

# Expressing National Ideology Through Archetypal Image “Wolf” in Kazakh Postmodern Literature: Take Balmolda’s *Zhalkara* as an Example

Aidarbek A. Akbulatov

M. Utemisov West Kazakhstan University, Kazakhstan

Kamshat B. Zhumasheva\*

M. Utemisov West Kazakhstan University, Kazakhstan

Zinulla Zh. Mutiyev

M. Utemisov West Kazakhstan University, Kazakhstan

Karlygash K. Suleimenova

Almaty Humanitarian and Economic University, Kazakhstan

Nazerke Y. Mubarak

Kazakh National Women’s Teacher Training University, Kazakhstan

Gulzira Zh. Utegenova

M. Auezov South Kazakhstan University, Kazakhstan

Aigul B. Nassimullina

M. Utemisov West Kazakhstan University, Kazakhstan

Zhansaya G. Mussina

M. Utemisov West Kazakhstan University, Kazakhstan

Rimma M. Kuzhentayeva

M. Utemisov West Kazakhstan University, Kazakhstan

**Abstract**—Modern Kazakh literature has played a crucial role in shaping and expressing the national ideology following Kazakhstan’s independence. Munaydar Balmolda is one of Kazakh postmodern prose writers with a high spirit of patriotism, who vividly reveals the theme of the irreconcilable struggle for the national idea, honor and courage, national spirit. The paper analyzes how Munaydar Balmolda creatively transforms advanced models of literature in accordance with his time using the particularly impressive archetypal image of the wolf cult to express the modern national ideology of independent Kazakhstan. This study is based on the qualitative analysis of folklore traditions and the mythological archetype of the wolf in Balmolda’s novel *Zhalkara* using a complex methodology combining narrative analysis, content analysis, artistic analysis, semiotic analysis and archetypal literary criticism. In the novel, the concept of the wolf functions as a cultural mental framework that can adapt and transform according to the author’s creative intentions. The wolf’s national symbolism is given a distinctive artistic expression, enriching the work with profound intellectual significance and enabling an artistic exploration of Kazakhstan’s national identity emphasizing such essential concepts as conscience, morality, liberty and the spirit of freedom. The examination of the evolution of 21st-century Kazakh prose, the current state of artistic text theory, and the challenges of meaningful philological analysis offers valuable insights for enhancing the theoretical education of aspiring literary scholars. The findings of this research can serve as supplementary material for elective courses such as the theory of artistic text, literary regional studies and contemporary Kazakh literary criticism.

**Index Terms**—modern Kazakh literature, postmodernism, archetype, archetypal image, wolf

---

\* Corresponding Author. E-mail: [kama0186@mail.ru](mailto:kama0186@mail.ru)

## I. INTRODUCTION

Since Kazakhstan gained independence in 1991, the government has initiated efforts to build a national identity by promoting the revival of the Kazakh language and culture. These efforts aim to establish a clear and consistent narrative of the nation's history to legitimize its status as a sovereign state (Serikova et al., 2024). In modern Kazakhstan, there is a need to form national values, national ideology, the patriotic spirit of the Kazakh people, which are based on the idea of the protection of the ancestors' land and the love for the native land (Sultangalieva & Yerdembekov, 2023).

Modern Kazakh literature has played a crucial role in shaping and expressing the national ideology following Kazakhstan's independence. The collapse of the Soviet Union opened new thematic and ideological spaces for writers, allowing them to explore previously restricted topics such as social issues, religion, national identity and historical memory (Abdullina et al., 2024). Literature became a vital medium for reflecting the country's complex social transformations and the search for a renewed national identity. The main features of postmodern literature in Kazakhstan, particularly in its search for a national ideology, reflect a unique adaptation of global postmodern trends to local historical and cultural contexts.

To restore historical memory and reinterpret national identity, contemporary Kazakh prose writers use techniques like intertextuality, mythologization and symbolism. In postmodern literature, writers acquire fresh opportunities to creatively blend elements of reality and imagination by altering narrative structures, employing metaphorical language and incorporating mythological symbols (Ananyeva, 2021). Traditional Kazakh literature has long emphasized the importance of Turkic mythology and mythical archetypes in expressing national and cultural values. Recent research on Kazakh postmodern literature has focused on the distinctive characteristics of new Kazakh prose that emerged after Kazakhstan's independence in 1991, highlighting its connection to mythological and folkloric elements. Concepts such as "folkloremes" and "mythologemes" have been identified as implicit cultural codes that play a key role in conveying the author's artistic vision (Altybayeva & Sagyndykov, 2019). In postmodern Kazakh prose, diverse aesthetic components are creatively blended, blurring the lines between reality and fantasy. Here, archetypes and mythologemes come together to form "a complex aesthetic and philosophical unity with distinct genre and stylistic traits, which shapes the uniqueness of the imagery, structure, and symbolism" (Jakipova & Beissenova, 2021, p. 11).

The process of national self-identification heavily relies on fundamental concepts rooted in folk culture and language, often referred to as archetypal models or ideas. Among these universal mental constants shared by many cultures worldwide is the image of the wolf, which belongs to the system of eternal symbols alongside archetypes such as the Mother, the Wise Old Man, Water and Home. The wolf, known as a powerful and freedom-loving creature that cannot be subdued or tamed, was widely revered across various peoples. For ancient Turks and Mongols, the wolf served as the primary totem and was honored as an ancestral figure (Sarbasov, 2016). In contemporary Kazakhstan, the wolf remains a significant symbol, experiencing a notable resurgence of interest. Sultanova and Mikhailova (2013) attribute this revival to a strengthening of ethnic memory and a collective search for identity, with the wolf, as a pan-Turkic totem, representing the desire to reconnect the broken links between past and present.

Unlike well-known global literary works such as E. Seton-Thompson's *The Boy and the Lynx* or Jack London's *White Fang*, where animals serve as the central characters, Kazakh authors primarily focus on creatively drawing from the ancient worldview of the Turks and Kazakh people (Tanzharykova, 2010). In their postmodern prose, these writers revive the dreams, aspirations, and spiritual culture of the Kazakh people by employing archetypes, transforming ethno-folklore motifs, and expressing them through rich symbolism.

However, despite the increasing interest in postmodern literature in Kazakhstan, relatively little scholarly attention has been given to the works of the prominent Kazakh writer Munaydar Balmolda, who, passing advanced examples of literature in the creative process through his inner world, approaches this direction from a new angle, filling it with the sound of his time and its current problems. In the works by Balmolda, such values as the national idea, commitment to the nation and country, the state, integrity, wisdom, honor and conscience occupy a very important place. Political, social and everyday problems of the Kazakh people, current aspects of society, especially national and universal values are clearly traced in the work of the writer, namely in his prose. He is one of the modern prose writers who write symbolically about animals and beasts in modern literature and use philosophical thinking as his artistic direction, which is confirmed by the novels *Abadan*, *Zhalkara* and *Bayankara*.

The purpose of the present research is to explore the key image – the image of the wolf – in Munaydar Balmolda's novel *Zhalkara* (Balmolda, 2023) and determine its role in the expression of the national ideology that is conveyed through folklore motifs and mythological images to the contemporary Kazakh people.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretically, this research is grounded in the concepts of archetypes and archetypal images. The term "archetype" denotes an ancient structure or primordial pattern that embodies the collective experience of humanity (Burrows et al., 1973). These meanings are unconsciously shaped and realized through the process of social integration among people (Jung, 1959). Art serves as an intuitive and semantic core of the world, creating a complex framework for communication. On an implicit level, an archetype represents the accumulated historical experience of an individual or group, functioning as a pattern of meanings developed over centuries and forming a collective understanding of the

world. Markov (1990) suggests that within the collective unconscious lies an objective historical memory – encompassing logical, artistic, and practical knowledge – that preserves the invaluable moral, aesthetic, and social wisdom of humanity. The artist's role is to access these fundamental meanings and images, extracting and reviving them to restore to people the partially forgotten and lost symbolic representations.

Archetypes are recognized to manifest in diverse ways within artistic works, which can be revealed through both semantic and structural analysis of the text (Markov, 1990; Bolshakova, 2003). Understanding the deeper significance of an archetype in art allows discerning themes such as the continuity of humanity, the inseparable connection between time and memory, and the notion of archetypal memory. This insight also helps clarify a nation's cultural code, as archetypes can vary in their expression depending on cultural background, historical context, and the era in which they appear (Pearson, 1998). Notably, archetypes are often described as so-called empty programs that require cultural content to be filled, enabling each culture to uniquely interpret and represent these universal patterns (Haule, 2010).

Myth, as an integral part of culture, plays a crucial role in conveying the cultural code and heritage of the past within modern literature (Dizayi & Bağırlar, 2022). It maintains a strong connection with archetypes and highlights the shared traits of humanity (Campbell, 1988). In the socio-cultural context, myth is regarded as an anthropological category (Zharylgapov et al., 2023). The enduring presence of archetypes in the myths of global literature and culture is attributed to the semantic and value-based core inherent in mythology (Vunanburzhe, 2000). Positioned at the heart of human spiritual culture (Zharylgapov et al., 2023), myth represents the accumulated legacy of ancestral memories transmitted across generations.

Within human consciousness, archetypes traditionally form as archetypal images. These images function as codes embedded in national traditions and help define the core of a nation's character. Hillman (2004) even suggests that every image can be viewed as an archetypal image. Izod (2001) explains that archetypal images possess a universal quality, yet they are influenced and shaped by specific cultures and historical periods, allowing them to evolve and take on new forms across different generations and cultures. In this study, we focus on the archetypal image of the wolf, which has been passed down through Kazakh culture but acquires fresh interpretations in modern literature.

When discussing the symbolism of the wolf, it is important to recognize that the wolf archetype belongs to the category of so-called eternal symbols and forms part of the archetypal animal structure (Khazankovich, 2009). Despite this, animal archetypes have been relatively underexplored in folklore and global literature. Nevertheless, they remain quite consistent within national cultures, likely due to totemic beliefs and traditions. Before the rise of major world religions, pagan societies revered totemic animals and birds, which served as central elements in their ethnic worldviews. These totem animals later underwent artistic and aesthetic reinterpretation in national literary traditions. Often attributed with positive human qualities, totem animals held a “saving” role in mythology and folklore, as they were believed to offer protection and aid to humans. The foundation of totemic beliefs lies in the ancient conviction of a deep connection between humans and various animal species; people commonly identified and defined themselves through their association with the animal world, since animals represented “the most ancient, archetypal form of visual thinking” (Dubovaya, 2015, p. 7).

In the mythologies of many Indo-European peoples, the wolf was regarded as a symbol of ancient sacred cults, often seen as a dangerous and hostile creature embodying bloodthirstiness. The motif of battling a wolf was commonly interpreted as equivalent in meaning to the motif of fighting a snake. In contrast, among Turkic peoples, although the wolf was sometimes viewed as a threat, it was also revered and, in certain tribes, considered a totemic ancestor (Sharyafetdinov, 2024). This study looks at the image of the wolf from a fresh perspective to explore its role in the expression of the national ideology for the contemporary Kazakh people, as it is seen by the Kazakh postmodern prose writer Munaydar Balmolda in the novel *Zhalkara*.

### III. METHODOLOGY

The present research employed a qualitative descriptive approach (Creswell, 2014). Based on the novel *Zhalkara* by Munaydar Balmolda, folklore motifs and mythological images (the totem cult of the wolf, the cult of the heavenly wolf “kok bori”) in Kazakh postmodern literature are studied. The study is based on the analysis of folklore traditions and the mythological archetype of the wolf as a reflection of the national idea of Kazakhstan after the country gained independence. The text of the novel was treated as a data source for interpreting meanings.

This study utilized complex analysis combining a mix of methods to examine the role and meanings of the archetypal image within the text, including narrative analysis, content analysis, artistic analysis, semiotic analysis and archetypal literary criticism. Narrative analysis, as a hermeneutic approach, was applied to uncover both explicit and implicit ideas related to the wolf image in the story (Terekhova & Malakhayeva, 2015). Within the framework of the hermeneutic approach, a work is analyzed from the point of view of its plot, the system of time and space, the composition of images and characters, the narrative structure, the subject-semantic internal connection, the genre and stylistic composition. The explicit narrative content involved analyzing the factual details provided by the author about the image and associated events. Content analysis helped to interpret the implicit meanings, focusing on the overall significance of the story or its parts, as well as how the wolf image appears and is understood within the qualitative data (White & Marsh, 2006). The method of artistic analysis was utilized to look at folklore motifs, elements of mythological reminiscence and artistic conventionality present in the novel. The semiotic method was employed to examine the cult of the wolf, its conceptual

connection with the categories of conscience, morality, freedom and the spirit of independence, as well as its significance in Kazakh literature. Archetypal criticism provided deeper insight into the symbolic meanings and various representations of the archetypal image in the story, comparing it with similar depictions in other sources (Dobson, 2005). Such complex qualitative analysis enabled identifying artistic forms of expression belonging to Munaydar Balmolda as a representative of postmodern Kazakh prose authors that creatively integrate archetypal images in their works to express certain national meanings and ideas.

#### IV. RESULTS

In the novel *Zhalkara*, Munaydar Balmolda combines real and mythical discourses. The novel specifies the real time and space of the events. The artistic time in the novel covers the period from Kazakhstan's independence to the pandemic, and the space is depicted as an artistic object of the territory of the Astrakhan region of Russia and the Western region of Kazakhstan, the sands of Naryn. The mythical component of the novel lies in the author's direct appeal to folklore elements and ancient Kazakh mythology about the wolf, which have been embedded in his memory and consciousness since childhood (Tanzharykova, 2010). He reproduces the legends of the heavenly wolf "kok bori", which is common to the Turkic peoples and occupies a special place in the Kazakh spiritual culture. The Turkic peoples believe that they are descended from the heavenly wolf "kok bori". This strong, strong-willed, agile, intelligent wild representative of the steppe is recognized as a patron, breadwinner, savior of a small baby, the last descendant of a tribe exterminated by an attack of enemies (Baltabayeva, 2010). In Kazakh epic poems, the image of a wolf is always perceived as a positive character and is used to describe the bravery of a hero who single-handedly attacked an enemy. In Kazakh epics, the heavenly wolf "kok bori" is a symbol of courage and heroism.

The author emphasizes the natural connection between a wolf and a man. The images of the wolves Zhalkara and Zhalkahar in the novel are presented by him in human form. The interaction of the aksakal Gali and his son Azat Galiuly with wolves as with people as the novel develops is fiction, the author's fantasy, that is, the world of artistic creativity, crossed from the point of view of literary conditioning. The author reflects on the fact that the Kazakh and the totem wolf are free creatures of the steppe in terms of origin and roots. Taking the image of the heavenly wolf "kok bori" as a symbol of courage and heroism, honor and humanity, the author gives symbolic meaning to the concept of "kok bori" as a spiritual patron of the Turkic peoples, including the modern Kazakh people.

The creation of a symbolic image in a work of art is a difficult and complex process that requires creative search. This is a complex image that reveals the spiritual essence of the writer, arising as a result of the author's inner experiences. The image of the wolf in the novel under analysis is a symbolic image, deeply conscious, studied by the writer. Describing the image of the wolf and the life of people in parallel, the author tries to comparatively reveal the image of the time when society is under the influence of anti-cultural values, i.e. there is a devaluation of such values as honor and morality. The image of the wounded wolf Zhalkara shows the image of today's Kazakh people with a wounded body and a suppressed soul. Despite the fact that this is an independent free country, language and religion, being still cannot free themselves from the shackles, leaving the impression that it personifies a society suffocating in its own independence. In this sense, the author's decision to convey such a bitter truth in a mystical, grotesque way through such an image as a wolf-bori is original.

Framed by wolf symbolism, Balmolda's work about the wolf-bori is in fact a description of the bitter truth about the fate of the Kazakhs. In the novel *Zhalkara*, the writer with deep psychological sensitivity and skill depicts the nature of the wolf, strives to convey it in harmony with the inner world of people. If sometimes it is in spiritual harmony with a person, then at other times – from a psychological point of view, it makes one pursue hunters, enter into a fight and attach importance to the flow of consciousness. Zhalkara and Zhalkahar are artistic and symbolic images in the novel, presented not in the form of a beast, but a hero equated to a human image, representing to modern generations the unbroken spirit of courage and freedom of the Kok Turks, heroic images that reveal at an aesthetically high level predation and human values in human society, cruelty and kindness, betrayal and other human relations, national discrimination, issues of racism, death and life, the author's idea.

In the novel, Zhalkara's wolf appears before the eyes of drunk Matvey as a ghost, which shows the proximity of this work to the thriller genre. The author made a special artistic decision: the steppe wolf led by Zhalkara and the forest wolf led by Karadon staged a bloody massacre for their territories. Probably, the author, describing the cruelty of blood enemies, wanted to show the Kazakhs fighting with each other. The author's position is clear from the following passage: "Why do wolves fight among themselves, what do they lack, aren't they related, don't they have the same language, the same religion, the same vision, how did it happen that they take each other by the throat, like people, fight, mercilessly spilling each other's blood. 'Almighty, forgive me, have we really become people too,' – this is how the shocked Zhalkara lamented. Ayazu, who understood his thoughts, howled quietly, the arlan raised the Russian forest on its ears. Ayazu and Kokzaujal joined him" (Balmolda, 2023, p. 31).

The image of wolves fighting with bipeds, injustice and cruelty is a fight against morality, human conscience, caused by the degeneration of the human race, isolation from national origin, so you need to curb your pride, fight, suppressing your ego, and secondly, the force that takes revenge on people in the form of a wolf-bori is a punishment sent by the creator against injustice.

The novel often reflects descriptions of ghosts, imagination and fear that causes anxiety. For example, the punishment of Zhalkara Kosoy, one of the hunters who shot his nestmates and the she-wolf, gives the impression of a film of the punishment of a criminal. Decorating the New Year's tree, he, seeing a wolf on the other side of it, falls to the ground in fear, gets an electric shock, and his tongue is taken away, thereby he becomes helpless. Here the author deliberately introduces the technique of creating fear, causing anxiety:

– Natasha, when now? I have finished everything. Come to me, you and I will be the first to see this Christmas tree light up, – he shouted. The candles lit up one after another and sparkled, – and we will light the star together. At that moment, a tree branch moved. Kosoy pushed the bush with his hand, thinking that it was the girl hiding from him, and when he tried to grab her, he saw Zhalkara in front of him with bared fangs and yellow eyes, swaying with fire. Kosoy, backing away, fell backwards. There was water all around. Kosoy, whose one end of the electric wire in his hand fell into the water, was thrashing about in a fit like a mad dog. (Balmolda, 2023, pp. 34-35)

In our opinion, the appearance and disappearance of the wolf in an instant, like a ghost, is an artistic decision taken by the author to show its mystical power, superior to the power of a person.

The use of such artistic devices in the novel *Zhalkara* as the pursuit, killing of a person by a wolf, fear and fright from dreams about wolves, leading to the loss of reason, causes a feeling of anxiety. For example, the reader cannot remain indifferent when reading the passage when the old man Matvey is delirious in his sleep, and one of the prostitute girls next to him, frightened by the wolf, cuts off Matvey's head. Descriptions of how during the funeral procession they forget the head separated from the body and how dogs gnaw it cannot but affect the emotional state of the reader. Through such exaggerated descriptions, the author leads to the fact that the end of the evil committed by mankind during life, the punishment of the Almighty for unbelievers will be a dog's death.

The novel by M. Balmolda *Zhalkara* can be classified as a religious-mystical thriller. Throughout the novel, religious-mystical, folklore elements, means of emotional impact on the reader, as well as a number of detective genres characterizing criminal elements, a realistic, naturalistic direction reflecting the realities of modernity, postmodernist tendencies are mixed. Among them, the issue of the social, everyday and political life of the Kazakh nation is described by symbolism on a fantastic, religious-mystical level. The fight between wolves is actually a fight between man and man, which includes state integrity, freedom, and the national honor of the Kazakh people. Reading and analyzing the novel, we noticed that the author pays special attention to such a concept as *kie* - a patron saint. The cognitive understanding of ancient Turkic culture, referring to the idea that the totem *bori* is connected with our national foundations, suggests that raising a hand against it is not allowed by their holiness, it is considered a sin. This is clearly seen in the following excerpts from the novel:

– She always sees wolves in her dreams. She is afraid of them, runs away, and eventually went crazy and died. I remember: even when I was four years old, my mother would sit me on her lap and breastfeed me, and then howl like a wolf. Dad would scold her, grab my hand and sit me next to him. My mother would say, crying bitterly: “I sing a lullaby to my child, you are cruel, the wolves I see in my dreams are not looking for me, but for you”. It's interesting that even though I was a child, I remember these words of my mother, which she said while crying – this is how young people had a heart-to-heart conversation. Sergey said that he had a wife and two children in Astrakhan.

– Ivan, so you haven't gotten married yet? You and I always talk about animals and birds, but we don't tell anyone about ourselves and the children.

– Sergey, I also have children in the city. I have three: two girls and one son. “And my wife is sick... The doctors don't know for sure about her illness either. She got sick the year our son was born. She also has nightmares, just like my mother. She hasn't been able to sleep for over a year... as soon as she falls asleep, the wolf cubs bite her chest, suck, tearing her until she bleeds”. (Balmolda, 2023, p. 38)

In the novel, the author depicts very sharply those who have lost their moral dignity, exaggerates the importance of the wolf and the she-wolf, conveying anti-human values through the comparative use of contrasting phenomena, draws parallels between the creation of nature, the wolf-*bori*, and man. No matter how people did him good, no matter how mercilessly they killed him, he remained a wolf-*bori*, attaching special importance to honor, betrayal, hypocrisy, cruelty and other circumstances; the writer openly shows his authorial position:

The wolf and the she-wolf were reunited. Ayazu, although she went ahead of the arlan, still waited for an order from him. Zhalkara looked at his companion with admiration “through the eyes of a horseman” and said: “Ayazu, I have destroyed the hunter who exterminated my pack, but my work is not finished yet, if you want, follow me, if not, the road is open, return to your homeland, I admire you, I am grateful to the Almighty for such a fearless companion as you, have a safe journey, young she-wolf”. Ayazu, lowering her eyes like a girl, answered: “Wolf-*bori*, I am a she-wolf who set out on a journey with the intention of going to the end, to go through all the obstacles in this campaign side by side with you. If I have to die, I am ready to sacrifice myself, so let me stay with you, do not drive me away from you, I will not leave. I am ready to sacrifice my wolf blood and the soul of a she-wolf to you, on your path”. Wolf-*bori* and the she-wolf continued their march. But it was unknown how long the wolf, with a shot through his back, would show courage: the blood dripped more and more heavily from his blue-black mane. Zhalkara walked ahead along a narrow forest path covered with snow

and ice, Ayazu followed him, sniffing the purple drops that left a trace with every step, and turning to God with a prayer. (Balmolda, 2023, pp. 55-56)

In the novel, when depicting the feelings between Zhalkara and the she-wolf Ayazu, and the appeal to the Almighty with a prayer, the author considers loyalty to the oath between people in comparison with the animal world. In some cases, he shows that the ability to keep one's word is manifested in wolves more than in people of modern society. The theme of morality, worship of Allah, faith in him runs like a red thread through all the author's work. Morality is a philosophical and ethical, religious and theological category, a concept expressing a set of positive qualities, good morals (character, dignity, intelligence, humanity, kindness, nobility, etc.), which is shown essential for the Kazakh people. Acceptance of Islam by the heart is faith, and faith is also the basis of morality. Morality shows the spiritual perfection of man. According to Islamic philosophy, morality comes from faith. Faith is the light in the heart; morality is the good character inherent in a person who believes in Allah (Shanbai, 2009). Therefore, according to the author, all the bad things that happen in the world are evil sent by Allah. He also understands that, in essence, worship is a direct path to the purity of faith, which shows a person how to live well. It is well known that the problem of religion was previously one of the closed topics during the Soviet era that began to be widely raised in prose and poetry after Kazakhstan gained independence. And how it is conveyed at the artistic level is a separate question.

In addition to the moral component of the national idea, the author raises the issue of freedom. And in the perception of freedom, the wolf-bori Zhalkar and Azat Galiuly are described in parallel:

Azat Kazakh! What do you think is the secret of the fact that I, we, all gray, since ancient times, despite everything, including death, do not leave these steppes, are born, grow, mature, develop together with you, Kazakhs, the descendants of those in whose veins the blood of the Turks flows? Everything is hidden in our blood and our little heart! We have no peace as long as there are enemies of the heavenly wolf-kok bori and the kok-turks, enemies who envy the fact that in the very heart of the Turan steppe, lives a Kazakh who has inherited a great spirit! Azat, know: I am with you until the last breath!" – the howl of Zhalkara among the sands on a moonlit night, reached Azat's heart! "A bullet does not take the brave", our ancestors said. So Azat was faced with the third stage on the battlefield – in a spacious gym, where there were few sympathizers, but many enemies. (Balmolda, 2023, p. 215)

If the heavenly wolf kok bori Zhalkar in this fragment represents the ghost of the Kazakh people striving for freedom, then the Kazakh Azat is a collection of images inspired by the spirit of the Kazakh batyrs, the leaders of the liberation uprisings of the Kazakh people up until the December events of 1986. The fact that Azat's right hand did not even move when the killers hit him with an axe, on the contrary, the blade of the axe itself is bent from the blows, reminds us of heroic characters from epics and fairy tales. The author is convinced that only the Creator himself will protect his faithful slaves, no matter what wickedness they have committed.

## V. DISCUSSION

Balmolda's *Zhalkara* is a great example of postmodern prose, which is characterized by processes of hybridization and transculturation (Roudometof, 2015). Hybridity in postmodernism is interpreted as a glocal phenomenon, manifesting both globally and locally (Figlerowicz & Merteikian, 2023), encompassing both uniformity and diversity (Robertson, 1995), and creatively blending global and local cultural traditions (Gritsenko & Aleshinskaya, 2015; Aleshinskaya, 2020). The hybrid character of Balmolda's *Zhalkara* is evident in magical realism, where fantastical elements are seamlessly woven into the narrative, blurring the boundaries between fantasy and reality (Warnes & Sasser, 2020) and revealing the supernatural essence within the real world everywhere (Siskind, 2012). The postmodern orientation in Munaydar Balmolda's novel *Zhalkara* is evidence of the multi-level nature of the text, its penetration in the form of reminiscence, or recollection. By this concept we mean the observation of the influence and impact of other creativity in a certain work, or its revival, as well as a different use of mythology in modern literature. Mythological reminiscence traces the real, sometimes unobvious use of individual myths or their known literary interpretation, which is a qualitative approach based on cultural memory and associative perception of the reader (Tanzharykova, 2010). Based on this conclusion, in Munaydar Balmolda's novel, two directions of reminiscence can be observed. In particular, the author pays special attention to the phenomenon of mythological renaissance, interprets myths about the heavenly wolf "kok bori", folklore motifs in a new way, that is, offers literary interpretations based on the reader's memory and associative accumulation.

Myths about wolves are intricately woven into the narrative of Balmolda's literary work to bridge ancient cultural heritage with contemporary realities (Ananyeva, 2021) and thus create a unique identity through the combination of symbolism and national myths (Rajabi et al., 2020). Folklore elements, such as fairy tales, legends, and myths, are creatively reinterpreted rather than simply reproduced, allowing the writer to convey universal values and social problems through a distinctly Kazakh lens (Kenbayeva et al., 2022; Pangereyev et al., 2023). The author's work is characterized by a special perception of the revival of the ideas of the legends about the heavenly wolf "kok bori" and their use as a mythological archetype and mythical image. This creative integration of mythological motifs and folkloric elements enriches the aesthetic and thematic complexity of the work, enabling the author to reconstruct national identity and express historical memory. Through such mythological integration, Balmolda significantly contributes to the preservation and reinterpretation of Kazakh cultural heritage within a modern literary framework.

In Munaydar Balmolda's novel *Zhalkara*, the archetypal image of the wolf manifests itself on the basis of the structural-semantic, cognitive sphere, and also as a special form of the author's mythical thinking. The historical experience of Kazakhs is reflected in the national-cultural archetype of the wolf, which allows determining the mytho-suggestive character in the national-cultural space and comprises the cultural memory of the Kazakh people. The cult of the wolf is not only a poetic image for the author, but also has a vital significance and meaning, which is his understanding of the national idea for an independent Kazakhstan.

The choice of the image of a wolf as the main symbol for his story can be explained by the great significance of the image of a wolf both in the Kazakh tradition and in the Turkic tradition in general. Thus, the wolf was considered a sacred animal and was revered by the Turks, as evidenced by the role of the wolf in the genealogical Turkic mythical poem "Oguz-name" (Sarbasov, 2016). In the fairy tales of the Turkic peoples, there is also a peculiar image of the heavenly wolf "kok bori". In fairy tales, the relationship between the wolf and man is depicted differently than in the epics. Wolves in fairy tales communicate and befriend the main characters, behave like people in difficult times, showing a person the way, overcoming various obstacles, helping him to achieve his goal (Baltabayeva, 2010). The image and behavior of the wolf are widely revealed in proverbs and sayings, such as "The food of a young man and a wolf is on the road"; "The wolf, in order not to show his thinness, bristles"; "And the wolf does not do harm to his companion"; "Wrapped in a (wolf) fur coat, it does not even realize that the comrade next to him is shivering from the cold"; "Even if the wolf is old, he has enough strength for one sheep"; "A dog will avoid even a dead wolf"; as well as in catchphrases about brave, courageous people: "like a wolf", "ate a wolf's heart" or "a wolf gives birth to a wolf" (Baltabayeva, 2010, p. 53).

Thus, in the novel *Zhalkara*, deeply immersing himself through the spiritual heritage of the Turkic peoples in the concept of the wolf "kok bori", Munaydar Balmolda, revives it in human form, depicting the realities of today. He gives the totem a special symbolic meaning. Therefore, it is necessary to note that the fact that wolves think and act in a human way is a conscious tactical decision taken by the author on the basis of folklore motives and artistic conventions, since the author's worldview is based on the image of kok bori, which implies the sublime spirit of the Kazakh people.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The qualitative analysis of Munaydar Balmolda's novel *Zhalkara* as an example of postmodern Kazakh prose shows the author's creativity in adding the national color into Kazakh literature by using the archetypal image of the wolf. The concept of the wolf is realized in the novel as a mental cultural matrix, while possessing the ability to transform in accordance with the creative goals and objectives that the author of the work sets for himself. The national symbolism of the wolf receives a unique creative embodiment and saturates the work of art with deep mental meanings, allowing artistic comprehension of the national idea of Kazakhstan during the period of independence.

Thus, the novel *Zhalkara* is a work thematically subordinated to national ideology. In Munaydar Balmolda's novel, the national problem, the national idea acts as the core of the work that manifests national self-awareness, spiritual struggle, resistance to oppression and hostility. The essence of the national idea proposed in the novel *Zhalkara* is to convey to the current Kazakh people an artistic solution that the world is a phenomenon of faith, that is, it is necessary to keep your heart pure, come to faith, and only then will such a holy people as the Kazakhs and the spirit of the heavenly wolf-kok bori rise. If honor was a value in the national identity of our ancestors, then at present this value seems to be beginning to disappear. Immorality has reached its limit, global trends are advancing from all sides, which can lead to the loss of the national spirit and identity of the nation. According to the author, coming to faith is the right path, the path of truth for the modern Kazakh people.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors would like to express gratitude to the editors and reviewers for their support. This work was supported by Science Committee project MSHE RK «Literary heritage of the Zhayik-Caspian region and contemporary Kazakh literature» grant number AP19676441.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Abdullina, A. B., Yildiz, N., & Sarsenbayeva, Zh. B. (2024). The issue of modern Kazakh postmodernism and neo-mythologism in the aspect of national knowledge (based on the stories of A. Kemelbayeva). *Keruen Scientific Journal*, 82(1), 158–168. <https://doi.org/10.53871/2078-8134.2024.1-13>
- [2] Aleshinskaya, E. (2020). Translation in forming musical discourse: A case study of English-language song lyrics in Russia. *Research in Language*, 18(4), 395–405. <https://doi.org/10.18778/1731-7533.18.4.03>
- [3] Altybayeva, S. M., & Sagyndykov, E. S. (2019). Mythical and folklore installations in the structure of the artistic text. *Philological Aspect*, 51(7), 153–164.
- [4] Ananyeva, S. (2021). Postmodern vision of the world in modern literature. *Keruen*, 71(2), 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.53871/2078-8134.2021.2-03>
- [5] Balmolda, M. (2023). *Novel Zhalkara*. ShugylaPrint.
- [6] Baltabaeva, G. (2010). *The artistic world of Kazakh prose of the independence period (stories and short stories)*. Kazakh National Pedagogical University named after Abay.

- [7] Bolshakova, A. Yu. (2003). Theory of the archetype at the turn of the 20th–21st centuries. Theoretical problems of literary criticism. *Questions of Philology*, 13(1), 25–31.
- [8] Burrows, D. J., Lapidus, F. R., & Shawcross, J. T. (1973). *Myths and motifs in literature*. The Free Press.
- [9] Campbell, J., & Moyers, B. (1988). *The power of the myth*. Doubleday.
- [10] Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research and design qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications, Inc.
- [11] Dizayi, S., & Bağırlar, B. (2022). Mythmaking in modern literature: *Harry Potter* by J. K. Rowling. *Journal of Advanced Research in Social Sciences*, 5(3), 26–31. <https://doi.org/10.33422/jarss.v5i3.761>
- [12] Dobson, D. (2005). Archetypal literary theory in the postmodern era. *Journal of Jungian Scholarly Studies*, 1(1), 1–16.
- [13] Dubovaya, E. V. (2015). *In the circle of bestiary images*. Moscow State Pedagogical University.
- [14] Figlerowicz, M., & Mertehikian, L. (2023). An ever-expanding world literary genre: Defining magic realism on Wikipedia. *Journal of Cultural Analytics*, 8(2), 1–27. <https://doi.org/10.22148/001c.73249>
- [15] Gritsenko, E., & Aleshinskaya, E. (2015). Translanguaging in music: Conceptualizing modes of interaction in global contact zones. *Voprosy Kognitivnoy Lingvistiki*, 4, 73–80.
- [16] Haule, J. R. (2010). *Jung in the 21st Century. Volume One: Evolution and archetype*. Routledge.
- [17] Hillman, J. (2004). *Archetypal psychology: A brief account*. Spring Publications.
- [18] Izod, J. (2001). *Myth, mind and the screen: Understanding the heroes of our time*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511489464>
- [19] Jakipova, G. A., & Beissenova, Zh. S. (2021). A new intellectual tide in Kazakh literature. *Cross-Cultural Studies: Education and Science*, 6(1), 6–13.
- [20] Jung, C. (1959). *Archetypes of the collective unconscious*. Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- [21] Khazankovich, Yu. G. (2009). The image of the “wolf” in folklore and literature: To an archetype problem. *Bulletin of the Saint Petersburg University of Economics and Finance*, 2, 186–188.
- [22] Kenbayeva, A. Z., Bekmasheva, A. N., Umarova, G. S., Shakirova, K. M., & Tuimebekova, A. A. (2022). Functioning of toponymic lexis in Turkic epic literature. *Eurasian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 8(3), 45–54. <http://doi.org/10.32601/ejal.803004>
- [23] Markov, V. A. (1990). Literature and myth: The issue of archetypes (to the formulation of the question). In M. Chudakova (Ed.), *Tynyanov collection. The Fourth Tynyanov Readings* (pp. 130–138). Zinatne.
- [24] Pangereyev, A. S., Umatova, Z. M., Azamatova, A. K., Ibrayeva, Z. K., Karagoishiyeva, D. A., Umarova, G. S., & Kenbayeva, A. Z. (2023). Ethnocultural originality of color toponyms in Turkic folklore. *Eurasian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 9(3), 216–225. <http://doi.org/10.32601/ejal.903019>
- [25] Pearson, C. S. (1998). *The hero within: Six archetypes we live by*. Harper Collins.
- [26] Rajabi, A., Azizi, M., & Akrahi, M. (2020). Magical realism: The magic of realism. *Rupkatha Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities*, 12(1), 1–13. <http://doi.org/10.21659/rupkatha.v12n2.18>
- [27] Robertson, R. (1995). Glocalization: Time-space and homogeneity-heterogeneity. In Featherstone, M., Lash, S., & Robertson, R. (Eds.), *Global modernities* (pp. 25–44). Sage Publications.
- [28] Roudometof, V. (2015). The glocal and global studies. *Globalizations*, 12(5), 774–787. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14747731.2015.1016293>
- [29] Sarbasov, B. S. (2016). The image of wolf in Kazakh folklore. *Eurasian Journal of Philology: Science and Education*, 160(2), 182–186.
- [30] Serikova, A., Rysaldy, K., & Geybullayeva, R. (2024). Futurity as a linguosynergetic category in postmodern discourse. *Bakhtiniana, São Paulo*, 19(2), e63927e. <http://doi.org/10.1590/2176-4573e63927>
- [31] Shanbai, T. (2009). *The concept of culture (within the framework of Shakarim’s work)*. Raritet.
- [32] Sharyafetdinov, R. Kh. (2024). Mythopoetic images of the animal world as a reflection of the worldview of the Turkic peoples in modern Tatar literature. *Nauka i shkola* [Science and School], 3, 18–28. <https://doi.org/10.31862/1819-463X-2024-3-18-28>
- [33] Siskind, M. (2012). Magical realism. In Quayson, A. (Ed.), *The Cambridge history of postcolonial literature* (pp. 833–868). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/cho9781107007031.007>
- [34] Sultangaliyeva, R. B., Sagidulliyeva, S. S., Mutiyev, Z. Z., Sagynadin, G. S., Akbulatov, A. A., Askarova, G. S., & Zhumasheva, K. B. (2024). Integration of world literary traditions and innovative artistic searches in contemporary Kazakh prose. *Forum for Linguistic Studies*, 6(6), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.30564/fls.v6i6.7098>
- [35] Sultangaliyeva, O. K., & Yerdembekov, B. A. (2023). National and ethnographic features of Kazakh poetry in the era of independence. *Bulletin of L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University. PHILOLOGY Series*, 142(1), 154–162. <https://doi.org/10.32523/2616-678X-2023-142-1-154-162>
- [36] Tanzharykova, A. V. (2010). *Ethnographic and folklore motifs in Kazakh prose*. Kazakh National Pedagogical University named after Abay.
- [37] Terekhova, T. A., & Malakhayeva, S. K. (2015). Narrative analysis as an understanding method. *Humanities Vector*, 41(1), 143–152.
- [38] Vunanburzhe, J. J. (2000). Principles of mythopoetic imagination. In Sokolov, B. G. (Ed.), *Metaphysical studies* (pp. 43–48). St. Petersburg University Publishing House.
- [39] Warnes, C., & Sasser, K. A. (2020). Introduction. In Warnes, C. & Sasser, K. A. (Eds.), *Magical realism and literature* (pp. 1–10). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108551601.001>
- [40] White, M. D., & Marsh, E. E. (2006). Content analysis: A flexible methodology. *Library Trends*, 55(1), 22–45.
- [41] Zharylgapov, Zh., Syzdykova, B., Kaiyrbekova, A., Babashov, A., & Shakirova, K. (2023). Myth and mythological discourse in literary studies. *Bakhtiniana. Revista de Estudos do Discurso*, 18(4), e63680e. <https://doi.org/10.1590/2176-4573e63680>

**Aidarbek A. Akbulatov**, PhD, Associate Professor at the Department of Kazakh Philology, Faculty of Philology, M. Utemisov West Kazakhstan University. His research interests are modern Kazakh literature, novel genre of the XXI century.

**Kamshat B. Zhumasheva**, PhD, Senior Lecturer at the Department of Kazakh Philology, Faculty of Philology, M. Utemisov West Kazakhstan University. Her research interests are gender linguistics and gender orientation in literature. In addition, she teaches gender linguistics, modern trends in linguistics.

**Zinulla Zh. Mutiyev**, Candidate of Philological Sciences (PhD), Professor at the Department of Kazakh Philology, Faculty of Philology, M. Utemisov West Kazakhstan University. His research interests include Kazakh literature, literary local history.

**Karlygash K. Suleimenova**, PhD, Senior Teacher at Almaty Humanitarian and Economic University, Almaty, Kazakhstan. Her research interests are modern Kazakh literature, novel genre of the XXI century.

**Nazerke Y. Mubarak**, PhD Candidate, Lecturer at the Kazakh National Women's Teacher Training University, Kazakhstan. Her research interests include gender linguistics, women's discourse, and Kazakh culture.

**Gulzira Zh. Utegenova**, Candidate of Philological Sciences (PhD), Senior Lecturer at M. Auezov, South Kazakhstan University, Kazakhstan. Her research interests include Kazakh linguistics, sociolinguistics, and modern teaching methodologies.

**Aigul B. Nassimullina**, Master of Pedagogical Science, Senior Tutor at the Faculty of Philology, M. Utemisov West Kazakhstan University. Her research interests include methods of teaching English, English literature, and pedagogy.

**Zhansaya G. Mussina**, Master of Pedagogical Sciences, Senior Lecturer at the Faculty of Philology, M. Utemisov West Kazakhstan University. Her research interests include Kazakh oral literature and the history of aitys (improvised oral poetry).

**Rimma M. Kuzhentayeva**, Master of Pedagogical Sciences, Lecturer at the Faculty of Philology, M. Utemisov West Kazakhstan University. Her research interests include linguistics, new directions in linguistics, the English language, and methods of teaching English.