

REVIEW

National Values as an Object of Colonial and Postcolonial Criticism in Literature: A Case Study of Mashhur Jusup

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ABSTRACT

Kazakh literature has undergone significant transformations under colonial and postcolonial influences, with authors negotiating the tensions between oral heritage and written literary forms. This study investigates how Mashhur Jusup Kopeev integrates oral traditions—such as genealogies, proverbs, heroic tales, and oral verse—into his written works, and how these strategies articulate national values, cultural identity, and subaltern voices. The research employs a discourse-oriented and literary-linguistic analysis of selected poems, short stories, and narrative fragments, drawing on concepts from postcolonial theory, hybridity, and textual semiotics, with comparative insights from global authors like Tagore and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o. Findings indicate that Kopeev’s textualization of oral forms creates a hybrid literary style that foregrounds spiritual poetics, narrative memory, and cultural resilience, simultaneously negotiating local traditions and broader literary frameworks. His works demonstrate the strategic preservation and recontextualization of Kazakh oral knowledge, reflecting both cultural reverence and innovative literary transformation. The discussion emphasizes how Kopeev’s poetics functions as a medium of resistance, identity formation, and postcolonial articulation, situating Kazakh literature within global

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discourses of hybridity and memory. The study concludes that Kopeev's approach offers a model for integrating oral and written modalities while reinforcing national and cultural continuity. Limitations include the selective textual focus, suggesting the need for further research encompassing a broader corpus and reception studies to fully capture the range of his literary strategies.

Keywords: Mashhur Jusup Kopeev; Kazakh Literature; Oral Tradition; Cultural Identity; Postcolonial Hybridity; Literary Memory

1. Introduction

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Kazakh cultural and literary landscape underwent a profound transformation under Russian imperial and Soviet influence. Dominant discourses often framed nomadic worldviews as peripheral or “pre-modern,” echoing Edward Said's notion of the “Orientalist gaze”^[1]. Such representations were not neutral but encoded hierarchies of language, identity, and cultural legitimacy.

Amid this environment, a new literary consciousness emerged. Figures such as Ibray Altynsarin, Chokan Valikhanov, Abai Kunanbaev, and Mashhur Jusup Kopeev mediated between oral and written traditions, embodying what Gayatri Spivak describes as a recovery of the subaltern voice—not overt resistance, but the reassertion of cultural autonomy through language^[2]. Mashhur Jusup's works particularly illustrate this synthesis. In his poetry, he frames history as living genealogy, binding individual existence to communal memory. His use of allegory, rhythm, and symbolic vocabulary served as mechanisms of continuity and transformation, aligning with Homi Bhabha's concept of hybridity^[3].

With the rise of Soviet Socialist Realism in the 1920s–1930s, spiritual and genealogical themes lost space in the literary mainstream. Jusup's marginalization reflected not only political suppression but also what Frantz Fanon identifies as a narrowing of discursive possibilities under colonial and postcolonial conditions^[4]. His case exemplifies how literature functioned as a site of symbolic negotiation, enabling Kazakh identity to be rearticulated through hybrid discourse.

Similar strategies can be found in world literature. Chinua Achebe integrated Igbo cosmology into the Anglophone novel^[5]; Rabindranath Tagore dramatized the tension between spiritual humanism and modernity^[6]; and Gabriel García Márquez inscribed collective experience through

magical realism^[7]. Early modern Kazakh writers likewise reshaped inherited and introduced forms to articulate cultural autonomy. As Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin note, resignifying dominant models generates creative negotiations of meaning rather than simple opposition^[8].

Kopeev's corpus—lyrical poetry, didactic prose, genealogical records, and folklore—illustrates this negotiation. Writing primarily in Arabic-script Kazakh, he foregrounded themes of language, ethics, and ancestral memory. As Kenzhebekova argues, oral narrative was more than a communicative mode: it functioned as a framework for transmitting values and sustaining identity^[9]. Through allegory, indirect expression, and folkloric codes, Jusup developed a literary voice that safeguarded Kazakh epistemologies while adapting to new textual forms.

The rediscovery of Kopeev in contemporary Kazakhstan reflects a broader revitalization of cultural memory. Zhusipova emphasizes his enduring symbolic presence, noting that visits to his mausoleum are acts of cultural remembrance^[10]. Current scholarship increasingly situates him and Abai within global theoretical frameworks, as Kudaibergenova suggests, to move beyond Soviet-era paradigms^[11]. David Moore's comparative work, questioning the divide between “postcolonial” and “post-Soviet”^[12], has further encouraged transcultural readings. Kossyna highlights literature's role in shaping identity narratives in modern Kazakhstan^[13], while Tolz underscores how Russian scholarly discourses once reduced Kazakh culture to rigid categories^[14].

Spivak's question—“Can the subaltern speak?”^[2]—remains relevant for Jusup's work, which often employed what she terms “strategic essentialism”: emphasizing cultural specificity within broader representational systems. Fanon's insights into language and identity^[15,16] further clarify the ambivalence visible in transitional authors, negotiating between indigenous and dominant norms.

Jusup's strategies resonate with Bhabha's notions of hybridity and mimicry^[3]. His genealogical writings (shezhire) adopted ethnographic structures while embedding insider perspectives, creating what may be described as a literary historiography rooted in cultural intimacy^[17]. Linda Hutcheon's concept of historiographic metafiction^[18] illuminates how such texts simultaneously preserve memory and interrogate historical knowledge—a practice foundational for later nation-building authors such as Auezov and Yesenberlin.

Language was central to this process. As Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o showed by shifting from English to Gikuyu^[19], and Achebe by embedding Igbo proverbs in English novels^[5], indigenous idioms root literature in lived linguistic worlds. Tagore's Bengali poetics similarly grounded expression in cultural specificity^[6]. For Kopeev, Kazakh idioms and oral rhythms performed the same role. As Tlostanova argues, this was a form of epistemic reactivation—the recovery of suppressed knowledge systems through literature^[20].

Equally important are spiritual and ethical motifs. Kazakh literature, like Tagore's or Sufi-inflected traditions, drew upon proverbs, parables, and moral wisdom to articulate humility, justice, and endurance. Rather than polemical critique, Kopeev's texts engaged readers through symbolic systems familiar to collective memory. His role within the zar zaman tradition underscores this moral and genealogical dimension^[21].

Far from being static artifacts, Jusup's writings represent a dynamic negotiation of identity, ethics, and cultural continuity. The epithet "Mashhur" ("renowned") reflects his place not only as a poet but as a cultural sage whose symbolic resonance extends into contemporary Kazakhstan^[10]. Therefore, this study asks: How are national values—language, spirituality, and social cohesion—encoded in Jusup's work? How do his strategies compare with other global traditions emerging from cultural subordination?

At the same time, this article seeks to fill a noticeable research gap. Although Mashhur Jusup Kopeev is recognized in Kazakh- and Russian-language scholarship, his works remain underexamined in Anglophone literary studies and are rarely framed within global theoretical debates. Much existing research highlights his historical or folkloric role, but little attention has been paid to his narrative techniques, his strategies of negotiating between oral and written modes, and

his relevance to comparative literary theory. The novelty of this study lies in repositioning Jusup through concepts such as hybridity^[3], strategic essentialism^[2], and historiographic metafiction^[18], situating him alongside world writers who reshaped tradition under conditions of cultural asymmetry. The significance of this approach extends beyond regional literary history: it illustrates how Kazakh texts enrich global discussions on identity, memory, and cultural resilience, offering insights into the universal dynamics of literary adaptation and continuity.

The present study is a case study because it examines the works of Mashhur Jusup Kopeev in depth to explore how national values, cultural identity, and postcolonial issues are expressed in Kazakh literature. Focusing on a single author allows for a detailed and context-sensitive analysis of linguistic representation, oral traditions, and literary memory, illustrating broader socio-cultural and postcolonial dynamics. By analyzing Kopeev's poetry and prose, the study demonstrates how one author's literary production can serve as a lens to understand the negotiation of national values and subaltern voices within colonial and postcolonial contexts. This method enables the integration of textual, historical, and theoretical perspectives, providing insights that a generalized survey of Kazakh literature might overlook.

2. Materials and Methods

This study employs a qualitative semiotic literary analysis as its primary methodology. Semiotics, understood as the study of signs, metaphors, and symbolic systems, provides the central interpretive framework, allowing us to examine how Mashhur Jusup Kopeev encoded cultural values, ethical principles, and collective memory into literary form. The primary sources consist of his poetry, prose, and recorded oral narratives in Kazakh, supplemented by Russian-language commentaries and published translations, which provide additional historical and linguistic context.

The analysis focused on five interrelated thematic domains recurrent across Kopeev's writings: (1) language and literature, (2) cultural heritage and memory, (3) spiritual values, (4) ethical and social order, and (5) the imaginative articulation of collective destiny. These domains were treated as aesthetic and symbolic dimensions of Kopeev's broader literary vision, embedded in the cultural and historical land-

scape of the Kazakh steppe. Genealogical references were interpreted as symbolic condensations of continuity and belonging; natural imagery as metaphors for resilience and transformation; and allegorical figures as embodiments of ethical and spiritual values.

To complement this, discourse analysis was used in a limited capacity to trace how these themes are discursively articulated across the corpus, clarifying the interaction between symbolic imagery and cultural narrative. At the interpretive stage, comparative literary analysis situated Kopeev within a global constellation of writers such as Chinua Achebe, Rabindranath Tagore, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, and Gabriel García Márquez, each of whom mobilized local epistemologies to reimagine cultural identity. Comparative reading thus served as a heuristic device, demonstrating how Kopeev’s symbolic poetics resonate beyond regional boundaries.

Finally, the study situates Kopeev’s works within three historical periods of cultural transformation: the Russian colonial era, when oral traditions and genealogies faced marginalization; the early Soviet period, when Socialist Realism constrained spiritual and ethical motifs; and the late Soviet/post-Soviet revival, when his writings were reintroduced as part of national cultural recovery. These temporal layers frame how Kopeev’s symbolic language reconfigured traditional values across shifting socio-historical contexts.

In sum, the methodological framework is semiotic at its core, supported by discourse analysis for thematic structuring and comparative literature for global contextualization. This

layered approach reveals how Mashhur Jusup’s oeuvre transforms inherited cultural codes into a distinctive symbolic language that both safeguarded Kazakh epistemologies and contributed to wider literary dialogues on tradition, memory, and imagination.

3. Results and Discussion

This study analyzes selected works of Mashhur Jusup Kopeev, including the didactic poems *Oqyg’yl, bilim al* (“Seek knowledge, gain wisdom”), genealogical narratives such as *Shezhire Bayan*, and short narrative texts like *Jaña Ğasır* (“New Century”). These texts were chosen because they exemplify key thematic categories related to Kazakh cultural values, including history and folklore, spiritual ethics, language and literature, communal unity, and ethical autonomy.

As shown in **Figure 1**, History & Folklore represents the largest proportion of thematic references, followed by Spiritual Values, Language & Literature, Unity & Solidarity, and Freedom & Ethical Autonomy. Mashhur Jusup’s works consistently revolve around several key themes that articulate Kazakh cultural values. The content analysis revealed five predominant thematic categories: (1) History & Folklore, (2) Spiritual Values, (3) Language & Literature, (4) Unity & Solidarity, and (5) Freedom & Ethical Autonomy. Figure 1 illustrates the relative frequency and narrative prominence of these themes across Jusup’s corpus, identified through symbolic coding and textual mapping.

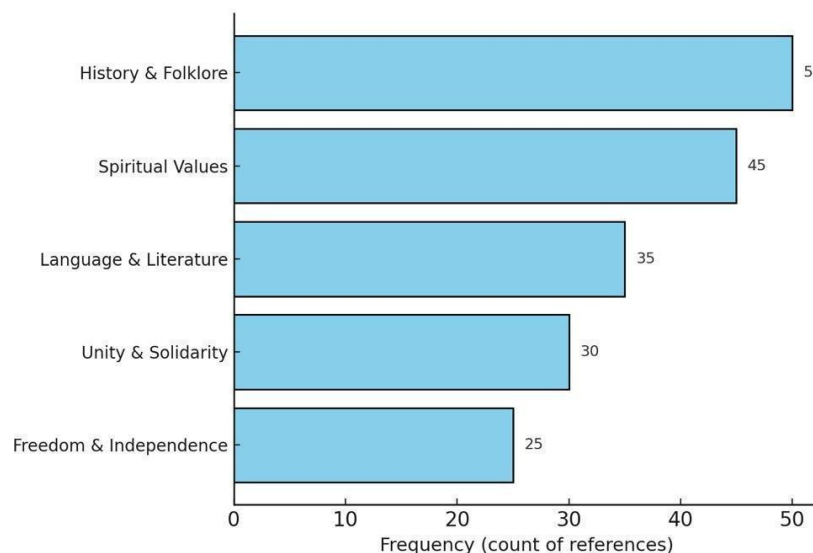


Figure 1. Frequency of major national-value themes in Mashhur Jusup’s works.

In particular, genealogical poems such as *Shezhire Bayan* foreground ancestral memory and historical figures, transmitting ethical and social values of the Kazakh community. As shown, references to history and folklore (e.g., ancestral legends, genealogies, historical heroes) are the most frequent, followed closely by spiritual motifs rooted in Islamic ethics and moral philosophy. Language and literature (such as the promotion of education in Kazakh and the preservation of oral poetic forms), as well as calls for communal unity, also appear prominently. Slightly less frequent, though still notable, are expressions related to cultural autonomy and the memory of figures associated with collective resilience. This distribution reflects Jusup's literary approach, in which the recovery of historical memory and spiritual confidence forms the foundation for shaping a coherent cultural worldview. Each thematic element is interwoven; together they constitute a layered system of meaning rooted in ethical, aesthetic, and linguistic continuity.

The significance of this frequency lies in what it reveals about Jusup's literary priorities. Didactic poems like *Oqyg'yl, bilim al* integrate Qur'anic references and ethical proverbs, guiding readers toward moral reflection and spiritual cultivation. The high occurrence of historical and folkloric references demonstrates his sustained emphasis on collective memory and the affirmation of Kazakh identity. Spiritual values are similarly emphasized, reflecting a deliberate integration of ethical and moral reflection derived from Islamic teachings. The slightly lower frequencies of themes related to language, literature, and communal unity indicate their supportive role in transmitting knowledge, reinforcing cultural cohesion, and shaping social solidarity. Even the less frequent theme of freedom is strategically positioned to reflect ethical autonomy within the moral and cultural framework of his works. Thus, frequency is not merely a quantitative metric but a qualitative indicator of thematic prominence, showing which cultural values Jusup consistently foregrounds and how he structures his literary discourse to reinforce collective identity and ethical continuity.

Mashhur Jusup's literary works reveal a subtle and intentional construction of Kazakh cultural identity through narrative structure, poetic imagery, and folkloric symbolism. Avoiding overt political commentary, his texts instead perform a subtle act of cultural reaffirmation through literary

expression. Jusup's poetic and narrative strategies present Kazakh life not as an ethnographic curiosity, but as a subject of intrinsic value and intellectual depth. In this way, his work aligns with a broader tradition in world literature where writers use fictional and lyrical forms to reassert narrative authority and cultural self-representation.

In his verse, Mashhur Jusup develops a rich portrait of Kazakh society as industrious, ethically grounded, and spiritually attuned. Through depictions of seasonal life on the steppe, intergenerational responsibility, and shared communal values, he constructs what might be described as a literary ethnography of the Kazakh ethos. The herdsman, for instance, functions as a symbol of harmony between human life and the natural environment, while references to *adat* and *shari'a* reflect a moral code embedded in both tradition and spiritual reflection. These themes resonate with classical traditions of moral instruction through literature, as found in Islamic didactic texts and the Central Asian epic genre. Jusup further illustrates these ethical principles in his poem *The Five Precious*:

«The first thing you need is faith»
 «Believe in the works of life to come!» - said!
 «God forgives!» - However, the matter is not over,
 «If he does not know the terms of faith, he will be fine (iban),» he said.
 «The second thing needed is reason,» he said.
 «Stupid bald head! - said.
 «He breaks his religion by getting angry over a trifle,
 Sell your faith to unbelief!» - said.
 «The third jewel is patience!» he said,
 «The patient will find his ideal!» - said.
 «In any case, the punishment of the impatient is violence,
 Impatience will cause other problems!»
 «Fourthly, the most valuable thing is to thank you,» he said.
 «Ingratitude for blessings is blasphemy!»
 From the bed: «God, I'm sorry!» - insult.
 «Looking for a reason, run the right way!»
 «The fifth most valuable thing is manners.»^[22]

By enumerating these virtues, Jusup emphasizes that

ethical and spiritual formation is foundational to personal and communal life. These qualities are not abstract ideals; they guide daily action and cultivate social cohesion, reinforcing both moral integrity and cultural identity.

A particularly compelling aspect of Jusup's writing is his use of voice and perspective. By narrating from within the Kazakh cultural experience, his texts subvert the external gaze and reposition storytelling as an act of internal cultural dialogue. In episodes where non-local figures (officials, traders, or foreign characters) appear, they are interpreted not in confrontational terms but through the ethical and symbolic lens of Kazakh worldviews. Satirical or ironic elements occasionally surface — for example, in anecdotes involving bureaucratic figures—yet they remain embedded in character-driven narratives rather than abstract critique. These inversions reflect what Edward Said termed a “contrapuntal reading”^[1], where alternative value systems emerge through the structure and rhythm of the text itself.

Equally significant is Jusup's commitment to preserving and recontextualizing Kazakh oral knowledge. His integration of genealogies, proverbs, heroic tales, and oral verse elevates these forms into the realm of written literature. This process of textualization demonstrates both cultural reverence and literary transformation. From a literary standpoint, it represents the reimagining of oral tradition within a written, poetic framework—a feature that echoes global modernist efforts to redefine the boundaries of literary form. Jusup's method bears comparison to authors such as Tagore and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, who likewise incorporated indigenous narrative structures into literary works to enrich their respective cultural canons^[6,19].

Far from being a mere chronicler, Mashhur Jusup emerges as a literary architect of cultural memory. His works anticipate later projects of cultural self-definition not through overt ideological engagement, but through the aesthetic reconstruction of identity. Blending poetic sincerity, folkloric intertextuality, and narrative complexity, he demonstrates that Kazakh culture contains its own epistemological and ethical systems. As Chinua Achebe has observed in relation to African literature, literary representation is not merely a reflection of reality but a deliberate act of affirming that a community's history and voice merit artistic expression^[5].

In this light, Mashhur Jusup's writing performs a comparable function: affirming the integrity and imaginative

capacity of local cultural forms. His engagement with oral heritage, didactic modes, and vernacular expression positions him not only as a transmitter of tradition, but also as a literary innovator. Drawing on Gayatri Spivak's concept of the subaltern^[2], we may understand Jusup's work as mediating experiences that were often left undocumented in formal written records. His sensitivity to everyday voices, ethical motifs, and indigenous modes of knowledge enables a layered representation of Kazakh worldviews that transcends the boundaries between folklore and literature. In the words of Leela Gandhi, postcolonial literature can be understood as an ethical response to cultural silencing, affirming the significance of voices and experiences that have historically remained underrepresented in dominant literary traditions^[23].

Rather than being shaped by external literary paradigms, Jusup's oeuvre builds an internally coherent narrative space grounded in cultural specificity. His commitment to preserving linguistic nuance and oral resonance reflects a broader literary principle: that the rhythms, metaphors, and structures of a people's lived tradition offer a valid and enduring foundation for literary articulation. In this sense, his work participates in a global literary movement that privileges cultural voice and memory as central to aesthetic form.

One of the central ways Mashhur Jusup shaped his literary legacy was through the recording and stylization of oral genres—folk songs, epics, laments, and proverbs. Deeply embedded in the nomadic life of the Kazakh people, these forms functioned as carriers of collective memory and cultural ethics. By transforming them into written texts, Jusup not only granted them permanence but also elevated them to the level of literary expression. Although filtered through his own authorship, these narratives retain the rhythms and tonalities of communal experience: lyrical reflections on hardship, legendary portrayals of ancestral figures, and meditations on loss emerge not as individual lamentations but as shared cultural utterances.

Jusup's stylistic choices reflect a deliberate effort to preserve the oral aesthetic within literary form. “*Oqyg'yl, bilim al*— seek knowledge, gain wisdom” exemplifies his integration of didactic guidance with poetic structure. Educated in a madrassa, Jusup was profoundly influenced by Qur'anic language and the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, which informed both the style and ethical orientation of his poetry.

This influence did not replicate Kazakh norms or traditions directly but provided him with a linguistic and moral framework that he creatively integrated with local cultural idioms. For example, in didactic poems such as *Oqyg'yl, bilim al* ("Seek knowledge, gain wisdom"), he employs Qur'anic phrasing alongside Kazakh proverbial expressions, creating a hybrid discourse that simultaneously conveys spiritual guidance and cultural continuity.

Crucially, Jusup often adopts a first-person plural voice ("we"), situating himself within the communal perspective rather than addressing it externally. This collective voice appears in poems like *Shezhire Bayan* and *Oqyg'yl, bilim al*, where he speaks on behalf of the community to reflect shared values, lament cultural loss, or urge ethical and educational continuity. By merging his voice with that of the community, Jusup transforms the lyrical "I" into a communal utterance, reinforcing a sense of collective consciousness and aligning his work with traditions of socially engaged verse and testimonial writing. In this way, his poetry functions not only as literary expression but also as a medium for preserving, performing, and transmitting Kazakh cultural memory within an Islamic ethical framework.

In this way, Jusup's work anticipates modern literary ethnography, blending artistic form with cultural preservation. As Santos argues, the safeguarding of oral knowledge in literary contexts is a means of resisting the loss of alternative worldviews and of protecting what he calls "epistemological diversity" in the face of modern homogenization^[24]. Literature becomes, in this framework, not simply a site of artistic production but also one of memory, documentation, and epistemic renewal.

Through these practices, Mashhur Jusup emerges not only as a poet but as a literary mediator of cultural continuity. His efforts demonstrate how the transformation of oral heritage into written literature can serve both mnemonic and aesthetic functions. Rather than situating his role within oppositional binaries such as dominant/marginalized or traditional/modern, Jusup's literary practice is best understood as an act of mediation—one that listens to, rearticulates, and reanimates the epistemological frameworks of Kazakh oral knowledge in literary form. His writing attests to the enduring capacity of literature to sustain cultural voice, even in contexts of linguistic and institutional displacement.

Jusup's literary corpus exemplifies a layered hybridity

of form and genre, shaped by his simultaneous engagement with oral tradition, Islamic textual culture, and emerging modalities of print. His ability to weave together these discourses reflects what can be termed a vernacular modernity—a localized reconfiguration of genre that retains indigenous symbolic logic while incorporating new material forms. This hybridity is evident in his genealogical narratives (*shezhire*), which borrow documentary structure from Orientalist ethnography yet function more as acts of literary re-narration than as archival record. As Linda Hutcheon notes, historiographic metafiction resists historical finality by foregrounding the constructedness of narrative itself^[1]. In this sense, Jusup's genealogies reframe collective memory as an open, dynamic process of identity formation.

His prose and verse reflect a deliberate synthesis of Quranic citation, Sufi ethical principles, and Kazakh oral idioms, particularly manifested in poetic forms such as *terme* and *tolghau*. This interweaving exemplifies Walter Ong's concept of "secondary orality," in which oral structures are preserved within written discourse, retaining their rhetorical and emotive force^[2]. Rather than subordinating oral poetics to the conventions of print, Jusup re-stages them in written form, thereby preserving their performative and mnemonic character. In doing so, he maintains the voice of the *aqyn*, allowing it to resonate across textual and communal space.

This intermedial form resonates with Mikhail Bakhtin's idea of dialogism, wherein literary texts house multiple, intersecting voices—sacred and profane, oral and literate, collective and individual—without resolving them into a single authoritative discourse^[3]. Jusup's work embodies this dialogic multiplicity: Islamic intertextuality and vernacular idiom operate side by side, generating a poetic field that resists univocal meaning. Rather than articulating a politics of direct confrontation, his poetics work through form, texture, and mood—a mode akin to what James C. Scott describes as the "hidden transcript" of cultural autonomy maintained beneath surface compliance^[25].

Affective dimensions are equally integral to this literary strategy. As Sara Ahmed has suggested, emotions circulate within texts as social practices that bind readers into shared orientations and attachments^[26]. In Jusup's writing, themes of loss, exile, ethical disorientation, and longing are not simply nostalgic tropes, but emotionally charged signs that create affective solidarities. His literature not only communi-

cates collective memory but shapes the emotional economies through which identity is felt, performed, and transmitted.

Stylistically, Jusup's texts are characterized by repetition, parallelism, proverbial cadence, and rhythmic flow—all features that align with John Miles Foley's theory of "oral-derived" literature, wherein performance cues remain embedded in the written text. These elements invite culturally grounded interpretive strategies that read not just for meaning, but for rhythm, tone, and ethical resonance. His work thus functions as a form of "readable orature," wherein the written word carries the imprint of live voice and the social contract of oral exchange.

Finally, Jusup's selective engagement with the tools of print culture—while retaining a Kazakh linguistic and epistemic base—exemplifies a literary negotiation with modernity that is neither mimicry nor rejection, but formal innovation. His literary project is not framed in terms of ideological resistance but of aesthetic continuity, wherein cultural legitimacy is not inherited from external models but authored from within Kazakh symbolic systems. In this regard, his work aligns with the literary vision of Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, who advocated for writing that revitalizes indigenous forms while asserting their value within the global literary field^[19].

In sum, Mashhur Jusup's works should be understood less through the binary of colonizer and colonized, and more as literary negotiations of genre, voice, and form, where hybridity is a method of cultural continuity through transformation. His legacy lies not only in what he resisted, but in how he rewrote Kazakh literary possibility through a synthesis of tradition and innovation.

Mashhur Jusup's literary production occupies what Homi Bhabha famously termed the "Third Space"—a hybrid cultural site that arises from the encounter between colonizer and colonized but cannot be reduced to either. In Jusup's case, this Third Space emerged as a unique synthesis of traditional Kazakh oral culture and the technologies and forms introduced by the Russian colonial system. Jusup adopted the apparatus of modernity—literacy, print, even the format of newspaper publication—yet used these tools to preserve and reframe Kazakh identity rather than efface it. His engagement with *shezhire* (genealogical texts), for example, mimicked Russian ethnographic interest in documenting lineage, but redirected its function: instead of serving the imperial archive, it affirmed the legitimacy and historical continuity

of Kazakh culture for a local audience.

This strategic mimicry reflects Bhabha's notion of being "almost the same but not quite"^[3]. Jusup appeared to align with colonial expectations—literate, printed, systematic—but infused those forms with a native epistemology and purpose. His works resisted epistemic assimilation not through overt defiance, but through cultural redirection. The hybrid nature of his texts allowed him to navigate restrictions, reaching Kazakh audiences through both textual and oral means. His choice to write almost exclusively in Kazakh, while mastering Russian literacy, reinforces this point. Like Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's later decision to abandon English in favor of Gikuyu^[19], Jusup's linguistic commitment was a quiet act of cultural continuity.

Significantly, the affective dimension of Jusup's writing strengthens his position as a cultural mediator. As Sara Ahmed argues, "emotions do things"—they circulate between bodies and signs, producing collective attachments and shaping the contours of belonging^[26]. Jusup's lyrical engagement with themes such as exile, memory, reverence for the ancestors, and the sorrow of cultural loss constructs an emotional economy that binds readers to a shared cultural horizon. His invocation of poetic feeling is not simply expressive, but performative: it creates the very conditions for communal recognition and ethical orientation. In this light, the hybrid form of his writing is inseparable from its affective function.

Most notably, the written form—though alien to the steppe's oral tradition—ensured the survival of Jusup's legacy. During the Soviet period, much of his work was concealed, only to resurface in the post-independence era. Here, the hybrid space he forged proved invaluable: it preserved Kazakh thought in a form retrievable by future generations. In this sense, Jusup's texts fulfill what Paul Ricoeur calls the mediating function of narrative in linking memory, identity, and historical understanding^[27].

Beyond its formal diversity, the literary corpus of Mashhur Jusup anticipates key insights by Frantz Fanon regarding the internal dynamics of cultural coherence. Fanon noted that cultural disorientation often results not only from external pressures, but from disruptions in the symbolic systems through which communities articulate their identity. Jusup's poetic practice may be read as a form of symbolic reconstruction: his verses consistently affirm Kazakh dignity, eth-

ical clarity, and spiritual rootedness. Rather than engaging in overt ideological discourse, his writing enacts narrative realignment—contrasting external displays of wealth or authority with the moral integrity of communal Kazakh life.

Such rhetorical strategies can be understood as cognitive and affective reorientation. Through recurring appeals to moral equality—often anchored in Islamic teachings (“all humans are equal regardless of race or worldly status”)—Jusup reframes social meaning through a vocabulary of justice and mutual respect. His use of repetition, cadence, and culturally embedded metaphor serves not only aesthetic but mnemonic functions, sustaining a shared worldview within the structure of poetic form.

This process aligns with Fanon’s reflections on cultural renewal through symbolic refiguration, whereby communities reclaim a sense of self by reasserting their narrative voice. It also resonates with Marianne Hirsch’s concept of postmemory, in which inherited disruption is not only remembered but imaginatively reworked through artistic expression and emotional continuity^[28]. In this light, Jusup’s poetry becomes a medium of re-integrating memory, language, and identity—not by rejecting external forms, but by embedding them within an autonomous literary tradition.

Mashhur Jusup’s literary oeuvre demonstrates a subtle examination of discursive tension between traditional Kazakh worldviews and the rhetorical patterns introduced through imperial cultural contact. Rather than engaging in direct commentary, his poetry builds allegorical frameworks and narrative vignettes that stage the psychological dissonance experienced by individuals navigating contrasting value systems.

A particularly notable motif is the figure of the Westernized Kazakh—a young man returning from Russian education, adopting foreign attire and speech, yet experiencing estrangement from both his native community and the cultural system he has acquired. This figure functions within Jusup’s poetic logic as a cautionary narrative of cultural displacement. Drawing on a didactic tradition, Jusup frames such characters not as targets of critique but as emblematic of disrupted semiotic belonging—individuals caught between linguistic registers and symbolic orders.

From a literary perspective, this portrayal aligns with Homi Bhabha’s concept of hybridity as a space of instability and ambivalence^[3]. Jusup’s adaptation of this motif into

moral verse transforms the abstract idea of dislocation into a culturally resonant image. Mircea Eliade’s notion of myth as a narrative structure that restores symbolic coherence offers a helpful interpretive frame: through poetic invocation of ancestral figures and spiritual cosmologies, Jusup rearticulates communal values in the face of accelerating change^[29].

Rather than approaching this tension as a binary opposition, Jusup’s poetics reflect a dialogic orientation. His verse mediates between oral tradition and literary textuality, between inherited forms and new discursive environments. This resonates with Édouard Glissant’s idea of relation—a poetics grounded in connection, resonance, and layered identity^[30]. Jusup’s use of irony, repetition, and intertextual echo creates a textual space where tradition is neither frozen nor erased, but dynamically reimaged.

Thus, Mashhur Jusup’s poetic narratives, particularly in works such as *Oqyg’yl, bilim al* (“Seek knowledge, gain wisdom”) and genealogical poems (*Shezhire Bayan*), may be seen as acts of symbolic integration, where genre, voice, and cultural idiom work together to negotiate and reconfigure the boundaries of identity. In linguistic terms, they perform a pragmatic function: managing cultural meaning across shifting contexts, reaffirming the legitimacy of local expression through literary form.

Mashhur Jusup’s engagement with the theme of education reflects a broader literary concern with the continuity of ethical and epistemic traditions. In didactic poems such as *Oqyg’yl, bilim al* (“Seek knowledge, gain wisdom”), he activates the voice of the *akyn* not merely as a transmitter of oral heritage but as a moral and cultural guide. In this poetic framework, the value of education lies in its ability to harmonize with inherited wisdom, rather than to displace or overshadow it. He further elaborates on this ethical dimension of learning in another poem on the Pilgrimage, where he emphasizes the moral imperative of acquiring knowledge:

“Whatever the duty, science is a duty
If you know the science, how much debt can
be paid.
First of all, learn the science of business.
Say as much as you can and then pray to God.
Go on a pilgrimage and talk to a righteous man.
As soon as the pilgrim leaves, his complexion
deteriorates.
The suffering caused by ignorance.

This is insanity done by an ignorant man.”^[31]

Through these lines, Jusup frames education as a moral obligation, connecting intellectual growth to spiritual responsibility. Knowledge is not merely for personal advancement; it is a tool to align one’s actions with ethical and communal values.

The narrative voice emphasizes that learning achieves its fullest meaning when it remains in dialogue with ancestral knowledge systems—those embodied in proverbs, genealogies, and oral verse. This literary stance recalls what Gayatri Spivak has described as a provisional re-centering of cultural language and knowledge—not as an exclusionary gesture, but as a way to sustain interpretive coherence and textual continuity within a given tradition^[2].

Jusup’s poetics underscore the significance of literary works as reflections of their historical eras—spanning the Russian imperial period, the Soviet era, and the subsequent transformation period—rather than treating language as a general communicative tool. His use of rhythm, metaphor, and repetition reinforces the pedagogical and ethical functions inherited from oral-derived literature. As Harold Scheub has argued, oral storytelling, particularly in poetic forms, serves as a dynamic repository of cultural memory and moral reflection^[32]. In this context, Jusup’s literary style can be understood as a continuation of this tradition, adapted to the evolving conditions of textual production. Rather than positioning poetry as ornamental or decorative, Jusup’s works consistently present it as a formative structure, encoding, preserving, and disseminating shared cultural values. His method demonstrates that literary expression, when grounded in vernacular idioms and communal metaphors, functions as a durable medium for transmitting knowledge, memory, and ethical guidance.

Crucially, Jusup’s moral universe is rooted in a Sufi-inflected vision of Islamic ethics. His poetry frequently explores the tension between worldly distraction and inner truth, framing the soul as the true locus of autonomy and fulfillment. This metaphysical orientation establishes a framework in which dignity and self-understanding are realized through spiritual cultivation rather than material achievement. For example, he writes, “the body may be in bondage, but the soul soars when attached to the Divine,” illustrating how the Sufi concept of *fanā’* (self-effacement before divine reality) operates as a poetic strategy for articulating inner strength,

humility, and transcendence.

Such literary use of spiritual motifs reflects what Edward Said described as the capacity of indigenous religious traditions to offer alternative epistemologies to dominant secular rationalisms^[1]. In Jusup’s verse, these motifs do not serve merely devotional purposes, but become part of a broader ethical and symbolic structure. His poetry frequently invokes *sabr* (patience), *tawakkul* (trust in divine will), and *‘adl* (justice), presenting them as central values in the cultivation of moral clarity and social cohesion. This textual practice aligns with long-standing traditions of *hikmet* (wisdom literature), where verse serves as a medium of ethical instruction and reflective thought.

Rather than expressing critique in polemical or oppositional terms, Jusup’s work achieves its effect through literary subtlety and symbolic density. His verses articulate a model of ethical subjectivity rooted in local spiritual heritage, one that is both introspective and communally resonant. As Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o has noted in his reflections on literary form, the revitalization of inherited linguistic and ethical frameworks is itself a powerful means of cultural affirmation and narrative renewal^[19].

Thus, Mashhur Jusup’s contribution lies not in overt political statements but in the nuanced construction of ethical and cultural voice within his poetry. In works such as *Oqyg’yl, bilim al* (“Seek knowledge, gain wisdom”) and *Shezhire Bayan*, his poetic discourse situates Kazakh identity within a symbolic system that merges spiritual reflection with communal memory. Through the interplay of religious metaphor, oral-poetic structures, and narrative rhythm, these texts enact a form of cultural memory that is both affective and instructive, guiding readers toward ethical self-understanding while preserving inherited knowledge. This approach emphasizes the formative power of literary form, demonstrating how Jusup’s verse functions as a medium for sustaining moral values and collective identity across historical eras.

Mashhur Jusup’s poetry offers nuanced portrayals of characters who experience cultural disorientation as a result of uncritical imitation of foreign models. In satirical and narrative poems, he depicts figures who return from formal education estranged from their community, dismissing traditional Kazakh values and aesthetics in favor of externally acquired habits. These individuals are often rendered as spir-

itually vacant and emotionally isolated—not due to coercion, but as a result of internal imbalance and misplaced priorities. This moral and emotional dislocation is exemplified in lines such as:

«Poor me!» - and don't shut yourself off.
 «I'm lonely!» - don't say that.
 «I'm sad!» - don't say that.
 «I'm coming!» - don't stop
 Don't be sad, man, don't be sad,
 He knows the bitter and the sweet
 The dead know the value of life in the grave
 The value of health
 He knows he is sick and in bed
 Akmaral is not grazing with wild boar
 The nightingale does not fly with the black
 crow...^[33]

Through these verses, Jusup offers practical guidance on discernment, teaching readers to recognize virtue and vice. His poetic examples function as ethical lessons, illustrating the consequences of moral misalignment and encouraging reflection on personal conduct within the framework of communal and cultural values.

In such portrayals, Jusup articulates a broader concern with the alignment of knowledge and cultural rootedness. Rather than rejecting learning, he emphasizes the necessity of integrating intellectual growth with ethical reflection and communal relevance. Here, learning is inseparable from ethical rootedness, showing that intellectual growth must harmonize with inherited values. Historically, Islamic intellectual life in Central Asia was shaped by diverse approaches to knowledge: some emphasized the preservation of tradition, while others advocated for reform and renewal within ethical and educational paradigms. Jusup's poetry navigates these currents, favoring a reconciliatory stance that upholds moral rootedness while engaging with new ideas. This principle of integrating effort, reflection, and gratitude is vividly illustrated in his poem about Bukhara:

“If I taste Bukhara like a blessing,
 If I fall down and lie down alone in the cell.
 Bukhara - eating frozen bread
 If I were hungry, I wouldn't dream!”^[34]

His gratitude for learning in Bukhara highlights the interplay of effort, hardship, and appreciation in ethical cul-

vation, demonstrating that intellectual growth is inseparable from moral and spiritual reflection.

From a narratological perspective, this technique reflects what Mieke Bal identifies as the narrative shaping of cultural memory—the way storytelling structures not only recall but reconstruct shared identity and values^[35]. During the Russian and Soviet eras in Kazakhstan, Islamic intellectual life was shaped by two main streams: one skeptical of external knowledge and the other advocating reform and educational renewal (Jadidism). Jusup's verse engages with this tension from a reconciliatory perspective: he embraces learning while maintaining ethical rootedness, insisting that intellectual growth must harmonize with communal and spiritual values. His poetic narratives, therefore, do not reject tradition nor blindly adopt reform; instead, they mediate between continuity and change, reflecting a cultural ethic that integrates knowledge with inherited wisdom.

Moreover, Jusup's use of rhythm, repetition, and layered address can be interpreted through the lens of semiotics and discourse analysis. These formal features operate as signifying structures, preserving and transmitting communal knowledge while encoding ethical, cultural, and spiritual values. Rather than simply performing oral tradition, his texts function as discursive repositories, where poetic form structures meaning and mediates collective identity across historical contexts.

Kazakh culture represents a historically and ethically grounded system of values, transmitted through oral and literary forms, spiritual practice, and communal memory. Shaped by nomadic traditions, Islamic ethics, and the lived experience of successive historical eras, it functions as both a repository of collective identity and a framework for moral and spiritual reflection. In this context, Mashhur Jusup's literary work can be seen as a site where inherited cultural values are negotiated, performed, and preserved through poetic discourse. His engagement with Sufi-inflected Islamic themes—such as patience (*sabr*), spiritual equality, and divine justice—anchors much of his verse in a metaphysical worldview that transcends historical contingency. Poems that reflect on the soul's liberation or the impermanence of material hardship evoke a sense of inner resilience and moral clarity. Within this poetic framework, ethical dignity is reaffirmed not through external affirmation but through spiritual introspection and contemplative wisdom.

Alongside this spiritual register, Jusup consistently draws upon Kazakh oral traditions. His references to figures such as Alpamys and Kobylandy function not merely as folkloric evocations but as symbolic embodiments of endurance, loyalty, and communal cohesion. Similarly, his use of *tolghau* and *zhyrlaw* genres provides a culturally encoded means of reflection on personal and societal tensions. Allegorical representations of nature, animals, or seasonal shifts often carry deeper ethical or philosophical connotations, extending the interpretive scope of his verse.

Rather than resisting change, Jusup reorients literary practice toward coherence between tradition and evolving form. Even within a written medium, his poetry maintains the rhythmic and tonal patterns of oral performance, fostering a sense of shared voice and cultural participation. This synthesis of form and function situates him as a mediator between inherited modes of expression and new literary contexts.

Jusup's poetics thus exemplify how literary form can serve as a vessel for cultural continuity. His combination of Sufi-Islamic ethics and Kazakh oral aesthetics reflects not just a stylistic choice, but an epistemological position: that traditional knowledge systems contain within them the imaginative and ethical resources needed to address the challenges of the present. Rather than seeking resolution through external systems of thought, Jusup's poetry turns inward—to inherited stories, values, and metaphors—as sources of orientation and renewal.

This aesthetic strategy resonates with the idea that cultural narratives are not passive artifacts, but dynamic frameworks through which communities interpret their world.

Jusup's literary imagination demonstrates that ancestral motifs and structures can be reanimated and adapted without losing their foundational meanings. Through parable, repetition, and invocation, he opens a symbolic space where inherited narratives acquire contemporary resonance.

In this light, literature in Jusup's work becomes not only a mode of remembering but a mode of reimagining. The myths and themes he preserves are not simply historical residues but active forms of sense-making in times of uncertainty or change. His poetic synthesis offers a vital insight: that the conscious adaptation of tradition within literary form provides a powerful means of maintaining cultural coherence across generations. Taken together, these thematic and stylistic patterns illustrate how Jusup's literary practice operates as both a repository and a mediator of Kazakh cultural memory, setting the stage for further interpretive discussion.

4. Discussion

Mashhur Jusup's literary vision may be situated within a broader constellation of writers who employed literature as a medium for cultural rearticulation and ethical reflection. Rather than advancing direct socio-political commentary, his texts construct a symbolic architecture in which each motif—language, history, spirituality, communal cohesion, and cultural continuity—reinforces the others, forming a cohesive framework of identity rooted in ethical, affective, and aesthetic commitments (Table 1). This integration of genre, form, and metaphor enacts a latent cultural dialogue through poetic structures rather than overt ideological statements.

Table 1. Conceptual Framework of Key National Values in Mashhur Jusup's Writings.

Key National Value	Representative Examples from Jusup's Works	Narrative / Poetic Function
History & Folklore	Genealogical poems ("Shezhire Bayan"), references to Alpamys, Kobylandy	Preserves collective memory; reinforces cultural identity; connects present to ancestral heritage
Spiritual Values	Didactic verses in <i>Oqyg'yl, bilim al</i> , reflections on sabr, tawakkul, 'adl	Provides ethical guidance; integrates Islamic teachings with moral reflection; anchors moral autonomy
Language & Literature	Promotion of Kazakh oral forms (terme, tolghau), poetic diction and idioms	Maintains continuity with oral tradition; conveys aesthetic and mnemonic function; emphasizes vernacular literacy
Unity & Solidarity	First-person plural usage ("we"), communal exhortations in narrative poems	Articulates collective identity; reinforces social cohesion; mediates between individual and community
Freedom & Ethical Autonomy	Allegories of personal and spiritual resilience, critique of superficial modernity	Encourages ethical self-governance; reconciles intellectual growth with cultural rootedness; highlights moral responsibility

This narrative strategy finds resonance in global literary traditions where storytelling serves as a medium of epistemic renewal. In African literature, Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*^[36] offers a parallel. Achebe's portrayal of Igbo soci-

ety engages oral tradition not as folklore but as a mode of world-making, embedding proverbs, rhythm, and cosmology within the English language to convey indigenous knowledge systems. His use of linguistic hybridity results in what

scholars have described as a textual palimpsest—where local epistemologies reshape the colonial language from within. Jusup, by contrast, retained Kazakh as his principal medium of expression, thereby preserving both the internal cadence of oral tradition and the cultural specificity of his audience. Yet the two share a commitment to narrative as a form of mnemonic and ethical restoration. In both, oral heritage operates not as a historical artifact but as a structural and cognitive foundation for literary form.

A distinct but related affinity can be found in the works of Rabindranath Tagore, whose literary practice similarly fused spiritual, philosophical, and linguistic traditions. Tagore's fiction and essays reflect on the dynamic interplay between cultural inheritance and intellectual modernity. His writing, often addressed to both Indian and Western readers, articulates a vision of identity as dialogic and ethically grounded. Jusup's orientation, while more inward and anchored in Sufi Islamic ethics, likewise positions literature as a site of reflection and re-centering. Both authors view the poetic voice not as a vehicle for polemic, but as a means of cultivating ethical imagination. Importantly, neither embraced rigid essentialism; rather, each explored cultural identity as a layered, interpretive process in which values are renewed through narrative.

In this comparative light, Jusup's oeuvre affirms the literary imagination as a form of cultural stewardship—one that bridges generations, restores collective memory, and reinforces the ethical grammar of everyday life.

The contrast in their public fates is instructive. Tagore, internationally recognized and awarded the Nobel Prize, engaged with colonial modernity from a global intellectual platform. Jusup, by contrast, worked within the more circumscribed cultural spaces of the Kazakh steppe, where censorship and ideological control limited public dissemination. Yet both authors are now canonized within their respective literary traditions as figures of cultural introspection and narrative innovation. Their works demonstrate how literature, particularly in transitional or constrained contexts, can serve not merely as a reflection of identity but as a creative force for its redefinition and transmission.

Mashhur Jusup's literary legacy illustrates how poetic form and ethical content combine to preserve cultural memory and reinforce a sense of belonging. His focus on key cultural values—language, history, folklore, spirituality,

and communal cohesion—constitutes a sustained aesthetic project of cultural affirmation. This approach, while not framed as an overt critique, operates through symbolic structures and traditional genres that reinforce indigenous epistemologies and worldviews. Similar patterns can be observed in the works of other literary figures from post-imperial or colonially affected contexts.

Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*^[36] offers a salient point of comparison. Although Achebe wrote in English, he infused his prose with Igbo proverbs and narrative rhythms, thereby re-centering African cultural logic within a Western linguistic medium. Jusup, in contrast, composed his works in Kazakh, embedding oral stylistics and moral instruction directly into the vernacular literary tradition. Both writers used folklore not merely as content but as a narrative method—transforming inherited forms into vehicles of cultural endurance.

Rabindranath Tagore, writing within the intellectual ferment of British India, likewise explored themes of spiritual identity and ethical self-understanding. His blend of philosophical humanism and literary modernism shares affinities with Jusup's synthesis of Sufi-Islamic ethics and Kazakh poetic structures. While Tagore addressed a cosmopolitan audience and often adopted dialogic modes, Jusup's orientation remained grounded in the metaphors and moral lexicon of his own culture. Despite these differences, both authors conceived literature as a space of ethical reflection and cultural regeneration.

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o offers a more radical intervention into questions of language and literary form. His decision to write exclusively in Gikuyu signaled a deliberate attempt to realign literary production with local linguistic and cognitive frameworks. Although working in different historical contexts, both Ngũgĩ and Jusup understood the deep connection between language and cultural self-definition. Jusup's continued use of Kazakh—including in pre-reform Arabic script—during a time of increasing standardization reflects a commitment to preserving linguistic integrity. In both cases, literary language becomes not only a stylistic choice but a medium of epistemic continuity.

These comparative perspectives underscore the broader relevance of Jusup's work. Without adopting explicit ideological positions, his poetry advances a sustained engagement with cultural inheritance, moral orientation, and the

expressive possibilities of native literary forms. Through this, he joins a lineage of writers who have used the written word to sustain and adapt collective identity in the face of transformation.

In Latin American literature, Gabriel García Márquez used the stylistic device of magical realism to reflect on the cultural and historical complexities of his region. His allegorical setting of Macondo in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*^[7] encapsulates collective memory, myth, and the cyclical nature of historical experience. In a comparable manner, Mashhur Jusup encoded cultural introspection through folklore and oral motifs, using myth and moral allegory to articulate enduring values under conditions of transition and instability. While Márquez addressed a global readership in a post-independence environment, Jusup focused on internal cultural preservation during a period of significant ideological transformation. Both demonstrate how fiction, when rooted in mythopoetic structures, can safeguard cultural memory when direct historical commentary is constrained.

Literary tone and strategy are deeply shaped by historical context. Authors like Jusup, Tagore, and Achebe composed their works during periods of cultural marginalization or under the influence of dominant external narratives.

Their texts often combined moral urgency with aesthetic affirmation, mobilizing traditional forms to express continuity. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, writing during the post-independence period in Africa, adopted a more radical formal strategy by renouncing colonial languages in favor of indigenous linguistic frameworks. García Márquez, writing in the context of post-independence Latin America, turned to cyclical temporality and metaphor to explore historical repetition and cultural endurance. Despite differing historical situations, these writers converge in their belief that literature serves not merely as a reflection of identity but as a vehicle for its rearticulation.

Table 2 highlights the comparative literary influences on Mashhur Jusup and situates his work within a broader historical and cultural context. The contrast in public reception and historical conditions—Tagore’s international recognition versus Jusup’s marginalization under Soviet-era constraints—illustrates how differing social and political environments shape the production and circulation of literary texts. Yet in all cases, these authors demonstrate that literature functions not merely as a reflection of identity but as a medium for its rearticulation and transmission, preserving cultural memory and ethical values across generations.

Table 2. Comparative Literary Influences on Mashhur Jusup and Their Reflection in His Work.

Author	Historical Context / Region	Representative Aspect in Jusup’s Work	Example / Poetic Feature
Rabindranath Tagore	British India, early 20th century.	Ethical self-understanding; spiritual humanism	Didactic and reflective poems emphasizing moral and spiritual development
Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o	Post-independence Africa, mid-late 20th c.	Commitment to indigenous language; epistemic continuity	Use of Kazakh language (including pre-reform Arabic script) to preserve linguistic and cultural integrity
Gabriel García Márquez	Post-independence Latin America	Mythopoetic structures; cyclical temporality; cultural memory	Folkloric and allegorical motifs in narrative poems; encoding of collective memory and moral allegory
Chinua Achebe	Colonial/post-colonial Nigeria	Cultural continuity through traditional forms; moral affirmation	Integration of Kazakh oral traditions and proverbs into poetic narrative
Post-Soviet Kazakh authors	Kazakhstan, post-1991	Rediscovery of marginalized literary voices; reinforcement of cultural continuity	Jusup’s previously censored works reinterpreted; grounding in vernacular moral and narrative traditions

In Kazakhstan, the dissolution of the Soviet Union did not result in a conventional narrative of political rupture, but it did open a space for cultural and historical re-evaluation. In this context, the rediscovery of previously censored or marginalized figures like Mashhur Jusup took on renewed significance. His works, once kept from public circulation, began to be interpreted as vital expressions of cultural continuity and literary inheritance. Much as African intellectual

traditions turned to oral sources or Indian discourse reengaged with philosophical texts, post-Soviet Kazakh literature sought grounding in vernacular moral and narrative traditions.

The case of Jusup underscores a broader principle: that national values in literature are not merely symbolic ornamentation but function as narrative frameworks for ethical reflection and cultural stability. Values such as language,

folklore, spiritual worldview, and historical consciousness operate as aesthetic mechanisms that shape the narrative logic of his poetry. Like Ngũgĩ, Achebe, Tagore, and García Márquez, Jusup embeds cultural codes within literary form, transforming inherited elements into generative forces for collective meaning-making. In doing so, his writing affirms literature's long-term capacity to transmit, renew, and reinterpret cultural identity across generations.

This process resonates with Gayatri Spivak's notion of "strategic essentialism," where cultural identity is temporarily foregrounded not as a fixed essence, but as a rhetorical and imaginative framework for collective reorientation^[2]. In this light, Mashhur Jusup's focus on Kazakh cultural and spiritual heritage—his poetic affirmation of "Kazakhness"—functions not as exclusivism, but as a literary project of cultural coherence. His writing does not assert cultural superiority; rather, it seeks to restore symbolic balance and affirm shared ethical foundations through aesthetic form.

At the same time, literature's capacity to influence broader historical dynamics is necessarily bounded. Jusup's oeuvre, for all its symbolic richness and moral clarity, could not arrest the structural transformations that reshaped Kazakh life in the modern period. Processes such as language shift, erosion of oral traditions, and sociocultural fragmentation left enduring traces. Yet literature operates on a different register—one of cultural latency and mnemonic preservation. Jusup's poetry, with its patterned language and moral allegory, functioned as a vessel for intangible heritage, encoding knowledge and worldview in forms transmissible beyond their moment of origin.

As Jan Assmann argues, cultural memory resides in symbolic forms like poetry and narrative, which allow communities to transmit identity across discontinuous time^[37]. In this sense, Jusup's verse represents not only a record of values but a structure for their reinvention. It underscores a vital function of literary discourse: the ability to hold, reshape, and reactivate meaning across historical thresholds.

This dynamic illustrates the dual nature of national values in literary texts—they are both thematic content and structural principle. While externally imposed systems may attempt to marginalize local knowledge, literary form reconfigures those very elements into a framework of continuity and depth. For Mashhur Jusup, the ethical and aesthetic

dimensions of language, tradition, and belief are not relics of the past but active tools for narrative renewal. His poetic practice shows that cultural inheritance, when mediated through literature, becomes not just memory, but method—a strategy of sustained intelligibility in shifting contexts.

In contemporary literary scholarship, particularly within the evolving framework of global cultural studies, the role of literature as a medium of value preservation and transformation continues to generate critical interest. As societies negotiate the complexities of modernity and cultural transition, literary texts serve not merely as mirrors of the past but as active frameworks for reimagining collective identity. They ask enduring questions: What must be remembered? What can be transformed? What narratives sustain belonging?

Mashhur Jusup offers one answer to these questions through a poetics of continuity—a literary ethic rooted in the preservation of symbolic structures, ethical metaphors, and narrative patterns. His work does not merely archive tradition; it reanimates it through rhythm, genre, and spiritual depth. Rather than opposing change, Jusup's poetry accommodates transition by anchoring it in inherited forms of meaning. In doing so, he exemplifies how literature can mediate between historical rupture and cultural resilience.

Ultimately, Jusup's literary legacy illustrates a broader truth: that literature, more than any institutional mechanism, sustains the quiet, enduring work of cultural survival. Empires may collapse, social systems may shift, but stories endure—preserving sensibility, language, and memory across time. As Svetlana Boym argues in her discussion of reflective nostalgia, the value of memory lies not in restoring a lost origin, but in "dwelling on the gaps between past and present"—turning absence into a space of imaginative engagement and cultural introspection^[38]. In such stories, the soul of a people is not simply recorded—it is kept alive.

5. Conclusions

Mashhur Jusup Kopeev's literary legacy illustrates the enduring capacity of literature to sustain cultural meaning and identity in periods of historical disruption. His multifaceted oeuvre—encompassing poetry, prose, and the preservation of oral tradition—demonstrates how local expressive forms can serve as vessels of cultural introspection, ethical

transmission, and symbolic renewal.

Jusup's writing contests reductive or external representations of Kazakh life by presenting an internalized, ethically grounded worldview. His works construct a literary portrait of Kazakh society that emphasizes communal values, spiritual depth, and cultural autonomy. Rather than reproducing dominant frameworks, he reconfigures them from within—embedding Sufi moral cosmology, oral aesthetics, and indigenous metaphorical systems into written forms shaped by new educational influences.

By foregrounding the everyday concerns, moral reflections, and spiritual aspirations of ordinary Kazakhs, Jusup created a space where culturally embedded voices could be heard and preserved. His literary practice operates as a form of narrative recovery: rather than offering polemic or ideology, it reanimates traditional knowledge through poetic structure and affective resonance.

Jusup's adoption of literary forms introduced through formal education did not amount to passive assimilation. Instead, he selectively adapted them to serve expressive and ethical purposes rooted in Kazakh epistemologies. This strategic negotiation of form and content recalls Gayatri Spivak's notion of *strategic essentialism*—the mobilization of cultural identity not as a fixed essence, but as a rhetorical framework for imaginative and collective coherence^[39].

His verses articulate a model of knowledge transmission that is simultaneously spiritual and mnemonic. Through parable, allegory, and genre-specific conventions such as *tolghau* and *zhyrlaw*, Jusup channels the affective force of oral tradition into the written archive. In doing so, he repositions literature not as a mere record of the past, but as a generative structure capable of shaping ethical orientation in the present.

When placed in conversation with authors such as Chinua Achebe, Rabindranath Tagore, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, and Gabriel García Márquez, Jusup's work reveals a shared literary strategy: transforming inherited cultural forms into frameworks for reflection and renewal. Although his readership was primarily local and his register spiritual rather than polemical, his contributions expand the scope of world literature by offering a Central Asian model of cultural continuity under pressure.

In sum, Mashhur Jusup's writings do not merely preserve Kazakh traditions—they recompose them in narrative

form to meet the challenges of transition and transformation. His legacy affirms that literature, even in its quietest and most contemplative modes, can serve as a vessel of ethical memory and symbolic resilience. Through his verse, the cultural and moral imagination of a people was not only safeguarded but continually reawakened.

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