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National specificity of the conceptual foundation of the epic poem “Manas”

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Abstract

Relevance. The relevance of exploring the conceptual space and the artistic implementation of national elements in epic works is conditioned upon the need to establish international communication about the cultural heritage of the Kyrgyz people and the consolidation of its state status.

Purpose. The purpose of this research was to explore the national identity of the Kyrgyz people through the analysis of the conceptual space of the heroic poem “Manas” with the consideration of conceptual categories and nomination of key concepts.

Methodology. The following methods are used in this research: analytical-synthetic, selective artistic, conceptual, intertextual, cultural studies, structural, historical and contextual.

Results. Using the above methods, the conceptual structure of the heroic epic “Manas” was considered and the following categories were identified: religious, mythological, historical, philosophical, educational and folk and everyday life. In addition, the concepts included in each of these categories were indicated. The research analyzed plots, motifs and images appearing in the text of a work of fiction to develop the national identity of the Kyrgyz people. The moral and ethical values of the nation and the specifics of Kyrgyz’s upbringing and mentality were emphasised. Attention was focused on the historical context of the work and closely related philosophical categories. The results of conceptual modelling are presented in the table. Based on the analysis of Manas, an idea of the cultural, social and literary context of Kyrgyzstan was developed.

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Conclusions. This work can be used for comparative research of different aspects: cultural, mythopoetic, religious, and historical based on the analysis of the heroic epic, to develop an idea of the national mental core of the peoples of Central Asia, to consider the key concepts actively used in the oral and written literary traditions of Kyrgyzstan.

Keywords: literary tradition; Kyrgyz culture; mythologeme; religious beliefs; historical discourse.

Introduction

Exploring the conceptual framework of the poem “Manas” from the standpoint of its national specificity is very significant for the promotion of the cultural product established by Kyrgyz in the international space. Drawing attention to historical discourse, cultural context and social changes is relevant, as through such studies the world’s understanding of the specificity of communication and mentality of the Kyrgyz people increases. The nation’s literary traditions reflect an entire stratum of cultural knowledge both about their nation and the world in general, thus, folklore, historical, and mythological representations of life point to fundamental values, including the understanding of friendship, honor, patriotism, and danger. Thus, the research of the artistic layer of culture is necessary from the standpoint of transmission of cultural knowledge from generation to generation to avoid mistakes. Consideration of concepts allows learning more about mythology, religion, culture, and social interaction, as they represent capacious linguacultural codes. Analyzing the conceptual foundation of a work of fiction allows obtaining the maximum amount of knowledge about the national identity, which allows highlighting the key features of the mentality of the people.

Epic works reflect the national spirit, expose the characters of national heroes, and continue the traditions of narrative folklore; thus, they preserve the mental core of an entire nation [1-4]. The research of the heroic poem “Manas” is relevant as it is essential for understanding the historical stages of the nation’s development on the way to independent states, which is typical for many countries in Europe and Asia. Developing an idea of oral and written literary traditions helps in the research of the artistic national fund. Thus, the research of literary works is necessary to highlight the stages of development of literary genres, plots and motive structure. It is relevant to fix mythopoetic, and folklore elements in a certain historical period and trace their transformations. The research of national elements and their artistic implementation in the poem “Manas” helps to develop an idea of Kyrgyz culture, to identify key images of folk heroes and mental characteristics of Kyrgyz people. Establishing connections between the experience of the people and modern youth, can convey the basic moral and ethical values of the nation and preserve its identity. Consideration of the conceptual framework of the poem “Manas” is necessary since only recently a period of active research has begun after Kyrgyzstan has asserted its rights to this work. Thus, at the current stage of studying Kyrgyz culture and literature, it is relevant to draw maximum attention to the motifs, plots and images of the poem from the international community.

In the research by T.K. Aitalieva *et al.* [5] examine the concepts of Khizra and forty Chileans on the example of the epic poem “Manas”. The authors note that the space of the work of fiction is saturated with various cultural layers, and symbols of different epochs, including Islam. In addition, the work analyses the motifs and plot specifics of

the folk epic. Researchers N. Shaimerdenova *et al.* [6] pay special attention to the research of the specific features of formulaic style and epic style, analyses ancient forms of folk life and epic thinking, presents the genesis of genres, considers the principles of performing tradition using discursive, comparative analysis of archaic literary texts.

In the work of T. Marazykov *et al.* [7] reviewed the main types of folk medicine mentioned in the cultural and historical monument of Kyrgyz folklore tradition – the epic “Manas”. The authors note that the work of fiction reflects valuable information about folk methods of fighting diseases, which is designed on empirical, rational and religious ideas about life. The research of A.S. Oglu Khalilov [8] is designed to explore the epic tradition in Oghuz culture by the example of epic texts. The analysis of fiction in oral and written form was performed using comparative-typological and historical methods. This research emphasizes the structure of the epic, details and ritualism of the texts.

M.K. Koldoshev [9] examines the main pedagogical ideas embedded in the Kyrgyz folk epic “Manas”, and the methods of their implementation in the modern educational process, in particular in the implementation of educational work. The author notes that Manas-batyr is a folk hero as he protected the Kyrgyz from exploitation by foreigners. The research highlights the education of patriotic spirit, and love for the motherland and his land. Folk epic, according to T.S. Oglu Gani [10], is a source of people’s ethno-culture, original imagination, and mythological memory. Myths, beliefs, convictions, beliefs, moral values and moral provisions established in society are the foundation for artistic and aesthetic embodiment of stories. The work analyses different cultural traditions and individual ideological traits of different peoples.

The purpose of this research is to explore the conceptsphere of the epic poem “Manas”, to develop an understanding of the interrelation and functioning of mythological, religious, moral, philosophical and historical plots, motifs and values, to consider the basic foundations (cultural patterns) on which the narrative is built. The subject of the research is the text of the epic poem “Manas” considered from the standpoint of conceptual space. Based on the purpose of this work, the following objectives were set: to consider the conceptual bases of the work, to identify the interrelationships between them, to develop an idea of the national cultural and historical discourse of Kyrgyzstan, to focus on mythological, religious, historical and moral elements.

Literature Review

Modern research is designed to explore the ethnofolklore and epic traditions of various peoples of the world, including those living in Central Asia, and to explore their artistic works from the standpoint of their national and international value. In addition, mythological and religious motifs and images, beliefs and traditions of the peoples, social patterns of life and ideas about the upbringing of

younger generations are of interest. The Eurasian civilization of the steppe has brought many intellectual values to the world cultural fund, but they have been understudied. B. Obrusanszky [11] notes that the peoples of the Eurasian steppe began to summarize their history rather late, therefore, only folklore texts, ancient chronicles and heroic epic have been preserved.

The epic poem "Manas" with its thousand-year history and culture demonstrates the world outlook and beliefs of the Kyrgyz people and other Turkic peoples. N. Useev [12] reminds that the Kyrgyz people accepted Islam as a result of the Battle of Talas in 751, which is reflected in this work. The heroes of "Manas" perform battle cries that repeat the truths of Islam. National identity consists of several common markers, one of which is the idea of national heroes. The research by A. Wachtel [13] focuses on the methods of establishing a national Kyrgyz hero by examining the image of Manas, a legendary bogatyr from the oral epic, and by analyzing the 19th-century historical character Kurmanjan Datki. The work notes that the image of Manas from the standpoint of a modern writer is a courageous hero, representative of interests and unifier of the nation. Therewith, the image of Kurmanzhan is more associated with pragmatism and state wisdom and is the embodiment of the national character of the Kyrgyz.

The concept of the enemy is explored by M. Duman [14] on the example of 30 epic texts of Turkic origin, selected from different regions, based on structuralist methodology. The author demonstrates the origins of the establishment of the enemy image and the preservation of its connection with contemporary politics. Thus, the work constructs a chain between the past, present and future, politics and epic, which mutually influence each other. The research by G. FitzHerbert [15] explores the motif of the hero's divine origin, through which the core of the conventional epic motif is reconstructed. The focus of attention is directed to Inner Asian traditions related to the sky and mountains, and Buddhist ideology and Manichaeism of the Silk Road. J. Plumtree [16] states that computer methods can help in the research of folk epic. It can be used to quantify texts, provide statistical data, and examine specific elements of an increasing corpus of data. A. Öztürkmen [17] notes that folklore performed the tasks accompanying Turkish nationalism in different ways. This subject is examined through the case study of five original texts written by Turkish intellectuals. Thus, most of the studies have the purpose of developing an understanding of folk heroes and national traits, the relationship between the historical past and the future, and the need to explore national-specific traits in heroic epics based on the folklore traditions of the people to understand their psychology and mentality.

Materials and Methods

The theoretical foundation of this research is the works of modern authors representing different interpretations of the heroic epic and different understandings of the national specificity of literary works. The works considered the following aspects: the development of epic traditions in different countries of the world, historical and cultural prerequisites for the establishment of fiction, and the reflection of national identity in the example of heroic epic.

The versions of "Manas" by S. Orozbako [18], Zh. Mamai [19] and S. Karalaev [20].

The analytical and synthetic method was used to consider the theoretical works of modern researchers related to understanding the ancient oral and written literary traditions of the peoples of the world, developing an idea of the national heroic epic and compiling a national portrait on the example of key heroes-gods. Emphasis was placed on historical, cultural and social aspects of national identity. Selective artistic analysis was focused on the selective nature of elements to be considered in the poem "Manas", in particular the conceptual space consisting of mythological, religious, historical, philosophical, moral, folk and everyday elements. Thus, the text of the epic poem was analyzed for the coexistence of the above components in one textual space.

Conceptual analysis was used to consider the conceptual categories and notions included in them and reflecting common meanings. The conceptual space was represented by comparing mythological, religious, historical, philosophical, moral and folk discourse. The table named the main categories of concepts and examples of the concepts themselves, most frequently occurring in the text. Intertextual analysis was used to identify the main allusions to mythological plots, religious motifs, folk beliefs and historical concepts, and to justify their integration into the artistic space of the literary text. Thus, references to archaic legends and ancient gods were allusions and reminiscences to already known primary sources, often existing in the oral literary tradition. Structural analysis was used to compile the conceptual model (structure) of the epic poem "Manas", consisting of structural elements – conceptual categories (mythological, historical, mythological, educational, philosophical and folk and everyday life) and individual concepts. Thus, the main components of the conceptual space of the literary work under consideration were indicated.

Historical analysis was used to reflect the historical events related to the struggle for independence of Kyrgyzstan with the Kytai and other tribes, to characterize the positive image of the national hero in the Kyrgyz people's opinion. Historical analysis was used to identify the most frequently used concepts with a historical component. A contextual analysis was used to confirm the thoughts and concepts stated in the text of the research, in particular, to demonstrate the interpretation of the meaning of specific concepts. Thus, fragments from the epic poem served as evidence of using this or that concept in the literary text. Cultural analysis was used to understand the nature of the conceptual space of the artwork, reflecting cultural, mythological, religious, value and moral signs and symbols. Thus, the analysis of the heroic epic relied on folklore, ethnographic and ethno-cultural information presented within the literary work.

Results and Discussion

The Kyrgyz epic "Manas" reflects the customs, traditions and beliefs of the Kyrgyz people, demonstrates historical events, describes the struggle for power and relations between different tribes and peoples, and pays attention to the values of the Kyrgyz people. It is included in the list of World Cultural Heritage and the Guinness Book of Records [20, 21]. The main characters of the work are the

noble Manas, the wise Bakai, the sacred elder Koshoi, and Manas's companions: Almambet, Chubak, Syrgak and his lovely wife Kanykei. The main merit of Manas is in uniting the Kyrgyz people, conquering territories, and successfully fighting against the Kytai and other tribes. The folk epic Manas reflects the moral values and ideals of the people, namely freedom-loving, goodness, justice, the triumph of nobility, unity and generosity. The Kyrgyz are proud of their cultural heritage and narrators, called manaschi, who

are the so-called guides between the two worlds: human and transcendent [18, 22, 23].

Considering the conceptual space of the Manas epic, its multilayer and multidirectional nature can be noted since the poem combines fairy-tale folk motifs with ancient mythological and religious beliefs and fantasy plots are closely intertwined with heroic and educational themes [18-20]. When exploring the epic for concepts, their following categories were identified: religious, historical, mythological, educational and philosophical (Table 1).

Table 1. The structure of the conceptual space of the epic poem “Manas”

Concepts					
Religious	Historical	Mythological	Educational	Philosophical	Folk household
Prayer	People	Gift	Honour	Life	Aidar (haircut)
Islam	War	Predictor	Dignity	Death	Akkanky eer (saddle)
Allah	Steppe	Sacred objects, places and actions	Love for the Motherland	Love	Komokoiluu (thickened spear)
Faith	Bogatyr	Miraculous salvation	Respect	Wisdom	Er dzhigit (raising sons)
Salvation	Competition	Revival	Mentor	Help	Er enish (traditional wrestling of riders in the Kyrgyz style)

Source: compiled by the authors based on [18-20]

Thus, each of the identified categories includes a number of concepts that interact with each other within the functional-semantic field. Notably, there are different kinds of interrelations between the categories: for example, the historical category interacts with the philosophical category, and the folk and household category with the educational one.

Mythological and religious foundations of the folk epic “Manas”

The folk epic “Manas” frequently contains images of mythological nature. These may be heroes with supernatural powers, soothsayers or magical animals. Kyrgyz ancient myths demonstrate belief in the goddess Kayyp, who is the patroness of animals. She was prayed to for the protection of animals and hunting dogs. She lived on Mount Kayyp, which was considered a sacred place for immortals [19]. Since the primitive religion of the Kyrgyz was shamanism, the epic preserved representations reflecting the belief in ancient shamans in the guise of magical maidens. Aichurek is the embodiment of the image of a good goddess, a magical maiden, a shaman, and reflects the specific features of the culture of nomadic peoples. Firstly, she was incredibly beautiful: in “Manas” her beauty is equated to the Sun, Moon and light, and she had a prophetic gift, thus, she could transform into a swan. The image of Aichurek is also connected with the motif of the hero's revival by his wife, as through her magic power Semetey was resurrected. The epic depicts the “ok attoo” ritual, during which the bullet miraculously leaves the wounded man [24, 25].

The conceptual space of Manas is closely connected with animistic beliefs, namely the notion that the soul can leave the body during life and inhabit another object. Among the objects of magical nature, one can distinguish kandagai trousers, a potion that raises from the dead. According to the version of Zh. Mamai [19] in describing the war between Gulchoro and Kiyaz, it is narrated that

Gulchoro dealt more and more blows to Kiyaz, but the latter was constantly resurrected. Only after hitting the sparrows, in which Kiyaz's soul was hidden, was he completely defeated in the battle. The following concepts can be identified in “Manas”: “unbroken sleep”, “incredible birth”, “abduction of the hero's wife”, “resurrection from the dead”, and “conflict between parents and children”. The epic talks about the miraculous resurrection of Manas through the goddess Chayirdy, who gave him a magic potion, milk or water from the sacred river (according to different versions). In addition, Manas has stories about the resurrection of Semetey and Chakmaktash [19, 26].

Mythological concepts are associated with the worship of totem animals, thus, the warlike Manas is often compared to the white tiger, dragon, divine bird and lion. The images of totem animals' deer, elk, and argali were perceived by Kyrgyz tribes as patrons. The epic depicts the zoomorphic goddess Ak-Bugu feeding her milk to the infant Semetey. Tengrianism was actively supported in Kyrgyz folk tradition, as the Kyrgyz worshipped such pagan deities as Tenir, Zher-Suu, and Umai-ene [27]. The deity Tenir was considered a social force, a source of good and the first order, the deity of earth and water Zher-Suu – an object of clan worship. In ancient times, the goddess Umai was considered a warrior who gave the ancient Turks victory, but then her functions changed due to historical conditions, and she became the patroness of the home. In the episode where the dialogue between Manas and Umai occurred, the goddess is portrayed as alive, and natural, and the belief in her existence and power is emphasized.

The reflection of beliefs is connected with the functioning of such characters as Telek, who could foresee the result of a campaign, or Agydai, who could guess from a ram's shoulder blade, predetermining a person's fate. In Manas's inner circle are fortune-tellers and soothsayers whose main functions are to cure people, predict the future, and pacify the dark world. Almambet, for example, learnt

the art of spells from a sixty-headed dragon living on Lake Aversgen. Using the diviner's help, he repeatedly succeeded in causing atmospheric precipitation due to the magic stone "zhai tash", which prevented many disasters and dangers. The description of warfare occupies the main artistic space in the folk epic, being the key storyline [28, 29]. But apart from war, Manas's life is full of miracles. For example, the very birth of the hero occurred through an ancient ritual, thus, he can be called a gift of heaven or a gift of the gods. His armor, sword and warhorse had miraculous properties. The epic repeatedly emphasizes that Manas had God-like power, as no one could overcome him. It is confirmed by the sixth battle with Chynaacha [19, 20].

Since the epic poem *Manas* was established over many centuries, it reflects concepts related to Islam (God, Muslims, prayer): "Musulmandyn kapyrdan, artyktygyn bilgizip" ("Let me know the superiority of a Muslim over an infidel") [19], "Tört ireket bagymdat, eretki erte namazdy etkeyip okup alyptyr" ("Four rites of morning prayer, he bowed and recited the early morning prayer"). God's love for man is often mentioned: "Kuday ticket elyshty, zhe elbey tiryy kalyshty" ("God knows whether they died or stayed alive without dying"), "Kudaydyn sygön pendesi" ("God loves me") [20]. In the version of S. Orozbekov [18] contains an episode about Manas's conversion to the Muslim faith, with his weapons being consecrated according to Muslim custom. In addition, stories are pointing to Manas' pilgrimage to Mecca. And his main companion Almambet is born with the name of Prophet Mohammed on his lips. This image correlates with the ancient tale of Oguz-Kagan, who was the ancestor of Turkic tribes and the first to embrace Islam. Some motifs from the autobiography of Almambet and Oguz coincide: miraculous birth, adoption of Islam, conflict with his father, leaving the parental home, and development of the commander's character in battles.

The Kyrgyz religious worldview was syncretic, which involved the adoption of traits from different religious movements influencing people's everyday lives [30, 31]. Notably, religion played a huge role in the life of the Kyrgyz people, closely intertwined with pre-Islamic beliefs. Moderate Islam was established in Kyrgyzstan due to several factors: its location at the crossroads of the Great Silk Road and the adaptation of Islam to the nomadic way of life, which influenced the minimal number of religious objects and mosques [32-34]. In the version of S. Orozbekov [18] describes the meeting of Manas with Khizr and forty chiltans differently: while Chegebai and Manas were herding lambs, a wolf approached them, but Manas was not afraid of it, unlike his friend, and ran after it. Then Manas finds himself in a cave where he meets forty chiltans who are organizing a feast. They tell Manas that he needs to discover Allah and accept the truths of Islam, answer his questions and tell stories of his reincarnation.

In the version of S. Karalaev [20] speaks about Manas' meeting with forty chiltans and Khizr at dawn. According to Islamic religious beliefs, Khizr is a righteous man and the most intelligent prophet, possessing great wisdom and mystical knowledge, and the sacred ability to do good and help people. He can reincarnate, perform people's wishes, and wander a lot. In addition, there is a popular belief that everyone meets Khizr three times in life: in childhood, adulthood and old age, but cannot identify him. Khizr's

appearance before Manas is described in parallel with bright and colorful sketches of nature: dawn has fallen, a cold wind blows, sparrows scatter and the earth wakes up. Khizr appears before Manas in the guise of a wolf and is surrounded by forty chiltans, who later become the supporters of the rich man himself. Khizr urges Manas to take the religious path and accept Islam. Thus, Manas symbolizes the transition of the Kyrgyz people from mythological to religious beliefs.

Historical, philosophical and folk and household conceptual space

Historical concepts are related to centuries-old traditions of the Kyrgyz people in the organization of social life, passing through different stages on the way to establishing their state. The foundation of the work consists of the plot of the "Great Campaign", in which the following events occur: the conspiracy of Khans, Manas's campaign with his warriors to Beijing, the battle with kytai, the conflict between Almambet and Chubak. In addition, the stories about Almambet, a companion of Manas, and the death and funeral of Manas are significant from the plot standpoint. The narrators S. Orozbekov [18] and S. Karalaev [20], the historical line is characterised by different interpretations of plots, situations and motifs, and the specific architectonics of the work.

The concept of Motherland is one of the key values of the Kyrgyz people, therefore, the epic emphasizes the need to protect it from enemies: "Askar biyik Tal-Choku Ashuusu biyik bel eken, beizhin menen mekenin, eki bashka көp eldin ortosunda chep eken" ("The high pass of Tal-Choku Ashuusu was a belt, a fortress between Beijing and the Motherland, two different peoples"), "Alakandai burutka korgon bolup tuulgan kalkan bolup zharalghan mekenin anyk chebi eken" ("It was a real fortress, a real shield of the Motherland").

The fact of willingness to fight and defend the native land testifies to the militancy of the people: "Ak asaba tuu kamdap, el oedero tartarda" ("The white flag is ready, and the people will go forward") [20], "Unutpai estep aluңar, Bilykty murda salybyz, Tynch zhatkan kyrgyz elge, de" ("Do not forget: we have already laid the foundation for a peaceful Kyrgyz people") [19].

The concepts of death, funeral, and wake are depicted in the epic in national traditions. The whole episode "Wake for Koketei" is devoted to this theme, which is disclosed in detail. The son Bokmurun organizes a grand funeral for his father Koketei. The narrative is saturated with folk and household details, disclosing the picture of the folk life of the Kyrgyz people. In addition, in this fragment, the image of funeral rites is intertwined with battle scenes involving bogatyrs: Manas, Koshoi and Teshtyuk.

The wake is attended by many guests, entertainment, war games and contests where the bogatyrs demonstrate their fighting prowess. In addition, they are attended by those who had feuded with Koketei: Joloi on the Kalmyk side and Konurbai on the Chinese side. The Kyrgyz bogatyrs: Koshoi and Manas won in the foot fight, as well as the peak fight. Notably, this episode most likely refers to the period of development of the Kyrgyz nation in the 15th-16th centuries. The competitions were seen not just as contests but as a confirmation of love for one's native land and willingness to defend it. A person's connection with

his Motherland is very significant; a full-blooded existence outside the interests of his people is impossible. The example of Almambet, a native of the Kytai, demonstrates that despite the loyalty of the Kyrgyz, he feels loneliness and longing for his native land. In addition, it is confirmed by the folk wisdom put into the mouth of the elder Bakai. The Kyrgyz had great respect for their deceased ancestors, the arbaks, and Manas contain several episodes that confirm the honouring of their memory and the tradition of erecting tombstones [18, 20].

Among the philosophical concepts, the notions of life and death play a primary role. The epic emphasizes that a true warrior is not afraid to face death: “Ajal kelse kaitpagan, Olymdon bashyn tartpagan” (“When death came, he did not turn back, he did not turn away from death”). It is about the courage to bear death blows: “Kairaty bar erender Kaigy tartpai olymdon, Zhyrgap zhatkan myndan kōp” (“Courageous heroes have a better chance than happy ones to die without sorrow”). Therewith, the inevitability of death is emphasised: “Ushu turgan olumdon Baatrylar, kaisy zhan kachyp kutulat?” (“Heroes, which soul will be saved from this death?”) [20], “Akyr olum chyn okshoyt, Bul dynyyō zhalganby?” (“It seems that death is real, is this world a lie?”), “Kandai olum kelse da Kachuunu bilbeit narkybyz!” (“Whatever death may come; we do not know how to escape it!”) [18], “Zhurōgy jok zhan kōse, oshol zherde algyndai, moynuna zhakyn olumdy” (“If he saw a soul without a heart, he seemed to be close to death” [19].

Folk and household concepts are primarily related to the Kyrgyz people’s ideas about ethical and moral aspects, educational provisions, and cultural traditions: games, entertainment, and household items. Four key traits are the representatives of the ethical in the work: intelligence, patience, decency and conscience, which the narrators embodied in the characters of Manas, Bakai, Almambet and Kanykei. They are counterbalanced by adverse characters: Konurbai, Joloy and Neskar, who personify four vices: anger, laziness, greed and arrogance.

The Kyrgyz folk epic has a particular load of educational concepts marked by national influence. The narratives of life of the Kyrgyz people are put into the mouths of folk sages: Akbalta, Koshoi, and Bakai, their basic moral and ethical principles were love for their native land and respect for the Motherland. The epic often uses such concepts as “akylman” (sage), “kemenger” (mentor) and “daanyshman” (seer), which are characteristics of a wise man. The following characters are endowed with cunning, shrewdness, foresight and ingenuity: Almambet, Kanykey, Akyl Karachach and Dzherenche Chechen. The notion of “er dzhigit” in Kyrgyz folk epic is connected with the upbringing of sons, enshrined in the nation’s historical experience. This status could be obtained only after passing various tests, in particular, Manas demonstrates the path to becoming an intellectually developed and strong personality. Boys who were not brave enough and did not pass the tests of fate were not given this status [18, 19].

The concept of a “handywoman” was used to personify an intelligent, caring and fair woman who could serve as a model in society for future generations. She is the personification of kindness, beauty, love and the keeper of the home, a faithful friend and companion. Medical knowledge is of great significance in the folk and

household culture of the Kyrgyz. Among the main terms related to medicine are the following:

- “kainatma” (medicine for wounds and fractures);
- “apiyim” (opium);
- “medet” (medicine for a wound after being hit by an arrow).

In addition, medicines of mineral nature are mentioned – “kantemir dary” (a mixture of blood and iron). Kyrgyz medicine representatives were called “tabyp” (witch doctor), “daryger” (doctor), “anachy” (midwife). Manas describes many household games and entertainments: “game of alchiki”, “toguz korgool”, “kishte”, “orompoy”, “selkinchek”, “akyinek”, “shabiet”. Equestrian games were popular: “chon at chabysh”, “alaman baige”, and a game connected with shooting “zhamby atmai”, which are reflected in the episode of Keketey’s wake. In addition, this fragment mentions pike fighting (“er sayish”), horsemen’s wrestling on horseback (“er eñish”) and foot wrestling (“kurōsh”) [18, 19].

Thus, the conceptual space in the folk epic considered consists of several categories, namely religious, mythological, folk and domestic, historical and philosophical concepts. Through such a broad conceptual field, the narrators were able to present a picture of everyday life, traditions, historical realities and mythological beliefs of the Kyrgyz people.

Reception of folk epic in literary studies

In the work of S. Jacquesson [35] indicates that the promotion of the folk epic “Manas” should not be conducted only within the framework of national consolidation and ethnonationalism, but explored from the perspective of the artistic component and global contribution to the literary tradition. The author connects such ethnocentrism with the constant discussions regarding the involvement of the Kyrgyz epic with Chinese culture and the desire to restore historical justice. In the Manas epic, the representation of the Kyrgyz nation occurs through the description of moral and ethical values, cultural heritage, historical achievements, folk medicine and entertainment, and principles of upbringing of the next generations. Folk tales, rendered in prose or poetry, contain stories of heroic battles, and love and carry an entire spectrum of values: faith, art, law, and experience. T. Çelik [36] notes that many European countries are concerned about the process of losing the connection between the traditions of peoples and modern generations, thus, the purpose was set to explore cultural heritage, to establish international organizations that promote this process. Notably, the active research of the Kyrgyz epic and its promotion in the international discourse occurred only 20 years ago, thus, the link between the epic text and modern generations is still in place. Therewith, modern Kyrgyz literature frequently uses traditional plots and motifs from the national history [37].

The book by H.G. Wolf *et al.* [38] is a cultural and linguistic case research on countries such as Hungary, India, South Africa, Nigeria, Romania, China, Iran and Poland. The linguistic expedition explored three main characteristics that are culturally significant and understudied: spirituality, emotionality and society. It allowed evaluating of cultural concepts and metaphors in the texts. From the standpoint of spirituality, the epic poem

"Manas" is saturated with a lot of maxims, and aphoristic statements, which contain capitals truths for the Kyrgyz people. These mainly concern the methods of bringing up children and society as a social unit in general. Priority values are emphasized: love for the native land, patriotism, kindness, and honesty. In terms of emotionality, a high degree of manifestation of both positive and adverse emotions should be noted. From the standpoint of the study of society, aspects of social order and living arrangements, and overcoming historical challenges are significant.

The end of the era of folk epic establishment in Central Asia began in the 19th century, which was due to the increasing number of the population possessing written literacy [39]. In this regard, the oral literary tradition began to be associated with something marginal, however, the Kyrgyz people have preserved many oral traditions, including in the sphere of performing arts. The research by K. Reichl [40] discusses the reasons for the relevance of the Manas epic and its significance for the cultural identity of Kyrgyz. Due to the longtime of establishment and the breadth of description of historical events, this work is a cultural symbol of the nation, since, in addition to depicting the history of the development of statehood, it covers all aspects of life: social, economic, political, cultural, moral. Folk epics reflect the adverse and positive experiences of peoples and national traits. The time of their establishment correlates with the beginning of human history and appeals to the ancient past [41]. N.A. Kurban [42] indicates that the folk epic is universally accessible and generally understood by the entire nation as the themes, formulations and messages are intended for the widest possible audience – all classes of society. Thus, Manas is a product of mass culture as it presents socio-cultural and moral-value meanings that are the core of the worldview of an entire nation.

The Manas epic centers on the struggle of the Kyrgyz people and their triumphant liberation from the slavery of the Uighurs and Kytai, and the strengthening of Turkic identity, particularly Kyrgyz identity. I. Bashiri [43] attempts to discern what role the epic story of Manas plays in modern Kyrgyz society. Modern Kyrgyz society is proud of the poem as a work of art and cultural treasure, which is an artistic embodiment of the struggle of the Kyrgyz people for their independence. Thus, it is actively explored in schools and universities, and Kyrgyz and international specialists are engaged in examining the poem. The heroic poem Manas, which is now acknowledged as the national epic of the Kyrgyz people, was registered on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by the People's Republic of China in 2009. The Kyrgyz managed to restore justice only after 2011 with active political support. Thus, the epic was registered as an intangible cultural heritage of Kyrgyzstan [44]. Defending their cultural product in the international discourse demonstrates an important step of the Kyrgyz people towards building a strong and powerful state, as the restoration and research of historical and literary monuments are one of the chains of preserving the link between the past, the present and the future.

A. Currie & D. Swaim [45] defend the realistic reconstruction of events, noting the reflexivity of history. The authors' position indicates that when history unfolds, chronologically distant events acquire new characteristics.

Constant revision of history is necessary to extract individual facts from the past. The chronological presentation of history in "Manas" allows restoring the main historical events, dates, and facts and establishing a connection between them. Thus, there is a rethinking of historical processes in general. Popular culture is connected with the oral (folklore) tradition of presenting knowledge about the world, recorded in the transmission from mouth to mouth. It can be represented by both prose and poetry, as myths, rituals, and dramatic works [46]. P. Oza [47] explores folk culture through the example of fairy tales in the Indian literary tradition as they represent an integral part of the linguistic and cultural identity of the people. In addition, the author notes the role of regional influences on Indian culture. Despite reflecting the sentiments of an entire nation, myths, traditions and rituals have their regional nature and this may be an interesting subject for future research.

J. Repinecz [48] examines the relationship between the oral and written traditions of literature through the epic tradition. The author attempts to reassess the relevance of West African literature in French. In addition, it is emphasized that the understanding of the narrative national tradition is rather Eurocentric. Despite this, in international literary discourse, the Kyrgyz poem Manas is a historical and cultural phenomenon, presenting the widest canvas for the unfolding of events and a trove of knowledge about Kyrgyz culture. The modernist theory of nationalism exposes contemporary social, political and economic processes, while the ethnosymbolist theory envisages the investigation of the national through the prism of cultural specificities, including oral and written literary tradition [49, 50]. H. Albayrak [51] considers the cultural heritage of the Turkish people on the example of epics representing the Turkic world and including a wide geography: Turkey, Kyrgyzstan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan. Notably, the epics of the peoples of the Caucasus and Central Asia demonstrate a strong connection between historical events, traditions and culture of their people. These texts generally strive to present a broad historical panorama of the stages of statehood [52, 53].

The folk epic "Manas" talks about the struggle of the Kyrgyz against their oppressors. According to ancient sources, Manas was the first person to unite the Kyrgyz tribes, then his struggle was continued by his son Semetey and grandson Seitek. Research by S. Seiilbek *et al.* [54] demonstrates how Manas's return to the political and ideological scene of Kyrgyzstan occurred between 2009 and 2013. The image of Manas is painted as an image of a hero, a bogatyr, a courageous warrior, a patriot, and a leader, ready to defend his native spaces. He is the personification of the leader, through whom the Kyrgyz people came to independence. In the work of K. Reichl [55] compares the functioning of oral epic tradition in different Turkic-speaking societies, particularly in Siberia and Central Asia. The author uses the results of the research to understand ancient and medieval texts of epic poems and heroic songs. When exploring the Kyrgyz epic tradition, the conceptual breadth of the space of the artwork, which includes representations of mythological knowledge, the reflection of religious beliefs, the significance of the

development of value categories in society, and the historical struggle for freedom, is significant.

Thus, after comparing modern studies with the authors' results, it can be noted that the development of the epic tradition in the cultural and historical national context is present in many peoples, and the epic poem considered is a reflection of the spirit of the era of its establishment with the disclosure of many aspects of the socio-political, cultural and economic life of the Kyrgyz people.

Conclusions

The research of the folk epic "Manas" focuses on the conceptual space of this work, in particular, it addresses an entire layer of cultural values for the national identity of the Kyrgyz people. The conceptual space was considered in terms of historical events, religious beliefs, mythological perceptions and cultural traditions. In analyzing the epic poem "Manas" several conclusions were made. The following conceptual categories became the conceptual foundation of this work: religious (prayer, faith, Allah, Muslimism, salvation), historical (war, people, bogatyr, competition), mythological (predictor, miraculous salvation, immortality), educational (respect, mentor, love for the Motherland), folk and household (aydar, er dzhigit). The idea of national identity of the Kyrgyz people is developed based on cultural, socially significant, moral and mythological values of the people. From the moral and ethical standpoint, the categories of love for the Motherland, honor, dignity, justice, and respect are significant for Kyrgyz people. A particular role is played by educational concepts, which reflect the value positions of the Kyrgyz.

The heroic poem "Manas" reflects the national traditions of the Kyrgyz people, which is identified in the naming of medicines and conventional medicine, and in the nomination of folk games and their description. Through the reflection of the folk and domestic layer of culture, many things can be learnt about the outfits and everyday objects of the people in the historical period considered. The transition from pre-religious (mythological) to religious (Islamic) beliefs is demonstrated. The mythological space of the work is developed based on

references to gods, motifs and plots of miraculous salvation or revival of characters. For example, attention is focused on the image of Aichurek, associated with the resurrection of her husband Semetey, the episode of Kyyaz's resurrection while fighting Gulchoro, the magical influence of the goddesses Tenir, Zher-Suu, Umai-ene and the revival of Manas through Chaiyrda. The belief in totem animals is emphasized. Manas's transition to Islam is connected with the story of Khizr and forty chiltans, and his companion Almambet. The foundation of the heroic epic "Manas" is the historical plot of the Kyrgyz people's active struggle for their independence, in particular the confrontation with the Kytai. The historical was considered together with philosophical and moral categories, as they reflect each other: death as a philosophical category is related to historical events, and honor and dignity of warriors is an educational category in the Kyrgyz opinion.

Thus, this research explored key conceptual categories and provided examples of concepts frequently used in the Manas heroic epic. The conceptual structure has been presented in tabular form with categories and concepts highlighted. Mythological, religious, historical and cultural plots and motifs developing the artistic value of this literary work were considered thoroughly. Priority areas in the further scientific perspective may be the following: developing an idea of the artistic values of understudied or unexplored literary works representing heroic epic, structural and contextual analysis of epic works, comparative and contrastive researches of cultures and literatures of different peoples of the world, exploring the introduction of concepts and the specificity of conceptual bases and categories in the literature of Central Asian countries.

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Conflict of Interest

None.

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Національна специфіка концептуальної основи епічної поеми «Манас»

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Анотація

Актуальність. Актуальність дослідження концептуального простору та художньої реалізації національних елементів в епічних творах зумовлена необхідністю налагодження міжнародної комунікації про культурну спадщину киргизького народу та закріплення її державного статусу.

Мета. Метою цього дослідження було дослідити національну ідентичність киргизького народу через аналіз концептуального простору героїчної поеми «Манас» з урахуванням концептуальних категорій та номінації ключових концептів.

Методологія. У дослідженні використано такі методи: аналітико-синтетичний, вибіркового художній, концептуальний, інтертекстуальний, культурологічний, структурний, історико-контекстуальний.

Результати. За допомогою вищезазначених методів було розглянуто концептуальну структуру героїчного епосу «Манас» та виокремлено такі категорії: релігійні, міфологічні, історичні, філософські, виховні та народно-побутові. Крім того, вказано концепти, що входять до кожної з цих категорій. У дослідженні проаналізовано сюжети, мотиви та образи, що з'являються в тексті художнього твору для розвитку національної ідентичності киргизького народу. Наголошувалося на морально-етичних цінностях нації, особливостях виховання та менталітету киргизів. Акцентовано увагу на історичному контексті твору та тісно пов'язаних з ним філософських категоріях. Результати концептуального моделювання представлені в таблиці. На основі аналізу «Манасу» було сформовано уявлення про культурний, соціальний та літературний контекст Киргизстану.

Висновки. Дана робота може бути використана для порівняльного дослідження різних аспектів: культурного, міфопоетичного, релігійного, історичного на основі аналізу героїчного епосу, для вироблення уявлення про національне ментальне ядро народів Центральної Азії, для розгляду ключових концептів, активно використовуваних в усній і писемній літературній традиції Киргизстану.

Ключові слова: літературна традиція; киргизька культура; міфологема; релігійні вірування; історичний дискурс.