

# THE PROBLEM OF MENTALITY IN THE NOVELS OF F. SCOTT FITZGERALD, ERKIN A'ZAM AND ULUGBEK HAMDAM COMMONALITY AND SPECIFICITY

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**Annotation.** This article analyzes the problem of mentality in the works of F. Scott Fitzgerald, Erkin A'zam and Ulugbek Hamdam from a comparative-literary perspective. The main attention is paid to the artistic representation of American and Uzbek mentality, especially in relation to personal ambition, material success, spiritual values, social reputation, moral responsibility and inner crisis. Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* reflects the mentality of American society through the concepts of the American Dream, individual success, wealth, class distinction and personal illusion. Erkin A'zam's *Momoqaldiriq ostida sayr* represents Uzbek mentality through irony, social observation, collective judgment, reputation and the contradiction between external behavior and inner truth. Ulugbek Hamdam's *Muvozanat* reveals the mentality of the modern Uzbek individual who searches for balance between material needs and spiritual values.

**Keywords:** Mentality, Fitzgerald, Erkin A'zam, Ulugbek Hamdam, American Dream, Uzbek prose, spiritual crisis, national specificity, comparative literature.

The concept of mentality occupies an important place in literary studies because literature reflects not only individual destiny but also the worldview, values, habits, moral norms and social behavior of a nation or a particular historical period. Mentality is a complex system of thinking, feeling and evaluating reality. It includes people's attitude toward wealth, family, fame, love, honor, freedom, responsibility and society. Therefore, the analysis of mentality in literary works allows us to understand both national specificity and universal human problems.

In American literature, F. Scott Fitzgerald is one of the most important writers who artistically revealed the mentality of the twentieth-century American society. His novel *The Great Gatsby* shows a world where success is measured by wealth, social status, parties, luxury and external beauty. However, behind this bright surface, Fitzgerald reveals loneliness, moral carelessness and spiritual emptiness. Gatsby's dream is connected with love and hope, but it is also shaped by the mentality of material success and social ambition<sup>1</sup>.

In Uzbek literature, the problem of mentality appears in another cultural form. Uzbek prose traditionally pays attention to family, community, respect, shame, honor, moral duty and social reputation. In the works of Erkin A'zam and Ulugbek Hamdam, Uzbek mentality is

<sup>1</sup> Fitzgerald F. S. *Tender Is the Night*. – New York: Scribner, 2003. – 320 p.



represented not only as a system of national values but also as a field of contradictions. Their characters often live between traditional values and modern social pressure, between external respectability and inner dissatisfaction, between material needs and spiritual balance [3; 4].

The purpose of this article is to analyze the problem of mentality in the novels of F. Scott Fitzgerald, Erkin A'zam and Ulugbek Hamdam. The article focuses on two main aspects: commonality and specificity. Commonality means universal problems that appear in all three writers' works: moral crisis, loneliness, social pressure, false success and spiritual emptiness. Specificity means national-cultural features: American individualism and the American Dream in Fitzgerald, Uzbek social psychology and irony in Erkin A'zam, and the search for moral-spiritual balance in Ulugbek Hamdam.

Mentality in literature can be understood as the artistic expression of a nation's worldview, social psychology and moral values. It is not limited to ethnic character or national traditions. It also includes historical experience, social relations, cultural memory and the way people interpret success, happiness, dignity and responsibility.

In literary texts, mentality appears through characters' behavior, speech, choices, conflicts, symbols and narrative structure. For example, a character's attitude toward money may reveal the mentality of a whole social class. A family conflict may show national traditions and moral expectations. A person's loneliness may reflect the crisis of modern society.

In comparative literature, mentality is especially important because it helps to compare different national literatures without reducing them to simple similarity. Fitzgerald, Erkin A'zam and Ulugbek Hamdam write in different languages and cultural contexts. Nevertheless, their works can be compared because they all reveal the relationship between the individual and society, material and spiritual values, external success and inner emptiness.

In Fitzgerald's prose, mentality is connected with American modernity, capitalism, individual achievement and the dream of self-creation. In Erkin A'zam's prose, mentality is connected with social observation, irony, reputation, public opinion and everyday moral contradictions. In Hamdam's prose, mentality is connected with philosophical reflection, spiritual search and the need for balance in a changing society.

Thus, mentality becomes not only a cultural category but also an artistic-philosophical problem.

Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* is one of the clearest artistic interpretations of American mentality in the twentieth century. The novel reflects the atmosphere of the Jazz Age, when wealth, entertainment, social mobility and luxury became dominant values. However, Fitzgerald does not present this mentality as a simple celebration of success. He shows its internal contradictions.

The central concept in the novel is the American Dream. Traditionally, the American Dream means freedom, opportunity, personal effort and the possibility of building a better life. *Gatsby* seems to embody this dream: he comes from a poor background, creates a new identity and becomes wealthy. However, Fitzgerald shows that this dream has been corrupted by materialism. *Gatsby's* success is external, but his inner life remains dependent on an illusion.

*Gatsby's* mentality is romantic and material at the same time. He believes in love, hope and transformation, but he tries to realize this dream through wealth, parties and social spectacle. His mansion, expensive shirts and luxurious car are not only signs of prosperity; they are symbols of his desire to be accepted by Daisy's world. This shows that American mentality in the novel is deeply connected with visibility and social recognition.



Daisy Buchanan represents another side of American mentality — inherited privilege and moral carelessness. She belongs to a world where comfort is more important than responsibility. She is charming and attractive, but she lacks moral courage. Her choice of security over truth shows that wealth can create emotional weakness and ethical emptiness.

Tom Buchanan represents power, arrogance and class superiority. His mentality is based on domination. He believes in his social privilege and uses it to control others. Fitzgerald criticizes this mentality because it separates wealth from morality. Tom's richness does not make him noble; it makes him careless.

Nick Carraway's position is also important. He observes this world and gradually understands its emptiness. Through Nick's narration, Fitzgerald gives a moral evaluation of American society. The famous judgment that Tom and Daisy are "careless people" reveals the writer's criticism of a mentality in which privilege protects people from responsibility].

Therefore, Fitzgerald presents American mentality as contradictory: it contains hope and illusion, freedom and class limitation, success and emptiness, beauty and moral decline.

In Fitzgerald's works, mentality is not only a social phenomenon but also a source of personal crisis. The characters internalize the values of their society. They believe that wealth, beauty, youth and status can bring happiness. However, these values do not lead to spiritual fulfillment.

Gatsby's crisis comes from the fact that he confuses dream with reality. He believes that he can repeat the past and recover Daisy through wealth. His mentality is shaped by American optimism, but Fitzgerald shows that unlimited optimism may become tragic when it ignores time, truth and moral complexity.

In *Tender Is the Night*, Fitzgerald presents another form of mentality crisis. Dick Diver is talented, educated and socially attractive, but he gradually loses his inner strength. His decline reflects the psychological and moral exhaustion of a person who lives in a world of luxury, emotional dependence and unstable identity<sup>2</sup>. This novel shows that spiritual crisis may occur not only through the desire for wealth but also through the loss of self-discipline and moral center.

Fitzgerald's characters often live for appearance. They want to look successful, beautiful and desirable. This is one of the central features of the mentality he criticizes. Appearance becomes more important than essence. Public image becomes stronger than inner truth. As a result, the individual becomes spiritually empty.

Harold Bloom emphasizes that Gatsby's greatness lies in his unusual capacity for hope, but this hope is placed in a morally damaged world<sup>3</sup>. This means that Fitzgerald does not completely reject Gatsby. He sees beauty in Gatsby's dream, but he also shows that the social mentality around him makes this dream impossible.

Erkin A'zam's *Momoqaldiraq ostida sayr* represents Uzbek mentality through social psychology, irony and the inner contradictions of ordinary life. Unlike Fitzgerald's world of luxury and high society, Erkin A'zam's artistic world is closer to everyday Uzbek reality. However, the spiritual problem is similar: a person may lose sincerity and inner balance under the pressure of social expectations.

<sup>2</sup> A'zam E. *Momoqaldiraq ostida sayr*. – Toshkent: Sharq, 2010. b– 187.

<sup>3</sup> Bloom H., ed. *F. Scott Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby*. – New York: Bloom's Literary Criticism, 2010. – 182 p.



The title *Momoqaldiroq ostida sayr* itself has symbolic meaning. A thunderstorm suggests anxiety, instability and inner tension. A walk under a thunderstorm may symbolize human movement through a complicated moral and social environment. The person does not live in peace; he lives under pressure.

In Uzbek mentality, public opinion and reputation have strong power. A person is often judged not only by individual choice but also by how others see him. This social psychology can support moral order, but it can also create hypocrisy and fear of judgment. Erkin A'zam's prose often reveals this contradiction through irony<sup>4</sup>.

In this work, characters may try to appear correct, respectable or successful in society, while their inner world remains uncertain. This creates a conflict between external behavior and internal truth. Such a conflict is one of the main features of modern Uzbek prose.

Erkin A'zam's artistic method is different from Fitzgerald's. Fitzgerald uses glamour, symbolism and tragic irony. Erkin A'zam uses everyday detail, social irony and psychological observation. But both writers expose false values. Fitzgerald criticizes the emptiness behind wealth; Erkin A'zam criticizes the emptiness behind social appearance.

Thus, Uzbek mentality in Erkin A'zam's prose is shown as complex. It contains respect, community feeling and moral sensitivity, but it may also produce dependence on public opinion, fear of criticism and inner division.

Irony plays an important role in Erkin A'zam's representation of mentality. Through irony, the writer shows the difference between what people say and what they really think, between social mask and inner condition, between public morality and private weakness.

This method is especially suitable for analyzing Uzbek social psychology. In many cases, people do not openly express their inner conflicts. They hide them behind politeness, social formulas, jokes or silence. Erkin A'zam reveals these hidden contradictions through subtle artistic details.

In this sense, irony becomes not only a stylistic device but also a method of mentality analysis. It helps the writer show how social expectations influence individual behavior. A person may behave according to accepted norms, but inside he may feel doubt, dissatisfaction or spiritual emptiness.

Fitzgerald also uses irony, especially through Nick Carraway's narration. However, his irony is often directed at the American wealthy class. Erkin A'zam's irony is more connected with Uzbek everyday mentality and social relationships. This is an important national specificity. The common feature is that both writers use irony to uncover false values. The difference is that Fitzgerald exposes the false glamour of wealth, while Erkin A'zam exposes the false stability of social appearance.

Ulugbek Hamdam's *Muvozanat* is one of the important works for understanding the mentality of the modern Uzbek individual. The title means "balance," and this concept directly expresses the main philosophical problem of the novel. The person must find balance between material and spiritual life, tradition and modernity, personal desire and social duty, external success and inner peace.

In Hamdam's prose, mentality is represented not only through social behavior but also through philosophical reflection. His characters often think about the meaning of life,

<sup>4</sup> Hamdam U. *Muvozanat*. – Toshkent: Sharq, 2007. b –129.



responsibility, faith, morality and personal identity. This gives the novel a deeper existential tone.

The Uzbek mentality in Muvozanat is connected with the need for harmony. A person cannot live only for material success. At the same time, he cannot completely ignore social and economic reality. Therefore, the solution is not rejection of the material world but its subordination to spiritual values<sup>5</sup>.

This idea differs from Fitzgerald's tragic vision. In *The Great Gatsby*, the world is morally damaged, and Gatsby's dream ends in destruction. In *Muvozanat*, the problem is also serious, but the title itself suggests the possibility of moral correction and inner harmony. Hamdam's artistic world is more openly philosophical and ethical.

The mentality of Hamdam's characters reflects the transitional condition of modern Uzbek society. People live between inherited moral values and new social demands. They need money, work, status and stability, but they also need conscience, love, faith and meaning. When these values are not balanced, spiritual crisis begins. Thus, *Muvozanat* presents mentality as a dynamic process. It is not fixed; it changes under the influence of time, society and personal experience. Despite national and cultural differences, Fitzgerald, Erkin A'zam and Ulugbek Hamdam share several common artistic concerns.

First, all three writers show that mentality influences personal destiny. Gatsby's life is shaped by the American Dream and the desire for social recognition. Erkin A'zam's characters are shaped by public opinion and social expectations. Hamdam's characters are shaped by the search for balance in a changing society. Second, all three writers reveal the conflict between external appearance and inner truth. Gatsby appears rich and successful, but he is lonely and dependent on illusion. Erkin A'zam's characters may appear socially normal, but internally they are anxious and divided. Hamdam's heroes may live in ordinary social conditions, but inside they search for meaning and harmony. Third, all three writers criticize false values. Fitzgerald criticizes wealth without morality. Erkin A'zam criticizes social appearance without sincerity. Hamdam criticizes material life without spiritual balance. Fourth, all three writers show that spiritual crisis is not only an individual problem. It reflects the condition of society. Gatsby's tragedy reflects the crisis of American material culture. Erkin A'zam's irony reflects contradictions in social mentality. Hamdam's search for balance reflects the moral needs of modern Uzbek society. This commonality proves that the problem of mentality has universal significance in literature<sup>6</sup>.

Fitzgerald's specificity lies in his connection with American culture and the American Dream. His characters are often motivated by individual ambition, self-creation and the desire to rise socially. Gatsby is the best example of this mentality. He believes that he can transform himself and achieve happiness through effort and wealth. However, Fitzgerald shows that American individualism has limits. Gatsby can become rich, but he cannot fully enter the world of old money. He can create an image, but he cannot control reality. He can dream, but he cannot repeat the past.

Fitzgerald's artistic world is also marked by glamour. Wealth is represented through bright images: parties, music, cars, clothes and beautiful houses. But this glamour is double-sided. It attracts and destroys. It creates beauty and hides emptiness. Therefore, Fitzgerald's

<sup>5</sup> Normatov U. *Ijod sehri*. – Tashkent: Sharq, 2007.

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



specificity is the tragic exposure of the American Dream. He shows that when a national mentality places too much value on material success, the human soul becomes vulnerable.

Erkin A'zam's specificity lies in social irony and psychological observation. He does not need Gatsby-like luxury to show crisis. He reveals emptiness in everyday behavior, conversations, social habits and ordinary human contradictions. His representation of mentality is deeply connected with Uzbek social life. Public opinion, reputation, indirect speech, irony, silence and social masks become important artistic tools. The writer shows that a person may be controlled not by wealth alone but by the fear of what others will say. This is a very important feature of Uzbek mentality. The community can protect values, but it can also limit individual sincerity. Erkin A'zam exposes this dual nature. He does not simply reject national mentality; he shows its contradictions. Thus, his specificity is the ironic analysis of social consciousness and the hidden crisis of sincerity.

Ulugbek Hamdam's specificity lies in philosophical depth and the concept of balance. His characters are not only socially observed; they are spiritually and intellectually analyzed. The writer asks broader questions: How should a person live? What is the relationship between body and soul, money and conscience, tradition and modernity, society and individuality? In Muvozanat, mentality is not only a set of social habits. It is a moral-philosophical structure. A person's inner harmony depends on the correct relationship between different values. If material needs dominate completely, the person becomes spiritually empty. If spiritual values are disconnected from real life, the person also suffers. Therefore, balance is the central idea [4]. Hamdam's specificity is that he searches for a constructive solution. Fitzgerald's world is tragic; Erkin A'zam's world is ironic; Hamdam's world is philosophical and ethical. This distinction makes the comparative analysis richer.

One of the most important common themes in the three writers' works is the relationship between mentality, material values and spiritual crisis. In Fitzgerald, material values dominate American social mentality. Gatsby's dream becomes impossible because love and morality are absorbed by money and class. In Erkin A'zam, material values appear together with social reputation and everyday ambition. The crisis is not always connected with great wealth; it is connected with the loss of sincerity under social pressure.

In Hamdam, material values are part of life, but they must be balanced with spirituality. The problem begins when material needs become stronger than moral and spiritual orientation. This comparison shows that spiritual crisis can have different sources. In American prose, it may arise from consumer culture and class ambition. In Uzbek prose, it may arise from social pressure, loss of sincerity, transition-period instability and imbalance between external and internal values.

The relationship between individual and society is central to the problem of mentality. Fitzgerald's Gatsby wants to enter a society that does not truly accept him. He builds his identity according to social expectations, but society remains indifferent to his inner world.

In Erkin A'zam's prose, the individual is closely connected with social environment. The person cannot ignore public opinion. This creates psychological pressure. The individual may lose authenticity because he constantly adjusts himself to others.

In Hamdam's Muvozanat, the individual must find a moral position within society. He cannot escape social life, but he also cannot fully surrender to it. He must preserve inner balance. Thus, all three writers show that mentality is formed in the tension between personal desire and social norms. A person becomes spiritually strong only when he can critically understand the values of his environment.

## Conclusion

The comparative analysis of the problem of mentality in the novels of F. Scott Fitzgerald, Erkin A'zam and Ulugbek Hamdam shows that mentality is one of the key categories for understanding literary characters, conflicts and philosophical meanings. In Fitzgerald's works, especially *The Great Gatsby*, mentality is connected with the American Dream, individual success, wealth, class distinction and moral carelessness. Fitzgerald shows that the mentality of material success may produce spiritual emptiness and personal tragedy.

In Erkin A'zam's *Momoqaldiraq ostida sayr*, mentality is represented through Uzbek social psychology, irony, public opinion, reputation and the conflict between external behavior and inner truth. The writer reveals how social expectations can create inner division and moral uncertainty.

In Ulugbek Hamdam's *Muvozanat*, mentality is interpreted philosophically as the search for balance between material and spiritual values, personal desire and moral responsibility, tradition and modernity. Hamdam's novel emphasizes that a person must preserve inner harmony in a changing world.

The main commonality between these writers is their attention to the crisis of the individual in society. All of them show that false values – wealth without morality, reputation without sincerity, material life without spiritual balance – lead to emptiness. The main specificity lies in cultural interpretation: Fitzgerald presents the tragedy of the American Dream; Erkin A'zam reveals Uzbek social irony; Hamdam develops a philosophical concept of balance.

Thus, the problem of mentality in these works has both universal and national significance. It demonstrates that literature is not only a reflection of life but also a deep analysis of human consciousness, social values and spiritual destiny.

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