

Article

# The concept of personality and national identity in contemporary Kazakh prose

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**Abstract:** Colonialism has had a profoundly negative impact on national consciousness. Although the Republic of Kazakhstan has gained independence, it has not yet fully overcome the adverse effects of colonialism on its national consciousness. A portion of the Kazakh people has been Russified. Meanwhile, the younger generation, raised in their native language, either lacks a deep understanding of or is gradually forgetting the foundations of national identity that date back to ancient times. During the Soviet era, communist ideology prevented the population from truly knowing their history, traditions, and beliefs. In this context, literature plays a crucial role in reviving national memory. This article examines the concept of personality in literary works and the uniqueness of national identity based on the works of several contemporary authors. The introduction provides an overview of researchers' conclusions related to the concept of personality. The ancient origins of national identity—sacred elements, rituals, shamanism, and the mystical connections between humans, nature, and animals—as depicted in literary works are analyzed within the dynamics of the present day, alongside the fates of the characters. The desecration of sacred elements is not merely ignorance but a sign of the erasure of national memory; rituals are not just words but embody sacred concepts accumulated from centuries of the people's experience, which are reflected in the works. Accordingly, the research article analyzes and provides examples from several literary works. In compiling conclusions about the concept of personality, the study utilized descriptive, biographical, and socio-psychological methods to describe national identity in literary works and its ancient manifestations, as well as the depiction of sacred elements and rituals.

**Keywords:** concept of personality; national identity; national memory; sacred elements; rituals

## 1. Introduction

The primary concern of literature is the Human Being. Throughout many years, literary criticism and theory have presented various perspectives and interpretations of personality. Nevertheless, the human being remains a mysterious entity, akin to an infinite universe. Despite the efforts of philosophy, sociology, ethics, aesthetics, pedagogy, and psychology to study the human issue from their respective specific angles, they all pursue a common goal: to understand the human being and their potential within the complex system of contemporary social relations. The philosophical concept of understanding the human being is also crucial for literature. It is not without reason that literature is referred to as “Human Studies.” It is always directed towards the human being, their actions, and inner world, adhering to

principles of understanding personality. Therefore, the concept of personality in literature is considered important and complex.

Literary scholars interpret the notion of personality differently. Some argue (Nalbandyan, 1984) that there can be no human being without personality, while others (Kolobaeva, 1990) believe that a person can be recognized as a personality if they fully realize the possibilities granted by nature, society, and history.

Currently, significant attention is paid to the categories of the concept of personality. In Russian literary typology, Pavlov (2004) identifies three types of personality: egocentric, ambivalent, and Christian. Yevdokimova (2009) proposes two approaches to examining the issue of personality: the first is European, in which the main “worthy” trait of a person is egocentrism; the second involves a viewpoint oriented towards self-sacrifice. V. G. Belinsky interpreted personality in literature from a vulgar sociological perspective. Many authors adhered to this viewpoint, portraying personality as a product of social relations. They associated the change and formation of personality with changes in society. Thus, in their opinion, it is not the person who creates themselves, society, the state, history, etc., but rather society creates the person. Pavlov (2007) noted that it is difficult to agree with this opinion of V. G. Belinsky. Nevertheless, significant achievements have been made in modeling personality archetypes in world and national literature. A great artist always relies on specific ideological foundations in their creativity. However, they also independently analyze the social environment and introduce their unique concept of personality and society into the spiritual life of humanity. This concept is closely tied to the author’s philosophical and political views on the world. Thus, they achieve an independent search that allows them to convey new figurative information about reality. The depiction of personality in literature is a creative product of the author’s worldview and aesthetic perspectives, as well as their literary mastery.

Therefore, the issue of the author’s personality in literature is significant and occupies a distinct place in personality studies. Personality is, in any case, a national category. It serves as a bearer of a particular nation’s understanding and religious beliefs, mentality, truth of the environment, and social problems. National differences in perception, character, and truth of the environment can be seen, for instance, in J. London’s “Martin Eden,” E. Hemingway’s “A Farewell to Arms,” and Kazakh writer M. Auezov’s “The Path of Abai.” However, common to these works is the artistic depiction of human values that are universal to all humanity. This research examines the personality and the concept of personality in literary works, as well as issues of national specificity and perception.

## **2. Literature review**

Extensive research has been conducted by scholars on the mysterious aspects of the human psyche and its depiction in art. The works of Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Erich Fromm, Joseph Campbell, and Mikhail Bakhtin are considered crucial in the study of personality in literature. These scholars explored various topics, including the psychology of characters and symbols, archetypes and the collective unconscious, human psychology and its connection to society, the development of heroic characters in literature, and the relationship between characters and space within the text. The

issue of personality and related perspectives, their classification, and depiction in literary works, as well as the fundamental question of what constitutes a personality, have been addressed in the studies of Kovalchuk (1998), Gulnazaryan (2009), Shchedrina (1998), Rybak (2009), Yevdokimova (2009), Pavlov (2004), Makarov (2005), Kolobaeva (1990), and Gapon (2005), among others. During the Soviet era, the issues of the “positive hero” and their idealization were emphasized, and the image of the communist was politicized. All of this was artificial. In contemporary literature, the perspective on personality has changed. The changing times have introduced new characters into literature. The qualitative changes in the characters of Kazakh literature during the period of independence have been discussed in the works of literary scholars such as Kiraibaev (2011), Temirbolat (2023), Orazbek (2017), Orda (2016), Baltabaeva (2016), Abdikulova (2016), and Abdikova (2011), among others. However, the issues of personality and its national characteristics in literature remain relevant. Changes in literary trends and innovations in literary works are primarily related to the unique depiction of characters and the author’s fresh perspectives.

### **3. Research materials and methods**

The article compares and examines the scientific theories and perspectives of past and present researchers on the concept of personality, as well as the important component of personality—the concept of national identity. In the Western European concept of personality, the development, comfort, and egoism of the individual are prioritized. In contrast, during the Soviet era, researchers emphasized the relationship between society and the individual and the issues of social development in their works on the concept of personality. Consequently, in the works of Soviet-era writers, common interests, the welfare of socialist society, and the personal sacrifices of individuals, even to the point of martyrdom, were depicted. This process was also characteristic of national literature that was part of the Soviet Union. However, in the works of well-known writers, the creative energy, inexhaustible strength, and humanism of individuals were vividly portrayed in various situations. In the concept of personality presented by contemporary writers, there is a noticeable emphasis on religious beliefs and personal freedom. The modern individual is not isolated but is closely connected with global civilization. While the national language, traditions, and ancient history of the people play a leading role in shaping their worldview, the influence of global integration is also significant. Therefore, this study examines the important aspects of the concept of personality, focusing on national characteristics and perceptions. National identity is the core of national consciousness and often originates from the ancient worldview of the people. The unity of related nations and their differences from other peoples are linked to these ancient roots. Unfortunately, in the era of globalization, there is a risk of losing national identity. Thus, nations with deep national roots and developed civilizations strive to develop, honor, and preserve their ancient perceptions and understandings in accordance with contemporary demands. Literature plays a crucial role in preserving national identity. In literary works, the foundations of national identity are portrayed through various artistic methods, finding their artistic solutions. Therefore, the article examines the portrayal of national consciousness in contemporary Kazakh prose, focusing on the depiction of

ancient beliefs such as “kiye” and superstitions, and analyzes their relevance to the present day. The choice of contemporary prose as the object of analysis is justified by the following reasons:

- First, contemporary prose is free from the constraints of communist ideology;
- Second, ancient beliefs and customs are depicted in these works with the spirit of independence, rooted in national traditions;
- Third, although the manifestations of national worldview are discussed in scholarly literature, they are not widely accessible to the public. In artistic works, these elements are depicted through events and characters, making them more impactful from an aesthetic and emotional standpoint.

The research employs descriptive, biographical, and socio-psychological methods to compile conclusions about the concept of personality and to analyze the depiction of national identity and its ancient manifestations, including sacred elements and rituals, in literary works.

#### **4. Analysis**

In the study of literature, the problem of personality in artistic works was first approached as a distinct object of research in the early 20th century, and in Russian literary studies, this began in the 1950s with the work of L. I. Timofeev. Although the concept of personality has not been specifically addressed in Kazakh literary studies, the depiction of human characters, the interplay between character and circumstances, the spiritual world of the protagonist, and other related issues have always been explored in the research.

The concept of personality has played a crucial role throughout the history of art. Significant periods of artistic thought, such as antiquity, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, Classicism, and the Enlightenment, despite their differences, were distinguished by their depiction of the human being. Various perspectives on humanity established the dominant methods in art—Romanticism and Realism.

In literature, the portrayal of personality is primarily a product of the author’s skill and artistic worldview. As Maugham (1991 p. 163) stated, the author “does not copy life, but arranges it according to his plan”. Therefore, in understanding the issue of personality, the author, the personality itself, and the artistic concepts of personality “form an integral artistic structure” (Gulnazaryan, 2009) Without understanding the moral and philosophical stance of the author, it is impossible to fully grasp the ethical position of the character. In contemporary prose, the author’s perspective is deeply embedded in the psyche of each character.

Kirakosyan (1982) considers the issue of personality in literature and art as the issue of human beings at the highest level of social-individual existence. In other words, it should be viewed as a matter of aesthetic and artistic-ethical evaluation. Lukin (1977) identifies the material and spiritual values produced by the structure of personality, as well as the personality’s role in carrying specific aesthetic tastes, ideals, and viewpoints. According to Ananyev (1977), the concept of personality includes not only social factors but also the “natural characteristics and psychological diversity” of the protagonist.

Seleznov's (1986) work introduces the terms "sacrificial personality" and "European personality" (European type of consciousness). Bocharov (1977) defines the characteristics of an egocentric personality that is focused on the depth and comfort of its own soul: "Your moral being should be beneficial and pleasant to you, without harming others, and gaining at the expense of others is always a degradation." This perspective, though it may seem good on the surface, is actually a form of egocentric delusion that is centered only on oneself and one's own well-being (p. 234). In Russian literature, and consequently in Kazakh literature, which developed under its influence, moral obligations were placed at the forefront. The principle that personality begins not with self-assertion, but with sacrifice and giving (self-sacrifice) was established.

Pavlov (2007) categorizes personality into three types: Orthodox, ambivalent, and egocentric, and adds the idea of internal inconsistency in a person to its conceptual representation. This explains the prevalence of the ambivalent (intermediate) type of personality in Russian literary works. In the contemporary concept of personality, religious freedom plays a significant role. According to Sokhryakov (1997), a person becomes a true personality "when they begin to feel themselves as a part of nature, of the divine world, and feel their responsibility for the fate of this world" (Sokhryakov, 1997)

Historical periods have influenced the concept of personality. For instance, from the early years of Soviet literature after the 1917 revolution, the concept of personality was given special importance. However, despite good intentions, practical implementation was not easy, hindered by lack of experience and political interference. In Soviet literature of the 1920s–1930s, the principle of unity between the individual and the collective was presented in a one-sided manner, both in theory and in creative practice. The richness and diversity of the individual's psychological life were undervalued in favor of subordinating personal aspirations to the common interest. This led to schematic and abstract depictions of characters in the literature of that period. While the slogans of the "living person" and "psychologism" aimed to correct these shortcomings, one-sided demands hindered their successful realization. The same can be said about the "ideal hero" or "conflict-free" theories that were hotly debated after World War II (Jrbashian, 1980).

Kazakh literature, under Soviet ideological control, also experienced this situation. It was regarded merely as a branch of the multinational Soviet literature, losing its national foundation. The difficult historical experiences of the people and the fate of individuals repressed under Stalin were not discussed. In the literature of this period, national issues were only hinted at. For example, in the story "Kokserek" by Kazakh writer Mukhtar Auezov, which was said to be influenced by Jack London's "White Fang," the psychology of the steppe wolf is portrayed in an interesting and deep way, but the underlying concept was different. In the end, the wolf, raised from a cub, devours a child in the stormy steppe, symbolizing the truth of Russian colonialism—ultimately, it will devour. In Magzhan Zhumabayev's poem "Koilybay's Kobyz" the high spirit of the Kazakh people, a branch of the ancient Turkic people, is celebrated. In Gabit Musrepov's story "Talpak Tanau" [Cow] the arrival of a pig, as the fifth livestock under the Communist order, to a Muslim Kazakh village that traditionally raised sheep, cows, camels, and horses, is depicted. This

represented not just a change of times, but a violation of people's beliefs and a display of dominance.

National identity is a critically important concept for the Kazakh people, whose consciousness was nearly erased and brought to the brink of extinction by colonialism. Aristotle used the term "tautotis" (similarity) in relation to "identity" to address issues of change and continuity among diversity (Orlova, 2010). Initially, identity was discussed in relation to the individual as an agent of action (Z. Freud, D.G. Mead, T. Adorno, H. Marcuse, K. Dubula, R. Linton, E. Fromm), but in the 1960s, the discussion shifted to issues of group and social identity. During this period, identity became an important complex in the humanities. The character and significance of newly formed identities during the transition from national consciousness to the diversity of identities within society in Europe were explored. Various theories based on the multiculturalism direction were studied. It was found that this policy aimed to dissolve national and civic identities (Ethnopolitical dictionary, 2014)

Unfortunately, Kazakhstan has experienced the consequences of multiculturalism in the 30 years since gaining independence. All the wealth and power of the country were concentrated in the hands of a small group around the first president. The people were left in despair. Therefore, recognizing the foundation of national identity, which preserves identity from fragmentation, is considered crucial in the current time. Counter-identities, which aim to dismantle national identity, have been established on the basis of strong technologies. It is now clear that these configurations weaken and erode the "unifying" identity whenever mechanisms for preserving national values fail to perform their duties correctly.

Currently, the preservation of national culture is the main task in ensuring national security. The values of each nation are primarily preserved in their native language. The next value lies in their religion, which calls for morality and good qualities. The influence of a nation's language and religion is reflected in its mentality, which is the way of life or national code developed over many centuries. To understand the national code, it is necessary to "return to our historical roots," which is a law of dialectics. If the system of historical memory is not properly structured, national values will fade in the minds of future generations. If national values are lost, conscious identity will not form. In the social reality of Kazakhstan, we must not forget the "spiritual trauma" related to our nation (Kapitsyn, 2014).

Although Kazakh literature developed professionally during the Soviet years, it was under strict communist censorship. In contemporary Kazakh prose, depicting the nation's history, national mentality, traditions, and ancient beliefs is playing a key role in filling the gap left by the "spiritual trauma". While the values of world civilization are open to the younger generation in the era of globalization, the centuries-old experiences and values of the people were previously inaccessible.

National character, consciousness, and national identity are considered essential components of the concept of personality. The fate of a hero is intertwined with the significant history of the nation and its struggle for independence. Through a person, the spirit and religion of the people, language richness, customs and traditions, art, crafts, land and natural resources, etc., are depicted.

National perception originates from the ancient worldview of the people. For example, prohibitions such as "don't tear the sky," "don't spill milk," "don't

contaminate water,” “don’t cut willows,” “don’t kick cattle,” “don’t blow out the fire,” “don’t scatter ashes,” and others were established to maintain harmony in nature. The people have long recognized the sanctity of moonlight. They tried to prevent people with headaches from going outside. During full moons, it was prohibited to go outside with an uncovered head, sleep outside, or look at the moon for too long. It was considered inappropriate for moonlight to fall on a baby’s face. These rituals and prohibitions have deep meanings, as they encompass centuries of the people’s experience.

One such ancient worldview is the concept of “kye” (holy). Kye denotes the sacredness of any living being or object, indicating the presence of special mystical power. In the people’s worldview, respecting kye brings prosperity and unity, while neglecting it is believed to incur its punishment. Some manifestations of national perception are being forgotten in the modern era of globalization. A people who loses their national perception lose their intrinsic nature. Therefore, in order to preserve the nation, it is crucial to remember, develop, and renew ancient customs and beliefs. One way to preserve national perception is through artistic works and literature. In these works, ancient beliefs and traditions are depicted in connection with contemporary understanding. Losing national memory can lead to the disappearance of a nation. Unfortunately, this process is widely observed among peoples newly liberated from colonial oppression. The reasons are as follows: First, colonialism prevented the people from knowing their history. Second, colonial ideology altered the people’s consciousness. Third, due to colonial oppression, a generation grew up that did not know its own history, language, traditions, and beliefs. Therefore, the process of reviving ancient beliefs and traditions in the works of contemporary writers is essential for national identity. Through artistic works, today’s generation learns about ancient history, beliefs, and traditions. In this direction, writers are engaged in various artistic explorations. Myths are being renewed with contemporary understanding, as myths vividly represent ancient beliefs (Malinowski, 2015).

In the story “Aygyrkisi” (The man is a mercy) by modern Kazakh writer Dauytaev (2008), the sacred qualities of the horse are depicted. In modern prose, repeating motifs from folklore works is an advantage. Therefore, the author develops the sacred qualities of the horse in a contemporary context.

The story is narrated from the perspective of the head of the family, Esqul. His nephew, Zhalgas, finds a foal stuck in the mud and, along with his brother, rescues and takes care of it. Later, this foal becomes a champion in races, not conceding to anyone, and demonstrates a special character. The author conveys the sacred qualities of the horse to the reader through several details. First, there is the unexpected action of the horse regarding a woman in labor. When the young wife is struggling with labor pains and her cries are heard outside, a black horse grazing on a cart suddenly starts to neigh loudly, breaks its bridle, rushes towards the yurt, and crashes into the door with its head. When the horse loudly neighs in front of the woman, a baby’s cry is heard from outside.

Original: Qudaidyń qudyreti myna aıǵyr da kisi eken ǵoi” dep qalady bir qarıa. Tań qalǵan qasyndaǵylarǵa: “Kisiniń kiesin kórsetken joq pa? Bizden ketip qalǵan kisilik kieni qudaı sol janıardyń denine salǵan shyǵar. Sóitpese, myna isi qalaı, a?!” deidi.

Translation: “God’s power, it turns out that this horse also possesses human spirit,” says an old man. He explains to the astonished bystanders: “Didn’t he show the spirit of a person? Perhaps God has placed the human spirit into this animal. Otherwise, how can we explain its actions?” (Dauytaev, 2008, p. 55). After this event, the black horse is known as Aygyrkisi.

Secondly, there is the horse’s behavior when Zhalgas falls from the roof of a barn during a storm and loses consciousness. At night, Esqul notices that a herd of horses outside the house does not leave. When morning comes and Zhalgas is somewhat recovered, Esqul witnesses another remarkable event. The herd of horses leaves for pasture.

Original: “Aıgyrkisi shynynda da kielı. Jalǵastyń jaǵdaıyn sol mezet bilip, úiirin aıdap keldi. Úiirimen tań atqansha Jalǵastyń tileyin tiledi, amandyǵyna qulyndaryn qurban etip ketti...”dep aıtysady aýyl adamdary.

Translation: “Aygyrkisi is truly sacred. It sensed Zhalgas’s condition and came to help with its herd. It prayed for Zhalgas’s well-being all night and made a sacrifice by killing its foals...” say the villagers (Dauytaev, 2008, p. 58).

The writer describes the horse’s actions with creative imagination. However, readers accept this without hesitation. The connection between the horse and the human, not considered unusual among herders, is also depicted. For example, the historical manifestation is the famous composer Akan Seri mourning his horse Qulagher. In the writer’s description, the connection between Zhalgas and the horse reaches a high level.

Esqul the elder and the young Zhalgas both reflect the national character that venerates horses. Especially, the swift horse becomes central to Zhalgas’s life. The conflict in the story is intensified by the negative attitude of Zhalgas’s father, Buldii. Obsessed with wealth, he decides to sell the renowned racehorse, which has gained fame among both Kazakhs and Kyrgyz, to the Kyrgyz. The dialogue between Esqul the elder and Buldii is based on a sharp confrontation between their characters.

Esqul the elder is powerless. He tries to prevent his brother from selling the horse. “A horse with a sacred spirit should not be sold. Its spirit will strike back,” he pleads. The domineering Buldii does not heed his words. His attitude reflects a worldliness and a psychology of the times that everything in this world is for sale. Nothing is considered sacred. He has entirely forgotten the concept of kye, seeing it as an old relic. Zhalgas, distressed by his father’s actions, dies in a car accident on his way to the Kyrgyz village.

The writer revives the concept of kye, which has deep roots in national perception. One must be able to preserve kye; otherwise, its wrath will strike. Buldii’s only son’s sudden death in a car accident signifies this. The mystical connection between humans and animals is shown in the horse sensing Zhalgas’s death, escaping from the Kyrgyz owner, and arriving at the grave site. The writer depicts this as if the horse felt the situation with some divine power. Human sorrow and the boundless sadness in the horse’s eyes as depicted by the writer are a mysterious enigma. The story describes the horse being impaled on iron at Zhalgas’s grave.

The incident brings a change to Esqul’s inner world. Knowing the sacred nature of the horse, why did he not intervene? What kind of person cannot stand against cruelty and injustice? The concept of characters in the story thus deepens. Do people



honor kye? The modern ailments of society and the changed values are depicted. Buldii, who is obsessed with wealth and disregards kye, appears as a representative of a lost generation.

In ancient Turkic cosmology, the horse is considered a sacred animal. In the beliefs of the ancient Scythians, the horse was seen as both a companion and a means of transportation during a person's life, and as an angel guiding the deceased to the Sun or Tengri ("the afterlife") (Kelimbetov, 2005). The ancient "Kultegin" monument (8th century) extols the horse as a crucial element in the warrior's life. It is said that Kultegin had twelve horses, each with a unique role in battle. They moved alongside their master and risked their lives, often dying on the battlefield (Ahmetuly et al., 2007). This sacred attribute of the horse continued in later Kazakh epics. Therefore, the sacred nature of the horse remains firmly entrenched in the national consciousness to this day.

In her stories, writer Kemelbaeva (2004) richly depicts national ethnographic perceptions and understandings. One such work is the story "Tyrnak" (Nails). From the very beginning of the story, the magical power of words is felt. The dark portrayal of nature and the protagonist's exhausted, disheveled mood are tightly interwoven. The author uses rich, evocative language to describe the space and human relations, affecting the reader's emotions. Descriptions such as the incessant rain for three days, muddy swamps, the land sinking to the bones, the gray haze of blindness, dense black clouds, and impenetrable dome-like formations first show the writer's linguistic and stylistic features and second, reflect the writer's unique perception of the world and phenomena.

The exhausted shepherd lets go of the reins. His horse has brought him to an old wintering place that he is familiar with. When he enters the abandoned wintering place of his father, he is found dead. The horse, tied to the door, rears up in fear and throws itself into the air. People who went out to search for him later find him in a semi-conscious state. His clothes are torn, and unknown claw marks cover his entire body. As he is dying, the shepherd Boztai utters only the word "claw." The exposition leaves the reader in a state of mystery. The mysterious death of the character is deepened by the investigation conducted by Police Sergeant Sayan Jumataev, with the assistance of Boztai's peer, Erbolat. They visit the old wintering place. In a place where there had been a struggle, it is impossible not to find any trace. However, inside the wintering place, there are no signs. The spider webs hanging from the walls are undisturbed. Nonetheless, the police sergeant takes pictures of the interior. The mystically tinted episode that follows is focused on uncovering the secret of the death. The author skillfully intertwines the unfolding of events and evidence. The plot develops through various stories and beliefs about claws and hair, along with Hadiths from the Quran. At Erbolat's request, Ishanbai the mullah recounts stories from old times and Quranic verses, while Erbolat's son, studying in London, gathers global information about hair and claws and sends it via the internet. The appearance of a dark spot in the photograph of the old wintering place intensifies the mystery. The rich description of nature, the dialogues between characters, and reflections on life and mystical forces serve as tools for the author to convey his position to the reader. The story reflects the author's search for answers to the many pressing truths in modern society. Are we still paying attention to the customs and traditions accumulated over centuries by our ancestors? Is the

current generation losing touch with its roots and becoming superficial, guided by arbitrary and shallow viewpoints? The author seems to suggest that the rituals and prohibitions passed down through generations are not mere words but contain hidden mysteries. Are children today being taught by their parents about superstitions and prohibitions such as not keeping a single goat in the middle of nowhere, avoiding old wintering places, not cutting hair or nails at night, or not pointing a finger at the moon? The author develops this understanding through the dialogues of the characters. The mullah explains,

Original: “Shash, tyrnaq sığaty las nárseni otqa tastamaıdy, ot shamdanady. Buryn tyrnaq alǵan pyshaqty jerge jeti ret suqqylap, lastan tazalaıtyn” deıdi molda. Qurdasynyń beımezgil ólimi janyń aýyrytqan Erbolat oqýdaǵy ulyna: “- Balam, ulttyq dástúrdi, boıtumardy eskilik qaldyǵy kórý teris. Jas balany qaýyp-qaterden saqtasyn dep úki qaýyrsynyn, búrkittiń tyrnaǵyn, qasqyrdyń tisin besikke ilgen. Qazirgiler dymdy bilmeıdi, yrym-tyymnan jurdaı, sondyqtan pálege kóp urnady”, -deıdi.

Translation: “Dirty things like hair and nails should not be thrown into the fire; the fire becomes enraged. In the past, a knife used to cut nails was stabbed into the ground seven times to cleanse it.” The sudden death of his peer deeply troubles Erbolat, who tells his son: “My child, it is wrong to view national traditions and charms as relics of the past. They were used to protect children from danger, such as hanging an eagle’s claw, an owl’s feather, or a wolf’s tooth on the cradle. Nowadays, people are ignorant of these practices and are devoid of superstitions, leading to frequent misfortune.” The author grounds the concept of individuality in the contemporary reality. Although the characters are modern, the story emphasizes the need to respect traditional beliefs. However, there is a new perspective that is pushing aside ancient knowledge. At the end of the story, the retired sergeant Sayan Jumataev demolishes the old wintering place and replaces it with a business establishment.

The story depicts the continuity of ancient folk beliefs into the present day. It addresses the issue of respecting beliefs formed from centuries of popular experience. One foundation of national identity lies in these ancient beliefs. Reviving and presenting them to contemporary readers through engaging narratives, and prompting reflection, has become the author’s primary artistic goal.

In Kemelbaeva’s (2004) story “Shashty” (Hair), the themes of slavery and freedom are depicted. At first glance, the plot might seem familiar, focusing on the long-standing conflicts between Turkmens and Kazakhs. However, the story offers a new artistic solution that adds a fresh ideological and aesthetic weight to the work. The story features two characters: an old man who has experienced slavery early in life, and a young boy who has recently fallen into slavery during a raid. The contrast between these characters, the author’s narrative style, the surprising twists in the plot, and the historical and psychological realism all reinforce the author’s unique style.

For the old man, a life of slavery far from his homeland is not a life at all. He feels like a living corpse dragging his soul behind him. “Qańbaqsha aýyp, tamyrsyz dedektegen men bir qańly”, -dep kúńirenedi” [I am like a leaf blown away, a wandering wanderer,” he laments]. The artistic concept of the character is based on ancient national consciousness: even with food to eat and clothes to wear, a life of slavery is unhappiness.

The story describes how the boy, according to the old man, wins multiple rounds in a horse race and, in the final moments, rides his swift steed straight back to his homeland. The story revives a mythical theme. The depiction of horse racing, the passion for horses, and the psychology of training and caring for the steeds are portrayed as reflections of folk consciousness in artistic imagery.

In A. Kemelbaeva's story "Kokkiya" (Blue Hill), elements of oral literature tradition are developed. The plot intensifies when Tusiphan, who is cutting wood on a mountain slope, has his cart overturned and gets trapped under the bundled logs. No one is around to help. As evening falls and night turns to dawn, he remains trapped, with only his legs visible and his whole body crushed under the wood. In his final moments, he recalls his entire family and calls out for their help, praying to the spirits of his ancestors and to the Creator:

Ábdihamıt ágam, Nurjan jeńgeı, kishi sheshe, Sháken táte, Orazhan ága - Oqam-ay, Kenjeganyń tátem, Yrysqaisha qaryndasym, Silataı ága, Úkibas jeńgeı, Baǵdash, qos qaryndasym Qainiken men Qanshaym, qarlyǵashtai ushyp jetshi janyma qaraqtarym, aǵalaryń jazataıym mynadaı boldy.

[Abdhamit, Nurgan, Auntie, Shaken, Orazkhan, Okham, Auntie Kenjeganyń, Yryskaisha, Silataı, Ukybas, Bagdash, my two sisters Kainiken and Kanshaim, come to me swiftly, my dears, your brother is in such a dire state].

In this way, the story portrays a deep sense of cultural and familial connection and a blend of historical and mythical elements, demonstrating the profound influence of traditional values and beliefs. The use of ancient folkloric knowledge enhances the artistic quality of the narrative. When Tusiphan is brought back to the village in a half-conscious state, he mutters about his family and their absence. Brotherhood is a fundamental aspect of Kazakh identity. The reverence for spirits and prayers to the Creator reflect a synthesis of Tengrist and Islamic beliefs. Tusiphan is buried in an ancestral tomb with a blue dome (Kossimova, 2023). For forty days, his sisters and daughters mourn him. The elegy includes lines like, *Aq úı tiktim aralǵa, aralym órer samalǵa. Alshańdaı basyp júrgende, jyǵyldy-ay atym tomarǵa. Súrmedim dáýren erkimshe. Kún degenim tún boldy-ay... Jalǵyzym, átteń qartein, qyzyǵyńa qanbaǵan* [I built a white house on the isle, my isle will be touched by the breeze. As I strode proudly, my horse stumbled on a stump. I did not live freely. The sun turned to night... My only one, alas, what can I do, you did not enjoy the joys]. These lines embody ancient national values. The color blue, revered by ancient Turkic peoples, symbolizes the heavens and sacred entities, linking the blue dome of Tusiphan's tomb with cosmic significance.

The story reflects the Kazakh customs related to death, particularly the tradition of honoring and respecting the spirits of the ancestors. Respect for the spirits is an ancient Turkic tradition, as evidenced in the "Kultegin" monument, where the spirits of Bumyn Khagan and Istemi Khagan are frequently honored. According to their beliefs, a person's soul lives on and continues to influence the actions of the living in the form of a spirit. The practice of erecting stone monuments for the spirits of fallen heroes originated from this belief (Ybraev, 2014). This respect for the spirits remains deeply ingrained in Kazakh culture, with mourning and honoring the deceased still prevalent today. The "Kultegin" monument describes how the people cut their hair and beard in mourning and dispersed valuable items like sable furs and blue squirrels

(Ybraev, 2014). The tradition of cutting the mane and tail of a deceased person's horse and slaughtering it during the annual memorial meal has been preserved. Additionally, valuable clothing was distributed to close relatives, considered as a gesture of honoring the deceased.

In Askar Altay's (Altai, 2022) novel "Bylgary tabyt" (The Leather Coffin), the concept of kismet, which is losing its significance, is deliberately included. Archaeologist Professor Magdan Juragatuly and his team study a tomb near the village of "Leather Coffin" in East Kazakhstan. They witness locals using a wolf in a traditional game of kokpar, which horrifies the professor. He questions the ignorance or barbarity of such acts. Critic Mendeke (2024) notes, "The Blue Wolf is a totem for all Turkic peoples. It is sacred and protected by ancestral spirits. No nation should disgrace its sacred totems by such actions." The professor's distress highlights the extreme disrespect for cultural heritage and the dire consequences of cultural erosion. Kismet represents the mystical connections between humans, nature, and animals. Understanding the mysteries of creation is impossible, and literary mysticism arises from the desire to uncover these secrets. In Kanat Abilkayirov's "The Snake's Revenge," mystical elements merge with fantasy (Kali, n/d). The story links the protagonist's tragic fate to the curse of a snake king, associated with ancient revenge rituals. The protagonist, a religious scholar, occasionally transforms into a snake, reflecting folk beliefs in totemic connections and vengeance. The narrative explores the tragedy of a divided people, social injustice, and mystical bonds between humanity and nature, emphasizing the ancient practice of shamanism and its mystical powers.

## 5. Conclusion

The dynamism of the concept of personality is a key driving force in the development of literature. This concept is not a static idea of a person or character but a reflection of new perspectives emerging in the dynamics of time. It represents a novel interpretation of human existence that adds a unique shade to an author's work. In this concept, national characteristics and perceptions hold significant importance, as literary figures serve as carriers of national consciousness. The colonial period prevented a deep understanding of a nation's history, traditions, and beliefs. With independence, nations are reassessing their historical figures and heritage from a fresh perspective. However, the legacy of colonialism still affects societal attitudes, with nihilism, false internationalist rhetoric, and servile mentality remaining prevalent. In this context, the importance of national characteristics and perceptions in literary works is crucial for reviving national spirit. Contemporary writers are increasingly focusing on national consciousness and revitalizing national memory. This quest is evident in the works of N. Dauytaev, A. Kemelbaeva, A. Altai, and Q. Abilkayir. While ancient concepts of sacredness and rituals are historical markers, they play a vital role in preserving national memory and human values, and in expressing a nation's unique worldview.

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