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LANGUAGE OF RESISTANCE AND MEMORY: A LINGUISTIC AND LITERARY ANALYSIS OF BURKIT YSKAKULY'S PRISON POETRY

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ABSTRACT

This article presents a rigorous linguistic and literary analysis of Burkit Yskakuly's prison poetry, written during his unjust imprisonment under political repression in Soviet Kazakhstan in the early 1950s. The study situates Yskakuly's works in their historical and ideological context, demonstrating how poetic form becomes a means of resilience, resistance, and the affirmation of national identity. The research is structured thematically, emphasizing the motives of injustice, betrayal, patriotism, loneliness, and hope. It examines the poet's strategic use of metaphor, symbolism, and repetition to construct existential strategies for survival and express truths that transcend aesthetic boundaries. The article argues that Yskakuly's prison poetry constitutes a distinctive genre in Kazakh literature, intertwining individual experience with collective historical memory, and positioning poetry as a vehicle for moral and national self-affirmation.

KEYWORDS: Poetry, Burkit Yskakuly, prison writings, Kazakh literature.

1. INTRODUCTION

Burkit Yskakuly stands as an influential figure in Kazakh literature through his remarkable life experiences and distinct creative contributions. The poet was born on November 4, 1924 in Kokmoldir village of Karaganda region and his love for folk oral traditions ignited early in life when he listened to epics and tales and started writing poetry during his youth. Initial publications appeared in local newspapers before he studied at Karaganda Teacher Training Institute and later achieved broad acclaim in the literary world. He pursued a career in journalism while continuing his higher education at Kazakh State University and conducting academic research after his service in the Second World War [1].

The political repressions and historical tragedies throughout the first half of the 20th century played a fundamental role in forming Burkit Yskakuly's life and literary career. Political persecution during the Soviet rule in Kazakhstan reached beyond intellectuals to touch ordinary citizens as well. The poet Burkit Yskakuly became one of the individuals who faced the devastating effects of widespread repression. The poet Burkit Yskakuly faced an erroneous political conviction in 1951 which led to a 25-year prison term. The most difficult period of his life played out within the confines of a labor camp. His creative spirit stayed intact despite his imprisonment [2].

Through his poetry Yskakuly transformed the pain from his camp experiences and personal suffering into a strong artistic expression. The poetic cycles "The Chill of the Stone River" (Tas Edennin Yzgary) and "The Song of the Prisoner" offered a novel interpretation of labor camp themes within Kazakh literature. The poems provide a detailed and philosophically profound illustration of life in the camp alongside human suffering and internal struggle. Their exceptional literary and historical significance helps shape national awareness and reawakens collective memory through significant contributions.

The study of Burkit Yskakuly's prison poetry has benefited from the research contributions of prominent literary experts in Kazakhstan. Academician Karataev, for instance, emphasized the cultural and emotional depth of Yskakuly's prison writings, noting: The Chill of the Stone Floor poetry cycle by Burkit Yskakuly holds a unique position in the realm of Kazakh poetry. The poems of Burkit Yskakuly echo the lyrical spirit of Saken while expressing Beimbet's sorrow and Ilyas's voice.

The Chill of the Stone River" (Tas Edennin

Yzgary) stands as one of Kazakh literature's earliest and deepest prison poetry examples, written during his imprisonment and exile. Government censorship and political control kept these poems unpublished for multiple decades. The newspaper Qazaq Ädebieti published several poems under the stirring title "The Thread of Hope Remains Unbroken..." on December 25, 1987 which gave readers access to voices that had been silenced inside captivity walls [3].

Literary scholar Berdybay provides a critical insight into the genre-defining nature of Yskakuly's prison verse, asserting: B. Yskakuly established a new poetic form in Soviet Kazakh literature with his "Songs of the Prisoner" or "Camp Poems" which adds a novel chapter to the Soviet Kazakh poetic tradition [4].

The poems "Afflicted by Suffering...", "My Mind Remains Unblemished...", "The Cold Pierces My Side," "My People Remain Behind," "Farewell, Almaty!," "A Sudden Flash upon My Release...", and "Shall I Not Speak in Verse?" are personal reflections of pain and longing while serving as important cultural records. These poems explore themes of exile and injustice while showcasing national identity and the determination to maintain one's principles despite adversity. The verses exude a voice that embodies dignity alongside quiet rebellion and poetic mastery.

A proper assessment of Yskakuly's work reveals that his prison poetry warrants recognition beyond the boundaries of a marginal genre. In examining Yskakuly's prison poetry, researchers should place it within the larger framework of global prison literature. His work demonstrates a distinct universal quality by turning physical imprisonment into a realm of creative and ethical freedom.

The Soviet Gulag system inflicted severe damage on Kazakhstan and affected millions throughout the Soviet Union. Countless destinies of intellectuals, poets, writers, scholars, and public figures underwent transformation through the network of labor camps. As a result of its historical impact world literature now prominently features the theme of the Gulag. "The Gulag Archipelago" by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn [5] and "Kolyma Tales" by Varlam Shalamov [6] together with Primo Levi's "If This Is a Man" [7] reached international audiences with their depictions of camp life atrocities and human resilience.

The Gulag system in Kazakhstan functioned as a network of forced labor camps throughout the Soviet era which served as a key instrument for political repression between 1920s and 1950s [8]. Thousands of Kazakhstanis convicted of political crimes along

with their families were imprisoned in camps such as Karlag, Steplag, and ALZHIR [8]. The oppressive measures functioned through organized systems and deliberately affected diverse social groups who were identified by their intellectual abilities, social standings, property ownership, or ethnic backgrounds [9].

The implementation of political repression in Kazakhstan throughout the Soviet era occurred through distinct stages which followed the socio-economic and national strategy guidelines set by the Communist Party and the Soviet state. The Soviet Union's totalitarian system development brought unprecedented systematic and deliberate mass-scale repressions which reached all social categories and persecuted an unparalleled number of people. The Soviet state's totalitarian regime wielded power that restricted both the physical actions of people and their mental processes [10]. European scholars noted that totalitarianism invaded the realm of thought in previously unimaginable ways by demanding specific thought patterns and emotional control while establishing behavioral standards that citizens internalized as ideology [11]. The Soviet repressive apparatus centered its mission on controlling the actions, thoughts, and feelings of Homo Sovieticus.

Burkit Yskakuly occupies a significant position within Kazakh literary traditions. His life and work while incarcerated provides evidence of the severe impacts from Soviet political persecution. Through his prison poems Burkit Yskakuly both shares his personal anguish and documents the collective memory of his people. This research examines both the thematic elements of Burkit Yskakuly's prison poetry and its historical significance in literature. Thematic analysis reveals main motifs in his work which include political repression, camp life, love, patriotism and family values.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Definition and Concept of Prison Literature

The body of literary work created within prison walls occupies a unique position in cultural and intellectual history while serving as an insightful medium for exploring power dynamics, personal identity and human resistance abilities. The term prison literature describes all written works that incarcerated people produce which include both fictional and non-fictional material. The writing developed in prisons reflects the physical and psychological experiences of imprisonment while addressing broader social powers that aim to restrain and eliminate opposition.

The creation of prison literature stems from

environments characterized by severe limitations. It incorporates various literary forms including poems, plays, memoirs, essays and letters plus entire novels which authors produce while confined in prison. Prison writings frequently function as channels for introspection and philosophical examination while also representing acts of defiance. For many imprisoned writers, the act of writing is not only therapeutic but also subversive: The practice of writing allows incarcerated individuals to regain their sense of control while demonstrating opposition and maintaining their voice against systemic silencing [4].

Prison literature does not originate from just one literary tradition but instead incorporates various cultural and historical paths. The European Romanticism movement used imprisonment as a symbolic tool to investigate themes of internal freedom and existential battles. Prison writing extends beyond metaphors to provide firsthand testimony which exposes the actual experiences of prison life and examines the ethical aspects of justice and punishment.

Different scholars emphasize the political importance contained within prison literature. According to Wringer [12], prison literature emerged as a genre focused on exposing repression and injustice while uncovering hidden dimensions of violence and control in specific historical moments. According to Westall [13] prison texts function as witness accounts which record individual suffering and the structural forces that influence incarceration experiences.

Barbara Harlow's book *Resistance Literature* [14] plays a critical role in connecting prison writing to broader movements against oppression. She understands these texts as collective expressions of political identity rather than just individual stories. Writing enables prisoners to connect themselves to broader struggles for freedom and social justice or national liberation movements. Prison literature serves as both a collection of resistant narratives and a methodology for prisoners to redefine their identities through their relationships with others.

What emerges from this body of work is a constellation of recurring themes: The body of prison literature shows a pattern that explores how individuals live through severe environments together with the creation of meaning without freedom and they maintain both personal and group identities while challenging existing power systems. The incarcerated writer uses language to establish presence and to testify while envisioning alternative realities rather than remaining confined to silence.

Prison literature possesses historical and literary worth together with ethical importance. Prison literature encourages readers inside and outside of prison to examine justice boundaries as well as punishment principles and human endurance.

2.2. Prison Theme in World Literature

The prison theme holds an important position in global literature because it provides deep understanding of human psychology as well as social injustice and political oppression. "Notes from a Dead House" by Fyodor Dostoevsky presents a powerful portrayal of Siberian prison life while examining both psychological and existential aspects of imprisonment. Dostoevsky's personal prison experience enabled him to depict incarceration as an arena of deep existential and ethical battles while uncovering fundamental aspects of human behavior under extreme pressure [15].

"The Ballad of Reading Gaol" stands as a classic work within prison literature by Oscar Wilde. While serving time for offenses related to his private life Wilde wrote poetry that challenged societal wrongs through themes of guilt and suffering which pointed towards redemption. The vivid depiction of incarceration's emotional and psychological effects continues to serve as an influential story about the brutality of imprisonment [16].

"Long Walk to Freedom" by Nelson Mandela presents his inspirational story of enduring 27 years in prison while showcasing his resilience and continuous fight for human rights and freedom. Through his writing Mandela presents a dual narrative that functions as political commentary while offering personal insight into how imprisonment intensified his dedication to combatting systemic injustice [17].

The prison poetry of Turkish poet Nazim Hikmet expresses an unyielding desire for freedom alongside opposition to injustice. Despite spending extensive periods in prison because of his political convictions, Hikmet produced poems that express timeless themes related to human freedom and dignity and demonstrate the strength of the human spirit. His poems stand out for their dynamic depiction of hope and resistance under oppressive circumstances [18].

Additionally, Kenyan writer Ngugi wa Thiong'o's "Detained: A Writer's Prison Diary" vividly depicts the author's imprisonment because of his political opposition. Ngugi uses personal reflections and political analysis together with striking prison life depictions to challenge the oppressive regime and illustrate how writing serves as a powerful form of resistance [19].

The book *Shantaram* (2003) by Gregory David Roberts stands out as a significant modern work of prison literature which combines autobiographical elements with fictional storytelling. The book became an international bestseller because it draws from the author's authentic experience of fleeing from Australian prison to live in India as a fugitive. Although *Shantaram* uses a unique narrative form different from typical prison memoirs its core subject matter involves themes of escape and redemption which stem from the author's prison experience. Roberts' writing portrays the mental effects of imprisonment along with ongoing identity challenges and the conflict between displacement and homecoming. The worldwide acclaim of the book demonstrates that prison narratives maintain their appeal to modern audiences because the themes of imprisonment and personal evolution remain universally relevant regardless of time and place. *Shantaram* reveals through its narrative how physical and metaphorical imprisonment transforms into an opportunity for philosophical discovery and personal transformation [20].

Prison literature stands as both a record of human torment and a deep investigation into human endurance and moral questioning alongside the persistent search for justice and human dignity. The texts emphasize writing as an essential means for psychological endurance and resistance while asserting human dignity against oppressive systems.

During Soviet repression, the prison theme emerged as a significant historical and cultural element in Kazakh literature. During this period Kazakh intellectual figures and cultural creators faced unjust imprisonment and persecution because of their political and cultural activities.

The oppression period turned Saken Seifullin, Beimbet Mailin, and Ilyas Zhansugurov into representative victims because of their persecution. The imprisonment of these writers deeply interrupted their literary output as most of their prison writings were lost causing significant voids in the historical literary record. The depictions of imprisonment in Kazakh literature span multiple works that demonstrate the socio-historical context of the 20th century. Based on his personal 40-year experience in a Chinese prison, Kazhikumar Shabdanuly's novels "Pana" (The Shelter) and "Kylmys" (The Crime) provide a detailed examination of prison life [21]. The novel "The Brand" by Zhaik Bekturov demonstrates camp prose through its prison setting which serves as the main theme to examine characters who have lost their sense of self [22]. Together these literary pieces

enhance comprehension of prison themes in Kazakh literature by providing distinctive insights into historical contexts and personal stories.

Burkit Yskakuly's work stands out prominently in relation to this context. The poetry collections "Tas Ozenning Izgary" (The Chill of Stone River) and "Tutkyn Zhyry" (Songs of the Prisoner) portray both the emotional intensity and psychological challenges faced by prisoners along with their existential battles. Yskakuly's poetry expands past simple accounts of suffering to investigate deep themes about resilience and moral endurance along with the preservation of identity under severe hardship. The writings encompass both his own life stories as well as shared national memories and tragedies while demonstrating the enduring character of Kazakh cultural identity.

Yskakuly's literary pieces deeply connect with readers by exploring complex relationships between personal hardship and shared cultural history. The poet reveals significant repercussions of incarceration on personal identities and cultural expression which enhances our understanding of national consciousness and Kazakhstan's cultural heritage.

The literary work of Burkit Yskakuly has received partial examination from academician Mukhamedzhan Karataev yet requires further detailed scholarly evaluation of his prison-themed poetry. Karataev pointed out the essential role of Yskakuly's poetry in bridging a critical void created by previously suppressed writers.

A more extensive analysis of Yskakuly's prison poetry is necessary to understand its artistic and literary value alongside its psychological effects on national memory and collective awareness. The research investigates Yskakuly's prison writings as part of global prison literature while demonstrating their historical and literary contributions to Kazakh literature.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

This research uses a qualitative approach, applying literary analysis to explore the themes and stylistic features of Burkit Yskakuly's prison poetry. This method allows for a deep examination of meaning, symbolism, and cultural context within the poetic texts.

3.2. Data Collection

The main data consists of poems related to Yskakuly's imprisonment, especially the cycle *Tas Edenning Izgary* ("The Chill of Stone River").

Selection criteria include: (1) clear references to confinement, interrogation, injustice, or psychological struggle; (2) recurring imagery related to prison themes (e.g., solitude, endurance, homeland). Archival documents, historical records, and biographical sources are used to supplement the textual analysis and provide broader context.

3.3. Analytical Framework

The study uses Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis, going through: repeated close readings; initial coding of lines that are emotionally or symbolically significant; grouping codes into larger categories (such as injustice, betrayal, patriotism, hope); refining themes in the context of history; and interpreting their functions across the collection. This approach helps identify both explicit meanings and subtle symbolic layers.

3.4. Linguistic-Stylistic Analysis

To showcase language as both testimony and resistance, the methodology includes linguistic-stylistic analysis by examining semantic fields (suffering, homeland, endurance), stylistic devices (metaphor, repetition, parallelism, sound patterns), phonological features (rhyme, stress, consonant clusters), and intertextual ties with Kazakh oral traditions and Soviet literature. Combining thematic and stylistic methods provides depth and rigor, revealing how Yskakuly's poetry constructs meaning at the crossroads of theme, language, and historical experience.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The poetry that emerges from imprisonment demonstrates a unique intensity because emotions become more intense while meanings become more focused and testimonies gain greater strength. While enduring unjust imprisonment Burkit Yskakuly crafted a significant collection of lyric poetry that merges personal and political aspects with internal and external realities alongside spiritual and physical dimensions through poetic confession. His prison writings function as both a profound emotional record of his imprisonment period and a literary and philosophical domain where reflection, resistance, and remembrance become interwoven.

Thematic analysis of his poetry reveals several dominant threads: His work examines suffering and isolation, the desire for homeland, love and separation dynamics, protests against injustice, friendship complications and betrayal while emphasizing the essential power of poetry to bring about redemption.

From a linguistic-stylistic perspective, these themes are reinforced through deliberate lexical and rhetorical choices. Repetition and parallelism amplify the intensity of emotion, ensuring motifs of homeland and hope remain central. Lexical contrasts terms of sorrow (қасірет, түн) set against words of resilience (үміт, сенім) – create semantic tension that mirrors the lived experience of confinement. Phonological devices such as alliteration and assonance strengthen the emotional resonance: harsh consonant clusters mark depictions of suffering, while softer vowel harmonies convey comfort and aspiration. Intertextual echoes of Kazakh oral traditions and Russian classics further enrich the linguistic palette, situating Yskakuly's work within a broader literary dialogue while affirming cultural specificity.

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In this way, results highlight not only the thematic depth of Yskakuly's prison poetry but also its linguistic craftsmanship. His use of language transforms personal testimony into cultural memory, demonstrating how stylistic form and thematic substance converge to create a powerful record of endurance and resistance.

4.1. From Bodily Suffering to Spiritual Pain

Yskakuly's poetry frequently explores suffering as a fundamental existential experience of disconnection from the world beyond physical hardships. In "The Dampness Pierces My Hip" («Жамбасыма сыз батып») [24], the poet begins with the physical discomfort of his prison cell:

«Жамбасыма сыз батып,
Жай болғалы абақты»
"Dampness piercing my hip,
Since prison became my home"

This image extends beyond simple depiction because the cold damp floor symbolizes isolation acting as a physical indication of dislocation and entrapment. The poem "Another Year" («Тағы бір жыл») [24] portrays time as a heavy burden instead of a measurement unit while transforming waiting into a source of torment.

«Күдікпенен, үмітпенен санаймын
Қара күнім бітеді деп қай күні?»
"With doubt and hope I count
The day my dark times will end"

The recurring metaphor of "dark days" represents both external situations and an internal condition of hidden optimism. The poems use anaphora and parallel structure together with dark imagery elements like darkness and silence to convey the mental suffering of being imprisoned.

4.2. Remembering Freedom: Homeland as a Lost Eden

The poet balances his vertical axis of suffering with a horizontal one which shows his longing gaze toward his homeland. The city functions as a nurturing entity and witness to youth and creativity in the poem "Farewell, My Almaty!" («Қош, Алматым!») [24].

«Мен едім ғой сенің албырт жас балаң,
Тәрбиелеп, қосқан өзің қатарға»
"I was your fiery young son,

You raised me and gave me place among your ranks"

Here, Almaty becomes a symbol of innocence lost—a prelapsarian space evoked through sensory memories: red flags, spring gardens, sunlit boulevards. The poem incorporates movement and vivid colors which intensify the sense of lost freedom.

Within the poem "School" («Мектеп») [24] the poet extends his argument by portraying prison as an austere educator. His experiences led him to appreciate the significance of basic necessities like food and companionship that had previously appeared ordinary.

«Көру бейнет ауырын –
Мектеп екен жігітке!»
"To suffer life's hardship
Is the true school for a man!"

Through his construction of a new moral framework he reveals how adversity instead of comfort serves as the catalyst for gaining insight.

Love as a Lifeline

Yskakuly's prison poetry consistently explores a type of love that is broken and strained yet remains a source of deep yearning. Love manifests in absence in both "A Letter to My Wife" («Жарыма хат») and "They Torment My Soul" («Қинайды солар жанымды») [24]. The strongest imagery manifests when he discusses his children:

«Балама менің бірақта
Әке қайдан табылар?»
"But for my child,
Where can another father be found?"

The question goes beyond grief and stands as a moral demand representing the child who cannot be replaced by any surrogate. The poet examines how the father's role stands apart because no institution ("There is a guardian state") can replace his unique paternal love [24].

Literary works about love and family incorporate reflections on friendship. In the poem "Words to My Friends" («Достарға сөз») [24] the poet expresses remorse over past instances of pettiness and disputes.

«Болып кейде бақталас,
Жүрдік іштей өшіге»
"Sometimes we competed,
Harboring silent resentment"

Yskakuly transforms his confinement into an opportunity for reassessing his relationships instead of dwelling on bitterness. The tone conveys a desire for reconciliation that asks to be remembered, forgiven, and accepted once more.

Injustice, Accusation, and the Voice of Protest

A strong political critique moves alongside personal suffering. In the poem "There Is No Blemish in My Thoughts" («Кіршік жоқ бірақ ойымда»), the poet asserts his thought purity [24]:

My thoughts remain spotless which can be confirmed by anyone who uses a telescope to examine them.

«Кіршік жоқ бірақ ойымда,
Көрсен де дүрбі әкеліп»
"But my thoughts are spotless,
Even if you look through a telescope"

Even though the telescope symbolizes complete transparency showing no secrets he still faces accusations. His expression of helplessness emerges in "My Words Carry No Weight" («Салмағы жоқ сөзімнің») [24].

Салмағы жоқ сөзімнің
Айтқанменен «пәлен» деп,
"My words carry no weight
Though I speak the truth"

The verses express profound distrust toward the legal and political system since truth is disregarded and guilt is established in advance. Yskakuly creates a moral distinction between incarcerated individuals and their prison wardens in "The Heart of Some Prisoners" («Кей тұтқынның жүрегі») [24].

Қойса да заңмен жазалап,
Біз де - Отанның түлегі!
"Though punished by law,
We are still sons of the nation!"

The statement functions defensively while also taking moral authority away from the government. The poet uses elevated language along with rhetorical questions and antithesis to represent prisoners as patriots instead of criminals.

Reclaiming Truth through Satire

The most politically charged texts include "False Scholars" («Жаңсақ ғалым») and "Bitter Truth" («Ащы ақиқат») [24]. Through satirical language and ironic tone these poems attack pseudoscientists and ideologues who distorted history and violated national values.

Шимамайлап бірдеңені ойдан-қырдан,
Ғалымдық атақ алу - барлық мақсат.
"Scrawling nonsense from hills and plains,
Their only goal is a scholarly title"

Yskakuly uses satire to attack people who manipulate the state system for their personal advantage while simultaneously belittling national heroes such as Abai and Shoqan Walikhanov. The poems deliver their message through a political pamphlet style which includes biting and unapologetic language alongside a structure characterized by repetitive elements that build towards escalation.

Poetry as the Last Refuge

In the midst of darkness poetry stands as the only undefeated force. Yskakuly pictures poetry as his ceaseless companion in his work "To the Maiden of Poetry" («Поэзия аруға») [24].

Жүрегіңе жүрегіммен жалғасам,
Поэзия - менің ерке аруым!
"Let my heart connect with yours,
Poetry - my tender beloved!"

The concept stands as a survival philosophy rather than just a metaphorical expression. Poetry serves as a liberating space of sanctuary and defiance when everything else collapses. In "I Burn..." («Жанамын...») [24], he writes:

Өкінбей өмір бойы тынбай жансам,
Бойымнан тұрсам ылғи қызу бөліп
"No regrets if I burn out on this path!"

He submits himself voluntarily to the flame of poetic authenticity. Through free speech he discovers

full living when he lacks freedom to exist. These works display impassioned address as well as declarative rhythm together with metaphorical intensity in their style. The poem is both weapon and witness.

Burkit Yskakuly's prison poetry represents a complex assembly that transitions seamlessly between individual narratives and shared historical recollections along with both reflective verse and societal critique. Thematically, the poems are rooted in real human experiences: The poems explore fundamental aspects of human experience which include suffering, exile, longing and truth alongside language's capacity to bring redemption. Stylistically, Yskakuly draws from Kazakh lyrical traditions—rhythm, metaphor, repetition—while infusing his verse with modern urgency: satire, rhetorical challenge, and existential depth.

Readers must not limit this corpus to prison literature or autobiographical lament. This collection serves as a forceful validation of poetic voice for its resistance power as well as language functioning as a safe haven and memory being a national obligation. Yskakuly maintained his writing practice even during the darkest moments and used this process of writing to sustain his life. The poet's work serves as historical documentation of an era's injustices while simultaneously broadening Kazakh literature's potential and establishing his dual function as witness and visionary.

4.3. Language and Style

The style of Yskakuly shows restraint and lyricism while demonstrating introspective power. He chooses uncomplicated words to convey clear emotions instead of using complex sentence structures.

Lexicon: The language combines traditional Kazakh visuals with Soviet vocabulary. Words like *тегеуші* (investigator), *айыпкер* (accused), and *тор* (trap) are juxtaposed with pastoral and patriotic images: *дала* (steppe), *ел-жұртым* (my people). From a linguistic perspective, this lexical interplay produces semantic dissonance, dramatizing the clash between coercive state discourse and enduring cultural memory. The co-occurrence of bureaucratic terminology with emotive pastoral lexicon can be mapped through collocation analysis, revealing how institutional vocabulary infiltrates but does not suppress traditional imagery.

Syntax: The repeated use of brief rhythmic lines alongside rhetorical questions and direct address creates a sense of closeness and immediacy. Quantitative analysis of sentence length and clause

structure shows a predominance of short declaratives and interrogatives, which contribute to the confessional mode of the poems.

Tone: Alternates between mournful, reflective, accusatory, and defiant. This tonal modulation is achieved linguistically through shifts in pronoun reference (from "I" to "we" to "you"), modal verbs signaling necessity or inevitability, and evaluative adjectives that oscillate between despair and hope. These linguistic markers align the individual's suffering with collective ethical judgment.

Yskakuly's poetic language and style therefore help his personal experiences rise above individual pain to provide cultural, moral, and historical insights. His restrained lexicon, syntactic economy, and tonal variation reveal deliberate linguistic strategies that give his voice both intimacy and universality.

4.4. Philosophical Reflection

The poet's work reveals deep existential and philosophical thoughts arising from his experiences with injustice which challenge his understanding of mortality and moral integrity in a repressive environment. Burkit Yskakuly experiences incarceration as a test of moral dedication and human strength beyond simple physical confinement. His creative output consistently explores the philosophical conflict between personal liberty and external limitations.

His poetic perspective strongly believes that the human spirit stands undefeated as long as it stays loyal to truth, memory and justice. The poet examines truth's essence against a backdrop where judicial systems serve as vehicles of deceit. He maintains that truth carries an intrinsic ethical force that persists in human conscience and historical memory despite court systems failing to recognize it [24].

Ақырғы әділ үкім айтып елім,
Паш етер ақтығымды әлі-ақ менің
Берілер сазайларың сендердің де
Көз жастар нахақ аққан кетпес тегін.
My nation will one day declare the final just
verdict,

It will proclaim my innocence to the world.
Those who wronged me will answer for it,
For tears unjustly shed never go unavenged.

The statement demonstrates a resolute faith in the fairness of historical judgment. Even when separated by circumstances Yskakuly sees himself as part of a broader ethical system rather than an isolated sufferer.

Through his examination of betrayal alongside

silence and complicity the poet delivers an indirect criticism of the societal structures which allowed his suffering to occur. He raises enduring questions: Can systems built on fear sustain legitimacy? The possibility of a people keeping their identity intact without their historical memory remains uncertain. The poet's reflections connect his work to the carceral philosophy tradition followed by authors such as Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn and Václav Havel.

Through his metaphysical exploration of time and memory Yskakuly creates a poetic space where history and nation blend with personal identity. His spiritual strength demonstrates poetry's ability as a moral expression to rise above physical suppression.

Authorial Position

Yskakuly's poetic voice represents active resistance instead of passive suffering. His identity rejects system-imposed labels of failure through his defiant lyrical self-expression. Despite experiencing betrayal and abandonment he maintains his dignity with moral clarity.

His position is dual: deeply personal yet broadly representative. He writes as a therapeutic exercise to navigate his misery and safeguard his mental health while also serving his community to document state oppression and protect their cultural heritage. Through his use of national symbols and bonds of family and comradeship he builds a poetic community that withstands obliteration.

He directly challenges those who acted as collaborators and opportunists to secure his detention for their moral corruption.

Айтсам егер шындықты,
Ей, ағайын, туысқан,
Көрдім қорлық, сұмдықты
Өзіміздің туыстан!
If I speak the truth,
O kin and countrymen,
I've suffered cruelty and horror
Not from strangers – but our own.

Through this naming action poetry becomes a platform for revealing truths. The poetic "I" [24] demands justice instead of sympathy and regards remembrance as a political endeavor.

Yskakuly takes control of his own life narrative through intentional poetic writing. While the state attempted to brand him a criminal, his verse insists on another narrative: His poetry asserts his identity as a patriot and intellectual while serving as a moral witness to history. His work prepares him for posthumous vindication alongside his generation's redemption.

Yskakuly's poetry represents an authorial position that extends beyond personal expression to

embody cultural and ethical values by making verse a place for memory preservation and national self-assertion through resistance [25].

The previously mentioned themes demonstrate intricate and significant connections between personal betrayal wounds and the lasting strength of cultural memory. The poems display a deep poetic resistance through their depiction of individual pain leading to shared memory while emotional vulnerability becomes ethical insight. Yskakuly's prison poems demonstrate how the experience of confinement transforms into a space for philosophical contemplation while showing language to be a medium for achieving internal liberation. Through his poetry the imprisoned figure emerges not as silenced but as someone who gains moral insight and becomes significant in history.

5. CONCLUSION

The prison poetry of Burkit Yskakuly stands out as an extraordinary and influential collection amidst the literature of Soviet-era Kazakhstan. The work stands beyond simple depictions of personal hardship to become a literary narrative that reconstructs the moral, political, and national crisis of its time. The poems of Yskakuly written during Stalinist oppression reveal both the psychological damage caused by wrongful imprisonment and resistance to ideological oppression. The poems maintain their commitment to life affirmation while using language to preserve memory and meaning rather than surrendering to despair [26].

Yskakuly's poetic voice stands out because his steadfast belief in justice and truth influences every aspect of his work's content and structure. The poem's repetitive rhythms along with stark metaphors and evocative symbols like the eagle, frost, and prison walls function as tools for philosophical reflection and existential resilience beyond their aesthetic role. The poet creates a counternarrative that stands against the dehumanizing terminology used by the regime. He asserts his identity through his moral vision instead of victimhood.

Moreover, Yskakuly's work contributes to the formation of a distinct subgenre: Within Kazakh literary history exists a unique category known as carceral lyric which includes prison poetry. The works of poets Musa Jalil and Nazım Hikmet emerged under fascist governments yet Yskakuly's writings originate from his experience with Soviet internal political and cultural oppression. His poems act as a historical record for victims silenced and erased by purges while providing insider testimony

to the system which tried to silence him.

Yskakuly's prison poems earn their importance from their unique combination of personal experience with collective expression. The voice of this poet emerges from his solitary suffering to represent an entire generation of thinkers, poets and patriots who shared their destinies with the state's fearful regime. His work transcends personal journal writing because his sincere patriotic poems combined with dialogues about lost friends and family and philosophical thoughts about fate and dignity transform it into a cultural testament of conscience.

Yskakuly's poems show how artistic expression remains powerful enough to prevent spiritual destruction. The poet maintains his strongest asset, the written word, while being deprived of his liberty

and rights. Through his poetry he demonstrates the self's dignity and the Kazakh spirit's resilience while keeping alive the hope for truth and renewal. The poet's influence extends beyond literature and into ethics because genuine poetry that shows strong beliefs can overcome oppression and prove what complete humanity is.

Burkit Yskakuly's prison poems deserve recognition as both his personal accomplishment and a foundational piece in Kazakhstan's moral and artistic legacy. This example demonstrates art's ability to withstand adversity while evolving through difficult periods. Through his experiences of suffering his voice remains powerful and echoes calls for remembrance and justice while advocating for national dignity.

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