

Ideological Labeling, Binary Oppositions, and Canon Formation in Sabit Mukanov's Critical Discourse on Writers of the Alash Period

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Abstract—The relevance of the present study is determined by the need to reconsider Sabit Mukanov's critical discourse on the writers of the Alash period as a space of interaction between Soviet ideological evaluation, literary-critical analysis, and the formation of Kazakh literary historiography. The aim of the study is to identify how ideological markers, binary oppositions, and literary-linguistic techniques of evaluation function in S. Mukanov's work *XX ғасырдағы қазақ әдебиеті* (Kazakh Literature of the Twentieth Century) and participate in shaping the literary status of the authors under analysis. The methodology of the study is based on lexicographic-semantic verification of evaluatively loaded vocabulary, literary-discursive and critical discourse analysis, analysis of binary oppositions, strategies of legitimation / delegitimation, and historical-literary interpretation of more than 180 literary-discursive fragments. The scientific novelty of the work lies in the development of an integrative model of ideologically marked literary evaluation and in the substantiation of the concept of negative canonization with reference to the Soviet critical description of writers of the Alash period. As a result of the study, it was established that ideological markers in S. Mukanov's text function not in isolation, but in interaction with evaluative nomination, predication, antithesis, binary oppositions, and historical-literary attribution. The main findings of the study confirm the dual function of S. Mukanov's critical discourse as an instrument of Soviet delegitimation and, at the same time, as a form of preserving the writers of the Alash period in national literary memory.

Index Terms—writers of the Alash period, critical discourse, ideological marking, binary oppositions, negative canonization

I. INTRODUCTION

The relevance of the study is determined by the need to reconsider Sabit Mukanov's critical legacy within Soviet literary historiography and the contemporary reassessment of Alash-period¹ writers in the Kazakh literary canon. Kazakh Literature of the Twentieth Century is especially important because it combines ideological evaluation with the recording of names, works, and biographical information about authors whose reception was shaped by class-based methodology. This duality makes Mukanov's discourse a key object for analyzing Soviet criticism, ideological labeling, binary oppositions, negative canonization, and literary memory.

Recent research frames Alash literature as part of national modernization, enlightenment, cultural resistance, and the reconstruction of collective identity rather than as a merely biographical or political phenomenon (Kapağan & Bacaklı,

¹ The *Alash period* denotes the early twentieth-century Kazakh national-intellectual and literary movement associated with the Alash intelligentsia, the Alash Party, and the Alash Orda autonomy.

2020; Dukeyev, 2025; Saktaganova et al., 2025). Studies of Soviet national literatures, socialist realism, and critical discourse show that the canon was shaped by ideological selection, institutional control, and discursive legitimation or delegitimation (Dobrenko & Smola, 2022; Frank, 2022; Luyckx & Janssens, 2020; Rieder & Theine, 2019; Smola, 2022). Yet Mukanov's own language of evaluation has not been sufficiently examined as a system of markers, oppositions, and evaluative strategies. This gap determines the aim of the article: to identify how ideological markers, binary oppositions, and literary-critical strategies function in Mukanov's discourse and how they both delegitimize and preserve writers of the Alash period within the Kazakh literary canon.

The novelty of the study lies in interpreting Mukanov's criticism not only as Soviet class-based evaluation but also as a mechanism of literary-historical fixation. The article therefore analyzes ideological markers, evaluative nominations, binary oppositions, and the concept of negative canonization, showing that criticism could restrict the symbolic status of Alash writers while still preserving their names, works, and biographical traces in national literary memory.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature relevant to this study falls into four interconnected areas: Alash-period writing and Kazakh literary modernity; Soviet national literatures and socialist-realist normativity; critical discourse analysis of ideological marking and delegitimation; and canon formation, literary memory, and negative canonization. Together, these areas allow Mukanov's text to be read at the historical, ideological, discursive, and canon-forming levels (Kapağan & Bacaklı, 2020; Dukeyev, 2025; Smola, 2022; Barré et al., 2023; Milevski & Wetenkamp, 2022).

The conceptual basis of the study is therefore not a single term but a chain of related categories: ideological marking establishes the language of evaluation; binary oppositions structure the contrast between one's own and the alien; legitimation and delegitimation assign literary status; and negative canonization explains how even polemical or negative inclusion can preserve an author in cultural memory. Table 1 summarizes these concepts.

TABLE 1
THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO DEFINING THE KEY CONCEPTS OF THE STUDY

Concept	Main authors	Semantic emphasis in the definition	Significance for the present study
Ideological marking	Luyckx & Janssens (2020); Rieder & Theine (2019)	Ideological evaluation is regarded as a way of assigning a certain status to an object through recurring nominations, arguments, and evaluative formulas	Makes it possible to analyze how categories such as "nationalist," "bourgeois," "class-based," "Soviet," and others become instruments of literary evaluation
Binary oppositions	Rieder & Theine (2019); Smola (2022)	Discourse organizes meaning through oppositions in which one side receives the status of norm, while the other is presented as deviation, threat, or ideological error	Makes it possible to identify oppositions in Mukanov's criticism such as Soviet / Alash, proletarian / bourgeois, and one's own / alien
Legitimation / delegitimation	Luyckx & Janssens (2020); Rieder & Theine (2019)	Legitimation secures the subject's right to recognition, whereas delegitimation lowers the subject's symbolic, political, or cultural status	Makes it possible to show how Mukanov's criticism limited the literary and ideological significance of Alash-period writers
Literary memory	Milevski & Wetenkamp (2022); Dukeyev (2025)	Literature and historiography function not only as means of describing the past but also as mechanisms for its selection, preservation, and reinterpretation	Helps explain why even negatively marked references to Alash authors preserved their presence in national memory
Canon formation	Smola (2022); Barré et al. (2023)	The canon is formed through institutional selection, repeated mention, reception, educational mechanisms, and ideological mechanisms	Makes it possible to consider Mukanov's work as part of the process of forming the Kazakh literary canon, including its contradictory forms
Negative canonization	Smola (2022); Milevski & Wetenkamp (2022)	An author may remain in cultural memory not only through recognition but also through stable polemical or critical inclusion	Provides the theoretical basis for the main thesis of the article: Mukanov's criticism simultaneously delegitimized and preserved Alash-period writers

Table 1 shows that the concepts describe different levels of one object. Ideological marking identifies the evaluative vocabulary, binary oppositions reveal its internal structure, delegitimation explains the lowering of symbolic status, and literary memory and canon formation clarify why negative description may still secure historical presence.

For this reason, the review is organized as a movement from Alash literary modernity to Soviet ideological criticism, then to discourse-analytical mechanisms and finally to the canon-forming consequences of negative evaluation. This logic is summarized in Table 2.

TABLE 2
LOGIC OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW STRUCTURE

Review section	Main research focus	What the section should demonstrate	Connection with the topic of the article
2.1. National Literary Historiography and Writers of the Alash Period	Alash, Kazakh literary modernity, national awakening, early Kazakh literary scholarship	Writers of the Alash period were participants in the formation of the national literary and intellectual tradition	Explains why the object of Mukanov's criticism had not only literary but also national-cultural significance
2.2. Soviet Ideological Criticism and the Language of Literary Evaluation	Socialist realism, class-based methodology, Soviet national literatures, criticism of "bourgeois nationalism"	Literary evaluation in the Soviet system was connected with ideological normativity and political loyalty	Makes it possible to understand why aesthetic evaluation in Mukanov's text is combined with political and ideological marking
2.3. Critical Discourse Analysis: Marking, Otherness, and Binary Oppositions	Evaluative nomination, the one's own / alien model, legitimization and delegitimation, the language of power	Ideological criticism functions through recurring linguistic patterns, oppositions, and evaluative categories	Provides the tools for analyzing specific markers and binary oppositions in <i>Kazakh Literature of the Twentieth Century</i>
2.4. Canon Formation, Negative Canonization, and Literary Memory	National canon, inclusion and exclusion of authors, cultural memory, returned and displaced authors	The canon is formed not only through recognition but also through conflictual or negative inclusion	Leads to the thesis that Mukanov's criticism simultaneously delegitimized and preserved Alash authors

Table 2 demonstrates the need to connect historical-literary context with discursive and canonical analysis. A purely historical account would not reveal Soviet evaluative language, while discourse analysis alone would not explain why repeated negative description becomes consequential for literary memory.

A. National Literary Historiography and Writers of the Alash Period

Recent studies increasingly approach Alash writers as agents of Kazakh modernity, national consciousness, enlightenment, and cultural self-determination. Kapağan and Bacaklı (2020) link Alash literature with resistance to colonial policy and the reconstruction of national awareness, while Saktaganova et al. (2020) show how Soviet historiography marked the movement as "bourgeois-nationalist." This matters for the present study because Mukanov's criticism operated within an already politicized interpretive field.

Research on translation, the press, and public discourse further shows that Alash writing functioned as a literary-intellectual project rather than only as political history (Bashirov et al., 2024; Yerdembekov et al., 2025). Post-Soviet narratives also confirm that the memory of Alash remains contested and connected with statehood, identity, and cultural heritage (Dukeyev, 2025; Sadvokassova et al., 2025). In literary terms, national memory is preserved through motifs, narrative structures, and cultural codes (Baibolov et al., 2025; Samenkyzy et al., 2025).

TABLE 3
MAIN RESEARCH DIRECTIONS ON WRITERS OF THE ALASH PERIOD AND NATIONAL LITERARY HISTORIOGRAPHY

Direction	Main semantic emphasis	Significance for the present study
Alash and national awakening	Literature is regarded as a means of enlightenment, cultural resistance, and the formation of national consciousness	Makes it possible to show that Alash writers were not only political figures but also participants in literary modernization
Alash and historiography	The focus is on how the Alash movement was described in the Soviet and post-Soviet periods	Helps explain why Mukanov's evaluations are connected with a broader Soviet tradition of ideological marking
Literature and nation-building	Literary texts, translations, the press, and journalism are interpreted as instruments of cultural self-determination	Provides grounds for considering Alash literature as part of a national intellectual project
Memory of Alash in contemporary Kazakhstan	The Alash legacy is included in competing official and unofficial narratives of memory	Leads to the question of how a negative Soviet evaluation could preserve Alash authors in literary memory

Thus, the literature establishes the cultural significance of Alash writers but less often explains how they were linguistically represented in Soviet literary historiography. This limitation leads to the next problem: the Soviet language of literary evaluation.

B. Soviet Ideological Criticism and the Language of Literary Evaluation

Studies of socialist realism and Soviet national literatures show that criticism in the USSR performed a normative and ideological function. Dobrenko and Smola (2022), Dobrenko (2022, 2024), Smola (2022), and Andronikashvili (2022) describe Soviet multinational literature as a system in which national literatures were recognized and institutionalized while being subordinated to all-Soviet ideological norms. Mukanov's judgments should therefore be read as part of a broader practice of distributing authors according to class acceptability, loyalty, and conformity to the Soviet norm.

Soviet criticism also relied on critical appropriation: pre-revolutionary and national heritage was not always erased but was reinterpreted within socialist categories (Frank, 2022; McGuire, 2018; Kudaibergenova, 2013). Chmielewska (2019), Zhang (2021), and Darbasova (2021) show that literary value could be combined with ideological hierarchy, symbolic capital, and institutional judgment. Accordingly, markers such as *ultshyl* (nationalist), *baishyl* (pro-bay, or aligned with

the wealthy class), bourgeois, class-based, and Soviet are not simple labels but elements of a critical vocabulary that defines acceptable and erroneous literature.

TABLE 4
MAIN MECHANISMS OF SOVIET IDEOLOGICAL EVALUATION OF LITERATURE

Mechanism	Semantic emphasis	Significance for the analysis of S. Mukanov
Class-based interpretation	The author and the work are evaluated through affiliation with a particular social force or class position	Makes it possible to explain the use of categories such as <i>baishyl</i> (pro-bay, or aligned with the wealthy class), <i>taptyq</i> (class-based), and bourgeois
Critical appropriation of heritage	Pre-revolutionary or national heritage is preserved but reinterpreted within the Soviet system of coordinates	Helps show how Alash authors are included in literary history through negative evaluation
Normativity of socialist realism	Literature is evaluated according to the degree of its conformity to the Soviet ideological and aesthetic norm	Makes it possible to identify why some authors are recognized as “one’s own,” while others are marked as “alien”
Ideological delegitimation	The significance of an author is lowered through politicized labels and accusatory formulas	Provides the basis for analyzing Soviet markers in Mukanov’s critical discourse
Canonical inclusion through criticism	An author is preserved in literary history even when his legacy is described negatively	Leads to the concept of <i>negative canonization</i>

Table 4 condenses this logic: Soviet evaluation connected class interpretation, critical appropriation of heritage, socialist-realist normativity, delegitimation, and canonical inclusion through criticism. The remaining task is to show how such mechanisms operate linguistically in Mukanov’s text.

C. Critical Discourse Analysis: Marking, Otherness, and Binary Oppositions

Critical discourse analysis makes it possible to examine not only that Mukanov used Soviet categories but also how they functioned in the text. Delegitimation is treated as a discursive process that lowers the status of a social or cultural actor by assigning ideological qualities, restricting legitimacy, and presenting a particular position as normative (Luyckx & Janssens, 2020; del Saz-Rubio, 2025; Abbas et al., 2025; Chyad & Al-Aadili, 2025; Wong, 2025).

Binary oppositions are central to this process. Discursive polarization constructs a positive in-group and a negative out-group through moral evaluation, emotionalized argument, and appeals to authority (Kakisina et al., 2022). In Mukanov’s case, oppositions such as Soviet / Alash, proletarian / bourgeois, *taptyq* (class-based) / *ultshyl* (nationalist), and one’s own / alien transform a complex literary field into a hierarchy of norm and deviation.

Ideological marking appears through recurring labels, evaluative definitions, and class-based nominations. These markers interact with argumentation and moral evaluation, turning literary characterization into an apparently objective critical judgment (Mansouri et al., 2017; Rieder & Theine, 2019). This approach directs the analysis to repeated words, assigned features, oppositions, and the semantic boundaries constructed around Alash writers.

Thus, discourse analysis allows Mukanov’s book to be read as a historical-literary source and as a text where Soviet ideology receives concrete linguistic form. Its limitation, however, is that it does not fully explain why negative representation may still preserve authors in literary history.

D. Canon Formation, Negative Canonization, and Literary Memory

Canon studies explain this paradox. The canon is formed not only by aesthetic recognition but also by institutions, repetition, education, criticism, political context, and reception (Barré et al., 2023; Rydholm, 2025; Youngman et al., 2024). In this sense, Mukanov’s book can be treated as an instrument of Soviet literary institutionalization that assigns Alash writers a place, even when that place is ideologically restricted.

Studies of Soviet heritage show that authors could be included through critical appropriation rather than direct acceptance (Frank, 2022; Smola, 2022). The concept of negative canonization is therefore useful: a writer may remain in memory through repeated polemical or negative mention. The author is marked as alien or erroneous, yet detailed naming, biographical description, and discussion of works prevent disappearance from literary history.

Literary memory further clarifies this mechanism because texts, narratives, and historiographic descriptions transmit the past even when they reinterpret it ideologically (Milevski & Wetenkamp, 2022). In the Kazakh context, memory is also carried by linguistic and cultural models (Bakytzhanova et al., 2025), while Alash continues to generate competing narratives in contemporary Kazakhstan (Dukev, 2025).

The review therefore shows that Mukanov’s discourse must be studied as a dual mechanism: it performs Soviet delegitimation through markers and oppositions, but it also preserves Alash writers within the structure of Kazakh literary memory.

III. MATERIAL AND METHODS

A. Research Materials and Methods

The material of the study is S. Mukanov's XX ғасырдағы қазақ әдебиеті / Kazakh Literature of the Twentieth Century, where early twentieth-century Kazakh literature and writers of the Alash period² are systematized within Soviet literary-critical methodology. The empirical corpus includes more than 180 literary-discursive fragments concerning Akhmet Baitursynuly, Mirzhakyp Dulatuly, Magzhan Zhumabayuly, Zhusupbek Aimauly, Mukhtar Auezov, Sultanmakhmud Toraigyrov, and other authors. The unit of analysis is a semantically complete fragment in which ideological evaluation intersects with the literary characterization of an author, work, or movement.

The study uses lexicographic-semantic verification, literary-discursive analysis, critical discourse analysis, analysis of ideological markers and binary oppositions, legitimization / delegitimation analysis, and historical-literary interpretation. Lexicographic verification clarified the meanings and Soviet-ideological nuances of units such as ultshyl (nationalist), baishyl (pro-bay, or aligned with the wealthy class), burzhuaziyashyl (bourgeois-oriented), reaktsiyalyq (reactionary), tap dushpany (class enemy), halyqqa qarsy (anti-people), and proletariatqa qarsy (anti-proletarian), using Qazaq әдеби тілінің сөздігі, sozdikqor.kz, and sozdik.kz.

Literary-discursive analysis identified how these markers combine with genre, style, language, artistic method, movement, and authorial position. Critical discourse analysis determined their functions in Soviet literary-critical language; the analysis of literary-linguistic techniques focused on evaluative nomination, predication, antithesis, modal-evaluative vocabulary, and aesthetic reservation; and binary-opposition analysis examined national / nationalist, popular / anti-people, progressive / reactionary, and one's own / alien. The interpretive stage related these results to legitimization, delegitimation, canon formation, and literary memory (Frank, 2022; Chmielewska, 2019; McGuire, 2018; Milevski & Wetenkamp, 2022; Rydholm, 2025; Youngman et al., 2024).

B. Research Procedure

The procedure consisted of five stages: corpus formation, annotation, lexicographic verification, literary-discursive analysis, and historical-literary interpretation. More than 180 fragments were selected and coded according to ideological markers, techniques of evaluation, binary oppositions, legitimization / delegitimation strategies, and forms of literary-historical inclusion.

At the verification stage, dictionary meanings, historical-ideological nuances, and contextual functions were compared for the main markers, including ultshyl, baishyl, burzhuaziyashyl, reaktsiyalyq, tap dushpany, halyqqa qarsy, proletariatqa qarsy, eski ömir, and kertartpa. The next stage examined how these units work inside critical judgments about language, style, genre, authorial position, and literary movement.

At the final stage, the results were interpreted through the model of negative canonization. Cases were recorded in which an author received negative ideological evaluation but was simultaneously preserved through his name, biography, works, genre contribution, linguistic mastery, artistic force, or social and educational role. This study is also subject to several methodological limitations. First, the corpus is based on S. Mukanov's XX ғасырдағы қазақ әдебиеті and therefore reflects one authorial and institutional perspective within Soviet Kazakh literary historiography. Second, the identification of ideological markers and binary oppositions necessarily involves interpretive decisions; to reduce subjectivity, the analysis combined lexicographic-semantic verification with contextual reading and repeated comparison of markers across different fragments. Third, because the corpus consists of selected semantically complete fragments rather than all possible references to Alash-period writers in Soviet criticism, the findings should be understood as an analytical model of Mukanov's discourse rather than a complete typology of Soviet Kazakh literary criticism. These limitations do not weaken the main findings, but they define the scope within which the results should be interpreted.

Table 5 summarizes the correspondence between methods, analytical focus, and obtained results.

² The Alash period refers to the early twentieth-century Kazakh national-intellectual and literary movement associated with the Alash intelligentsia and the Alash Orda autonomy, generally covering the years around 1905–1920.

TABLE 5
CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN METHODS, ANALYTICAL FOCUS, AND OBTAINED RESULTS

Method	Analytical focus	Obtained result
Lexicographic work	Dictionary meanings, transliteration, and historical-ideological nuances of ideological markers	A glossary of key ideological markers was prepared and their function in literary-critical discourse was clarified
Literary-discursive analysis	The relationship between ideological evaluation and literary categories: author, genre, style, artistic method, literary movement	The integrative factors of S. Mukanov's critical discourse were identified
Critical discourse analysis	Functions of ideological markers in Soviet literary-critical language	The system of ideological marking of writers of the Alash period was demonstrated
Analysis of literary-linguistic techniques	Evaluative nomination, predication, antithesis, opposition, modal-evaluative vocabulary, aesthetic reservation	The mechanism by which literary characterization is transformed into ideologically oriented evaluation was revealed
Analysis of binary oppositions	The pairs national / nationalist, popular / anti-people, progressive / reactionary, one's own / alien	The structure of Soviet literary evaluation was demonstrated
Analysis of legitimation / delegitimation	The contradiction between ideological criticism and recognition of literary significance	The dual function of S. Mukanov's critical discourse was identified
Historical-literary interpretation and analysis of literary memory	Inclusion of writers of the Alash period in literary-historical description	The model of <i>negative canonization</i> was substantiated

Table 5 shows that the methodological design connects semantics, discourse, and literary historiography: lexicographic work clarifies evaluative vocabulary, discourse analysis identifies its functions, and historical-literary interpretation explains its canon-forming effect.

IV. RESULTS

The analysis of more than 180 literary-discursive fragments from S. Mukanov's XX ғасырдағы қазақ әдебиеті made it possible to establish that the critical representation of writers of the Alash period is formed through the interaction of ideologically loaded vocabulary, literary-linguistic techniques of evaluation, binary oppositions, and historical-literary attribution. These components form an integrative model of ideologically marked literary evaluation, in which the Soviet critical frame not only determines the interpretation of the author but also participates in fixing his place in the history of Kazakh literature. Ideological evaluation in S. Mukanov's work therefore does not function as a separate political commentary externally imposed on literary material; rather, it is incorporated into the structure of critical judgment through evaluative nomination, predication, antithesis, modal-evaluative vocabulary, the opposition of literary movements, and the characterization of the author's artistic significance.

For this reason, the presentation of the results moves from the semantics of key ideological markers to literary-linguistic techniques, binary oppositions, legitimation / delegitimation strategies, and the model of negative canonization. This structure makes it possible to show how criticism, polemics, and ideologically marked description become not only a means of restricting an author's literary reputation but also a form of preserving him in national literary memory.

A. Lexicographic Verification and Functions of Ideological Markers

Lexicographic-semantic verification showed that the corpus contains a layer of ideologically and evaluatively loaded vocabulary characteristic of Soviet literary-critical language. This group includes not only individual words such as *ultshyl* (nationalist), *baishyl* (pro-bay, or aligned with the wealthy class), *burzhuziashyl* (bourgeois-oriented), and *reaktsiialyq* (reactionary), but also nominations close to them in function: *tap dushpany* (class enemy), *halyqtyq emes* (non-popular / not people-oriented), *halyqqa qarsy* (anti-people), *proletariatqa qarsy* (anti-proletarian), *eski ömir* (old life), *kertartpa* (retrograde), and others. Their meaning in the article is defined not in isolation, but through the comparison of dictionary semantics with the context of use in Mukanov's critical text. Table 6 presents the main groups of markers that most clearly participate in constructing the literary evaluation of writers of the Alash period.

Table 6 presents the main groups of these markers and their literary-discursive functions.

TABLE 6
IDEOLOGICAL MARKERS AND THEIR FUNCTION IN S. MUKANOV'S LITERARY-CRITICAL DISCOURSE

Group of markers	Representative units	Semantic basis	Literary-discursive function
National-political markers	<i>ultshyl</i> (nationalist), <i>ultshyldyq</i> (nationalism), Alashorda	Connection with the national idea; in Soviet usage, suspicion of "bourgeois nationalism"	Transferring the writer's national-cultural position into the political-ideological plane
Class-social markers	<i>baishyl</i> (pro-bay, or aligned with the wealthy class), <i>burzhuazyashyl</i> (bourgeois-oriented), <i>tap dushpany</i> (class enemy), <i>proletariatqa qarsy</i> (anti-proletarian)	Connection with the bay, bourgeois, or class-"alien" field	Subordinating literary evaluation to a class-based scheme
Historical-evaluative markers	<i>reaktsialyq</i> (reactionary), <i>eski ömir</i> (old life), <i>kertartpa</i> (retrograde)	Connection with the past, backwardness, and resistance to "progress"	Representing the author or movement as incompatible with the Soviet model of historical development
Normative-literary markers	<i>halyqtyq</i> (people-oriented), <i>halyqtyq emes</i> (non-people-oriented), <i>halyqqa qarsy</i> (anti-people), <i>progressivti</i> (progressive)	Correspondence or non-correspondence with the Soviet criterion of "people-orientedness" and "progressiveness"	Distributing literary value along the scale of Soviet acceptability

The data in the table show that ideological markers in S. Mukanov's text are not random evaluative words. They perform the function of literary-critical classification: they determine how the author, his work, movement, and place in literary history should be perceived. Particularly indicative is the dual semantics of the marker *ultshyl* (nationalist): in its general linguistic meaning, it may be associated with national commitment, whereas in the Soviet critical context its negative ideological meaning is actualized. Consequently, the national idea in Mukanov's critical discourse is often transferred into the framework of political suspicion.

B. Literary-Linguistic Techniques of Critical Evaluation

Ideological markers in S. Mukanov's critical discourse acquire evaluative force not only through their semantics but also through the ways in which they are incorporated into literary-critical reasoning. In the analyzed fragments, they correlate with the characterization of the author, work, genre, style, artistic method, social position, and literary movement. Therefore, the evaluation of writers of the Alash period is formed not as an isolated ideological naming, but as the result of the interaction of vocabulary, textual organization, and literary-scholarly argumentation.

Particular importance belongs to techniques that transfer ideologically loaded vocabulary into the structure of critical judgment. Evaluative nomination establishes the initial framework for characterizing the author; predication attaches stable features to him; antithesis and opposition organize the conflict between literary movements; binary oppositions reduce the complex literary process to a system of ideological pairs; historical-literary attribution places the author within a particular period and movement; aesthetic reservation makes it possible to criticize the ideological position and, at the same time, recognize artistic significance. Table 7 therefore shows how an individual evaluative marker becomes part of a holistic literary-critical interpretation of an author, work, or movement.

TABLE 7

Technique / category	Discursive-textual realization	Result of analysis
Evaluative nomination	The author or movement is designated through an ideologically loaded category	The literary figure receives an initial evaluative framework
Predication	Stable features are attributed to the writer: <i>ultshyl</i> (nationalist), <i>baishyl</i> (pro-bay, or aligned with the wealthy class), <i>reaktsialyq</i> (reactionary), <i>halyqtyq emes</i> (non-people-oriented)	A stable evaluative image of the author is formed
Antithesis and opposition	One type of literature is correlated with another through a conflictual model: Soviet / Alash, proletarian / bourgeois	The literary process is presented as a confrontation between ideological and aesthetic movements
Binary opposition	Evaluation is constructed through pairs: national / nationalist, people-oriented / anti-people, progressive / reactionary, one's own / alien	The complex structure of the literary process is reduced to a system of ideological oppositions
Historical-literary attribution	The author is included in a particular period, literary milieu, movement, or socio-historical context	Criticism simultaneously restricts the interpretation of the author and fixes his place in literary history
Aesthetic reservation	Alongside ideological criticism, language, style, poetic force, genre innovation, or educational role are recognized	A contradiction arises between ideological delegitimation and literary recognition

The techniques presented in Table 7 show that literary-critical evaluation in S. Mukanov's work is constructed as a multi-level discursive formation. The ideological marker establishes the primary framework of interpretation, yet its critical function is revealed through predication, opposition, historical-literary attribution, and aesthetic reservation. For this reason, in the analyzed corpus ideological evaluation does not completely cancel literary-scholarly analysis, but interacts with it, forming a contradictory critical portrait of writers of the Alash period.

C. Binary Oppositions as the Structure of Soviet Literary Evaluation

The analysis of binary oppositions made it possible to establish that, in S. Mukanov's critical discourse, the evaluation of writers of the Alash period is organized through stable semantic pairs characteristic of the Soviet literary-critical paradigm. These oppositions perform not only an ideological but also a literary-historiographical function: through them, the place of an author, work, or movement is determined within the system of the 'permissible' and the 'impermissible,' the 'progressive' and the 'reactionary,' the 'people-oriented' and the 'anti-people.' As a result, the literary process of the early twentieth century is described not as a diverse field of artistic searches, but as a space of conflicting ideological and aesthetic orientations.

Table 8 systematizes the main binary oppositions through which the Soviet model of literary evaluation is formed in S. Mukanov's critical discourse. It records not individual contrasts, but their function in the interpretation of the author, work, and literary movement.

TABLE 8
BINARY OPPOSITIONS IN S. MUKANOV'S CRITICAL DISCOURSE

Binary opposition	Semantic-ideological function	Literary-evaluative effect
National / nationalist	Distinguishes cultural-national content from politically suspicious nationalism	The national problematics of a work may be interpreted as a manifestation of ideological danger
Proletarian / bourgeois	Transfers the literary position into the class-social plane	Artistic value is correlated with the presumed class affiliation of the author, idea, or movement
People-oriented / anti-people	Determines the conformity of a work to the Soviet criterion of people-orientedness	The author gains or loses literary legitimacy within the Soviet critical system
Progressive / reactionary	Correlates the author or movement with a model of historical forward movement or with an image of the past	The literary phenomenon is evaluated through the category of historical promise or backwardness
Soviet / anti-Soviet	Establishes the political boundary of an acceptable literary position	Literary evaluation becomes linked to presumed loyalty to the Soviet ideological norm
One's own / alien	Forms a model of ideological belonging or alienation	The writer may be included in literary history, but as a problematic, contradictory, or ideologically alien figure

The presented system of oppositions shows that binarity in Mukanov's work functions not only as a method of ideological polemic, but also as a principle of literary-historical ordering of material. Through these pairs, the critic establishes the coordinates of interpretation: the author is evaluated not only according to artistic features, but also according to the historical, class, national, or political position into which he is placed.

This mechanism is especially important for understanding the internal contradictoriness of XX ġasyrdağy qazaq ādebieti. On the one hand, binary oppositions restrict the interpretation of writers of the Alash period within the Soviet evaluative scheme. On the other hand, the very inclusion of these authors in literary-historical description preserves them as significant figures of Kazakh literature of the early twentieth century. Consequently, binary oppositions participate not only in delegitimation but also in the subsequent negative canonization of the analyzed authors.

D. The Relationship Between Ideological Delegitimation and Literary Recognition

Legitimation / delegitimation analysis shows that Mukanov's evaluative structure is heterogeneous. Negative political or class characterization often coexists with recognition of artistic, linguistic, genre-related, educational, or historical-cultural significance.

Table 9 records the recurring configuration in which ideological lowering is combined with partial literary recognition.

TABLE 9
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN IDEOLOGICAL DELEGITIMATION AND LITERARY RECOGNITION

Author	Type of ideological problematization	Parameter of literary legitimization	Final evaluative configuration
Akhmet Baitursynuly	National-political markedness	Role in the development of language, enlightenment, the press, and literary culture	Political criticism is combined with the fixation of historical-cultural significance
Mirzhakyp Dulatuly	Evaluation through a national-social position	Significance of works and their role in awakening public consciousness	Ideological delegitimation is accompanied by the preservation of literary-historical role
Magzhan Zhumabayuly	Problematization through the framework of nationalist poetry	Poetic force, language, form, aesthetic innovation	Aesthetic legitimization emerges within an ideologically restricted evaluation
Zhusupbek Aimauly	Class-ideological suspicion	Significance of prose, psychologism, and plot-imagery structure	Literary mastery is fixed despite political delegitimation
Mukhtar Auezov	Soviet critical framework and the search for a class position	Artistic mastery and force of representation	A contradictory model of partial legitimization is formed
Sultanmakymut Toraigyrov	Social-ideological interpretation	Inclusion in the history of literary development and recognition of social orientation	A form of partial canonization emerges

The table confirms that delegitimation and recognition are not mutually exclusive. Mukanov lowers the author's Soviet status through class-political marking, yet the fixation of names, biographies, works, genres, and artistic contribution prevents complete exclusion from literary history.

Table 10 presents representative corpus evidence for this configuration.

TABLE 10
CORPUS-BASED EVIDENCE OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN IDEOLOGICAL DELEGITIMATION AND LITERARY RECOGNITION

Corpus fragment	Analytical interpretation	Result
Author – Akhmet Baitursynuly “Akhmettiñ tarihi eñbegin bağalaimiz, biraq ony dästürlemeimiz... qazir bizdiñ tap dushpanymyz” (we value Akhmet’s historical work, but we do not adopt it as a tradition... at present he is our class enemy)	Recognition of historical role and class-ideological delegitimation through the marker <i>tap dushpany</i> (class enemy) are combined in one fragment	A dual evaluation is formed: historical significance is recognized, but the Soviet critical framework restricts the author’s literary legitimation
Author – Mirzhakyp Dulatuly Regarding the novel <i>Baqytsyz Zhamal (Unhappy Jamal)</i> , Mukanov writes that its significance “öz zamanyndağy mañyzyn kemituge bolmaidy” (cannot be diminished in relation to its own time), while simultaneously evaluating the idea of women’s equality through a proletarian framework	The novel receives an ideologically restricted interpretation, but is preserved as a significant historical-literary document of its era	Ideological criticism does not cancel the recognition of the work’s social and literary significance
Author – Magzhan Zhumabayuly “Mağzhan... qazaqtıñ kūshti aqyndarynan sanalady... Abaidan keyin til önegesinde Mağzhannan asqan aqyn joq” (Magzhan... is considered one of the strong Kazakh poets... after Abai, there is no poet superior to Magzhan in terms of linguistic mastery)	Despite Soviet criticism of nationalist poetry, Mukanov recognizes Magzhan’s poetic force, linguistic mastery, and formal innovation	Aesthetic legitimation emerges within an ideologically restricted evaluation
Author – Mukhtar Auezov Regarding <i>Qily zaman (Difficult Times)</i> , Mukanov writes that Auezov is a “kūshti jazushy” (strong writer), a master of language and imagery, but concludes his evaluation by defining the work as “eñ baryp turğan baishly” (the most pronouncedly pro-bay work)	Recognition of artistic mastery and class-based delegitimation through the marker <i>baishyl</i> (pro-bay, or aligned with the wealthy class) are combined in a single critical judgment	A contradictory model of partial legitimation emerges: artistic force is recognized, but ideological status is lowered
Author – Zhusupbek Aimaulyuly Mukanov analyzes in detail the journal <i>Abai</i> , the poem <i>Uran (Call)</i> , the novels <i>Qartqozha</i> and <i>Aqbilek</i> , but ultimately characterizes Zhusupbek’s path as “proletariat üshin eñ zalaldy zhol” (the most harmful path for the proletariat)	Detailed literary fixation is combined with severe ideological delegitimation	The author is preserved in literary history precisely through polemical and critical description
Author – Sultanmakmurt Toraigrov The material notes that Mukanov analyzes Toraigrov’s social and political views, his service to the people, his social orientation, and his attention to the condition of the poor	Ideological interpretation is softened here by socio-educational and literary-historical recognition	Partial canonization is formed through the inclusion of the author in the history of literary development

The fragments in Table 10 demonstrate that Akhmet Baitursynuly and Zhusupbek Aimaulyuly are strongly framed by class-political criticism; Magzhan Zhumabayuly and Mukhtar Auezov receive marked aesthetic recognition; and Mirzhakyp Dulatuly and Sultanmakmurt Toraigrov are preserved through historical-social interpretation. This pattern supports the concept of negative canonization.

E. From Ideological Marking to Negative Canonization

Historical-literary interpretation shows that Mukanov’s discourse becomes canon-forming not through direct approval but through inclusion in literary-historical description, polemical characterization, the enumeration of works, biographical fixation, and evaluation of artistic contribution.

Five mechanisms form this process. First, ideological delegitimation marks the writer through *ultshyl*, *baishyl*, *burzhuaziyashyl*, *reaktsiyalyq*, *tap dushpany*, and related nominations. In the case of Akhmet Baitursynuly, the formula “tarihi eñbegin bağalaimiz, biraq ony dästürlemeimiz... qazir bizdiñ tap dushpanymyz” combines recognition of historical work with class-based distancing.

Second, literary-analytical fixation preserves the biography, works, and social role of the writer, as seen in Mukanov’s treatment of Mirzhakyp Dulatuly’s *Oyan*, *qazaq!*, *Baqytsyz Zhamal*, *Azamat*, and *Terme*. Third, aesthetic partial legitimation appears where poetic force, language, form, or artistic mastery is recognized despite ideological criticism, especially in evaluations of Magzhan Zhumabayuly and Mukhtar Auezov.

Fourth, polemical historical-literary attribution preserves the corpus of works and biographical trace even when the writer’s path is declared ideologically harmful, as in the case of Zhusupbek Aimaulyuly. Fifth, contradictory evaluation fixes authors as problematic but significant figures of the literary process.

Accordingly, negative canonization is produced through the sequence ideological marking – literary-analytical fixation – aesthetic partial legitimation – polemical attribution – canon-forming preservation. Table 11 formulates the integrative model of this process.

TABLE 11
INTEGRATIVE MODEL OF IDEOLOGICALLY MARKED LITERARY EVALUATION IN S. MUKANOV'S CRITICAL DISCOURSE

Stage of the model	Discursive mechanism	Function in S. Mukanov's criticism	Result
1	Ideological marker	Establishes the Soviet evaluative framework	The author receives a primary ideological characterization
2	Literary-linguistic technique	Incorporates the marker into critical judgment	Evaluation becomes part of literary analysis
3	Binary opposition	Structures the literary process as a conflict of movements	The system of "one's own / alien" and "progressive / reactionary" is formed
4	Evaluative position	Determines the author's place in the Soviet literary system	The writer receives the status of permissible, problematic, or alien
5	Legitimation / delegitimation	Lowers or partially recognizes literary significance	A contradictory critical portrait emerges
6	Literary-historical fixation	Preserves the name, biography, works, genre and stylistic contribution	The author remains within literary history
7	Negative canonization	Includes the author in literary memory through criticism and polemic	A stable, though contradictory, place of the author in national literary history is formed

The model shows that the ideological marker initiates evaluation but does not exhaust it. Its function is realized through technique, opposition, authorial positioning, legitimation or delegitimation, and literary-historical fixation; therefore, Alash writers are both restricted and preserved in Mukanov's critical discourse.

V. DISCUSSION

The study aimed to determine how ideological markers, literary-linguistic techniques, binary oppositions, and legitimation / delegitimation strategies function in Mukanov's discourse on Alash-period writers. The analysis shows that XX ғасырдағы қазақ әдебиеті should be interpreted not only as a Soviet ideological text but also as a contradictory mechanism of literary-historical fixation, because its critical descriptions simultaneously restrict, classify, and preserve the authors under discussion.

The first major result is that ideologically loaded units such as *ultshyl*, *baishyl*, *burzhuaziyashyl*, *reaktsiyalyq*, and *tap dushpany* operate as components of a literary-critical system rather than as isolated words. Their evaluative force emerges through predication, antithesis, modal vocabulary, historical-literary attribution, and oppositions such as national / nationalist, people-oriented / anti-people, progressive / reactionary, and one's own / alien. This finding is consistent with critical discourse studies of nomination, legitimation, and delegitimation (Mansouri et al., 2017; Abbas et al., 2025; Wong, 2025), but specifies these mechanisms on Kazakh literary-critical material.

The second result is that ideological marking does not produce complete exclusion. *Baitursynuly* is recognized historically while being distanced as a *tap dushpany*; *Dulatuly's* *Baqytsyz Zhamal* is interpreted through a proletarian framework but remains important for its time; *Zhumabayuly's* poetic force and linguistic mastery are acknowledged despite nationalist problematization; and *Auezov's* artistic power is recognized while *Qily zaman* is class-marked. These cases correspond to studies of Soviet national literatures, where heritage was often preserved by being reinterpreted through socialist categories (Frank, 2022; Chmielewska, 2019; McGuire, 2018).

The findings can also be read in relation to current debates in post-Soviet memory studies and digital humanities. In post-Soviet studies, the Alash legacy is no longer treated only as a recovered historical object but as a contested field of official and non-official narratives in contemporary Kazakhstan (Dukeyev, 2025). From this perspective, Mukanov's negative canonization helps explain why Soviet critical texts remain important for the post-Soviet reconstruction of literary memory: they preserve the names, works, and evaluative categories that later become objects of reinterpretation. At the same time, digital humanities and cultural analytics have shown that the canon is increasingly studied through archives, databases, computational comparison, and the relation between visibility and selection (Algee-Hewitt, 2024). The present study is not a computational project, but its corpus-based attention to recurring markers, oppositions, and patterns of preservation may serve as a basis for future digital mapping of Soviet Kazakh literary criticism. In this sense, the results connect historical-literary analysis with the broader digital-memory debate, where collective memory is understood as a dynamic and mediated process shaped by archives, databases, and repeated acts of cultural selection (Mandolessi, 2024).

The practical significance of the study lies in its multi-level model for analyzing Soviet criticism: lexical-semantic markers, literary-linguistic techniques, binary oppositions, historical-literary fixation, and literary memory. For Alash studies, this model explains how polemical descriptions could preserve information about writers under ideological control; for teaching the history of Kazakh literature, it helps avoid both mechanical rejection and uncritical acceptance of Soviet scholarly texts.

Further research may compare Mukanov's strategies with those of *Saken Seifullin*, *Mukhtar Auezov*, *Esmagambet Ysmayylov*, *Qazhym Zhumaliev*, and other representatives of Kazakh Soviet literary scholarship. A broader corpus of Kazakh criticism from the 1920s–1950s would make it possible to trace the development of ideological vocabulary, binary oppositions, aesthetic reservations, and negative canonization across Soviet and post-Soviet reception.

VI. CONCLUSION

The study established that Mukanov's discourse on Alash-period writers is constructed through ideologically loaded vocabulary, literary-linguistic techniques, binary oppositions, and historical-literary attribution. Markers such as *ultshyl*, *baishyl*, *burzhuazyashyl*, *reaktsiyyalyq*, and related nominations operate as elements of the Soviet evaluative-classificatory system and shape the interpretation of authors, works, and literary movements.

At the same time, ideological marking does not equal complete exclusion. Mukanov's text combines Soviet delegitimation with the preservation of names, biographies, works, language, style, genre contribution, artistic force, and historical-literary role. This duality allows the book to be understood as a contradictory form of literary memory.

The main conclusion is that XX ғасырдағы қазақ әдебиеті performs negative canonization: authors are included in literary history through criticism, polemic, ideologically marked description, and subsequent fixation within the national literary narrative.

Thus, Mukanov's critical discourse both restricts the interpretation of Alash writers and preserves them in Kazakh literary historiography, making it an early and complex mechanism in the formation of literary memory about the Alash period.

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