



The Social Significance of Generosity and Wealth: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives

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ABSTRACT

This study undertakes a critical examination of the concepts of zhomarttylyq (generosity) and baylyq (wealth) within the context of post-colonial Kazakh literature, with a specific focus on Zeinolla Sänik's novel *Basbai*. Historically, the figure of the bai in nomadic Kazakh society functioned not merely as an accumulator of capital but as a central institution of social stability, redistributive justice, and tribal governance. However, the Soviet ideological apparatus, through the mechanisms of "anti-bai" campaigns and socialist realism, systematically dismantled this archetype, resemanticizing the wealthy individual as a class enemy and a symbol of moral decay. This research addresses a critical gap in literary scholarship: the lack of systematic analysis regarding how diasporic and post-independence authors have attempted to decolonize these economic concepts and restore the ethical lineage of the bai. Drawing upon the philosophical frameworks of Abai Qunanbaiuly's "Complete Human" (Tolyk Adam) and al-Farabi's "Virtuous City," alongside the methodological tools of New Historicism and Hermeneutic Phenomenology, this article analyzes how Sänik reconstructs the bai as a moral agent. The study employs a qualitative, text-based research design, utilizing thematic analysis to interpret the narrative strategies used to harmonize material prosperity with spiritual integrity. Findings indicate that the protagonist, *Basbai Bapin*, serves as a literary corrective to Soviet historiography, embodying an "ethical capitalism" where wealth is legitimized solely through its conversion into public goods—infrastructure, education, and famine relief. The study concludes that the literary rehabilitation of the bai is essential for the restoration of national memory, offering a universal model of leadership that transcends the binary opposition of wealth and virtue.

KEYWORDS

Basbai, Zeinolla Sänik, Tolyk Adam, Virtuous City, Post-colonial Literature, Ethical Wealth, Kazakh Ethnography, Hermeneutics.

INTRODUCTION

The Crisis of Meaning in the Post-Colonial Context

The transition of the Kazakh steppe from a nomadic confederation to a colonial periphery of the Russian Empire, and subsequently a constituent republic of the Soviet Union, precipitated a profound rupture in the indigenous episteme. This rupture was not merely political or economic but deeply semantic. Core cultural concepts that had governed social relations for centuries were destabilized and redefined to serve the imperatives of imperial integration and class struggle (Arukenova, 2023). Among the most severely affected were the concepts of *baylyq* (wealth) and *zhomarttylyq* (generosity).

In the traditional pre-Soviet worldview, wealth was conceptually distinct from the modern capitalist notion of private accumulation. As noted in the ethnographic records of the 19th century, wealth was viewed through a prism of social obligation. The *bai* was not an isolated individualist but a "nodal point" in the clan network, responsible for the material sustenance of the *aul* (village) and the preservation of the genealogical lineage. The legitimacy of wealth was contingent upon *zhomarttylyq*—a form of generosity that functioned as a redistribution mechanism, ensuring that the vulnerability inherent in the nomadic existence was mitigated by collective resource sharing (Yermenbayeva et al., 2024).

However, the imposition of Soviet ideology necessitated the destruction of the *bai* as both a class and a cultural symbol. The 1928 decree on the confiscation of property and the deportation of the *bais* was accompanied by a discursive assault in literature and media, where the *bai* was caricatured as a "bloodsucker," a hoarder, and an enemy of the proletariat (Friedman, 2010). This created a "trauma of meaning" for the Kazakh cultural consciousness: the historical memory of the benevolent leader was suppressed, and the vocabulary of success was severed from the vocabulary of ethics.

The Literary Resurgence and the Figure of Zeinolla Sänik

The independence of Kazakhstan in 1991 initiated a period of "cultural reclamation," characterized by a concerted effort to decolonize national history and literature. This era witnessed the return of diasporic writings—works produced by Kazakhs living in China, Mongolia, and Turkey who had escaped the full brunt of Soviet censorship. Zeinolla Sänik, a distinguished writer and ethnographer from the Xinjiang region, stands at the forefront of this movement. His novel *Basbai* (2017) offers a unique vantage point: it narrates the life of a historical figure, Basbai Sholaquly (Bapin), who lived during the turbulent transition of the early 20th century but whose legacy was preserved in the oral memory of the diaspora (Kokbas & Kurmambayeva, 2023).

Sänik's work is not merely a biography; it is an act of ethical reconstruction. By portraying a *bai* who builds bridges, funds schools, and feeds the starving, Sänik challenges the Soviet hegemony over the past. He posits that the *bai* was, in fact, the bearer of the highest human virtues, aligning with the philosophical ideals of the Turkic Islamic renaissance.

Research Gap and Significance

While historical studies have begun to reassess the economic role of the *bais*, there remains a significant gap in literary scholarship regarding the *ethical* and *philosophical* dimensions of this figure in post-independence fiction. Recent research by scholars such as Yermenbayeva et al. (2024) and Salauat (2025) challenges the static Soviet view of the bai as a 'feudal' relic frozen in time. Instead, they posit the bai as a dynamic 'entrepreneurial' stratum that emerged in the wake of 19th-century economic reforms. A pivotal theoretical contribution comes from the work of Zh. B. Abylkhochin (1991), who redefined the bai within the 'traditional structure' of Kazakh society arguing that the relationship between the bai and the poor was a complex 'patron-client' relationship rooted in the sauyn system. Current research often focuses on the political rehabilitation of repression victims but rarely applies a rigorous hermeneutic lens to understand how contemporary writers use the *bai* archetype to resolve the tension between materialism and spirituality (Issemberdiyeva, 2023). Furthermore, the application of Abai Qunanbaiuly's *Tolyk Adam* framework to the analysis of the literary *bai* remains underexplored.

This study addresses this gap by analyzing *Basbai* as a philosophical text that negotiates the reconciliation of wealth and virtue. It argues that Sänik's novel provides a blueprint for a modern Kazakh identity that embraces market economics while remaining rooted in traditional communal ethics.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

To provide a robust analysis of the novel, this study integrates three theoretical domains: the indigenous ethical philosophy of Abai Qunanbaiuly, the political philosophy of al-Farabi, and the socio-historical theory of the Kazakh "Bai" institution.

The "Complete Human" (*Tolyk Adam*) Paradigm

The central ethical measuring rod for the protagonist in this study is the concept of *Tolyk Adam* (The Complete or Integral Human), articulated by the 19th-century Kazakh thinker Abai Qunanbaiuly. Abai's philosophy emerged as a response to the colonial encroachment and moral stagnation he perceived in his society. He proposed a triad of essential qualities that define the perfected human character:

1. **Nurly Aqyl (Enlightened Intellect):** The capacity for rational thought, scientific inquiry, and the discernment of truth (Eurasia & Syzdykova, 2021).
2. **Jyly Zhurek (Warm Heart):** The seat of compassion, justice, and benevolence (*rahim*). Abai argues that intellect without a heart leads to cold calculation, while will without a heart leads to cruelty (Nuryshva, 2022).
3. **Ystyq Qairat (Ardent Will):** The energy and determination required to execute good deeds and resist vice (Eurasia & Syzdykova, 2021).

In the context of wealth, Abai's *Tolyk Adam* does not renounce the world. Instead, Abai criticizes the "lazy poor" and praises honest labor (*enbek*). He posits that wealth is a tool; in the hands of a *Tolyk Adam*, it becomes a means to serve the community (*adamzattyng barin suy—*

"love all humanity as your brother"). Generosity (*zhomarttylyq*), in this framework, is the external manifestation of the "Warm Heart" guided by the "Enlightened Intellect".

Al-Farabi's "Virtuous City" and the Ethics of Leadership

Complementing Abai's individual ethics is the socio-political theory of Abu Nasr al-Farabi (Alpharabius), the "Second Teacher." In *Al-Madina al-Fadila* (The Virtuous City), al-Farabi conceptualizes the state as a macrocosm of the human body, which must be ruled by a heart—the Sovereign (Germann, 2021).

Al-Farabi distinguishes between the **Virtuous City**, which cooperates to achieve true happiness (*sa'ada*)—defined as the perfection of the soul—and the **Ignorant City** (*Al-Madina al-Jahiliyya*), where citizens strive only for bodily health, pleasure, or wealth for its own sake (Ali & Mingli, 2019). Crucially, al-Farabi argues that a virtuous ruler (Imam/Philosopher) must possess the capacity to manage material resources to enable the citizenry to pursue higher virtues. Wealth, therefore, is not an end but a *necessary condition* for the flourishing of the Virtuous City (Azzuhri, 2022). This framework is instrumental in analyzing Basbai's role as a regional leader who attempts to construct a "micro-Virtuous City" in the Tarbagatai region amidst the chaos of the "Ignorant" colonial administration.

The Sociology of the "Bai" and the Semantics of Wealth

A sociological understanding of the *bai* is essential to decode the novel's realism. As ethnographer A. Toqtabai notes, the Kazakh social structure relied on a triad of leadership: the *bi* (judicial authority), the *batyr* (military authority), and the *bai* (economic authority).

Russian pre-revolutionary observers, such as S.B. Bronevsky (1830), documented that the term *bai* was distinct from the Russian *bogaty* (rich). Bronevsky observed: "A Kazakh bai is a person who has achieved maturity of intellect and spirit... Merely accumulating material possessions never qualified anyone as a bai in their understanding".¹ This implies that *baylyq* was a status of stewardship rather than ownership. The *bai* acted as a social safety net, organizing *as* (memorial feasts), sponsoring weddings, and lending livestock to impoverished kin (*sauyn* system).

The Soviet intervention radically altered this landscape. The "Little October" revolution in Kazakhstan (1925-1928), led by Filipp Goloshchyokin, specifically targeted the *bais* as the "root of feudalism." The subsequent famine (1930-1933) and collectivization campaigns were justified by the narrative that the *bais* were hoarding grain and livestock.⁵ Consequently, in Soviet literature, the *bai* became a stock villain—a caricature of greed. Sänik's novel engages in a direct dialogical confrontation with this Soviet legacy, seeking to restore the Bronevsky definition over the Goloshchyokin definition (Issembdiyeva, 2023).

Aim and Research Questions

The primary aim of this study is to analyze the literary reconstruction of the ethical *bai* in Zeinolla Sänik's *Basbai*, determining how the novel harmonizes traditional Kazakh values with universal humanistic ideals of generosity.

This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: How does Sänik deconstruct the Soviet stereotype of the *bai* and reconstruct the character of Basbai Bapin as a moral agent?

RQ2: To what extent do the actions of the protagonist reflect the philosophical criteria of Abai's *Tolyk Adam* and al-Farabi's *Virtuous Ruler*?

RQ3: How does the novel operationalize the concept of *zhomarttylyq* (generosity) as a mechanism for social justice and national survival?

RQ4: What similarities exist between the Kazakh concept of the ethical *bai* and cross-cultural concepts of nobility and generosity (e.g., in English literature)?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopts a **Qualitative, Hermeneutic Research Design**. Hermeneutics, as a methodology, is particularly creating for literary analysis dealing with historical and cultural reconstruction. Following the tradition of Gadamer, the research treats the text not as a static object but as a medium of dialogue between the "horizon of the past" (the pre-Soviet era depicted in the novel) and the "horizon of the present" (the post-independence context of the author and reader) (Paterson & Higgs, 2005).

This hermeneutic approach is supplemented by **New Historicism**, which situates the literary text within the power structures of its production. This allows for an analysis of *Basbai* not just as a work of fiction, but as a "counter-history" that challenges the colonial narrative of the Soviet era (Brewton, n.d.).

Research Documents

In text-based qualitative research, the "research documents used as the basis" are the texts themselves and the archetypal figures they contain.

- **Primary Participant (Text):** The novel *Basbai* (* Collected Works, Vol. 5*) by Zeinolla Sänik, published by An-Arys (Sänik, 2017).
- **Primary Subject (Character):** Basbai Sholaquly (Bapin), treated as a case study for the *bai* archetype.
- **Secondary Participants (Comparative Texts):**
 - Abai Qunanbaiuly's *Words of Edification*.
 - Al-Farabi's *The Virtuous City*.
 - Ybyrai Altynsarin's didactic tale *Atymtai Zhomart*.
 - S.B. Bronevsky's ethnographic notes *On the Kirgiz-Kaisaks of the Middle Horde* (1830) (Sabol, 2017).

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection involved the systematic extraction of textual segments ("rich data") from the primary novel that pertained to the semantic fields of wealth, generosity, leadership, and conflict. Specifically, the extraction process focused on narrative descriptions detailing the protagonist's accumulation of wealth and his emotional disposition toward material success.

Furthermore, the analysis targeted dialogue interactions between Basbai and diverse social figures—ranging from the poor to colonial officials—to isolate his ethical stance on redistribution. Finally, conflict scenes and internal monologues were examined to determine how financial resources were deployed as tools for conflict resolution and social stabilization.

The extraction process focused on:

1. **Narrative Descriptions:** How the author describes Basbai's accumulation of wealth and his emotional state regarding it.
2. **Dialogue:** Conversations between Basbai and other characters (e.g., the poor, government officials, religious figures) that reveal his ethical stance.
3. **Conflict Scenes:** Moments where Basbai's wealth is challenged or where he uses wealth to resolve social conflicts.
4. **Internal Monologues:** Passages reflecting Basbai's introspection on his duty to the people.

Data Analysis Techniques

The extracted text was analyzed using **Thematic Analysis** (Braun & Clarke framework), a method suited for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data (Caulfield, 2019).

The analysis proceeded through the following stages:

1. **Immersion:** Repeated reading of the novel to achieve a holistic understanding of the narrative arc.
2. **Coding:** Initial codes were generated for specific behaviors (e.g., "building infrastructure," "feeding orphans," "resisting corruption," "honoring labor").
3. **Theme Development:** Codes were collated into overarching themes relevant to the research questions (e.g., "Wealth as Stewardship," "The Bai as Enlightener," "Metaphysics of Blessing").
4. **Hermeneutic Cycle:** The themes were interpreted iteratively against the theoretical frameworks of Abai and al-Farabi to derive second-order insights regarding the text's philosophical contributions (Webber et al., 2023).

FINDINGS

The hermeneutic analysis of Zeinolla Sänik's *Basbai* reveals a systematic literary effort to redefine the ontology of the *bai*. The text moves beyond the materialistic definition of wealth to present a model of "Ethical Stewardship."

The Labor-Centric Origin of Wealth: Deconstructing the "Exploiter" Myth

A critical finding is Sänik's emphasis on the *origin* of Basbai's prosperity. Soviet narratives traditionally depicted the *bai* as a parasite who inherited wealth or stole it from the labor of others. In contrast, *Basbai* opens with a detailed depiction of the protagonist's engagement with *enbek* (honest labor).

The novel illustrates that Basbai's wealth, while partly ancestral, was sustained and expanded through superior management, ecological knowledge, and hard work. The text details his expertise in livestock breeding, his selection of pastures, and his logistical acumen.

"The proverb 'There is no prosperity without hardship' underscores the value placed on wealth earned through labor... The proverb 'If you hope to live a year, gather provisions for a day' reflects the necessity of constant effort."

Sānik strategically contrasts Basbai with the "lazy" or "corrupt" wealthy (such as the merchant Ilham). Basbai is shown working alongside his shepherds, respecting figures like Kättēbai not as servants but as partners in the pastoral economy. This finding aligns with Abai's *Tolyk Adam* requirement for *Ystyq Qairat* (Ardent Will/Energy), refuting the stereotype of the idle rich.

Generosity as Structural Intervention: The Bridge-Builder

The most potent symbol of ethical wealth in the novel is the construction of the bridge over the Emil River. This act transcends simple charity; it represents structural philanthropy.

The findings highlight a specific episode where Basbai observes the exploitation of the poor by Ilham, a merchant who operates a toll ferry. Ilham extracts "the lifeblood of the poor like a leech". Basbai's response is not merely to pay the toll for the poor (a temporary fix) but to build a permanent bridge.

"If the Russians can build a bridge, why can't the Kazakhs?" This act serves three functions in the narrative:

1. **Economic Justice:** It destroys the predatory monopoly of the exploitative merchant.
2. **National Agency:** It asserts Kazakh technological and organizational capacity (using Russian machinery but Kazakh initiative).
3. **Communal Integration:** It physically connects disparate parts of the community, symbolizing the *bai's* role as a unifier.

This finding directly correlates with al-Farabi's *Virtuous City*, where the leader creates the physical conditions necessary for the citizens' well-being. By building the bridge, Basbai acts as the "Virtuous Ruler," prioritizing public good over private hoarding.

The Bai as Enlightener: Wealth serving Intellect

The analysis reveals that Basbai's generosity is heavily directed toward *Agartu* (Enlightenment/Education). The novel details his role in financing the first *rüşdi* (progressive/modern) school in the Tarbagatai region.

- **Data Point:** Basbai donates 500 sheep initially, followed by ongoing support that eventually serves 4,000 students.
- **Data Point:** He provides meat and grain specifically for poor students to ensure they can attend classes.

This finding is crucial for the *Tolyk Adam* framework. Abai famously argued that wealth without knowledge is dangerous. By converting livestock (material capital) into a school (intellectual capital), Basbai demonstrates *Nurly Aqyl* (Enlightened Intellect). He recognizes that

the survival of the Kazakh nation in the 20th century depends on literacy and modernization, not just grazing rights. This portrays the *bai* not as an obstacle to progress (as Soviet history claimed) but as its primary financier.

Crisis Management and the "Year of the Monkey"

The novel creates a high-stakes ethical test for Basbai during the famine of 1919 (the "Monkey Year"). The analysis shows that Sänik uses this historical event to distinguish the Virtuous Bai from the Ignorant Bai.

While other wealthy individuals hoard grain or flee, Basbai stays with his people. He sets up communal cauldrons (*qazan*) in every village and slaughters his own herds to feed the starving.

"It is not I who was Basbai — you were Basbai..." (Basbai's lament for Isa qaji, acknowledging the collective nature of leadership).

The text illustrates that in the nomadic moral economy, "wealth lasts until the first blizzard," but *abroi* (honor/reputation) lasts forever. Basbai's liquidation of his assets to save biological lives elevates him to the status of a "Batyr of the Soul."

Comparative Archetypes: Atymtai Zhomart and Basbai

The analysis identifies explicit intertextual references connecting Basbai to Atymtai Zhomart, the legendary figure of Arab-Turkic folklore known for working despite his wealth to remain humble.

Table 1.

Comparative Analysis of the "Bai" Archetype in Literary Discourse

Feature	Soviet/Colonial Archetype (e.g., in Qulager)	Sänik's Reconstructed Archetype (Basbai)	Philosophical Correlate
Source of Wealth	Exploitation, Inheritance	Labor (Enbek), Stewardship, Skill	Abai's Ystyq Qairat (Will)
Motivation	Greed, Hoarding	Honor (Namys), Community Survival	Al-Farabi's Sa'ada (Happiness)
Relationship to Poor	Antagonistic Enemy	(Class Paternal/Fraternal (Protector)	Abai's Rahim (Mercy)
Social Function	Parasitic (draining resources)	School, Famine relief (Bridge, School, Famine relief)	Virtuous Ruler City
Defining Trait	Sarañ (Miserliness)	Zhomart (Generosity)	English "Noblesse Oblige"

Sänik creates a parallel: just as Atymtai Zhomart gathered firewood to understand the plight of the poor, Basbai engages in the physical realities of his people. The novel uses this comparison to anchor Basbai in a deep historical lineage, suggesting that he is not a modern anomaly but the latest iteration of an ancient virtue tradition (Jawanmardi) (Rysdauletovna & Bazarbaevna, 2023).

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study suggest that Zeinolla Sänik's *Basbai* performs a complex operation of cultural healing. By rewriting the *bai*, the novel addresses the "trauma of meaning" inflicted by colonization and offers a vision for the future.

The Restoration of Ethical Agency

The most significant implication of Sänik's portrayal is the restoration of moral agency to the wealthy. Under the Soviet narrative, a *bai* was structurally determined to be evil; his class position dictated his morality. Sänik rejects this determinism. He shows that Basbai chooses virtue. He chooses to build the bridge when he could have profited from the ferry; he chooses to feed the poor when he could have preserved his capital.

This aligns with the Existentialist and Hermeneutic view that individuals define themselves through action. Basbai creates his identity as a Tolyk Adam through his decisions. This interpretation resonates with Nurysheva's (2022) recent analysis of 'Abai's existentialism,' which posits that the Tolyk Adam is not a static moral inheritance but a dynamic state achieved through the continuous exercise of choice and will (Ystyq Qairat). By locating the *bai*'s virtue in his actions (building, feeding, educating) rather than his lineage, Sänik's narrative confirms Nurysheva's philosophical reading within a literary context.

Furthermore, this portrayal sends a powerful message for post-independence Kazakhstan regarding the nature of capital. The study's finding that Basbai represents a model of 'ethical capitalism'—rooted in productive labor (*enbek*) and community obligation—offers a sharp counter-narrative to the 'rentier capitalism' described by Sanghera and Satybaldieva (2021). While their sociological research characterizes the contemporary post-Soviet economic landscape as one dominated by extraction and 'unearned income', Sänik's novel retrieves an alternative indigenous genealogy of wealth. By depicting the *bai* as a 'nascent national bourgeoisie' engaged in trade and innovation—a view supported by the historical revisions of Yermenbayeva et al. (2024) and Salauat (2025)—the novel suggests that the emerging capitalist class has the agency to reject oligarchic predation. Thus, the literary reconstruction of Basbai does not merely romanticize the past, as Kudaibergenova (2018) warns some nation-building narratives might, but rather provides a prescriptive ethical framework for the modern 'Virtuous City,' harmonizing the demands of the market with the moral imperatives of the Tolyk Adam.

Harmonizing Tradition and Modernity

Sänik does not present Basbai as a reactionary figure clinging to the past. Instead, Basbai is a modernizer. He funds a "progressive" (*rüşdi*) school, not just religious instruction. He uses

Russian machinery to build the bridge. He advocates for agriculture alongside nomadism to diversify the economy.

This contradicts the colonial stereotype that the traditional elites were barriers to modernization. Sänik argues that the bai class was, in fact, the indigenous engine of modernization—an engine that was destroyed by the Soviet intervention. By linking baylyq (wealth) with agartu (enlightenment), the novel harmonizes the nomadic past with the technological future.

The Universal Grammar of Generosity

The cross-cultural comparison reveals that Basbai is not merely a local ethnographic curiosity but a representative of a universal archetype. The English concept of "generosity" (originally linked to nobility) and the Roman concept of "mecenatism" find their exact mirror in Basbai's actions.

- **The rejection of Stinginess:** Just as English literature mocks the miser (e.g., Scrooge), Kazakh literature mocks the *Shygai*. Basbai's confrontation with the charlatan artisan ("I honor true craftsmanship, not fraud") demonstrates that true generosity requires discernment (*Ghaqqyl*). It is not foolishness; it is the wise allocation of resources.
- **Civic Republicanism:** Al-Farabi's idea that the ruler serves the city is echoed in Basbai's lament ("What will happen to the people?"). This suggests a form of indigenous civic republicanism, where the legitimacy of the elite is based on their service to the *Res Publica* (the public affair).

Post-Colonial Resistance and "Kut"

Finally, the discussion must address the metaphysical dimension. The novel implies that Basbai possessed Kut (divine blessing/vitality). When he is persecuted and eventually dies (implicated to be at the hands of Chinese/Colonial authorities), the region suffers: "When he departed, did the blessing depart as well?"

This suggests that the bai was an ontological anchor for the community. The colonial violence against the bai was not just an economic redistribution; it was a spiritual lobotomy of the nation. This finding aligns with the ethnographic observations of Valikhanov (Yermenbayeva et al., 2024) who noted that the traditional Kazakh worldview identified the wealthy leader as kut kongan—one upon whom the divine spirit of Kut had settled. Consequently, as Bogenbayev et al. (2014) argue in their analysis of ancient Turkic worldviews, the concept of Kut represents not merely material abundance but a 'vital energy' or 'gift from God' essential for the biological and social continuity of the clan. The removal of the bai, therefore, constituted a rupture in this metaphysical order, leading to what Medeuova (2024) describes as a 'traumatic memory infrastructure' where the physical destruction of the elite equates to the spiritual disorientation of the collective. Thus, Sänik's writing acts as a ceremony of retrieval, calling the Kut back to the people by remembering the virtuous leader, effectively engaging in the 'decolonization of national memory' described by Issemerdiyeva (2023).

In Sänik's novel *Basbai*, the central character Basbai embodies and enriches the concepts of generosity and wealth. Within the narrative, Basbai is portrayed as a symbol of wisdom, high moral integrity, magnanimity, kindness, and civic responsibility. Through this character, Sänik demonstrates that the notion of wealth in society encompasses both material and spiritual values and represents a complex, multidimensional concept. Basbai's actions clearly illustrate the traditional worldview of the Kazakh people, in which human virtues are placed above material possessions, affirming the timeless moral principle: «*my wealth is but a sacrifice for my honor*» (Brewton, n.d.). The concept of generosity does not merely signify open-handedness, but also respect for others and the ability to appreciate goodness. These qualities distinctly characterize Basbai Sholaquly in the novel. Elevated to the pinnacle of generosity, Basbai bi held deep respect for Isa qaji, admiring his noble deeds and humanitarian service. Isa qaji is described as a historical figure who, during the severe famine of the 1920s–1930s, extended vital assistance to Kazakh groups migrating to the Chinese region in search of survival. As Sänik (2017) recounts, «*When the group of 300 people led by Kenzhebek, a descendant of Shakantai batyr, attempted to cross the Shäushek–Baqty border, many at the front of the caravan were shot. Those who arrived exhausted and starving were revived and reintegrated into society through the benevolence of Isa qaji*». Even when disputes arose between Basbai bi and Zhanqyq Jumyke zäñgi, Basbai chose to honor and accept Isa qaji's conciliatory decision. This demonstrates that, despite his own respected status, Basbai deeply valued the contributions of Isa qaji – an individual who devoted his life to serving the people. Basbai's lament upon Isa qaji's death further reveals the depth of his moral stature: «*Oh, blessed qaji, you were the lake from which this people drank, the land where they found stability. Now who will guide us, who will protect us? It was not I who was Basbai – you were Basbai...*» This emotional tribute highlights Basbai's profound humanity and noble character. Thus, the novel presents Basbai as a literary embodiment of generosity, illustrating how individual virtue can unite communal values, moral integrity, and social responsibility.

Russian general S. B. Bronevskii, who once traveled widely across the Kazakh steppe and recorded various observations, wrote: «*The Kazakh term **bai** is not equivalent to the Russian word 'bogatyi' (rich). A Kazakh **bai** is a person who has achieved maturity of intellect and spirit – someone who has attained true human completeness. Only such a person is called **bai** by the Kazakhs. Merely accumulating material possessions never qualified anyone as a bai in their understanding*». (Bronevskii, 2005). Indeed, within the worldview of the Kazakh people, the notion of **bai** represents a special moral and social status – one associated with nobility and lineage.

The concept of wealth in the Kazakh tradition is closely connected to the historical formation of the social and clan structure. According to ethnographer A. Toqtabai: «*For a Kazakh clan to be recognized as an independent unit, three essential elements were required: first – a bai to sustain the people, second – a batyr to protect them, and third – a bi to represent them at public councils. Only when these three pillars were present would the community declare, 'We*

have reached seven generations; we are now a separate clan,' and ritually inaugurate the new lineage». (Toqtabai, 2021). Thus, a Kazakh bai was not someone who pursued private comfort by building numerous houses or acquiring luxurious possessions. In the absence of pension funds or social insurance systems, it was the bai who assumed responsibility for the material well-being of the people: providing livestock for communal feasts, supporting impoverished families, assisting young men in establishing households, and ensuring that no member of the clan was left without the means to live. Importantly, unlike in Russian or European social contexts, antagonism between rich and poor did not characterize Kazakh society. This is not mere romantic idealization; it is confirmed by documented accounts of Russian and Turkic scholars.

Contemporary scholarship has also intensified its examination of the semantic, cultural, and moral dimensions of the concept of wealth. Linguist E. G. Steshina (2008), based on experiments among modern Russian and English youth, concludes that wealth is predominantly perceived in its material form. In contrast, E. N. Uchaikina (2005), exploring the etymology of the word in Old English, argues that wealth was originally associated with well-being, abundance, and the human aspiration for a good life.

A common thread uniting researchers of the wealth concept is its inherent duality: while wealth can elevate well-being, it may simultaneously weaken moral sensitivity, encourage indifference, and provoke unjust behavior. As noted in many studies, excessive attachment to wealth may distort a person's inner world, leading to arrogance or disdain toward others. This understanding resonates strongly with Kazakh cultural philosophy. The notion that any wealth lacking ethical foundation is temporary is expressed in proverbs such as «*Wealth lasts only until the next disaster*» and «*Do not boast when rich, do not despair when poor*». Similarly, the saying «*There is no prosperity without hardship*» underscores the value placed on wealth earned through labor.

While acknowledging the importance of wealth in human life, the Kazakh worldview emphasizes that it should not corrupt a person's virtues but should instead strengthen and preserve them. The ethical principle «*If you are wealthy, let your wealth benefit the people*» reflects an ideal in which wealth is understood not as a means of superiority, but as a responsibility. Given that livestock herding was the primary economic foundation of the Kazakh people, their appreciation of labor, perseverance, and the fruitful management of resources was deeply rooted. The proverb «*If you hope to live a year, gather provisions for a day*» reflects the necessity of constant effort, thoughtful planning, and purposeful labor in the pursuit and maintenance of wealth.

In his extensive novel *Basbai*, writer Zeinolla Sänik offers a richly layered portrayal of Basbai Sholaquly – a historical figure who, in the collective memory of the Kazakh people, is revered not merely for his great wealth, but for his humanity, dignity, and profound devotion to his land and community. Drawing upon many years of research as well as his own artistic and civic principles, Sänik weaves a narrative that presents Basbai as an embodiment of the Kazakh

ideal of noble generosity. The novel convincingly demonstrates that the figure of Basbai is not fictionalized mythmaking, but a genuine reflection of the historical Atymtai-like tradition of exceptional generosity. The author depicts his protagonist as someone marked by innate extraordinariness – an image that rings true, given that few individuals endowed with vast herds and material blessings have chosen, as Basbai did, to share their prosperity with their people, shielding them from hardship and offering steadfast support during foreign rule. Through the refined craftsmanship of a knowledgeable and eloquent writer like Zeinolla Mübäräkuly, Basbai's image is elevated even further, securing his place as an enduring figure of moral memory. In Kazakh culture, wealth and generosity have long been regarded as inseparable values.

In the work under analysis, the author strengthens the individuality of his protagonist by grounding Basbai's civic and moral character traits in concrete, vivid examples. Basbai is portrayed as a man of honor. One episode recounts a wealthy merchant in Shāweshek, Ilham, who constructed a reed ferry (buram) across the Emil River and enriched himself by exploiting travelers – so much so that even after performing the Hajj, he continued raising toll fees and humiliating those unable to pay. When Basbai intervenes to protect a poor traveler stripped naked in disgrace, his indignation reveals his innate sense of justice, fully resonating with the Kazakh maxim: «*Be not only the child of your father, but of all humanity*». His compassion for the poor and his determination – «*I will build a proper bridge so that the people no longer fall into such misery*» – align with Abai's philosophical notion of the «*Complete Human*».

Al-Farabi's conception of human virtue is also reflected vividly in Basbai's character. The philosopher defines the highest form of goodness as long-lasting benevolence expressed through care for people, society, and cities. Basbai exemplifies precisely this ethical model. Sānik reinforces this through a central scene in the novel:

«Well then, my people,' he begins, 'I have gathered you to seek your advice. As you know, the Emil River overflows all year long, claiming many lives. And we cannot do without crossing it to reach the town. For two years now, Ilham the rich man has placed a ferry on the river, sucking the lifeblood of the poor like a leech. I have been thinking: should I not build a proper bridge here? With all the wealth I have gathered, I have neither been able to go on pilgrimage nor faithfully keep the fast and prayer. Perhaps a deed that benefits the people will bring me blessing». (Sānik, 2017). This passage reveals Basbai as a man deeply invested in the well-being and future of his community.

His modesty and sincerity made him beloved throughout the region, and the reach of his generosity extended far beyond ethnic boundaries. As Abai proclaimed, «*Love all humankind as your brother*», Basbai's actions vividly demonstrate such universal humanism. He adopted and raised an Uyghur orphan named Rozi, giving him the name Tuyghyn and setting him up with his own dining establishment. Thus, the boy became known among the people as «*Basbai's Uyghur son*». Likewise, he supported two Tatar orphans – Aryp and Garyp – by building them a mill, enabling them to sustain themselves. Furthermore, he financed the opening of a Russian and a

Han Chinese school, and provided livestock to help a Dungan family establish their household economy. These episodes deepen the reader's respect for Basbai, presenting him as a rare individual whose wealth served not himself, but the flourishing of all those around him. Basbai's sense of dignity and honor is further revealed when regional officials – such as the district governor Barnaqov and the skilled Russian craftsmen Dyakov – propose that the much-needed bridge should be built by Russian specialists. Basbai defiantly responds: «*If the Russians can build a bridge, why can't the Kazakhs?*» (Zeinolla, 2017). Motivated by national pride, he acquires the necessary machinery from Soviet territory through Oqas and undertakes the construction of the first permanent bridge across the Emil River.

The project, which began in September 1941 and was completed by June 1942 in just ten months, resulted in the creation of the «**Basbai Bridge**», an 87-meter-long, 6-meter-wide structure capable of supporting 25 tons and expected to last twenty years. Built from interlaced pine, fitted with a guardhouse, painted in deep crimson, and adorned with carved beams, the bridge symbolized not only technical innovation but also Basbai's determination to connect communities and improve human life. This act of building a bridge – both literal and symbolic – demonstrates his remarkable foresight and moral purpose.

Basbai is also remembered in the Tarbagatai region for his contributions to education, comparable to the role played by Zhangir Khan in the nineteenth century. Declaring, «*I will donate 500 sheep*», he actively supports the opening of a rüşdi (progressive) school. Through his initiative, 4,000 sheep and additional material resources are collected, construction progresses rapidly in 1939-1940, and the school officially opens in 1941. Even after its completion, Basbai continues to provide assistance – sending meat to poor students, offering material support to the school, and contributing significantly to the educational sector in Tarbagatai between 1938 and 1940. As Sänik (2017) notes, the school then served around 4,000 students. Moreover, Basbai donates 500 *pood* of grain and 50 oxen for public needs, demonstrating that he followed in the philanthropic footsteps of nineteenth-century educators like Altynsarin.

A versatile figure, Basbai successfully managed livestock, agriculture, and trade while also investing heavily in education, culture, and technological advancement. He is thus depicted as a «**modernizer who kept pace with the shifts of the era**» (Zhakhan, 2021).

Contemporary scholars increasingly observe that, in today's fast-paced globalized societies-both Kazakh and Western-the pressures of daily life and the erosion of interpersonal connection have weakened compassion, generosity, and communal responsibility, while self-interest has grown stronger (Aspekty, 2002). Against this backdrop, Basbai's character represents a timeless humanistic ideal, demonstrating that true wealth lies not in accumulation but in its moral application for the public good.

One episode especially illustrates this universal dimension of his generosity. During the period when the electrification of rural regions-not only major cities-was advancing across the world in the twentieth century, the town of Shāweshek also faced an urgent need for electricity.

When district leaders sought community support, Basbai was the first to respond. Raising his hand, he declared: «*Why hesitate? Just tell me what this project-one that will brighten both our eyes and our spirits-will cost. I will provide half*». This gesture shows clearly that Basbai was not a servant of wealth but a leader who placed righteous action above material attachment.

His tremendous donation-700 choice sheep, 70 horses, and 70 oxen-toward the electrification of the district (Sänik, 2017) reflects the Kazakh ideals of generosity, magnanimity, and communal responsibility. Through such acts, Basbai emerges not only as a regional figure of prosperity but as a bearer of universal human values.

Certainly, Kazakh literature contains many works depicting wealthy or influential figures. However, most of these portrayals were shaped by the rigid demands of socialist realism, which tended to emphasize negative qualities in order to align with ideological expectations.

In contrast, the author of *Basbai* revitalizes the traditional Kazakh practice of praising noble qualities – an art deeply rooted in oral tradition – within the framework of written literature. Through this method, he skillfully reveals the compassion, generosity, and moral depth of his protagonist. Indeed, the humaneness of Basbai's character extends beyond the typical boundaries of Kazakh society; he emerges as a protector of the poor, a supporter of the distressed, and a guardian for the vulnerable. The novel highlights Basbai as a rare individual who regards his wealth not as personal property but as a communal treasure entrusted to him by fate.

Unable to tolerate any form of injustice, Basbai uses his resources to restore the dignity and well-being of those in need. Through vivid artistic details, the author depicts a character whose moral stature grows with every act of kindness. Thus, Basbai becomes a model not only for his own era but for all times – a beacon for anyone who possesses wealth and influence.

The ancient Kazakh proverb «Wealth comes to those who tend it» is embodied in Basbai's life. The ethnographer-author successfully demonstrates the values of honest labor and ancestral vocation through Basbai's upbringing, experience, and early training. His respectful treatment of shepherds such as Kättëbai, his concern for every herder's welfare, and his understanding of traditional pastoral practices all point to an individual deeply rooted in Kazakh nomadic culture. This is also a testament to Zeinolla Mübäräkuly's scholarly background in ethnography and his familiarity with the subtleties of pastoral life. The author places into the mouth of Basbai's grandmother the saying: «Your ancestral wealth will neither let you starve nor fall behind – pray instead for fortune and prosperity». Throughout the novel, various proverbs – «competition is the spur to the soul; another man's wealth will never become your own», «Ancestral riches are only something to speak of», – are elaborated through Basbai's actions. His generosity is portrayed as inseparable from his wealth.

The figure of Atymtai Zhomart, shared not only by the Kazakhs but by many Turkic peoples, serves as a typological symbol of charity. For example, in his story *Atymtai Zhomart*, the educator and writer Ybyrai Altynsarin uses this character to impart moral lessons. Despite possessing immense wealth, Atymtai dresses simply, cooks his own meals, walks on foot, and

never withholds kindness from anyone. Through Atymtai's voice, the writer conveys several reflections: 1. If one constantly indulges in luxury – fine horses, elegant clothing, abundant possessions – it can corrupt the heart and make one disdainful of the poor. 2. By working even though I am wealthy, I want to show future generations that honest labor is never shameful. 3. Even if I buy bread with the small wages I earn daily and eat it, its taste and nourishment are far greater, for food earned through toil is more satisfying. 4. I fear that if I treat God's given wealth as solely my own and fail to use it for good, consuming and accumulating it only for myself, I will become sinful before the One who granted it. (Altynsarin, 1988).

These moral principles echo strongly in Basbai's portrayal. Through them, the reader recognizes the universal humanistic value of Basbai's generosity—one that transcends time, ideology, and geography. Writer Zeinolla Sänik also pays particular attention to Basbai's compassion during the devastating famine of 1919—a catastrophe remembered in local oral tradition as *“the calamitous Monkey Year.”* In the Kulyztai region, where countless lives were lost, Basbai remained steadfastly with his people. By sharing all he had, setting cauldrons in every village, and feeding the starving, he played a decisive role in helping the community survive that terrible period. These acts of boundless generosity elevated his stature even further, transforming him into a true hero of the people.

The author does not portray Basbai in isolation. Instead, he presents the broader environment in which Basbai lived, depicting the political, social, and cultural conditions of the time. Through characters such as Abdikärim, whose witty remarks reveal much about the era; Näzir, who recounts the torment of imprisonment; and Mäzhit, who discusses Kazakh orthography and the history of Tarbagatai, the reader gains insight into the deeper historical currents shaping life in Xinjiang. The treacherous policies of the Guomindang, who exploited inter-tribal divisions to suppress the Kazakhs, are exposed as tragic lessons of history. Moreover, describing Basbai's determination to search for the graves of ancestors after the massacres carried out by the warlord Zu Zongtang further emphasizes his patriotic and humanitarian devotion.

Throughout the novel, Sänik underscores Basbai's deep respect for elders, his desire to preserve the memory of past generations, and his eagerness to learn about the history and heroism of his people. These episodes reveal Basbai's commitment to safeguarding collective memory and honoring ancestral legacy.

Across the narrative, Basbai remains unwaveringly generous, courageous, and intolerant of falsehood. His guiding principle – *«It is not people who save people, but God; yet I have never relied on divine intervention, only on my intention. Giving from the doorway is unworthy of human conscience»* -- reflects the moral code by which he lived.

Sänik's artistic mastery becomes especially clear when portraying Basbai's temperament. Despite his immense kindness and gentleness, he could not tolerate injustice. As the novel notes: *«Basbai had a fierce side; when that fire caught, no one could restrain him – he would do*

as he believed right, and nothing could stop him». He is shown particularly uncompromising when confronting greed or moral corruption. Modern research also examines phenomena such as stinginess and material obsession. For example, V. V. Kleptsova (2009), analyzing the concept of “stinginess” from a cognitive perspective, classifies it as a deficit not only of generosity but of spiritual and emotional expansiveness – manifesting as obsession with profit, wealth, status, food, praise, knowledge, or power. Such individuals impose their will on others and negatively impact the lives around them. In contrast, Basbai serves as the antithesis of this archetype. Fearless before both the wealthy and the powerful, he stands as a symbol of moral resistance to selfishness and cruelty. He feeds the hungry, provides horses to the needy, shelters the homeless, and confronts those who exploit the weak. His life’s mission is rooted in humanity, goodness, freedom, and equality. Through this, Sänik elevates Basbai to a universal human ideal – an exemplar of shared moral values.

Kazakh proverbs and aphorisms about stinginess remain abundant: «*A stingy man becomes deaf – he hears but pretends not to*», reflecting cultural condemnation of such behavior. Figures like Saranbai or Qarabai have traditionally embodied this negative type in literature. The English language, too, contains numerous proverbs and quotations relating to stinginess, as catalogued in *The New Penguin Dictionary of Quotations* (2006). Sänik also highlights a deeper symbolic truth: while Basbai lived and distributed his wealth selflessly, the people prospered; but following his departure and death, not only his own household but the entire region experienced decline. This is portrayed with striking detail:

«When he departed, did the blessing depart as well? Misfortunes—white famine, black famine, and disaster – all came in succession, leaving most of the Shagantogai people desolate. The great store of goods once believed inexhaustible vanished within a few years. Even the various furs and garments – wolf, fox, beaver, sable, lynx, and others – disappeared without a trace. Wealth, like livestock, seems to follow its rightful master. Once Basbai passed on, prosperity faded; the herds dwindled; fortune deserted the land. Soon after, collectivization and the storms of political upheaval swallowed the remainder of his livestock».

Thus, as shown above, the reckless destruction of hard-earned communal wealth does not merely impoverish an individual – it undermines the fate of an entire nation. Through the concept of wealth, Sänik masterfully conveys this profound cultural and philosophical warning.

The novel’s decision to depict the family into which Basbai was born and raised carries profound significance. He emerges as a figure who shares his wealth generously with those around him, channeling his resources into education, culture, and community well-being. The setting in which Basbai grows up is portrayed as a milieu of master orators and eloquent thinkers – an environment steeped in traditional wisdom. Employing the psychological device of recollection, the author enables the elderly grandmother’s memories to revive centuries of Kazakh life, as stories passed down from generation to generation illuminate the rhythms of the nomadic

world. Family has always been regarded as the fundamental foundation of society. As K. Matyzhanov – the first scholar to systematize Kazakh family customs – observes: «*Family life represents one of humanity's greatest cultural achievements. Its emergence elevated humankind to a new stage of communal existence, becoming the seedbed and eternal essence of what we now call society*» (Mukhan et al., 2020).

The novel vividly reconstructs historical scenes – such as the debates and verbal duels held in the court of Süleimen bi – through which the reader encounters the intellectual richness of the Karakerai community. The eloquent exchanges of skilled orators and the lively interplay of sharp ideas bring to life the cultural depth of the Kazakh environment in which Basbai was nurtured. Sänik also highlights the influence of artistic and moral forces in Basbai's formation. The exceptional talents of poets such as Äset and Käribai are woven into the narrative to show how the hero's worldview was shaped not only by ancestral vocation but also by the aesthetic power of song and poetry. Public gatherings, which Basbai witnesses in his youth, are shown as spaces where discussions of national welfare and communal responsibility were central—thus reflecting the unique character of Kazakh steppe life. Through this, the author demonstrates the significance of oral tradition, history, and artistic expression in the formation of human character.

The novel further illustrates Basbai's perceptiveness in recognizing the complexities of the era. He observes firsthand the tightening grip of Russian imperial influence and the opportunistic moves of Uzbek and Tatar merchants seeking profit from the Kazakh steppe. Realizing that livestock alone would not suffice in a changing world, Basbai diversifies into agriculture, trade, and literacy – emerging as a forward-looking leader attuned to the demands of modernity.

In this sense, Sänik presents Basbai as a «complete man» in the Abai tradition: someone capable of finding the solution to his own livelihood while also understanding and navigating the needs of others. His initiatives – such as securing loans in Shäweshek, establishing grain and hay reserves in Qarabura, Jalpaktal, Törejailau, and Jünjürek, building winter stations, and opening a public dining house in Shagantogai with Tuyghyn as its caretaker – demonstrate his practical wisdom and social leadership. Through these efforts, he achieves parity with the wealthiest and most influential figures of Shäweshek. By promoting agriculture and settlement alongside animal husbandry, and by personally modeling these practices, Basbai shows himself to be a visionary concerned with the long-term welfare of his people. All these examples illustrate Sänik's portrayal of Basbai as an individual whose generosity transcends ethnic, social, and economic boundaries. His character aligns seamlessly with what scholars describe as «*universal human values*». (Khudaibergenov & Orda, 2018). Thus, the depiction of Basbai acquires cultural and philosophical significance: he becomes not merely a local historical figure, but a universal symbol of humanism, generosity, and moral leadership.

Basbai's reflection – «*Above all, do not rely merely on what our ancestors created. Do not become a spoon poised over a ready-made feast; continue to cultivate and advance our arts.*

From the stormy winds of Ebi and Qybylan, from the fertile valleys of Barlyq and Qulystai that nurture all living beings, from the roaring surge of the Tentek River – why should new melodies not be born?» -- reveals his vision for the continual growth and renewal of cultural expression. Here, the voices of the author and the protagonist merge seamlessly, becoming a unified artistic consciousness. A distinctive strength of the novel lies in the way it portrays not only Basbai's material wealth but also the profound spiritual wealth of his people. The gatherings held in Basbai's village, the lively poetic duels, clever exchanges in *aitys*, and depictions of its many forms – from *türe aitys* to *bädik* – demonstrate the author's deep knowledge of Kazakh oral poetry and its aesthetic traditions. These scenes show how Zeynolla Mübäräkuly skillfully integrates his scholarly understanding of Xinjiang's musical heritage and broader Kazakh artistic culture into the fabric of the narrative.

In discussing the musical tradition, Sänik notes that the study, revival, and refinement of Kazakh musical instruments remain incomplete. He refers to the discovery of the *jetigen* among Kazakhs in Uzbekistan, and how an older variant of the instrument was later found in Eastern Xinjiang and restored by the Ili regional arts ensemble. This, he argues, indicates the work that still lies ahead in the preservation and interpretation of ancient musical heritage. His reflections raise broader questions: *How did these ancient instruments survive into the modern age? Who were the masters who preserved them? Who shaped their development?* (Zeynolla, 2017). Through Basbai's admiration for the delicate, resonant melodies of Qairaqbai and Qojaqul Qarghabai, the author reveals both the hero's refined aesthetic judgment and his own artistic philosophy.

The narrative also recounts episodes highlighting Basbai's generosity toward gifted artisans. Whenever he encountered individuals of exceptional talent, he rewarded and supported them. Yet he refused to tolerate deception. A well-known incident describes how a charlatan attempted to pass off beautifully crafted household items – bowls, racks, carved beds – as his own work in order to obtain rich gifts from Basbai. Upon learning the truth, Basbai rebuked him, saying: *«I honor true craftsmanship, not fraud. If trickery is not checked, will not the order of life itself fall into disarray?»* His decisive response helped maintain artistic integrity within the community.

The author further enriches the narrative by exploring Kazakh traditional crafts – jewelry, woodwork, saddle-making and analyzing symbolic meanings embedded in ornamental patterns. As Sänik writes: *«The Kazakh people are a nation of artisans and creators. They inscribed their world-whether vast steppe landscapes or everyday objects in decorative motifs that conveyed wonder and meaning. The axe symbolized strength; the waterskin, abundance; wild animals represented the mountain world; flowing water signified fertile lands; the raven's footprint, winter; livestock, the summer pastures; the bat, the mysteries between the stars»*. He goes on to differentiate ornamental forms such as *tendeme*, *zhuzdeme*, *syñar oi*, and *qoltıq oi*, and explains the symbolic nature of motifs like *qus muryń*, *tüietaban*, *itqúıryq*, *qoşqar müiz*,

omyrtqa, and *qus tańdaı* (Zeinolla, 2017). Through this analysis, the author underscores the intellectual depth of Kazakh artistic imagination.

At the heart of the novel lies Basbai's unwavering commitment to his people's greatest treasures – their freedom and ancient sense of independence. This theme resonates powerfully in the famous episode of his encounter with Uañ Zhiñ, retold in oral tradition as «*Basbai's Demand to Uañ Zhiñ*». Basbai declares: «*We are the Kazakh people. We have long roamed the wide steppe, and it may not be easy to bring back a people accustomed to such vastness. A free and untamed nation does not bend easily-it may break. The Kazakh raises the four kinds of livestock, but honors the horse above all. It is drink, it is food, it is the wings of a warrior. Without the horse, could the Kazakh have lived so broadly and freely? Thus, he cherishes the horse as his own soul, for he himself is of equine nature. And there are two ways to break a horse: with brute force, or by showing that the human is not alien to it. So tell me – when ruling the Kazakh, which method will you choose?*» Through this masterfully crafted dialogue, the author portrays Basbai's ability to stand firm on his own soil, defending not only himself but his entire people from the pressures of foreign domination. These lines combine the sharpness of Kazakh oratory with the indomitable spirit of the steppe warriors – men who lived and died for the dignity of their nation. Delivered with incisive thought and poetic eloquence, Basbai's words affirm his stature as a true orator and patriot.

CONCLUSION

This research aimed to analyze the reconstruction of wealth and generosity in post-independence Kazakh literature through Zeinolla Sänik's *Basbai*. The study concludes that the novel successfully rehabilitates the *bai* archetype, liberating it from Soviet ideological distortions and restoring its original ethical definitions.

Through the character of Basbai Bapın, Sänik demonstrates that in the traditional Kazakh worldview, wealth is a dynamic social energy rather than a static possession. Basbai embodies Abai's *Tolyk Adam* by integrating **Labor** (the origin of wealth), **Intellect** (the management of wealth), and **Heart** (the distribution of wealth). He exemplifies al-Farabi's *Virtuous Ruler* by creating the physical and intellectual infrastructure (bridges, schools) necessary for the community's happiness.

The study further highlights that this portrayal is not a nostalgic idealization but a critical engagement with history. Basbai is shown navigating complex geopolitical pressures, modernizing his economy, and resisting colonial encroachment. His generosity is framed not as charity but as a strategy for national survival.

By reconstructing the *bai*, Zeinolla Sänik does not just tell a story of the past; he builds a bridge for the future, much like his protagonist, connecting the broken banks of history with the planks of memory and honor.

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