

**CLASSICAL ANTIQUITY AS A FOUNDATION OF MODERN LITERARY  
THOUGHT: CLASSICAL IMAGES AND MOTIFS IN THE WORKS OF  
ALBERT CAMUS AND EASTERN MODERN PROSE**

**KADIROV SUHROBBEK FAXRIDDIN O'G'LI  
MASTER STUDENT OF WEBSTER UNIVERSITY IN TASHKENT**

[kadirovsuhrobbek90@gmail.com](mailto:kadirovsuhrobbek90@gmail.com)

**Abstract:** This article examines classical antiquity's influence on modern literature, analyzing how Albert Camus and Eastern writers reinterpret Greek myths and classical motifs to address contemporary existential and philosophical questions.

**Keywords:** classical antiquity, Albert Camus, Eastern modern prose, Greek mythology, classical motifs, literary tradition, existentialism, comparative literature, cultural synthesis, myth adaptation

Classical antiquity represents an enduring foundation of modern literary thought, providing inexhaustible sources of images, motifs, philosophical concepts, and narrative structures that continue to shape contemporary literature across diverse cultural traditions. The persistent presence of Greek and Roman mythology, tragic conventions, and archetypal narratives in twentieth and twenty-first century works transcends mere aesthetic borrowing, functioning instead as fundamental framework through which modern writers interrogate human existence, moral complexity, and civilizational crisis. This phenomenon proves particularly significant in examining the works of Albert Camus and Eastern modern prose writers, who reinterpret classical materials to address contemporary concerns while maintaining distinctive cultural perspectives.

Albert Camus's engagement with classical antiquity constitutes foundational element of his existentialist philosophy and literary methodology. His seminal essay "The Myth of Sisyphus" transforms the ancient Greek punishment myth into paradigmatic expression of the absurd condition, asserting that human dignity resides in

conscious revolt against meaninglessness rather than in achieving transcendent purpose. Camus radically reinterprets the classical source, retaining mythological structure while fundamentally transforming philosophical significance. Where ancient Greeks understood Sisyphus's eternal labor as divine punishment for hubris, Camus strips away theological framework, presenting the condition itself as metaphor for human existence devoid of inherent meaning.

Camus's novels similarly employ classical structures and motifs for modern purposes. "The Plague" functions as contemporary tragedy exploring collective human response to arbitrary suffering through narrative structures echoing Greek tragic conventions including inexorable catastrophe, impossible ethical choices, and resolution through acceptance rather than triumph. "The Stranger" employs classical tragic irony and Stoic philosophical acceptance while presenting modern psychological alienation. These works demonstrate how classical myths and structures provide narrative scaffolding enabling modern writers to articulate contemporary philosophical positions impossible within classical worldview itself.

Eastern modern prose engages classical Western antiquity through distinctive cultural filters, creating hybrid forms synthesizing Greek and Roman materials with indigenous literary traditions and philosophical systems. Japanese modernist Yukio Mishima transforms Greek tragic structure into exploration of post-war Japanese identity crisis, employing Dionysian-Apollonian dialectic to examine tensions between rational order and destructive passion. Turkish novelist Orhan Pamuk demonstrates postmodern engagement with classical ekphrasis tradition applied to Ottoman miniature painting, interrogating cultural collision between Islamic artistic traditions and Western Renaissance classicism. Egyptian writer Naguib Mahfouz employs classical tragic structures adapted to Egyptian settings, creating distinctively Egyptian modernism

engaging universal themes through culturally specific materials organized via classical Western structural principles.

Central Asian writers emerging from Soviet education systems heavily emphasizing classical humanities demonstrate particular engagement with Greco-Roman materials. Chinghiz Aitmatov incorporates multiple mythological layers including classical references, creating palimpsest structures examining cultural memory and historical trauma. His reinterpretation of Prometheus myth as allegory for artistic freedom under totalitarianism demonstrates how classical motifs provide politically coded language for contemporary critique.

Comparative analysis reveals both universal patterns and culturally specific approaches. Universal elements include recognition of classical myths as repositories of archetypal human situations, employment of tragic structures to examine suffering, and philosophical engagement with classical ethical systems. Cultural specificities emerge in how classical materials interact with indigenous traditions. Camus, writing within French literary tradition already saturated with classical references, engages antiquity as inherited cultural patrimony requiring reinterpretation. Eastern writers often approach classical materials as simultaneously universal human heritage and specifically Western tradition requiring negotiation with indigenous alternatives, generating creative tensions enabling critique of cultural hierarchies while participating in cross-cultural dialogue.

The philosophical dimension reveals significant divergence. Camus employs classical materials to articulate existentialist positions fundamentally opposed to classical worldviews, particularly regarding metaphysical meaning and cosmic justice. Eastern writers more frequently synthesize classical Western philosophy with indigenous systems including Buddhist non-attachment with Stoicism, Confucian social ethics with Aristotelian virtue ethics, creating genuinely hybrid philosophical visions rather than simple appropriation.

Classical antiquity's enduring influence demonstrates the remarkable adaptability and continued relevance of ancient materials for addressing contemporary concerns across global literary traditions. These engagements reveal classical materials as contested multicultural heritage open to multiple interpretations, simultaneously universal and particular, ensuring their continued vitality in world literature.

### **REFERENCES**

1. Camus A. *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays*. – New York: Vintage, 1991.
2. Said E. *Culture and Imperialism*. – New York: Knopf, 1993.
3. Hardwick L., Stray C. *A Companion to Classical Receptions*. – Oxford: Blackwell, 2008.
4. Behdad A., Thomas D. *A Companion to Comparative Literature*. – Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011.
5. Moriya T. *Modern Japanese Literature and the Classical Tradition*. – Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 2018.
6. Segal C. *Singers, Heroes, and Gods in the Odyssey*. – Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994.
7. Pamuk O. *The Naive and the Sentimental Novelist*. – Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010.
8. Fludernik M., Gehrke H.J. *Classics and the Uses of Reception*. – Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015.
9. Lianeri A., Zajko V. *Translation and the Classic*. – Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.
10. Hamilakis Y. *The Nation and Its Ruins: Antiquity, Archaeology, and National Imagination in Greece*. – Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.