

## EFFECTS OF TRADITIONAL CULTURE ON MODERN TURKISH POETRY

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### ABSTRACT

*It is not possible for societies not fed from the tradition to have a future. If it is a cultural matter, this is more distinctive. Although the literature addressing any kind of pleasure of the society for centuries is different in terms of the style and target group, it is fed from the same source. The matter of "classic-modern" having been discussed almost since the Tanzimat (administrative reforms) has become keener in literature along with social life. Literary richness and sense of art having come to a peak with Classical Turkish Literature have been used by every artist who requires them. The fact that the tradition has survived in different forms and dimensions in Modern Turkish Poetry and especially folk culture is witnessed. The sense of being against whatever is related to the past has also preferred to benefit from this richness in the course of time. Despite the fact that which means and channels have fed to poets of Modern Turkish Poetry has been analyzed with many studies, these studies must still continue.*

**Key Words:** *tradition, classical poetry, modernism, Divan literature, elite culture, folk culture.*

### ÖZET

#### Geleneksel Kültürün Modern Türk Şiirine Etkileri

*Gelenekten beslenmeyen toplumların geleceğinin olması mümkün değildir. Söz konusu olan kültürel bir mesele ise, bu daha da belirgindir. Asırlar boyu milletin her türlü zevkine hitap eden edebiyat; üslup ve hedef aldığı kitle bakımından farklı*

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da olsa, aynı damardan beslenir. Yaklaşık olarak Tanzimat'tan beri tartışılan "eski-yeni" konusu sosyal yaşamla birlikte edebiyatta daha keskindir. Klâsik Türk edebiyatı ile doruk noktaya ulaşan sanat anlayışı ve edebî zenginlikler, ona ihtiyaç duyan her sanatçı tarafından kullanılmıştır. Modern Türk şiirinde ve özellikle halk kültüründe geleneğin farklı biçim ve boyutlarda devam ettiğine tanık olunmaktadır. Eski ile ilgili ne varsa hepsine çeşitli nedenlerle karşı çıkan bir anlayış; zamanla bu zenginlikten faydalanma yolunu da tercih etmiştir. Modern Türk şiiri şairlerinin hangi yollar ve kanallar ile gelenekten beslendikleri pek çok çalışma ile incelenmiş olmakla birlikte, bu araştırmalar devam etmelidir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** gelenek, klâsik şiir, modernizm, Divan edebiyatı, yüksek kültür, halk kültürü.

## Introduction \*\*

If a definitive period of the society is desired to be observed or monitored, the culture and literature of this society should be examined. Hopes, anxieties, sorrows, happiness, excitements, passions, loves, hatreds; tradition and customs; dates and pleasures... In case that which characteristics peculiar to a nation are asked to be enlightened or drawn attention, words and personages stands as being ready to help. In addition to any kind of charming, attractive and colorful beauties, you can also find sorrow and mourning in these time-worn pages... While ravaging the gazelle with beautiful eyes in mountains and deserts, both Fuzuli and Bayburtlu Zihni expressed the same feeling with different skills:

*Kangı dağda bulsam ben o maralı*

*Kangı çölde sürsem çeşm-i gazalı*

*Yavrusun yitirmiş ceylan misâli*

*Gezer çölden çöle yoktur durağı*

(On which mountain can I find that beloved with gazelle eyes? At which desert should I search that beloved with gazelle eyes? She wanders from desert to desert like a gazelle which lost its child.)

While founding a new approach and understanding, those asserting for nearly two centuries that Classical Turkish Poetry is oriented to elite culture began their works by rejecting whatever is related to the tradition. Indeed, some of man of the Tanzimat (Tanzimatçılar) criticizing the divan poetry were also educated from this school. Whereas, as in all civilizations,

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the culture is bipolar and spreads from two branches: folk culture and elite culture...What a strange, this development which is natural also for culture as in many matters has been introduced as if being separation and difference. For centuries, all societies accept their tradition and modern poetries as a national treasury. Periods which has been fed from the same source and mentioned with different names have been sacrificed to terminology stemmed from the need of naming of literature history as required. Periods and understandings classified sketchy like literatures developing under the influence of Divan, Folk, Sufism and West are the classifications resulted from a necessity. This could be also discussed with its many aspects. Especially as mentioned by Mehmet Kaplan in his courses and articles, "What enlivens all in this world is soul strength of the individual. He can benefit from nothing himself except rich and strong things. Transition from folk culture to elite culture is almost impossible. On the other hand, you can not differentiate Yunus Emre from Fuzûlî or Fuzûlî from Ziya Gökalp and Namık Kemal. As a matter of fact, the best way to keep Turkish poetry and folk culture alive is to protect elite culture because all of them feed each other with invisible veins (Kaplan 1998)." What spreads Behçet Necatigil, Necip Fazıl, Sezai Karakoç, Attilâ İlhan, Hilmi Yavuz and Beşir Ayvazoğlu to words and hearts is this source.

As Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar mentioned, some of our artists has neglected to benefit from and get pleasure out of the tradition in today and past because of accommodation to thoughts of their environment and sometimes excitement of their age. And sometimes as mentioned by Nurullah Ataç in a discourse, "although the tradition accommodates various beauties in itself, it is the product of the orient and Islam civilization should be introduced to young people and read by them within the scope of a new culture. However, as examples seen in other nations, the classic-modern discrimination of art and culture and especially literature is not made. Especially literary sources and richness is a whole and can be utilized by everyone in every period. As mentioned in the article "*Yeni Türk Sanatkârı Yahut Frenk'ten Türk'e Dönüş (New Turkis Artist Or turn from European to Turk)*" published by Sabahattin Eyüboğlu in 1938; it is impossible for those opposing to divan poetry and its sources to produce mature works. Of course, surviving of classical poetry in today with its all matters is unthinkable. However, youth or oldness of literary arts, epics, sufistic richness, heroes and heroism as well as esthetic pleasures cannot be mentioned (Okay 1992).

## **Effect ways of the tradition to Modern Turkish Poetry:**

Such discussions continuing for a long time and never coming to an end will survive again. A great number of academic studies or reviews under different titles such as classic-modern, divan poetry- Western-style poetry, folk culture- old culture are available. Many scientist and artists like Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, M. Orhan Okay, Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, Orhan Şaik Gökyay, Cemil Meriç, Mehmet Kaplan, Birol Emil, Cemal Kurnaz, Muhsin Macit, Ahmet Oktay, Kemal Sılay, Necati Tonga, Beşir Ayvazoğlu, İskender Pala, Hilmi Yavuz, Erdoğan Erbay and Mehmet Kahraman expressed their opinions and give works on these discussions. "Our literature is regarded as a whole along with the classic- the modern new, divan -poet singer and its other types. The fact that we have divided the literature in classes, types, centuries and even up to one artist realized in order to incline to a small part of the subject and indeed this is nothing except artificial division. The possibility of making these divisions in different ways is always controversial. However, in order to enable the integrity of concept and term and thus understand such subjects easily, preferring usual classifications is a practical way. New Turkish poetry as new literature is also considered within such an assumed innovation concept (Okay 1992)." The main matter is the detection made by Yunus Emre centuries ago: *Cümle şâir dost bahçesi bülbulü.*

Following these information, effects of classical Turkish Literature on modern poetry should be studied under following headings:

### **1. Religion and Sufism:**

One of sources Turkish literature has benefited is Islam and Sufism. In addition to religious texts, important persons on the history of Islam are indispensable richness of our poetry by various means. Also in modern poetry, references related to personages like Adam, Noah, Ibrahim, Nemrud, Ismail, Jacob, Yusuf, Dawud, Suleiman, Moses. Hızır, İlyas, Jesus Christ, Hz. Mohammed, Çehâr-Yâr-ı Güzîn, Hz. Hassan and Hussein and their miracles or events as well as religious-sufi sources are considerably found. Many sufis such as Mevlana, Yunus Emre, Seyyid Nesimi, Eşrefoğlu, Hacı Bayram, Hacı Bektaş Veli, İbn Arabi, Pir Sultan Abdal, Kaygusuz Abdal and Şeyh Galib have still been carrying mystical experience to today thanks to their poetries, loves and understandings of unity of existence (vahdet-i vücud). Transferring of traditional structure based on Koran and Sufism to modern today's artists has been realized in different forms. Although many of them did not have the mystical experience, they became poet of religious pleasure and mystic knowledge. Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, Sezai Karakoç, Asaf

Hâlet Çelebi, Hilmi Yavuz, Attila İlhan, Hüsrev Hatemi, Ali Günvar, Ebubekir Eroğlu and Ahmet Necdet are of the first names coming to mind.(Macit 2005). From Şeyh Galib (İpekten 1996):

*Hoşça bak zâtına kim zübde-i âlemsin sen  
Merdüm-i dide-i ekvân olan âdemsin sen*

(Humankind, look at yourself well and know yourself. Because you are the eye apple of the universe.)

It seems as if we do not pay attention to his warning!! Many people said “I read it, I heard it or my life changed” did not they?

While in *Berzah*, Ebubekir Eroğlu saying:

*ve eski deyimle: aşk  
başlanığıç bilgisidir yol erlerinde  
tutsam söze gelmeyen ele girmeyen  
adımdan adıma devreden  
halin tarihini arasam  
bir çıkış bulsam derviş öykülerine  
görüntülere  
ruh güzelliğinin kokusu gelir,*

(The love with old saying is the starting information for the road saints. If I could search the past of this condition which can not be expressed with words, can not be touched with hands, which transfers from step to step. If I could find a way to the stories of dervishes. The smell of that spirit beauty comes apparent.)

he replied this voice by his verses. He informed his intimate knowledge to classical poets who were streaming as a river or gurgling as if a waterfalls. While his secret of “Kün feykûn/ As He said, and was.” was being expressed in *Teyid*, he could not burrow into waves in conjunction of two seas. To Enthusiasm of Seyyid Nesîmî in his following verses:

*Mende sığar iki cihân men bu cihâna sığmazam  
Gevher-i lâ-mekân menem kevn ü mekâna sığmazam*

(Two universes fit in me, but I do not fit in this universe. I am a jewel which does not have a space. I will fit to no place.)

Our poet participated in such a way:

*ah musanın gördüğü ateş  
meryemin tutunduğu dal göğe çıkan taş  
insanım nesimiyim insanım*

*bir zerreden yayıldı şanıım*

*ben bu ada sığmadım*

(I am the fire seen by Moses, held on by Mary, which got to the branch and sky. I am Nesimi and a human being. My fame was spread from one atom and I won't fit to names.)

While Asaf Hâlet searching the secret of "Ene'l-hak" under Cüneyd-i Bağdâdî was maintaining his search, he began to explore again and constructed the event over again:

*bakanlar bana*

*gövdemi görürler*

*ben başka yerdeyim*

*gömenler beni*

*gövdemi gömerler*

*ben başka yerdeyim*

*aç cübbeni cüneyd*

*ne görüyorsun*

*görünmiyeni*

*cüneyd nerede*

*cüneyd ne oldu*

*sana bana olan*

*ona da oldu*

*kendi cübbesi altında*

*cüneyd yok oldu*

(The ones who look at me see my body. In fact I am at another places and the ones who bury me in the ground do bury my corpse. Cüneyd reached the nonexistence under his cassock.)

## **2. The History and Historical and Heroic Personages:**

There are many epics, anecdotes, stories and tales in the literary surroundings connect to especially Islam civilization. Heroes on love stories like *Leylâ vü Mecnûn*, *Ferhâd ile Şîrîn*, *Yusuf ile Züleyhâ* and primarily *Şehnâme* and their characteristics can always be found on verses. Cafer Turaç found the sorrow of Ferhad in the calmness of the river in his heart in *Amasya Mektupları*:

*Derler ki imlâsı kırık kaderin*

*içinden geçermiş ferhatın kahrı*

*ya ben sana nasıl gelirim şirin  
bulutun içinden rüzgar sesinden  
ya ben sana nasıl gelirim Ferhat  
kalbimdeki ırmak sakinliğinden.*

*Derler ki goncası açmaz bir aşkın  
kapıları örtük olurmuş he mi  
mermere yazılan harfler kaybolur  
yağmur düşer sızlanırmış karanfil  
ben böyle bekliyorum, yollarda gülüm  
imlâsı kırık kalbimle seni.*

(Ferhat's misery comes from its fate. It is said that the bud of the love wouldn't open. Yet the words written on the marble disappears. If the rain falls, clove groan. I am waiting for you my beloved, with my broken heart.)

Sezai Karakoç has considered the tradition equivalent to "el-ba'sü ba'de'l-mevt (resurrection after death)" in the field of art for a poet, has not he? He chose Hızır as fellow in *Hızır'la Kırk Saat* did not he? Who he called as Suna is not anyone except Leylâ (Karakoç 2009). Magnificent Poet Nazım Hikmet expressed enthusiastically following verses about the conquest of Istanbul and the Fatih in his poetry of *Sekizyüz Elli Yedi* dedicated to his friend Vâlâ Nureddin:

*İslâmın beklediği en şerefli gündür bu;  
Rum Konstantaniyye'si oldu Türk İstanbul'u!  
Cihana karşı koyan bir ordunun sahibi,  
Türk'ün genç padişahı, bir gök yarılır gibi  
Girdi "Eğrikapı"dan kır atının üstünde;  
Fethetti İstanbul'u sekiz hafta üç günde!  
O ne mutlu, mübarek bir kuluymuş Allah'ın...  
"Belde-i Tayyibe"yi fetheden padişahın  
Hak yerine getirdi en büyük niyazını:  
Kıldı Ayasofya'da ikindi namazını.  
İşte o günden beri Türk'ün malı İstanbul,  
Başkasının olursa, yıkılmalı İstanbul (857/1453)*

(The Constantinople took the name Istanbul now. The army which stood against the world is led by a young sultan. He conquered Istanbul within eight weeks and three days. What a happy and blessed servant of Allah he is.

After he prayed at mid-afternoon, Istanbul belongs to Turks. If this city passes to another one, then it should be destroyed.)

Also, the tradition of “date deduction” for important events is existed in our traditional poetry. This art performed according to Abjad Calculation was rendered for a conquest, death of important persons or sometimes opening of a building. One of modern artists of this art, examples of which are significantly seen in divan literature is Prof. Dr. Mustafa Kara. He makes the date deduction for especially important characters who passed away nowadays. As an example, his date deduction for Bosnia President Aliya İzzet Begoviç who passed away in the year of 2003 is as following:

*Hikmet ile siyâseti birleştiren er idi  
İlim ile firâseti buluşturan ser idi  
Geldi iki müjdecî tarihe ışık tuttu:  
“Fedhulûhâ hâlidîn” gideceği yer idi (1424)*

.....

*Üsküplü Beyatlı'nın ak tolgalı neferi  
Aşkla şevkle sürdürdü Bosna için seferi  
Doğu ve Batı çıksın vefâtını söylesin  
İşte azizim “Osmanlının Büyük Zaferi” (2003)*

(The place where Aliya İzzet Begoviç goes is the paradise, he combined the thought with politics, the science with farsightedness. White helmet soldier of Yahya Kemal Beyatlı from Üsküp sustained the Bosnian struggle with love.)

### 3. Sense of Love and Beloved:

In the Divan literature, it is regarded love as imaginary and beloved as a state in which the meeting is not possible. What immortalizes both the love and the beloved is the lover. As a matter fact, beauty of the beloved is worthless without our love. Many beloveds for the sake of whom lovers have died in deed have never existed (İlhan 1998) ...

*Ne kadınlar sevdim zaten yoktular  
Yağmur giyerlerdi sonbaharla bir  
Azıcık okşasam sanki çocuktular  
Bıraksam korkudan gözleri sislenir  
Hayır, sanmayın ki beni unuttular  
Hâlâ ara sıra mektupları gelir  
Küçük değildiler birer umuttular*



*Eski bir şarkı, belki bir şiir*

*Ne kadınlar sevdim zaten yoktular...*

(What women I loved, but they never existed. The lovers who took on the rain with the autumn were happy like children when I caressed them a little. Don't think that they have forgotten me. I still receive their letters.)

While in tradition we can see the spring-scented beloved coming into existence and being the indispensable to enjoy to the full in Kağıthane or Sa'dâbâd, we encounter her in everywhere today.

#### **4. Themes:**

Whereas the torch of classical poetry which would not go out until doom day has been transferred, themes which have expanded deep horizons behind words and verses for centuries are holy treasures of our art richness. While Yahya Kemâl saying:

*Eslâf kapıldıkça güzelden güzele*

*Fer vermiş o neşveyle gazelden gazele*

*Sönmez seher-i haşre kadar şi'r-i kadîm*

*Bir meş'aledir devredilir elden ele*

(As long as the old lovers got charmed from one beauty to another, they gave life to odes/poems with that love. The glister of the old poem won't die out until the morning of the judgment day. It is such a torch that passes from one hand to another.)

He could not endure the disconnection from the past. In a poetry poet of which is unknown, the poet reproached as following:

*Yakdın fenâ dükkânını hâkister eyledün*

*Ey Şem' külfet eyleme pervâne kalmadı*

(Candle, you destroyed the nonexistence shop. Don't be bothered anymore, because there is no loving firefly that will turn around you.)

And then had the idea that the beloved having hyacinth hair, red cheeks and amber fragrance and the lovers for the sake of whom beloved would suffer from had noted exist anymore in his era. However despite being not found in deserts, the Leyli were on coaches and trains anymore. Beşir Ayvazoğlu emphasized in *Gece Sesleri* that the beloved is not different than beloveds in mesnevi in terms of essence:

*Faytonlar trenlere trenler ötelere*

*alıp götürdü leyli bir sevgiliyi*

*o, mesnevilerden gizlice devşirdiğim.*

(The Leylas I took out from that masnavis were taken far away by coaches and trains.)

## 5. Literary Arts:

When using the language in divan poetry, word, meaning and metaphor arts in addition to rhythmic structure of aruz meter are utilized: Comparison, metaphor, kinâye (word or expression used in both a literal or a figurative sense), mecaz (figurative expression), ta'rîz, iham, tevriye, tenâsüb, tecâhül-i ârif, leff ü neşr, hüsn-i ta'lîl, iktibas, hyperbolism, telmih, oxymoron, pun, iştikak, reflection ... each of them is as a pearl on necklace in past and today Abdullah Öztemiz Hacıtahiroğlu is considering classical poetry with aruz meter as a bracelet on her arm and syllable as a ring on her finger:

*Dayanır mı ölçüye her ozan  
Biner ölçü sırtına yük gibi  
Bileğimde bir bilezik arüz  
Hece parmağında yüzük gibi...*

(Not every poet can withstand the measures of poem. The prosody burdens on his back like a weight. The Aruz prosody is like a bracelet on my wrist, the syllabic meter is like a ring on my finger.)

Themes and figures constituting axle of our classical poetry have been continuing to meet with each other and past and future meet with a rose in the mouth and a bowl in hand under cypress and stars. Attilâ İlhan bring Nedim and Nâzım together under this atmosphere:

*gördüm sessizce buluştuğunu nâzım'la nedim'in  
lacivert ıssızlığında yıldızlı bir servinin  
birinin elinde vâridât'ı simavnalı bedreddin'in  
birinin ağzında gül elinde mey kâsesi vardı*

(I saw how Nazım Hikmet and Nedim met silently. One had Şeyh Bedreddin's *Vâridât* in his hand, the other had rose in his mouth, he had drinking glass in his hand.)

## 6. Nature and Time:

The past, rather than being a cosmic matter in the nature of time, is beyond it. Nature and time having independent existence and effectiveness are beyond human despite intertwined with the society. These two concepts drawing attention with their abstract characteristics are phenomena which can be desired by everyone with perfect descriptions especially in mesnevi.

According to the characteristic of the subject, time and space can be also terrified with frightful expressions. Whereas the joy is dominant in spring age when it is the age of rose, fall is the symbol of the end and disappearance. Along with feelings of Bâkî (Pala 1998:120):

*Nâm u nişâne kalmadı fast-ı bahârdan*

*Düştü çemende berk-i dirahit itibârdan*

(No trace has been left from the spring. The tree leaves on the grass no longer have respect.)

Hâşim winks at Hilmi Yavuz in *Gizemli Şiirler*.

*sen sussan da susmasan da bir*

*tutup tutuştüğün hayale*

*ağırdan iri güller ve lale*

*düşer düştüğün melale*

*ve hüznü yeniden okumak*

*için bir kitap olur dünya*

(Whether you are silent or not, big roses and tulips fall sadly on the the dream you are burning with. The world becomes a book to read the sadness again.)

### **7. Nazım Type, Shape and Nazire Tradition:**

Expect the continuation of the tradition today as in past is not appropriate for reality of history and culture course. As a matter of fact, to find the sense of art and many sources of divan poetry and even folk literature in modern poetry cannot be possible as obtained in the past. Poetry types like Kaside, gazel, rubaî, murabba, tuyug, tercî-i bend, terkîb-i bend, tahmis and muhammes; poetry styles such as tevhid, münâcaat, na't, medhiye and fahriye ... We can ignore such poets like Ahmet Necdet having still written *Aya Kaside and Ahmet Necdet writing Gül'e Gazel and Gül'e Kaside* in our modern poetry (Yıldırım 2003:73):

*Gülümserken âleme gönüller gülzâr olur*

*Cûşa gelir bülbüller gülistânda zâr olur*

*Aşk ehlinin cümlesi dost bağında bezirgân*

*Esen serin yellerde râyihân olur*

(When smiling to the world, all souls become a rose garden. The emotionalized nightingales start to groan in the rose garden. Each tradesman fallen into love is like nice smells blowing in the friendly garden.)

In the institutions where competitions on na't and tevhid poetries organized by various means, harmonic gurgling sound of the *Su Kasidesi* can be listened again. Mücahit Koca says that the God show the right path through the Prophet in his *Birinci Manzume* by means of *Kardeşlik Ülküsü* just by side of you (Koca 2008:9) :

*Bize dünyada; yol ve yordam gerekirdi,  
Allah, yolu peygamberiyle gösterirdi.  
Der Peygamber; "Bütün iller, Allah'ın,  
"Bütün kullar, Allah'ın."  
Resûlullah, güzel ve çirkin şeyi söylerdi,  
İnsanı huzura ancak İslâm götürür, derdi.  
Ne Doğulu, ne Batılı olmayan nurdur nur,  
Doğuyu ve Batıyı aydınlatır nur.  
Sensin, gelecek dünyaya yeni bir ruh ve şekil,  
Kimsin, diyene kalk; Müslümanım, diye dikil.*

(Allah showed us the road in this world by His Prophet. He said that: All the countries belong to Allah, all people belong to Allah. The divine light enlightens the East and the West.)

The tradition of "nazîre" is one of practice schools of our classical poetry. These practisings were enabling our poetry to become an actual workshop by words of Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar. In this study, the concept of space and time gets upside down. Fuzûlî calls Necatî Bey while Bâkî calls Fuzûl and Nedim is remind of Bâkî.

*Gül âteş gülbün âteş gülşen âteş cûybâr âteş  
Semender-tıynetân-ı aşka besdür lâlezâr âteş*

Rose, rose sapling, rose garden and river are actually fire. Against salamander creations of the love, tulip garden is sufficient as fire (İpekten 1996:98). To Şeyh Galib who interpret everything with divine love, Yasin Doğru from Bursa calls with exclamation of "*Gül Ateş*" (Doğru 2009:11):

*hep bir bahçeniz olsun istersiniz  
yalnız kırmızı güller açan  
ve yalnız size ait olan  
bir bahçeniz olsun istersiniz*

*avuçlarınızda taşıdığınız ateşin  
şavkıyla renklenir gülleriniz*

ve onların cennet râyihasıyla  
şenlenir mekkeniz medineniz  
Kudüs bundan yoksun kalsa da  
ulaşır ona da âyet âyet  
müjdeci sesiniz

(You wish that you had a garden which only belongs to you and only red roses grow. Your roses get colored with the glitter of the fire you carry on your palms. Your Mecca and Medina livens up with paradise smell of that roses. But the Jerusalem doesn't have it.)

### **Consequence:**

Despite having been studied under different names and headings, the culture and especially poetry is a whole. They resemble a body in which main veins and hearts are common. Divan poetry, folk poetry, modern poetry; they are always in need of each other. Yunus Emre whom we have felt with nice language and breath put an end on this matter: all poets are nightingale of poetry garden. Although each of them sings in different forms and in different times, they fells the same landscape and scent. Folk culture is one of culture fields where the tradition maintains its effect healthily. The way to keep this culture and literature source as rich and fresh is remembering the elite culture.

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