernization]. Deposited at INION RAN, 27.04.2000, No. 55606, pp. 250–252.
10. Kondakov, I. V. (1997). *Vvedenie v istoriyu russkoy kul'tury* [Introduction to the History of Russian Culture]. Moscow, Chapter 7.