

MONSTROUS FEMININITY IN KAZAKH FOLKLORE:
DELINEATING NORMATIVE AND TRANSGRESSIVE WOMANHOOD

ОБРАЗЫ ЖЕНЩИН-МОНСТРОВ В КАЗАХСКОМ ФОЛЬКЛОРЕ:
ОЧЕРЧИВАЯ ГРАНИЦЫ НОРМАТИВНОЙ И ТРАНСГРЕССИВНОЙ
ЖЕНСТВЕННОСТИ

ҚАЗАҚ ФОЛЬКЛОРЫНДАҒЫ ҚҰБЫЖЫҚ ӘЙЕЛ БЕЙНЕСІ:
ҚАЛЫПТЫ ЖӘНЕ ҚАЛЫПТАН ТЫС ӘЙЕЛДІКТІ СҮРЕТТЕУ

by

Inzhuna Karazhanova

A thesis submitted to the School of Humanities and Social Sciences of Nazarbayev

University in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts in Eurasian Studies

ASTANA, KAZAKHSTAN

2016

© 2016

INZHUNA KARAZHANOVA

All Rights Reserved

THESIS APPROVAL FORM
NAZARBAYEV UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

**MONSTROUS FEMININITY IN KAZAKH FOLKLORE:
DELINEATING NORMATIVE AND TRANSGRESSIVE WOMANHOOD**

**ОБРАЗЫ ЖЕНЩИН-МОНСТРОВ В КАЗАХСКОМ ФОЛЬКЛОРЕ:
ОЧЕРЧИВАЯ ГРАНИЦЫ НОРМАТИВНОЙ И ТРАНСГРЕССИВНОЙ
ЖЕНСТВЕННОСТИ**

**ҚАЗАҚ ФОЛЬКЛОРЫНДАҒЫ ҚҰБЫЖЫҚ ӘЙЕЛ БЕЙНЕСІ:
ҚАЛЫПТЫ ЖӘНЕ ҚАЛЫПТАН ТЫС ӘЙЕЛДІКТІ СҮРЕТТЕУ**

by

Inzhuna Karazhanova

NU Student Number: 201482850

APPROVED

BY

Dr. Gabriel McGuire

ON

The 4th day of July, 2016.



Signature of Principal Thesis Adviser

MONSTROUS FEMININITY IN KAZAKH FOLKLORE:
DELINEATING NORMATIVE AND TRANSGRESSIVE WOMANHOOD

ОБРАЗЫ ЖЕНЩИН-МОНСТРОВ В КАЗАХСКОМ ФОЛЬКЛОРЕ:
ОЧЕРЧИВАЯ ГРАНИЦЫ НОРМАТИВНОЙ И ТРАНСГРЕССИВНОЙ
ЖЕНСТВЕННОСТИ

ҚАЗАҚ ФОЛЬКЛОРЫНДАҒЫ ҚҰБЫЖЫҚ ӘЙЕЛ БЕЙНЕСІ:
ҚАЛЫПТЫ ЖӘНЕ ҚАЛЫПТАН ТЫС ӘЙЕЛДІКТІ СҮРЕТТЕУ

by

Inzhuna Karazhanova

Principal supervisor: Dr. Gabriel McGuire

Second adviser: Prof. Alexander Morrison

External reviewer: Dr. Daniel Prior

Electronic version approved: ✓
Prof. Alexander Morrison
Director of the MA Program in Eurasian Studies
School of Humanities and Social Sciences
Nazarbayev University

Abstract

Representations of the feminine as monstrous can be found in any type of narrative from ancient mythology to modern video games. Witches, succubi, female vampires, sirens, furies, mermaids, possessed women, ghost women, etc. represent the female body and womanhood as Other, grotesque and abject, as well as demonise women who live in transgression to normative constraints of a patriarchal society. This work looks at the images of the monstrous-feminine within the Kazakh fairy tale: Zhalmauyz Kempir, Zheztyrnaq and Albasty—and argues that how these characters are presented, situated and treated in their narratives can tell us what is deemed acceptable and what is considered as violation of the established gender order. Through examining these characters, the conditions for the different representations and roles they inhabit, as well as comparing them to idealised positive heroines, this work seeks to identify how femininity and womanhood are represented in Kazakh folklore, and what those representations can tell us about gender roles, relations, and attitudes to female desire, power, autonomy and transgression of social norms.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to thank my thesis advisers, Gabriel McGuire and Alexander Morrison for their mentorship, guidance, support and encouragement throughout the process of writing this work. I would also like to extend my gratitude to the Professors of Nazarbayev University from whom I have learnt a lot during my two years in the Eurasian Studies programme, as well as my external adviser Daniel Prior, thank you for your insight and advice. Of course, I thank my family for their faith in me and their love. Last but not the least, my warmest thank-you to my classmates and friends for your emotional support.

Table of contents

Abstract	2
Acknowledgements	3
Table of contents	4
Introduction	5
Chapter I. The faces of the monstrous-feminine in Kazakh fairy tales	21
Chapter II. Interpreting Zhalmauyz Kempir	57
Chapter III. The idealised heroine	84
Conclusion	97
Appendix (Summaries of the fairy tales)	102
Bibliography	112

Introduction.

This thesis is a study of monstrous women who inhabit the world of Kazakh fairy tales—the cannibalistic blood-sucking old hag Zhalmauыз Kempir, the copper-clawed - Zheztyrnaq, the grotesque and demonic Albasty—and what they tell us about constructions of and attitudes toward femininity, womanhood and gender. "A free woman in an unfree society will be a monster,"¹ wrote British feminist writer Angela Carter, and the reverse is also true, as I explore in my thesis: through examining the monstrous, we determine the boundaries of the norm. Monstrous women violate the acceptable standards of female behaviour, disrupting the established order of patriarchal society, and that is what makes them terrifying and fascinating. The horror genre, be it films, books or video games, is replete with monster women: both literal in the form of ghosts, vampires, witches, shapeshifters, demons, succubi, mutants, etc., as well as human-shaped seductresses, abusers and killers. In male-oriented media female monsters can be used for shock value, to scare a male player with an image of a woman, a usual representation of comfort, submissiveness, beauty and subservience, who is suddenly coming before him as "unrelentingly, unapologetically ugly" wanting "without sympathy, or remorse, to devour his very body".² On the one hand, popular narratives that portray women who do not fit into patriarchal standards of conduct as monsters, either literal or metaphorical, reflect and reinforce a stifling normative framework. On the other hand, female monsters recently are increasingly reinterpreted as liberating and empowering: creatures that exist free of patriarchal constraints and that refuse to

¹ Carter, Angela. *The Sadeian Woman: And the Ideology of Pornography*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1978, p.27.

² Ruberg, Bonnie. "Women Monsters and Monstrous Women". *The Escapist*, 1 November 2005. <http://www.escapistmagazine.com/articles/view/video-games/issues/issue_17/105-Women-Monsters-and-Monstrous-Women>

be bound or tamed. “Girls are obsessed with being desirable, not desiring... I want to be the girl who lunges at people, wants to eat them,” says in an interview French musician Héloïse Letissier.³ Somali-British poet Warsan Shire expresses a similar refusal to yield to societal expectation or be complacent: “You think I’ll be the dark sky so you can be the star? I’ll swallow you whole.”

In the context of Kazakh society, even though there is not a comparable tradition of popular horror narratives as there exists in the West, the few horror films that do exist are not devoid of monstrous women. Erkin Rakishev’s *M-Agent* combines the recent popular Western horror trend of an entity that terrorises through the world wide web with the Japanese horror genre staple of a pale ghost girl with long black hair.⁴ The heroes of *Liubov’ Zla (Love is Evil)*⁵ are also haunted by a female ghost whose design is clearly borrowed from Japanese *Ju-On: The Grudge* and the American remakes thereof. The film also contains a witch character in the form of a stereotypical ‘Gypsy fortune-teller’. Erkebulan Zholdasov and Samat Bazykhanov’s *Fuga: Doroga v nikuda (Fugue: Road to Nowhere)* explores the mind of a mentally ill woman tormented by hallucinations that mainly manifest as another young woman covered in blood splatters who pursues her through the woods and violently attacks her.⁶ Even though there is definitely room for analysis of gender representations in these films through their monstrous female characters, the narratives themselves are highly unoriginal and heavily borrow from film traditions of other cultures. A similar problem exists with domestic genre fiction as a whole, which is also quite sparse. For instance, the Erzhan

³ Quoted in Olbrich, Suze. “Christine and the Queens on Alter-Egos and Ambition”. *AnOther Magazine*. February 23, 2016. < <http://www.anothermag.com/design-living/8405/christine-and-the-queens-on-alter-egos-and-ambition> >

⁴ Rakishev, Erkin, dir. *M-Agent*. KTK and Zhas Ulan. 2013.

⁵ Kulakhmetov, Tursun, dir. *Liubov’-Zlo*. DJ Tur’Sound Production. 2011.

⁶ Bazykhanov, Samat, and Zholdasov, Erkebulan, dirs. *Fuga: Doroga v Nikuda*. Ansar Plus and I Media Group. 2014.

Esimkhanov's novel *Voina* (*War*), marketed as “first Kazakhstani fantasy”, does not ground itself in Kazakh mythology or culture, instead combining generic Western fantasy elements with some vague non-Western influences such as shamans and tribes, and has characters with names like *Бладрэ́йвен*—Bloodraven.⁷ A science fiction novel *Liudi Zemli: Nasledie Adiomy* (*People of Earth: Legacy of Adioma*) takes place in England and has a boy named *Рэ́йн* (Rein) as the protagonist.⁸ *Poteriannaia kniga zaklinanii: Vossoedinenie* (*The Lost Book of Spells: Reunion*), a fantasy novel actually published in Almaty two years before *Voina*, is an amalgamation of Western fantasy tropes and clichés, taking place in a generic Medieval Europe-like setting, populated with elves, trolls and other creatures popularised with the success of J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*.⁹

That is not to say that concepts, images or themes borrowed from other cultures extend no influence on the recipient culture or cannot be used to analyse it. In fact, it is a useful and interesting discussion in and of itself to consider the effect of Western cultural hegemony on Kazakh society, and particularly why it seems difficult for people to find a place for elements of traditional Kazakh culture in popular narratives such as genre fiction or horror films. In my view, tales of Zhalmayyz Kempir or Zhezyrnaq are ripe for modern retellings and reinterpretations. It is part of the reason why I choose to focus on the fairy tales in my work. Among all types of stories in Kazakh culture, it is the fairy tales that are most rich with the images of the monstrous-feminine. Moreover, fairy tales have been increasingly analysed and reinterpreted from the feminist perspective in the West, however, there is not as much similar scholarship on tales belonging to other cultures. Indeed, in Kazakh folkloristic studies, scholarship tends to

⁷ Esimkhanov, Erzhan. *Voina*. Almaty: Daik-Press. 2010.

⁸ Khan, S. *Liudi Zemli: Nasledie Adiomy*. Bishkek: Raritet. 2011.

⁹ Bogan, Elivan. *Poteriannaia kniga zaklinanii: Vossoedinenie*. Almaty. 2008.

follow the same general patterns of analysis, as I will explore later in the thesis, especially when it concerns gender. Thus, my thesis aims to contribute to the growing feminist fairy tale scholarship around the world, as well as present a new perspective for studying folklore in Kazakhstan.

I approach studying gender as a construct and a system of oppression, in line with theories of such feminist scholars as the French philosopher and activist Simone de Beauvoir and the American gender and queer theorist Judith Butler. This thesis treats gender as not something that is natural or innate, but rather as a social category that people living in patriarchal societies are assigned coercively. That is not to say that gender is not real—it affects everyone in very real and material ways—but rather that it is not something absolute or constant. Butler’s theory of performativity states that gender is produced and naturalised through repeated performative acts that are determined by the dominant discourse via actions, norms, language, narratives etc.¹⁰ The production and reinforcement of the regulatory framework of gender via cultural narratives is what I am specifically concerned with in this thesis, or more precisely, how representations of monstrous women and women as monstrous reflects and constitutes what is permissible and what is transgressive.

Monstrous-feminine is defined by the Australian feminist film theorist Barbara Creed as society’s conception of “what it is about a woman that is shocking, terrifying, horrific, abject”.¹¹ The concept of biological sex is a construct through which patriarchy renders bodies intelligible. As many queer theorists including Judith Butler discuss, bodies that destabilise these rigid categories are erased or pathologised.¹² Thus when I discuss female biology, female anatomy, I mean not physiological features or functions

¹⁰ Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge, 1999.

¹¹ Creed, Barbara. *The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis*. London: Routledge, 1993, p.1.

¹² Butler, *Gender Trouble*, p.130.

that are innately female or that make a woman, but rather those that signify bodies as female within the dominant power framework. As Simone de Beauvoir wrote, humanity is male by default, and woman is “defined and differentiated with reference to man... he is the subject, he is the absolute—she is the Other”,¹³ but it is also the case that man will define himself as subject in opposition to woman and everything female, as it represents the object. Indeed, that definition of masculinity via abjection of the feminine is so strong that psychological studies show that men who hold less stereotypical views of women and who were less emotionally restrictive tend to experience less gender role conflict, and less differentiation and relationship problems.^{14 15}

The object in the definition refers specifically to one of the key concepts explored by Bulgarian-French philosopher Julia Kristeva.¹⁶ The object, in Kristeva’s words, is neither subject, nor object, but rather something that helps us define ourselves as subject: “The object has only one quality of the object—that of being opposed to I.”¹⁷ When we are faced with the object, we are repulsed, we feel the need to separate ourselves from it, we expel it, and in so doing define the self in opposition to it. At the same time, the object is something that is always a part of us. For example, as Kristeva argues, the human corpse is one of the fundamental examples of abjection. Each of us carries our future corpse within us; the corpse is “death infecting life”; the rejection, repulsion, abjection that exists toward dead human bodies lie at the core of many

¹³ De Beauvoir, Simone. *The second sex*. New York: Knopf, 1953.

¹⁴ Blazina, Christopher, and Watkins Jr, C. Edward. “Separation/individuation, parental attachment, and male gender role conflict: Attitudes toward the feminine and the fragile masculine self.” *Psychology of Men & Masculinity*, Vol 1(2), Jul 2000, pp.126-132.

¹⁵ This issue has also received discussion in Western social media, for example, through a recent humorous hashtag on Twitter #MasculinitySoFragile that highlights how (heterosexual) masculinity is threatened and intimidated by even a hint of contact with femininity.

¹⁶ Kristeva, Julia. *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. Trans. Leon S. Roudiez. New York: Columbia University Press, 1982. Trans. of *Pouvoirs de l'horreur*. Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1980.

¹⁷ Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, p.1.

cultures' taboos regarding corpses or purifying burial rituals.¹⁸ Therefore, the abject is something we can reject, but never fully part with; "it is thus not lack of cleanliness or health that causes abjection but what disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite."¹⁹

According to Creed, the constructions of monstrous are grounded in these notions of abjection that exist in the cultural perception, "particularly in relation to the following religious 'abominations': sexual immorality and perversion; corporeal alteration, decay and death; human sacrifice; murder; the corpse; bodily wastes; the feminine body and incest."²⁰ The abject exposes the fragility of the laws that govern society and of the borders that are supposed to keep the subject safe from the threat of extinction.²¹ In terms of gender, motherhood and reproduction are constructed as abject and monstrous. Both Kristeva and Creed engage with concepts and ideas of the Austrian neurologist, father of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud in building their own theory. For example, Kristeva, similarly to Freud, considers the act of separating from one's mother as something violent, clumsy and physical that is forever retained within us; that bond to the mother that we must continuously reject in order to signify ourselves as "subject becomes abject".²² Building on this, Creed argues that women's monstrosity is connected to motherhood and their reproductive functions, to their biological Otherness as it is perceived within a patriarchal society. However in many ways Creed argues fundamentally against assumptions and conclusions that Freud makes, as I will discuss in more detail in Chapter I. Freud largely associates womanhood with victimhood and passivity, whereas Creed is interested in women that

¹⁸ Ibid., p.4, p.109.

¹⁹ Ibid., p.4.

²⁰ Creed, *The Monstrous-Feminine*, pp.8-9.

²¹ Ibid., p.10.

²² Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, p.13.

are monstrous because they commit monstrous acts. Because of this, my own engagement with Freud in this dissertation is only through the works of Creed and Kristeva, as I am also interested in the active transgressive monstrosity of these characters.

Barbara Creed bases her theory on extensive research of the Western horror film genre. The horror genre obviously lends itself well to exploration of presentations of monstrous women. Even though Creed primarily analyses horror films and not folklore, she does discuss folklore and mythology in the book. For example, she notes how a witch and a female vampire are monstrous women found throughout history in various forms.²³ In classical mythology, one can also find female monsters such as the Sirens, who lure sailors to their doom and eat them, or the Medusa with the head of snakes who turns anyone who gazes upon her to stone. Throughout the discussions of various faces of the monstrous-feminine, Creed refers to mythical narratives to trace how the monstrous-feminine is intrinsic to tales produced within patriarchal cultures, and not just the modern Western horror film. Indeed, Creed coins the term 'monstrous-feminine' itself precisely because these representations are not simply monsters who happen to be female, but rather characters whose gender is essential in the construction of their monstrosity.²⁴ Creed's book challenged the prevailing notion at the time that women were primarily victims in horror films, or that there could be no great monsters who were female, or the idea that a woman could only be feared because she is *castrated*, according to Freud.²⁵ On the contrary, it is because she *castrates*, she horrifies. Therefore, Creed challenges the idea that femininity by nature excludes

²³ Creed, *The Monstrous-Feminine*, p.2.

²⁴ Ibid, p.3.

²⁵ Ibid., p.4.

violent and monstrous behaviour.²⁶ Indeed, the monstrous-feminine is that which threatens and disrupts the status quo. There is something of a paradox to the monstrous-feminine:

On the one hand, those images which define woman as monstrous in relation to her reproductive functions work to reinforce the phallogocentric notion that female sexuality is abject. On the other hand, the notion of the monstrous-feminine challenges the view that femininity, by definition, constitutes passivity.²⁷

Therefore, to demonise something, to turn it monstrous, is also to give it power. Artists of marginalised identities may take this further to embrace those aspects that are demonised by society, instead of rejecting them or trying to fit them into existing normative categories. For example, in an independent video game *We Know the Devil*, being taken by the Devil and transforming physically into a monster symbolises coming to terms with one's true (queer) identity; to shed human skin and revel in one's monstrous form is to reject assimilation and prescribed norms of gender and sexuality.²⁸ Thus, in analysing the monstrous women of Kazakh folklore, I aim not only to expose patriarchal conceptions of femininity and womanhood as the abject, but also move beyond that and uncover the potential transgressive and subversive value of these characters and tales.

Therefore, as the primary aim of my work is to explore how Kazakh fairy tale narratives designate border and limits of gender, my emphasis is on analysing the content of the fairy tales. At the same time, historical context is important to keep in mind, even if for Kazakh folklore there is not enough material to thoroughly study material context of how, when, where and by whom these tales were told. Kazakh folklore, traditionally told and spread orally, began to be widely collected and written

²⁶ Ibid., p.5.

²⁷ Creed, *The Monstrous-Feminine*, p.175.

²⁸ *We Know the Devil*. Aevee Bee and Mia Schwartz. 2015. Video game.

down in the nineteenth century, during the time when the Kazakh steppe had been colonised and controlled by the Russian Empire, with the tales recorded mainly by Russian travellers, ethnographers, scholars and military officers, or members of nascent Kazakh intelligentsia who received Russian education. This concerns the primary sources I use in my thesis that date to the end of nineteenth-beginning of the twentieth centuries. Studying Russia's colonial Central Asian subjects was important to the imperial government, and often expeditions to study culture, way of life, religion, customs and traditions of native populations were directly funded by it. The Russian historian Marina Mogil'ner states that ethnographic fieldwork was done with the purpose of collecting data on and understanding Russian colonisation process, forming knowledge on various Russian regions, Russification and civilising the *inorodtsy*.²⁹ For example, Russian historian and ethnographer of the nineteenth century I. N. Smirnov saw the purpose of ethnographic fieldwork in the colonies as preserving relics of the primitive way of life and culture that are disappearing under imperial influence, and should be preserved for science, and similar beliefs were shared by many of Smirnov's colleague contemporaries.³⁰ The central argument of Mogil'ner's work is precisely that concepts of racial superiority and inferiority were as much part of the developing field of anthropology in Russia as they were in Western science.³¹

Thus, it is important to situate the process of the collection of these tales in the imperial context, considering the relationship between production of knowledge and power, in line with Edward Said's critique of Orientalism. This means remembering that these tales were collected in the social and political context of extreme power

²⁹ From Russian language 'aliens', 'of other origin'. *Inorodtsy* was a legal term in imperial Russia that referred to non-Russian populations of the Empire. Carries a derogatory connotation of being backward, uncivilised.

³⁰ Mogil'ner, Marina. *Homo Imperii: A History of Physical Anthropology in Russia*. Lincoln: UNP - Nebraska, 2013, p.59.

³¹ Mogil'ner, *Homo Imperii*, pp.3-5.

imbalance, by people who were agents of the imperial power with the purpose of furthering and consolidating that authority, and who considered the native Central Asian populations backward and inferior. As the West constructed the Orient as the Other to define itself against it, so in many ways Central Asia was Russia's Orient to determine itself as a modern, European imperial power on par with any Western Empire. To add to that, because of Russia's experience in the Caucasus, when it consolidated its hold over Central Asia with the conquest of Tashkent, Russian Empire was deeply suspicious of Islam, believing it to be a backward influence on the Kazakhs and a potential threat to stability because of its inherent fanaticism.³² Ethnographer M. A. Miropiev, whose collection of 'demonological' tales I prominently use as a source, was a dedicated Russian Orthodox missionary who shared these views, and held a highly dismissive attitude toward Islam, believing it to be a religion of customs with no real meaning behind them, as opposed to Orthodox Christianity. He was a proponent of Russification of the native populations and did not see how Islam could exist aligned with the spirit of modernity or, more importantly, with the interests of Russia.³³

The Orientalist and Islamophobic, dismissive and patronising attitudes of these scholars, of course, find reflection in the way they approached their work. Another member of such anti-Islamic school of thought, N. P. Ostroumov, collected Uzbek fairy tales during his service director of schools in Russian Turkestan. As pointed out by Adeb Khalid, Ostroumov's use of Orientalist knowledge in service to the imperial state is a classic example of Said's Orientalism paradigm.³⁴ He was considered an expert on Islam, his published works were widely circulated within official circles, and he was

³² Morrison, Alexander. "Russian Rule in Turkestan and the Example of British India, C. 1860-1917". *The Slavonic and East European Review* 84.4, 2006, pp.666-707, pp.695-6.

³³ Batunskii, M. A. *Rossii i Islam*. (Vol. II) Moscow: Progress-Traditsiia, 2003. Pp.245-258.

³⁴ Khalid, Adeb. "Russian History and the Debate over Orientalism". *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 1.4, 2000. pp.691-699, p.691.

frequently consulted by the colonial administration of Turkestan.³⁵ At the same time, he is more of a complex figure because he took a genuine interest in Muslim culture and society and, in his position as editor of *Turkestanskaia Tuzemnaia Gazeta* he published work of many local intellectuals and poets.³⁶ This can be also seen in how he discusses Ialmauyz Kempir, Uzbek variation of Zhalmauyz Kempir, as the “Uzbek Baba-laga”. On one hand, calling a creature of indigenous mythology as their “version” of a (somewhat) similar Russian fairy tale character reflects a patronising attitude, as if Central Asian myths and folk tales are derivative of the Slavic ones. On the other hand, he says that Ialmauyz Kempir is fascinating and in many ways even more interesting than Baba-laga in her appearances.³⁷ Even though Ostroumov collected fairy tales among the Uzbek, I use his collection in my analysis of the monstrous-feminine in Kazakh fairy tales. The figure of Zhalmauyz Kempir is evidently not confined to Kazakh culture, and the tales about her of course predate and transcend modern nation states borders. For example, one of the fairy tales I use from Ostroumov’s collection, *Baba laga i brat eia tsarevich (Baba laga [Ialmauyz Kempir] and Her Brother the Prince)*³⁸ features a scene where Zhalmauyz Kempir sneaks into the stables every night to eat a foal, and follows with a scene of dramatic discovery. Another nineteenth century prominent traveller and scholar, G. N. Potanin, describes hearing a tale about Zhalmauyz Kempir with a plot nearly identical to that from a Kazakh man.³⁹ Uighur fairy tale about Chin Tomur Bator has the heroes oppose a seven-headed old hag who sucks blood from the protagonist’s

³⁵ Morrison, Alexander. “‘Applied Orientalism’ in British India and Tsarist Turkestan”. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 51, No. 3 (Jul., 2009), pp. 619-647. P.640.

³⁶ Morrison, “Applied Orientalism”, pp.641-642.

³⁷ Ostroumov, N. P. *Skazki sartov v russkom izlozhenii*. Tashkent: Tipografiia Okruzhnogo Shtaba, 1906, p.9.

³⁸ ‘Baba-laga i brat ieia tsarevich (Baba laga [Ialmauyz Kempir] and her brother the prince)’. Ostroumov, *Skazki sartov v russkom izlozhenii*, pp.11-18.

³⁹ Potanin, G. N. *Ocherki Severo-Zapadnoi Mongolii. Vypusk II. Etnograficheskie materialy*. Saint Petersburg: Tipografiia V. Kirshbauma, 1881, p.32 (Potanin mentions it in ‘Primechaniia k V-oi glave’ although I did not find a full version of this tale recorded by him).

sister—all characteristics of Zhalmauyz Kempir.⁴⁰ Thus, even if a full comparative analysis of Zhalmauyz Kempir’s figure is beyond the scope and not the purpose of this work, I believe it logical and useful to bring in some comparisons from folklore of other Central Asian cultural traditions where it helps illustrate my argument.

The comparison with Baba-Iaga was an immediate reaction of many Russian scholars and travellers who recorded tales of Zhalmauyz Kempir. This problematic attitude extended to Soviet era Russian-language publications, some of which, such as the volume edited by M. Auezov and N. Anov that I use in this work, were the first to publish a number of popular fairy tales with Zhalmauyz Kempir, where she is called interchangeably by her own name or by “Baba-Iaga”. Additionally, because Kazakh language has no grammatical gender but Russian language does, the tales are often quite arbitrary in their usage of pronouns in regard to characters like Zheztyrnaq, as I will discuss in more detail later in the body of the thesis. In connection to this, the continuity of intellectual tradition from Russian Imperial to Soviet scholarship is reflected in the way they were organised into genres to fit the existing classification within Russian folkloristics. Slavist and folklorist A. N. Afanas’ev, who is famous for being the first to publish a fundamental collection of Russian folktales and fairy tales, was a proponent of the so-called mythology school of folkloristics. The mythology school proposed that folklore was surviving remnants of forgotten myths created by ancient humans who were moved by the natural phenomena around them to create mythology. Because of this, the aim of folkloristic research should be discerning the original mythological meaning of folklore, something that, according to critic A. L.

⁴⁰ Makeev, Leonid. (ed.) *Kazakhskie i uighurskie skazki. Perevody i literaturnie varianty*. Alma-Ata: Kazakhskoe ob’edinennoe gosudarstvennoe izdatel’stvo, 1949, p.141.

Toporkov, was often done crudely and inconsistently, without sufficient justification.⁴¹ Even if the mythology school has faced criticism and lost credibility since Afanas'ev's time, it was still immensely influential. In studies of Kazakh folklore thus persists the search for a clear line of progression from ancient myth (and history) to folkloric narratives we have access to in the present. Scholars like Mukhtar Auezov, Edyge Tursunov, Seit Kaskabasov, Zira Naurzbaieva and others are to various degrees concerned with the genesis and mythological-ritual foundations of the fairy tale, especially *volshebnaia skazka--qial-ğazhaiyp ertegi* (magical fairy tale, or 'wondertale' to use terminology from Vladimir Propp, a category borrowed from classification of Russian fairy tales which Afanas'ev considered the most ancient and connected to myth), although some criticise the extent to which Kazakh fairy tales can be clearly divided into these genres.⁴² In case of Zhalmauyz Kempir, she appears in fairy tales classified as *qial-ğazhaiyp ertegileri*, as well as *batyrlar ertegileri* (fairy tales about the *batyr*⁴³). The existence of her character and the common motifs she brings with her presence already question how clear the line is between these two supposedly different genres of fairy tales. The fairy tales about the *batyr* are also often considered the intermediary stage between the more archaic magical fairy tale and the epos,⁴⁴ so the extent to which these categories and models of evolution fit the actual existing narratives is an interesting and important question, but falls outside the scope of this work, as I am interested in the gender analysis of the content. This means that to a certain extent I do have to consider the narratives I am studying within these particular categories as these are the forms they are typically consumed in.

⁴¹ Toporkov, A. L. *Teoriya mifa v Russkoi filologicheskoi nauke XIX veka*. Moscow: Indrik, 1997.

⁴² Beiseev, A. A. *Kazakhskie skazki o zivotnykh*. Almaty, 2004, p.19.

⁴³ From Kazakh—a hero, brave man, warrior.

⁴⁴ Iskakova, Z. Sh. *Kazakhskai bogatyrskai skazka*. Almaty: Institut literatury i iskusstva im. M. Auezova, 1995, pp.17-21.

Another ethnographer whose work I use prominently is Bashkir Turkologist A. A. Divaiev, who, similar to Kazakh Shoqan Walikhanov, received Russian education in a military academy and collected ethnographic materials while in imperial service, and later continued his work under the Bolshevik regime. Divaiev is, of course, different from figures such as Miropiev or Ostroumov, because he is himself a colonial subject. Indeed, author of *Alpamysh: Central Asian Identity Under Russian Rule* H. B. Paksoy argues Divaiev was member of the “first wave” of resistance against imperial power, and worked to preserve symbols of traditional culture such as mythology and folklore and form an indigenous repository of knowledge.⁴⁵

The main body of this work consists of three chapters. In Chapter I, ‘The faces of the monstrous-feminine in Kazakh fairy tales’ I apply Barbara Creed’s categories of the monstrous-feminine to analyse the characters of Zhalmauыз Kempir, Zheztyrnaq and Albasty. Creed identifies five faces of the monstrous-feminine: archaic mother, possessed monster, monstrous womb, witch, and vampire. In the second part of her work, she also provides extensive discussion of the psychoanalytic theory and the analysis of monstrous-feminine as the *femme castratrice* and *vagina dentata*. For my analysis, I use all of these categories with the exception of possessed monster which did not correspond to a monstrous character in Kazakh fairy tales. I explore how female body is signified as Other and thus monstrous through representations of the monstrous women of Kazakh fairy tale, how male dread of female power and sexuality is evident in constructions of these narratives, as well as compare the Kazakh female monsters with some similar characters from other cultures.

In Chapter II, ‘Interpreting Zhalmauыз Kempir’, I take a closer look at the character

⁴⁵ Paksoy, H B. *Alpamysh: Central Asian Identity Under Russian Rule*. Hartford: Association for the Advancement of Central Asian Research, 1989.

of the voracious old hag and examine how and why in some fairy tales she can be a positive character instead of a wholly evil antagonist, like Zheztyrnaq and Albasty always are. I provide a discussion on some of the existing analysis for Zhalmauyz Kempir by Kazakhstani folklorists, and propose a system of classification of Zhalmauyz Kempir's appearances in the fairy tales based on the gender of the protagonist and the type of interaction with the protagonist. I argue that Zhalmauyz Kempir's morality is bound to her transgression of gender norms. In tales where she is allowed to be a positive character and survives beyond the end of the story, she is necessarily disempowered and serves a donor function, aiding the male protagonist.

Chapter III, 'The idealised heroine', looks at the positive female character of the fairy tales where the monstrous-feminine is also present. I analyse what qualities the positive heroine is allowed to possess in Kazakh fairy tales and how she stands apart and in what ways she is similar to heroines of the Western fairy tales often criticised by feminist scholars as passive and victimised. I also draw comparison with the wife in the epos *Qobylandy Batyr* to demonstrate that this idealised female archetype exists in other forms of folklore, too. This chapter aims to show that the idealised heroine is used to designate limits of acceptable womanhood just as the female monsters are.

This thesis also features an Appendix which contains summaries of the fairy tales I discuss, as well as the full Bibliography at the end.

My study aims to explore ways in which representations of womanhood and femininity persist in fairy tales narratives, further evidenced by the fact that the tales do not display significant changes in their nineteenth century versions to the versions published in the recent decade. As Judith Butler succinctly put, gender is a category that

is “simultaneously taken for granted and violently policed”.⁴⁶ Fairy tales as a genre in public perception are associated with tradition, an authentic past, and thus are an ideal type of narrative through which the dominant discourse of gender can be naturalised, as many Western feminist scholars also point out. Moreover, as I will discuss in my conclusion, what these fairy tale narratives reinforce as acceptable norms of gender behaviour and presentation and what they deem to be transgressive and thus worthy of punishment, translates into modern Kazakh society, as well. Ultimately, I hope my work can contribute to development of critical approaches to gender in the context of Kazakh society and culture, as well as subversive reinterpretations of the colourful characters of Zhalmauыз Kempir, Zheztyrnaq and Albasty.

⁴⁶ Butler, *Gender Trouble*, p.xx

Chapter I.

The faces of the monstrous-feminine in Kazakh fairy tales.

The subject mother and the monstrous womb.

The archaic mother is the first face of the monstrous-feminine that Creed identifies. In Kristeva's theory of abjection, as Creed explains, one of the earliest experiences of abjection that people go through is the act of breaking away from the mother. The child must separate from the mother to become its own subject; the mother is reluctant to release it because her bond with the child authenticates her identity. This leads to a conflict, where the maternal becomes abject, as it must become the place where the living subject—the child—is not, and an imaginary border between the self and that which threatens the self must be constructed.⁴⁷ Creed uses examples of horror films such as *Carrie* and *Alien* to demonstrate the construction of the maternal figure as the monstrous-feminine that deals with the confrontation with the abject and the attempts to eject it and redraw these imaginary boundaries between the human and non-human.⁴⁸

Creed goes further than Kristeva, beyond the psychological analysis of the individual level conflict between mother and child: "I think it is possible to open up the mother-question still further and posit an even more archaic maternal figure, to go back to mythological narratives of the generative, parthenogenetic mother—that ancient archaic figure who gives birth to all living things."⁴⁹ The examples provided by Creed are Chinese Nu Kwa, Mexican Aztec, Greek Gaia and Sumerian Nammu—the variations on the Mother-Goddess who created the world and populates it by herself. Freud also

⁴⁷ Creed, Barbara. "Horror and the Monstrous-Feminine: An Imaginary Abjection". *Screen*, 1986, 27 (1). Pp.44-71, p.46.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p.53.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.58-59.

accounted for the existence of such a mythological figure, where the Mother-Goddess is a remnant of an archaic matriarchal structure of society that later replaced a patriarchal one. As Creed explains, if originally the Mother-Goddess would be the subject of her own narrative, within a patriarchal culture, she would become an object in a tale of a male protagonist who seeks to acquire the knowledge she possesses and then destroys her. Medusa and Sphinx would both be variants of the Mother-Goddess figure in this sense.⁵⁰ In this mythological, cosmic sense then “within patriarchal signifying practices, particularly the horror film, she is reconstructed and represented as a negative figure, one associated with the dread of the generative mother seen only as the abyss, the monstrous vagina, the origin of all life threatening to re-absorb what it once birthed.”⁵¹

How do we approach Zhalmauыз Kempir as a variant on the archaic mother? As I discuss in more detail in Chapter II, this would not be an original interpretation of Zhalmauыз Kempir, since Kazakh folklorists have claimed already she represents a remnant of a female-dominated society of the past, a distorted vision of a powerful archaic deity. Without historical research that would uncover sources on such female deities and establish plausible links between them and Zhalmauыз Kempir, this remains a speculative endeavour. It is still worth analysing whether Zhalmauыз Kempir fulfils the function of the archaic mother archetype as defined by Creed, in terms of how she represents the convergence of the Othering of female body with the dread of female power and autonomy.

As I will discuss in more detail in Chapter II, there is a set of tales about Zhalmauыз Kempir where she performs the role of the villain. These could further be

⁵⁰ Ibid, p.61.

⁵¹ Ibid., p.62.

split into subsets, where one contains fairy tales such as *Zhanadil*⁵² or *Zhaiyq pen Edil* (*Zhaiyq and Edil*),⁵³ in which Zhalmauыз Kempir poses immediate physical threat to the hero (threatens to eat him or attacks to kill), and ones such as *Er-Töstik*⁵⁴ or *Karazhai*,⁵⁵ where she desires to possess him and suffocates his father until he promises to give up his son. In this type of tales, it can be argued that Zhalmauыз Kempir is a representation of the maternal abject, a possessive archaic mother that seeks total control over her child, yearning to return him to her suffocating, deadly embrace. Both in *Karazhai* and *Er-Töstik* she acquires an object that is very dear to the hero (a gun and a whetstone respectively) in order to lure him to her. A weapon is often regarded as an extension of the warrior, and if a gun is a literal example of that, a whetstone that keeps the hero's sword sharp is also closely associated with that; thus, Zhalmauыз Kempir takes a hold of something that is an inextricable part of the hero and acts as a symbol of his status as subject. When Zhalmauыз Kempir takes hold of the hero's possession, she forcibly returns him to the state of childhood, robbing him of his adult male identity. The interpretation of these tales as manifestations of a maternal abject seems more valid when we look at Zhalmauыз Kempir's actions after *Karazhai* comes to her in search of his gun:

Недолго раздумывая, сын быстро собрался и пошел искать старуху. Нашел он ее и потребовал свое оружие. Не дает старуха оружия. Два дня упрасивал Каражай старуху вернуть ему оружие, но та и не думала отдавать. Проголодался Каражай. Стал просить он оружие поохотиться, чтоб не умереть с голоду. Сжалилась старуха. Пошел Каражай на охоту. Убил он несколько зайцев, уток и вернулся обратно. Старуха стала ласковее с ним. Через несколько дней Каражай снова отправился на охоту.

⁵² 'Zhanadil.' Sidel'nikov, V. M., (ed.) *Kazakhskie narodnye skazki v trëkh tomakh*. Alma-Ata: Zhazushy, 1971, volume III, pp. 10-11.

⁵³ 'Zhaiyq pen Edil (Zhaiyq and Edil):' Sidel'nikov, V. M., (ed.) *Kazakhskie narodnye skazki v trëkh tomakh*. Alma-Ata: Zhazushy, 1971, volume III, pp.83-86.

⁵⁴ 'Er-Töstik'. Auezov, M., and Anov, N. (eds) *Kazakhskie narodnye skazki*. Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatelstvo hudozhestvennoi literatury, 1952, pp. 270-295.

⁵⁵ 'Karazhai'. Sidel'nikov, V. M., (ed.) *Kazakhskie narodnye skazki v trëkh tomakh*. Voume III. Alma-Ata: Zhazushy, 1971. pp.48-50.

Старуха дала ему оружие, но просила не охотиться, на белой горе с тремя выступами.

— Ты не подходи даже близко к этой горе,— сказала она.— Там живут разбойники, и они убьют тебя.⁵⁶

[Without giving it much thought, the son quickly gathered his things and went in search of the old woman. He found her and demanded his weapon back. The old hag did not return it. Two days Karazhai spent begging the old woman to give it to him, but she was not even considering it. Karazhai grew hungry. He started asking for the gun to hunt, so that he would not die of hunger. The old woman pitied him. Karazhai went to hunt. He killed a few hares, ducks, and came back. The old woman became more affectionate with him. After a few days again Karazhai went hunting. The old woman gave him the gun, but asked not to hunt on a white mountain with three peaks.

‘Don’t even come close to that mountain,’ she said. ‘Bandits dwell there, and they will kill you.’]

Thus, once Karazhai comes to her, she does not pose a threat to him, or demand anything from him. Seemingly, the only thing she desires is for Karazhai to be near her. We also see a development of the maternal bond as she grows more gentle and trusting and permits him to hunt; Karazhai does not use his weapon to attack her, or his freedom to hunt to try and escape her. Either by virtue of possessing his weapon, or the bargain she struck with his father, Zhalmauyz Kempir seems to hold a piece of the hero’s soul that acts like a leash. Indeed, in Er-Töstik, after the titular hero’s father promises his son to Zhalmauyz Kempir, his wife Kenzhekei overhears about it and starts locking her yurt at night. Angered by this, Er-Töstik enters the yurt by force and lies down next to Kenzhekei but she puts a dagger to her chest:

— Лежи спокойно, иначе мы погибли оба.

— Почему погибли?

— Отец твой отдал тебя бабе-яге. Ты теперь не мой. Сначала освободись от бабы-яги, а потом приходи и будешь моим мужем.⁵⁷

['Lie still, or we both die.'

'Why?'

'Your father has given you up to (Baba Iaga) Zhalmauyz Kempir. You are mine no more. First, you need to free yourself from Zhalmauyz Kempir, then you

⁵⁶ Ibid., p.50.

⁵⁷ Auezov, M., and Anov, N. (eds). *Kazakhskie narodnye skazki*. Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatelstvo hudozhestvennoi literatury, 1952. p.278.

can come back and be my husband.']

Even though at this point Er-Töstik knows nothing of the bargain, and Ernazar has not yet acted upon it in any way beyond him initially leaving Er-Töstik's whetstone with Zhalmauyz, Kenzhekei affirms the reality of Ernazar's debt and forces her husband to confront Zhalmauyz Kempir. This signifies that the deal between Ernazar and Zhalmauyz Kempir effectively makes Er-Töstik a prisoner of the hag in both body and soul, similar to Karazhai. Moreover, while he belongs to Zhalmauyz Kempir, even though he has not encountered her yet, he is not allowed to sleep with his wife Kenzhekei. If Zhalmauyz Kempir gains possession of him as the archaic mother, Er-Töstik is effectively no longer a man, but once again, a child, and therefore cannot be a woman's husband. Before he can restore that right, he must sever the bond with Zhalmauyz Kempir—separate from the abject—which can be accomplished by gaining back the possession of the whetstone.

In addition to Karazhai, a similar tale is present in Miropiev's *Demonologicheskie razskazy kirgizov*: a *bai* is attacked by Zhalmauyz Kempir, promises his son in return for his own life, leaving with her the son's *altyn saqa*⁵⁸ to ensure his son would come.⁵⁹ As the boy comes looking for his toy, Zhalmauyz Kempir tries to capture him, then pursues him as he flees on his horse. She is almost able to get him, when the boy's dogs come to the rescue and kill Zhalmauyz Kempir. The tale ends with explanation that Zhalmauyz Kempir wanted to eat the boy. Of course, devouring him would be the most certain way of ensuring he is never able to leave her—a grotesque inversion of the act of giving birth. Indeed, according to Creed, the archaic mother in the patriarchal narrative is one

⁵⁸ From Kazakh, *saqa* is the striker in the traditional game of *asyq atu*, where players throw sheep knuckle-bones to knock out other bones; here a playing piece for the game made out of gold is meant.

⁵⁹ "Tale #17' Miropiev, M. "Demonologicheskie rasskazy u kirgizov". *Zapiski IRGO po otdeleniiu etnografii*. T.10, vyp.3, Spb, 1888. pp.32-35.

that is uncontrollable, generative and cannibalistic.⁶⁰ She represents the fears of “being separate from the mother, and the threat of annihilation—often through re-incorporation”. Cannibalising the hero symbolises re-absorption of the child she once nurtured.⁶¹ Notably, the hero’s actual mother is either not present at all, as in *Karazhai* and the tale #17, or does not play any role in the scenes involving the hero’s capture by Zhalmauыз Kempir, as in *Er-Töstik*. The struggle of the legitimate father and Zhalmauыз Kempir over the son could be construed as conflict of paternal versus maternal authority. On the other hand, the father’s character seems to lose all importance to the narrative once he gives up his son to Zhalmauыз Kempir. The story does not hold him accountable for such an act of betrayal, and none of the variants even have the hero hold any kind of grudge. The central conflict remains between the hero and the archaic mother.

As *Er-Töstik* flees Zhalmauыз Kempir on his magical stallion Shalquiryq, the horse trips over a large black boulder, which prompts the ground to shatter underneath them, and *Er-Töstik* and Shalquiryq fall to the underworld. The journey through the underworld is often interpreted as a remnant of shamanic beliefs, but for the interpretation of Zhalmauыз Kempir as archaic mother it is significant for a different reason. To quote Creed, “what is common to all of these images of horror is the voracious maw, the mysterious black hole which signifies female genitalia as a monstrous sign which threatens to give birth to equally horrific offspring as well as threatening to incorporate everything in its path. This is the generative archaic mother, constructed within patriarchal ideology as the primeval 'black hole'.”⁶² Therefore, *Er-Töstik* falls into the black hole womb of the abject mother and must fight his way out of

⁶⁰ Creed, *Horror and the Monstrous Feminine*, p.69.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p.65.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p.63.

it to reassert his status as subject and reclaim his manhood.

The concept of archaic mother giving birth to horrific offspring is reflected in Zhalmauyz Kempir's *dev* sons. In *Karazhai*, the hero, obviously, does not listen to the warning about the mountain, and goes straight to it. The mountain turns out to be the dwelling place of three *devs*, sons of Zhalmauyz Kempir. As *Karazhai* approaches each of the mountain peaks, he faces a *dev* in battle, defeating and killing each one of them. Witnessing this, Zhalmauyz Kempir attacks *Karazhai*. Their fight is long but in the end *Karazhai* kills the hag and returns home to his father with his gun. The *dev* sons of Zhalmauyz Kempir represent her monstrous motherhood and her generative powers as sole creator of life—there is no father, only her, she “gives birth all by herself, the original parent, the godhead of all fertility”.⁶³ In this, she is a part of what Creed calls a ‘primal-scene narrative’, a maternal figure existing “outside the patriarchal constellation”.⁶⁴

In the tales where Zhalmauyz Kempir plays the role of the donor to the hero, the *batyrs* who are welcomed by Zhalmauyz Kempir can be seen as easily slipping into the familiar comforting relationship with the mother. Her inability as the mother-figure to relinquish the mother-child bond might be identified as that which disempowers her and compels her to assist them on their quests. However, according to Creed's theory, the archaic mother should represent the conflict between the symbolic order and that which threatens its stability—“the mother and all that her universe signifies”.⁶⁵ In that case, the hero of the fairy tale should have trouble escaping Zhalmauyz Kempir once the mother-child bond between them is established, as we see in the tales where she is the antagonist. When she assists the hero, that is not the case: the assistance that the male

⁶³ Ibid., p.62.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p.60.

⁶⁵ Ibid, p.53.

protagonist in these encounters receives is usually the extent of their interaction. He is not faced with the necessity to violently separate himself from Zhalmauыз Kempir, and she does not prevent him from leaving in any way.

Even though archaic mother does not fit these fairy tales, a case can still be made for Zhalmauыз Kempir representing the maternal abject, albeit a different kind. In representations of female monstrosity, the abject is brought to the forefront and exaggerated, so what I propose is a category of 'grotesque mother', a negative maternal archetype that is inauthentic or incomplete motherhood, or a distortion or mockery of motherhood. Albasty, another woman-monster from Kazakh folklore, is representative of that, possessing long breasts that sag to the ground:

[Женщина] с такими длинными грудями, что она может перекидывать их через плечо. По ночам албасты наваливаются на спящих, кладут им в рот свою грудь и давят их. Спящий сильно мучается, стонет и мечется, но не может освободиться от нее и проснуться.⁶⁶

[A woman with such long breasts that she can throw them over her shoulder. At night Albasty lies atop sleeping people, puts her breasts into their mouths and presses them down. The sleeping person suffers intensely, moans and thrashes, but cannot break free and wake up.]

The act of Albasty putting her breasts into her victim's mouth simultaneously bears an association with breast-feeding, but also a sexual connotation, especially with the added description of moaning and trying to break free from under the person containing an allusion to sexual violence. It is also analogous to the phenomenon of 'The Old Hag', explored by David J. Hufford in his book on narratives of nocturnal supernatural assaults: experiences during which a person wakes up at night, with a strong feeling of an alien, hostile presence in the room, while unable to move themselves. Scientific explanation posits that it stems from the physical disorder known

⁶⁶ Rudenko, S.I. "Byt Bashkir. Chast' 2". *Zapiski imperatorskogo russkogo geograficheskogo obschestva po otdeleniiu etnografii*, T.XLIII, vyp.2 Leningrad: Gosudarstvennaia tipografiia im. I. Fedorova, 1925, p.306.

as 'sleep paralysis'. Since in Newfoundland, where Hufford did most of his research, there was a cultural context where models of experience of encounters with demonic beings existed, it gave rise to traditional supernatural beliefs of a physical embodiment in the form of the old hag.⁶⁷ At the same time, Albasty evokes comparison to the mythological creature of succubus, a female version of the incubus, a demon who appears in dreams and seduces or enacts sexual violence upon the sleeping.

However, in the context of abject mother, an important feature of Albasty is her connection to pregnancy and birth: she is a malevolent spirit that preys on women who are about to or just gave birth:

В ауле нашем жил киргиз Бай-бала, он был женат на дочери киргиза Чаянской волости, Ит-имгана. Жена его только что разрешилась от бремени. Её, оказывается, начала душить албасты. Послали за мной. Пришел я и увидел там своего наставника—Яраша; он сидел, наклонившись к земле и прислонив ко лбу кинжал. Увидя меня, он поднял голову и дал мне благословение действовать далее. Когда взоры мои увидели роженицу, я подумал, что она мертвая. Она лежала навзничь. На ней сидело какое-то существо, с большим туловищем, в голову, величиною в котел; от сильного давления чудовища груди и живот роженицы подходили к ее шее. Это была албасты. Я подошел и ударил ее несколько раз по голове кинжалом. Албасты соскочила, я погнался за ней на двор и преследовал до тех пор, пока она не скрылась.

*— Слава тебе, Господи! Произнесла роженица, открыв глаза и получив облегчение.*⁶⁸

[In our *аул* there lived a Kirgiz Bai-Bala, who was married to the daughter of a Kirgiz from Chaianskaia volost', It-imgan. His wife has just given birth. Apparently, she was being choked by Albasty. They sent for me. I came and saw my mentor there, Iarasha. He was sitting there, leaning low to the ground and resting his dagger against his forehead. When he saw me he raised his head and gave me blessing to take further action. When I laid my eyes upon the woman giving birth, I thought she was dead. She laid flat and on top of her sat some creature, with a huge torso, with a head the size of a cauldron; from the monster's heavy pressure the breasts and stomach of the woman came up to her neck. It was Albasty. I came close and stroke her a few times with a dagger. Albasty jumped off, I ran after her and chased her until she disappeared.

⁶⁷ Hufford, David. *The Terror That Comes in the Night: An Experience-Centered Study of Supernatural Assault Traditions*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982.

⁶⁸ Divaiev, A. A. *Etnograficheskie materialy. Legendy, byliny, demonologicheskie rasskazy, primety, poslovitsy i skazki tuzemnogo naseleniia Syr-Dar'inskoi oblasti. Vypusk V*. Tashkent: Tipo-litografiia torgovogo doma "F. i G. Br. Kamenskie", 1896. (Otdel'nie ottiski iz Sborniki materialov dlia statistiki Syr-Dar'inskoi oblasti), pp. 43-44.

‘God be praised!’ said the woman, opening her eyes and feeling relieved.]

The difference of Albasty’s connection to motherhood from Zhalmayz Kempir’s is that Albasty does not and cannot have children of her own but rather haunts those who can. The most striking physical feature of Albasty are the gross sagging breasts, the body part closely associated with motherhood, one that naturally enlarges in women when they become pregnant and later breastfeed. Albasty, as the monstrous-feminine, is a grotesque exaggeration of the reproductive mother, but one which is also a mockery of a woman’s generative powers because Albasty is devoid of them. Albasty can be said to represent the “uncontained fecund body” that serves as a reminder of human’s fragility and mortality. A “clean, contained, proper body” of the young fertile human women is constructed in opposition to it.⁶⁹ Notably, another difference between Zhalmayz Kempir and Albasty, is that the former is more or less contained within the realm of the fairy tale, whereas Albasty was believed to be a real demon who haunted pregnant women. Infant’ev relates a scene he witnessed, where a yurt in which a woman was having trouble giving birth was surrounded by people who started pounding on the walls of the yurt in order to scare Albasty away and let the woman give birth in peace.⁷⁰ Theory of abject, as was discussed, states that society, in order to preserve symbolic border, strives to push the abject out of its borders. Kristeva’s concept of “maternal becoming abject” is then quite literal in these tales as that which is terrifying and disturbing about motherhood manifests in the shape of a monster.

The witch.

⁶⁹ Ussher, Jane. *Managing the Monstrous Feminine: Regulating the Reproductive Body*. London: Routledge, 2006, p.7.

⁷⁰ Infant’ev, P. P. *Etnograficheskie rasskazy iz zhizni tatar, kirgizov, kalmykov, bashkir, vogulov i samoedov*. Saint Petersburg: Izdanie AF Devriena, 1909. p. 21.

The term 'witch' is loaded with many meanings. In the English language and the Western context, the witch is of course associated with the European Medieval witch-hunts, and the image of the witch is of a person alleged to do harm by magic, most commonly a woman.⁷¹ Even though the word witch does not have to necessarily mean a woman, the term itself is gendered, and evokes certain associations: "Somehow *it* has become female; engulfing, castrating, possessive and then trapped, alienated."⁷² The figure of the witch has also been reconsidered, reinterpreted and reclaimed in the Western feminist movement, from scholars who claim the witch-hunts were gynocide, i.e. a deliberate mass-scale crime against women,⁷³ to positioning the witch as a symbol of female empowerment and spirituality outside of patriarchal religions.⁷⁴ To quote Justyna Sempruch, "As a radical feminist identity, the 'witch' strategically represents both the historical abject figure subjected to torture and death, and a radical fantasy of renewal in the form of a female figure who desires (and articulates) a cultural transformation."⁷⁵ In the Kazakh context, such a historical event associated with witches or, consequently, a similar body of literature is not present. Historically, within indigenous religious tradition, people possessing supernatural skills were called *baqsy*: shamans and healers who could communicate with spirits (*zhyn*) and even command them.⁷⁶ Even though *baqsy* were men most of the time, female *baqsy* called *baqsy-kempir* or *baqsy-qatyn*, were not unheard of, if rare.⁷⁷ *Baqsy* summoned spirits that obeyed them to exorcise malevolent spirits who were harming people's wellbeing or

⁷¹ Simpson, Jacqueline. "Witches and Witchbusters". *Folklore*. Vol. 107 (1996), pp. 5-18.

⁷² Szachowicz-Sempruch, Justyna. "Female Entanglements with Evil: the Witch Figure as an Embodiment of Cultural Borderlands". *Journal of Religion and Culture*, vol. 15, 2003, pp.92-116.

⁷³ Daly, Mary. *Gyn/ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1978.

⁷⁴ Walker, Barbara G. *The Crone: Woman of Age, Wisdom, and Power*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985.

⁷⁵ Sempruch, Justyna. "Feminist Constructions of the 'Witch' as a Fantasmatic Other". *Body & Society*, vol. 10(4), 2004, pp.113-133.

⁷⁶ Divaiev, *Etnograficheskie materialy, vypusk 5*.

⁷⁷ Naumova, O.B. "Kazakhskii baksy: istoriia odnoi fotografii. (Publikatsiia materialov F.A. Fiel'strupa po kazakhskomu shamanstvu)". *Etnograficheskoe obozrenie*, 6, 2006, pp.77-85.

livelihood, and possessed high social standing, whereas European witches were marginal, low on the social hierarchy, those who would carry the blame for misfortunes.⁷⁸ However, the monstrous-feminine category of the witch is still useful for analysis of Zhalmauyz Kempir, even if within Kazakh history we do not find a similar tradition of society-wide persecution of women who are believed to possess supernatural powers. That is because at the core, the witch is feared for a different reason: the threat to the dominant order.

Barbara Creed writes that the witch is one of the five essential faces of the monstrous-feminine, “the incontestably monstrous role...that belong to woman”.⁷⁹ Barbara Walker also points out the connection between the innate power of the witch and the mystery of women’s ability to give birth, tying it to previous analysis of the dread associated with female biology and reproductive capabilities.⁸⁰ In Kristeva’s language the witch is inherently abject, a representation of female grotesque that exists on the margin between order and chaos, human and animal, and threatens social stability. Creed builds on Walker’s work, claiming that in ancient societies women were feared to possess terrifying supernatural powers and that reflects in tradition and folk beliefs.⁸¹ During Christian persecution of witches, witchcraft and womanhood were closely and deliberately connected, with claims that women were more likely to be witches, because they were weaker, less intelligent, more infantile, and more susceptible to be seduced by the Devil. Creed argues that the historical image of the witch cannot be separated from how witches are depicted in popular culture “as a monstrous figure with supernatural powers and a desire for evil”.⁸²

⁷⁸ Evans-Pritchard, E. E. *Witchcraft, oracles and magic among the Azande*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1937.

⁷⁹ Creed, *The Monstrous-Feminine*, p.73.

⁸⁰ Walker, *The Crone*.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p.74.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p.76.

In Kazakh fairy tales, Zhalmauыз Kempir and Mýstan Kempir are the figures that correspond to the archetype of the witch: a woman possessing innate supernatural skills or characteristics who causes people harm, “dangerous and wily, capable of drawing on her evil powers to wreak destruction on the community...to unsettle boundaries between the rational and irrational, symbolic and imaginary”.⁸³ Two important features of the witch figure is, firstly, the fact that she is considered close to nature due to her innate feminine powers and thus can control its forces, and secondly, she is portrayed as an evil schemer. Within Kazakh fairy tales, the witch is named Mýstan Kempir when the role of the schemer and manipulator dominates the character; when she uses more supernatural powers, or resorts to blood-sucking or cannibalism, she is Zhalmauыз Kempir. However, sometimes the same plot is encountered in different fairy tales, where in one Zhalmauыз Kempir will be present, and in another Mýstan Kempir.

The witch as a sexual being liberated from patriarchal society’s constraints, commanding supernatural power at her fingertips, and holding no respect for the boundaries or social norms of the society she inhabits is a threat to the established order and structures of power. That is why women in Medieval Europe were disproportionately prosecuted for accusations of witchcraft.⁸⁴ The witch as the archetype of this kind of female transgressor is present in the narratives of cultures where witch-hunts did not take place because behind this archetype is the society’s need to demonise and punish that which threatens the normative—in this case, a woman who exists independent of and in defiance to the patriarchal laws and conventions.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Barstow, Anne Llewellyn. *Witchcraze: A New History of the European Witch Hunts*. London: Pandora, 1994. Pp.132-133.

One of the ways the witch does this is through appearance. Monstrous female characters such as Medusa have been interpreted by scholars such as Deborah Covino as abject women who in their monstrosity “stand apart from those who are oppressed by the beauty ideal and those who strategically conform to it”.⁸⁵ Similarly, Zhalmauyz Kempir is old and ugly, sometimes covered in thick hair. Moreover, her nature is such that she threatens the border between the subject and the abject. The versions of her that possess zoomorphic qualities blur the line between human and animal; one eye instead of two, seven heads or inverted feet encroach upon the integrity of the human body. These body-horror qualities, however, Zhalmauyz Kempir shares with male monsters, too, such as the one-eyed giant *dev*. What is particular to her as a monstrous woman is the fact that she transgresses against the laws and norms of society. Covino draws attention to the aspect of aesthetic transgression that is crucial to the abject woman, where she opposes that which is “clean and proper”, and her flesh itself becomes an “alternative, disruptive language” that opposes the symbolic order of the acceptable aesthetic of the female body.⁸⁶ With the continuous reinforcement of such narratives, and not just through fairy tales (although, as mentioned previously, fairy tales often strongly associate beauty with goodness, especially for their female characters), men and women alike grow up learning to be repulsed and disgusted by female bodies. For men this dread results in rejecting associations with womanhood and femininity, as discussed above, and externalizing it by producing idealised, ‘purified’ images of women. Women internalize it as shame and self-hatred. The perception of female body as abject for women themselves results in the endless struggle to accept their bodies and pursuit of an unachievable ideal through diets,

⁸⁵ Covino, Deborah C. *Amending the Abject Body: Aesthetic Makeovers in Medicine and Culture*. New York: State University of New York Press, 2004, p.29.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

cosmetics, surgery, etc.

As the abject offends and threatens the boundaries that are supposed to keep you safe, abjection is also experienced toward hypocrites, liars, betrayers.⁸⁷ As the witch is, so is Zhalmauyz Kempir often a trickster and a deceiver. Stumbling upon Zhalmauyz Kempir's house or lair is a common plot point in the fairy tale.

Considering that coming across an inhabited dwelling in the middle of the steppe or forest should be a good thing for a traveller, especially when the notion of hospitality is so deeply intrinsic to Kazakh culture, Zhalmauyz Kempir awaiting for a victim to boil alive in her forty-lug cauldron⁸⁸ is a direct violation of that. Moreover, Zhalmauyz Kempir possesses the ability to transform her appearance, from old hag to beautiful woman to child, as suits her needs, violating, firstly, laws of reality by placing under doubt our ability to perceive the world for what it is, and secondly, by jeopardising norms and conventions that make gender, and therefore, identity, legible: under patriarchy where women are assigned different worth depending on their age (and hence, attractiveness and reproductive potential), the inability to assign Zhalmauyz Kempir a stable category disrupts the status quo. Thus, her appearance is abject not only because she represents the undesirable female body but also because she is able to alter it at will.

⁸⁷ Creed, *The Monstrous-Feminine*, p.10

⁸⁸ The lugs (Kazakh *qulaq*, Russian *ushko*) around the cauldron are used for lifting it up and suspending it above the fire. A common detail about Zhalmauyz Kempir is that she boils her victim in a cauldron with forty lugs, therefore, indicating its unusually large size.



Fig.1. from *Batylrlar turaly ertegiler*. Almaty: Aruna baspasy, 2015. P.91.

I discuss Zhalmauyz Kempir's power of transformation in more detail in the next chapter. For the current discussion it is important to note she is not the only monstrous character who does this:

Вездѣ въ этихъ рассказахъ дѣйствие происходитъ в горах, а самый Джез-Тырнакъ появляется людямъ в образѣ хорошенькой дѣвицы или молодухи, съ руками, тщательно прикрытыми длинными рукавами платья, и почти вездѣ онѣ убивается изъ ружья какимъ либо охотникомъ.⁸⁹

[All of these tales take place in the mountains and Zheztyrnaq itself appears to people in the shape of a pretty girl or young woman, hands carefully concealed by long sleeves of its dress, and almost in all of the tales it is killed by some hunter with a gun.]

Zheztyrnaq is a creature from Kazakh folklore that appears as a young woman with long and sharp copper/brass nails ('brass nail' being the literal meaning of her

⁸⁹ Divaiev, A. A. *Etnograficheskie materialy. 1. Kirgizskoe prichitanie po pokoinike. 2. Dzhez-Tyrna (etnograficheskii nabrosok). Vypusk IX.* Tashkent: Tipo-Litografiia V.M. Il'ina. 1903. (Otdel'nie ottisi iz Sbornika materialov dlia statistiki Syr-Dar'inskoi oblasti, tom XI, 1904).

name) and sometimes a metallic beak instead of a nose. She stalks hunters who trespass on her territory and silently comes out of the woods at night to join them at their bivouac. If the hunter does not recognise Zheztyrnaq for who she is, he is shredded to pieces, but if he does, he is able to deceive her into attacking a log instead and then shoot her. The mutual trick of appearance is crucial to the story. Zheztyrnaq as abject woman blurs the line between normal and abnormal, safe and dangerous, male and female. Like Zhalmauyz Kempir, she is a threat to the tradition of hospitality—in every variation she sits by the hunter's fire and he offers her a bowl of meat. The hunter must see through the deception and recognise the abject woman for what she is.

Albasty employs the trick of altering her appearance, too. Divaiev relays the story of a Kazakh *baqsy* about his encounter with Albasty in his youth:

Я погнался за ним [рябчиком], поймал и положил его за пазуху. Потом я опять сел на верблюда и потихоньку поехал. Заглянув к себе за пазуху, я ужаснулся: там сидела крошечная девочка с растрепанными желтыми волосами (белокурая). Она посмотрела на меня и засмеялась. В испуге я бросил девочку на землю. Ранее этого мне приходилось слышать от стариков, что в таких случаях следует бить эти существа, в каком бы образе они ни явились. Я так и сделал. Погнался за этой девочкой и сильно избил. Она скрылась. [...] Девочки стали дразнить и подсмеиваться надо мною. Вероятно, тут что-то такое нечистое, подумал я, и стал их бить. Две девочки скрылись, а одна осталась. Вглядевшись в нее. Я признал в девочке ту самую, которую я только что бил. Я не оставил на ней ни одного волоса, все выдрал.⁹⁰

[I chased the [grouse], caught it and put it in my pocket. Then I saddled the camel and rode slowly. When I looked inside my pocket, I was horrified: there sat a tiny girl with messy yellow hair (blonde). She looked at me and laughed. Terrified, I threw her on the ground. Before this I used to hear tales from old men that in situations like this you should beat these creature, no matter how they appear to you. So that is what I did. I chased the girl and beat her hard. She hid. [...] The girls began teasing and laughing at me. Most likely, there was something afool there, I thought, and began beating them. Two girls ran away, but one stayed. As I looked more closely at her, I recognised in her the girl I beat previously. I did not leave one strand of hair on her head, I pulled it all out.]

Several aspects of this are notable. The act that betrays the little girl as Albasty

⁹⁰ Divaiev. *Etnograficheskie materialy*. Vypusk V, pp.43-44.

every time is her laughter at the young man—arguably, an act of transgression, in violation of the submissive norm of feminine behaviour. The punishment here is gendered as well: the girl is beaten by the boy until she begs for mercy and promises to never come near him again; he also tears out all of her hair, a representation of her femininity, and brings it home where everybody tells him it is the hair of Albasty. If in the previous section Albasty could be seen as a grotesque mother, it is evident she can also represent a grotesque child. However, after beating the girl, the young man is not yet safe from her; he begins to suffer from hallucinations which persist in tormenting him until he agrees to serve a man who appears before him and tells him to become a *baqsy*. In this, his salvation from a female monster's curse is to literally become subservient to male authority (which involves transfer of a moustache and a ring and repeated strikes with a golden dagger upon the man's belly). In the later part of the tale, Albasty comes back to prey upon women in the *auyl*, trying to harm pregnant and birthing women, and attempts to disfigure the *baqsy's* wife by twisting her head backward. Having become a reputable *baqsy* by then, he has no trouble chasing her away and righting the wrongs she caused.

Another important characteristic of the witch is her relationship to other women. A coven of witches and the witches' Sabbath are recognisable and expected features of this archetype. The witch is viewed as a threat not only because she exists outside the dominant patriarchal order, but because she can convince other women to join her there, further and further disrupting the established power structure. In Chapter II I discuss in detail how Zhalmauzyz Kempir is categorised as villainous when she seduces weak-willed (as viewed by the narrative) women to transgress societal norms, how both she and her victim are punished for such violation, how she is utilised as representation of narrative punishment for transgressing gender norms, and how her

ties to other female characters are demonised. Overall, the witch as the face of monstrous-feminine exists within the Kazakh fairy tale as transgressor of acceptable body aesthetic, disruptor of rigid gender categories, and above all as the threat to the foundations of the patriarchal order.

Femme castratrice and vagina dentata.

This dimension of the monstrous-feminine does not directly refer to female reproductive functions or motherhood. Instead, it is Creed's challenge to Freud's concept of woman as a castrated being. She argues against the essentialism of his viewpoint, which presents femininity as something that is never violent or aggressive by its nature.⁹¹ This view of femininity also connects to an idealised, infantilised conception of women as pure, peaceful creatures who need men "to guide them through life's stormy passage".⁹² *Femme castratrice* is Creed's answer to this failure to imagine woman as a terrifying being, capable of engaging in violent acts and revelling in them. She re-evaluates a case study of Freud's ('Little Hans'), arguing that the child at the centre of the study viewed his mother's genitals as a castrating organ that has sharp cutting blades like teeth, instead of Freud's original conclusion that children believe mothers' penises are castrated, which gives them a castration complex.⁹³ Creed draws a parallel between the child's anxiety over castration, suffocation and death associated with his mother, and the themes of monstrous-feminine in horror. The castrating woman is the embodiment of frightening female sexuality, who can castrate, drown, suffocate, crush or impregnate, and in this she is also connected to the image of the

⁹¹ Creed, *The Monstrous-Feminine*, p.99.

⁹² *Ibid.*, pp.179-180.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p.108.

mother because she can do these things as punishment.⁹⁴ The castrating female genitals, the vagina with teeth, are present not just as psychoanalytical interpretations of the fears of troubled children, but also in myths, legends and popular culture.

The image of a castrating woman, particularly one that castrates with her vagina, is found in the mythology of many cultures, although the term *vagina dentata* itself enters common usage in the twentieth century, following a publication by anthropologist Robert Lowie and later receiving an entry in the Oxford English Dictionary.⁹⁵ A common representation of *vagina dentata* in mythology is Medusa. Freud analysed the character of Medusa as a being who frightens because she is castrated, and the myth itself in his interpretation represents the male fear of being castrated, whereas turning to stone from looking at Medusa, i.e. becoming stiff as if having an erection, symbolises reassurance of still having a penis. However, Creed presents an alternative interpretation where Medusa is a version of the castrating female genitals instead, with the snakes representing multiple *vaginae dentatae*.⁹⁶ The Sirens also present a classical image of castration anxiety, in Creed's view: "The Sirens, of course, were images of female castrators par excellence [...] jagged rocks, cannibalism, death and dismemberment".⁹⁷ Furthermore, the Yanomami people of the Amazon have a myth that the first woman possessed a vagina with teeth; in Native American Zuni and Hopi narratives sexually voracious women are copulated with using false wooden penises to knock the teeth out of their vaginas.⁹⁸ In a Jicarilla Apache myth, a boy comes upon a house with four girls who were vaginas but transformed into women, luring men with promise of sex and then devouring them using their strong

⁹⁴ Ibid., p.114.

⁹⁵ Rees, Emma L. E. *The Vagina: A Literary and Cultural History*. Bloomsbury Academic, 2013.

⁹⁶ Creed, *The Monstrous-Feminine*, p.123.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p.140.

⁹⁸ Rees, *The Vagina*, pp.104-106.

vaginal teeth.⁹⁹

The context of the false promise of pleasure is important to the concept of *vagina dentata* because it represents the “duplicitous nature of woman”, and in the modern world this misogynistic stereotype survives, evident, as Creed points out, in derogatory slang such as “castrating bitch”, or “man-eater”.¹⁰⁰ I believe it is related to the larger sexist notion, prevalent in both Western and post-Soviet cultures, of men being tricked into marriage through the beauty and desirability of a young woman, who later transforms into (or rather reveals her true colours as) a nagging wife, and brings about the man’s symbolic death: the loss of economic and sexual freedom (at least officially), and the emotional suffering from being tied to the “ball and chain”. In this sense, the man is seen as emasculated by his wife, i.e., castrated. The argument that Creed repeats throughout her chapters on *femme castratrice* and *vagina dentata* is that Freud refuses to acknowledge the image of woman as castrator that is constructed from male dread of women, instead only focusing on the notion of woman as castrated and the infamous concept of penis envy. Creed maintains that “the man is afraid of being weakened by the woman, infected with her femininity and of then showing himself incapable”.¹⁰¹ Freud ignores the figure of castrating woman, even though she is present in mythology, folklore and popular culture, precisely because she undermines his claim that men fear women only because they are castrated, i.e., passive victims who have had something done to them.¹⁰² A monstrous woman that castrates, therefore, represents these fears of both literal and symbolic castration. Castration can be genital, or represented symbolically through loss of other limbs, breasts, or loss of identity.¹⁰³

⁹⁹ Creed, *The Monstrous-Feminine*, p.118.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p.131.

¹⁰² Ibid., p.139.

¹⁰³ Ibid., p.119.

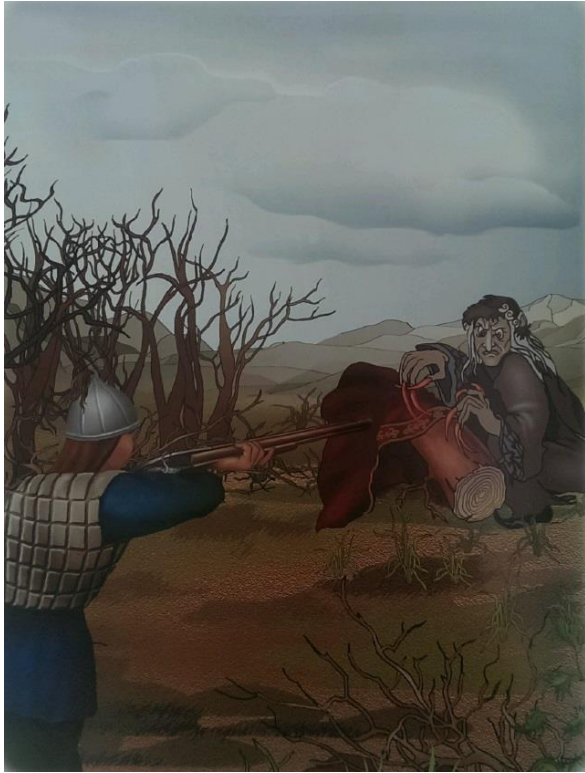


Fig. 2. From *Batylar turaly ertegiler*. Almaty: Aruna baspasy, 2015. P.90

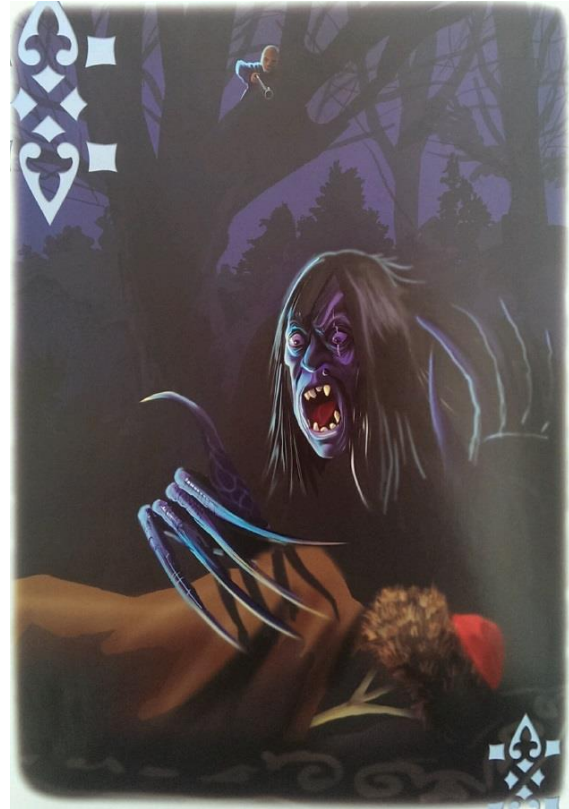


Fig. 3. From *Erlık Ertegileri*. Almaty: Aruna baspasy, 2015. P.68

As mentioned earlier, the fear of castration in the Kazakh fairy tale is evoked by the creature Zheztyrnaq, although Zhalmauыз Kempir also carries the association with *vagina dentata*. As Creed writes, “one approach interprets the *vagina dentata* as a symbolic expression of the oral sadistic mother”, or the fear that the mother might devour her children, expressed in tales such as *Hansel and Gretel* through the figure of the cannibal witch.¹⁰⁴ The image of Zhalmauыз Kempir as the devouring woman who wants to return her children to her womb by eating or swallowing them has been discussed earlier. It is notable that where Zhalmauыз Kempir, despite repeating motifs, features in a variety of fairy tales with different plots and a range of characters, the tale of Zheztyrnaq is essentially always one and the same at the core. Divaiev also notes this, writing that the Kazakhs seem to truly believe in the existence of Zheztyrnaq, and that

¹⁰⁴ Creed, *The Monstrous-Feminine*, p.121.

all of the tales are very similar despite the vast distances that separate the storytellers.¹⁰⁵ It always features a mysterious figure, hidden behind some form of clothing, that is later revealed to be Zheztyrnaq, and a protagonist that must in turn deceive Zheztyrnaq by dressing an inanimate object in his own clothes.

British scholar of epic poetry Arthur Thomas Hatto in his article 'On some Siberian and other copper-crones' surveys the rich tradition of the image of bird-like women with copper beaks and talons in the Altai, Siberian, Yakut, Khakas, Buryat, Mongol and Kazakh cultures.¹⁰⁶ He suggests the bird imagery of Zheztyrnaq and similar mythological characters comes from remaining traits of Crone Earth-mother figures who were relegated from epic poetry, replaced by male gods when society became patrilineal. Hatto ties these female goddesses to the shamanic attire of female shamans in Altaian epos who wore eagle-owl skins on their heads, as well as dives in to the material history of the significance of copper in the societies he studies.¹⁰⁷ It is interesting that the theory of the image of a female goddess being distorted into a negative one as matriarchal societal structure comes to be replaced by a patriarchal one in the course of history is applied by Hatto to the Inner Asian copper-crones, when an analogous interpretation is used by Kazakh folklorists in reference to Zhalmauyz Kempir. I delve into this argument in more detail in Chapter II and explain why I view it as problematic. Another important thing to note, although researching it further falls beyond the scope of this work, is that Hatto's (and other scholars that he is citing such as U. Harva and S. Surazakov) argument that initially the bird imagery was a requisite part of sacred shamanic attire and later transformed into a character of a crone whose

¹⁰⁵ Divaiev, *Etnograficheskie materialy*. Vypusk IX, p.1.

¹⁰⁶ Hatto, Arthur T. "On some Siberian and other copper-crones." *Suomalais-Ugrilaisen Aikakauskirja Journal de la Société finno-ougrienne*. Vol. 85 (1994).

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p.72.

“function...in the narrative was to strike terror”¹⁰⁸ might conflict with the generally accepted idea in Kazakh folkloristics that the tales about the confrontation of Zheztyrnaq and the hunter are one of the most archaic ones to have been preserved within Kazakh folklore, and thus the image of a female monster with copper talons must have existed simultaneously with shaman women who wore bird skins and were revered.¹⁰⁹

Regardless of whether Zheztyrnaq’s copper beak (not always present in the Kazakh tales) and copper claws (a constant attribute) can be linked to a shamanic heritage, Hatto rightly points out the terror inherent to a figure who appears half human woman and half bird of prey, emerging from a dark forest with sharp talons and a bird-like beak, “powerful, silent and ghostly” like the eagle-owl.¹¹⁰ Hatto allows for “faunal inspiration” as a partial reason for the emergence of the image of the copper-clawed woman.¹¹¹ Whereas he ties her resolutely to birds, it is notable that Zheztyrnaq is often described as covered in coarse hair which together with her claws evokes an image of a bear on its hind paws, perhaps awoken from slumber by the hunter traversing its territory. Kristeva and Creed both talk about the abjection of mixed animal and human features, and Zheztyrnaq represents that abject fear of blurring a line between human and animal.

Hatto analyses Kazakh Zhalmauыз Kempir as a variation of Zheztyrnaq and categorises her and Mıstan Kempir as copper-crones.¹¹² However, in this work, even though I interpret Zhalmauыз Kempir and Zheztyrnaq as both representing the faces of the monstrous-feminine in Kazakh folklore, I treat them in separate categories because

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p.71.

¹⁰⁹ Iskakova, *Kazakhskaiia bogatyrskaiia skazka*, p.21.

¹¹⁰ Hatto, “On some Siberian and other copper-crones”, p.74.

¹¹¹ Ibid., p.91.

¹¹² Ibid., p.92.

of the function and the roles in the narratives that they play. For instance, as already discussed, Zhalmauyz Kempir is closely tied to motherhood, a trait that Zheztyrnaq lacks. I situate Zheztyrnaq in relation to castrating female figures instead, with her copper claws, of course, the first and most obvious association with *vagina dentata*—they are literally tools of castration, used to tear bodies of her victims into tiny pieces, evocative of symbolic castration through dismemberment in line with Creed. The rest of the imagery, however, is also important. The vagina is associated with darkness and depth that hides danger and death. The defeat of a *vagina dentata* is equal to a journey of the hero into the underworld, for example Heracles' descent into the realm of Hades and taming the hellhound Cerberus.¹¹³ Caves, tunnels, any dark, dank, deep spaces can be used to symbolise the vagina, as well.¹¹⁴ Zheztyrnaq emerges from such a dark and deep space: the forest, “*густой тёмный лес*”,¹¹⁵ filled with threats to the hunter's life (but also the place of his conquest). The clawed Zheztyrnaq is the teeth of the forest's vaginal depth. On Zheztyrnaq herself, there is also similar imagery: the long sleeves of her robe or dress that hide her hands—dark slits that hide sharp deadly claws. It is also notable that the act of Zheztyrnaq hiding her face and hands with her clothes evokes an innocent image of a shy girl that is then flipped on its head with the reveal of her true monstrous nature. Divaiev also mentions a belief that the Zheztyrnaq live in holes in the ground or caves—further similar imagery.¹¹⁶ The hunter must save himself by constructing a fake version of himself, remarkably, a wooden log, a phallic symbol, that is castrated instead of the hunter.

The gendering of Zheztyrnaq in the different tales is a problematic issue. In some versions, like *Zhaiyq and Edil*, she is stated to be a woman, and all of the Zheztyrnaq we

¹¹³ Lederer, Wolfgang. *The Fear of Women*. New York: Grune & Stratton, 1968. p.49.

¹¹⁴ Creed, *The Monstrous-Feminine*, p.120.

¹¹⁵ ‘Zhaiyq and Edil.’ Sidel'nikov, *Kazakhskie narodnye skazki*, Volume III, p.84.

¹¹⁶ Divaiev, *Etnograficheskie materialy, Vypusk IX*, p.2.

encounter are female. In *Zheztyrnaki, Peri i Mamai* (*The Zheztyrnaq, Peri and Mamai*) there exist female and male Zheztyrnaq who can marry each other (this version seems to be a variation on *Zhaiyq and Edil*, as it presents a new story that frames the tale about Zheztyrnaq itself; in *Zhaiyq and Edil* Zheztyrnaq marry Zhalmauыз Kempir's sons, not male Zheztyrnaq.)¹¹⁷ In Divaiev's description he seems to suggest the true nature of Zheztyrnaq is almost genderless, with the image of a young woman only being a disguise to fool a hunter, whereas the Zheztyrnaq themselves are closer to animals than humans.¹¹⁸ In *Batyr Boran*, Zheztyrnaq are similarly described as monstrous:

"...чудовища...вся их сила была в руках. Пальцы у них, как когти орла. Тело все покрыто густой шерстью" ("...monsters...all of their might was in their hands. Their fingers were like an eagle's claws. Their bodies were covered with thick fur".)¹¹⁹ When Divaiev describes Zheztyrnaq, he uses male pronouns in Russian, which is problematic, since Kazakh language does not possess grammatical gender (the pronoun *ol* could be used mean he, she, or it), and thus this could simply be the case of a faulty translation. In Sidel'nikov's collection, when Edil realises he has killed a Zheztyrnaq, the narrative uses "he" but in the later part of the story Zhalmauыз Kempir reveals these have been her daughters-in-law,¹²⁰ which might further prove that this is due to confusion of translating from a language with no grammatical gender to the one which has it. In the tale recorded by Divaiev, when Zheztyrnaq appears before the hunter, she presents as female convincingly and unambiguously:

И вотъ какъ-то передъ закатомъ солнца въ то время, когда онъ, разведя огонь, варилъ мясо, предъ нимъ предстала женщина. Тюлебай-батыръ посмотрелъ на нее и, найдя что она молода и, очень красива собой, предложилъ ей кусокъ мяса; она приняла поданное ей мясо не голою рукою, а

¹¹⁷ 'Zheztyrnaki, Peri i Mamai (The Zheztyrnaq, Peri and Mamai): Sidel'nikov, *Kazakhskie narodnye skazki*, Volume III, pp.56-62.

¹¹⁸ Divaiev, *Etnograficheskie materialy*, Выпуск IX, p.2.

¹¹⁹ Sidel'nikov, *Kazakhskie narodnye skazki*, Volume III, p.64.

¹²⁰ Ibid., pp.84-85.

прикрытой спущеннымъ рукавомъ платья. Тут Тюлебай-батыръ догадался, что передъ нимъ сидитъ Джезъ-Тырнакъ, и сталъ составлять планъ самозащиты. Когда Тюлебай-батыръ, поѣвши мяса, сталъ утирать руки о платокъ, сидящая съ нимъ женщина сказала:— «напрасно трешь сало объ сало», когда-же Тюлебай-батыръ сталъ глотать кости, она сказала:— «не точи булатъ объ булатъ».¹²¹

[And so before the sun has set, at the time when, having made a fire, he was boiling meat, a woman appeared before him. Tulebai batyr looked at her and seeing she is young and very beautiful, offered her a piece of meat; she accepted the meat not with her bare hand, but with a rolled down sleeve of her dress. At this moment Tulebai batyr realised that a Zheztyrnaq sits before him and started devising a plan to defend himself. When Tulebai batyr, having eaten the meat, started wiping his hands with a piece of cloth,¹²² the woman sitting next to him said, 'It is a waste to wipe tallow with tallow', and when Tulebai batyr began sucking the bones, she said, 'Don't sharpen steel with steel'.]

The exchange at the end of the extract can be interpreted using the concept of abjection. What Zheztyrnaq does here is eliminating the border between abject and subject. She equates Tulebai's hands with the meat fat he is wiping on the cloth, and then his teeth with the bones of the animal he is eating. This is not only a direct physical threat, because Zheztyrnaq essentially sees no difference between the hunter and the piece of meat, but also a symbolic one because she robs him of his individual identity.

¹²¹ Divaiev, *Etnograficheskie materialy, Vypusk IX*, p.3

¹²² The Russian word that Divaiev uses is *platok*, which might mean handkerchief, scarf, shawl, or a rag.



Fig.4. From *Erlık Erteğileri*. Almaty: Aruna baspasy, 2015. P.68

To muddle the gender issue further, Divaiev writes that having shot Zheztyrnaq, Tulebai examines the corpse and realises it is not a woman but a man. Divaiev's version is the only one to my knowledge where this happens. The usual post-mortem reveal is that the woman is a Zheztyrnaq, as in *Zhaiyq and Edil*:

Едиль выстрелил. Человек взмахнул руками и грохнулся на землю. Охотник подошел к убитому и увидел, что все ногти на пальцах неизвестного существа были медные. Пуговицы на одежде были золотые и серебряные, а на лбу сверкал один-единственный глаз. Это был жезтырнак.

[Edil shot. The person threw his arms up and fell to the ground. The hunter approached the killed and saw that all of the nails of the mysterious creature were copper. The buttons on its clothes were golden and silver, and on his forehead shone the one and only eye. It was Zheztyrnaq.]

Tulebai, however, discerns that he is dealing with Zheztyrnaq almost immediately,

and the fact that underneath the dress is a man is further confirmation of it.¹²³ This, together with the fact that in Divaiev's version Zheztyrnaq does not attack the wooden log with her claws but "jumps at it, embraces it and falls with it to the ground" which carries obvious sexual connotations, perhaps suggests a homosexual anxiety, or a fear of being "deceived" by a person who violates the norms of gender presentations and disturbs the rigid gender categories of heteropatriarchy.

Crossdressing is not uncommon in Kazakh fairy tales, and happens both ways. In *Krasavitsa Malkhuan (Malkhuan the Beauty)*¹²⁴ the hero wants to take the titular Malkhuan as his wife, but she has already been promised to a powerful but old khan. He puts on her dress and goes to the khan instead of the girl, pretending to be her. Everyone around him is fooled, including the khan himself and the khan's sister who starts feeling confused: "*Еркежан и раньше иногда казалось, что любит она так горячо не свою подругу, а нареченного... потому что видела в невестке много мужского, когда они оставались надине...*" ["Even before this it seemed to Erkezhan that the love she felt was not for a [female] friend but her intended...because she saw in her sister-in-law a lot of masculine qualities when they spent time together alone".] When the hero reveals he is a man, Erkezhan is overjoyed.¹²⁵ In *Doch' viziria (The Vizier's Daughter)* the heroine dresses as a man, and orders her maids to follow suit. Together, they join the khan's hunt and prove to be better archers and hunters than the khan's men. The khan, who previously took the vizier's daughter as his lover and gave her the impossible task of birthing him a son even though he was to be gone for a year, does not recognise her.¹²⁶ In all of these cases, including the Zheztyrnaq tale, putting on

¹²³ Divaiev, *Etnograficheskie materialy, Vypusk IX*. p.4.

¹²⁴ 'Krasavitsa Malkhuan. (Malkhuan the Beauty.)' Sidel'nikov, *Kazakhskie narodnye skazki*, Volume III, pp.155-164.

¹²⁵ Sidel'nikov, *Kazakhskie narodnye skazki*, Volume III, pp.159-160.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.27-28.

clothes of the opposite gender constitutes a complete transformation, where the hero or heroine is no longer recognisable and is without fail read as the gender that he or she aims to pass as. This might be simply due to the general fairy tale tendency of simplification: putting on a man's clothes now means you look like a man. On the other hand, it might represent rigid standards of gender presentation, where wearing a type of clothing assigned by societal norms to a certain gender must mean you belong to this gender. Where the heroic characters are allowed to utilise this for their own goals, the monster is punished and killed. The reason for this is the motive and the intent of the characters who cross-dress. The vizier's daughter does so to conceive a child from the khan (but notably she does this when she puts female clothes back on, otherwise it would be transgression) and Malkhuan's beloved uses crossdressing as an instrument to defeat his male rival and marry the woman he desires. Both are motives that do not violate traditional gender roles. Zheztyrnaq's female form, on the other hand, is that of the female castrator, already a woman who refuses to adopt the proper feminine role, in Creed's words.¹²⁷ Additionally, she attempts to be intimate with the hunter while still in disguise, which is deemed unforgivable.

The vampire.

The vampire is a creature found in folklore and fiction worldwide, from ancient times to the present day. With many variations across cultures and time periods, the vampire continues to occupy people's imagination, evident in the amount of literature, television, film and other forms of media dedicated to exploring this creature and its relationship to humanity. Regardless of gender, vampires are creatures in abject states of being, in line with Kristeva's theory because they are walking corpses, bodies devoid

¹²⁷ Creed, *The Monstrous-Feminine*, p.146.

of souls who feed on others' blood and life energy, walking a thin line between the dead and the living. For Creed, the female vampire is of particular interest as a representation of the monstrous-feminine. Because the act of sucking blood from their victims is highly intimate, it is often interpreted as a metaphor for a sexual encounter.¹²⁸ Some narratives may deliberately sexualise the scene of the vampire's attack, who would hold their victim in an erotic embrace, or even move beyond subtext and explicitly link the act of vampirism with the sexual act.¹²⁹ When the vampire is a woman, that automatically places her in the role of the seductress, the sexual aggressor, the one who penetrates. Creed posits that because of this, horror films with female vampires always exploit images of lesbian desire, regardless of whether the movie makes it explicit or subtext.¹³⁰ Through these representations, sexual and romantic relationships between women are demonised because they depict the lesbian as 'a vampire-rapist who violates and destroys her victim'.¹³¹ Homosexual desire in any form threatens the dominant heteronormative structure of society, but lesbian love doubly so, because it undermines the sexual forms of control over women within patriarchy: "As well as transforming her victims into blood-sucking creatures of the night (she does not necessarily destroy her victims), she also threatens to seduce the daughters of patriarchy away from their proper gender roles."¹³²

Zhalmauyz Kempir is a vampire in several of the fairy tales. It should be noted that I have not come across tales where she drinks blood from men. Even though there are plenty of examples where she attacks male characters, threatens to eat them or

¹²⁸ Ibid., p.59

¹²⁹ For example, in the popular American book series *The Southern Vampire Mysteries* by Charlaine Harris vampires are practically unable to differentiate between sexual desire and hunger for blood.

¹³⁰ Creed, *The Monstrous-Feminine*, p.59.

¹³¹ Zimmerman, Bonnie. "Daughters of Darkness: The Lesbian Vampire on Film" in Grant, Barry K. *Planks of Reason: Essays on the Horror Film*. Metuchen, N.J: Scarecrow Press, 1984, p.75.

¹³² Creed, *The Monstrous-Feminine*, p.61.

swallows them whole, it is only women, and notably young women, who become victims of her vampirism. As Creed points out, a male victim of a vampire would become a representation of the abject, because his body is penetrated, i.e. something that within patriarchal societal norms should only happen to female bodies.¹³³

In tales where Zhalmayyz Kempir interacts with women who transgress the boundary of gender norms, they are punished by the narrative, with Zhalmayyz Kempir embodying that punishment. In a fairy tale as recorded by Miropiev, the heroine only comes across Zhalmayyz Kempir because she is fleeing from the threat of male physical and sexual violence.¹³⁴ Zimmerman notes that in stories of lesbian vampires, there must be an added power imbalance between the aggressor and the victim, since the female vampire cannot derive power from her gender as a male can.¹³⁵ While in the horror film or novel that often translates to class difference, in the fairy tale age fulfils that function instead, as well as Zhalmayyz Kempir's supernatural and monstrous power.

In *Qarauirek* a girl named Sarqyt¹³⁶ is friends with a cat, with whom she shares food every day.¹³⁷ One day, when the cat does not come right away, Sarqyt eats the food by herself. The cat arrives later and, angered with the girl, puts out the fire in the hearth. Now Sarqyt must wander in search of a flint to rekindle the fire. Once again, this tale is an example of how a woman who somehow violated a norm of behaviour (became greedy with food; lost the hearth fire she was tasked to maintain) encounters Zhalmayyz Kempir:

От сөніп қалған соң, Сарқыт ағаларын іздеп, шақпақ алуға келе жатса, көз ұшында жылтылдаған бір от көрінеді. От алу үшін барса, жеті басты

¹³³ Ibid, p.19.

¹³⁴ Tale #19. Miropiev, M. "Demonologicheskie rasskazy u kirgizov". *Zapiski IRGO po otdeleniiu etnografii*. T.10, vyp.3, Saint Petersburg, 1888, pp.37-38.

¹³⁵ Zimmerman, "Daughters of Darkness", p.73.

¹³⁶ From Kazakh, *sarqyt* means leftover food.

¹³⁷ 'Qarauirek.' Kaskabasov, S., et al. (eds.) *Babalar sözi. Zhüz tomdyq. Volume 75. Batyrlyq ertegiler*. Astana: Foliant, 2011. pp.117-122.

*жалмауыз кемпір екен. Жылтылдаған соның көзі екен.
— Е, қарағым, жақсы келдің, неғып жүрсің? – дейді кемпір.
— Шешеке, от алайын деп келіп ем, - дейді қыз.
— Бармағыңнан бір сорғызсаң, от беремін, болмаса, от бермеймін. Оған
көнбесең, өзіңді жұтып та қоямын, - дейді кемпір. Сарқыттың
қорыққанынан есі шығып кетеді.
— Жарайды, шешеке! – деп, Сарқыт бармағын сорғызады. Кемпір сорғанда
қыз бозарып кетеді.¹³⁸*

[With the fire extinguished, Sarqyt went in search of her brothers to take a flint from them, when out of the corner of her eye she saw a distant fire. When she went to get the fire, there was the seven-headed Zhalmauыз Kempir. It was her eye that shone in the dark.
'My dear, welcome, why have you come here?' asked the hag.
'I have come to ask for fire', the girl replied.
'If you let me suck on your thumb, I shall give you fire, but if you don't, then I shall not. And if you refuse, I shall swallow you!' said the old hag. Sarqyt quaked with fear.
'I agree then,' she said and gave up her thumb. As the old hag sucked on her finger, the girl went pale.]

In this fairy tale, even though it is not stated explicitly that Zhalmauыз Kempir is drinking from the girl, it is evident from how Sarqyt grows pale as if losing blood. Zhalmauыз Kempir proceeds to visit her over the next several days in her brothers' absence, sucking on Sarqyt's finger.¹³⁹ After the brothers start to suspect something is wrong with Sarqyt who has grown extremely pale and thin, they force her to confess about Zhalmauыз Kempir's visits and then teach her how to bait the hag to fall into their trap. Even if blood is not mentioned, like in Miropiev's tale #19, Sarqyt loses her life force to Zhalmauыз Kempir. There is sexualised subtext to the situation: the act of sucking on someone's finger is intimate and erotic; Zhalmauыз Kempir visits in secret when Qarauirek and the other men are not present, and Sarqyt is scared and ashamed to tell her brothers what is happening to her. Like a scorned lover, Zhalmauыз Kempir becomes enraged when Sarqyt behaves dismissively toward her which is how

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ In the Kazakh language version in Kaskabasov, *Babalar sözi*, Zhalmauыз Kempir sucks from a finger on the girl's hand, whereas in the Russian language version in Syzdykova, D. *Kazakhsnie volshebnyie skazki*, Alma-Ata: Zhazushy, 1989, it is from her toe.

Qarauirek and the others are able to trap and defeat her.

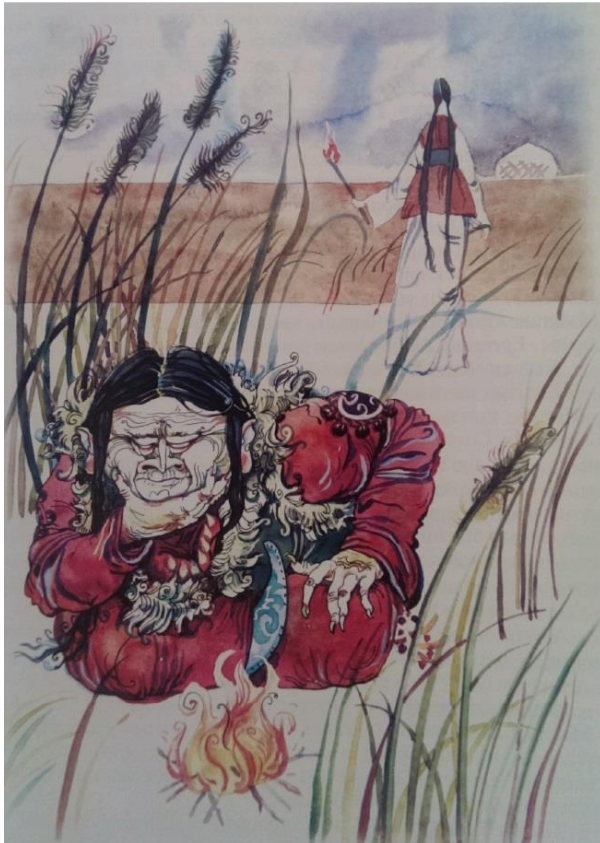


Fig.5. From *Qial-ğazhaiyp ertegiler*. Almaty: Aruna baspasy, 2015, p.21.

Қызға жалмауыз кемпір келгенде, сөзін айтып болған соң, мына сөзді айт: «Желаяғы астында жоқ, Қарауірек үйде жоқ, келсең кел, келмесең өзің біл, жалмауыз, де», - дейді. Сөйтіп, өздері көрінбейтін бір жерде дайындалып отырады. Жалмауыз кемпір келіп, бұрынғы айтатын сөзін айтып болған соң, Сарқыт та сөзін айтып: «Келсең кел, келмесең өзің біл, жалмауыз», - дейді. Кемпір ашуланып, қызға ұмтыла бергенде, орға гүп етіп түсіп кетеді.¹⁴⁰

[They told the girl to say this to Zhalmauыз Kempir after she speaks her usual words: ‘The runner is not here, Qarauirek is not home, if you want to come in, do so, if not, do not, do as you please, Zhalmauыз!’ Having said this, they hid somewhere to prepare. When Zhalmauыз Kempir came and spoke as she did before, Sarqyt said her own words, ‘If you want to come in, do so, if not, do not, do as you please, Zhalmauыз!’ The old hag became

outraged, flew at the girl, and fell down the hole.]

Of course, the quest for fire is a widespread motif in many cultures’ mythologies. Ancient people revered fire as a source of warmth, light, protection, and there are numerous myths and legends about people abducting fire from the sky or stealing it from others.¹⁴¹ In these types of legends, though, the hero who is the originator, abductor or creator of fire is usually also an ancestral and civilising figure, someone who taught people “how to produce tools, to prepare their food, to hunt the animals, various crafts and art, and introduced a social organisation, laws, rules of matrimony,

¹⁴⁰ Kaskabasov, *Babalar sözi*, p.122.

¹⁴¹ Bůčková, Martina, “Variations Of Myths Concerning The Origin Of Fire In Eastern Polynesia”. *Asian And African Studies*, 2009, 2, pp.324-343.

magic, ceremonies and holidays and, most importantly, the acquisition of fire”.¹⁴² However, this is not the case in *Qarauirek*. Sarqyt is a victim of her own wrongdoing, terrorised and almost drained of life by Zhalmauыз Kempir until she is saved by her male kin. If Zhalmauыз Kempir is indeed a vilified remnant of a once powerful matriarchal deity, this fairy tale might be a distorted version of a legend where a woman is a cultural hero who acquires fire from a goddess. However, analysing the content of the fairy tale as it is, the story presents an unfavourable picture of a transaction of power between two women, with underlying sexual subtext. Creed writes that the lesbian vampire always opposes the institution of family and threatens to seduce the daughters away. In the first example, the heroine falls into Zhalmauыз Kempir’s deadly embrace because she is on the run from her male relatives: her father, her brother and her potential husband. In *Qarauirek* Sarqyt escapes the same gruesome fate only because she is still on good terms with her brothers. Through drinking the blood of the heroine (or sucking her life force out of her thumb), Zhalmauыз Kempir becomes the sole master over the young woman’s life, the role which should, by patriarchal standards, belong to the male head of the family: “she disrupts identity and order; driven by her lust for blood, she does not respect the dictates of the law which set down the rules of proper sexual conduct”, she’s a direct threat to the institution of heterosexuality.¹⁴³

This Chapter explored the faces of Kazakh fairy tale’s monstrous-feminine. Embodying archetypes of grotesque mother, monstrous womb, the witch, the vampire, *femme castratrice* and *vagina dentata*, Zhalmauыз Kempir, Zheztyrnaq and Albasty are representations of abject womanhood that disrupt the normal order of life. The

¹⁴² Ibid, p.325.

¹⁴³ Creed, *The Monstrous-Feminine*, p.61.

category of grotesque mother reflects the fear and dread of bodies that are signified as female under the patriarchy. The process of giving birth, motherhood and the reproductive and sexual organs themselves are seen as monstrous. The witch destabilises order by refusing to be held down by constraints of the normative, and thus is seen as threatening to the patriarchal society. *Femme castratrice* and *vagina dentata* represent male fear of castration, and further demonstrate how women's bodies and particularly genitalia are Othered and literally demonised. The vampire represents another form of transgression: violation of the heteronormativity, where Zhalmayz Kempir sucking blood from young girls symbolises sexual and romantic relationships between women. These relationships are always portrayed as negative to uphold the sanctity and stability of the heteropatriarchy. In Chapter II, I take a closer look at Zhalmayz Kempir and seek to explain the variation of roles she inhabits within the fairy tales.

Chapter II.

Interpreting Zhalmauyz Kempir.



Fig. 6. From Priakhina, D. G. (ed.) *L'iotsia pesnia pod dombu. Fol'klor i literaturnie pamiatniki Kazakhstana*. Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 2009. Artist A. Shaltakbaeva.



Fig. 7. From *Qial-ğazhaiyp ertegiler*. Almaty: Aruna, 2015, p.30.

Many of the best-recognised Kazakh fairy tales feature Zhalmauyz Kempir as a prominent character. An old ugly hag, often with grotesque qualities such as sharp claws, inverted feet or hooves, seven heads, one eye, she is terrifying and fascinating, especially combined with the supernatural powers she usually possesses, like physical transformation or immense speed and strength. Zhalmauyz Kempir has features of more than one archetypal female monster: like a vampire, she sucks blood, like a witch, she has supernatural power, like a shapeshifter she changes her body at will, and she

eats human flesh. The interesting thing about her is that the role she plays in these tales varies, and so does her morality. As mentioned in the Introduction, Zhalmauyz Kempir is not the only monstrous woman in Kazakh fairy tales but what sets her apart is that characters such as Albasty and Zheztyrnaq are evil and antagonistic in every iteration. When one encounters a fairy tale featuring Zheztyrnaq, one can make a correct assumption that she would attempt to harm the hero and be defeated at the end, but Zhalmauyz Kempir's position in the Kazakh fairy tale narrative is more ambiguous. There is not a clear narrative stance or judgement on the morality of the character that can be extrapolated from the fairy tales. She could prey on the characters, wishing to swallow them whole, or share food with them, offering valuable advice and help on their quest.

Ambiguous characters in fairy tales stand out, because the world of the fairy tale is often represented through polarized narratives, with clear-cut good and bad characters. According to Danish folklorist Axel Olrik, epic narratives tend to favour 'clarity' and do not reveal the multiplicity of features corresponding to real life.¹⁴⁴ Austrian-American child psychologist and scholar Bruno Bettelheim argues that fairy tales are essential for the psychological development of children, assisting them in coming to terms with growing up and making sense of the confusing adult world. Moreover, he posits that fairy tales provide unconscious guidance to comprehending existential anxieties and learning to solve interpersonal problems for children.¹⁴⁵ But if fairy tales provide an easy-to-digest binary understanding of the world: good and bad, smart and stupid, beautiful and ugly—then examining which behaviours and features are praised and associated with goodness, and which condemned and viewed as

¹⁴⁴ Olrik, Axel. *Principles for Oral Narrative Research*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992, pp.43-44.

¹⁴⁵ Bettelheim, Bruno. *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*. New York: Knopf, 1976.

monstrous, could help us discern what concepts and constructs are normalised and which are othered in society. Therefore, my aim is to analyse which factors accompany portrayals of Zhalmayyz Kempir as a positive character compared to when she is presented as a negative one.

To problematise the morality binary of the fairy tale, I employ a feminist theoretical framework. In line with Simone de Beauvoir, men are the default human beings, whereas women are understood to be presented as man's Other, their femaleness defining them first and foremost. Female biology is both mysterious and repulsive to the patriarchal gaze, and biological processes linked to female gender such as menstruation, pregnancy, and childbirth can become sources of existential insecurities and horror to man.¹⁴⁶ Fairy tales (and stories in general) can play a crucial role in constructing social, gendered reality. They present different roles for children of different gender: heroic, active, aggressive for the boys, and that of a passive, submissive victim for the girl.¹⁴⁷ Furthermore, the women that are presented in fairy tales as evil or monstrous reflect forms of presentation or performance of femininity and womanhood that are marginalised and condemned in society.

This black-and-white moral divide is common for the Kazakh fairy tale, as well: the *batyrs* are brave, strong and victorious; the wives who are loyal to their husbands get to triumph alongside them while those who cheat and betray are banished or killed; so are the jealous sisters and the scheming witches who help and instigate them. In such a world, Zhalmayyz Kempir, a monstrous cannibalistic witch who swallows forty grown men whole but helps the hero out if he greets her kindly, unquestionably stands out. If monstrous-feminine creatures such as Albasty and Zheztyrnaq are always evil

¹⁴⁶ De Beauvoir, *The second sex*, p.201.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

and defeated at the end, Zhalmauyz Kempir presents a more complicated picture. This chapter looks at the spectrum of Zhalmauyz Kempir's roles and appearances throughout the fairy tales, tracing links between aspects of her different representations, her morality and the narrative treatment she receives, and how these represent gender norms and roles within the stories.

Zhalmauyz Kempir in Kazakh folkloristics.

The name *Zhalmauyz* is comprised of two Kazakh words, *zhalmau* and *auyz*. *Zhalmau* means 'to eat ravenously, to gorge, to devour something completely' (it can refer not just to consuming food but to a fire destroying a building), and *auyz* is the word for 'mouth'. *Kempir* means 'old woman'; thus, Zhalmauyz Kempir literally means an old woman with a devouring mouth. The voracious and cannibalistic nature of Zhalmauyz Kempir is represented in many fairy tales. Some of the stories describe how big her mouth is, or how she feasts on forty cauldrons of meat simultaneously in a matter of seconds. In *Zhanadil*, the titular hero comes across her throwing a man into her cauldron and preparing *quyrdaq*¹⁴⁸ out of him.¹⁴⁹ As soon as Zhalmauyz Kempir sees Zhanadil, she attacks him, wanting to devour him, as well. After Zhanadil defeats her, he finds that she was keeping a vast number of people captive in her house, planning to eat them later.¹⁵⁰ In Ostroumov's *Skazki sartov v russkom izlozhenii*, Zhalmauyz Kempir is a gluttonous old woman with her head 'the size of a Kirgiz yurt'.¹⁵¹ She eats human flesh, and her children are just as voracious. Even as Zhalmauyz Kempir is keeping up the ruse of being a young human woman, in *Baba Iaga and her brother the prince* she is unable to control her appetite and steals and eats a foal every night, which

148 Kazakh traditional dish of roasted sheep's liver, heart, lungs and fat tail.

149 'Zhanadil.' Sidel'nikov, *Kazakhskie narodnye skazki v trëkh tomakh*. volume III, pp. 10-11.

150 Sidel'nikov, *Kazakhskie narodnye skazki*, volume III, pp. 10-11.

151 Ostroumov, *Skazki sartov*.

sends the khan's son on her trail. While the city is left without protection of its male rulers, Zhalmauyz Kempir's daughter devours most of the court.¹⁵²

The Kazakh folklorist Riza Almukhanova argues that her voraciousness speaks to a primal and monstrous nature that only much later takes on a female image.

Zhalmauyz Kempir's zoomorphic qualities and her connection to water suggest to Almukhanova a parallel with antique mythological creatures such as Scylla and Charybdis, as does Zhalmauyz Kempir's role as a gatekeeper to a different realm, having got past whom the hero embarks on a journey to the underworld, much like the heroes of Ancient Greek myths:

Zhalmauyz Kempir, in accordance with her specific origin with regard to geographic features, dwells not on islands or a cliff, or a cave, but on the steppe. And necessarily, under a lone tree. This is also not random. In Turkic folklore the Baiterek tree is the symbolic of the cosmic model. If one remembers the motif of the dragon swallowing the nestlings, where top of the tree represent the higher world, the dragon the underworld, and human the middle world, then Zhalmauyz Kempir under a tree symbolises the connection to the underworld.¹⁵³

It should be noted, however, that there are plenty of fairy tales where Zhalmauyz Kempir is not waiting for the hero under a tree. In some tales, like in the abovementioned *Zhanadil*, the protagonist comes across her in a yurt or a house. She often dwells near bodies of water. For example, one of the most prominent Kazakh folklore scholars, Seit Kaskabasov, draws on this connection to water (floating on the surface of the lake as a lung, or sitting by the body of water waiting for her victims) to link Zhalmauyz Kempir with a remnant of an archaic deity who guarded the underworld:

...Zhalmauyz Kempir, like Albasty, has some sort of link to the

152 Ibid.

153 Almukhanova, R.T. "Zhalmauyz Kempir i antichnyie obrazy". *Naukowa myśl informacyjnego wieku – 2009». Materiały IV międzynarodowej naukowo-praktycznej konferencji*. Volume 11. Filologiczne nauki. Przemyśl, Nauka studia. 07-15 marca 2009 roku, 2009, pp.31-35 (Published in English under title 'Umai and antique images').

'underwater realm', which is, according to beliefs, the world of the dead. Consequently, Zhalmayz Kempir is also considered a representative of this world and is connected to Albasty. Thus, water means the underworld, and Albasty is the servant, while Zhalmayz Kempir the guardian, of that world.¹⁵⁴

Both Kaskabasov and Almukhanova¹⁵⁵ offer an additional interpretation of Zhalmayz Kempir as the reflection of an ancient ritual of initiation, which is based upon Vladimir Propp's analysis of Baba Iaga. Propp connected the fairy tale plots to descriptions of initiation rituals (for example, among the Marind-Anim tribe of New Guinea, recorded by German ethnologist G. H. Nevermann), as the hero of the story—the initiated—is drawn to the forest, brought into the hut, and faces a monstrous creature, the 'master of death and ruler of the animal kingdom', to descend into the underworld and come back up to the higher plane. However, as Propp notes, the fairy tale is often the inversion of the ritual, where the act of initiation (blinding, burning) is done to the witch (who represents the initiator) rather than the heroes (the initiated).¹⁵⁶

Propp also finds evidence of ancient matriarchal social structures within Baba Iaga's character, reflected in her being mother of all living things, which translates into her power over the life and death of men.¹⁵⁷ Kaskabasov similarly argues that Zhalmayz Kempir's evil nature is a consequence of patriarchy replacing matriarchy. According to his analysis, a woman's vast role as a shamanic head of the family, responsible for the initiation of the youth, was reduced to the confines of domestic life, so Zhalmayz Kempir transformed into the scheming intrigante Myster Kempir.^{158 159}

154 Kaskabasov, S. A., *Kazakhskaiia volshebnaia skazka*. Alma-Ata, 1972, pp. 79-80.

155 They could be said to belong to the same (and perhaps the only) school of folkloristic thought in Kazakhstan, originating within the Institut literatury i iskusstva im. M. Auezova, the same as Iskakova below. Kaskabasov also supervised Almukhanova's doctorate dissertation.

156 Propp, Vladimir. *Istoricheskie korni volshebnoi skazki*. Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo LGU, 1986, p.79-80.

157 Ibid.

158 Kaskabasov, *Kazakhskaiia volshebnaia skazka*, pp. 80-82.

The stories themselves, however, do not seem to offer such a clear line of regression. Many tales combine both Zhalmauыз Kempir and Mystal Kempir within their plots.

Almukhanova argues that, on the contrary, the evil side of Zhalmauыз Kempir comes from her primal, archaic nature as a mythological monster. Within the ritual of initiation she fulfils the function of 'trial by monster'.¹⁶⁰ However, this interpretation seems almost completely derivative of Propp's analysis of the image of Baba Iaga, which in itself rests in large part upon ethnographic observations of an entirely unrelated culture (the Marind-Anim). On the whole, making conclusions about the past of one culture through comparing it to the present realities of another, deemed more 'primitive' and thus closer to humanity's 'common ancient' past is rooted in the Western model of development, which states that all societies inevitably progress to a modern Western-like state. This is rooted in an evolutionist view of history, grounded in Marxist theory, as is the concept of societies progressing from a matriarchal to patriarchal structure.^{161 162}

A link between Zhalmauыз Kempir and initiation rituals can still be established through evidence from actual Central Asian sources. For example, Zhalmauыз Kempir is able to transform into a flame and fly this way in some tales.¹⁶³ Considering the etymology of her name, if *zhalmau* can refer to a fire devouring something completely as somebody would voraciously consume food, Zhalmauыз Kempir's literal transformation into fire is not surprising. Fire is also linked to shamanic rituals, for

¹⁵⁹ Mystal Kempir appears in many fairy tales as a malicious witch, who schemes against the hero. She is rarely portrayed with any supernatural powers, mostly using more mundane powers of manipulation and deception to bring down the hero and break up his family. She is not described as cannibalistic like Zhalmauыз Kempir.

¹⁶⁰ Almukhanova, *Zhalmauыз Kempir i antichnyie obrazy*.

¹⁶¹ Rist, Gilbert. *The history of development: from Western origins to global faith*. London: Zed, 2002

¹⁶² Engels, Friedrich, and Eleanor B. Leacock. *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State, in the Light of the Researches of Lewis H. Morgan*. New York: International Publishers, 1972.

¹⁶³ Makeev, *Kazakhskie i uighurskie skazki*, p.141.

example, in the Islamic conversion narrative recorded by Ötemish Hajji, Baba Tükles enters an oven pit and emerges untouched. The ordeal by fire represents the ritual of initiation.¹⁶⁴ If at least some of the *batyr* figures in the fairy tales are remnants or reflections of these narratives, as suggested by Deweese, then Zhalmauыз Kempir may indeed represent the process of initiation.

If Kaskabasov and Almukhanova acknowledge the dual nature of Zhalmauыз Kempir, Zina Iskakova presents a rather one-sided analysis of her as only having the function of causing harm to people, linking her voraciousness to human negative characteristics such as greed and cruelty:

Her appearance is repulsive, ugly. Her image is comprised of separate parts. [...] She is always an old hag, but she has the ability to transform both into a child and a beautiful woman. She appears as a cannibal, characterised by her greed.¹⁶⁵

And later:

His [Er-Töstik's] actions speak to his generous and noble soul. This is contrasted by Zhalmauыз Kempir, whose image is cruel, cunning and insidious. The bolder the representation of good in the fairy tale, the more graphic the image of evil.¹⁶⁶

Even though this analysis simplifies Zhalmauыз Kempir and outright ignores the stories where she is not unambiguously evil, it brings up the concept of antithesis, i.e. when emphasising the despicable nature of the evil characters brings out the good in the protagonists all the better. Moreover, as seen in the quote above, the image of Zhalmauыз Kempir as a greedy, monstrous, deceptive woman is contrasted to the generous, good, honest image of Er-Töstik as an idealised man. Even though not every version of Zhalmauыз Kempir is antagonistic to the hero, the ones that are do present

164 DeWeese, D. A. *Islamization and native religion in the Golden Horde: Baba Tükles and conversion to Islam in historical and epic tradition*. University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994.

165 Iskakova, *Kazakhskaiа bogatyrskaiа skazka*, p.87.

166 *Ibid.*, p. 101.

this clear binary division where Zhalmauыз Kempir is contrasted with not only the male hero, but also as a foil to idealised positive female characters. Zhalmauыз Kempir also functions as a representation, punishment or warning lesson for women who transgress gender norms, as I discuss later in this chapter.

Classifying Zhalmauыз Kempir.

In this section I analyse the fairy tales to determine what factors in the fairy tales determine Zhalmauыз Kempir's morality and function.

Scholar of Slavic languages and literature Andreas Johns uses a similar model to interpret the moral ambiguity of Baba Iaga in Russian fairy tales.¹⁶⁷ He argues that Baba Iaga's position in the narrative depends on gender roles in Russian traditional peasant society. Thus, when she encounters young boys, she is hostile, representing the anxiety of the separation from the mother and the assumption of a male role; with young girls, who retain a closer connection to the household than boys, she is more ambiguous and placed on a continuum of female figures of authority that girls encounter in their daily lives. With adult males she can be both an enemy and a helpful mediator for heroes seeking lost wives, and with adult women she is either villainous or ambiguous, appearing in the archetypes of false mother or false bride. Johns employs a Freudian approach, claiming that fairy tales deal with anxieties of maturation, and split along the gender division as boys and girls assume the different roles assigned to them by society.

How does this kind of approach apply to the Kazakh fairy tale narrative? One of the key differences is that Zhalmauыз Kempir as a rule usually encounters adult heroes. Children who are threatened by her are usually secondary or even tertiary characters in

¹⁶⁷ Johns, Andreas. "Baba Iaga and the Russian Mother". *The Slavic and East European Journal*, 1998, Vol. 42, No. 1, pp. 21-36.

the story. I argue that even though it is not possible to definitively put Zhalmauyz Kempir as an either archetypal evil character of Kazakh fairy tale or a positive one, within concrete stories she rarely remains morally ambiguous, and there are certain features that determine how the narrative presents and treats her.

In studies of folklore, there are several types of systems for classification of folktales. The Aarne-Thompson classification systems are one of the most prominent, first developed by Finnish folklorist Antti Aarne, later extended by American folklorist Stith Thompson, and recently also expanded by German scholar of literature and narrative research Hans-Jörg Uther. Classification of tales by type or motif rests on the premise that there is a limited number of essential plots and motives, and every folktale is a variation thereof. Whereas motif is a minimal narrative unit within a tale that persists, a tale type is a specific binding of motifs that stands as a unique story and of which there consist multiple variations.¹⁶⁸ Vladimir Propp, even as he admitted that the classification indices had proven to be tremendously useful for study of folklore around the world, still criticises it for a somewhat reductive or simplistic approach. As he writes in *Morfologiya "volshebnoi" skazki (Morphology of the wondertale)* the plots of fairy tales are closely related and linked with each other, and it is extremely difficult to tell where one begins and the other ends. Moreover, the proponents of the classification indices tend to assume that every tale type or motif represent a holistic element that can be taken out of its respective fairy tale and studies independently. However, Propp argues, this does not take into account transferability of these elements, so there are no objective criteria for why one plot is separated from another, as he demonstrates on the examples of Russian fairy tales *Baba-Iaga* and *Morozko*, which feature a similar plot of a

¹⁶⁸ Dundes, Alan. "The Motif-Index and the Tale Type Index: A Critique". *Journal of Folklore Research*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (Sep. - Dec., 1997), pp. 195-202, p.195.

daughter's exile and her punishment but are not treated as the same tale type.¹⁶⁹

Furthermore, a story can combine within itself more than one type of tale, which makes it difficult to determine which index number should be assigned to it.¹⁷⁰ Indeed, this is also true for Kazakh fairy tales, as many feature Supernatural Opponent and Supernatural Helper simultaneously, like *Er-Töstik*, for example, but those are separate groupings of tale types. As an alternative way of classifying fairy tales, Propp suggests studying functions instead as the composite elements of the fairy tale, i.e. the actions of the characters in fairy tale remain the same, even if characters themselves or the circumstances may change. The number of these functions, according to Propp, is limited (thirty one), and the sequence is always the same.¹⁷¹ Additionally, he identifies seven *dramatis personae*, the agents in the fairy tale that perform a range of functions.¹⁷² For example, the Villain's range includes *villainy, struggle* and *pursuit*. Zhalmauyz Kempir inhabits this role in a lot of fairy tales where she chokes the hero's father (e.g. *Er-Töstik*),¹⁷³ battles the hero in a fight until death (*Zhaiyq and Edil*),¹⁷⁴ or chases the hero (*Alaman and Zholaman*).¹⁷⁵ She can also fill the role of Donor, performing *the first function of donor* (a polite greeting as a test of character in *Three Princes: Two Smart One and a Fool*) or *guidance* (teaches Qudaibergen how to acquire magical artefacts in *Tri Sestry (Three Sisters)*).¹⁷⁶

Zhalmauyz Kempir being able to inhabit both the positive and the negative role, or

¹⁶⁹ Propp, Vladimir. *Morfologiya "volshebnoi" skazki*. Moscow: Labirint, 1998, pp.11-12.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., p.13.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., p.19.

¹⁷² Ibid., p.60.

¹⁷³ 'Er-Töstik'. Auezov, M., and Anov, N. (eds) *Kazakhskie narodnye skazki*. Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatelstvo hudozhestvennoi literatury, 1952, pp. 270-295.

¹⁷⁴ 'Zhaiyq and Edil.' Sidel'nikov, *Kazakhskie narodnye skazki*, volume III, pp.83-86.

¹⁷⁵ 'Alaman men Zholaman (Alaman and Zholaman)'. Auezov, M., and Anov, N. (eds) *Kazakhskie narodnye skazki*. Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatelstvo hudozhestvennoi literatury, 1952, pp.233-236.

¹⁷⁶ 'Tri sestry (Three sisters)'. Auezov, M., and Anov, N. (eds) *Kazakhskie narodnye skazki*. Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatelstvo hudozhestvennoi literatury, 1952, pp.178-190.

both the Villain and the Donor, is exactly the problem posed at the beginning of the chapter. Thus for my thesis, Vladimir Propp's system of classification is more useful. At the same time, my aim is more specific as I want to look at Zhalmauыз Kempir being either Villain or Donor as it relates to the regulatory framework of gender. At the same time, as I explore sets of specific circumstances in these narratives (eg., Zhalmauыз Kempir interacting with female characters who transgress gender norms), it means I am still in some ways utilising the motif approach. Therefore, my classification is a result of combination of the Aarne-Thompson system and Propp's functions, as well as borrowing from Johns' idea to categorise interactions based on the protagonist's gender. Because it is specific to my study of how the monstrous-feminine reflects the boundaries of acceptable within rigid gender categories, I do not use indices, letters or numbers from either the AT system or Propp's morphology, but come up with my own.

M1: Zhalmauыз Kempir as Villain.

The first type of representation of Zhalmauыз Kempir, is Zhalmauыз Kempir as the villain of the story in opposition to the male protagonist. Examples include *Er-Töstik*, *Zhanadil*, *Zhaiyq and Edil*, *Alaman and Zholaman*, and *Ialmauыз Kempir and her brother the prince*. In these fairy tales she is portrayed as hostile, monstrous, cannibalistic, and is always defeated at the end:

Поехали они искать Жайыка, долго искали, но не нашли. Друзья случайно набрали на большое стадо овец. Пастуха нигде не было видно. Невдалеке стояла белая юрта, охотники подъехали к ней.

— Эй, есть кто в юрте?— крикнули они.

— Заходите,— ответили изнутри.

Охотники спешились и, прихватив с собой на всякий случай оружие, вошли в юрту. Дверь с шумом захлопнулась за ними. В юрте сидела женщина спиной к двери и кормила грудью ребенка. Не оборачиваясь, она сказала:

— Едиль, ты убил трех моих невесток. Трех сыновей убил Жайык. Жайыка я сварила и съела. Я не искала вас, вы пришли ко мне сами. Теперь одного из вас я распорю, а другого повешу.

*Это была жалмауыз-кемпир.*¹⁷⁷

[They went to look for Zhaiyq. The two friends have been searching for a long time, with no luck, when they came across a big flock of sheep. There was no sign of a shepherd. Nearby stood a white yurt, and so the hunters rode up to it.

'Is there anyone inside?' they shouted.

'Come in', was the answer.

The hunters dismounted and entered the yurt, bringing their weapons with them just in case. The door shut behind them with a bang. Inside the yurt, facing away from them, sat a woman, breastfeeding a baby. Without turning around, she said, 'You have killed my daughters. Your brother has killed my sons. I have boiled him alive and ate him. I wasn't going to look for you but you've come to me on your own. Now one of you I will rip to pieces and the other I will hang.'

She was Zhalmayz Kempir.]



Fig. 8. from Sidel'nikov, V. M., (ed.) *Kazakhskie narodnye skazki v trëkh tomakh*. Alma-Ata: Zhazushy, 1971, volume III, p.25.



Fig. 9. From Sidel'nikov, V. M., (ed.) *Kazakhskie narodnye skazki v trëkh tomakh*. Alma-Ata: Zhazushy, 1971, volume I, p.19.

The two important features of Zhalmayz Kempir in M1 are, firstly, her voraciousness, and, secondly, deception through transformation.

¹⁷⁷ Sidel'nikov, *Kazakhskie narodnye skazki*, Volume III, p.85.

The cultural construction of female appetite with regard to food develops along similar lines to constructions and representations of female sexuality.¹⁷⁸ Submissiveness, discouragement from occupying too much space, denial of sexual agency and bodily autonomy are near-universal experiences of womanhood and femininity that are brought to the forefront by feminist criticism. De Beauvoir provides examples of how in Western European fairy tales the heroines' most treasured quality is beauty and thus the ability to charm a man, whereas the male heroes actively go on adventures and are rewarded for it. The recurring concept for de Beauvoir is that men are allowed transcendence, whereas women's future is immanence. Reflecting this, in fairy tales male heroes fight monsters and journey the world, while the female heroines are locked in a tower, a palace, imprisoned in some sense and always waiting for the hero to save them. Even when the heroines are adventurous and courageous, their ultimate goal and destiny is still to charm the hero, fall in love and be loved. Moreover, these tales suggest that resigning herself to the role of victim and martyr is the woman's path to happiness, developing a sense of masochism in girls: "the little girl learns that by consenting to the most serious renunciations, she will become all-powerful: she takes pleasure in masochism that promises her supreme conquests."¹⁷⁹

In this sense, a gluttonous woman is as much of a transgression of normative gender roles as a sexually promiscuous one. The socially approved role for a woman is to be submissive; in the fairy tales morally good heroines are often passive. Kazakh fairy tales are no exception, even if they have their peculiarities. The female characters wait to be found and claimed as wives with little to no say in the matter; they either wait to

¹⁷⁸ Dennis, A. 'The Spectacle of Her Gluttony: The Performance of Female Appetite and the Bakhtinian Grotesque in Angela Carter's "Nights at the Circus", *Journal of Modern Literature*, Vol. 31, No. 4 (Summer, 2008), pp. 116-130.

¹⁷⁹ Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, p. 353.

be rescued from danger or, if they act, it is to support their husbands (often husbands-to-be), fathers, and brothers. It is one of the primary tenets of feminist critique that women in patriarchal narratives are given the roles of objects, rather than agents.

In contrast, Zhalmayyz Kempir, instead of waiting to be consumed, consumes instead, and knows no measure. Abigail Dennis, analysing the subversive character of Fevvers in Angela Carter's *Night at the Circus*, writes, "...in the same way that sexual power can be manipulated and exploited, the power to satisfy one's own appetites and those of others are seen in the novel to be central to the workings of gender relations—often as a destructive, as well as positive, force."¹⁸⁰ If women are denied property (and treated as property), valued for beauty, discouraged from taking up space or displaying their desires and appetites, Zhalmayyz Kempir is ugly and terrifying, hoards treasure, and devours the flesh of men. In other words, her monstrosity contains grotesque inversions of social gender norms for women. This may represent the deep-rooted male fears of women as Other that Beauvoir wrote about, but can also provide room for subversive interpretations.

Secondly, as her moral nature and powers vary from fairy tale to fairy tale, so too does Zhalmayyz Kempir's appearance. Indeed, the only consistent image is that of an old woman, even if she might not stay an old woman throughout the whole fairy tale, or be only part human. Moreover, as mentioned before, she often possesses the power to transform and shapeshift within the tale, which she uses to trick the heroes into trusting her.

One of the common metamorphoses Zhalmayyz Kempir exhibits is presenting herself as a lung floating on the surface of a lake. As a *bai*¹⁸¹ approaches the lung, it

180 Dennis, "The spectacle of her gluttony", p.117.

181 A rich man. In Kazakh fairy tales, often a character of unpleasant nature, who is punished for his

clings to his boat and starts enlarging.¹⁸² Once close enough, the lung transforms into Zhalmauyz Kempir as an old woman and grabs the *bai* by his throat, demanding he give up his son to her. Devin DeWeese states that the motif of fishing something out of a body of water that turns into a woman is a generally common motif in Central Asian folklore, and is often connected to the narrative of Baba Tükles.¹⁸³ In *Er-Töstik*, the protagonist goes through ordeals similar to those Baba Tükles undergoes in the *Tarikh-i Dust Sultan* by Ötemish Hajji, that in turn reference a shamanic narrative and legends of sacred communal origins. However, the emphasis here is on the hero, Er-Töstik, and not on Zhalmauyz Kempir. Moreover, there is a difference that women who are fished out of the water to become the protagonist's wife or to fulfil a wish are in a passive role within the narrative. In contrast, Zhalmauyz Kempir transforms herself deliberately to be approached by the hero and trap them, therefore, inhabiting an active role.

When Zhalmauyz Kempir's appearance is that of an old woman, she frequently uses that to pretend to be human and helpless so as to gain the heroes' trust. In *Er-Töstik* she deceives Ernazar, the hero's father, by pretending to be a decrepit old woman, only to strangle him the moment he gets too close until Ernazar finally promises to give up Er-Töstik to her in exchange for his life (notably, Ernazar's cowardice is not punished by the narrative.) She similarly does this *Alaman and Zholaman*,¹⁸⁴ appealing to Alaman's kindness and willingness to help an old woman. Another variation on helpless and harmless appearance fooling the hero is Zhalmauyz Kempir appearing as a child.¹⁸⁵ In *Alaman and Zholaman* Zhalmauyz Kempir turns into a toddler to steal Alaman's dagger. Transforming into a baby or a child is something that Albasty also

greediness or serves as an antagonist to the hero of a more humble background.

182 Miropiiiev, "Demonologicheskie rasskazy u kirgizov", p.62.

183 DeWeese, *Islamization and native religion in the Golden Horde*, p.237.

184 'Alaman and Zholaman'. Auezov and Anov, *Kazakhskie narodnye skazki*, pp.178-190.

185 *Baba Iaga and her brother the prince* in Ostroumov, *Skazki sartov v russkom izlozhenii*.

employs as a tactic to hunt her prey.¹⁸⁶

Zhalmauyz Kempir can also present herself as a beautiful young woman. The purpose of this deception for Zhalmauyz Kempir varies between simply deceiving the man into thinking she is a harmless and innocent woman, or seducing him (and even marrying him) in order to procreate. Notable is the fact that while pretending to be a harmless old woman can be used by Zhalmauyz Kempir to earn the trust of both male and female characters, the appearance as a young woman is reserved for male characters only. This reflects a heteronormative patriarchal structure underpinning these stories. The role of vile seductress is relegated only to women (discussed in more detail below), and homosexual desire is not existent.

Deception through appearing as a young and beautiful woman is generally common throughout not only folklore but popular culture as well. Female bodies have always represented for societies fearful and threatening forms of sexuality, and that is reflected in the many mythological creatures who are monstrous in their femininity, and female in their monstrosity.¹⁸⁷ The world genders certain bodies, organs and functions as female. As men and masculinity are regarded as default and human, female biology and femininity are viewed as Other, freakish, monstrous. The connections between womanhood and monstrosity have been frequently explored by feminist scholars for characters such as Lilith, Medusa, Catherine Earnshaw, and others. They argue this male dread of women's autonomy and sexual agency results in vilification of femaleness, evident throughout history in such characters as the Sphinx, Medusa, Circe, Kali, Delilah, and Salome, "all of whom possess duplicitous arts that allow them both to

186 Divaiev. *Etnograficheskie materialy. Vypusk V.*

187 Creed, *The Monstrous-Feminine.*

seduce and to steal male generative energy”.¹⁸⁸ Cultural and social norms and regulations are often reinforced through myths, legends and fairy tales. Many urban legends, horror movies, video games and other forms of media feature creatures such as vampires, demons, succubi or ghosts tricking humans (in most cases, young men) into viewing them as beautiful and desirable women only to reveal themselves as monstrous—and murderous. Feminists have criticised such representations, as they reinforce stereotypes of women as deceptive, and their sexuality as monstrous.¹⁸⁹ In such tales, the virginal female character who waits for the male protagonist to make the first move is usually the only woman who survives to the end of the story.

M2: Zhalmauыз Kempir as depowered donor.

In the instances of positive interactions, Zhalmauыз Kempir is usually encountered by a male hero, where she can perform the function of testing the character, similar to Baba Iaga. In *The Three Sisters*, Zhalmauыз Kempir is a positive character who helps the hero Qudaibergen:

*Вот едет Кудайберген и замечает: возле горы синий дымок вьется. Поскакал он к дыму. Видит: между двумя горами стоит плохонькая одинокая юрта. Вошел в нее Кудайберген. Сидит в юрте Жалмауыз-Кемпир. - Здравствуй, сынок!- говорит старуха.- Откуда едешь и как попал сюда? До сих пор ни один человек не заходил ко мне. Отвечает Кудайберген: - Бабушка! Сначала накорми и напои меня, а потом расспрашивай.*¹⁹⁰

[So rides Qudaibergen, and suddenly sees a whiff of smoke rising. He sends his horse toward the smoke and comes upon a lone decrepit yurt between two mountains. He enters the yurt, and sees Zhalmauыз Kempir sitting inside.

'Hello, my boy', says the old woman. 'Where are you going and how did you get here? Never has a human visited me before.'

'Please, first give me some food and drink, and then ask questions', replies Qudaibergen.]

¹⁸⁸ Gilbert, S. M., and Gubar, S. *The madwoman in the attic: The woman writer and the nineteenth-century literary imagination*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979, p.34.

¹⁸⁹ Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*.

¹⁹⁰ Sidel'nikov, *Kazakhskie narodnye skazki. Volume I*, p.37.

So Zhalmauыз Kempir feeds Qudaibergen, then helps him with his quest for magical items three times, and in return asks for a favour—she begs Qudaibergen to ask Tasshyлар, a powerful male sorcerer, so that he would finally break the spell he had put on Zhalmauыз Kempir's son. Despite Zhalmauыз Kempir having her own territory in this tale, and possessing vast knowledge of all magical artifacts and living creatures around, she requires the male hero's help to negotiate on her behalf with Tasshyлар. In *Three princes: two smart ones and a fool*, Zhalmauыз Kempir again helps the prince because he is polite, and sends him to her sister who further helps with his quest to win a beauty from the powerful *dev*,¹⁹¹ of whom both of the Zhalmauыз Kempir sisters are afraid. They fear the *dev* will boil them alive if he finds out they helped the prince. Therefore, there is a motif that a polite greeting to Zhalmauыз Kempir saves the (male) hero's life, as she decides to spare him and aid him on his quest. According to Iskakova, in such tales Zhalmauыз Kempir represents a trial or a test that determines whether the hero is worthy of her help. For example, in *Zhaiyq and Edil*, it could be argued Zhaiyq, the brother of the main hero, fails the test, as he is warned by the voice of Zhalmauыз Kempir not to proceed into the Zhezyrnaq territory, but Zhaiyq replies rudely and rashly:

— *Послушайся меня, тогда тебе будет сопутствовать удача. Если же не слушаешься, жалмауыз-кемпир съест тебя,— снова раздался голос. Жайык зарядил ружье, зажег фитиль,*
 — *Если ты жалмауыз-кемпир, попробуй подойди, съешь меня,— приготовился он. Но и тут никто не явился. Тогда он повернулся и ушел.*

¹⁹¹ The *Dev* appears in the mythology of many cultures, including Persian, Slavic and Turkic. The word *dev* translates from Persian as 'devil, demon, spirit' among other meanings (Steingass, F. J. A comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary. Accessed <http://dsal.srv02.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/philologic/getobject.pl?c.2:1:8106.steingass>). Its most common form is a one-eyed giant. Ostroumov noted the similarity of some of the tales to the Greek myth of the cyclops Polyphemus (Ostroumov, N. P. "Novyie varianty siuzheta o Polifeme (Odnoglaze)", *Etnograficheskoe obozrenie*, 1891, no.2, p. 204.) Devs are known to be incredibly strong but stupid, although some fairy tales may portray them as powerful and cunning. Zhalmauыз Kempir's sons are devils in a number of stories.

[‘Listen to me, and then luck will follow you. If you don’t obey, Zhalmauyz Kempir will eat you,’ he heard the voice again.

Zhaiyq loaded his gun, lit the fuse: ‘If you’re Zhalmauyz Kempir, then come try and eat me,’ he readied himself. But no one came. Then he turned around and left.]¹⁹²

In this fairy tale Zhaiyq is eaten by Zhalmauyz Kempir. Zhalmauyz Kempir and the Zhezyrnaq are later defeated by his brother Edil, but not by learning from this lesson and begging Zhalmauyz Kempir for forgiveness, but instead by slaughtering her and her entire family of Zhezyrnaq daughters.

F1: Zhalmauyz Kempir and the female character(s) as conspiring villains.

This refers to fairy tales where Zhalmauyz Kempir brings out the darkest desires of human women, persuading them to leave their husbands, or deceive their brothers. This corresponds with Zhalmauyz Kempir as the witch, in accordance with the analysis in Chapter I. In *Alaman and Zholaman*, having gained access to their household, Zhalmauyz Kempir persuades Alaman's wife to leave him and marry Soltan instead. Even though both Alaman and his wife fall prey to Zhalmauyz Kempir's manipulations, the narrative is understanding of Alaman, who acts out of kindness and respect for old women, but unforgiving of the wife's disloyalty. As Alaman lies tied and helpless he asks his daughter to bring him his favourite dagger so that he would be set free. The daughter refuses, having understood that her father is now Soltan and she should not disobey her mother's orders. Alaman then asks his son, who complies and brings the dagger. Alaman sets himself free and orders his wife and daughter to be killed for treason.

The story leaves no room for moral ambiguity in the wife's act of betrayal, even

¹⁹² Sidel'nikov, *Kazakhskie narodnye skazki*. Volume III, p.84.

though she was manipulated by a witch. The punishment of the daughter for prioritising the mother's orders over those of her father, even though she is only a child, seems even harsher. The tale glorifies the bond between male family members, particularly, father and son (the son is naturally able to retain his loyalty to his father in spite of the adults around him who tell him otherwise). A woman's disloyalty to the patriarchal head of the family warrants punishment by death, even when done by a child. Compare with *Er-Töstik* where Ernazar betrays his son out of fear of death, when Zhalmauyz Kempir demands his son in exchange for his life, but where he is neither narratively punished nor even reprimanded in-text. Zhalmauyz Kempir is presented here as wholly malicious, conspiring with the wife and bringing out the worst in her.

F2: Zhalmauyz Kempir versus idealised female heroine.

This type of interaction usually occurs together with negative interactions with the male heroes, where Zhalmauyz Kempir is presented as an entirely evil character. In these tales, she often is defeated by the male hero with the help of a loyal and clever female character. For example, in *Er-Töstik* Kenzhekei is the one to hear about Ernazar giving up Er-Töstik to the witch. She warns him and advises him to take the stallion Shalquiryq who proves instrumental in helping Er-Töstik to get away from Zhalmauyz Kempir and save his life. Er-Töstik is unique because Zhalmauyz Kempir is actually killed not by the hero, but by a *peri*,¹⁹³ Bektory to whom she was subservient. In *Three sisters*, Aisulu, the hero's bride, turns the witch into a needle. The women who are allowed to be heroic or resourceful and, to an extent, battle Zhalmauyz Kempir, are always young and are either wives or the brides-to-be of the male protagonist. Their

193 From Persian پری *pari*, 'winged, a good genius, a fairy' (<http://dsal.srv02.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/philologic/getobject.pl?c.1:1:3303.steingass>) Angel-like creatures in Turkic and Persian folklore, who look like incredibly beautiful young women.

heroic deeds exist only to support their husbands. On one hand, this can be seen as subversive because they are not being rescued by men, but save men instead. However, this still occurs within tales with male primary protagonists. Fairy tales where the female character drives the story and battles Zhalmauyz Kempir on her own terms exist (see F3 below), but to what extent they can be claimed to subvert traditional gender norms remains questionable. I will discuss the contrast between the idealised positive heroine and the monstrous female characters in more detail in Chapter III.

F3: Zhalmauyz Kempir as punishment or warning for women who transgress gender norms.

Examples of this type of representation include tale #18 and tale #19 in M. Miropiev's *Demonologicheskie rasskazy u kirgizov*. In the former one, a bai grows fed up with his daughters because of their eating habits:

Иртеде бир бай болыпты; ол байдын уш кызы бар экен. Осы уш кыздар тамакты коп жейди экен; сонын ушун бай кыздарын жаман кореди экен. Бир кюни бай кыздарына айтыпты: «шырақтырым! Бюгюн сендер, колдарына шелек алып, тогайдан жемис териндер.» Сойтин колдарына уш тюби тесик шелек берди. Кыздар, иш карсяи оймамай куанып, жемис теремиз деп, тогайга кетипти. Тогайга келип, жемис терип жюргенинде, акеси бутен жакка кошып кетипти. Терген жемистери шелектыни тюрбинен тюрсип калаберипти, аныни ушун олар тогайды коп айналып жюрүпти. Кешке таман кыздар кайтып уйне келсе, уй орнында жок экен.¹⁹⁴

[In the olden times, there lived one rich man. He had three daughters. They ate so much that the rich man did not love them for it. So he decided to get rid of them. 'My darlings,' he said, 'today take a bucket each and go into the woods to pick berries.' But he gave them buckets with holes in the bottoms. The girls did not know that. They took the buckets and went into the woods. They spent a long time there, picking berries. While they were gone, their father moved to a different place. When the girls came back, their home was gone.]

Now homeless, the girls wander until they come upon the house of Zhalmauyz

¹⁹⁴ "Tale #18." Miropiev, "Demonologicheskie rasskazy u kirgizov", pp.35-37. (original spelling and grammar of the source preserved).

Kempir, who captures them and wants to eat them. But the girls trick her and kill both Zhalmauыз Kempir's young daughter and Zhalmauыз Kempir herself. Having escaped the witch, the girls find their home (although it is not clear whether their father accepts them back.)

In Miropiev's tale #19, a young woman is similarly the main protagonist of the fairy tale. She is sexually harassed by a man, and when she repeatedly rejects him, he grows resentful and scared she would complain to her father. Instead, he sends a letter to her father first, with slander that she has taken a lover and is secretly selling off her father's riches. Her father orders the girl's brother to kill her for this crime, but the brother cannot bring himself to do this so he lets her flee. The girl, similar to the heroines of the previous fairy tale, wanders around and finds Zhalmauыз Kempir's house. Zhalmauыз Kempir takes to her kindly, listens to her story and offers to be her mother instead. However, unfortunately for the girl, this is not the happy ending of the fairy tale for her:

Жалмауыз-кемпир, куанып: «сен маган кыз бол, мен соган шеше болаин», деди. Кыз, жаксы деп, осы кемпирдині уйнде бирге тура-берди. Иртені тані аткан соні, кемпир кызга айтты: «балам! менині басымныні битин караше», деп. Кыз басыныні битин караганда, кемпир кыздын тезесинен канын сорып, айтты: «инде болар, иртені кара», деп. Осылайша кыздыні кунде-кунде тезесинен канын сорып, акырында сол кызды олтерипти.¹⁹⁵

[Zhalmauыз Kempir said with joy, 'Be a daughter to me then, and I shall be a mother to you.' The girl agreed, and so started living together with the old woman in her house. The next morning, the old woman said to the girl, 'My child! Please look for lice in my head.' As the girl started looking for lice, Zhalmauыз Kempir drank blood from the girl's knee. Then she said, 'That's enough, you can look for more tomorrow.' And thus she drank blood from the girl's knee every day until she killed her.]

Notably, the three gluttonous daughters and the girl fleeing from her harasser

¹⁹⁵ 'Tale #19.' Miropiev, "Demonologicheskie rasskazy u kirgizov", p.38 (original spelling and grammar of the source preserved).

behave in opposition to acceptable gender roles for women. As discussed above, a gluttonous woman transgresses gender norms as much as a sexually promiscuous one, and this fairy tale expresses the same sentiment. Unwilling to tolerate their gluttony, their father abandons them, and as consequence of their transgression, they come face to face with a personification of voraciousness, barely escaping being eaten alive. In the fairy tale #19, the protagonist is punished for daring to reject a man's advances. In this story, every man in her life wishes her harm (her brother less so, but still, he does not choose to protect her or flee with her), but Zhalmauyz Kempir, the sole other female character, who offers her shelter, is the one who leads to her death. Notably, without the very end where the girl is drained of blood by Zhalmauyz Kempir, the story could be quite subversive: a young woman fleeing from the threat of male violence, rescued by an older woman living alone independently, outside of society. As Michael Dylan Foster writes of *yamamba*, a mountain witch from Japanese folklore similar to Zhalmauyz Kempir in several aspects, "living on the edge of society, in the mountains, she becomes a symbol of the marginalized Other, the outcast, or perhaps someone who has purposefully chosen to live off the grid. As a woman in particular, she comes to represent resistance to patriarchy and hegemonic gender relations."¹⁹⁶ However, such union of women is denounced and vilified since Zhalmauyz Kempir harbours nothing but malicious, murderous intent toward the girl. Here she represents the monstrous-feminine category of lesbian vampire. Deciding to live with Zhalmauyz Kempir outside of the male-dominated society is literally what kills the heroine; the only way the fairy tale presents where she could have survived was to submit to the man who harassed her at the beginning of the story.

¹⁹⁶ Foster, M. D. *The book of yokai: Mysterious creatures of Japanese folklore*. Oakland: University of California Press, 2015, pp. 144-149.

F4: Zhalmauyz Kempir and her female kin.

In the last group of fairy tales is Zhalmauyz Kempir interacts with female characters who are part of her family. In *Three princes*, there are two Zhalmauyz Kempir sisters, and in *Baba Iaga and her brother the prince* there are mother and daughter. Interestingly, in *Zhaiyq and Edil*.¹⁹⁷ Zhalmauyz Kempir lives together with her three sons and their wives, who are Zheztyrnaq. Zhaiyq kills the sons, and Edil kills all three Zheztyrnaq, and Zhalmauyz Kempir eats Zhaiyq in revenge. She wants to do the same to Edil, but loses their battle and is shot in the end. Edil takes all the treasures of Zhalmauyz Kempir for himself and returns to the auyl, but Zhalmauyz Kempir's last remaining daughter comes after Edil's own daughter after three years. However, Edil's daughter prevails and manages to kill Zheztyrnaq. In a different fairy tale, *Baba Iaga and her brother the prince*, Zhalmauyz Kempir pretends to be a young woman so as to marry the khan and give birth to a daughter (when the mother's ruse is exposed and she flees the khan's city, the daughter stays behind and devours half the court, including her father and brothers.) In contrast to Zhaiyq and Edil, Zhalmauyz Kempir's daughter is also a Zhalmauyz Kempir, not a Zheztyrnaq.¹⁹⁸ At the end of the tale, the khan's son kills both of them.

Thus, we find little to no representation of positive female-female relationships within the fairy tales. Bonds between women are broken or meaningless from the start because the priority lies with winning the favour from the male hero, as in *Three sisters*, where the elder sisters grow jealous of their youngest sister winning more love from their shared husband. Where there is positive relationship between mother and

197 Sidel'nikov, *Kazakhskie narodnye skazki*, Volume III, pp.83-86.

198 If in the Kazakh tales, Zhalmauyz Kempir is a singular and unique character, in the Uzbek ones it seems more of a title, that can be passed down or shared (similar to the Russian fairy tales where there are three Baba Iaga sisters.)

daughter, for example, it is brief and insignificant to the plot (again, in *Three sisters*, the youngest sister loves her daughter Künsulu but they do not interact until their reunion at the very end; similarly, no mention is made of the relationship between Künsulu and Aisulu, even as they become sisters-in-law.) But when the narrative does dedicate time to the bonds among female kin, it is between the Zheztynraq sisters, or Zhalmauyz Kempir mother and daughter, who are all monsters that are punished and defeated at the end of the tale. In contrast to this when Zhalmauyz Kempir has a son, she can be either a positive character who survives the end of the fairy tale, helps the hero and receives help from him in return (*Three sisters*), or a negative one (*Er-Töstik, Karazhai*). Notably, regardless of her moral disposition, in these fairy tales, both she and her son are victims of stronger creatures or sorcerers. However, when Zhalmauyz Kempir has daughters, they always stand in categorical opposition to the protagonist, and receive fatal narrative punishment. Additionally, Zhalmauyz Kempir's son's origins are not revealed or questioned by the characters, whereas her daughters are clearly a result of cruel deception.

Reference to the Witch section

Thus, even if marriage and childbirth, being the 'feminine destiny', in the words of Simone de Beauvoir, are the only fields where women see the legitimate opportunity to attain power, female characters who go about it in pro-active ways through seduction are punished and demonised. Only those who do not actively pursue the male hero but rather are found and pursued by him, or are loyal daughters and sisters of the hero, are allowed to be heroic. The bonds between men and women, men and men, and women and women, are all treated differently by the narrative, and by society as well. In this way, the spectrum of Zhalmauyz Kempir's different places in these narratives delineates the borders of normative gender behaviour, as it demonstrates that remaining within

the acceptable role (being of help to the male hero) generates a safe outcome, whereas transgressing these implicit rules leads to fatal narrative punishment. In the next Chapter I explore in more detail which types of female characters are idealised and upheld as standard.

Chapter III.

The idealised heroine.

The presence of binary opposition in folklore has been discussed by many scholars. As previously discussed, Olrik identified the “epic laws” of oral narrative composition in his work *Principles for Oral Narrative Research*. According to Olrik, European folkloric narratives tend to follow, among others, the law of clarity, the law of two to a scene, and the law of contrast. What this means is that folklore tends to schematise or simplify the reality, or in Olrik’s words, “make a limited selection from the real multiplicity of life”: preferring clarity of the narrative over complications and nuance of reality, rarely bringing in more than two characters to a scene, and often establishing a contrast between two characters.¹⁹⁹ The French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss in his influential article ‘The Structural Study of Myth’ wrote that “mythical thought always works from the awareness of oppositions towards their progressive mediation”.²⁰⁰ The American folklorist Alan Dundes noted that binary opposition might be a universal feature of human thought, not confined to (or defining) just mythical narratives, as argued by Lévi-Strauss.²⁰¹

Feminist scholars have also noted the binary present in fairy tale narratives, especially criticising how they work to turn readers into gendered subjects and establish strict gender norms and roles in children’s’ minds. For female characters in the fairy tales there is often a very strict path to happiness. The American feminist

¹⁹⁹ Olrik, *Principles for oral narrative research*, pp.42-43.

²⁰⁰ Lévi-Strauss, Claude. “The Structural Study of Myth”. *The Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. 68, No. 270, Myth: A Symposium (Oct. - Dec.,1955), pp. 428-444, p.440.

²⁰¹ Dundes, Alan. “Binary Opposition in Myth: The Propp/Lévi-Strauss Debate in Retrospect”. *Western Folklore*, Vol. 56, No. 1 (Winter, 1997), pp. 39-50, p.47.

scholar Marcia R. Lieberman in her famous essay “Some Day My Prince Will Come”: Female Acculturation through the Fairy tale’ discussed how for female heroines there is always a strong link established between their good looks and the value the narrative ascribes to them: “descriptions of the beauty of the heroine establish that she is good and gentle and worthy of a reward simply because of her beauty”.²⁰² Lieberman’s article, written in response to the American novelist Allison Lurie’s claim that fairy tales show a society where women are as competent as men, in many ways acted as the foundation of Western feminist fairy tale critique. In terms similar to Lieberman, the American radical feminist writer Andrea Dworkin argued that fairy tales show young women that in order to find happiness they need to be “passive, victimized, destroyed, or asleep.”²⁰³ In line with the law of contrast, the positive heroine of the European fairy tale is positioned in contrast to a negative one—an evil stepmother, a wicked witch. It is angel-woman versus monster-woman, in the words of Gilbert and Gubar: “for the central action of the tale [...] arises from the relationship between these two women: the one fair, young, pale, the other just as fair, but older, fiercer; the one a daughter, the other a mother; the one sweet, ignorant, passive, the other both artful and active; the one a sort of angel, the other an undeniable witch.”²⁰⁴ This strict binary opposition between female characters presents an unattainable ideal and utter condemnation in case of failure with no space for nuance in between.

Moreover, such representation of women is not limited to folklore, as feminist criticism of Madonna-Whore dichotomy in Western media demonstrates.²⁰⁵ The

²⁰² Lieberman, Marcia R. “Some Day My Prince Will Come”: Female Acculturation through the Fairy Tale.” *College English*, Vol. 34, No. 3, Dec. 1972. 383-395, p.385.

²⁰³ Dworkin, Andrea. *Woman Hating*. New York: Penguin Group, 1974, p.49.

²⁰⁴ Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, p.36.

²⁰⁵ Hafiz, Amina. “Women On the Big Screen: Summer blockbusters and Indie flicks: What are they saying about women?” *Off Our Backs* Vol. 35, No. 9/10 (sept-oct 2005), pp. 58-59.

Madonnas are usually the mothers and the true loves of the male protagonist, pure and often dead, who exist to be put on a pedestal by the hero, and/or to inspire him on his journey. The Whores are disposable “eye candy”, someone who the hero might have an affair with, never given their own voice or character arcs. The term itself was coined by Freud to name the phenomenon where his male patients divided women into mutually exclusive categories of women they desired and women they respected. The sexist stereotyping in real life and in media is, of course, a vicious circle that keeps reinforcing itself.

If traditionally binary oppositions were seen as common features of folklore, feminist scholarship strived to demonstrate their harmful implications. The problem with the initial wave of feminist fairy tale criticism was the fact that the fairy tales were not analysed in depth but rather used as examples of mechanism of patriarchal oppression of women.²⁰⁶ Toward the later quarter of the twentieth century, there emerged more nuanced discussions of fairy tales and female socialisation that acknowledged how fairy tales can mirror women’s experiences and encouraged female audiences to engage critically with these stories and to “imagine and construct new identities.”²⁰⁷ The feminist discussion of women’s portrayal in folklore also influenced the publication of collections of fairy tales with unconventional heroines and different or at least ambiguous attitudes toward beauty and passivity, as well as feminist retellings of the more popular ones.

In Kazakh fairy tales the monstrous characters are always opposed by positive heroes. In this chapter, I look at the tales where both a monstrous female character and a virtuous heroine are present, and what these narratives tell us about the images of

²⁰⁶Haase, Donald. *Fairy Tales and Feminism: New Approaches*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2004, p.4.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., p.7.

women. Thus, to limit the focus to oppositions, I only look at fairy tales with monstrous-feminine presence, as opposed to any fairy tale with a positive female character, but I will draw on examples from other fairy tales and genres where appropriate to demonstrate patterns of representation of women. I explore what the images of the idealised heroines tell us about the monstrous ones when placed in contrast to them, and the function they serve within the narrative relating to the dominant gender discourse.

In *Er-Töstik*, Kenzhekei is the hero's bride, the youngest of nine daughters that Ernazar matches for his nine sons. In *Er-Töstik* there are not one, but three monstrous women present: the *peri* Bektory, Zhalmauыз Kempir and Myster Kempir.²⁰⁸ The contrast with Bektory is immediate: Kenzhekei is chosen by *Er-Töstik*'s father, according to traditions, and the narrative is silent on her own thoughts on the arranged marriage. Bektory lusts after *Er-Töstik* the moment she sees him, wanting to separate him from his lawful wife-to-be. The passivity of Kenzhekei in the matter of her marriage to the male hero is directly contrasted to the *peri* actively desiring and pursuing him, which is presented as malicious. Immediately after the wedding Kenzhekei begs her father to give her his best horse, best weaponry and armour, and the best camel that he possesses. Her father is incredibly angry that a woman would make such demands but Kenzhekei objects that they are for her husband *Er-Töstik*, and after that Kenzhekei's father is convinced.

Kenzhekei is said to be the most beautiful and the cleverest of her father's nine daughters. Both her beauty and her intelligence are repeatedly emphasised throughout the fairy tale, which are underlined as the qualities that make her a perfect match for

²⁰⁸ In *Kazakhskie narodnye skazki* edited by Auezov and Anov she is called Metan Kempir which is clearly a distortion/typo of Myster. As in a number of other fairy tales where Myster Kempir is present, she is a fast runner who the hero must race and is defeated by sand being thrown in her face.

the fairy tale's protagonist. Ernazar laments that they did not listen to Kenzhekei's advice about not stopping in Sorqudyq after he has a conversation with her and realises how smart she is (however, that advice initially comes from Kenzhekei's father, and she only repeats it.) Sorqudyq is the place where Ernazar is attacked by Zhalmauyz Kempir and forced to give up Er-Töstik to her.

Kenzhekei is not deceived by Bektory's sweet greeting when the caravan encounters the *peri* on route to Ernazar's auyl. Their exchange is quite telling of the gendered contrast that the fairy tale establishes between them. The *peri* tries to invite Kenzhekei into her hut:

*Сүйген жарың Ер Төстік,
Құтты болсын, Кенжекей!
Мінген де атың Шалқұйрық,
Құтты болсын, Кенжекей!
Артқан да түйең Құба інген,
Құтты болсын, Кенжекей!
Киген де сауытың Ақсырмал,
Құтты болсын, Кенжекей!
Жар басында демесең,
Жарты лашық демесең,
Біздің үйге түсе кет,
Көбікті саумал іше кет.²⁰⁹*

[I congratulate you, Kenzhekei, on your beloved Er-Töstik! I congratulate you, Kenzhekei, on your graceful horse Shalquiryq! I congratulate you, Kenzhekei, on your packed pale-yellow camel! I congratulate you, Kenzhekei, on the chain armour Aqsyrmal you are wearing! If it is not a bother to you, if you are not above entering a poor house like mine,²¹⁰ then come and have some frothy *saumal*.²¹¹]

Kenzhekei sees through Bektory's lies:

*Перінің кызы Бекторы,
Шайпау сөзің қой, Торы.
Сүйген де жарым Ер Төстік,
Өз жарымды сүйемін,*

²⁰⁹Kaskabasov (ed.), *Babalar sözi*, Volume 75, p.15.

²¹⁰ Literal translation: "if you do not think it is at the top of a hill, if you do not think this is half a house".

²¹¹ Fresh *qūmys*-horse milk-that has not yet refermented.

Мінген де атым Шалқұйрық,
Өз атымды мінемін.
Артқан да түйем Құба інген,
Өз түйеме артамын.
Киген де сауытым Ақсырмал,
Өз сауытым киемін,
Жар басында демейін,
Жарты лашық демеймін,
Қайтсең де үйіңе түспеймін,
Бал берсең де ішеймін.
Перінің қызы Бекторы,
Шайпау сөзің қой, Торы!²¹²

[Daughter of Peri, Bektory, stop with your insolent speeches. Yes, I love my beloved Er-Töstik; yes, I saddled my horse Shalquiryq myself; yes, I packed my pale yellow camel myself; yes, the chain armour Aqsyrmal I wear belongs to me; it is not a bother to me, nor do I deem myself above it, but I shall not enter your house, and even if you offered me honey I would refuse. Bektory, daughter of Peri, enough with your insolent speeches!]

Kenzhekei's reply is about establishing her love and loyalty toward her husband but also her rightful ownership over everything that Bektory covets and compliments in her initial speech: riding her own horse, having packed her camel by herself, wearing her own armour—these things belong to Kenzhekei and thus not to Bektory, who is an outsider and is literally left by the wayside as the caravan passes her by. Notable is the word used in the Kazakh version of Kenzhekei's speech, *shaipau*, which means unreserved, insolent and is usually used to refer to a woman. Kenzhekei as the idealised woman, the perfect wife, utterly rejects the monstrous and wicked Bektory. The *peri's* offer of hospitality is also a significant detail, as it is a distortion of a traditional feminine duty in that Bektory wants to use as a ploy to steal Er-Töstik from Kenzhekei.

Kenzhekei is also the one that finds out about Ernazar's deal with Zhalmauyz Kempir, as discussed in previous chapters, and she's also the one who suggests to Er-Töstik to ride Shalquiryq to meet Zhalmauyz instead of any other horse belonging to

²¹² Kaskabasov (ed.), *Babalar sözi*, Volume 75, p.16,

Ernazar. Shalquiryq, of course, proves instrumental in helping Er-Töstik escape Zhalmauyz Kempir and later emerge from the underground realm. Kenzhekei disappears from the narrative once Er-Töstik leaves to confront Zhalmauyz Kempir and subsequently falls to the underground realm for further adventures. Sharing a mental connection with the female camel that she asked of her father for Er-Töstik, Kenzhekei makes a wish that the camel would give birth to a calf on the day Er-Töstik either meets his death or returns home. Similarly, Kenzhekei wraps a shawl around herself, foretelling that the same conditions would make it fall off her waist. In this act, it could be argued Kenzhekei falls into the archetype of a passive fairy tale heroine whose role is to wait for the hero. She binds herself both literally and with a promise and grows very old, alone, waiting for her husband even after everyone else had abandoned hope for Er-Töstik's return. Of course, her loyalty is rewarded when Er-Töstik does return and all three of them (including Shalquiryq) turn young again. At the same time, Kenzhekei does not comfortably fit the Western feminist critique of a completely passive heroine who waits to be saved. Throughout the fairy tale, she performs actions that protect the hero and even drive the story forward. However, even if there are parts where the narrative is dependent on her in order to move forward, such as recognising that Er-Töstik has been promised to Zhalmauyz Kempir and sending him off to get his soul back, all of Kenzhekei's actions are aimed at protecting and supporting Er-Töstik. Therefore, her character only exists in relation to the male protagonist, most evident in the fact that Kenzhekei is absent from the fairy tale when she and Er-Töstik are separated. Moreover, it is interesting that while the narrative tells us that Kenzhekei is clever and resourceful, her role in the fairy tale is to be an intermediary that passes on symbols of powers (the horse, the weapons, the camel) from one male figure to another, and thus the quality that the fairy tale praises in Kenzhekei the highest is her loyalty

and devotion to her husband.

This kind of virtuous loyal wife is an archetype common to Kazakh culture, not confined to only fairy tales (and it exists beyond fictional narratives as a whole, as I will discuss in my conclusion). In fact, the qualities that the positive folklore heroines are imbued with are precisely the same ones that are praised as features of idealised femininity in Kazakh society, including in the modern day. The feminine ideal here is closely and inextricably connected to ethnic identity: it is not just a perfect woman, but an ideal Kazakh woman, *naghyz qazaq qyzy*. In other genres of folklore, she is without fail found in the epos, similarly supporting the batyr hero every step of the way. For example, in *Qobylandy batyr*, one of the main and the largest Kazakh heroic epic narratives, of which there are thirty different versions,²¹³ the titular hero has a wife named Qortqa who is incredibly wise and astute, always giving the right advice to her husband. In a parallel to *Er-Töstik*, she is the one who delivers the hero his loyal horse companion, named Taiburyl in the epos, whom she picks out when it is still within its mother's womb.²¹⁴ Throughout the epos, Qortqa assists her husband with insight and advice, and it is shown he is wise to follow it. There is admiration for Qortqa within the narrative, and in how audience and scholars perceive her. For example, Soviet literary scholar A. S. Orlov wrote about the originality of Qortqa's character: "The clever Qortqa helps her quick-tempered and stubborn husband by caring, protecting and warning him. She is an obedient wife but she is firm in her opinions and advice. [...] Koblandy at first is angered with his wife's objections but then admits the fairness of her advice, praises her for her courage in challenging him and discovers her foretellings to be

²¹³ Tasmaghambetov, I. N., et al. (eds.) *Babalar sözi. Babalar zhyry*. Volume 35. Astana: Foliant., 2006, p.6.

²¹⁴ The connection of the wife and the horse is an interesting one because they almost fulfil the same function. They guide and help the hero on his journey, providing both physical and emotional support. Actually, the hero's horse usually plays a bigger role within the narrative than the wife. For example, in *Er-Töstik*, Kenzhekei is present only at the beginning and end of the fairy tale, and arguably her main role is to connect Er-Töstik and Shalquiryq, who then go on adventure together.

true.”²¹⁵ The scholar of Kazakh culture and mythology Zira Naurzbaieva classifies both Qortqa and Kenzhekei as examples of the archetype of ‘woman-mediator’ (*zhenshchina-mediator*), a wife and mother who possesses the gift of foresight and guides her husband on his heroic journey. According to Naurzbaieva, when the hero succumbs to a false sense of male honour and opposes his wife’s guidance, he ends up failing his task or gets into trouble. These wives prepare their men for the upcoming tests of character and symbolise “not only purpose and meaning of the hero’s journey but also wisdom and foresight.”²¹⁶

However, there is a significant problematic aspect to this female character type. This goes back to the binary dichotomy between the positive and the negative female characters. To my mind, the fact that the hero should always follow his wife’s advice to succeed makes the Kenzhekeis and Qortqas infallible. Indeed, if we look at the common features between these characters, especially in relation to the monstrous women, it is that while their husbands are allowed to make mistakes and fail and get back up on their feet, the loyal wives never are. They always immediately recognise a threat and see through the enemy. Kenzhekei is never fooled by Bektory; similarly, in *Three sisters* Qudaibergen’s bride Aisulu realises that the old woman is Myster Kempir the moment she sees her. Possessing supernatural powers, Aisulu is able to immediately defeat the witch by turning her into a needle and later turn her back before the khan in order to convince him of the malicious elder sisters’ guilt.²¹⁷ Aisulu is positioned in stark contrast to both Qudaibergen’s sister who succumbed to the influence of Myster Kempir and nearly brought doom upon her brother, and of course, the jealous women who used the witch to get rid of their youngest sister. The difference in treatment by the

²¹⁵ Orlov, A. S. *Kazakhskii geroicheskiy epos*. Leningrad: AN SSSR publishing. 1945, p.51.

²¹⁶ Naurzbaieva, Zira. *Vechnoe nebo kazakhov*. Almaty: SaGa, 2013, p.207.

²¹⁷ Auezov and Anov, *Kazakhskie narodnye skazki*, pp.188-190.

narrative of male and female characters who fall prey to monstrous women's manipulation or attack is quite stark. In *Alaman and Zholaman* it is the husband who is fooled by Zhalmauyz Kempir first and invites her into his home, but this is not seen as a failing on his part. Similarly, as argued before, when in *Er-Töstik* Ernazar promises his son to Zhalmauyz Kempir in order to be spared, he is never punished or even confronted about it. Thus, when male characters are victims of the monstrous women, the blame is placed on the latter; when female characters are faced with the same challenge, they are either completely immune to being manipulated and are idealised for this, or succumb to it and receive fatal punishment.

Thus, when we turn to folklore, which is read as part of traditional culture and representative of 'authentic', *naghyz* Kazakh lifestyle, we see exactly the representations of this regulatory framework that are embodied in both monstrous female characters and the virtuous infallible heroines. According to the British feminist scholar Maria Tamboukou who specialises in narrative research using Foucauldian concepts, it is the power relations within society that determine which narratives become possible and which are excluded. The meaning does not necessarily have to be conscious but the storyteller is unable to fully escape the influence of the dominant social and cultural power structures. According to Tamboukou, narratives are more productive than representative, they shape social concepts and relations and constitute realities.²¹⁸ This can be connected with Butler's definition of gender as a "continuous discursive practice, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory framework" that I discussed in the introduction.²¹⁹ The important process that Butler identifies is 'self-naturalisation' of cultural configurations of gender through this practice, and

²¹⁸ Tamboukou, Maria. "A Foucauldian approach to narratives" in Andrews, Molly, et al. *Doing Narrative Research*. Los Angeles: SAGE, 2008.

²¹⁹ Butler. *Gender Trouble*, p.45.

narratives, in line with Tamboukou's argument, possess power to either consolidate or disrupt this process. It is also worth noting that it is not only the idealised female heroine who is always placed in the story in relation to a man, serving as a narrative crutch, but the male protagonist also does not exist without a woman by his side. The hero is always in search of a bride, or rescuing his wife, and, as we have seen, following her wise advice. In fact, Qobylandy batyr's heroic journey always begins with his quest to marry Qortqa. Of course, for the male heroes, they still remain the main characters with full narrative agency; rather, these relationships reproduce traditional hetero-patriarchal structures and maintain established social order, or in Butler's terms, uphold the heterosexual matrix.

A different idealised heroine to the loyal wife is the one from the tales about the Zhezyrnaq. These tales are particularly suitable for this analysis, as they share an interesting similarity where it is the hero's daughter who defeats the last Zhezyrnaq and ensures her family's safety and happiness. In *Zhaiyq and Edil* two years after Edil defeats Zhalmauыз Kempir and takes all of her treasures, his daughter asks for Zhalmauыз Kempir's *sholpy*²²⁰ as her dowry:

— У жалмауыз осталась еще одна дочь, если ты возьмешь шолпы она убьет тебя, — отговаривал отец дочь.

Но девушка настаивала на своем. И Едиль уступил. Тут же наказал он дочери, чтобы в течение двух-трех лет она не спала ночами.

['Zhalmauыз Kempir has one more daughter left, and if you take *sholpy*, she will kill you', the father tried to change his daughter's mind.

But the girl insisted, and Edil conceded. Immediately, he ordered his daughter to not sleep at night for the next two-three years.]²²¹

The girl follows Edil's advice and when Zhalmauыз Kempir's daughter arrives one

²²⁰ Traditional Kazakh piece of jewellery that is worn on a woman's braids. It is believed that the jingle it produces when the woman moves repels evil spirits. Also, the sound is supposed to alert men of a woman's approach.

²²¹ Sidel'nikov, *Kazakhskie narodnye skazki*, Volume III, p.85.

night in her yurt to kill her, she is ready and kills the monster. In *Zheztyrnaq, Peri and Mamai* which follows a very similar plot, the daughter has a name—Bikesh—and there are only two Zheztyrnaq in the story. Her father Mamai kills the female one, and then Bikesh, similarly to Edil's daughter, keeps a vigil at night until the killed Zheztyrnaq's husband comes to kill Mamai. Bikesh cuts his head off with a white axe that initially belonged to the Zheztyrnaq couple and which she demanded from her father instead of *sholpy* like in Zhaiyq and Edil. As this fairy tale is a story within a story, in the framing narrative Mamai expresses a wish Bikesh were his son, and his nine sons were daughters, because she was the one who protected her father and killed Zheztyrnaq, instead of the sons, and the audience agrees it is a very good wish.²²²

In Kazakh language, there is an expression *ер міңезді*, ('of male character'), that can be used to positively describe a woman who is demonstrating conventionally perceived to be masculine qualities such as strong willpower or courage (perhaps symbolised for Bikesh by the fact that she asks for a weapon instead of jewellery as her chosen Zheztyrnaq trophy). Of course, this expression and the fairy tale itself suggest bravery and strength of character are inherently masculine qualities that are present only in rare and remarkable women. Moreover, Bikesh in the fairy tale explains her courageous deed this way:

— Отец, я возвращаю тебе топор, — сказала Бикеш. — Когда я выпрашивала его у вас, я думала, пусть умру одна, а братья мои и отец останутся. Если б вы не отдали мне его, то погибли бы все ваши сыновья, а вы б спаслись. Кому тогда были б нужны?²²³

['Father, I am returning the axe to you,' said Bikesh. 'When I begged you to give it to me, I thought, let me die alone, let my brothers and father be spared. If you had not given it to me, all of your sons would have died, and you would have survived. Who then would care about you?']

²²² Sidel'nikov, *Kazakhskie narodnye skazki*, Volume III, pp.56-62.

²²³ *Ibid.*, p.60.

On one hand, she seems to value her own life as less than that of her male relatives. On the other, it is firmly stated that none of Mamai's sons would have been able to defeat Zheztyrnaq—and also none of them were brave enough to try. Both Bikesh and Edil's daughter are positive female characters who are pro-active and get to save the day, and were personally inspirational to me as a young girl reading these fairy tales. At the same time, it is important to remember they are still not the main characters of their own stories, and are positioned in relation to their male family members and their husbands.

The idealised female heroines therefore illuminate what is wrong and transgressive about the monstrous women who they share the narrative space with. The devoted wife of the hero presents an unattainable and unfair ideal of femininity and propagates the idea that a woman should always exist in relation to a man and devote her strength and energy to support him on his journey, rather than embark on her own. The images of positive female characters are placed in opposition to the images of the monstrous-feminine but they fulfil the same function of regulatory gender framework. Whereas the female monsters transgress outside of it and for that are rendered abject, the idealised heroine remains firmly within the acceptable boundaries, an infallible and unachievable ideal.

Conclusion.

Barbara Creed states that the monstrous-feminine usually says more about male fears than about female desires or female subjectivity.²²⁴ Throughout this study of the monstrous-feminine of Kazakh fairy tale, this statement proves correct. But it is not simply male dread of women or male paranoia about castration, in line with psychoanalytical theories. It is that, too, but more generally, dominant narratives render monstrous and abject that which threatens their power and their legibility. In a patriarchal society, gender is a mechanism of women's oppression, and thus narratives that reproduce and reinforce the traditional discourse of gender push out the undesirable, the unacceptable, the transgressive beyond the boundaries of societal norms and standards to separate the subject from the abject. Thus, female power, female agency, female independence, female sexuality, especially lesbian sexuality, emerge in forms of the monstrous-feminine as the witch, the female castrator, the lesbian vampire. In future studies, more fairy tales could be studied to add to the analysis, or the genre scope could be extended, or a more comparative cross-cultural framework could be developed—but in this thesis I demonstrate that the monstrous-feminine of Kazakh fairy tale delineates borders of acceptable womanhood. Looking at representations of idealised heroines in the last chapter only further illuminates the limits of the acceptable gender behaviours, which are, of course, extremely narrow. The idealised heroine is not a real person with her own needs and desires, instead only existing to prop up and support the male protagonist. She is beautiful, talented, intelligent, wise—also stubborn and unafraid to speak her mind which is not an issue when she is always necessarily correct in her observations and predictions. Above all,

²²⁴ Creed, *The Monstrous-Feminine*, p.7.

she is loyal and devotes her entire self to her husband, with her sole purpose being keeping him alive and doing everything necessary for him to commit his heroic deeds.

As stories are influenced by the power structures of the society within which they are told, they often recreate these norms and roles, making them part of the literary tradition and the cultural fabric of that society. In the case of Kazakhstan, we can see that the ideal wife is an archetype that exists outside of folklore and is upheld as the idealised example of femininity and womanhood for Kazakh women. The loyal, wise, graceful wife who wants nothing for herself is in direct opposition to the treacherous, devious and voracious monstrous female characters who represent transgressive gender behaviour. This idealised female image extends well beyond folkloric narratives into Kazakh women's real lives. For example, a recent trend in Kazakhstan are schools and 'academies' that are designed to teach girls and women how to be ideal wives. One such organisation that made the news sets out to teach how to be "loyal wives, caring mothers, good housekeepers and interesting conversationalists."²²⁵ The founder of the school cites she was motivated to start this project because of the rising rate of divorce in Kazakhstan and thus she felt there was need to instruct women on how to please their husbands better in order to preserve relationships.

This is not the only such establishment: *Qazaq Qyzy* is a self-described 'institute of cultural and moral development' ('*institut kul'turno-nravstvennogo vospitaniia*') that opened in Astana two years ago makes its mission to bring up proper Kazakh girls. As the public relations director of the institute said in an interview, "We need to imbue our little girls with love for labour and love for their own culture from early years. Our mission is propaganda of Kazakh traditions, we want to shape the image of a Kazakh

²²⁵ Khrabrykh, Olga. "Legion blagorodnykh devits. V Almaty raspakhnula dveri shkola kelinok-ideal'nykh zhen." *CentrAzia*, № 26 (17626), February 13, 2013.
<<http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1360734300>>

girl. [...] Our task is to bring up real Qazaq qyzy—with strong willpower, rich with the wisdom of the Kazakh steppe, successful, educated, sophisticated, elegant, proud, resourceful and feminine.”²²⁶ The comparison with the ideal wife of the fairy tales and epics is impossible not to make. The institute, beyond teaching drawing, dancing, etiquette classes and so on, has such disciplines as ‘Kazakh moral norms and principles’, ‘Customs and traditions in a Kazakh family’, and ‘Philosophy of motherhood’. What makes it even more evident that this kind of idealised feminine image is part of the dominant narrative in Kazakh society is the fact that the project has official endorsement from the National Committee for Women’s Issues and Family and Demographic Policies affiliated with the Nur Otan Party and the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The official website (www.kazkyz.kz) lists Kazakh National University of Arts, Eurasian National University named after L. Gumilev and the National Museum of the History of Kazakhstan as the organisation’s partners, as well as boasts a visit from Kazakhstan’s State Secretary. The negativity in public response, as seen in, for example, the comment section under an article in the popular media outlet *Vox Populi*, is largely to do not with the concept of idealised Kazakh-feminine itself, but rather the need for separate institutions to maintain it, when it should be developed naturally within families, passing down from mother to daughter.²²⁷

Notably, it is a trend that scholars have noticed in other Central Asian countries as well, where post-independence reassessment of relationship with the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union led to consequent reassessment of the transformation of gender roles that underwent in the previous time periods. The process of ‘national revival’ and

²²⁶ Usupova, Aidana. “Institut npravstvennogo vospitaniia Qazaq Qyzy poiavilsia v Astane”. *Tengri News*, August 28, 2014. <http://tengrinews.kz/strange_news/institut-npravstvennogo-vospitaniya-kazak-kyzyi-poyavilsya-260860>

²²⁷ Okasov, Danial, and Rakhim, Rus. “Qalai naghyz Qazaq qyzy bolugha bolady?” *Vox Populi*, October 6, 2014. <<http://www.voxpopuli.kz/kz/main/2283-qalay-naghyz-qazaq-qyzy-bolugha-bolady.html#comments>>

search for authenticity in Central Asian states are in many ways dependent on women filling traditional gender roles.²²⁸ This is evident in the absence of schools to teach men how to be real Kazakh men and proper husbands, and also things like the different ways in which society reacts to Kazakh men who marry foreign women and Kazakh women who choose to marry foreign men. Thus, nation-building and national consciousness become part of the framework that regulates gender norms and relations.

I believe it is important to critically approach these traditional values that uphold a rigid patriarchal framework of binary oppositional gender and heteronormativity, not just in academic scholarship, but also in fictional narratives. Kristeva says before the abject becomes abject there is a small chance of it being accepted as part of the new norm, and Judith Butler encourages to cause gender trouble to shake the foundations of the regulatory gender framework until it loses both legibility and credibility. Culture plays a significant role in the process of consolidating what is normal and what is abnormal. Stories we tell and are told reflect and build the world around us. This is where I think the monstrous-feminine could actually be used to subvert existing tropes and challenge dominant power structures. June Pulliam in her book *Monstrous Bodies: Feminine Power in Young Adult Horror Fiction* writes that female-oriented and female-produced genre fiction in the West is becoming a fruitful platform for compelling narratives that refuse to either demonise their female characters for independence, or idealise them, instead embracing elements of the monstrous, and allowing female character moral complexity.²²⁹ I hope to one day see tales where Zhalmauыз Kempir shelters girls fleeing from male violence and enacts vengeance upon their abusers, where a hunter's daughter and Zheztyrnaq fall in love, and Kazakh women can be

²²⁸ Racioppi, Linda, and Katherine O. S. See. *Gender Politics in Post-Communist Eurasia*. East Lansing, Mich: Michigan State University Press, 2009, p.3.

²²⁹ Pulliam, June M. *Monstrous Bodies: Feminine Power in Young Adult Horror Fiction*. Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Inc, 2014.

complex heroines of their own stories across all genres.

Appendix.

Summaries of the fairy tales.²³⁰

Alaman men Zholaman (Alaman and Zholaman) - M1, F1

First published in *Kazakh folk tales* (recorded from Mahmud Uralov from auyl #3 of the Turgaiskii uezd Cherpalskoi volosti.)²³¹

Alaman is married to beautiful Karashash and they have two children, a son and a daughter. One day a hair from Karashash's head falls into the river and flows down the stream until a khan spots it. He decided that if one hair is so beautiful, then the woman must be of unimaginable beauty, and so he hires one-eyed Zhalmauыз Kempir (in this version, named Baba Iaga) to find this woman. Zhalmauыз Kempir pretends to be an elderly and decrepit human woman, to gain Alaman's trust. The batyr's horse is afraid and distrustful of her, but she manages to deceive the protagonists. Having gained access to their household, she persuades Alaman's wife to leave him and marry Soltan instead. Even though both Alaman and his wife fall prey to Zhalmauыз Kempir's manipulations, the narrative is understanding of Alaman who acts out of kindness and respect for old women, but unforgiving of the wife's disloyalty. As Alaman lies tied and helpless he asks his daughter to bring him his favourite dagger so that he would be set free. The daughter refuses, having understood that her father is now Soltan and she should not disobey her mother's orders. Alaman then asks his son, who complies and brings the dagger. Alaman sets himself free and orders his wife and daughter to be killed for treason. After this, Alaman marries again and lives with his new wife and son Zholaman. Zhalmauыз Kempir turns into a toddler and lies on the road, to fool Alaman

²³⁰ I am also including information on where, when and from whom the tale was recorded in cases where I managed to find such information.

²³¹ Auezov and Anov, *Kazakhskie narodnye skazki*, pp.233-236.

and get his dagger. Alaman and Zholaman's horses are afraid of the baby, but Alaman still takes it home. After a few days, the baby and the dagger disappear. Alaman's new wife realises it was Zhalmauyz Kempir and advises him to flee into the mountains. Zhalmauyz Kempir rides a camel to catch Alaman. Zholaman sets out to rescue his father, instructed by his stepmother on how to defeat Zhalmauyz Kempir: she can be killed only by being stabbed in her eye, and only once (if stabbed twice, she comes back to life.) Zholaman does as told, and returns home with his father to live in happiness and prosperity.

Er-Töstik - M1

First published in Russian translation (translated from the Kazakh language manuscript of the Institut Iazyka i literatury Akademii Nauk KazSSR, presently Institut literatury i iskusstva im. M.O.Auezova) in 1952 in *Kazakhskie narodnye skazki (Kazakh folk tales.)*²³²

Neither in the 1952 version edited by Auezov and Anov, nor in the 1971 one edited by Sidel'nikov, is Zhalmauyz Kempir actually named Zhalmauyz Kempir in the Russian text, but rather 'Baba Iaga'. She does the bidding of Bektory, a *peri*. She deceives Ernazar, the hero's father, by pretending to be a helpless old woman sitting under a tree, then starts choking him the moment he gets too close until Ernazar finally promises to give her Er-Töstik in exchange for his life (notably, Ernazar's cowardice is not punished by the narrative.) Kenzhekei, Er-Töstik's bride, hears of this and tells Er-Töstik to be rid of Zhalmauyz Kempir, and only then can they be wed. Er-Töstik uses the help of his horse, Shalquiryq, to distract Zhalmauyz Kempir and get his whetstone back. Zhalmauyz Kempir hisses like a snake, and runs as swiftly as the fastest horse in pursuit

²³² Auezov and Anov, *Kazakhskie narodnye skazki*. pp. 270-295.

of Er-Töstik. As they are trying to get away from her, the ground cracks beneath them and they fall into the underworld. While Er-Töstik adventures in the underworld, Bektory suffocates Zhalmauyz Kempir, angry at her failing to catch Er-Töstik, and sends her son Shoin-Qulaq after him. Myster-Kempir is present in this fairy tale as a separate character who competes with Er-Töstik and his friends in a race.

*Ialmauyz Kempir and her brother the prince (Baba-Iaga i brat ieia tsarevich.)*²³³ –
M1, F4

Recorded by I. A. Mitropolskii in Taskhkent, from an Uzbek shoemaker.

A ruler of one city grew bored with his old wife and took a new wife, young and beautiful. He also wanted for his favourite mare to give birth to foals but somebody kept snatching the new born foals away. He ordered his three sons from his first wife to keep guard at night. The eldest and the middle one fell asleep and did not see when Zhalmauyz Kempir came to eat the foals. The youngest cut his finger and poured salt over the wound so as not to fall asleep, so when Zhalmauyz Kempir came, he was fully awake. He managed to cut off her finger before she got away. The next day the tsar's young wife gave birth to a girl and disappeared, after which the youngest prince noticed his half-sister missed a pinky. He realised she was a daughter of Zhalmauyz Kempir—his stepmother. Nobody believed him and thus he left his father's palace and went travelling. When he finally returned, the young Zhalmauyz Kempir has eaten the entire court. She wants to eat him, too, so he runs. As she chases him, he uses three magical artefacts he found in his travels and manages to defeat her. Then he takes a bride and lives happily.

²³³ Ostroumov, *Skazki sartov v russkom izlozhenii*, pp.11-18.

Qarauirek.²³⁴ – M1, F3

The girl Sarqyt is adopted by Qarauirek and his friends as a sister. They began to live together, the men hunting, and Sarqyt staying behind in their hut. Once they brought her a cat to keep her company. Sarqyt always shared her food with the cat but once she woke up so hungry she ate the food by herself. When the cat came and found out, she grew angry and put out the fire in their hearth. Sarqyt sets out to find her brothers to borrow their flint. As she wanders, she comes across the fire of Zhalmauыз Kempir. Sarqyt asks for some fire, but Zhalmauыз Kempir will only give it to her if the girl allows the hag to suck the toe on Sarqyt's foot. Sarqyt was terrified but agreed. As Zhalmauыз Kempir sucked her toe, Sarqyt grew pale as milk. Zhalmauыз Kempir gave ashes to Sarqyt and taught her how to make them a fire. She said if Sarqyt told Qarauirek about any of it, she would swallow Sarqyt whole. After this Zhalmauыз Kempir started coming to the hut when Sarqyt's brothers were away to suck on Sarqyt's toe. The girl grew very thin and weak. Eventually, the brothers found out and taught her how to trick Zhalmauыз Kempir. Together, they caught her, and begging for her life, Zhalmauыз Kempir promised to fulfil their wishes. The friends wished for the blind one to see again, the one who had no legs, could walk, and Sarqyt became a real beauty. Zhalmauыз Kempir swallowed and spat out each and every one of them, fulfilling their wishes. Only when she swallowed Qarauirek she refused to spit him back out, and so his friends chopped Zhalmauыз Kempir's head off and cut her to pieces until they found Qarauirek.

Tale #17 collected by Miropiev (told by Iunus Kulbaev, date and location of

²³⁴ Syzdykova, D. *Kazakhsnie volshebnyie skazki*, Alma-Ata: Zhazushy, 1989, pp.87-93.

collection not recorded).²³⁵ – M1

One rich man had three sons, and he loved his youngest the most. Once he went to the lake to water horses and saw a lung floating on the surface of the lake. The lung began to inflate and then turned into Zhalmauыз Kempir who caught the man by his beard and would not let go. No matter how he begged she would not let him go until he promised his youngest son to her. Zhalmauыз Kempir told him to leave his son's golden cue ball when the auyl moves to a different place, and so he did just that. His son went to look for his toy and came across Zhalmauыз Kempir. Zhalmauыз Kempir pulled out her tooth and turned it into an axe and chased the boy. She chopped off his horse's leg but the horse kept running. Then she pulled out another tooth and cut off another leg. The boy climbed a tree to hide from Zhalmauыз Kempir but she used to axe to start cutting the tree down. The boy then asked a goose to call his dogs for help. The dogs came running and killed Zhalmauыз Kempir. The boy safely returned home. Zhalmauыз Kempir wanted to capture him because she eats human flesh and wanted to devour him.

Tale #18 collected by Miropiev (told by Izmail Kusubaev, date and location of collection not recorded)²³⁶ – F3

A rich man grew tired of his three gluttonous daughters, so he sent them into the woods to pick berries and abandoned them, moving to a different place. The girls came back and found their home was gone. They took a mirror, a comb and a needle from the place where their yurt once stood and went to look for their parents. As they wandered, they came upon Zhalmauыз Kempir's house. Inside, they found a little girl who was

²³⁵ Miropiev, "Demonologicheskie rasskazy u kirgizov", pp.33-35.

²³⁶ Miropiev, "Demonologicheskie rasskazy u kirgizov", pp.35-37.

Zhalmauыз Kempir's daughter. They were scared of Zhalmauыз Kempir but still they stayed until the evening when she came home. Having found the three girls in her house, Zhalmauыз Kempir was filled with joy and decided to eat them. The next morning, as she was leaving, she said to the eldest daughter: 'Cook the youngest one for me', and left. The girls grabbed Zhalmauыз Kempir's daughter, threw her into the cauldron, and ran away. When Zhalmauыз Kempir came home she ate everything from the cauldron until there was only a head left, and that was when she realized she'd eaten her own daughter. Furious, she chased after the sisters. One of them threw the comb behind them, and from it a forest grew, the other threw back the needle, and it became high mountains. Zhalmauыз Kempir overcame both of these obstacles, but when the youngest sister threw the mirror, and it became a lake, Zhalmauыз Kempir could not cross it. She shouted out to the sisters, and they told her they swam across it with stones tied to their necks. Zhalmauыз Kempir did so, and drowned. The girls returned to their parents.

Tale #19 collected by Miropiev (told by Izmail Kasymov, date and location of collection not recorded).²³⁷ - F3

A rich merchant, who had a son and a daughter, went to trade to a foreign country and left his stall for one young man to look after. This young man grew infatuated with the merchant's daughter and harassed her relentlessly. She rejected his advances and threatened to write to her father about this. Scared by this threat, the young man wrote a slanderous letter to her father as if the girl took a lover and was secretly selling off her father's riches. Having learnt of this, the merchant wrote to his son and ordered him to kill his own sister for this. The brother could not bring himself to do this and let her run

²³⁷ Miropiev, "Demonologicheskie rasskazy u kirgizov", pp.37-38.

away. As the girl fled, she came across Zhalmauыз Kempir's house, who took her in and offered to be a mother to her. The girl agreed and started living with the old woman. Zhalmauыз Kempir everyday asked the girl to search for lice in her hair, and whilst she did that, Zhalmauыз Kempir drank blood from the girl's knee until she finally killed her.

Three sisters.²³⁸ - M2, F1

Recorded in auyl #1 Burtinskoi volosti Iletskego uezda Turgaiskoi oblasti, first published in Russian and Kazakh in the newspaper *Orenburgskii listok* in 1894 (vol.39-40), and later in V. N. Vasil'iev's collection (vol.1).²³⁹

There are two supernatural old women in this fairy tale: Zhalmauыз Kempir, translated in a footnote as 'Baba Iaga', and an unnamed witch (most likely Myster Kempir in Kazakh language version – unconfirmed.)

The khan's son comes across three beautiful sisters, and takes all of them as wives. The youngest sister gives birth to a son with golden hair and a daughter with silver, which makes the two older sisters incredibly jealous and anxious that she will now become the khan's favourite wife. They conspire with a witch who hides the twins in a chest and throws it into the river, replacing them with dog pups beside the youngest sister. Thinking that she bore him dogs instead of beautiful children as she had promised, the khan banishes the youngest sister. The twins are found and adopted by an old couple and are named Qudaibergen and Künsulu. Having grown up, Qudaibergen crosses paths with his birth father, but neither recognise each other. Khan is distraught that Qudaibergen is better at hunting than him, and thus his two wives

²³⁸ Auevov and Anov, *Kazakhskie narodnye skazki*, pp.178-190.

²³⁹ Auevov and Anov (ibid.) name these sources as the first places where *Three sisters* was published, but unfortunately, Rossiiskaia natsional'naia biblioteka lost their copy of the first volume of Vasil'iev's collection, and Gosudarstvennii arkhiv Orenburgskoi oblasti lost the pages of volumes 39-40 of *Orenburgskii listok* where the fairy tale was published.

involve the witch again to get rid of Qudaibergen. The witch gains Künsulu's trust and manipulates her into asking her brother for magical artifacts. As Qudaibergen searches for them, he comes across a shabby yurt where Zhalmauyz Kempir lives. Qudaibergen asks her to give him food and drink. She does so and then proceeds to give advice on how to acquire the artifacts that his sister asked for. First, he brings an oak from the 'demonic land' that borders Zhalmauyz Kempir's territory. Secondly, he defeats the dragon Aidakhar and saves the magic bird Samrukh's chicks, who in return flies him to the mountains to get the second artifact. Thirdly, the witch plants inside Künsulu's mind the wish for a sister-in-law, so Zhalmauyz Kempir instructs Qudaibergen how to ask sorcerer Tasshylyar for his daughter. She also requests that should Qudaibergen succeed, to ask Tasshylyar to lift the spell from Zhalmauyz Kempir's son. However, Tasshylyar turns Qudaibergen to stone. Aisulu, Tasshylyar's daughter, dwells underwater and is the pupil of Qudaibergen's adoptive deceased father. Aisulu's teacher demands Tasshylyar to release Qudaibergen, or he will harass Aisulu in her studies. Tasshylyar complies, and Qudaibergen leaves with Aisulu and Zhalmauyz Kempir's son, who is a giant. The fourth time the sisters try to get rid of Qudaibergen, Aisulu turns the witch into a needle the moment she steps into their yurt. Finally, the khan's viziers advise him to befriend Qudaibergen if he cannot seem to kill him. As the khan visits Qudaibergen, he looks into one of the acquired magical artefacts, a mirror, and sees his youngest wife alone in the desert with two dogs. The khan sends for her to be brought back to the palace, and as everyone sits down for a meal, Aisulu reveals the meat has been poisoned by the elder sisters. Then she turns the witch back into herself to testify against the sisters. By the khan's order, the witch is burned, while the two sisters are tied to forty mares' tails and torn limb from limb. Khan is reunited with his beloved wife and their children.

*Zhaiyq and Edil*²⁴⁰ - M1, F2, F4

Zhaiyq and Edil were two brothers and hunters. Once they were hunting in the forest and Zhaiyq stumbled upon the dwelling of Zhalmauyz Kempir. He was warned by her voice to get out of her house, but Zhaiyq did not listen and instead acted insolently. He told about it to Edil but when they went back to the place together, the hut was gone. Thus, Edil decided his brother lied to him. They started hunting separately. In the evening, Edil sat down by his fire when suddenly out of the woods a figure approached and sat down next to him. Edil gave a piece of meat to the stranger, and later that night before he went to bed, he put down a wooden log, covered it with his clothes, and hid in the trees. When his fire died, the figure from the woods returned and attacked the wooden log. Edil shot from his gun and killed the creature. When he looked at it he saw copper claws and realized it was Zheztyrnaq. Edil cut off its hands, and spent two more days in the woods, killing two more Zheztyrnaq. After this Edil asked help from a man named Qara to search for his brother and eventually they found a white yurt. When they entered, they saw Zhalmauyz Kempir inside, breastfeeding a child. She told them Edil killed three of her Zheztyrnaq daughters, and Zhaiyq killed three of her sons. She has already eaten Zhaiyq and now she would eat Edil and Qara. Edil struggled with Zhalmauyz Kempir all night and finally managed to kill her. He took all of her treasures for himself. Some years passed, and Edil's daughter was to be married. She asked for Zhalmauyz Kempir's sholpy as her dowry. Reluctant, Edil gave it to her, warning her that now the daughter of Zhalmauyz Kempir would come for her. Edil's daughter did not sleep for several years, waiting every night for Zheztyrnaq to come. One night, she did, and the girl was ready and chopped her head off. Thus, the last daughter of Zhalmauyz Kempir was killed.

²⁴⁰ Sidel'nikov, *Kazakhskie narodnye skazki*, volume III, pp.83-86.

*Zhanadil*²⁴¹ - M1

Zhanadil is a brave man who refuses to give away his beautiful sister to marry the khan, even though she wants to. The sister and the khan, with a help of an old woman pretending to be a healer, conspire to send Zhanadil on a quest for 'angelic water' so he would encounter Zhalmauыз Kempir and not return. When Zhanadil comes upon the house of Zhalmauыз Kempir, described as *strashnaia zhenschina* (terrifying, ugly woman), she cooks *quyrdaq* from a human in a cauldron with forty eyelets. Upon sighting Zhanadil, she immediately wants to capture him and throw him in the cauldron, but Zhanadil runs circles around it until Zhalmauыз Kempir's head starts to spin and she falls down. Zhanadil burns her in the fire, frees her captives and shares Zhalmauыз Kempir's riches evenly among everyone. Following one of the freed men's guidance, Zhanadil finds the angelic water and returns home, only to find the khan had married his sister and made Zhanadil's wife his slave. Zhanadil frees his wife, kills both the khan (not specified how) and his sister (ties her to forty horses' tails to be torn into forty pieces.)

²⁴¹ 'Zhanadil.' Sidel'nikov, *Kazakhskie narodnye skazki*, volume III, pp. 10-11.

Bibliography.

- 'Alaman men Zholaman (Alaman and Zholaman)'. Auezov, M., and Anov, N. (eds) *Kazakhskie narodnyie skazki*. Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatelstvo hudozhestvennoi literatury, 1952, pp.233-236.
- Almukhanova, R.T. "Zhalmauyz Kempir i antichnyie obrazy". *Naukova mysl informatsyjnego wieku –2009*». *Materiały IV międzynarodowej naukowo-praktycznej konferencji*. Volume 11. Filologiczne nauki. Przemyśl, Nauka studia. 07-15 marca 2009 roku, 2009, pp.31-35 (Published in English under title 'Umair and antique images').
- Auezov, M., and Anov, N. (eds) *Kazakhskie narodnyie skazki*. Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatelstvo hudozhestvennoi literatury, 1952.
- 'Baba-laga i brat ieia tsarevich (Baba Iaga [Ialmauyz Kempir] and her brother the prince.) Ostroumov, N. P. *Skazki sartov v russkom izlozhenii*. Tashkent: Tipografiia Okruzhnogo Shtaba, 1906, pp.11-18.
- Barstow, Anne Llewellyn. *Witchcraze: A New History of the European Witch Hunts*. London: Pandora, 1994.
- Batunskii, M. A. *Rossiiia i Islam*. (Vol. II) Moscow: Progress-Traditsiia, 2003.
- Batylrlar turaly ertegiler*. Almaty: Aruna baspasy, 2015.
- Bazykhanov, Samat, and Zholdasov, Erkebulan, dirs. *Fuga: Doroga v Nikuda*. Ansar Plus and I Media Group. 2014.
- Beiseev, A. A. *Kazakhskie skazki o zhivotnykh*. Almaty, 2004.
- Bettelheim, Bruno. *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*. New York: Knopf, 1976.
- Blazina, Christopher, and Watkins Jr, C. Edward. "Separation/individuation, parental attachment, and male gender role conflict: Attitudes toward the feminine and the fragile masculine self." *Psychology of Men & Masculinity*, Vol 1(2), Jul 2000, pp.126-132.
- Bogan, Elivan. *Poteriannaia kniga zaklinanii: Vossoedinenie*. Almaty. 2008.
- Bůčková, Martina, "Variations Of Myths Concerning The Origin Of Fire In Eastern Polynesia". *Asian And African Studies*, 2009, 2, pp.324-343.
- Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge, 1999.
- Carter, Angela. *The Sadeian Woman: And the Ideology of Pornography*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1978.
- Covino, Deborah C. *Amending the Abject Body: Aesthetic Makeovers in Medicine and*

- Culture*. New York: State University of New York Press, 2004.
- Creed, Barbara. "Horror and the Monstrous-Feminine: An Imaginary Abjection". *Screen*, 1986, 27 (1). Pp.44-71.
- Creed, Barbara. *The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis*. London: Routledge, 1993.
- Daly, Mary. *Gyn/ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1978.
- De Beauvoir, Simone. *The second sex*. New York: Knopf, 1953.
- Dennis, A. "The Spectacle of Her Gluttony: The Performance of Female Appetite and the Bakhtinian Grotesque in Angela Carter's "Nights at the Circus", *Journal of Modern Literature*, Vol. 31, No. 4 (Summer, 2008), pp. 116-130.
- DeWeese, D. A. *Islamization and native religion in the Golden Horde: Baba Tükles and conversion to Islam in historical and epic tradition*. University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994.
- Divaiev, A. A. *Etnograficheskie materialy. Legendy, byliny, demonologicheskie rasskazy, primety, poslovitsy i skazki tuzemnogo naseleniia Syr-Dar'inskoi oblasti. Vypusk V*. Tashkent: Tipo-litografiia torgovogo doma "F. i G. Br. Kamenskie", 1896. (Otdel'nie ottiski iz Sborniki materialov dlia statistiki Syr-Dar'inskoi oblasti).
- Divaiev, A. A. *Etnograficheskie materialy. 1. Kirgizskoe prichitanie po pokoinike. 2. Dzhez-Tyrna (etnograficheskii nabrosok). Vypusk IX*. Tashkent: Tipo-Litografiia V.M. Il'ina. 1903. (Otdel'nie ottisi iz Sbornika materialov dlia statistiki Syr-Dar'inskoi oblasti, tom XI, 1904).
- Dundes, Alan. "Binary Opposition in Myth: The Propp/Lévi-Strauss Debate in Retrospect". *Western Folklore*, Vol. 56, No. 1 (Winter, 1997), pp. 39-50.
- Dundes, Alan. "The Motif-Index and the Tale Type Index: A Critique". *Journal of Folklore Research*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (Sep. - Dec., 1997), pp. 195-202.
- Dworkin, Andrea. *Woman Hating*. New York: Penguin Group, 1974.
- Engels, Friedrich, and Eleanor B. Leacock. *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State, in the Light of the Researches of Lewis H. Morgan*. New York: International Publishers, 1972.
- Erlık Erteğileri*. Almaty: Aruna baspasy, 2015.
- 'Er-Töstik'. Auezov, M., and Anov, N. (eds) *Kazakhskie narodnyie skazki*. Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatelstvo hudozhestvennoi literatury, 1952, pp. 270-295.
- Esimkhanov, Erzhan. *Voina*. Almaty: Daik-Press. 2010.
- Evans-Pritchard, E. E. *Witchcraft, oracles and magic among the Azande*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1937.
- Foster, M. D. *The book of yokai: Mysterious creatures of Japanese folklore*. Oakland:

- University of California Press, 2015.
- Gilbert, S. M., and Gubar, S. *The madwoman in the attic: The woman writer and the nineteenth-century literary imagination*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979.
- Haase, Donald. *Fairy Tales and Feminism: New Approaches*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2004.
- Hafiz, Amina. "Women On the Big Screen: Summer blockbusters and Indie flicks: What are they saying about women?" *Off Our Backs* Vol. 35, No. 9/10 (sept-oct 2005), pp. 58-59.
- Hatto, Arthur T. "On some Siberian and other copper-crones." *Suomalais-Ugrilaisen Aikakauskirja Journal de la Société finno-ougrienne*. Vol. 85 (1994).
- Hufford, David. *The Terror That Comes in the Night: An Experience-Centered Study of Supernatural Assault Traditions*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982.
- Infant'ev, P. P. *Etnograficheskie rasskazy iz zhizni tatar, kirgizov, kalmykov, bashkir, vogulov i samoedov*. Saint Petersburg: Izdanie AF Devriena, 1909.
- Iskakova, Z. Sh. *Kazakhskai bogatyrskai skazka*. Almaty: Institut literatury i iskusstva im. M. Auezova, 1995.
- Johns, Andreas. "Baba Iaga and the Russian Mother". *The Slavic and East European Journal*, 1998, Vol. 42, No. 1, pp. 21-36.
- 'Karazhai'. Sidel'nikov, V. M., (ed.) *Kazakhskie narodnye skazki v trëkh tomakh*. Voume III. Alma-Ata: Zhazushy, 1971. pp.48-50.
- Kaskabasov, S. A., *Kazakhskai volshebnaia skazka*. Alma-Ata, 1972.
- Kaskabasov, S., et al. (eds.) *Babalar sözi. Zhüz tomdyq. Volume 75. Batyrlyq ertegiler*. Astana: Foliant, 2011.
- Khalid, Adeeb. "Russian History and the Debate over Orientalism". *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 1.4 (2000): pp.691-699.
- Khan, S. *Liudi Zemli: Nasledie Adiomy*. Bishkek: Raritet. 2011.
- Khrabrykh, Olga. "Legion blagorodnykh devits. V Almaty raspakhnula dveri shkola kelinok-ideal'nykh zhen." *CentrAziia*, № 26 (17626), February 13, 2013. <http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1360734300>
- 'Krasavitsa Malkhuan. (Malkhuan the Beauty.)' Sidel'nikov, V. M., (ed.) *Kazakhskie narodnye skazki v trëkh tomakh*. Alma-Ata: Zhazushy, 1971zki, Volume III, pp.155-164.
- Kristeva, Julia. *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. Trans. Leon S. Roudiez. New York: Columbia University Press, 1982. Trans. of *Pouvoirs de l'horreur*. Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1980.
- Kulakhmetov, Tursun, dir. *Liubov'-Zlo*. DJ Tur'Sound Production. 2011.

- Lederer, Wolfgang. *The Fear of Women*. New York: Grune & Stratton, 1968.
- Lévi-Strauss, Claude. "The Structural Study of Myth". *The Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. 68, No. 270, Myth: A Symposium (Oct. - Dec.,1955), pp. 428-444.
- Lieberman, Marcia R. "'Some Day My Prince Will Come': Female Acculturation through the Fairy Tale." *College English*, Vol. 34, No. 3, Dec. 1972. 383-395.
- Makeev, Leonid. (ed.) *Kazakhskie i uighurskie skazki. Perevody i literaturnie varianty*. Alma-Ata: Kazakhskoe ob'edinennoe gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1949.
- Miropiiev, M. "Demonologicheskie rasskazy u kirgizov". *Zapiski IRGO po otdeleniiu etnografii*. T.10, vyp.3, Spb, 1888.
- Mogil'ner, Marina. *Homo Imperii: A History of Physical Anthropology in Russia*. Lincoln: UNP - Nebraska, 2013.
- Morrison, Alexander. "'Applied Orientalism' in British India and Tsarist Turkestan". *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 51, No. 3, 2009. pp. 619-647.
- Morrison, Alexander. "Russian Rule in Turkestan and the Example of British India, C. 1860-1917". *The Slavonic and East European Review*, 84.4, 2006, pp. 666-707.
- Naumova, O.B. "Kazakhskii baksy: istoriia odnoi fotografii. (Publikatsiia materialov F.A. Fiel'strupa po kazakhskomu shamanstvu)". *Etnograficheskoe obozrenie*, 6, 2006, pp.77-85.
- Naurzbaieva, Zira. *Vechnoe nebo kazahov*. Almaty: SaGa, 2013.
- Okasov, Danial, and Rakhim, Rus. "Qalai naghyz Qazaq qyzy bolugha bolady?" *Vox Populi*, October 6, 2014. <http://www.voxpopuli.kz/kz/main/2283-qalay-naghyz-qazaq-qyzy-bolugha-bolady.html#comments>
- Olbrich, Suze. "Christine and the Queens on Alter-Egos and Ambition". *AnOther Magazine*. February 23, 2016. < <http://www.anothermag.com/design-living/8405/christine-and-the-queens-on-alter-egos-and-ambition> >
- Olrik, Axel. *Principles for Oral Narrative Research*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992.
- Orlov, A. S. *Kazakhskii geroicheskii epos*. Leningrad: AN SSSR publishing. 1945.
- Ostroumov, N. P. "Novyie varianty siuzheta o Polifeme (Odnoglaze)", *Etnograficheskoe obozrenie*, 1891, no.2.
- Ostroumov, N. P. *Skazki sartov v russkom izlozhenii*. Tashkent: Tipografiia Okruzhnogo Shtaba, 1906.
- Paksoy, H B. *Alpamysh: Central Asian Identity Under Russian Rule*. Hartford: Association for the Advancement of Central Asian Research, 1989.
- Potanin, G. N. *Ocherki Severo-Zapadnoi Mongolii. Vypusk II. Etnograficheskie materialy*. Saint Petersburg: Tipografiia V. Kirshbauma, 1881
- Priakhina, D. G. (ed.) *L'iotsia pesnia pod dombru. Fol'klor i literaturnie pamiatniki*

- Kazakhstan*. Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 2009.
- Propp, Vladimir. *Istoricheskie korni volshebnoi skazki*. Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo LGU, 1986.
- Propp, Vladimir. *Morfologiya "volshebnoi" skazki*. Moscow: Labirint, 1998.
- Pulliam, June M. *Monstrous Bodies: Feminine Power in Young Adult Horror Fiction*. Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Inc, 2014.
- 'Qarauirek.' Kaskabasov, S., et al. (eds.) *Babalar sözi. Zhüz tomdyq. Volume 75. Batyrlyq ertegiler*. Astana: Foliant, 2011. pp.117-122.
- 'Qarauirek.' Syzdykova, D. *Kazakhsnie volshebnyie skazki*, Alma-Ata: Zhazushy, 1989, pp.87-93.
- Qial-ğazhaiyp ertegiler*. Almaty: Aruna baspasy, 2015.
- Racioppi, Linda, and Katherine O. S. See. *Gender Politics in Post-Communist Eurasia*. East Lansing, Mich: Michigan State University Press, 2009.
- Rakishev, Erkin, dir. *M-Agent*. KTK and Zhas Ulan. 2013.
- Rees, Emma L. E. *The Vagina: A Literary and Cultural History*. Bloomsbury Academic, 2013.
- Rist, Gilbert. *The history of development: from Western origins to global faith*. London: Zed, 2002.
- Ruberg, Bonnie. "Women Monsters and Monstrous Women". *The Escapist*, 1 November 2005. < http://www.escapistmagazine.com/articles/view/video-games/issues/issue_17/105-Women-Monsters-and-Monstrous-Women>
- Rudenko, S.I. "Byt Bashkir. Chast' 2". *Zapiski imperatorskogo russkogo geograficheskogo obschestva po otdeleniiu etnografii*, T.XLIII, vyp.2 Leningrad: Gosudarstvennaia tipografiia im. I. Fedorova, 1925, p.306.
- Sempuch, Justyna. "Feminist Constructions of the 'Witch' as a Fantasmatic Other". *Body & Society*, vol. 10(4), 2004, pp.113-133.
- Sidel'nikov, V. M., (ed.) *Kazakhskie narodnye skazki v trëkh tomakh*. Alma-Ata: Zhazushy, 1971.
- Simpson, Jacqueline. "Witches and Witchbusters". *Folklore*. Vol. 107 (1996), pp. 5-18.
- Syzdykova, D. *Kazakhsnie volshebnyie skazki*, Alma-Ata: Zhazushy, 1989.
- Szachowicz-Sempruch, Justyna. "Female Entanglements with Evil: the Witch Figure as an Embodiment of Cultural Borderlands". *Journal of Religion and Culture*, vol. 15, 2003, pp.92-116.
- Tale #17. Miropiiev, M. "Demonologicheskie rasskazy u kirgizov". *Zapiski IRGO po otdeleniiu etnografii*. T.10, vyp.3, Saint Petersburg, 1888, pp.33-35.
- Tale #18. Miropiiev, M. "Demonologicheskie rasskazy u kirgizov". *Zapiski IRGO po*

- otdeleniiu etnografii*. T.10, vyp.3, Saint Petersburg, 1888, pp.35-37.
- Tale #19. Miropiiev, M. "Demonologicheskie rasskazy u kirgizov". *Zapiski IRGO po otdeleniiu etnografii*. T.10, vyp.3, Saint Petersburg, 1888, pp.37-38.
- Tambokou, Maria. "A Foucauldian approach to narratives" in Andrews, Molly, et al. *Doing Narrative Research*. Los Angeles: SAGE, 2008.
- Tasmaghambetov, I. N., et al. (eds.) *Babalar sözi. Babalar zhyry*. Volume 35. Astana: Foliant., 2006.
- Toporkov, A. L. *Teoriya mifa v Russkoi filologicheskoi nauke XIX veka*. Moscow: Indrik, 1997.
- 'Tri sestry (Three sisters)'. Auezov, M., and Anov, N. (eds) *Kazakhskie narodnyie skazki*. Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatelstvo hudozhestvennoi literatury, 1952, pp.178-190.
- Ussher, Jane. *Managing the Monstrous Feminine: Regulating the Reproductive Body*. London: Routledge, 2006.
- Usupova, Aidana. "Institut nraavstvennogo vospitaniia Qazaq Qyzy poiavilsia v Astane". *Tengri News*, August 28, 2014. <http://tengrinews.kz/strange_news/institut-nraavstvennogo-vospitaniya-kazak-kyizyi-poyavilsya-260860>
- Walker, Barbara G. *The Crone: Woman of Age, Wisdom, and Power*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985.
- We Know The Devil*. Aevee Bee and Mia Schwartz. 2015. Video game.
- 'Zhaiyq pen Edil (Zhaiyq and Edil)'. Sidel'nikov, V. M., (ed.) *Kazakhskie narodnye skazki v trëkh tomakh*. Alma-Ata: Zhazushy, 1971, volume III, pp.83-86.
- 'Zhanadil'. Sidel'nikov, V. M., (ed.) *Kazakhskie narodnye skazki v trëkh tomakh*. Alma-Ata: Zhazushy, 1971, volume III, pp. 10-11.
- Zhezyrnyaki, Peri i Mamai (The Zhezyrnyaq, Peri and Mamai)'. Sidel'nikov, V. M., (ed.) *Kazakhskie narodnye skazki v trëkh tomakh*. Alma-Ata: Zhazushy, 1971, Volume III, pp.56-62.
- Zimmerman, Bonnie. "Daughters of Darkness: The Lesbian Vampire on Film" in Grant, Barry K. *Planks of Reason: Essays on the Horror Film*. Metuchen, N.J: Scarecrow Press, 1984.