



MONOGRAPH

LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES OF CENTRAL ASIA AND THE WEST: COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS, IDENTITY, AND ARCHETYPES

INTRODUCTION

Thematic issue “Languages and Literatures of Central Asia and the West: Communication Systems, Identity, and Archetypes” is devoted to the study of languages and literatures of Central Asia and the West as interrelated systems of culture through which communication, identity, and archetypal imagery are discussed. Rather than situating them in isolation, this issue approaches them in a comparative and dialogical way that highlights their bond, interconnections and similarities across areas of language and literature.

The unspoken assumption is that language and literature are not just aesthetic or technical instruments but also forms of complex communication through which cultures encode their values, memories and reflections of the past. While literature is the vehicle that organises experience and reflects this in its narratives, language provides the guidelines and rules.

One of the broad themes uniting this issue is the exploration of identity as a complex construct. In both Central Asia and the West, this issue views identity as a complicated dynamic that is continuously produced by texts, stories, and experiences rather than as an innate characteristic of people. Literary texts, with their content and narratives, significantly influence the affirmation or denial of identity. Structures such as genres, grammatical choices, embedded images and narrative figures have also been shown to affect identity in response to trauma, discourse, events and change.

A second broad theme that unifies this issue is the idea of archetypes –recurring images that gain significance across different cultures while preserving meanings shaped by their specific cultural contexts. Archetypal images such as nature, the city, home, the family, the woman, the hero and the hunter can often be used to organize experience and express desires or fears that may be subconscious. In these particular Central Asian and Western contexts, archetypal images and narratives connect tradition to modernity; the past to the future; memories to the present. One area of

interest of this issue is symbolic and philosophical representations in literature. While literature reflects aspects of society, it also offers a philosophical and symbolic interpretation of those aspects. Nature is not just the physical environment where humans live and interact. Instead, philosophical questions such as what nature represents are considered.

Another area of interest with this collection is that of gender roles and gender-related social functions represented in literature. This area focuses on how gender functions within stories or narratives produced in literary texts rather than how gender may function more generally within society. Contradictory images that may be explored in this area include young women who play a role in society versus older women who are often cast in a negative light; the institution of the family versus interpersonal relationships; interpersonal conflicts; traditional gender roles versus expected tendencies related to individuality; duty; ethical behaviour; etc.

Research into language –grammar, style, syntax– is another important aspect of this issue. Specifically, an area of interest can include grammatical choices that frame meaning. Other contributions may focus on issues involved in translation, lexical borrowing, assimilation, etc. In a related area of inquiry, attention is given to languages that allow a high degree of linguistic flexibility, where song lyrics written in one language often include elements borrowed from others.

Together articles in this issue form a portrait of two semi-randomly selected areas adjoining Central Asia and the West. Their interrelation makes it possible not only to meet readers' expectations for descriptive and contextual discussion, but also to show how established cultural knowledge can be used in more creative and interpretive ways.

In a comparative space, this issue links Central Asia and Western literary worlds. By focusing on shared narratives across eras and artistic/non-artistic works, this issue highlights the importance of literature and philology in tackling cross-cultural interactions. It underscores the ways in which literary scholarship can respond to pressing cultural and technological issues in an increasingly globalized society.

Nurjan Sartbekova
Arabaev Kyrgyz State University, Kyrgyz Republic
 sartbek_nurja@outlook.com

Guest Editor