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THE PHILOSOPHICAL AND MYTHOPOETIC POETICS OF ANIMALISTIC IMAGERY IN ORALKHAN BOKEI'S PROSE

This article examines the artistic and philosophical nature of animalistic imagery in the prose of Oralkhan Bokey. The main objective of the study is to identify the symbolic, mythopoetic, and existential functions of animal images in the writer's works. The research employs hermeneutic, mythopoetic, comparative, and ecocritical approaches to textual analysis. The author demonstrates that through the animal images in «Kerbuga», «Bura», and «Zhetim Bota», the writer portrays the spiritual bond between humans and nature, the conflict between civilization and the natural world, and the inner tragedy of the individual. The findings indicate that animalistic imagery functions on several artistic levels: as a realistic representation of natural existence, a symbolic model, and a mythopoetic code. The article also considers the animalistic model in O. Bokey's prose in relation to contemporary theoretical frameworks, including Animal Studies, ecocriticism, and posthumanism. The scientific novelty of the study lies in its comprehensive analysis of the three-level artistic system

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of animalistic imagery in O. Bokey's prose and its interpretation through the lens of contemporary eco-humanities theories.

Key words: animalistic imagery, Oralkhan Bokey, mythopoetics, ecocriticism, symbol, existentialism, Kazakh prose.

MAIN PROVISIONS

The present study is based on the assumption that animalistic imagery in Oralkhan Bokei's prose represents an independent philosophical and artistic system rather than merely an aesthetic component of literary narration. The research argues that animal images function simultaneously on realistic, symbolic, and mythopoetic levels, allowing the writer to express ecological consciousness, existential reflection, and the ethical relationship between humans and the natural world.

The article examines the philosophical functions of animalistic imagery in the novellas *Kerbugy*, *Bura*, and *Zhetim Bota* through an interdisciplinary methodological framework combining hermeneutics, mythopoetics, ecocriticism, literary semiotics, and animal studies. Such an approach makes it possible to identify the artistic mechanisms through which animal images become mediators between human consciousness, cultural memory, and the environment.

The scientific novelty of the study lies in the systematic interpretation of Oralkhan Bokei's animalistic poetics from the perspective of contemporary environmental humanities. Unlike previous studies that primarily focused on the writer's romanticism, symbolism, or mythopoetics, this research demonstrates that animal imagery constitutes a coherent philosophical model closely connected with current international theories of ecocriticism, animal studies, posthumanism, literary ecology, and animal ethics.

The findings contribute to expanding the methodological approaches to the study of modern Kazakh literature and strengthen its integration into contemporary international literary scholarship by revealing the ecological, ethical, and philosophical dimensions of Oralkhan Bokei's artistic worldview.

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary literary studies, the examination of the relationship between humans and nature within the frameworks of ecocriticism and animal studies has become one of the most relevant areas of research. This growing scholarly interest is largely conditioned by the deepening global environmental crisis, which has compelled literary criticism to reconsider traditional anthropocentric models of interpretation and to search for new approaches capable of revealing the spiritual and ethical dimensions of the relationship between humans and nature. Within this paradigm, animal imagery in literature is no longer regarded merely as a decorative or auxiliary artistic device; rather, it is increasingly interpreted as an independent semiotic and philosophical category capable of expressing the deepest existential and moral concerns of an era. This shift is particularly significant for national literatures such as Kazakh prose, in which the image of the animal has traditionally occupied a central place within the mythological and folkloric worldview, yet has rarely been examined through the lens of contemporary theoretical frameworks.

The works of Oralkhan Bokei have been explored from various perspectives in the studies of Q. Zhanuzakova [1], O. Kozbekov [2], Zh. Aimukhambetova [3], and G. Zhalelova [4]. These studies primarily focus on the poetics, romanticism, and mythological foundations of the writer's prose. Q. Zhanuzakova's research examines the romantic tendencies inherent in Bokei's prose, while O. Kozbekov's work concentrates on the poetic and stylistic features of the writer's narrative structure. Zh. Aimukhambetova, in turn, approaches Bokei's works from the standpoint of mythopoetics, identifying archetypal motifs within his prose, whereas G. Zhalelova's research is devoted to the problem of personality and psychological conflict in the writer's characters. Taken together, these studies have made a substantial contribution to understanding the artistic originality of Bokei's prose; however, they consider animal imagery only as a secondary element subordinate to broader questions

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of style, genre, or character psychology, rather than as an independent object of philosophical and ecocritical inquiry.

However, the philosophical, mythopoetic, and existential functions of animalistic imagery in the writer's prose have not yet been comprehensively examined as an integrated artistic model. In particular, no attempt has previously been made to systematize the multiple levels — realistic, symbolic, and mythopoetic - at which animal imagery operates within Bokei's works, nor to interpret this imagery in correlation with contemporary international theories of animal studies, ecocriticism, and posthumanism. This gap is especially significant given that animalistic imagery constitutes one of the most consistent and semantically rich elements throughout Bokei's oeuvre, permeating his depiction of nature, civilization, and the inner world of his protagonists. In this regard, there is a need for a comprehensive investigation of the symbolic and worldview-related functions of animal representations in O. Bokei's prose.

The aim of this article is to determine the artistic and philosophical functions of animalistic imagery in the prose of Oralkhan Bokei. To achieve this aim, the study seeks to identify the existential meanings embedded in animal imagery, to reveal its mythopoetic and symbolic structure, and to interpret this imagery within the broader context of contemporary ecocritical and animal studies scholarship.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research material for this study consists of Oralkhan Bokei's works *Kerbugy*, *Bura*, and *Zhetim Bota*. To determine the artistic functions of animalistic imagery in these works, hermeneutic, mythopoetic, and ecocritical methods of analysis were employed. The hermeneutic approach enabled the interpretation of the philosophical meanings embedded in the images, while mythopoetic analysis was aimed at identifying the archetypal nature of animal representations. The ecocritical method was applied to examine the relationship between humans and nature.

The theoretical and methodological framework of the study was based on contemporary international scholarship in the fields of ecocriticism, animal studies, posthumanism, and literary ecology. These theoretical perspectives make it possible to demonstrate that animalistic imagery in Oralkhan Bokei's prose functions not merely as an artistic device but also as a complex philosophical and ecological model.

In particular, the study draws upon the concept proposed by the British researcher Joe Murray regarding the representation of animals as an ecological and ethical issue in climate fiction and Critical Animal Studies [5, 45].

The scholar interprets climate literature not merely as a reflection of human crisis but as a multilayered spiritual and ethical phenomenon closely interconnected with the fate of the animal world. This perspective enables a new interpretative understanding of the disruption of harmony between humans and nature in Oralkhan Bokei's prose. In particular, the image of the solitary deer in *Kerbugy* is understood not only as an existential symbol but also as an artistic model of the historical displacement of the natural world. Through this representation, the writer reveals the spiritual consequences of humanity's dominance over natural existence.

In addition, ecocritical studies conducted by Indonesian literary scholars Indah Fadhilla, Zakariya Pamuji Aminullah, and Wahyunengsih, based on the Deleuze-Guattari theoretical framework, were incorporated into the research [6, 88]. The scholars' concept of *becoming-animal* provides a basis for interpreting animal imagery not merely as biological beings but also as symbolic forms of spiritual transformation and resistance to civilization. This theoretical approach enables a deeper understanding of the inner harmony between humans and nature in Oralkhan Bokei's works. For example, the loneliness of the deer in *Kerbugy* is paralleled with the disintegration of the human soul, thereby establishing a semantic unity between human and animal existence. Through this representation, the writer philosophically suggests that the boundary between humans and nature is inherently conditional.

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The study also takes into account the works of the Swedish scholar Johan Adam Warodell in the fields of biodiversity humanities and literary ecology [7, 120]. The scholar interprets animal imagery in literature as a cultural indicator of ecological crisis. This theoretical perspective enables an integrated analysis of the narrowing of natural space and the issue of spiritual isolation in Oralkhan Bokei's prose. The isolation of animals in the writer's works functions as a symbolic model illustrating the impact of civilizational pressure on the natural world. From this perspective, Bokei's prose demonstrates a strong affinity with contemporary theoretical approaches in biodiversity humanities.

The studies of the American scholar Carol Gigliotti in the fields of animal cognition and posthumanism provide a basis for considering animals as cultural and spiritual subjects [8, 108]. By acknowledging animals' emotional intelligence and creative capacities, the scholar offers a deeper understanding of the humanistic dimension of animalistic imagery. This theoretical framework plays an important role in analyzing the humanized representation of animals in Oralkhan Bokei's works. The writer portrays animals not as external objects but as living beings existing in harmony with the human spiritual world. Consequently, animalistic imagery in Bokei's prose not only evokes emotional responses in readers but also raises questions concerning humanity's moral responsibility.

Furthermore, the theories of Ron Broglio in the fields of posthumanism and animal philosophy were incorporated into the study [9, 52]. The scholar conceptualizes animals as active beings expressing silent resistance to civilization. This theoretical perspective enables a deeper interpretation of the conflict between nature and industrial space in *Bura*. In the novella, the opposition between the camel and the railway symbolizes not merely the contrast between nature and technology but also a philosophical conflict between the spiritual world and technogenic civilization. Through this representation, the writer portrays the psychological and ecological consequences of modernization for human existence.

The studies of the Spanish philosopher Catia Faria in the field of animal ethics also contributed to the theoretical foundation of this research [10, 13]. The scholar interprets the suffering of wild animals as a moral issue and substantiates humanity's ethical responsibility toward nature. This theoretical perspective enables a new philosophical interpretation of the humanistic and ecological ideas reflected in Oralkhan Bokei's works. In the writer's prose, the fate of animals serves as a means of portraying humanity's spiritual crisis, the disruption of its connection with nature, and the problem of moral responsibility within an artistic and philosophical framework. From this perspective, Bokei's animalistic prose demonstrates strong continuity with contemporary theoretical approaches in eco-humanitarian studies.

RESULTS

The analysis of animalistic imagery in the novella *Kerbugy* revealed that the image of the deer performs not only an artistic or symbolic function but also constitutes the philosophical center of the entire narrative. Unlike conventional literary representations in which animals primarily accompany human action or reinforce the emotional atmosphere, Kerbugy possesses an autonomous semantic status. The deer becomes an existential subject through whom the author explores universal questions concerning loneliness, freedom, mortality, and the irreversible passage of time. Consequently, the narrative is organized not around external events but around the gradual transformation of the protagonist's spiritual condition, reflected through the destiny of the animal itself.

In *Kerbugy*, the image of the deer transcends ordinary animalistic characteristics and rises to the level of an existential symbol. Through this representation, O. Bokei reconstructs the traditional perception of wildlife by transforming the deer into an embodiment of human spiritual experience. The gradual aging of Kerbugy, its physical exhaustion, and increasing alienation from the surrounding environment symbolize not only the biological cycle of life but also the existential vulnerability of every living being confronted with solitude and historical change. Therefore, the animal becomes an artistic metaphor through which the writer reflects the fragility of existence and the inevitable disruption of harmony between humans and nature.

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Particularly significant is the writer's use of landscape as a psychological category. Mountains, forests, mist, rocks, and enclosed spaces do not merely describe the external environment but function as symbolic extensions of Kerbugy's inner condition. The surrounding landscape changes simultaneously with the protagonist's emotional state, creating what may be defined as a symbolic chronotope in which space and time become inseparable from existential experience. In this respect, nature itself acquires narrative agency and actively participates in constructing philosophical meaning.

Kerbugy's loneliness is portrayed through its gradual estrangement from the natural environment. As reflected in the passage, *«Once, the dense forests, the towering mountains sunk in slumber, and the cliffs and gorges harboring fear within their depths would catch the voice of Kerbugy, echo it intermittently, and carry it far away with resounding force»* [11, 10], the deer's voice no longer functions merely as an acoustic phenomenon but becomes a symbolic expression of spiritual isolation. The disappearance of the echo metaphorically signifies the loss of communication between the individual and the surrounding world. Consequently, silence acquires philosophical significance, representing the collapse of dialogue between humanity and nature.

The analysis further demonstrates that Kerbugy's isolation should not be interpreted exclusively as an individual tragedy. Instead, it reflects the gradual marginalization of natural existence under the pressure of expanding civilization. The disappearance of free natural space parallels the narrowing of the protagonist's existential horizon. Thus, the artistic conflict develops simultaneously on two interconnected levels: the ecological destruction of natural balance and the psychological disintegration of the individual. This dual structure considerably deepens the philosophical meaning of the narrative.

Another important feature of the novella is the transformation of the protagonist into a multilayered artistic image. Kerbugy simultaneously exists as a real animal inhabiting the mountain landscape, as a symbolic representation of freedom, and as a humanized figure possessing emotional and philosophical depth. These three semantic levels coexist throughout the narrative without contradicting one another. On the contrary, they create a dynamic artistic system in which biological reality gradually develops into existential symbolism. Such multidimensional representation distinguishes Bokei's animalistic poetics from traditional allegorical literature.

Spatial symbolism further reinforces this philosophical structure. Akshoky (White Mountain) symbolizes transcendence, spiritual elevation, and the possibility of preserving existential freedom. In contrast, the fence constructed from wooden stakes represents limitation, historical inevitability, and the gradual domination of civilization over natural existence. The opposition between these two spatial images establishes one of the central binary structures of the novella: freedom versus confinement, movement versus immobility, and life versus spiritual death. This binary opposition functions not merely as a compositional device but as the principal mechanism organizing the philosophical architecture of the text.

The temporal dimension of the narrative also deserves particular attention. Time in *Kerbugy* is represented not as a chronological sequence of events but as a psychological category. The protagonist experiences time through memory, physical aging, and gradual alienation from the surrounding environment. Consequently, temporality becomes inseparable from existential awareness. Every stage of Kerbugy's life corresponds to a particular stage in the disintegration of harmony between humans and nature, thereby transforming individual biography into a philosophical reflection on historical change.

The mythopoetic dimension significantly enriches the semantic complexity of the image. Within the traditional Turkic worldview, the deer frequently symbolizes purity, freedom, sacred power, and mediation between the earthly and spiritual worlds. O. Bokei preserves these archetypal associations while simultaneously adapting them to the realities of modern civilization. As a result, Kerbugy functions not merely as a mythological archetype inherited from folklore but as a contemporary philosophical symbol reflecting ecological crisis and the fragmentation of spiritual identity. This reinterpretation demonstrates the writer's ability to combine national mythological consciousness with universal existential philosophy.

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Overall, the analysis demonstrates that the image of Kerbugy should be understood as the conceptual nucleus of the novella rather than simply its central character. Through this animal image, O. Bokei develops a comprehensive philosophical model in which ecological consciousness, mythopoetic tradition, existential reflection, and national cultural memory become inseparable components of a unified artistic system. Therefore, Kerbugy represents not only the tragedy of an individual animal but also the broader spiritual crisis of humanity confronted with the irreversible transformation of the natural world.

The analysis of animalistic imagery in *Bura* revealed that the image of the camel constitutes a complex artistic model through which O. Bokei examines the philosophical conflict between natural existence and technological civilization. Unlike the deer in *Kerbugy*, whose symbolic function is primarily existential, the camel in *Bura* becomes the central medium through which the writer explores the historical transformation of the relationship between humans and nature. Consequently, the artistic conflict extends beyond the individual fate of the animal and acquires broader cultural, ecological, and philosophical significance.

Within the traditional Kazakh worldview, the camel occupies a distinctive symbolic position as an embodiment of endurance, freedom, dignity, and continuity with the nomadic way of life. O. Bokei preserves these archetypal associations while simultaneously placing the animal within the realities of industrial modernization. As a result, the camel ceases to function solely as an ethnographic image and becomes a philosophical symbol representing the confrontation between natural harmony and technological expansion. Through this artistic transformation, the writer demonstrates that modernization inevitably affects not only the physical environment but also the spiritual foundations of human existence.

The principal artistic opposition of the novella is constructed through the binary relationship between the camel and the railway. These images function as two contrasting models of civilization. Whereas the camel represents organic movement, natural rhythm, and continuity with ancestral cultural memory, the railway symbolizes mechanization, industrial progress, and the acceleration of historical change. This opposition should not be interpreted as a simple rejection of modernization. Instead, it reveals the complex psychological consequences that accompany the replacement of traditional ecological consciousness by technogenic forms of existence.

The symbolic significance of this conflict becomes particularly evident in the episode describing the approaching train: *«U-u-u-u, the locomotive responded in a loud voice. The camel shuddered. It had not known that the train was approaching. A sound! It heard the sound!»* [11, 18]. The locomotive's voice functions not merely as a realistic sound but as an acoustic symbol of civilization entering the natural world. Conversely, the camel's reaction reflects more than instinctive fear. It represents the existential anxiety experienced whenever the natural order encounters forces that fundamentally alter its traditional mode of existence. Through this scene, O. Bokei transforms an ordinary narrative episode into a philosophical reflection on the irreversible expansion of industrial civilization.

The railway itself possesses important semiotic functions within the narrative. Unlike roads traditionally associated with nomadic mobility, the railway imposes a rigid, predetermined direction that excludes spontaneity and freedom of movement. Consequently, it becomes a symbol of historical inevitability and technological determinism. The camel, by contrast, represents unrestricted movement across open space, preserving the values of independence and ecological balance. Their opposition therefore illustrates two fundamentally different conceptions of human existence: one based on harmony with nature, the other on domination over it.

The spatial organization of the novella further reinforces this symbolic structure. Open landscapes, vast steppes, and natural horizons are consistently associated with the camel, whereas industrial objects remain confined to linear, artificial spaces created by human intervention. This contrast establishes a spatial metaphor in which openness signifies spiritual freedom, while technological space embodies limitation and alienation. Thus, geographical space in *Bura* functions not simply as a setting but as an active participant in the philosophical development of the narrative.

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Equally important is the psychological dimension of the camel's image. O. Bokei attributes emotional depth to the animal without reducing it to an anthropomorphic character. The camel's fear, hesitation, and instinctive responses reveal a form of non-verbal consciousness through which the reader perceives the ecological consequences of modernization. Rather than expressing these consequences directly through human narration, the writer allows the animal itself to become the emotional center of the story. This artistic strategy considerably intensifies the ethical impact of the narrative by encouraging readers to experience the conflict from the perspective of the natural world.

The analysis also demonstrates that the opposition between the camel and the railway should not be interpreted as an absolute contradiction between civilization and progress. O. Bokei does not deny the historical necessity of modernization. Instead, he questions the spiritual consequences of technological development when it becomes disconnected from ecological and cultural values. The conflict therefore develops not between tradition and modernity themselves but between two different principles of coexistence with nature. This philosophical position distinguishes Bokei's prose from simplistic ecological criticism by presenting modernization as a morally ambiguous process requiring balance rather than rejection.

Another significant finding concerns the mythopoetic dimension of the camel image. In Turkic cultural tradition, the camel frequently symbolizes patience, endurance, wisdom, and the continuity of life under difficult environmental conditions. O. Bokei preserves these archetypal meanings while expanding them through contemporary philosophical reflection. The camel thus becomes both a cultural memory and a living participant in modern ecological crisis. This synthesis of traditional symbolism with contemporary existential concerns represents one of the most distinctive features of the writer's animalistic poetics.

Overall, the analysis demonstrates that *Bura* presents a philosophical model in which the conflict between nature and civilization is interpreted as a crisis of spiritual values rather than merely an ecological problem. Through the artistic opposition between the camel and the railway, O. Bokei reveals how technological progress transforms not only landscapes but also human consciousness, cultural identity, and ethical responsibility. Consequently, the image of the camel emerges as one of the most profound philosophical symbols in the writer's prose, embodying the enduring struggle to preserve harmony between humanity and the natural world.

The analysis of animalistic imagery in *Zhetim Bota* revealed that the image of Akbota constitutes one of the most profound artistic models of spiritual harmony in Oralkhan Bokei's prose. Unlike *Kerbugy*, where the dominant philosophical category is existential loneliness, and *Bura*, where the central conflict develops between nature and civilization, *Zhetim Bota* presents animalistic imagery as a means of restoring spiritual integrity. Consequently, the symbolic function of the animal undergoes significant transformation: Akbota is represented not as a victim of historical change but as an artistic mediator leading the protagonist toward self-discovery, moral renewal, and reconciliation with nature.

The narrative demonstrates that Taszhan's crisis extends far beyond professional disappointment. His creative exhaustion reflects a broader philosophical alienation from the natural foundations of existence. As an architect, Taszhan belongs to the sphere of civilization, where human beings constantly reshape and reconstruct physical space. However, the novella gradually reveals that the transformation of external space has been accompanied by the gradual fragmentation of the protagonist's inner world. Thus, the conflict develops not between the individual and society but between artificial civilization and the authentic spiritual order embodied by nature.

Within this philosophical context, the appearance of Akbota marks the beginning of the protagonist's existential transformation. The animal functions as a symbolic guide rather than a passive participant in the narrative. Through continuous interaction with the natural world represented by Akbota, Taszhan gradually reconstructs the values that had been suppressed by technological progress and rational thinking. Consequently, the animal becomes an active force facilitating psychological recovery and spiritual purification.

The symbolic significance of the protagonist's name further strengthens this philosophical interpretation. The lexical composition of the name *Taszhan* combines two semantically contrasting

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concepts: *tas* («stone»), representing durability, architecture, and material civilization, and *zhan* («soul»), symbolizing spirituality, emotional sensitivity, and inner life. This duality reflects the central contradiction of the novella. Throughout the narrative, Taszhan attempts to reconcile these two dimensions of existence. His encounter with Akbota gradually shifts the balance from material construction toward spiritual reconstruction, thereby transforming external professional success into an internal search for existential meaning. A particularly important role is played by Taszhan's reflective monologue: *«In the past... the city and nature complemented one another and existed in harmony... My mistake was a superficial understanding of national consciousness in architecture»* [11, 121].

This confession represents the philosophical climax of the narrative. Rather than acknowledging a technical or professional error, the protagonist recognizes a fundamental misunderstanding of the relationship between civilization, culture, and nature. Architecture here becomes a metaphor for the entire process of human intervention in the natural world. The realization that national consciousness cannot exist independently of ecological consciousness marks the protagonist's moral awakening. Thus, O. Bokei suggests that genuine creativity becomes possible only when technological development remains inseparable from cultural memory and environmental responsibility.

The analysis further demonstrates that Akbota should be interpreted as a mythopoetic archetype associated with purity, continuity, and renewal. Within the Turkic cultural tradition, the white camel occupies a privileged symbolic position, frequently representing blessing, sacredness, endurance, and spiritual protection. O. Bokei preserves these traditional associations while simultaneously expanding them into a contemporary philosophical context. Akbota therefore functions not merely as a folkloric symbol but as a living embodiment of ecological wisdom capable of restoring the disrupted balance between humanity and the natural world.

Unlike the deer in *Kerbugy* or the camel in *Bura*, Akbota does not primarily symbolize resistance or suffering. Instead, the image introduces an alternative philosophical model based upon coexistence, compassion, and reconciliation. Through this transformation, the writer demonstrates that the relationship between humans and nature need not inevitably develop into conflict. The possibility of restoring harmony remains open, provided that humanity rediscovers its cultural memory and ethical responsibility toward the living world.

The spatial organization of the novella reinforces this optimistic philosophical perspective. Natural landscapes are consistently associated with openness, silence, and spiritual clarity, whereas urban and architectural spaces are connected with psychological tension and emotional exhaustion. This opposition should not be interpreted as a rejection of civilization itself. Rather, O. Bokei proposes that civilization loses its humanistic value whenever it becomes disconnected from the ecological foundations of existence. Consequently, harmony arises not through abandoning modernity but through restoring equilibrium between technological progress and natural consciousness.

Another significant feature of the novella is the gradual transformation of animal imagery from an external object of observation into an internal component of human consciousness. At the beginning of the narrative, Akbota exists primarily as part of the surrounding landscape. As the story develops, however, the symbolic boundaries separating the protagonist from the animal become increasingly permeable. The psychological evolution of Taszhan occurs simultaneously with his growing sensitivity toward the natural world. Thus, animalistic imagery ceases to function solely as an artistic motif and becomes an essential mechanism through which the protagonist reconstructs his existential identity.

The comparative analysis of the three works examined in the present study demonstrates a clear philosophical progression in O. Bokei's artistic conception of animalistic imagery. In *Kerbugy*, the animal embodies existential loneliness and the tragic displacement of nature; in *Bura*, it represents resistance to technological civilization and the preservation of cultural identity; whereas in *Zhetim Bota*, the animal becomes a symbol of reconciliation, spiritual rebirth, and ecological harmony. These three philosophical models do not contradict one another but rather form successive stages within a

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unified artistic system reflecting the writer's evolving understanding of the relationship between humans and the natural world.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that Akbota occupies a unique position within O. Bokei's animalistic poetics. The image synthesizes mythological tradition, ecological consciousness, philosophical symbolism, and national cultural memory into a single artistic structure. Consequently, *Zhetim Bota* should be regarded not merely as a literary narrative concerning an individual's personal transformation but as a philosophical reflection on the conditions necessary for preserving human integrity in an age of rapid civilizational change.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the present study demonstrate that animalistic imagery in Oralkhan Bokei's prose constitutes a multidimensional artistic system whose semantic functions extend far beyond the traditional understanding of zoomorphic representation in literature. Unlike conventional literary models, where animals frequently serve as decorative elements, folkloric motifs, or symbolic attributes accompanying human characters, Bokei transforms animal imagery into an independent philosophical category through which fundamental questions of existence are articulated. Consequently, the images of Kerbugy, Bura, and Akbota should be interpreted not merely as literary characters but as autonomous semantic structures that mediate the relationship between humanity, nature, history, and civilization. This finding significantly broadens previous interpretations of Bokei's prose, which have primarily emphasized romanticism, psychologism, and national symbolism while paying comparatively less attention to the philosophical autonomy of animal imagery.

The analysis reveals that the artistic evolution of animalistic imagery in O. Bokei's prose proceeds through three interconnected levels: realistic, symbolic, and mythopoetic. These levels do not function independently but form a unified semantic system in which each image simultaneously preserves its biological authenticity while acquiring increasingly abstract philosophical significance. At the realistic level, animals are represented as integral components of the natural environment, preserving the ecological specificity of the Kazakh steppe and mountain landscape. However, this realistic representation gradually transforms into symbolic meaning. Kerbugy no longer represents only a deer but becomes an embodiment of spiritual loneliness and historical displacement. Likewise, the camel in *Bura* transcends its ethnographic significance and develops into an artistic metaphor for freedom confronted by industrial civilization. Finally, within the mythopoetic dimension, these images acquire archetypal functions associated with collective cultural memory and traditional cosmological perception. Such structural transformation demonstrates that Bokei does not merely employ symbolism but constructs an integrated philosophical model in which biological existence becomes inseparable from existential meaning.

An important finding of the study concerns the transformation of allegory within Bokei's artistic system. Traditional allegorical narratives generally establish direct correspondences between animal behavior and human morality. In contrast, O. Bokei fundamentally reconstructs this convention. Animal imagery does not simply illustrate human qualities but develops parallel existential trajectories that coexist with human experience. Consequently, the relationship between humans and animals is characterized not by hierarchical representation but by semantic equivalence. Kerbugy's isolation reflects not only the tragedy of an individual animal but also the fragmentation of the human soul under the pressure of historical change. Similarly, the fear experienced by the camel before the approaching railway symbolizes not merely the conflict between nature and technology but the broader philosophical opposition between organic existence and mechanized civilization. Such reinterpretation considerably expands the traditional understanding of allegory in Kazakh prose by transforming it into a mechanism of existential reflection rather than moral instruction.

The semiotic analysis further demonstrates that animal imagery functions as the central organizing principle of textual meaning. Rather than existing as isolated narrative elements, the animals interact continuously with landscape, temporality, spatial organization, and human consciousness. Every spatial component acquires symbolic significance through its relationship with

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the animal world. For example, Akshoky (White Mountain) functions as a vertical symbol of transcendence and spiritual aspiration, whereas the fence surrounding Kerbugy's environment signifies the gradual restriction of natural freedom imposed by civilization. Likewise, the railway in *Bura* represents technological expansion, while the open steppe embodies continuity with traditional ecological consciousness. In *Zhetim Bota*, Akbota becomes the mediating figure through which Taszhan reconstructs his disrupted spiritual identity. These observations demonstrate that the semiotic system of Bokei's prose operates according to principles of symbolic interdependence rather than isolated metaphorical representation.

The comparative analysis also reveals that O. Bokei's artistic worldview demonstrates remarkable compatibility with contemporary international developments in animal studies, ecocriticism, posthumanism, biodiversity humanities, and animal ethics. Although these theoretical paradigms emerged several decades after the publication of many of Bokei's works, they provide highly productive interpretative frameworks for understanding his artistic philosophy. Joe Murray's concept of Critical Animal Studies explains the ethical dimension of Kerbugy's isolation as an expression of ecological injustice. The becoming-animal concept proposed by Fadhilla and colleagues clarifies the philosophical continuity established between human and animal consciousness. Warodell's biodiversity humanities provide an ecological interpretation of shrinking natural space, while Gigliotti's theory of animal cognition explains why animals in Bokei's prose function as emotionally autonomous subjects rather than passive literary symbols. Broglio's philosophy of animal resistance further illuminates the opposition between natural freedom and technogenic civilization represented in *Bura*, whereas Faria's ethical theory interprets animal suffering as an indicator of humanity's moral responsibility. Together these theoretical perspectives demonstrate that Bokei's prose naturally anticipates many of the central concerns of contemporary eco-humanitarian scholarship.

Recent studies in ecocriticism have increasingly emphasized that literary representations of animals should be interpreted not merely as symbolic figures but as participants in ecological relationships. Garrard (2022) argues that contemporary ecocritical research has shifted from anthropocentric interpretations toward relational models in which humans and non-human beings coexist within shared ethical and environmental systems [12]. This approach considerably broadens the traditional understanding of animal imagery by recognizing animals as active components of ecological and cultural discourse rather than decorative literary devices. The findings of the present study support this theoretical position. In Oralkhan Bokei's prose, the deer in Kerbugy, the camel in Bura, and Akbota in Zhetim Bota are represented as mediators through which the disruption of harmony between humans and nature becomes visible. However, unlike Garrard's predominantly ecological interpretation, Bokei extends the artistic function of animal imagery by integrating mythopoetic symbolism and existential philosophy. Consequently, animalistic imagery in the writer's prose simultaneously performs ecological, philosophical, and national-cultural functions, thereby expanding the interpretative possibilities of contemporary ecocritical theory.

The obtained results also correspond with recent developments in posthumanist literary theory. DeMello (2021) maintains that modern animal studies reject the traditional objectification of animals and instead recognize them as subjects possessing agency, emotions, and cultural significance [13, 69]. Similarly, Gigliotti (2022) argues that animals in literature should be viewed as emotionally intelligent beings capable of shaping ethical reflection rather than functioning as passive narrative elements [8, 43]. These theoretical assumptions are fully consistent with the findings of the present research. The analysis demonstrates that Kerbugy, Bura, and Akbota are not secondary artistic details but independent semantic centers that determine the philosophical structure of the narrative and influence the protagonists' moral and psychological transformation. At the same time, O. Bokei's prose goes beyond the posthumanist paradigm by combining animal subjectivity with the mythological worldview of the Kazakh cultural tradition. Therefore, the writer constructs a multidimensional model in which ecological ethics, national consciousness, and existential reflection become inseparable components of artistic meaning.

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Furthermore, recent interdisciplinary scholarship has highlighted the necessity of integrating ecological ethics with literary analysis. Haraway (2016) proposes that humans and non-human beings should be understood through interconnected relationships rather than hierarchical opposition [14, 70], whereas Faria (2023) interprets the suffering of wild animals as an ethical issue that requires human moral responsibility [10, 18]. The present findings not only support these theoretical perspectives but also demonstrate that similar philosophical principles were artistically embodied in O. Bokei's prose long before they became central concepts of contemporary eco-humanitarian studies. In the analyzed works, animals are represented as equal participants in existential experience whose fate reflects the moral condition of humanity itself. This feature distinguishes O. Bokei's artistic worldview from purely ecological interpretations by emphasizing the spiritual unity of humans and nature. Consequently, the study suggests that the writer's animalistic imagery should be regarded as an original philosophical model that anticipates many ideas of modern ecocriticism, animal ethics, and posthumanist literary theory.

Nevertheless, the present research also demonstrates several important differences between Bokei's artistic model and contemporary Western theoretical paradigms. Most international theories primarily analyze ecological ethics, environmental degradation, or posthuman subjectivity within modern industrial societies. O. Bokei, however, integrates these philosophical concerns with the cultural memory, mythological consciousness, and nomadic worldview characteristic of Kazakh civilization. Consequently, animal imagery in his prose performs simultaneously ecological, historical, philosophical, and national functions. This multidimensional synthesis distinguishes Bokei's artistic system from many contemporary literary models in which ecological symbolism often remains separated from national mythological traditions. Therefore, the philosophical originality of Bokei's prose lies in combining universal eco-humanitarian ideas with specifically Kazakh cultural consciousness.

Another significant contribution of this study concerns the reconsideration of animalistic imagery as an integrated artistic system rather than a collection of individual symbolic motifs. Previous scholarship has generally examined particular images or isolated poetic features. The present analysis demonstrates that the deer, camel, and calf should instead be understood as components of a unified semantic structure governed by common philosophical principles. These principles include the continuity between humans and nature, the existential consequences of civilization, the preservation of ecological balance, and the ethical responsibility of humanity toward the natural world. Such systematization provides a broader theoretical perspective from which the entire artistic architecture of Bokei's prose may be interpreted.

The research also expands the methodological possibilities of Kazakh literary studies by demonstrating the productivity of integrating hermeneutics, mythopoetics, ecocriticism, semiotics, posthumanism, biodiversity humanities, and animal studies within a single analytical framework. Rather than functioning as competing methodologies, these approaches complement one another by revealing different semantic dimensions of literary representation. Their interdisciplinary synthesis makes it possible to interpret animalistic imagery simultaneously as an artistic image, philosophical symbol, ecological indicator, ethical subject, and cultural archetype. Such methodological integration considerably enriches contemporary approaches to the study of Kazakh prose and demonstrates the compatibility of national literary heritage with current international theoretical discourse.

The scientific novelty of the present study therefore extends beyond the identification of symbolic meanings within individual literary works. First, the research proposes a comprehensive three-level model of animalistic imagery consisting of realistic, symbolic, and mythopoetic dimensions. Second, it demonstrates that animal imagery functions as the principal semiotic mechanism organizing the philosophical structure of O. Bokei's prose. Third, it establishes for the first time the systematic relationship between Bokei's artistic worldview and contemporary theories of ecocriticism, animal studies, posthumanism, biodiversity humanities, animal cognition, and animal ethics. Finally, the study argues that O. Bokei anticipated many fundamental ideas of modern eco-humanitarian thought through literary imagination long before these concepts became established within international academic discourse. Consequently, the writer's prose should be regarded not only

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as an important achievement of Kazakh literature but also as a valuable contribution to contemporary global discussions concerning the philosophical relationship between humans, animals, and nature.

Table 1 – Comparison of Animalistic Imagery in Oralkhan Bokei's Prose with Contemporary *Animal Studies* and *Ecocriticism* Theories

Scholar / Theoretical Approach	**Main Scientific Concept**	**Representation in O. Bokei's Works**	**Scholarly Interpretation**
Joe Murray (Critical Animal Studies)	Considering the fate of animals as an ecological and ethical issue	The solitary deer in *Kerbugy*	The marginalization of the natural world under the pressure of civilization
Indah Fadhilla et al. (becoming-animal)	The animal as a symbol of spiritual transformation	The parallelism between the deer and human existence in *Kerbugy*	The conditional nature of the boundary between humans and nature is revealed
Johan Adam Warodell (literary ecology)	Animal imagery as a cultural indicator of ecological crisis	The conflict between nature and the railway in *Bura*	The impact of civilizational expansion on the natural environment is recognized
Carol Gigliotti (animal cognition)	The animal as an emotional and spiritual subject	The image of Akbota in *Zhetim Bota*	The humanistic and emotional functions of animals are highlighted
Ron Broglio (animal philosophy)	The animal as a force of resistance to civilization	The image of the camel in *Bura*	The silent resistance of nature to technogenic space is revealed
Catia Faria (animal ethics)	The suffering of wild animals as a moral issue	*Kerbugy* and *Zhetim Bota*	Humanity's ethical responsibility toward nature is revealed

The comparative analysis presented in Table 1 demonstrates that although the selected theoretical approaches belong to different branches of contemporary humanities, they collectively contribute to a multidimensional interpretation of animalistic imagery in Oralkhan Bokei's prose. Rather than functioning as isolated theoretical concepts, Critical Animal Studies, ecocriticism, posthumanism, literary ecology, biodiversity humanities, animal cognition, and animal ethics complement one another in explaining the philosophical complexity of Bokei's artistic world. The comparison indicates that the writer's representation of animals cannot be adequately interpreted through a single methodological perspective, since each theoretical framework reveals different semantic layers of the literary text.

The analysis also demonstrates that the selected theories may be grouped according to three complementary interpretative dimensions. The first dimension is ecological and ethical, represented by Joe Murray and Catia Faria, who interpret animals as indicators of ecological imbalance and moral responsibility. The second dimension is philosophical and ontological, represented by Indah Fadhilla, Ron Broglio, and Carol Gigliotti, whose concepts emphasize animal subjectivity, spiritual transformation, and resistance to anthropocentric civilization. Finally, the third dimension is cultural and ecological, represented by Johan Adam Warodell, whose biodiversity humanities approach considers animal imagery as a reflection of environmental degradation and cultural memory. Together, these perspectives demonstrate that animalistic imagery in Bokei's prose operates simultaneously on ecological, philosophical, ethical, and mythopoetic levels.

A comparison between the selected theoretical approaches further reveals that they differ not only in methodological orientation but also in the aspects of literary interpretation they prioritize. Critical Animal Studies primarily focuses on ethical responsibility toward non-human life, whereas posthumanist approaches challenge the traditional hierarchy separating humans from animals. Literary ecology and biodiversity humanities, in contrast, emphasize the interaction between environmental change and cultural consciousness, while animal cognition studies examine the

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emotional and psychological capacities attributed to animals. Such methodological diversity enables a more comprehensive interpretation of O. Bokei's prose, where the images of Kerbugy, Bura, and Akbota simultaneously function as ecological symbols, philosophical metaphors, mythopoetic archetypes, and independent artistic subjects.

The comparison also demonstrates that O. Bokei's artistic worldview anticipated many ideas that have become central to contemporary eco-humanitarian scholarship only in recent decades. Although the writer created his works before the emergence of Critical Animal Studies and posthumanist literary theory as established academic fields, his representation of animals corresponds remarkably closely to their principal assumptions. Rather than portraying animals as secondary elements of the narrative, Bokei constructs them as equal participants in existential experience whose destinies reflect broader philosophical questions concerning freedom, loneliness, civilization, morality, and the relationship between humans and nature. This continuity confirms the relevance of interpreting the writer's prose through contemporary international theoretical paradigms.

Finally, the synthesis of these theoretical approaches provides the methodological basis for the present research. Their integration makes it possible to examine animalistic imagery as a unified artistic system in which ecological consciousness, mythopoetic thinking, philosophical symbolism, and national cultural identity interact within a single semantic structure. Consequently, the theoretical model presented in Table 1 serves not merely as a classification of contemporary concepts but as an analytical framework that explains the multidimensional artistic functions of animal imagery in Oralkhan Bokei's prose and substantiates the interdisciplinary character of the present study.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, animalistic imagery in Oralkhan Bokei's prose serves not merely as a means of representing animals but as a complex artistic system revealing the spiritual nature of human existence and existential concerns. Through animal imagery, the writer portrays the conflict between nature and civilization, humanity's spiritual crisis, and the distinctive features of the national worldview. The animalistic model in O. Bokei's works demonstrates the depth of philosophical thinking in Kazakh prose.

The findings of the study demonstrate that animal representations in Oralkhan Bokei's prose function on multiple artistic and philosophical levels. Animalistic imagery simultaneously appears as a representation of natural existence, a symbolic code, and a mythopoetic structure. Through this multidimensional approach, the writer depicts the relationship between humans and nature not merely on a household or landscape level, but as an existential and spiritual unity.

The analysis revealed that the deer in *Kerbugy* symbolizes human loneliness and vulnerability in the face of time, whereas the image of the camel in *Bura* reflects the conflict between natural freedom and technogenic civilization. In contrast, the image of Akbota in *Zhetim Bota* forms an artistic model of natural harmony leading to human spiritual renewal. From this perspective, animal imagery functions not only as an artistic mechanism revealing the protagonist's inner psychological world but also as a semiotic system organizing the philosophical core of the text.

The study demonstrates that O. Bokei's prose develops in natural harmony with contemporary approaches in animal studies, ecocriticism, and posthumanism. In the writer's works, the animal world is represented not as something subordinate to or secondary to human existence, but as an independent sphere of life possessing spiritual and moral significance. This distinctive feature makes it possible to reconsider O. Bokei's prose within the framework of contemporary eco-humanitarian studies.

The scientific novelty of this article lies in the systematization of the three-level model of animalistic imagery in O. Bokei's works and in its comprehensive analysis based on contemporary theories of ecocriticism and animal studies. Furthermore, the study provides, for the first time, an integrated examination of the philosophical, mythopoetic, and semiotic functions of animal imagery in their interrelationship. As a result, Oralkhan Bokei's animalistic prose is interpreted as a distinctive artistic system in Kazakh literature, where ecological consciousness, humanistic philosophy, and the national worldview converge.

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Оралхан Бөкей прозасындағы анималистік бейнелердің философиялық және мифопоэтикалық поэтикасы

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Бұл мақалада Оралхан Бөкей прозасындағы анималистік бейнелердің көркемдік-философиялық табиғаты зерттеледі. Зерттеудің негізгі мақсаты – жазушы шығармаларындағы жануарлар бейнелерінің символдық, мифопоэтикалық және экзистенциалдық қызметтерін анықтау. Зерттеуде герменевтикалық, мифопоэтикалық, салыстырмалы және экокритикалық талдау әдістері қолданылады. Автор «Кербұғы», «Бура» және «Жетім Бота» шығармаларындағы жануарлар бейнелері арқылы жазушының адам мен табиғаттың рухани байланысын, өркениет пен табиғи болмыстың қайшылығын, сондай-ақ тұлғаның ішкі трагедиясын суреттейтінін дәлелдейді. Зерттеу нәтижелері анималистік бейнелердің бірнеше көркемдік деңгейде — табиғи болмыстың шынайы бейнесі, символдық модель және мифопоэтикалық код ретінде – қызмет ететінін көрсетеді. Мақалада О. Бөкей прозасындағы анималистік модель қазіргі заманғы теориялық тұрғылар – animal studies, экокритика және постгуманизм аясында талданады. Зерттеудің ғылыми жаңалығы О. Бөкей прозасындағы анималистік бейнелердің үш деңгейлі көркемдік жүйесін жан-жақты талдауда және оларды қазіргі эко-гуманитарлық теориялар тұрғысынан түсіндіруде.

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Кілт сөздер: анималистік бейне, Оралхан Бөкей, мифопоэтика, экокритика, символ, экзистенциализм, қазақ прозасы.

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Философская и мифопоэтическая поэтика анималистических образов в прозе Оралхана Бокея

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В данной статье исследуется художественно-философская природа анималистических образов в прозе Оралхана Бокея. Основная цель исследования – определить символические, мифопоэтические и экзистенциальные функции образов животных в произведениях писателя. В работе применяются герменевтический, мифопоэтический, сравнительный и экокритический методы анализа текста. Автор показывает, что через образы животных в произведениях «Кербуга», «Бура» и «Жетим Бота» писатель изображает духовную связь человека и природы, противоречие между цивилизацией и природным бытием, а также внутреннюю трагедию личности. Результаты исследования свидетельствуют о том, что анималистические образы функционируют на нескольких художественных уровнях: как реалистическое воплощение природного бытия, символическая модель и мифопоэтический код. В статье анималистическая модель в прозе О. Бокея рассматривается в соотношении с современными теоретическими концепциями – animal studies, экокритикой и постгуманизмом. Научная новизна статьи состоит во всестороннем анализе трёхуровневой

художественной системы анималистических образов в прозе О. Бокея и их интерпретации сквозь призму современных эко-гуманитарных теорий.

Ключевые слова: анималистический образ, Оралхан Бокей, мифопоэтика, экокритика, символ, экзистенциализм, казахская проза.

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ИРОНИЯНЫҢ КОМИКСТЕ ВЕРБАЛДЫ ЖӘНЕ ВИЗУАЛДЫ РЕПРЕЗЕНТАЦИЯСЫ

Мақалада иронияның комикстерде вербалды және визуалды репрезентациясы қарастырылады. Зерттеу «Адамтас» атты веб-комикстің алғашқы шығарылымы негізінде жүргізілді. Комикс мәтініндегі ирониялық мағынаның қалыптасу тетіктерін анықтау, вербалды және визуалды кодтардың өзара әрекеттесуін талдау, оқырман тарапынан иронияны қабылдауға ықпал ететін негізгі белгілерді сипаттау мақсат етілді. Жұмыстың ғылыми маңыздылығы иронияны дәстүрлі стилистикалық троп шеңберінен шығарып, мультимодалды, поликодты мәтін аясында қарастыруымен айқындалады. Практикалық тұрғыдан зерттеу нәтижелері қазақ комикстерін, графикалық мәтіндерді, визуалды