

## MODERN YOUTH AND CLASSICAL LITERATURE

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**Abstract.** This article provides a scientific and theoretical analysis of modern youth's attitudes toward classical literature, the current state of reading culture, and the role of classical literary works in shaping the spirituality and intellectual worldview of young people. In addition, the study examines the declining interest of youth in fiction, particularly in samples of classical literature, against the background of rapid digital technological development. The article also reveals the significance of classical literature in spiritual maturity, the formation of national identity, and the development of aesthetic thinking.

**Keywords:** classical literature, modern youth, reading culture, spirituality, national values, artistic thinking, literary heritage.

**Introduction.** In today's era of globalization and advanced information technologies, the worldview, modes of thinking, and cultural needs of young people are undergoing significant transformation. The rapid spread of the Internet, social networks, and short-format information has greatly influenced young people's interest in reading books. "In our country, a number of measures are being implemented in order to widely promote reading culture, introduce new publications and translations, increase public interest in books, and provide libraries and educational institutions with professional and specialized literature"<sup>1</sup>. In particular, attitudes toward classical literature have become one of the pressing issues of contemporary society.

Classical literature represents the historical memory, spiritual heritage, and aesthetic consciousness of a nation. Samples of classical literature embody universal humanistic ideas such as humanity, love, patriotism, honesty, and kindness. Therefore, classical literary works play an invaluable role in educating the younger generation as spiritually mature individuals. In recent years, issues related to tradition and modernity in Uzbek literature have been widely studied. Researchers especially emphasize the close connection between classical heritage and contemporary literary processes.

Classical literature is one of the most important sources enriching the spiritual world of individuals and shaping their moral maturity. In particular, the idea of the "perfect human being" occupies a central place in the works of Alisher Navoiy. In the poet's famous rubai beginning with the line "Whoever desires sovereignty...", advice concerning governance, justice, devotion to the people, and the responsibility of rulers is expressed with remarkable artistic mastery. In this rubai, moral and ethical ideas advanced by earlier thinkers and teachers are further enriched and artistically reinterpreted:

Whoever desires sovereignty must possess generosity;

Whoever makes a promise must remain faithful to it.

Whoever seeks spiritual poverty must accept self-annihilation;

Whatever comes before him, he must meet with contentment<sup>2</sup>.

Thus, the poet emphasizes that a ruler should possess generosity toward the people, remain faithful to promises, sacrifice personal interests for the peace of society and the future of

<sup>1</sup> Resolution No. PQ-9 of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Measures for the Development of Reading Culture and Increasing Public Interest in Reading Books." Tashkent, January 15, 2026.

<sup>2</sup> Abdukodir Hayitmetov. Alisher Navoi's Literary-Critical Views. — Tashkent, 1959. — P. 104.

the nation, and satisfy the needs of those who seek help from him. Undoubtedly, Alisher Navoiy wished to see such noble qualities embodied in the activities of the Timurid princes.

In another philosophical rubai created through the skillful use of rhythmic-syntactic parallelism, the poet deeply portrays the physical and spiritual condition of a person:

Neither strength in the body, nor power in the flesh,  
Neither joy in the heart, nor health within oneself.  
Such a person deserves solitude,  
What can arise from his ruins?<sup>3</sup>

In this rubai, semantic parallels such as “body – flesh,” “strength – power,” and “heart – self” intensify the emotional and philosophical impact of the poem. The poet argues that an individual lacking physical strength, spiritual vitality, and usefulness to society is unworthy of social participation. According to Navoiy, a person living within society must serve the public good and benefit others; otherwise, life loses its meaning.

The final line of the rubai possesses symbolic meaning, expressing the idea of what kind of legacy a person leaves after death. The poet suggests that human value is determined by beneficial deeds, moral integrity, and service to society. In this regard, the rubai encourages young people to become active, useful, and spiritually mature individuals. The poet’s “Khamsa,” ghazals, and wise sayings have inspired generations of young people toward enlightenment, goodness, and humanism for nearly six centuries.

Classical literature not only provides aesthetic pleasure but also enriches the moral world of individuals. The ideas expressed in classical works have not lost their significance even today. For instance, the novel *O‘tkan kunlar* vividly portrays national values, love, and social issues through remarkable artistic mastery. According to literary scholars, there exists a close relationship between classical and modern literature, as contemporary literature continues to draw inspiration from classical traditions.

Today, many young people spend most of their time on the Internet and social media, which reduces the time devoted to reading books. In particular, the linguistic complexity of classical works distances some young readers from them. However, this does not indicate a decline in the value of classical literature. On the contrary, it highlights the growing need to promote classical literature through modern methods. Electronic books, audiobooks, and screen adaptations may serve as effective tools for increasing youth interest in literature.

Studies indicate that visual aids and modern technologies enhance students’ interest in literary texts. Discussions on the Internet also demonstrate young people’s continuing interest in classical literature. Many recommend reading works such as *O‘tkan kunlar* and *Kecha va kunduz*. The spiritual image of every nation is reflected in its literature. Uzbek classical literature embodies the spiritual values formed over centuries. Therefore, studying classical literature helps young people develop an awareness of national identity. Jadid writers such as Cho‘lpon, Abdurauf Fitrat, and Abdulla Qodiriy promoted ideas of national freedom, enlightenment, and progress. Their works continue to serve as a spiritual school for modern youth.

Contemporary Uzbek literature also continues classical traditions. Modern writers effectively employ classical images, symbols, and philosophical concepts, thereby ensuring literary continuity. In the poetry of the independence period, themes such as human freedom, spiritual quest, and emotional experience harmonize with mystical ideas found in classical literature. Young contemporary writers are likewise inspired by classical literary heritage, demonstrating its continued relevance in modern literary processes.

Today, increasing young people’s interest in classical literature remains an urgent issue. For this purpose, it is essential to apply modern pedagogical technologies and interactive teaching methods in education. Presenting classical works in contemporary interpretations, increasing the number of electronic and audio books, organizing reading competitions and

<sup>3</sup> Alisher Navoiy. *Complete Works (MAT)*. Vol. 3. — Tashkent: Fan Publishing House, 1988. — pp. 6–20.

literary events, and promoting classical literature through social media can significantly contribute to the development of reading culture among youth.

Despite the rapid expansion of digital technologies and social networks, the educational and aesthetic value of classical literature has not diminished. Classical literature encourages deep thinking, moral reflection, and respect for national values. Therefore, promoting reading culture and introducing classical literature through modern educational and technological approaches is one of the major tasks of contemporary society.

**Conclusion.** In conclusion, classical literature represents a priceless spiritual treasure embodying the moral values, ethical principles, and artistic thinking developed by nations over centuries. Classical works inspire individuals toward goodness, compassion, patriotism, and enlightenment. In particular, the works of Alisher Navoiy, Cho'lpon, and Abdulla Qodiriy play an important role in educating young people in the spirit of moral maturity.

Indeed, young people who read classical literature enrich their spiritual world, develop independent thinking, and strengthen their sense of national identity. Thus, classical literature remains not only a heritage of the past but also an important educational force contributing to the spiritual development of present and future generations.

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