

**Humanistic principles of Chingiz Aitmatov: dialogue of cultures**  
**Гуманистические принципы Чингиза Айтматова: диалог культур**  
**Шыңғыс Айтматовтың гуманистік принциптері: мәдениеттер диалогы**

R.R. Barkibayeva 

Al-Farabi Kazakh National University  
; Алматы, Қазақстан; Алматы, Қазақстан; Almaty, Kazakhstan  
[kainigulasia@mail.ru](mailto:kainigulasia@mail.ru)

Y.T. Suraganova

12<sup>th</sup> grade student of Nazarbayev Intellectual School  
Семей, Қазақстан; Семей, Қазақстан; Semei, Kazakhstan;  
[y.suraganova@gmail.com](mailto:y.suraganova@gmail.com)

D. Kayratkyzy 

1<sup>st</sup>-year PhD student of Al-Farabi Kazakh National University  
Алматы, Қазақстан; Алматы, Қазақстан; Almaty, Kazakhstan;  
[dika\\_9204@mail.ru](mailto:dika_9204@mail.ru)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7630-5463>

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2923-9392>

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4879-6381>

### Summary

The purpose of this article is to actualize the humanistic principles of the work of Chingiz Aitmatov (1928-2008), one of the brightest humanist writers of the 20th century. The authors define the interpretation of classic literature as a “dialogue of cultures” (according to M. Bakhtin), considering the experience of interaction between cultures of different nations and peoples.

Historical and comparative and interdisciplinary methods are used in the article: art history and cultural approaches are combined with the method of artistic analysis of texts.

Relevance of the chosen research topic is due to the well-deserved interest in the work of Ch. Aitmatov, who raised the problems of “cultural memory” and “cultural identity” to the rank of universal ones. Ch. Aitmatov, Kyrgyz and Soviet writer, has always raised the problems of not one nation or state, but all mankind. He was one of the first, long before the start of world integration, to say that “now there is a need to develop a new, planetary thinking in mankind”, where the dialogue of cultures plays a key role.

The article also touches upon one of the most important issues of our time – the problem of moral education of young people. According to the authors of the article, the works of Ch. Aitmatov are a spiritual testament to the younger generation, a demonstration of the ways of forming moral universal values in young people.

**Key words:** dialogue of cultures, intercultural communication, universal values, humanism.

### Аннотация

Целью данной статьи является актуализация гуманистических принципов творчества Чингиза Айтматова (1928-2008) – одного из ярких писателей-гуманистов XX в. Авторы трактуют интерпретацию литературной классики как «диалог культур» (по М. Бахтину), рассматривая опыт взаимодействия культур разных наций и народов.

В статье используются историко-сравнительный и междисциплинарный методы: искусствоведческий и культурологический подходы соединяются с методом художественного анализа текстов.

Актуальность выбранной темы исследования обусловлена заслуженным интересом к творчеству Ч. Айтматова, который возвел проблемы «культурной памяти» и «культурной идентичности» в ранг общечеловеческих. Ч. Айтматов, кыргызский и советский писатель, всегда поднимал проблемы не одной нации или государства, а всего человечества. Он одним из первых задолго до начала мировой интеграции сказал, что «сейчас встает необходимость выработать у человечества новое, планетарное мышление», где диалог культур играют ключевую роль.

В статье также затронута одна из важнейших проблем современности – проблема нравственного воспитания молодежи. По мнению авторов статьи, произведения Ч. Айтматова – это духовное завещание молодому поколению, показ путей формирования в молодежи нравственных общечеловеческих ценностей.

**Ключевые слова:** диалог культур, межкультурная коммуникация, общечеловеческие ценности, гуманизм.

#### Андатпа

Осы мақаланың мақсаты – ХХ ғасырдың ең жарқын гуманист жазушыларының бірі Шыңғыс Айтматов (1928-2008) шығармашылығының гуманистік принциптерін өзектендіру. Авторлар әр түрлі ұлттар мен халықтар мәдениеттерінің өзара әрекеттесу тәжірибесін ескере отырып, әдебиет классиктерінің интерпретациясын «мәдениеттер диалогы» (М. Бахтин бойынша) ретінде түсіндіреді.

Мақалада тарихи-салыстырмалы және пәнаралық әдістер қолданылады: өнертану мен мәдениеттану тәсілдері мәтіндерді көркем талдау әдісімен үйлеседі.

Таңдалған зерттеу тақырыбының өзектілігі «мәдени жады» және «мәдени сәйкестілік» мәселелерін әмбебап деңгейге көтерген Ч. Айтматовтың шығармашылығына лайықты қызығушылықпен байланысты. Қырғыз және кеңес жазушысы Ч. Айтматов әрдайым бір ұлттың немесе мемлекеттің емес, бүкіл адамзаттың мәселелерін көтеріп келеді. Ол алғашқылардың бірі болып, әлемдік интеграция басталғанға дейін «қазір адамзатта жаңа, планетарлық ойлауды дамыту қажет» деп айтты, мұнда мәдениеттер диалогы басты рөл атқарады.

Мақалада сонымен бірге қазіргі заманның маңызды мәселелерінің бірі – жастарды адамгершілікке тәрбиелеу мәселесі қозғалды. Мақала авторларының пікірінше, Ч. Айтматов шығармалары – жас ұрпаққа рухани өсиет, жастардың бойында адамгершілік жалпыадамзаттық құндылықтарды қалыптастыру жолдарын көрсету.

**Түйінді сөздер:** мәдениеттер диалогы, мәдениетаралық байланыс, жалпыадамзаттық құндылықтар, гуманизм.

**Introduction.** In the twentieth century, one of the most important achievements in the field of human sciences was the development of the doctrine of dialogue of cultures, which allows a new approach to solving the problem of interaction of cultures, paving the way for a real understanding of different ethnic groups and peoples, and, consequently, to reduce the severity of conflicts between them. The foundations of this teaching were laid in the works of M.M. Bakhtin [5]. Although the dialogue of cultures as a theoretical teaching and method of analysis emerged quite late, the interaction of cultures, including their dialogue, is a constant factor in human history and “way of being” of different cultures. Therefore, it has repeatedly become the object of study in various human sciences – albeit through the prism of other theoretical approaches such as historical, philosophical, literary, etc. In particular, it has repeatedly occurred in the history of Russian culture – both because of the significant ethnic diversity of its population and its geographical location “between the West and the East”. As Yu.M. Lotman repeatedly emphasized, the study of the problem of dialogue of cultures at the present stage cannot be carried out, ignoring the experience that has already been accumulated in the humanitarian sphere [9, 427]. Therefore, the analysis of dialogue as a “way of being” of culture requires an appeal to a variety of humanitarian fields and use of their achievements, including writing. And here the work of Chingiz Toregulovich Aitmatov, which is based on the desire to develop dialogue of cultures, is priceless, and is undoubtedly a world cultural heritage. And our

task is to consider his work from the perspective of a dialogue of cultures, and note the importance of Aitmatov's works and ideas in spiritual development of young people. Of course, as much as possible within the framework of a single article.

**Material and methods.** G. Gachev, researcher of works of Ch. Aitmatov, noting the values of Aitmatov's works in Soviet times, wrote: "His novels are short and ingenuous, but they have artistic bottomlessness and philosophical depth, and about eternal problems of human life, culture, consciousness. The works of Chingiz Aitmatov have become an integral element and factor of our spiritual life over the past decades: they nourish spirit with thoughts, soul – with experiences, imagination – with beauty, and deepen the inner person in us" [6, 59].

Much has changed since that time: the political system, people, and values. The social instability of the last decades has led to the loss of moral guidelines among young people, the growth of manifestations of intolerance, cruelty, and hatred of "others". There is a need for a new content of education, based on understanding of the community and unity of human communities, harmonization of relations in a modern multicultural community. The topic of intercultural dialogue is becoming relevant today. It seems that the fate of Russia, the CIS countries, and the whole world largely depend on the solution of problem of interaction between different national cultures. Such an assessment may seem exaggerated to someone, but a number of arguments can be cited in favor of such a high assessment, the significance of the problem of interaction of national cultures in the CIS. This is the place of Russia and the CIS in the world system, this is the millions of people living, so to speak, "not in their national formations", this is the connection between political, economic, psychological, educational and linguistic problems. It is clear to every person that the fate of people living both in the CIS and beyond its borders will radically change if suddenly millions of people begin to move to new places. Most likely, this will be accompanied by casualties, hardships, violence and wars.

In fact, the wars are already underway. Ukraine is an example of this. The ideas of nationalism, cultural isolationism, as you know, are well theoretically justified. These are the concepts of racists like H.S. Chamberlain, fascists like Hitler and the like. These concepts are opposed by the much more humane and reasonable ideas of the founders of world religions, as well as such great thinkers of the past and present as E. Kant, L. Tolstoy, I. Berdyayev and A. Men. These include the Kazakh thinkers A. Kunanbayev, Sh. Kudaiberdiyev, Ch. Valikhanov, as well as our contemporaries Olzhas Suleimenov and Chingiz Aitmatov.

The words "Adamzattyn barin suy bauyrym dep ..." – "Love humanity like a brother ..." belong to the great Abai. They are carved on the monument, which was opened in the fall of 2015 in Glubokoe village, the regional center of the East Kazakhstan region. The Poet says that Abai with this testament, seems to tell us, future generations, that a person who is locked in a small world becomes spiritually poorer. Love humanity as a brother, and then, having risen to the universal laws, you will become a highly moral person.

"When some patriots enthusiastically say about their own culture that it is "authentic", O. Suleimenov points out, "I refuse to share their enthusiasm. An "authentic" culture can only exist on an island lost somewhere in the middle of the ocean, where no ship has landed for thousands of years. Deprived of contact with other cultures, such a culture, i.e. an island culture, is always poorly developed and the language that expresses it is extremely poor. Development is in interaction. All the great cultures that artificially cut off contact with the world stopped in their progress and fell into decline. The history of mankind can provide numerous proofs of this, he concludes. These words are compliant with Jaspers' ideas about philosophical communication and axial time. These words are also compliant with the following lines of A. Men. A. Men wrote "The current global crisis shows that neither hostility, nor defensive isolationism, nor eclecticism have a future. Dialogue can be fruitful for all parties. Dialogue today is no longer a luxury of intellectuals, but a requirement of life itself" [10, 97].

**Literature review.** Nowadays, our society more than ever needs educated, intellectually and spiritually developed youth, responsible for the fate of their people. Among today's youth there are many mobile, operational and competent in many social spheres (knowledge of languages and

information, computer technologies, etc.), but in the context of world integration and globalization without personal, human qualities, without the ability to think globally, without moral principles it will be difficult for them to make the right decisions and maintain the value relationships created by humanity for millennia.

Everyone knows that the role of art and fiction in the formation of moral values is great. Back in the seventies Ch. Aitmatov wrote: "Trying to play on our instincts, "mass art" often reproduces physical cruelty – murder, torture, blood... It always worries, inspires fear, this is a sure way to influence the souls of people, an attempt to make art a kind of hypnosis, a blinding factor... But I believe that art should proceed from normal human life. What is beautiful about a person is exactly how human he is". [2, 31].

The heroes of Ch. Aitmatov – Tolgonai, Subankul, Zhainak, Maisalbek, Kasym, Edigey, Kazangap, Abutalip, Altynai, Duishon, Arsen and others have the best human qualities, spiritual wealth, readers love them and therefore worry about their fate. Ch. Aitmatov did not know foreign languages, and considered Kyrgyz and Russian as his native languages, and worked in them. He wrote his first story in Moscow, in a hostel on Tverskoy Boulevard, and he called it by the female name "Jamilya". Louis Aragon, a famous French writer, called this love story, which went through all the trials of that difficult time, the most beautiful love story after Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet [3]. By the way, the opinion of this recognized pen master influenced official recognition of the work in the Soviet Union. The story was translated into dozens of languages, and L. Aragon himself translated it into French. It has been reprinted 37 times in German alone.

Human and his good deeds, work and conscience, love and hope, selflessness in the name of life on Earth, in the name of the future – these are Aitmatov's themes, they are the main values of mankind. Morality in the work of Ch. Aitmatov is the central, main core of establishment and formation of personality.

Not everyone is able to assess facts of the past from the perspective of the present day. Meanwhile, it should be emphasized that the awareness of identity, uniqueness, richness of cultures and languages, the diversity of spiritual and material world, the formation of ability to live and communicate in a multinational country is extremely important. In any society, the dialogue of cultures is necessary for its members in order to form mutual understanding and cooperation between peoples. Human society is the world of communication, and the modern era is the era of dialogue. Therefore, the problem of mutual understanding, openness, dialogue between different cultures is not a luxury, but a vital necessity.

**Results and discussion.** Ch. Aitmatov, a Kyrgyz and Soviet writer, has always raised the problems of not one nation or state, but all mankind. He was one of the first, long before the start of world integration, to say that "now there is a need to develop a new, planetary thinking in mankind". As the Kazakh scientist S. Kaskabasov in his article "Planetary Aitmatov" writes: "the experience of human development shows that in any cataclysms, in any zigzags, human society moves forward along an offensive path. And in this process, the rod axis plays a huge role, which does not lend itself to any changes... Chingiz Aitmatov is one of such outstanding leader, a figure of a planetary character, whose work provides moral support and spiritual wealth to millions of people at all times" [8, 11]. And it is difficult to disagree with this judgment. The world now lives in an irresistible thirst for mutual understanding, for cultural mutual exchange. And in order to live in friendship and respect, in the spirit of dialogue and tolerance, you need to know more and better how a neighbor lives at home, to know his spiritual guidelines, customs, morals, to share his best achievements and experiences. In this respect, the work of Chingiz Aitmatov is a powerful tool. After all, his works are meaningful and deep. People's writer of Kyrgyzstan Ch.T. Aitmatov dreamed that his works would bring to hearts and minds of people the light of humanity, goodness and faith in man, with renewed vigor sang the atmosphere of dialogue and tolerance, the beautiful and sublime in life. Chingiz Aitmatov set the formation of universal values as one of the tasks of his artistic creativity. He understood perfectly well that universal tolerance is achieved only when you leave alone everything that is specific that is inherent in individual people or nationalities. Ch.T. Aitmatov adhered to the conviction that "the truly valuable is marked by one thing – it belongs to all mankind" [7, 3]. We agree with this understanding

of universal values, because the greatest good for humanity is everything that contributes to the unity of peoples and nations.

Ch.T. Aitmatov believed that “humanity is united in Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, Goethe, Pushkin, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Balzac, Sholokhov, Faulkner, Garcia Marquez... They are bridges of thought and spirit. Bridges connecting generations of people, connecting the world in the main moral and philosophical searches and problems of the “one human community” on the planet. Bridges over which the accumulation of cultural values and experience of knowledge are spiritualized genetically and deeply endured the idea of humanism” [1, 511]. The work of Ch.T. Aitmatov is the contribution of Kyrgyzstan to the culture of peace. Ch. Aitmatov said “a true artist is the code of communication. If I meet a person and find out that they love Chekhov, I find a friend. If a previously unknown person, no matter what nationality he may be, listening to “Manas” for the first time, is able to feel the motive and beauty of this ocean – like epic, he is my brother” [1, 512]. It shows us that the specificity of the dialogue lies in a certain ability to perceive the “other”.

Ch.T. Aitmatov stated: “Each ethnos makes its own unique contribution to the planetary culture. National culture now cannot develop outside the general historical context of a given era. The ability of one nation to master the achievements of another is an important criterion for the viability of its culture. And this quality, enriching your nation, allows you to generously share your spiritual values with others, to ensure mutual understanding of people, their perception of national values [1, 219]. And it is hard to disagree with this. He wrote: “True patriotism is always based on the principle of national tolerance, which consists in the fact that a person, loving his nation and national culture, understands that there are worthy values in another culture... The experience of interaction with the cultures of other nations and peoples helps us to rise to the realization of this difference” [1, 221].

For Ch. Aitmatov, as the greatest writer of our time, love for the native land never meant national isolation: “If we are locked in ourselves, we will never achieve prosperity, all-round development”. In the story “Camel’s Eye”, lyrical digressions-appeals to the great Anarkhai are organic: “O Anarkhai, oh great steppe! Why are you silent, what are you thinking? What do you conceal in yourself from eternity and what awaits you ahead?” The protagonist is worried about the past of the steppe, he hears the voices of bygone times, the clatter of the hooves of nomadic cavalry, the clink of metal: “And I myself was somewhere in this ebullient battle ... But the fighting subsided, and then white yurts crumbled to the hanged Anarkhai, dung smoke smoked over the camps, flocks of sheep and herds of horses grazed around, to the ringing of bells came caravans of camels, who knows where and who knows where...”.

As if a reminder of the past, an ancient stone woman rises in the steppe: “A gray, roughly hewn granite block for a century stood here, as if on patrol, sinking deep into the ground and gazing at a dull, lifeless gaze. Her right eye, slightly slanted, chipped by the rains and wind, seemed leaked, empty and frightened away with an evil squint under the heavy likeness of a century”.

For the creativity of Ch. Aitmatov, the synthesis of Eastern and European thinking was fundamental. According to Ch. Aitmatov, “the globalized world, which is our evolutionary destiny, cannot be viable until it supports the essential elements of diversity that have marked human communities since the time when our ancestors first descended from the trees. This means a diversity of cultures, beliefs and religions, economic, social and political arrangements, as well as all ways of life coexisting in harmony with mutual respect and unshakable goodwill. Cultivated diversity does not mean isolating people or cultures from each other: it calls for international and intercultural contact and communication with due mutual respect for the differences, views, lifestyles and aspirations of everyone” [1, 214]. And in this regard, the creativity of the great Chingiz gives each people the opportunity to draw from the spiritual treasury of another, exchange their past, share their present and forge the future, and thereby contribute to the strengthening of friendship and the formation of spiritual interaction between peoples.

Ch. Aitmatov was firmly convinced that “A person who has no memory, no history, no spiritual biography captured in the images of great art – ancient myths, legends, classics – is doomed to spiritual poverty; he is not ready to take on the most complicated modern life”. As the great writer himself said, “... true patriotism is always based on the principle of national tolerance, which is that

a person, loving his nation and national culture, understands that there are worthy values in another culture ... the experience of interaction with the cultures of other nations and peoples helps”.

In 1998, academicians Ch.T. Aitmatov and V.M. Ploskikh were the first to actively support the Roerich Pact and the action “Banner of Peace on the peaks of Kyrgyzstan”. This is about the fact that on August 14, 1998, a group of mountain climbers from different countries of the world ascended the Khan-Tengri peak (Tien Shan, 6995 m) and raised the Banner of Peace, laying a memorial capsule. The main purpose of this action was to call from the highest peaks of Kyrgyzstan to the unity of all the peoples of the world on the basis of Culture, regardless of nationality, race and religion.

The hero of Chingiz Aitmatov’s book “The Brand of Cassandra”, the futurist Bork dreamed that “...a person could consider himself a Christian, a Muslim, a Buddhist, a Judaist, and others in this series of beliefs, and each religion – his love and respect, and he – recognition by all cults, and he would freely accept their ideas and norms, but not sectarian, not isolationist, but general religious. Then there would be no unspoken and public barriers of a religious nature between people, which is especially important for mixed multi-confessional societies in giant cities and densely populated countries. Perhaps such a state of affairs would greatly facilitate and harmonize human life? Maybe the time has come”.

**Conclusion.** The writer’s critical view of contemporary politics and world problems led the writer to the creation of the novel “The Brand of Cassandra”.

Writing the novel “Storm Stop”, Ch. Aitmatov first drew attention to the problem of weapons of mass destruction, which can destroy not only all of humanity, but also the planet Earth. Here we see how close the work of Ch. Aitmatov, to the actual problems of our time. With all his creativity, he proves to us that in modern conditions, the dialogue of cultures is the only adequate and humane way of peaceful coexistence and interaction of many different cultures. At the same time, the dialogue should not be a qualitative assessment of cultures, revealing its positive or negative aspects, but a reflection of the identity of cultures through comparison, and in our opinion, such a dialogue can serve as a means of bringing peoples closer together. And here the role of Ch., which has been formed throughout the entire creative process, is also important. Aitmatov’s single author’s concept of spiritual and moral ideas based on high humanism is invaluable.

### List of references

1. Aitmatov Ch.T. (1988) Stati, vystupleniya, dialogi, intervyyu [Articles, speeches, dialogues, interviews]. Moscow: Novosti Press Agency, 384 p.
2. Akmataliyev A. (1991) Chingiz Aitmatov: zhizn i tvorchestvo [Chingiz Aitmatov: Life and work]. Bishkek, 239 p.
3. Aragon L. (1958) Samaya prekrasnaya istoriya v mire o lyubvi [The most beautiful story about love in the world]. Moscow: Culture and life, No.7, pp. 7-10.
4. Auezov M. (1958) Put dovryi [Good way]. Literary newspaper. 23 October.
5. Bakhtin M.M. (1979) Estetika slovesnogo tvorchestva [Aesthetics of written word]. Moscow: Iskusstvo, pp. 328–335.
6. Gachev G. (1982) Chingiz Aitmatov. Frunze, Kyzgystan, 234 p.
7. Karim M.O. (1978) O pisatele Ch.Aitmatove [About the writer Ch. Aitmatov]. Literary newspaper. Moscow, 13 December.
8. Kaskabasov S. (2008) Voprosy literatury I iskusstva [Issues of literature and art]. No.3. 38 p.
9. Lotman Yu.M. (2000) O dvukh tipakh orientirovannosti kultury [On two types of culture orientation]. Saint Petersburg: Iskusstvo-SPB, pp.425-427.
10. Men A. (1992) Trudnyi put k dialogu: Sbornik. Predislovie Mitropolita Surozhskogo Antoniya [Difficult path to dialogue: Collection. With Foreword by Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh]. Moscow: Raduga, 464 p.