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**Abstract:** This article discusses the main contemporary challenges faced by the field of cultural studies in the 21st century. It explores the influence of globalization, the emergence of digital culture, the commercialization of culture, ecological and moral crises, and the growing need for interdisciplinary research. Each problem is analyzed with examples from modern life and global practice.

**Keywords:** cultural studies, globalization, digital culture, national identity, mass culture, ecological culture, moral crisis.

The 21st century has brought humanity into an era of rapid technological advancement, global interconnection, and information overload. These processes have had a profound effect on the development of culture, demanding new theoretical and methodological approaches from cultural studies. Today, cultural studies no longer focus only on the heritage of the past; it also analyzes the laws of cultural transformation, adaptation to global changes, and the emergence of new social values. Thus, the modern scholar of culture must address not only historical but also sociological, communicative, and ethical dimensions of cultural life.

#### 1. Globalization and the Problem of Cultural Identity

Globalization refers to the growing interconnection between peoples in economic, political, and cultural spheres. While it promotes intercultural exchange, it also poses a serious risk of losing national and cultural identity.

For example, among modern youth, Western music, fashion, and lifestyle have become dominant, often overshadowing traditional music, folklore, and clothing. As a result, the sense of belonging — the understanding of “who I am and where I come from” — is becoming weaker.

In Uzbekistan, efforts to counter this trend are visible through the promotion of national language media, Uzbek cinema, and cultural festivals. Projects such as “Navruz,” “Alpomish,” and “Cultural Heritage of Uzbekistan” aim to preserve and promote national identity amid global influence.

#### 2. Digital Culture and the Information Revolution

The 21st century is often called the age of digital culture. The internet, artificial intelligence, and social media have radically transformed how people communicate, learn, and create art. Culture is now being produced and consumed in virtual spaces.

For instance, artworks that once required physical visits to museums can now be viewed in online exhibitions and 3D virtual galleries, such as those offered by Google Arts & Culture. Platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube have created new “digital celebrities.” However, this new culture has a downside — superficiality and “like-based” value systems. The flood of information can cause “information noise,” reducing attention and depth of thinking. Therefore, the development of digital literacy and information ethics has become an urgent task for cultural educators.

#### 3. Commercialization and Massification of Culture

In the modern world, culture has increasingly become an economic commodity. The film industry, fashion, advertising, and show business have turned art into a profitable sector. For example, the global entertainment industry generates billions of dollars annually. However, this often leads to the decline of artistic quality and moral depth, giving rise to mass culture — entertainment that prioritizes popularity over meaning. Many contemporary songs and films, for instance, focus on sensationalism rather than social or spiritual content. This trend distances culture from its true purpose — the moral and aesthetic development of humanity. Therefore, modern cultural studies must critically analyze mass culture and protect artistic and national values from excessive commercialization.

#### 4. Ecological and Moral Crisis in Culture

Technological progress has resulted in serious environmental damage, bringing humanity to the brink of ecological crisis. Modern cultural studies now emphasize ecological and ethical responsibility as central aspects of culture. Movements such as “green culture” and “eco-art” have emerged worldwide, promoting environmental awareness through creativity. In Uzbekistan, initiatives like “Yashil Makon” (Green Space) and “Obod Yurt” (Flourishing Homeland) aim to restore harmony between humans and nature. The moral dimension is equally important. The weakening of humanism, respect, and patriotism among youth requires renewed focus on moral education through theater, literature, and national art festivals.

#### 5. The Need for Theoretical Renewal in Cultural Studies

Modern cultural studies must develop interdisciplinary approaches, integrating sociology, psychology, philosophy, communication, and anthropology. Culture today is not only an aesthetic phenomenon but also a social and psychological system that reflects human behavior, media consumption, and identity.

For example, fields like “culture and communication” or “media culture” analyze how modern people form their values through digital interaction. Thus, the discipline must constantly update its methods to remain relevant in the contemporary world.

To conclude, the modern problems of cultural studies are complex and interconnected. Globalization, digital transformation, commercialization, and moral decline are shaping a new cultural reality.

Addressing these challenges requires:

Preserving the balance between national and universal values;

Promoting cultural awareness and information literacy among youth;

Continuously modernizing the theoretical and methodological foundations of cultural studies.

Only through such efforts can cultural studies fulfill its mission — to strengthen the spiritual foundations of society and guide humanity toward a harmonious cultural future.

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