

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.19665051

Link: <https://zenodo.org/records/19665051>

SELECTION OF WORKS OF ART FOR THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPING SPIRITUAL AND MORAL IDEALS IN STUDENTS ON THE EXAMPLE OF ENGLISH CLASSICAL LITERATURE

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Abstract. *Artistic works possess significant potential for effectively influencing an individual’s intellectual, moral-spiritual, and emotional-aesthetic development. Therefore, literary works have been actively used in the education and upbringing of individuals for centuries. English classical literature undoubtedly occupies an important place in the development of universal culture and the socio-cultural progress of society. In the context of Uzbekistan, the growing interest in learning the English language, young people’s ability to communicate in this language, as well as the educational potential of English classical literature in developing intellectual, moral-spiritual, and emotional-aesthetic qualities, indicate the expediency of using it in the formation of students’ moral and ethical ideals. The article examines the organization of pedagogical activities aimed at developing students’ moral and ethical ideals, as well as the selection of examples of English classical literature that contribute to achieving effectiveness in this process.*

Keywords: *English classical literature, students, ideal, moral and ethical ideals, development, works of art, selection of works of art.*

INTRODUCTION

In the context of globalization, educating the younger generation as intellectually developed, spiritually mature, and morally responsible individuals has become one of the most urgent tasks of modern education systems. In this regard, works of art-especially literary texts-play a crucial role in shaping students’ spiritual and moral ideals. Literature has a unique ability to influence the human mind and emotions, fostering values such as honesty, kindness, justice, and empathy.

English classical literature, as an integral part of world literature, is distinguished by its profound philosophical depth, realistic depiction of life, and insightful exploration of human nature. The works of writers such as William Shakespeare, Charles Dickens, and Jane Austen vividly reflect moral dilemmas, social relationships, and ethical values. Through these literary masterpieces, students are encouraged to develop critical thinking skills, broaden their worldview, and form strong moral principles. The relevance of this research lies in the growing need to strengthen moral values among students in an age characterized by rapid information flow, cultural diversity, and increasing external influences. In such circumstances, the careful selection of appropriate literary works and their effective integration into the educational process becomes a significant scientific and practical issue.

The aim of this study is to explore the process of developing students’ spiritual and moral ideals through the selection of works from English classical literature and to propose effective methods for their implementation in education. To achieve this aim, the following objectives are

defined:

- to analyze the educational potential of English classical literature;
- to examine the theoretical foundations of spiritual and moral ideals;
- to identify the role of literary works in shaping students’ moral values;
- to develop effective approaches for using literary texts in the teaching process.

The scientific novelty of this research lies in its systematic analysis of the factors influencing students’ moral and spiritual development through English classical literature, as well as in the development of practical recommendations for educators.

LITERATURE REVIEW.

The issue of developing students’ spiritual and moral ideals through literature has been widely discussed in pedagogical and literary studies. Scholars emphasize that literary works serve not only as a source of linguistic knowledge but also as a powerful tool for moral education and personal development. According to Matthew Arnold, literature is “a criticism of life,” reflecting moral truths and human values that contribute to the ethical formation of individuals [1]. This idea highlights the importance of integrating classical literary works into the educational process to shape students’ worldview and moral consciousness. In the field of moral education, Lawrence Kohlberg developed a theory of moral development, arguing that individuals progress through different stages of moral reasoning [2]. Literature, particularly classical works, provides students with complex moral dilemmas that stimulate higher levels of ethical thinking and judgment. English classical literature offers rich material for moral and spiritual education. The works of William Shakespeare explore themes such as justice, loyalty, betrayal, and the consequences of human actions [3]. For instance, tragedies like Hamlet and Macbeth present deep moral conflicts that encourage readers to reflect on ethical choices and human responsibility. Similarly, Charles Dickens focuses on social justice, compassion, and the moral consequences of inequality in novels such as Oliver Twist and A Christmas Carol [4]. His works highlight the importance of empathy and kindness, making them valuable for students’ moral development. The contribution of Jane Austen is also significant, as her novels examine personal morality, social norms, and individual responsibility [5]. Through characters and their moral choices, students learn about integrity, respect, and ethical behavior in society. Modern researchers also emphasize the pedagogical value of literature. According to Carter and Long, literature plays a key role in developing not only language skills but also cultural awareness and moral sensitivity [6]. Lazar further notes that literary texts engage students emotionally and intellectually, making them effective tools for teaching values and critical thinking [7]. Furthermore, contemporary studies underline the importance of selecting appropriate literary works that correspond to students’ age, cultural background, and educational goals. Effective teaching methods, such as discussion, reflection, and role-play, enhance students’ engagement with literary texts and deepen their moral understanding. In summary, the analysis of scientific literature shows that English classical literature has significant potential for developing students’ spiritual and moral ideals. However, its effectiveness largely depends on the careful selection of texts and the use of appropriate pedagogical approaches.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.

This study employs a qualitative research design aimed at exploring the role of English classical literature in the development of students’ spiritual and moral ideals. A qualitative approach is considered appropriate as it allows for an in-depth analysis of literary texts and their pedagogical potential in shaping students’ values and ethical perspectives. The research is based on a combination of theoretical and empirical methods. Theoretical methods include the analysis of pedagogical, psychological, and literary sources related to moral education and the use of literature in teaching. In particular, the works of Lawrence Kohlberg on moral development and Matthew Arnold on the educational value of literature serve as the conceptual foundation of the study. Textual analysis is one of the primary methods used in this research. Selected works from English classical literature,

including those by William Shakespeare, Charles Dickens, and Jane Austen, are analyzed to identify themes, characters, and moral dilemmas that contribute to the formation of students’ ethical values. This method enables a deeper understanding of how literary content can influence students’ spiritual development. In addition, comparative analysis is applied to examine similarities and differences in moral themes across various literary works. This approach helps to determine which types of texts are most effective in fostering specific moral qualities such as empathy, responsibility, and integrity. The study also utilizes pedagogical observation and reflective analysis. These methods involve examining how students respond to literary texts during classroom discussions, as well as analyzing their interpretations, attitudes, and reflections. Such an approach provides insights into the practical effectiveness of using literature as a tool for moral education. Furthermore, elements of content analysis are employed to systematically categorize moral concepts, values, and ethical conflicts presented in the selected literary works. This method ensures objectivity and allows for the identification of recurring patterns related to moral development. The research process consists of several stages: selection of relevant literary works, analysis of their moral and educational content, implementation of these works in the teaching process, and evaluation of their impact on students’ spiritual and moral development. In summary, the chosen methodology integrates literary analysis with pedagogical approaches, ensuring a comprehensive examination of the role of English classical literature in shaping students’ moral ideals. The combination of these methods enhances the reliability and validity of the research findings and provides a solid basis for practical recommendations.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS.

English classical literature plays an important role in the development of world civilization. Because it deeply analyzes in artistic and emotional terms such topics as human nature, social morality, national and universal values, understanding the inner experiences of a person, the need to build relationships on the basis of justice, solidarity and mutual equal interests. Through the works of classical literature figures, human feelings, love, betrayal, justice, as well as social issues such as the problems of the industrialization period, the economic crisis that occurred in small crafts in connection with this period, and the poverty that arose as a result of it, are analyzed. The idea of reforming society is one of the most important ideas put forward in the examples of classical English literature. Examples of this type of literature not only enriched the English language and culture, but also had a great influence on the literature of other peoples, becoming an integral part of the world literary heritage.

In the history of world education, a tradition has been formed of intellectual, emotional and aesthetic education of students by combining pedagogical ideas with fiction, their artistic and emotional impact on the individual. As a result of the lack of scientific-academic, artistic, analytical nature of the content in the modern media and information field, it is necessary to use effective means to satisfy the need for intellectual, aesthetic, emotional development of young people, in particular, young people, and to enrich their worldview. One of the most effective means of positively influencing the individual is undoubtedly English classical literature.

Therefore, samples of English classical literature were selected to develop spiritual and moral ideals in students.

In the process of forming and developing spiritual and moral ideals in students, the selection of samples of English classical literature should not be random, but should be purposeful, scientifically and methodologically based and consistently organized. Because through works of art, students understand not only language or plot, but also the essence of human nature, moral choices, and social relationships.

The selection of examples of English classical literature for the intended pedagogical process was carried out based on the following criteria:

1. The educational potential of the work of art.
2. The correspondence of the ideas put forward in the work of art to universal and national values.

3. The correspondence of the work of art to the age and psychological characteristics of students is considered the main criterion.

Familiarization with examples of English classical literature undoubtedly confirmed the educational potential of all works and the correspondence of the ideas put forward in them to universal and national values.

The correspondence of the works of art to the age and psychological characteristics of students was also taken into account during the selection process. In this case, not only the idea put forward in the works of art, but also the level of cognitive complexity of the content (the correspondence of the plot line, the system of images and the ideological layer to the age-related cognitive capabilities of the student); It would be a practical and methodologically correct approach to take into account such factors as the students' mental and emotional stability, a certain level of life experience and possession of a system of spiritual and moral values; conflicts arising between the characters depicted in the works; dramatic situations; the formation of a positive attitude in them or the emergence of misunderstandings; the level of complexity of language and style, archaic expressions (outdated words and expressions in English that have now fallen out of use, word combinations used mainly in the form of "idioms", stylistic peculiarities (for example, in the works of William Shakespeare, life is depicted as a "stage" and individuals as "actors", in the works of Jane Austen, hypocrisy in society, social norms that do not serve the interests of the subjects are satirized and ridiculed, and in the works of Charles Dickens, the natural, realistic depiction of the life of English people (unemployment, poverty during the early industrialization period)).

At the same time, the success of the research was also studied in the practical aspect of the “portrait” of modern youth, their interest in reading works of art and, in parallel, their interests, needs and motivations for digital content. The results of the study and analysis showed that today's students, unlike their peers in the 60s-80s of the 20th century, are not interested in novels and stories on the themes of sincere love, loyalty and devotion, friendship, adventure, but only in short stories, and even then only in works of a relatively small or small-scale genre. They explained this by the high academic pressure (educational load), insufficient time budget, and lack of patience for leisurely reading books. At the same time, considerations regarding students' interest in reading works of art were also diagnosed on the basis of international and national research and the results were analyzed. The results of the study and analysis showed that the situation is extremely serious and contradictory. The current situation can be expressed in two cases possible: on the one hand, there has been a decrease in the interest and practical actions of young people in reading fiction, while on the other hand, there has been an increase in their activity in familiarizing themselves with digital media and online content. Here are a few examples that confirm this idea (Table 1):

Table 1.

Contemporary youth's attitudes towards reading works of art and digital content

№	Years	Indicators	Interest, need and motivation
1.	2024 (National Literacy Trust survey)	(in %)	Likes to read books in his free time
		Only 34.6 percent of 8-18 year olds (lowest rate in the last 20 years)	Reads independently every day
2.	2024	20.5 percent	By the number of times he reads in a year (1.2 million readers)
3.	2024 (National Library Board survey) 2025 2025	4.4 percent decrease	Reads a book at least once a year
		91 percent teenagers	Reads a printed book, articles, online content several times a week
		81 percent teenagers	Considers the reading process as enjoyable
		70 percent teenagers	Recognizes the intellectual benefit of reading

4.	2025 (India)	90 percent teenagers	Likes to read
5.	Years	32-33 percent	Likes to watch TV or use the Internet
6.	2024 (National Literacy Trust survey)	72 percent	Reads a work of fiction regularly

The decrease in interest and need for reading works of art by young people, especially students, is explained by the impact of digital technologies on their lives and activities. Their time resources are mainly spent on social networks, video content and Internet games.

The lack of a time budget leads to the formation of a new, unusual skill in modern youth - intolerance to receiving multi-page, large-volume information. Therefore, when choosing samples of English classical literature, it was confirmed that it is necessary to take into account the desire of students to get acquainted with short, short information, the dynamics of students' personal development, as well as their ability to know the English language. In this regard, the selection of short and relatively short stories was considered appropriate (Table 2).

The ideas put forward in the selected works serve to effectively develop students' spiritual and moral ideals. This can also be understood from the summary of the selected works:

1. Rudyard Kipling's "The Man Who Would Be King." The characters, Daniel Drummond and Peachey Carnehan, live with the dream of achieving power and wealth. They try to subjugate the inhabitants of a village in Afghanistan. To achieve their dreams, they reject the moral standards accepted by society.

Table 2.

Selected works of art for the development of spiritual and moral ideals in students using the example of English classical literature

№	Authors	Works	Year of creation Year of publication	Year of creation Year of publication
1.	Rudyard Kipling	“The Man Who	1888	1888
2.		Would Be King”	1905	1905
3.	Jack London	“Love of Life”	1902	1908
4.	O'Henry	“To Build a Fire”	1905	1905
5.	Jack London	“The Gift of the Magi”	1936	1936

However, at the end of the work, they are doomed due to their own mistakes and the nature of social laws. The work reveals the conflict between human desire, lust (the desire for wealth and power), and social moral rules.

2. Jack London's "Love of Life". In this story, the idea of the work is revealed in the third person and the name of the hero is not mentioned. The main idea is based on the struggle for survival of a person struggling with the harsh nature and the desire to preserve human qualities in difficult situations. The plot of the work takes place over a period of approximately several days to two weeks. During this period, the hero is separated from his partner Bill during his life in the wilds of northern Canada - the Yukon Territory and the tundra near the Arctic, then he struggles with hunger and fatigue, and in the end, without losing hope, he tries to survive. During this time, in the bitter cold, even treeless vast tundra, he is tested between his desire to live several times without food and water and his loyalty to his moral values, which are inherent in a truly human being. No matter how much hunger and thirst torment him, the hero ignores his inner voices and feeds on small animals, fish, wild plants, and roots. The main idea of man's desire to survive, strong will, and struggle against nature, even in extremely difficult conditions, is considered to be the main idea put forward in the work.

3. Jack London's "To Build a Fire" . The story is told in the third person. The events described in the story take place in the Yukon Glacier. Yukon is a region in northwestern Canada, bordering Alaska (USA), which is famous for its extremely cold climate, vast forests, and glaciers. The image of a traveler in the icy wilderness depicts the sharp contrast between man and nature. The reality of the work does not occur with a lonely hero. He has a companion - his dog. However, the image of the dog appears in the work not in the form of a living creature accompanying the traveler, but as a symbol of an inner intuition that foretells the occurrence of natural phenomena. The traveler, ignoring the advice of experienced old people familiar to him that it is not advisable to go alone in the extreme cold, and relying too much on his own intelligence and willpower, set off to meet his friends at the Henderson camp. After lunch, the traveler accidentally falls into the icy water. It is this incident that serves as the beginning of the tragic end of the traveler's life. From this moment on, a dangerous situation arises. He tries to light a fire and dry his clothes. However, the fierce cold, his haste and inexperience prevent him from lighting the fire sufficiently. The fire that he barely lit quickly goes out. Then he even thinks about killing his dog and warming himself with its skin. But he does not have the courage to do this. He tries to run to overcome the cold. However, due to fatigue and extreme cold, he falls and cannot get up. As a result, he dies of exhaustion and cold, immobilized. The dog sits on the lifeless body of the traveler for a while, and then heads towards the camp to overcome hunger. Thus, the work reveals in a very touching way the arrogance of man, the denial of the laws of nature, and the destruction that comes from making the wrong decisions.

4. O. Henry's "The Gift of the Magi". The story illustrates the true selflessness and ideals of humanity through the images of a young couple, Jim and Della, who are poor but deeply in love with each other. It is Jim's only possession, inherited first from his grandfather and then from his father. Therefore, the watch is not only a valuable thing for Jim, but also spiritually and emotionally valuable. On Christmas Eve, Della wants to buy her beloved husband Jim some valuable gift. However, the scarce funds she has do not allow her to fulfill her desire. Then Della sells her most valuable possession - her long and beautiful hair. With the money she receives from her hair, she buys a chain for Jim's watch. In turn, Jim wants to buy Della some kind of present for the holiday. For this purpose, he sells his precious watch and buys Della a valuable comb for her hair. When they exchange gifts, the gifts they receive have no practical value for either of them. However, Jim and Della's actions make them realize how sincere and selfless their love for each other is. Thus, the work effectively shows that the greatest wealth for a person is not material goods, but love, loyalty, and selflessness. At the end of the story, the author emphasizes that they are "Magi", that is, wise people who give gifts without any reason.

5. Ernest Hemingway's "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" . The story expresses deep socio-philosophical reflections on the meaning of life through the image of the writer Harry, who is facing death. Harry is injured during a trip to Africa and becomes seriously ill due to an infection. He is cared for by his beloved wife Helen. Reflecting on his personal life, Harry admits that in the past he had the opportunity to write about the war he participated in, the hardships he experienced, and the touching events he experienced, but he chose a full, prosperous life and could not fully express his talent. He also recalls that he was sometimes harsh and unfair towards Helen, who was dissatisfied with him. Throughout the plot of the work, Harry's memories and his current situation are intertwined. He critically evaluates his life before his death. At the end of the work, he is symbolically depicted as climbing the snowy peak of Mount Kilimanjaro. This situation symbolizes Harry's spiritual purification, albeit belated, and his understanding of the truth of life. The work, through the image of the writer, presents the idea that a person's greatest courage is to admit their mistakes and face the truth.

CONCLUSION

The practical experience carried out within the framework of the study also confirmed that the selected and above-named works serve as an educational tool for the effective development of spiritual and moral ideals in students.

Thus, works of art, which are examples of English classical literature, are not only a means of expressing the social system of a certain period, the human relations established in it, and the attitude of the individual to existence, but also become an educational mechanism that serves to comprehensively develop the individual. In their artistic, aesthetic, moral and emotional experience, students are formed as independent thinkers, morally mature and active individuals in society. This is achieved by selecting works of art and organizing the teaching process using them on a scientifically based basis, taking into account the educational potential of examples of English classical literature and the interests and desires of learners.

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