

**PHILOSOPHICAL CRITICISM APPLIED TO KASSANDRA'S BRAND  
NOVEL BY CH. AITMATOV**

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**ФИЛОСОФСКИЙ ПОДХОД К РОМАНУ «ТАВРО КАССАНДРЫ» Ч. АЙТМАТОВА**

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*Abstract.* This paper employs a combination of formalist literary analysis and philosophical criticism to provide a critical analysis of Ch. Aitmatov's short story, "Kassandra's Brand". The paper seeks to identify and explore the general philosophical themes and issues presented in the work, including life and death, values, and nature and humanity. The paper argues that philosophical and moral criticisms provide the foundation for all critical approaches and that thematic criticism is crucial in analyzing literary works. By examining the philosophical problems presented in the literary text, this paper highlights the importance of critically analyzing the acceptance of ideas and evaluating the ethical content of literary works. The aim of the work is to apply a philosophical literary technique to the work of Ch. Aitmatov "The Brand of Kassandra" and conduct a thematic analysis that allows you to determine the main idea of the novel. The introduction includes information on literary theory and the emergence of philosophical criticism, which is one of the first techniques in parallel with the moral and literary technique. The methodology specifies the use of descriptive, comparative and qualitative methods. As a result of the work, the main philosophical themes in the novel "The Brand of Cassandra" are identified and the topics posed are rhetorical. In conclusion, it should be noted the importance of literary criticism and philosophical reception revealing the idea of the novel.

*Аннотация.* На основе сочетания формалистического литературного анализа и философской критики дается критический анализ рассказа Ч. Айтматова «Тавро Кассандры». Статья направлена на выявление и исследование общих философских тем и проблем, представленных в работе, включая жизнь и смерть, ценности, природу и человечество. В статье утверждается, что философская и моральная критика обеспечивает основу для всех критических подходов и что тематическая критика имеет решающее значение при анализе литературных произведений. Рассматривая философские проблемы, представленные в художественном тексте, подчеркивается важность критического анализа принятия идей и оценки этического содержания литературных произведений. Целью работы является применить философский литературный прием к произведению Ч. Айтматова «Тавро Кассандры» и провести тематический анализ, который позволяет определить главную идею романа. Введение включает в себя информацию литературной теории и появление философской критики, которая является одной из первых приемов параллельно с морально-литературным приемом. В Методологии указано использование описательных,

сравнительных и качественных методов. В результате работы выявлены основные философские темы в романе «Тавро Кассандры» и поставленные темы являются риторическими. В заключении следует отметить важность литературной критики и философского приема раскрывающая идею романа.

*Ключевые слова:* литературная критика, философская критика, тематический анализ, Ч. Айтматов, Тавро Кассандры.

*Keywords:* literary criticism, philosophical criticism, thematic criticism, Ch. Aitmatov, Cassandra's Brand.

Literary criticism has evolved significantly over the years, with various critical approaches being developed and applied to literature. The term critical theory and literary theory refer to a similar study that goes beyond the traditional formalist literary analysis. The primary purpose of literary criticism is to criticize or analyze literature in a way that considers multiple perspectives. In the 1960s, literary theory began to be viewed from the perspective of text-based practical criticism and reader-based approaches [3]. In the 1970s, various critical approaches emerged, such as traditional, philosophical and moral, structuralist, postmodern, feminist, Marxist, Freudian, historical, biographical, and others.

This paper aims to analyze and interpret philosophical ideas and themes presented in Chyngyz Aitmatov's "Kassandra's Brand," focusing on life and death, values, nature, and humanity [1]. We argue that philosophical and moral criticisms provide the basis for all critical approaches, and thematic criticism is crucial in analyzing literary works. Through this analysis, this paper highlights the importance of critically examining literary works to gain a deeper understanding of the philosophical issues presented in them.

Literary works have long been analyzed using philosophical critical approaches, which take various forms. According to Martynov [6], one of the ways philosophical theory can be applied to literature is by including it as an equal component in the context of a philosopher's philosophy. Another method is by comparing philosophy and literature as two autonomous practices to find similarities and differences. Lastly, philosophical problems can be found in literary texts themselves. Philosophical criticism aims to examine concepts that have been adopted without much thought and analyze the process that led to their acceptance [7]. It evaluates the ethical content of literary works, recognizing that literature can improve empathy and moral consciousness, but can also have negative effects on people [5]. Poetry was, to Aristotle, "more philosophic" than history, but it always remained much inferior to philosophy itself. There is more than a touch of superciliousness in his treatment of poetry, style, of literature in general [4].

Philosophical criticism covers various questions such as the nature of reality, life, and death, such as, What is the nature of reality? What are death and life?

Literary works are seen as a figurative reproduction of reality that reflects philosophical ideas of life, and thus, can be analyzed using philosophical criticism [10]. In examining these questions, philosophical criticism aims to correct misconceptions and assumptions that people may have adopted without much thought.

Philosophical critical approaches have been used to analyze literary works in various ways. Philosophical criticism aims to examine concepts and evaluate the ethical content of literary works, and it covers questions that relate to the nature of reality, life, and death. Through its analysis, philosophical criticism seeks to correct misconceptions and assumptions that people may have

adopted without much thought. In Aristotle there is no conflict, the philosopher is always firmly in command and the poet is nonexistent. Aristotle brings to bear almost every department of human activity and human life [4].

The methodology of this paper involves a comparative analysis of the foundations of classical and romantic poetics, as established by Aristotle's "Poetics" [4] and S. T. Coleridge's "Literary Biography" [2] respectively. The focus is on exploring the philosophical and literary aspects of Plato's dialogues and their influence on the interaction between philosophical and literary critique. Additionally, Chyngyz Aitmatov's work "Kassandra's Brand," (1994) is analyzed through the lens of cultural and historical principles to gain a fresh perspective on his criticism.

To achieve these objectives, the paper employs descriptive, comparative, and qualitative methods of analysis. The descriptive method is used to provide an overview of the literary and philosophical context of the book and its influence on understanding the text. The comparative method is used to identify similarities and differences between Kyrgyz and English literary works. Finally, the qualitative method is used to analyze Aitmatov's works in terms of their cultural and historical context and their contribution to literary criticism.

Overall, this methodology aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the philosophical and literary aspects of Aitmatov's work. It also aims to provide a fresh perspective on Chyngyz Aitmatov's works by studying them through cultural and historical principles.

Chyngyz Aitmatov's story "Kassandra's Brand" was written in the XXth century in 1994. This is a kind of intellectual and philosophical reflection of a prose writer about the ecological and spiritual crisis of modern civilization, an attempt to comprehend the ways of the wide development of civilization. The author covers the themes like nature, death, life, the evolution of embryos, the preservation of humankind, and struggles of values, apocalypse.

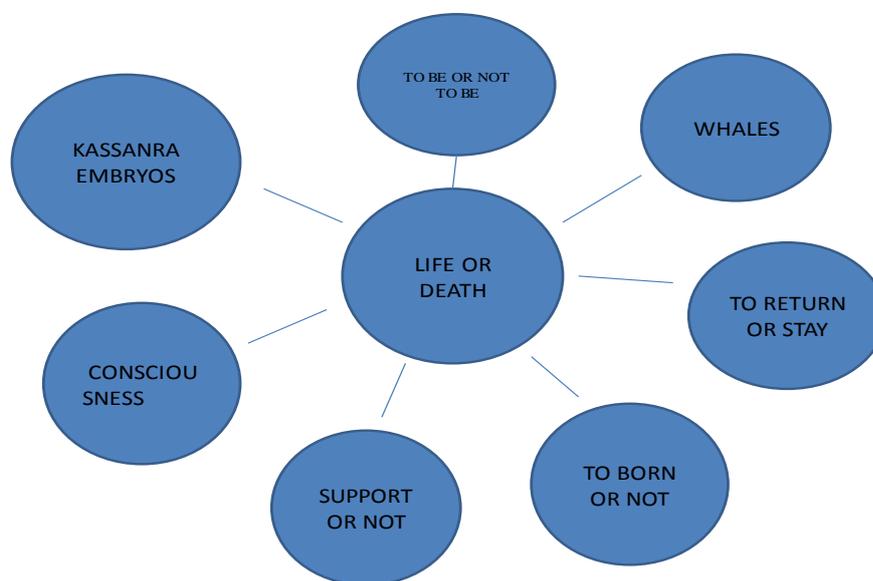


Figure. Thematic analysis

The novel starts with the quote: "И на сей раз было Слово. Как когда-то. Как в том бессмертном Сюжете" starts history in the beginning and has a similar plot to his other work "The Place of the Skull" [1]. The main idea of the story covers the theme of forgiving love for man, an attempt to save the world, even if "the price along the way is too high" (<https://goo.su/MZwL2>). At the very beginning, the tragedy of the development of civilization is described and it gives the

reader the clue to the unhappiness.

The first topic which covers the theme of the story is life and death like the idea of *“to be or not to be”* [8] in Shakespeare’s poem. Hamlet thinks about committing suicide or dying as he balances the suffering and unfairness of life against the potential worsening of the choice. In Aitmatov’s work there is also dilemma *“to born or not”* — *“Получается, что люди сами смогут решать, рождаться им на свет или нет”* [1]. There was the problem of newborns whether they need to survive or die in the womb of the mother. The main scientist and monarch Philopheus in the story has found the probing lights which define the necessity of embryos and make the whole story controversial. The author walks around this topic, substantiating it with his examples and confirming the theme of birth or death. It contains the theme of overpopulation issue like was given in the work of Kurt Vonnegut *“2BR02B”* [9]. It was the post-modernist work which comprises the ideas of the existence of humankind and asks those questions: if one wants to live if one wants to keep alive a newborn or someone should die. *“Old should give a place to new when it time”* is the message of Kurt Vonnegut. The overpopulation issue remains unsolved since no one wants to take such responsibility. We may also consider *“Kassandra’s Brand”* to be utopic and postmodernist work since it has postmodernist features such as hyperreality, and magic realism.

Table 1

CHYNGYZ AITMATOV'S DESCRIPTION OF THEMES

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Description</i>
Ecological Crisis	A reflection on the ecological and spiritual crisis of modern civilization
Philosophical Reflection	An attempt to comprehend the ways of the wide development of civilization
Nature	The author covers the theme of nature, which is an essential aspect of the ecological crisis
Life and Death	A dilemma of whether to be born or not is presented, which encompasses the theme of life and death. The author also explores the overpopulation issue, which raises the question of who should live or die. The consciousness of society about existence is also highlighted.
Embryos	The preservation of humankind, and struggles of values are centered around embryos, their significance, and their willingness to live. The author also conducts parallels between embryos and whales, symbolizing their pure animal magnificence, gratitude, and compassion.
Apocalypse	The story is based on the idea of forgiving love for man, an attempt to save the world, even if "the price along the way is too high." The tragedy of the development of civilization is described at the beginning of the novel.
Postmodernism	The novel has postmodernist features, such as hyperreality and magic realism.

We can see the sequence of events as the comparison between embryos and whales, the decision of the main character about returning to the planet or staying far from it, supporting the idea of killing embryos or preserving their life, and the consciousness of society about existence. The plot collision of the novel develops around a letter from the cosmic monk Philotheus to His Holiness the Pope. The theory he discovered about Cassandra-embryos already in the first weeks of intrauterine development, anticipating the meaninglessness of their future life and in eschatological fear sending signals about their unwillingness to live, causes a shock on the entire planet: The number of Cassandra-embryos is constantly growing «Тавро Кассандры – закадровый голос эмбрионального эсхата, напряженно и отчаянно ожидающего уже в утробе матери приближение конца света» [1]. We can observe the absurdness and utopic peculiarities in the work but the idea is deep whether we kill the life of embryos or save their life knowing that they might be

dangerous in the future. So in the story, it is described that embryos do not want to live and has no desire to exist “Якассандро — эбрион, не хочу родиться, не хочу... [1] And it becomes sophisticated question what humankind can do «Так вот, Мистер Борк, как быть дальше» [1] how to continue life knowing the discovery about probing lights to embryos.

Interestingly that Chyngyz Aitmatov conducts the parallels between embryos and whales. The symbolical meaning of whales is that whale is the pure animal of magnificence, gratitude, and compassion. In Bible, most notably in the book of Jonah God orders the Prophet Jonah to warn about the wicked days and it means the forthcoming of misfortune. «И только киты — вселенские радары, как всегда, держали в себе все то, что воспринимали они, эхо Вселенной ...Они плыли, вновь всплывая и вновь утопая» [1].

Chyngyz Aitmatov describes nature and draws a subtle comparison with whales. «В океане... движутся, как корабли, грандиозные животные, плывут, как журавли в небе, треугольником», чтобы «как сговорившись, подплыть ночью к берегу и швырнуть себя на отмель...на издыхание» [1]. Aitmatov answers: it is necessary to change consciousness, a person must change internally in order to prevent the apocalypse [1].

The main hero Robert Borkov underlines the idea of progression and development of human kind «человечество должно будет обнаружить в себе способность не только осознать трагическую возможность своей гибели, но, это осознание должно привести к новому образу жизни, к новому типу мышления [1]. So the story teaches us to be responsible for our lives and focus about global problems.

It would seem that the world, warned of future troubles, should come to its senses and embark on the path of correction. But people just don't want to listen to warnings. They demand to stop the experiment and stop irradiation. The few who understand the importance of warnings are ridiculed and insulted. And Philotheus, realizing the futility of words and persuasion, commits suicide by going into outer space. The world continues to choke on cruelty and violence. So we can tell it is a kind of apocalypse for society who do not want to grow and redemption is the infinite values like love, beauty, music, memory, and consciousness. «И жизнь его закончилась также трагически, как жизнь его любимой Руны. Уважайте Природу, знайте меру вторжения в ее законы, не допускайте использования научных открытий в антигуманных целях, не забывайте, что самое главное в быстротечной жизни — это ее вечные ценности: любовь, красота, музыка, память и совесть» [1].

Table 2  
CHYNGYZ AITMATOV'S DESCRIPTION OF NATURE AND COMPARISON WITH WHALES

<i>Nature</i>	<i>Whales</i>
Grandiose animals moving in the ocean like ships	Plying like cranes in the sky in a triangular formation
Can swim to the shore at night and beach themselves	Can intentionally beach themselves to die
A warning of future troubles	An analogy for humanity's potential for destruction and the need for change
Redemption lies in eternal values such as love	Redemption lies in humanity's ability to change internally and prevent apocalypse
Importance of respecting nature and its laws	Importance of preventing the misuse of scientific discoveries for inhumane purposes

The comparison drawn by Aitmatov between nature and whales is a subtle reminder of humanity's potential for destruction and the need for change. He warns that if humans do not learn to respect the laws of nature, they may face an apocalypse. The protagonist of the story, Robert Borkov, emphasizes the need for humanity to change its way of thinking and adopt a new way of

life to prevent this.

The story also teaches us to be responsible for our lives and focus on global problems. It warns that people must not misuse scientific discoveries for inhumane purposes, and they should understand the importance of respecting nature and its laws. Redemption lies in eternal values such as love, beauty, music, memory, and consciousness.

However, the story also highlights the resistance to change and the difficulty in getting people to listen to warnings. The few who understand the importance of warnings are ridiculed and insulted. Even Philotheus, who realizes the futility of words and persuasion, commits suicide by going into outer space.

In conclusion, Aitmatov's description of nature and his comparison with whales highlights the need for humanity to change its way of thinking and adopt a new way of life to prevent an apocalypse. It emphasizes the importance of respecting nature and its laws and the misuse of scientific discoveries for inhumane purposes. Redemption lies in eternal values such as love, beauty, music, memory, and consciousness. Overviewing the work "Kassandra's mark" we can set several philosophical questions such as:

- Can we go against nature?
- Can humanity control the birthrate?
- Struggles of values
- The preservation of the life of embryos or killing them
- Importance of science or human life
- Life or death
- Development or regression of the world.

These are rhetorical questions discussed in Aitmatov's work leads us to think about morality and to open controversial philosophical topics.

In conclusion, this paper has provided an in-depth analysis of Chyngyz Aitmatov's literary and critical works from a philosophical perspective. Through the examination of philosophical themes in his story, the paper has identified the uniqueness of Aitmatov's writing. It is crucial to highlight the importance of philosophical creativity, while exploring deep and important worldview issues in Aitmatov's work. The last story by Aitmatov, "Kassandra's Brand," demonstrates the incorporation of philosophical ideas and moral values. This paper utilized critical theory, philosophical criticism, and theme analysis to interpret the story and address philosophical questions set by Aitmatov in his work. Overall, this paper sheds light on the philosophical significance of Aitmatov's literary and critical works and their contribution to the field of literature and philosophy.

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*Работа поступила  
в редакцию 09.05.2023 г.*

*Принята к публикации  
16.05.2023 г.*

*Ссылка для цитирования:*

Imanalieva A., Kalieva K. *Philosophical Criticism Applied to Cassandra's Brand Novel by Ch. Aitmatov // Бюллетень науки и практики*. 2023. Т. 9. №6. С. 697-703.  
<https://doi.org/10.33619/2414-2948/91/89>

*Cite as (APA):*

Imanalieva, A., & Kalieva, K. (2023). *Philosophical Criticism Applied to Cassandra's Brand Novel by Ch. Aitmatov. Bulletin of Science and Practice*, 9(6), 697-703.  
<https://doi.org/10.33619/2414-2948/91/89>