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## **Strategic aspects of critical thinking in Abay's literary heritage**

This article examines some aspects of critical thinking by analyzing the greatest work of Abay Kunanbayev — «Books of Words». Deep in content «Words of edification» reflect all the wealth of the spiritual culture of the people which was given to us as heritage by our ancestors. This work is relevant nowadays. The development of critical thinking is very important for any person who wants to be an in-demand specialist nowadays, since the ability to make effective decisions and to think innovatively allows any person to achieve success in any kind of activity. The development of critical thinking is important especially for young people. In the modern developed world, in the era of global informatization, it is necessary to be a creative and consequently, be able to think critically.

*Keywords:* the «Words of Edification» of Abay, critical thinking, development of skills, critical thinkers, the modern world, the global age.

In the modern developed world of technology it is important not only to be productive but what is more important to be creative. For this, it is necessary to be able to think critically in order to be effectively creative person. Criticality of the mind is the ability of a person to evaluate and analyze objectively of own and others' thoughts, carefully and comprehensively check all the propositions and conclusions put forward.

Critical thinking, i.e. creative, helps a person, contributes to the ability to determine their own priorities in personal and professional life. It makes the person responsible for their choices/decisions, raises the level of individuals capabilities on managing recent mass information, forms the ability to evaluate, analyse and draw independent effective conclusions.

The topicality of the theme in the critical thinking development is strengthened by the fact that critical thinking is in effect in society, however, theoretically the category of «critical thinking» is not well understood. Categories that are similar in content, such as free, productive, creative thinking, etc. are used in the didactic literature to denote certain qualities of thinking that are not associated with critical thinking.

A modern person possesses the qualities of critical thinking to some extent due to objective conditions formed by the specifics of the development of society and influencing the way they are reflected by the individual. However, the presence of certain qualities does not guarantee the formation of a special state of thinking in general. Only a set of interacting qualities of critical thinking is a model of thinking that is characteristic of a free and creative person in a democratic society. Accordingly, the need of the society for this type of individuals should be reflected in the education system.

Practical evidence shows that too little percentage of graduates of schools and universities really possess a set of qualities of critical thinking and information culture, so the question arises here: how should students develop critical thinking? The answer to this question in the opinion of many scientists According to many scholars' opinions the answer to this question is through reading and writing, through the development of skills for working with literary read.

For example, literature serves as an effective means of mental, moral and aesthetic education to help readers to wind to understand of the context. It develops the child's thinking and imagination, enriches his emotions, and gives fine examples of the literary language. The role of fiction in the development of the speech of a child is great, without which it is impossible to successfully study at school, and then at a university.

Some believe that critical thinking is relevant to philosophy and politics but not relevant to literature. But we can suppose that literature is an effective tool for engaging students in critical thinking. However, teaching children to analyse and evaluate literary texts appropriate to their age and interests, help them develop critical thinking skills. This involves seeing relationships between events, drawing inferences, analysing events, synthesizing evidence and evaluating both the content of a text and the language used to the express ideas contained within the topic.

To improve critical thinking skills, we decided to consider the main aspects of critical thinking through the literary heritage of the great poet, a great thinker, the founder of written Kazakh literature, and its first classic. For Kazakh, the name of Abay is well known just as Shakespeare, Goethe, and Pushkin are well-known in many countries, because his great words became a spiritual patrimony of not only one nation, but of the entire humankind.

Abay (Ibrahim) Qunanbayuli was a Kazakh poet, composer and philosopher. He was also a cultural reformer toward European and Russian cultures on the basis of enlightened Islam. His work heritage provided rich contribution in songs and poems, translations and prose. His translations of the poetry written by Russian writers and poets such as Pushkin, Lermontov, and Krylov became the national patrimony of Kazakhstan. He translated the works of Schiller, Goethe, and Byron into Kazakh language.

«Kara Sozder» [Book of Words] (prose) created by the great thinker constitutes an ethnic philosophical work. His creation is an exploration of Kazakh national life in the second half of the 19th century. He influenced social affairs in the country where he lived. In addition, he participated in the governing of the country and played a certain role in trying to solve complicated problems justly.

The «Book of Words» of Abay finds a special sound and relevance nowadays. We are trying to understand all the richness of the spiritual culture given to us as heritage by our ancestors, analyzed in a small but deep in content, work of Abay. This work is characterized by profound philosophical ideas, moral teachings, humanistic principles, a program of spiritual and moral perfection of man, reflections on his cognitive abilities and mentality. From a Kazakh thinker and poet examined the spiritual and moral appearance and way of life of his people, who turned out to be at the crossroads of time. Therefore, this work with good reason can be called the «critical conscience» of our epoch «Book of Words» represents the inimitable and unique world of the author (Abay) himself, aimed at understanding not only the being of the surrounding world, but also to comprehend the inner world of man. This presents Abay's dialogue with himself, his readers and us. It intrinsically combined philosophical reflections and religious experience, the artistic word and moral instruction, the depth of knowledge and the inexhaustibility of the senses, the wisdom of the thinker and the prophet's vision.

In the Book of Words, the great Abay thinks critically and, as a rule, it is a complex and holistic process. Thinking critically, we are forced to combine or use many elementary skills of critical thinking. Let's consider the various strategies of critical thinking through the Book of Abay's words and begin with affective strategies as «Thinking Independently». Its principle demonstrates that «Critical thinking is independent thinking, thinking for oneself. Many of our beliefs are acquired at an early age, when we have a strong tendency to form beliefs for irrational reasons (because we want to believe, because we are praised or rewarded for believing). Critical thinkers use critical skills and insights to reveal and reject beliefs that are irrational» [1; 25].

Formulating new beliefs, those who think critically do not accept the thoughtless beliefs of others. They, rather, independently analyze the problem, reject unreasonable authorities and recognize rationally justified. Thoughtfully form the principles of thought and action; and do not take thoughtlessly what they are offered. The thinkers independently seek to unite all the relevant knowledge in their own thinking and behavior.

In Word One Abay presented many phrases like: «Whether for good or ill, I have lived my life, traveling a long road fraught with struggles and quarrels, disputes and arguments, suffering and anxiety, and reached these advanced years to find myself at the end of my tether, tired of everything. I have realized the vanity and futility of my labors and the meanness of my existence. What shall I occupy myself with now and how shall I live out the rest of my days? I am puzzled that I can find no answer to this question». The author asks himself different contradictive questions in order to find the right decision from his rich life experience. Furthermore: «Rule the people? Shall I multiply the herds? Occupy myself with learning? Choose the path of the Sufi and dedicate myself to the service of religion? Educate children, maybe?» [2; 13]. Prominent Abay thought critically trying to figure things out for himself, rejecting unjustified authorities, and recognize the contributions of genuine authorities.

Responding to his questions Abay thought: «Rule the people? No, the people are ungovernable. Let this burden be shouldered by someone who is willing to contract an incurable malady or else by an ardent youth with a burning heart. But, may Allah spare me this load which is beyond my powers! Shall I multiply the herds? No, I cannot do that. Let the young folk raise livestock if they need them. But, I shall not darken the evening of my days by tending livestock to give joy to rogues, thieves and spongers. Occupy myself with learning? But how shall I engage in scholarship when I have no one to exchange an intelligent word with? And then to whom shall I pass on the knowledge I will have amassed? Whom shall I ask what I do not know

myself? What's the good of sitting on a desolate steppe with an arshin (*an old measuring rod equivalent to 28 inches*) in hand trying to sell cloth? Too much knowledge becomes gall and wormwood that hastens old age if you have no one by your side to share your joys and sorrows. Choose the path of the Sufi and dedicate myself to the service of religion? No, I'm afraid that won't do either. This vocation calls for serenity and complete peace of mind. But I have not known peace either in my soul or in my life and what sort of piety can there be amongst these people, in this land! Educate children, maybe? No, this, too, is beyond my powers. I could instruct children, true, but I don't know what I should teach them and how. For what occupation, for what purpose and for what kind of community am I to educate them? How can I instruct them and direct their paths if I don't see where my pupils could usefully apply their learning? And so here, too, I have been unable to put myself to any good use» [2; 13].

Abay made this conclusion as the final decision that will be more valuable and useful for others «Well, I have decided at length: henceforth, pen and paper shall be my only solace, and I shall set down my thoughts. Should anyone find something useful here? Let him copy it down or memorise it. And if no one has any need of my words, they will remain with me anyway».

According to Aspect 3 «Exploring Thoughts Underlying Feelings and Feelings Underlying Thoughts» Richard W. Paul (1990) describes «Critical thinkers realize that their feelings are their response (but not the only possible, or even necessarily the most reasonable response) to a situation. They know that their feelings would be different if they had a different understanding or interpretation of the situation» [1; 44].

Critical thinkers recognize that thoughts and feelings, far from being different kinds of «things», are two aspects of their responses. Uncritical thinkers see little or no relationship between their feelings and their thoughts, and so escape responsibility for their thoughts, feelings, and actions. Their own feelings often seem unintelligible to them.

When we feel sad or depressed, it is often because we are interpreting our situation in an overly negative or pessimistic light. We may be forgetting to consider positive aspects of our lives.

Understanding our feelings better by asking ourselves, «How have I come to feel this way? How am I looking at the situation? To what conclusion have I come? What is my evidence? What assumptions am I making? What inferences am I making? Are they sound inferences? Do my conclusions make sense? Are there other or better ways to interpret this situation?»

We can learn to seek patterns in our assumptions, and so begin to see the unity behind our separate emotions. Understanding ourselves is the first step toward self-control and self-improvement. This self-understanding requires that we understand our feelings and emotions in relation to our thoughts, ideas, and interpretations of the world [1; 53]. Abay wrote about different nations in Word 2 «In my childhood I used to hear the Kazakhs jeering at the Uzbeks: «You Sarts in wide skirts, you bring your rushes from afar to thatch your roofs! You bow and scrape when you meet someone, but you insult him behind his back. You are afraid of every bush; you rattle on without stopping, and that's why they call you Sart-Surts (*kaz. Surt-Sart: rattle, talkative person*)». Encountering Nogais (*kaz. Nogai: Kazakh name for Tatars*) the Kazakhs would ridicule and scold them, too: «The Nogai is afraid of the camel, he soon gets tired astride a horse and takes his rest walking. «The red-headed Urus (*kaz. Urus: Kazakh name for Russians*), once he spies an aul (*kaz. village, nomadic community*), gallops fit to break his neck towards it, permits himself to do whatever comes into his head, demands to hear all the rumours and gossip, and believes everything he is told».

But later Abay saw the Sarts can grow all plants that, no land that their merchants have not visited, and no such thing that their nimble fingers cannot contrive. Their laymen live in peace and seek no enmity, the Nogais are fine soldiers and that they bear deprivation stoically. They face death with humility, protect schools and honour religion, they know how to work hard and grow rich, and to dress up and have fun. He pictures the Russians as well-educated people.

Analysing Word 2, we used strategy 3 «Exercising Fairmindedness». According to its principle — to think critically, we should be able to consider the strengths and weaknesses of opposing points of view [1; 45].

The world consists of a many of societies, people in which have diverse points of view and possess different ways of thinking. To develop us as intelligent people, we must enter into the details and think in the framework of the structures and ideas of this or that people or society. We cannot adequately understand the world if we think of it only from one point of view. In addition, critical thinkers admit that their behavior affects others and on this basis they also view their behavior from the standpoint of other people.

Developing Intellectual Good Faith or Integrity Critical thinkers recognize the need to be forthright to their own thought, to be consistent in the intellectual standards they apply, to hold themselves to the same rigorous standards of evidence and proof to which they hold others. To practice what they advocate for others and to honestly admit discrepancies and inconsistencies in their own thought and action. They believe most strongly what has been justified by their own thought and analyzed experience.

Words 31 and 32 attract great attention because in these words every human being can find answers for many different questions and can be considered as some advice to think critically and the most valuable thing that should be used practically in life.

Abay described in Word 31 «We can name four means that promote the perception and memorization of what is heard: First, we should acquire spiritual firmness and determination secondly, you should heed wise counsels attentively and with an open heart, eager to grasp the meaning of what is said; thirdly, you should ponder over these wise words and repeat them over and over again so as to imprint them in your memory; fourthly, you we should avoid harmful states of the mind and resist them even in the face of temptation. These states of mind are: careless sloth, indifference, senseless amusement, the inclination to morose reflection and destructive passion. These vices can destroy both your mind and your talent».

In Word 32 Abay deeply provides insight into how to learn the ropes. «Those who seek learning should know certain essential conditions without which they cannot achieve their goal. First, do not attempt to do so for the sake of profit. You should love learning for its own sake and strive for it. If you value knowledge as a supreme blessing, each new truth you uncover will bring peace and satisfaction to your soul. Memorise well what is new to you, and you will feel the desire-for new quests, and a love of knowledge will be born in your heart. Then your memory will absorb whatever you have seen and heard. But if you have another purpose in mind, seek knowledge only with the aim of getting rich, your attitude to learning will be the same as that of a woman to her stepson. If your soul and your mind are well intentioned towards learning, it will be benevolent in turn it will surrender to you readily. But it will show half-hearted benevolence to a half-hearted person.

Second, study with clear and noble aims, not to acquire learning so as to be able to argue with other people. Now, arguments within reason help to strengthen one's convictions, but, excessive zeal for them can only spoil a man. For lovers of wrangling will launch into disputes not for the sake of ascertaining the truth but rather to show off their knowledge and get the upper hand of other people. Such arguments breed envy, add not a whit of humanity and do not serve scholarship — on the contrary, they simply confuse people. This is the vain occupation of troublemakers. He who leads hundreds astray from the right path is not worth the little finger of one who has brought just one man back to the path of truth.

True, disputation is one of the paths to knowledge, but a person who gives himself entirely to this runs the risk of becoming conceited and arrogant an envious gossip. Such a person will be not averse to slander, backbiting and vituperation which only lowers human dignity.

Third, if you have succeeded in pursuit of a truth, do not turn back from it even on pain of death. But if you are not convinced of your knowledge, do not imagine that someone else will appreciate it. If you do not value your own knowledge, how can expect recognition from utter strangers?

Fourth, there are two tool that aid the acquisition of knowledge. One is *mulakhaza* [the subtle art of polemics] and the other, *mukhafaza* [firmness in defense of one's views]. It is necessary to strive constantly to perfect these for without them it is impossible to reinforce and develop your knowledge.

Fifth, I spoke previously of four harmful attitudes of mind, and among these we named careless sloth or idleness. My soul! I enjoin you, to beware of this evil! It is pernicious both for God and for man, both for reason and for honour. It is the arch enemy of everything! But there is no place for this evil where conscience resides.

Sixth, human character is a vessel containing intelligence and knowledge. Develop your character therefore! By indulging in envy and frivolity, by allowing ourselves to be influenced by the words of others and momentary passions, you may forfeit your strength of character. Learning will be of no avail if the vessel that receives your knowledge is not sound.

To attain your goal and be faithful to your duty, you should foster constancy of purpose, determination and strong will, for these help preserve the sobriety of your reason and the purity of your conscience» [2; 137].

In these two Words there are different significant strategic aspects of critical thinking: Thinking Independently, Exploring Thoughts Underlying Feelings and Feelings Underlying Thoughts, Developing Intellectual Humility and Suspending Judgment, Developing Intellectual Courage, Developing Intellectual Perse-

verance, Developing Confidence in Reason, Comparing Analogous Situations: Transferring Insights to New Contexts, Developing One's Perspective: Creating or Exploring Beliefs, Arguments, or Theories, Clarifying Issues, Conclusions, or Beliefs, Clarifying and Analyzing The Meanings of Words or Phrases, Developing Criteria for Evaluation: Clarifying Values and Standards and etc.

Generating or evaluating solutions when solving problems, critical thinkers use all the means available to find the best possible solution. Evaluate possible solutions not by ourselves, on the contrary relative to each other (since the «best solution» implies a comparison). Moreover, spending time on a clear, precise, unbiased formulation of the problem, and do not give an immediately poor description to jump right over to the solution (jumping into conclusion). Thoroughly analyze the causes of problems, ask ourselves: «Why are some solutions better than others? What is required to solve this problem? What methods did this and similar problems solve? With what results?». However, alternative solutions, as a rule, are not given ready; should be generated or invented. Thinking critically one must also think creatively, developing possible solutions to find the most suitable. However, very often the problem persists, not because we cannot say which of the possible solutions are the best, because there is no best solution available. Therefore, although thinkers critically use all available information relevant to these problems, including information about solutions found by others in similar situations, thinking flexibly and figuratively, trying to work out any good idea (no matter whether it was known or not).

The thinkers rightly take into account the interests of everyone, if they (interests) influence the problem itself or to advance its decisions. They are more eager to discover a better solution than to actually achieve the goal and approach the solution of problems realistically.

Thinking critically people read with healthy skepticism and do not question or deny anything until they figure it out. First find out and then make a judgement, understand that everyone can make mistakes and be wrong, not excluding the authors of textbooks. Also realize that, since each person has his/her own point of view, for this reason, may miss some of the relevant information. Authors write books on the same or similar topics, however they differ on perspectives or positions. Therefore, readers critically admit that reading a book is reading only one possible view of the subject. More can be achieved by examining the entire diversity of views on the subject of interest to us. Critical readers question themselves about what they read and want to know about what is meant, justified and described in the text as well as meaning and truth. They do not evaluate the text as a collection of sentences; they evaluate it as integrity, applying a wide range of interpretations until one approaches the whole work. Those who read critically are not inclined to ignore or distort what does not fit into their interpretation.

Critical thinkers can take statements, recognize their implications-what follows from them and develop a fuller, more complete understanding of their meaning. They realize that to accept a statement one must also accept its implications, can explore both implications and consequences at length. When considering beliefs that relate to actions or policies, critical thinkers assess the consequences of acting on those beliefs.

The main aim of this article is to help not only our students (because critical thinking has great educational value for young generation) but help us to understand very simple things as the notion, nature and practical value of critical thinking through reading, thinking, analyzing, interpreting, giving own opinions, evaluating and properly use outcomes of their analyses and thoughts in everyday life. Book of Words was chosen as one of the greatest works of extraordinary genius to demonstrate the right thoughts and decisions which will be necessary in the further life experience.

In conclusion, the works of Abay are priceless treasure for the education, especially for younger generations. Book of Words is the bank of all the necessary knowledge in many fields of human activity. Through Abay's works, we can and need to educate our today's youth. We have examined a few strategies and Words of Abay. There are 35 strategic aspects of critical thinking and 45 Words of Abay. This study needs much time and deep examination and analysis and searches carefully and thoroughly the huge scientific work with practical value can be done.

The use of critical thinking development methods in both learning and teaching process contributes to the formation of a socially adapted, independently thinking, tolerant personality. Critical thinking is the ability to raise new questions, develop various arguments, take independent thoughtful decisions from the standpoint of logic and moral values; all these qualities are in demand by modern society.

In modern pedagogy, many studies in the field of critical thinking have been carried out. At the same time, consideration of this theme through Abay's heritage can contribute to further deepening and development of the theory and practice of forming critical thinking. This study of Abay's creativity is one of its kind by providing a new approach to the integration of the national and the universal in a modern multicultural

society. Thus, the ability to think critically helps a person to reduce the number of acts, which afterwards would have to be empathised and therefore increases our chances of success.

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### Абайдың әдеби мұраларындағы сыни ойлаудың стратегиялық аспектілері

Мақалада Абай Құнанбаевтың ұлы шығармасы «Қара сөздер» негізінде сыни ойлау аспектілерін талдау қарастырылған. Ұлы ойшылдың мазмұны терең «Қара сөздер» ата-бабамыздың рухани мәдениетінің бар байлығын сипаттайды. Бұл шығарма қазіргі таңда да өзектілігін жоғалтқан емес. Заманауи қоғам қажеттіліктеріне жауап бере алатын кез келген адам үшін сыни ойлау қабілетін дамыту, кез келген қызметте табысты нәтижелерге жете алуына бейімделуі маңызды мәселе болып табылады. Әсіресе өзгермелі қазіргі қоғамда бұл жастар үшін аса қажет. Ақпарат дамыған қазіргі жаһандық әлемде шығармашыл тұлға сыни ойлау қабілетінсіз қалыптасуы мүмкін емес.

*Кілт сөздер:* Абай Құнанбаевтың «Қара сөздер», сыни ойлау, біліктілікті арттыру, шығармашылық тұлға, өзгермелі қоғам, жаһандық әлем.

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### Стратегические аспекты критического мышления в литературном наследии Абая

В статье рассмотрены аспекты критического мышления посредством анализа величайшего произведения Абая Кунанбаева — «Слова назидания». Глубокие по содержанию «Слова назидания» отражают все богатство духовной культуры народа, оставленной нам в наследие нашими предками. Это произведение имеет актуальность и в наши дни. Развитие критического мышления крайне важно для любого человека, который хочет быть востребованным специалистом в наше время, так как умение делать собственные выводы, мыслить инновативно позволяют добиться успехов в любом виде деятельности. Развитие критического мышления особенно важно для молодежи. В современном развитом мире, в эпоху глобальной информатизации, необходимо быть творческим человеком и, следовательно, уметь мыслить критически.

*Ключевые слова:* «Слова назидания» Абая Кунанбаева, критическое мышление, развитие навыков, творческая личность, современный мир, глобальная эпоха.

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