

Exploring mystical motifs in literature as a reflection of human consciousness

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The aim of the study is to identify the role of mystical motifs in literature with a focus on Kazakh works and to compare these motifs with examples from British and Irish literature. The research methodology included textual analysis of Kazakh literary texts, linguistic and symbolic approaches, and a comparative study of mystical motifs in the works of international authors. The study explored cultural, philosophical, and artistic aspects of the representation of mystical motifs. The results demonstrated that mystical motifs occupied an important place in both Kazakh and British and Irish literature, playing a key role in reflecting spiritual quests, cultural values, and philosophical ideas. In Kazakh literature, motifs such as the symbolism of the steppe, sky, and rivers epitomised a connection with the sacred, collective memory, and philosophical reflections on life. Linguistic elements, including metaphors, allegories, and national idioms, highlighted the depth and universality of the images. International examples showed the use of mysticism to explore issues of morality, spiritual redemption, and transformation. The comparative analysis revealed that Kazakh literature integrated sacred elements and cultural traditions, creating multi-layered texts that retained unique national features. At the same time, British and Irish literature used mysticism as a means to create universal images capable of transcending cultural boundaries. Kazakh literature, in contrast to these examples, emphasised the connection to historical memory and spiritual values. The study confirmed that mystical motifs in literature, regardless of cultural context, served as an important tool for thinking about existential issues, strengthening national identity, and creating intercultural dialogue.

Keywords: metaphors, allegories, cultural traditions, sacred elements, symbolism.

1. Introduction

Mystical motifs in Kazakh literature go far beyond the aesthetic or folkloric level, forming a deep connection between the spiritual traditions of the people and global cultural processes. They reflect universal themes—the search for meaning in life, harmony with nature, spiritual renewal, and inner freedom—which take on special significance in the context of contemporary Kazakh society. In times of rapid social and technological change, when national identity faces the challenges of globalization,

mythological and mystical images become a means of understanding one's own spiritual roots. Through the symbolism of nature, motifs of sacred space, and archetypes of ancestors, Kazakh literature forms a cultural memory that connects the past with the present and creates conditions for rethinking human values in a global context. It is thanks to this capacity for spiritual generalization that mystical motifs in Kazakh prose acquire universal significance, transcending the boundaries of local culture and establishing the place of national tradition in the global literary space.

There is a lack of intercultural and psychologically oriented research in the scientific community that considers the mystical not only as a religious or aesthetic phenomenon, but as a universal form of expression of deep psychological processes. Studying this phenomenon in Kazakh prose reveals how mystical images integrate archaic beliefs, folkloric motifs, and philosophical quests, forming a unique model of the spiritual experience of a people. The analysis of such texts allows us to understand how, through the mystical, fiction not only reproduces individual mental dynamics, but also supports the continuity of national tradition, serving as a space for collective memory and identity.

The psychological aspect of mystical motifs has been examined in detail by Johannsen (2023) and Karimova (2024). The works emphasised the interaction of magical elements and imagination, exploring the role in the formation of characters' emotional states and readers' perception. The researchers demonstrated how mystical motifs can convey inner psychological experiences, creating complex emotional structures that resonate with the deepest levels of human consciousness. These studies have confirmed that literary images and motifs play an important role in making sense of emotional processes that often remain inaccessible to direct description.

The development of genre specificity of mystical motifs has been studied by Qurbonova and Ikhtiyorovna (2023). The authors analysed the evolution of the fantasy genre in the twentieth century, paying special attention to the adaptation of mystical elements to the requirements of modernity. The authors noted that mystical motifs retain the relevance, acting as a means of artistic comprehension of complex social changes. The study showed that these motifs play an important role in creating universal narratives that can not only entertain, but also raise questions about human essence and existential challenges.

The ethical aspect of mystical motifs has been studied by Zhenzhao (2023). Zhenzhao's work emphasised how these elements allow authors to raise complex moral dilemmas. The researcher highlighted that mystical motif that transcend rational understanding serve as a unique tool for exploring the boundaries of morality and spiritual quest. The research has shown that such themes contribute to the formation of profound narratives in which literary characters confront inner conflicts that embody universal values.

The philosophical significance of mystical motifs was explored by Sherfan (2022) in the context of Jebran's works. The researcher noted that mystical elements, especially in the themes of love, convey complex spiritual and philosophical quests. The analysis demonstrated that literature can be a powerful vehicle for exploring the inner quest of the individual, connecting personal experiences with universal truths. These motifs not only illustrate the mystical nature of love, but also emphasise its significance as a symbol of the eternal quest for harmony and self-discovery.

Nizomi and Al-Khorazmi (2022) investigated the role of mystical motifs in Sufi literature, focusing on the themes of self-discovery and the search for truth. The authors showed that Sufi texts reflect the transcendent dimensions of human existence by connecting personal spiritual experiences with universal principles. The results revealed a wealth of mystical symbolism that is used to convey complex philosophical ideas and inspire self-improvement. Fraeters (2023) focused on the literary and symbolic representation of mystical motifs. The work revealed that allegory and symbolism play a key role in conveying mystical ideas, reflecting the profound influence on the aesthetics of medieval literature. The researcher emphasised that the use of symbols in literature creates complex images that can evoke a sense of spiritual revelation in readers.

The philosophical traditions of antiquity, including the use of mystical motifs within Platonism, have been explored by Kutash (2020) and Siniscalco (2020). The work showed how mythological elements served as a means of communicating philosophical ideas, linking spiritual and intellectual understanding. The work confirmed the significance of mystical motifs as a powerful tool for exploring human nature and creating narratives capable of bridging the rational and irrational. Fairy tales as carriers of mystical motifs were studied by Karimova (2024). The author's work demonstrated that fairy tales remain a powerful tool for transmitting cultural values and spiritual symbols, linking the traditions of the previous times with modern ideas about morality and spirituality. The study showed that mystical elements in fairy tales create a universal language understandable to different generations and cultures, thus ensuring the relevance throughout the centuries.

Within the broader landscape of world literature, Kazakh literature occupies a distinctive position by offering a unique perspective on the mystical as both a spiritual and cultural phenomenon (Issakova *et al.* 2020). While Western and Eastern literary traditions often frame mysticism through religious transcendence or individual revelation, Kazakh literature interprets it as a collective experience rooted in ancestral memory, harmony with nature, and moral continuity. As a relatively less studied tradition, it expands the global understanding of literary mysticism by integrating steppe cosmology, oral heritage, and ethical philosophy into modern narrative forms. In doing so, Kazakh prose not only

enriches comparative literary studies but also redefines mysticism as a living dialogue between tradition and the challenges of contemporary identity.

Mystical motifs in literature act as an important element linking artistic creation to deep aspects of human spirituality and cultural experience (Gonçalves 2024). Studies in this area address a wide range of aspects, including psychological, cultural, philosophical and literary dimensions. However, these works often remain confined to particular genres, cultural traditions, or theoretical approaches. This study examines how mystical motifs in literature reflect the inner world of the human soul, bringing together interdisciplinary perspectives and filling existing research gaps.

Given the analyses conducted, several key gaps in existing research can be identified. Firstly, there is no comprehensive interdisciplinary approach that would combine cultural, linguistic and literary aspects of mystical motifs. In addition, it is not sufficiently explored how these motifs are reflected in Kazakh literature, representing a unique combination of national identity and universal themes.

The aim of this study was to explore how mystical motifs reflect the inner changes of the human soul and to analyse their significance in Kazakh prose. The objectives of the study included analysing the representation of mystical motifs in literature of different genres and cultures; studying the linguistic and symbolic means of their expression; exploring the cultural and philosophical significance of mystical themes; and assessing their role in Kazakh prose as part of the national literary heritage.

2. Theoretical overview

In the researches of Hughes (2020), Amin and Lutfi (2021), the authors examined transcendental imagery in modernist literature, where the authors focused on the poetry of Emily Dickinson. The analyses showed that mystical elements were used to conceptualise spiritual liberation and the search for the meaning of existence, uniting literary creation with modernist concepts. These studies revealed that modernist literature actively developed mystical themes, adapting such themes to new cultural and social challenges. Particular attention to parables has been paid by Boucher (1997). The work revealed the symbolic and philosophical depth, analysing how spiritual ideas and moral lessons are conveyed through literary structures. Boucher demonstrated that mystical parables not only served as a tool for moral education, but also became a space for transmitting universal values, linking different eras and traditions.

A psychological approach to Kazakh postmodernist literature has been applied by Altynbek and Mussabekova (2024). The researchers emphasised how mystical motifs reflected the inner quest of the individual and the collective self-consciousness. The work showed that the literature of this period used mystical elements to comprehend complex processes of identity, which made it particularly

relevant in the context of social and cultural change. The study of symbolism in world literature and its influence on the work of Kazakh poets was carried out by Mussaly *et al.* (2022) and Ahadovich and Isakovna (2023). In the works, the authors showed that symbolism as a literary movement had a significant impact on national literary traditions, including the use of mystical motifs. These studies demonstrated that interaction with world trends enriched Kazakh literature, giving it an original artistic style. The cultural role of sacred places as a literary motif was analysed by Mirazova *et al.* (2024). The study showed that sacred spaces played an important role in the transmission of cultural heritage and spiritual values. Mystical images of sacred spaces in the work were interpreted as symbols linking traditional representations and modern literary forms.

Important aspects of existential loneliness and its reflection in mystical metaphors were examined by Rakymzhan *et al.* (2022). The authors used conceptual and metaphorical analyses to show how literature described complex spiritual experiences. The issue of national identity and its reflection in modern Kazakh prose was analysed by Samenkyzy *et al.* (2024). The study emphasised that mystical motifs were used to reveal the complex relationship between personal and collective consciousness. These motifs in the work were interpreted as a means to make sense of cultural and historical memory. Zharylgapov *et al.* (2023) and Aryn *et al.* (2024) focused the attention on mythological elements in literature. The work showed that myth and mythological discourse played a key role in the creation of mystical texts, linking ancient traditions with modern literary contexts. The research demonstrated that mythological images continue to be relevant tools for expressing spiritual and philosophical ideas.

The symbolism of historical figures and legendary motifs as tools for expressing ideas of state identity was examined by Turysbek *et al.* (2021). The work showed that in modern prose these motifs are used to connect the previous times and the present, reinforcing cultural and national traditions. The study confirmed that mystical elements help express important aspects of collective identity. Traditional shamanic rituals and the connection with mystical motifs were studied by Mashimbaeva *et al.* (2022). The researchers showed that shamanism had a significant influence on Kazakh literature, forming a unique spiritual basis for artistic texts. The work demonstrated that these traditions remain an important element of national culture, being reflected in contemporary literary works.

The relationship between mystical poetry and the 'self-concept' has been examined by Mohr (2023). The author showed that mystical poetry actively explored inner experiences and issues of self-identity, creating unique narratives of spiritual liberation. This study emphasised the role of mystical poetry as a form of literary expression of personal and universal experiences. A comparative analysis of the mystical thoughts of philosophers and mystical poets R. Tagore and M. Iqbal was conducted by Rabeya (2023). The author revealed that both thinkers used mystical images to express philosophical

ideas related to spiritual self-improvement. The study demonstrated that the works illustrate the universality of mystical motifs as a tool for cultural dialogue. Khan (2022) conducted a comparative analysis of symbolism in the work *Women in love* by Lawrence and the poetry of Jalaladdin Rumi. The author's work showed that mystical elements played an important role in creating complex philosophical images, emphasising the universality of symbolism.

Love as a mystical motif in the poetry of Jalaladdin Rumi and Yunus Emre has been studied by Toker (2024). The study demonstrated that complex spiritual and emotional experiences were revealed through this image, emphasising its importance in literature. The feminist aspect of Jewish mysticism in literature was analysed by Rethelyi (2022). The author showed how mystical elements were used to express social and gender ideas, linking spirituality to the struggle for women's rights. Metaphors as a means of communicating spiritual experience were examined by Xie (2023). The study showed that the metaphors fulfilled the function of symbolic signs capable of linking complex philosophical concepts with artistic text.

Thus, the reviewed studies collectively demonstrate that mysticism in literature functions as a multifaceted framework for exploring the human condition—uniting psychological introspection, spiritual experience, and cultural expression. While Western scholarship (Hughes 2020; Amin and Lutfi 2021; Boucher 1997) highlights mysticism as a form of transcendental reflection and existential inquiry, research within the Kazakh literary context (Altynbek and Mussabekova 2024; Mussaly *et al.* 2022; Mirazova *et al.* 2024) reveals its role in articulating collective identity and preserving cultural continuity. These perspectives converge in showing that mystical motifs serve as both personal and communal modes of meaning-making, bridging individual consciousness with shared moral and historical experience. The synthesis of these studies thus provides the conceptual foundation for the present research, situating Kazakh literature within the global discourse on mysticism as a distinctive tradition that integrates spiritual symbolism, linguistic creativity, and cultural philosophy.

3. Materials and methods

The study investigated mystical motifs in literature of different genres and cultural contexts. It included the works of authors such as M. Shelley's *Frankenstein, or, the Modern Prometheus* (2019 [1818]), E.A. Poe's *The Fall of the House of Usher* (2023 [1839]), O. Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (2006 [1890]), C. Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* (2018 [1843]), and Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (2021 [1726]). The research process involved a detailed examination of the texts to identify key mystical motifs and artistic expression. Attention was paid to the study of plot structures, imagery, thematic emphases, and symbolism

reflecting mystical themes. The cultural features of the works and their influence on the representation of mystical elements were also analysed.

An essential part of the work was the study of linguistic and symbolic means of expressing mystical motifs in Kazakh literature. The study focused on the works of authors such as A. Kunanbayev and R. Seisenbayev's *Kara sözder* ('Black Words,' 2009), J. Aimauytov's *Qartqoža* (1926), M. Auezov's *Abai žoli* ('Abai's Path,' 1956), I. Esenberlin's *Košpendiler* ('Nomads,' 1978), and O. Suleimenov's *AZ i JA* ('AZ and I,' 1975). During the research, text structures, linguistic means, rhetorical figures, and the use of metaphors through which mystical themes were expressed were studied. Attention was also paid to the interpretation of culturally significant symbols and their role in shaping the mystical atmosphere of the text. The ways in which authors used linguistic elements to convey hidden meanings and philosophical ideas related to mystical motifs were explored.

The selected works were identified as exemplary for the analysis of mystical motifs, as they represent the most complete combination of the spiritual, symbolic, and philosophical dimensions of literature in their cultural contexts. In them, the mystical is not limited to the fantastic or religious, but appears as a means of comprehending the depths of human inner processes, the limits of knowledge, moral responsibility, and the connection between humans and the world and their own spiritual roots. These texts are representative of their literatures because they demonstrate how the mystical becomes a universal language for expressing philosophical and moral ideas, and how, through symbolism, archetypes, and metaphors, literature reproduces the process of inner transformation of the individual and national consciousness.

The textual analysis was conducted on the basis of a unified research logic that combined hermeneutic and semiotic approaches. The study was carried out through careful reading of the texts, interpretation of key symbols, metaphors, lexical and poetic devices used to reproduce the mystical dimension. The methodology of the study involved a gradual selection of the magical themes, a gradual exposure of their role in the storyline and artistic construction, a gradual exploration of the symbolic images and linguistic means creating a mystical atmosphere, and a gradual comprehension of their philosophical significance for the culture. This was done for methodological uniformity and comparable results to show how mystical topics serve as a cross-cultural means through which an artist can understand the human spirit for diverse literary cultures.

In the course of the work, a detailed analysis of the interaction of mystical motifs with the artistic traditions of Kazakh literature was carried out, which included the study of both textual and structural features of the works. Literary techniques were considered in the context of the ability to convey key cultural and spiritual meanings through mystical images and elements that acted as central

components of the narrative. Particular attention was paid to the ways in which authors expressed spiritual experiences and philosophical concepts through the artistic word and connected these ideas to folk epic, religious beliefs, and sacred traditions rooted in the cultural memory of the people.

All texts were examined with a focus on the artistic and cultural significance. Textual structures, symbolic elements, and the role in constructing the overall narrative were studied. The analyses included the identification of peculiarities of interpretation of mystical motifs based on the linguistic characteristics and connection with national traditions.

4. Results and discussion

4.1. Research of representation of mystical motives in literature of different genres and cultures

Mystical motifs occupy an important place in literature, acting as a tool for comprehending the most complex and profound aspects of human nature. Such motifs allow authors to explore the inner world of man, the spiritual quest, the desire for self-discovery and the search for the meaning of existence. These motifs serve as a link between the real and the supernatural, helping to reveal the invisible facets of the human soul. The inclusion of mysticism in literary narrative expands the boundaries of the possible, creating space for the reflection of philosophical reflections on life, death, good and evil. The use of mystical elements in works of different genres and cultures makes it possible to express universal themes that resonate with readers of different eras and societies. Such elements sharpen the inner conflicts of characters, emphasise moral dilemmas and add a transcendent dimension to the narrative, contributing to the creation of deep symbolic images that appeal to the collective unconscious. Genre specificity also plays a key role in the formation of mystical motifs: in gothic literature—creating an atmosphere of horror and mystery, in decadence novels—exploring spiritual and aesthetic aspects, and in satirical prose—serving as a tool for allegorising human vices (Table 1).

Work	Genre	Characteristics of mystical motives	Genre function
<i>Frankenstein, or, the Modern Prometheus</i>	Gothic novel	The mysticism of science, the transgression of the boundaries of nature	Creating an atmosphere of horror and moralising overtones

<i>The fall of the house of Usher</i>	Gothic novel	The mysticism of space and psychological devastation	Enhancing the macabre atmosphere
<i>The picture of Dorian Gray</i>	Decadence novel	Mysticism of immortality and moral decline	Exploring morality and aesthetics
<i>A Christmas carol</i>	Social novel	Mysticism as an instrument of spiritual transformation	Transformation through interaction with the mystical
<i>Gulliver's travels</i>	Satirical allegory	Mysticism through allegorical worlds	Criticism of human vices through symbolism

Table 1. Genre specificity of mystical motifs (compiled by the authors on the basis of Bagthaliya 2023, Blake 2022, Öztekin 2022, Hone and Rogers 2024).

Kazakh mysticism is inextricably linked to the unique historical, cultural, and philosophical context of the people, which determines its special place in the world literary tradition. It was formed under the influence of nomadic civilization, the close connection between man and nature, and ideas about the sacredness of the steppe, sky, and earth. In this worldview, the spiritual is not opposed to the material, but appears as an integral part of everyday life, where harmony between man, nature, and ancestors is the main condition for existence. That is why in Kazakh literature, mystical motifs not only express individual spiritual quests, but also reflect collective memory, mythological archetypes, and the historical continuity of the nation. This type of mysticism serves to preserve and reinterpret national identity: through symbols of nature, images of ancestors, and ritual motifs, literature affirms spiritual continuity and reminds us of the value of traditional moral principles. The use of mystical themes allows authors not only to artistically interpret the past, but also to restore the cultural balance that was lost as a result of historical cataclysms. Thus, Kazakh mysticism is not only an aesthetic category, but also a means of collective self-knowledge, combining national philosophy, historical memory, and the pursuit of spiritual unity.

In Shelley's *Frankenstein, or, the Modern Prometheus*, the author intertwines mystical motifs with scientific and philosophical themes. Victor Frankenstein's creation of artificial life transcends not only science but also human understanding, asking questions about the limits of human cognition, responsibility, and the consequences of ambition. The human soul in this work is reflected in the

suffering of the created being, which, despite its outward monstrosity, demonstrates deep emotion, a desire for acceptance and love. For example, the scene where Frankenstein's creature appeals to the creator with a plea for a companion shows the inner conflict, when the desire to be part of human society collides with the realisation of the own alienness. The spirituality of the work is shown in the opposition between human ambition and the natural order of things, where the creation, devoid of compassion and a guiding hand, becomes destructive to its creator and the world around it (Bagthaliya 2023).

In *The Fall of the House of Usher*, Poe uses mystical motifs to create a gloomy and oppressive atmosphere where the physical space of the house becomes a symbol of the inner world of its inhabitants. The Usher house, with its ominous interiors, cracked walls and decay, reflects the spiritual state of Roderick and Madeline Usher. For example, the description of Roderick's morbid hypersensitivity creates a sense of blurred boundaries between the real and the supernatural. The soul is presented here as a space subject to decay and decay, where mystical forces appear inextricably linked to the human psyche. Of particular significance is the scene where Roderick realises having buried the sister alive, which becomes the culmination of the shared moral and physical collapse. Through this story, shows how inner fears, unresolved conflicts and family secrets can take physical embodiment, becoming part of the space in which one lives (Bagthaliya 2023).

In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, mystical motifs are centred around a portrait that magically takes on the consequences of the moral actions of the protagonist. The portrait becomes the physical embodiment of Dorian Gray's soul, exposing all the vices, sins and moral decay, while the outward appearance remains unchanged. For instance, the scene in which Dorian notices the first change in the portrait after Sybil Vane's betrayal shows how the actions begin to distort the spiritual self. The mysticism here manifests itself in the transcendent connection between the portrait and the hero's inner world, where the portrait serves as a metaphor for the human soul, which cannot remain unchanged by vices and sins. The spiritual aspect of the work is related to the exploration of moral choice, redemption, and reckoning. Despite Dorian's attempts to avoid the consequences of the actions, the destruction of the portrait at the end of the novel becomes a symbol of self-destruction, emphasising that the human soul cannot be separated from the actions (Blake 2022).

A Christmas Carol uses mystical images of the spirits of Christmas to show the transformation of the main character, Ebenezer Scrooge. Each spirit represents a particular aspect of time, and the visitation becomes a way for Scrooge to realise the mistakes and re-evaluate the values. For example, the scene with the Ghost of Christmas Past, in which Scrooge sees the lonely childhood, plunges the man into memories that make the protagonist relive lost opportunities for love and happiness. The

mysticism here lies in the spirits' ability to transport the protagonist between time layers, creating a space for introspection and inner transformation. Scrooge's soul gradually reveals itself through these journeys, gaining compassion, mercy, and a willingness to change. The spirituality of the work is manifested in the idea of redemption, where mystical elements serve as a catalyst for profound changes in man (Öztekin 2022).

In *Gulliver's Travels*, mystical motifs are expressed through Lemuel Gulliver's allegorical journeys, each of which represents an exploration of a different aspect of human nature. For example, in Laputa, where the inhabitants are completely absorbed in abstract science, the author uses mysticism to depict how the lopsided development of the mind without a spiritual component leads to disharmony. In the land of the Houyhnhnms, the opposition between the intelligent horses and the wild Yahoos reflects the struggle between reason and instincts, showing the inner conflict of the human soul. The scenes in which Gulliver encounters the Guignols force the protagonist to reflect on the own moral and spiritual principles, questioning established ideas about human nature. The mysticism in this work is expressed through allegories that allow the spiritual, ethical and social aspects of life to be explored. The spiritual aspect is expressed through the protagonist's reflection on the belonging to humanity and the search for an ideal that remains unattainable (Shevchenko 2019; Hone and Rogers 2024).

The analysis of mystical motifs in the literature of different genres and cultures demonstrates that mysticism functions as a universal artistic and philosophical instrument for revealing the deepest layers of human experience. Despite differences in cultural contexts and literary forms, all examined works share a common focus on the inner transformation of the individual, the tension between moral responsibility and desire, and the search for meaning beyond the boundaries of the material world. In Gothic prose, mysticism manifests itself through fear and transgression; in decadent literature, through aesthetic and ethical reflection; in social and satirical works, through moral renewal and allegorical critique of human nature. Mysticism emerges not as a marginal element but as a central narrative force that unites aesthetic, psychological, and moral dimensions, allowing literature to articulate the universal drama of the human soul.

4.2. Linguistic and symbolic means of expressing mystical motives in Kazakh literature

Kazakh literature is rich in symbolism and deep spiritual reflections, which makes it a fruitful ground for analysing mystical motifs. In the works of key authors there is a combination of cultural traditions, philosophical ideas and linguistic features that enhance the mystical atmosphere. Linguistic and symbolic means play an important role in expressing mystical motifs, creating a bridge between the world of the real and the transcendent. These elements help to convey the complex experiences of the

characters, the inner conflicts and spiritual quests, reflecting the richness of Kazakh cultural heritage and its connection with universal human values. An important aspect of the analysis is the symbolism of nature, which represents the cycle of life, as well as sacred elements such as traditions, rituals and epic, which connect the individual experiences of the characters with the collective memory of the people. Linguistic techniques such as the use of metaphors, allegories, and idioms emphasise the philosophical depth of the texts, creating space for the interpretation of mystical themes (Jiao 2024). Such works reveal the richness of the spiritual tradition of Kazakh literature, allowing to reveal unique forms of interaction between the real and the metaphysical.

In *Kara Sөzder* by Kunanbayev and Seisenbayev (2009), mystical motifs find the expression through the author's philosophical reflections on the nature of the human soul, its relationship with the outside world and fundamental moral principles. In these texts, nature acts as a mirror of the inner state of man, and its phenomena symbolise the stages of the spiritual path. For example, the change of seasons in Abay's reflections is associated with the idea of the cyclical nature of life, emphasising that each end is only the beginning of a new stage. Spring becomes a symbol of rebirth, while winter is the embodiment of trials and the inevitability of change, which echoes the notion of spiritual renewal. The allegories used by the author fill the text with deep symbolism. For example, the image of mountains that stand unbroken in the heights becomes a metaphor for human resilience and striving for spiritual heights despite the difficulties of earthly existence.

The river flowing through the steppe embodies the continuity of time and the connection between the previous times and the future, which reflects the importance of memory and heritage in the spiritual life of man. The language of the work is saturated with images that emphasise the struggle between the material and the sublime. For example, Abay reflects on how the pursuit of wealth and external well-being can overshadow a person's true purpose. In one of the reflections, Abay states that a person who has not learnt harmony with the world and himself cannot achieve true happiness. The mystical atmosphere is enhanced through the subtle poetry, the brevity of the narrative and the use of metaphors that make the texts accessible to interpretation on different levels. In *Kara Sөzder*, the human soul is presented as a dynamic and multifaceted phenomenon in a constant struggle between the earthly and the spiritual. These reflections emphasise the universality of Abay's message, which transcends Kazakh culture and addresses issues vital to all eras and peoples (Barlybayeva et al. 2022).

The novel *Qartqoža* by Aimauytov (1926) is centred on the fate of a young Kazakh whose life takes place in an era of profound social change and political upheaval. The central theme of the work is the hero's struggle to maintain the identity and hope in the face of oppression. Mystical motifs play an important role in revealing the inner world and the relationship with the environment (Issakova et al.

2021). The land described in the novel is not just a geographical element, but a sacred symbol that embodies the spirit of the people, the history and cultural heritage. The hero perceives nature as a source of comfort, strength and inspiration, especially in moments of doubt and loss. For example, the scenes where Qartqoža gazes into the vast steppes are filled with deep symbolism: the steppe becomes a reflection of the inner freedom and at the same time a reminder of the long journey to be made.

The linguistic features of the text enhance the mystical atmosphere. Aimauytov (1926) uses national idioms, metaphors, and images that emphasise the connection between man and the native land. For example, the image of a tree whose roots go deep into the ground is used as a metaphor to describe the hero whose life is closely connected with the homeland, but whose branches strive upwards, towards the new and unknown. The spirituality of the work is evident in the way the hero finds solace in nature and faith in the future. For example, the scene where Qartqoža turns to the stars in the night sky becomes a symbol of the spiritual search and endeavour to find the place in the world. This episode illustrates how nature and its elements become conduits between the earthly and the sublime, linking man to the sacred. Mystical motifs in the novel help the author to convey the importance of man's unity with the land and cultural heritage, making these themes central to revealing the character's image (Barlybayeva *et al.* 2022; Streltsova 2023).

In the Esenberlim's 'Nomads' epic trilogy, mystical motifs are organically woven into the historical narrative, creating a deep connection between the personal fate of the heroes and the collective memory of the people. One of the central symbols is the steppe, which in Kazakh literature personifies not only freedom and vastness, but also the metaphysical connection of man with the earth and the spiritual world. The steppe in the work becomes a living being, which seems to interact with the heroes, reflecting the inner conflicts and life trials. For example, in the episodes where the heroes are faced with a choice between personal ambitions and duty to the people, the steppe is presented not only as a symbol of unlimited possibilities, but also as a source of loneliness and doubt. An important moment is the scene where the hero walks through the steppe alone, torn between the duty to preserve tradition and the desire for change. Here, the steppe becomes an allegory of inner search and struggle, emphasising the mystical aspect of the connection between man and nature. Esenberlin (1978) describes the steppe as a space filled with mystery and memories, where every fold of land and every tumbleweed tells a story of the previous times.

The linguistic features of the work include rich figurative language, the use of traditional Kazakh idioms and metaphors that reinforce the sacred perception of the steppe space. For example, the comparison of the steppe with the endless sky emphasises its infinity, and the use of the metaphor "the steppe breathes" highlights its living nature. These elements add a special mystical atmosphere to the

narrative, linking the natural landscape to the spiritual quest of the characters. An important mystical symbol in the trilogy is also the rivers that cross the steppe and symbolise the path of life. In one of the episodes, the river becomes a place where the hero washes himself, preparing to make an important decision, which is interpreted as an act of spiritual purification and renewal. Mystical motifs are reinforced through the description of the steppe winds, which seem to whisper to the hero the answers to the questions, linking the protagonist to the memory of the ancestors. Thus, the steppe in 'Nomads' becomes more than just a place of action. It embodies eternity, spiritual power and the connection between the previous times, present and future, which makes it an integral part of the narrative, filled with mystical symbolism and deep philosophical reflections (Barlybayeva et al. 2022).

In Auezov's (1956) novel *Abai's Path: An Epic Novel*, mystical motifs are expressed through the spiritual development of the protagonist and the connection with the cultural and philosophical traditions of the Kazakh people. The narrative is saturated with descriptions of folk rituals, songs and legends, which carry elements of mysticism and spirituality. For example, the scenes in which Abay reflects on the role in preserving culture and spiritual values emphasise the inner conflict between tradition and the need for change. The language of the work is rich in allegories, which help to convey the multifaceted nature of cultural heritage and point out its connection to the mystical aspects of human life. The spirituality of the novel is manifested in Abay's quest for harmony between individual development and collective good, which makes mystical motifs central to the inner search (Issayeva and Aitimbetova 2024).

In Suleimenov's (1975) *Az and I*, mystical motifs are expressed through the study of historical and cultural roots of the Kazakh people. The author turns to the symbolism of ancient texts, myths, and epics that link the previous times with the present. Mystical elements are manifested in the interpretation of cultural symbols such as ornaments, ancient names and images that carry deep meanings and sacred significance. Through analysing language and artistic traditions, the author reveals the ways in which Kazakh culture preserves and transmits its spiritual values. The linguistic features of the work emphasise the importance of language as a carrier of sacred knowledge that unites generations. Mystical motifs here act as a link that allows comprehending the previous times and adapting its lessons to modernity, emphasising the importance of cultural continuity and its influence on national identity (Abylkassimova and Tulebaeva 2022).

Thus, the analysis shows that in Kazakh literature mystical motifs express the unity of human and nature, linking personal experience with collective memory. Through metaphors, idioms, and symbols, writers reveal inner spiritual quests and the continuity of cultural traditions. Mystical language

becomes a means of expressing moral purification, harmony, and the connection between the earthly and the sacred, turning Kazakh literature into a reflection of the nation's spiritual worldview.

4.3. Assessment of the role of mystical symbols and motifs in Kazakh literature as part of the national literary heritage

Mystical symbols and motifs pervading Kazakh literature are central to its structure and perception as a national cultural heritage. These elements carry not only artistic, but also spiritual, philosophical and historical value. The elements fulfil the functions of preserving national identity, transmitting sacred knowledge, forming a link between the earthly and the spiritual, and strengthening historical memory (Table 2). The significance goes beyond literary creation, transferring ideas and images into the sphere of national identity, collective memory and cultural traditions.

Function	Description	Purpose	Example
Preservation of identity	Reflection of the traditions and culture of the people	Strengthening the connection between generations, preserving identity	Symbols of nature (steppe, river) as the spirit of the people
Transfer of values	Broadcasting ideas about harmony and purpose	Formation of spiritual foundations, understanding of life	Cycles of nature as a symbol of renewal
The connection between the earthly and the spiritual	Uniting the material world with spiritual quest	Creating harmony, connection with the sacred	Sacred rites and rituals
Memory Preservation	Reinforcing historical events through symbols	Strengthening memory, rethinking experience	Allegories in epics and legends
Intercultural dialogue	Universal images for understanding by other cultures	Enrichment of cultures, popularization of heritage	The symbol of the steppe as a universal space
Exploration of the Soul	Revealing the Spiritual Quests of Heroes	Understanding human nature, searching for harmony	The sky as a symbol of eternal questions

Table 2. The main functions of mystical motifs in Kazakh literature (compiled by the authors based on Barlybayeva *et al.* 2022, Issayeva and Aitimbetova 2024, Abylkassimova and Tulebaeva 2022).

Kazakh culture is based on the deep connection of man with nature, sacral attitude to the surrounding world and aspiration for harmony between the earthly and spiritual (Efremov 2025). In literature, these aspects find the expression through a rich system of mystical symbols that reflect the inner world of man, the struggle with contradictions, aspiration to higher ideals and search for the meaning of life.

The literary heritage of the Kazakh people preserves and transmits these ideas through generations, acting not only as a guardian of the past, but also as a tool for the formation of spiritual guidelines in modern times.

Mystical motifs in Kazakh literature play an important role in strengthening national identity (Doszhan 2023b). The motifs fulfil the function of a link between cultural tradition and personal experience, uniting the collective heritage with individual experiences. Through mystical images and symbols, literature helps the reader to realise the roots, to feel belonging to a nation for which spiritual values and cultural heritage remain the key reference points. Such literature becomes a space where people can find answers to existential questions, get in touch with the sacred and feel the connection with the previous times.

A special place in Kazakh literature is occupied by symbols of nature, which are often used as guides between the earthly and the spiritual (Bedelbayeva *et al.* 2023; Kushenova *et al.* 2025). Nature acts not just as a background for the narrative, but as a living participant, helping people to reveal the inner conflicts and achieve harmony. The steppe, mountains, rivers, and sky become symbols of eternity, freedom and permanence, which emphasises the central role of nature in the spiritual life of the Kazakh people. These images strengthen the mystical component of the texts, making the texts not only works of art, but also deeply philosophical reflections on man's place in the world.

Another important function of mystical motifs is the ability to convey the spiritual richness and philosophical concepts of Kazakh culture. Literature becomes a way of preserving and transmitting sacred knowledge, traditional ideas and moral principles. Through mystical symbols, universal ideas are transmitted that transcend time and space, making Kazakh literature significant for world culture (Novozhenov *et al.* 2020). In such a context, Kazakh literature is perceived not only as a part of the national heritage, but also as a contribution to the common spiritual wealth of mankind.

Mystical motifs help to comprehend the historical path of the Kazakh people, reflecting its cultural development and struggle for identity (Doszhan 2023a). Literature becomes a tool through which the people preserve the identity despite historical trials and social changes. Mystical elements in the texts allow readers to gain a deeper understanding of the philosophy of the Kazakh worldview, based on respect for tradition, faith in higher powers and striving for inner balance. Through literature, ideas about good and evil, the destiny of man, and the need to live in harmony with the world around are conveyed. Mystical symbols play a key role in the formation of the spiritual basis of Kazakh literary heritage. The symbols allow authors to explore the inner world of man, the aspiration to higher values and the search for the role in the world. This theme is universal, but in Kazakh literature it acquires a unique character due to its close connection with cultural traditions and national peculiarities.

Mystical motifs serve as an important means of revealing these unique aspects, enhancing the emotional impact of the texts and the philosophical depth.

Kazakh literature through mystical imagery helps to preserve and transmit cultural traditions that might otherwise be lost. For example, the use of oral elements such as epics, tales, legends, and songs in literary texts helps to preserve sacred elements of culture. These texts become living carriers of cultural heritage, passing it on from generation to generation. In this context, mystical motifs become not only a part of a literary work, but also a way to preserve national self-consciousness and strengthen cultural identity. The spirituality of Kazakh literature is also manifested through its connection with philosophical traditions. Mystical motifs serve as a basis for reflection on the meaning of life, fate, and destiny of man. Literary works become a platform for dialogue between tradition and modernity, where mystical symbols help to connect the previous times with the present. This makes Kazakh literature an important tool for maintaining national identity, which remains relevant even in the context of globalisation.

In addition, mystical motifs help literature to act as a bridge between different cultures, creating an opportunity for intercultural dialogue. The unique features of the Kazakh cultural heritage expressed through mystical images become accessible for understanding by representatives of other nations, contributing to the mutual enrichment of cultures. Thus, Kazakh literature not only strengthens its own heritage, but also contributes to the development of the world literary and spiritual space.

Mystical symbols and motifs in Kazakh literature form an essential foundation of the nation's spiritual and artistic heritage. They embody the unity of human, nature, and the sacred, linking individual experience with collective memory and historical continuity. Through these images, Kazakh writers express moral and philosophical values that define the cultural identity of the people, while also opening pathways for universal reflection on the meaning of existence. Mysticism in this context transcends mere artistic expression, becoming a means of preserving tradition, fostering intercultural understanding, and maintaining the spiritual integrity of the Kazakh worldview in the face of modern transformations.

4.4. Relating the research findings to literary and cultural trends

The results of the study showed that mystical motifs in literature played a key role in reflecting the human soul, spiritual quests and philosophical reflections. The use of these motifs allowed authors to create universal images related to morality, existential search and cultural identity. Similar conclusions were made by Holdridge (2022) in the context of Irish literature, where nature and

landscape acted as symbols of man's spiritual connection with the native land. However, the Irish tradition focused on the characters' personal experiences of loss and homecoming, whereas Kazakh literature emphasised collective identity and connection to historical memory, which reflected its orientation towards the preservation of cultural heritage.

Aimukhambet *et al.* (2021) highlighted mythological symbolism as a structural element of metatext. This proved to be similar to the findings of this study, which emphasised the symbolic function of mystical motifs. However, the approach of the researchers was based on the study of metatext, whereas in Kazakh literature the emphasis was on the use of linguistic and symbolic means to synthesise epic and modern literary forms. This distinction demonstrated the uniqueness of Kazakh literature in integrating traditional and modern elements to express mystical themes.

The linguistic and symbolic means of expressing mystical motifs in Kazakh literature also showed the complexity of using metaphors, allegories and national idioms. These means conveyed philosophical ideas and spiritual values, linking the characters to the sacred world. Parallels were traced in the study of Sarsenbaeva (2024), who emphasised the use of symbolism in literature to form an artistic image. However, in Kazakh literature, symbolism was more deeply rooted in folk traditions and spiritual concepts, unlike the researcher's analysis, where attention was paid to the aesthetic function and interaction with non-realistic elements.

Lemus (2021) studied the use of mystical elements in the works of transnational authors, emphasising the creation of 'border' spaces between reality and imagination. Unlike Kazakh literature, where mystical motifs linked sacred elements to cultural continuity, transnational literature focused on the personal transformation of characters through interaction with different cultures. This distinction emphasised the uniqueness of Kazakh literature, where mystical motifs served not only as a means of self-knowledge, but also as a way of strengthening national identity.

The study of Kazakh literature showed its significance in intercultural dialogue due to the universality of mystical motifs and the ability to integrate philosophical concepts. A similar approach was observed in the work of Santangelo (2023), where emotions and symbols in literary language were considered as means of conveying cultural meanings. However, Kazakh literature paid more attention to collective memory and national traditions, whereas the researcher's analysis focused on individual perception and emotional dynamics, which made the approaches of these literatures different.

Rajabi *et al.* (2020) on magical realism confirmed that mystical elements could serve as a link between the real and the supernatural, creating a unique space for interpretation. The magical realism explored by the authors stood out for its emphasis on the blurring of boundaries between worlds, which allowed for the exploration of the deeper aspects of the human psyche, as well as cultural and

social phenomena. This direction resonated in Kazakh literature, where mysticism was used as a means of strengthening the connection with cultural heritage and the sacred world. However, unlike magical realism, which focused on fantastic elements, Kazakh literature sought to integrate mystical motifs into real cultural and historical contexts, making these contexts an integral part of the narrative. Mystical images in Kazakh works, such as symbols of nature and sacred rituals, acted not only as an artistic tool, but also as a way of preserving collective memory and traditions. This distinction emphasised the unique approach of Kazakh literature, where mysticism, rather than creating illusion, enhanced realism through a deep connection to the spiritual and cultural identity of the people.

Kazakh literature demonstrated the rich aesthetic nature of mystical motifs that enhanced the emotional and philosophical impact of the texts. These motifs played an important role in creating multi-layered narratives that connect the inner experiences of the characters with the cultural and historical environment. The analysis of Classen (2020) showed that fantasy and imagination served as key artistic tools in medieval literature, where mystical elements often acted as a means to reflect fantastic worlds and allegories. However, Kazakh literature, unlike medieval European literature, emphasised symbolism closely linked to nature, sacred elements and historical memory. Such symbols as the steppe, river, and mountains not only created a mystical atmosphere, but also became carriers of cultural and spiritual meanings, enhancing the realism of the narrative. This approach made Kazakh literature unique, combining mysticism with real aspects of human experience and drawing attention to the importance of preserving the national heritage. Mystical motifs here acted not only as an aesthetic device, but also as a means of expressing philosophical reflections on human life, nature, and time.

The comparison of Kazakh literary tendencies with broader literary and cultural trends confirms the universality and originality of mystical motifs as a means of expressing human spirituality and cultural identity. While in many world literatures mysticism serves to explore personal experience and emotional transformation, in Kazakh prose it acquires a collective and philosophical dimension, reflecting the unity of people, nature, and sacred tradition. The integration of folklore, myth, and symbolism into modern artistic forms distinguishes Kazakh literature as a unique phenomenon that connects ancient archetypes with contemporary meanings. Mystical motifs here not only enrich aesthetic expression but also strengthen the continuity of cultural memory, ensuring the dialogue between tradition and modernity in both national and global contexts.

5. Conclusions

As a result of the study, it was found that mystical motifs play a key role in literature, fulfilling complex functions that are associated with spiritual, cultural and philosophical understanding of human nature. The study showed that such motifs act as a universal tool for conveying profound ideas, while preserving the unique features of national literature. Kazakh literature, in particular, has proven its ability to organically combine sacred symbols, natural elements and philosophical reflections, forming texts with a multi-layered structure. It has been revealed that mystical motifs in Kazakh literature have a close connection with national identity, acting as a means of preserving collective memory. These motifs contribute not only to the reproduction of historical experience, but also to its comprehension in modern contexts. Through the symbolism of nature and linguistic elements, authors create images that allow preserving traditional values, passing these values from generation to generation. Thus, literature becomes an important link connecting the previous times, present and future.

In addition, the study has shown that mystical motifs in literature have a transcendent character, helping authors to overcome the boundaries of the real world and explore such universal themes as the search for the meaning of life, the struggle with inner conflicts and the desire for harmony. In Kazakh literature, these motifs are closely connected with sacred aspects of national culture, which distinguishes it from other literary traditions where mysticism is often exclusively artistic or symbolic in nature. Special attention was paid to the linguistic and symbolic means of expressing mystical motifs. It was noted that through allegories, metaphors, and idioms authors emphasise the philosophical depth of texts, increasing the emotional and artistic impact. This makes Kazakh literature not only a means of communicating ideas, but also a platform for cultural dialogue.

This study explores the role of mystical motifs in Central Asian literature, providing a framework for understanding the spiritual dimensions of literature in societies undergoing modernization and globalization. It provides a methodological foundation for Central Asian literary studies, examining how national literatures articulate their spiritual and philosophical heritage through narrative symbolism. The study also expands the theoretical boundaries of mysticism beyond Western and religious paradigms, highlighting the potential of lesser-studied literary traditions like Kazakh literature to redefine mysticism as a multidimensional phenomenon. This approach encourages future comparative and interdisciplinary research, exploring how mystical imagery can connect different cultures through shared spirituality, morality, and existence meaning.

An interdisciplinary approach to studying mystical motifs in Kazakh literature could enhance the theoretical depth of literary analysis. This would involve analyzing the symbolic and ritual origins of mystical imagery, revealing how ancient belief systems, oral traditions, and communal practices shape

literary representations of the sacred. The syncretic nature of Kazakh mysticism, which combines elements of Islamic spirituality, shamanic cosmology, and ethical humanism, could be clarified. Applying postcolonial theory could also reinterpret mystical motifs as a form of cultural resistance and self-redefinition within colonization and modern nation-building.

The limitations of the study are due to the focus on specific works of Kazakh literature and the mystical motifs, which limited the possibility of in-depth analyses of similar elements in other national literary traditions and genre contexts. Promising directions for further research include comparative analysis of mystical motifs in the literature of different national traditions and genres, as well as the study of the influence of globalisation and cultural exchange on the transformation. An interdisciplinary approach combining literary studies, cultural studies and philosophy will help to deepen the understanding of the significance of mystical elements in literature.

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