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Autor: Tybykova , Larisa N.

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Kontakt/Contact

Digizeitschriften e.V.
SUB Göttingen
Platz der Göttinger Sieben 1
37073 Göttingen

info@digizeitschriften.de

The symbols of beauty in Altay zoomorphisms

Larisa N. Tybykova

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This paper describes Altay zoomorphic images that are part of beauty symbolism in the Altay traditional culture. Zoomorphisms possess all main features of expressive lexis: figurativeness, expressiveness, emotionality and evaluation. They occupy a central position among different types of personal characteristics.
In Altay, image-bearing characteristics are given by means of set-phrases. Some of them function in both ways: as similes and metaphors.

Larisa N. Tybykova, Gorno-Altajsk State University, Gorno-Altajsk, Lenin street 1, Altai Republic, Russia. E-mail: tayban@rambler.ru

Zoomorphisms are metaphorical lexico-semantic variants of animal names that are applied to characterize a person in different respects, e.g. Russian *lisa* 'fox' used to denote a cunning and hypocritical person, or *ovca* 'sheep' to describe a quiet, peaceful and defenseless person.

Zoomorphisms are widely used to characterize a person in many languages. In Indo-European languages, e.g. in Russian, they form one of the subclasses of expressive vocabulary whose primarily function is not to denote entities, but to give them quantitative or qualitative evaluation. However, the expressive vocabulary is not sufficiently described even for the languages whose nominative inventory is well studied. At present, lexicology faces the task of classifying and describing the expressive vocabulary, as well as working out the logical basis, terminology and methodology for its evaluation.

In Russia, zoomorphisms became an object of special linguistic description in the 1970s. This investigation was instigated by M. I. Čeremisina, E. A. Gutman and F. A. Litvin, who described Russian zoomorphisms (Gutman & Čeremisina 1969, 1970, 1972, 1974, 1976, 1977; Gutman, Litvin & Čeremisina 1977; Čeremisina & Soppa 1973; Čeremisina & Zaxarova 1973; etc.). Later, similar research was carried out by specialists working on different Indo-European languages: Russian (Ryžkina 1980), French (Gutman, Litvin & Čeremisina 1977; Gutman & Čeremisina 1970, 1977), German (Kudrjavceva 1976, 1979), see also Antonova & Skvoreckaja 2004.

The first stage of zoomorphism research was devoted to the vocabulary's functional and syntactic features (Gutman & Čeremisina 1970; Litvin 1970, 1974, 1975). It showed that zoomorphic images are realised in three ways:

1. as similes, where different features of animals and persons are contrasted, e. g. Russian *On est, kak svin'ja* 'He eats like a pig'; here, the animal name has its direct meaning;
2. as metaphors, where the animal name is applied in its figurative meaning and serves as a zoomorphism proper, e.g. Russian *On – nastojaščaja svin'ja!* 'He is a real pig!';
3. as derivates of the animal name that usually preserve the dichotomy of the direct and figurative meanings: Russian *svinskij* 'pig-like', *svinjačit'* 'to behave like a pig', *po-svinski* 'like a pig'.

Further, Litvin & Čeremisina (1968) showed that zoomorphisms function in a sentence not only as nominal predicates, but also as forms of address, oppositions, attributes, subjects and objects. At this stage, the notion of zoomorphic image was introduced. It is understood as a system of associations and connotations that language speakers connect with this particular animal, realised in comparisons, metaphors and derivates (Gutman, Litvin & Čeremisina 1977). It was also shown that in order to investigate the semantics of a zoomorphism the linguist should point out its semantic components (semes).

Later, certain groups of zoomorphic images or separate zoomorphisms were studied more closely: a group of zoomorphisms with the semantic component 'living being' (Gutman & Čeremisina 1969), the German zoomorphisms *Pferd* 'horse' (Kudrjavceva 1976) and *Wurm* 'worm' (Kudrjavceva 1979), the Russian zoomorphism *petux* 'cock' (Čeremisina & Zaxarova 1973), the English zoomorphism *horse* (Litvina 1977), etc. Recently, we are witnessing interest in zoomorphisms in Turkic languages, often viewed in contrast to Russian (Skljarevskaja 1993; Sansyzbaeva 2000).

The above-mentioned research has worked out the main directions and methods of zoomorphism analysis. It allows for describing zoomorphisms systematically and comparing these systems in different languages.

This paper describes Altay zoomorphic images that are part of beauty symbolism in the Altay traditional culture.

A symbol is a concept related to an image: ontologically, a symbol is based on an image; on the other hand, a symbol itself generates a certain image; thus, the term "symbolic image" is often employed. Symbol is also related to metaphor (Telija 1988). An image is psychological and a metaphor is semantic, while a symbol is functional and is aimed at uniting social, tribal and national communities (Arutjunova, 1998: 338). In Arutjunova's opinion, symbol has a higher semiotic status than image. The basis of a symbol is an image. Potebnja (2000) claims that the cause of symbol emergence in culture is the demand for the permanent restoration of word meaning proper that is easily forgotten. For example, *guilder rose* became the symbol for a girl for the same reason that a girl has been called *red* (as in Russian *krasnaja devica* 'beautiful girl'; lit.: 'red girl'), i.e. through the main idea of fire-light in the words *girl*, *red*, and *guilder rose*. In his opinion, there are three types of relation-

ship between the initial word and symbol that may be associated with comparison, opposition and casual relationship.

Each nation has its own image of beauty, and dealing with this problem from different perspectives is of interest to linguists, ethnographers, folklorists and philosophers. The symbol of beauty may acquire opposite forms in different languages. If we compare the Kazakh and Russian languages, we observe that in the Kazakh speaker's consciousness the image of an otter (*qundïz*) is completely oriented to a girl or woman of dazzling beauty. In the Russian language the image of an otter is used to characterize not only a thin and ugly woman but an unpleasant woman with a nasty temper as well, for example, *On kak-to srazu voznenavidel belobrysuju angličanku, smotrevšuju na nego, kak na dikarja. "Ėtakaja vydra!" – dumal Galaktion* 'From the very beginning, he started to hate this pale English woman who looked at him as if he were a savage. "What an otter!" he thought' (Sansyzbaeva 2000: 59).

The Altay vision of beauty described by means of zoomorphisms may be compared with that of other languages.[1] Zoomorphisms reflect some features of exterior beauty that have national and cultural specificity. In the language consciousness of the Altay people the zoomorphical images *sïġïn* 'Siberian stag' and *mürküt* 'golden eagle' are shown to be the symbols of male beauty, valour and fearlessness. On the other hand, the images of *aq quu* 'swan' and *elik* 'roe' are the symbols of female beauty. We shall first consider the male images reflected in the Altay zoomorphisms *sïġïn* 'Siberian stag' and *šülüzin* 'lynx'.

The Altay zoomorphical image *sïġïn* 'Siberian stag' serves to characterize the physical features of young men; the word *mïyġaq* denoting the female species (doe) is not used to characterize females. The Siberian stag is one of the most handsome and strongest animals in Altay, and it is deeply honoured and loved by the Altay people. For this reason, the Altay people consider the Siberian stag (*sïġïn*) a symbol of might, stateliness and male beauty. For example:

(1) *Sïn-dï tömön d'el-erde, sïn-ï tüŋey sïġïn-dar,*
hedge-ACC PSTP gallop-GER height-POSS3 equal Siberian.stag-PL
sïïlad-ïp oyno-ordo, ün-i tüŋey üüre-ler...
sing-GER play-GER voice-POSS3 equal guy-PL
'When (they) galloped on horseback down the mountain all equal in height like Siberian stags and when (they) sang a song with modulation, friends (have) similar voices.'

[1] We have used data from the following Russian language dictionaries: Ožegov 1983; Ogol'cev 1994; Antonova & Skvoreckaja 2004.

(2) *D'e meni kičinek de-be. Sïğïn-dïy ögöön-dör-di*
PRTCL I:ACC small call-NEG Siberian.stag-COMP man-PL-ACC
oq-toŋ-ot-toŋ čïğara süürte-p tur-ata-m.
bullet-ABL–fire-ABL PSTP carry-GER stand:aux-PRS-1SG
'Do not look at me as a small one. Like Siberian stags (I) carried men out of fire and bullets on myself.'

(3) *Otšepqov-qo d'aqšï – sïğïn ošqoš d'iit-teŋ*
Otšepkov-DAT good Siberian.stag like young-ABL
art-payt.
fall.behind-PRS.NEG
'It is good for Otšepkov – (he) does not fall behind the young man who resembles a Siberian stag.'

(4) *Bu örökön-dö sïğïn-dïy uul-dar-ï da bar,*
this old.man-LOC Siberian.stag-COMP son-PL-POSS3 PRTCL existence
qïzïl-maral čïray-lu qïs-tar-ï da bar
red-heather face-with girl-PL-POSS3 PRTCL existence
'This old man has sons resembling Siberian stags and girls resembling the blooming of red heather.'

As seen above, the seme ‹extraordinary stateliness› is present in context (1), which is strengthened by the phrase *sïnï tüŋey* 'same height'; in context (2) the seme ‹big, mighty in build› has been realized when speaking about a small girl who as a nurse took men big and heavy compared to her out of fire on herself. In context (3) the seme ‹of great endurance› focuses attention on the strength and endurance of a young man; and in context (4) the image *sïğïn* 'Siberian stag' personifies all the best and beautiful in the physical appearance and state of a man or a youth.

Some features of man's appearance are described by the zoo image *šülüzin* 'lynx'. In this image referred to by a noun phrase, the descriptive component (modifier) is a noun which serves as an epithet (zoomorphism) and the modified one is built up by another noun in the plural form – *šülüzin köstör* 'lynx's eyes', and the whole phrase expresses the attribute invariably ascribed to the given animal by the Altay community thus testifying to the functional loading of the image. According to informants, lynx's eyes are usually yellow, yellowish-greenish eyes. In an example from fiction there is a mention of blue eyes, for example (5).

(5) *suuda čaŋqïr taš ošqoš šülüzin köstör-lü*
small blue stone like lynx eyes-with
'with lynx's eyes resembling small blue stones'

We came across examples in which big and bulging eyes resembling lynx's eyes have been mentioned, for example (6).

(6) *Bay-lar-ġa sen de d'alčï bol-ġo-ŋ, men de qul*
rich.people-DAT you PRTCL servant be-PF-2SG I PRTCL slave
bol-ġo-m, d'arïm qursaq-tï sen de ič-ke-ŋ, men de
be-PF-1SG, half stomach-ACC you PRTCL eat-PF-2SG I PRTCL
ič-ke-m, qayt-t-ïŋ?! – de-p, qïyġïr-ġan qïyġï-zï ïraaq
eat-PF-1SG what.do-PST-2SG say-GER cry-PART.PF cry-POSS3 far
d'er-ge uġul-ba-d-ï, šülüzin-niŋ köz-in-diy tozïraq
place-DAT be.heard-NEG-PST-3 lynx-GEN eye-POSS3-COMP sparkling
sür köz-i, bozor-ïp, qandal-a ber-d-i
bulging eye-POSS3 darken-GER become.bloodshot-GER AUX-PST-3
'"You also were a rich people's servant and I was a slave, you ate half of the food and me, too, what happened to you!?" His cry was heard far away, his sparkling bulging eyes, like lynx's eyes, having darkened became bloodshot.'

As lynx is singled out among other animals by its special grace, adroitness and quickness, all these qualities are also projected onto a man, see (7) and (8).

(7) *Šülüzin ošqoš eelgir boylu onoŋ.arï uy-lar-dï*
lynx like:PSTP lithe girl further cow-PL-ACC
saa-ġan …
milk-PF
'A lithe girl resembling a lynx continued to milk cows.'

(8) *Čïndap.ta, büd-et boy-ï šülüzin ošqoš kiži tur-u*
by.the.way believe-PRS self-POSS3 lynx like person stand:aux-PRS
ine: mïnayïp.la d'ïmžad-ïp, mïrqïlda-p tur-ala, d'ažïr-a
PRTCL this.way soften-GER pur-GER stand:aux-GER hide-GER
tudun-ïp al-ġan armaqčï-zïn tïrs čalmada-p al-ġan
hold-GER take:aux-PF lasso-POSS3ACC tightly tighten-GER take:aux-PF
tur-ar
stand:aux-PRS
'By the way, (he) himself believes (that) this man really behaves like a lynx: in the same manner with softening and purring (he) in a moment tightens his hidden lasso on you very fast.'

The images of male beauty and valour are presented not only by means of animal images but also with the help of birds. The birds of prey, the falcon and golden eagle, became symbols of male valour and beauty among Indo-European and Turkic peoples. From time immemorial qualities arousing people's admiration have been ascribed to them.

The image of the golden eagle as the embodiment of male beauty, valour and fearlessness has a very ancient origin. It is a bird-totem of the Altay tribe (Altay *söök*) *irkit*. Besides, golden eagles are sacred birds that assist in shaman practices, helping shamans to see through their eye-sight what happens in Altay. Golden eagles carry the shaman's requests and addresses on their wings to the heaven gods. Not

without reason does the image of the golden eagle occupy a special place among the images of such birds of prey as *qan-kerede* 'eagle', *šoŋqor* 'hawk' and *teylegen* 'kite'.

In the Altay speaker's consciousness the image of the golden eagle contains one of the best qualities of a man-warrior, fearlessness, see (9).

(9) *D'e bu teŋ emes tartïžu-da malčï Qasïm-nïŋ, mürküt-ter-diy,*
well this equal not battle-LOC cattle.breeder Kazym-GEN eagle-PL-COMP
d'altanbas uul-dar-ï d'eŋ.d'astan-ïp d'ïgïl-gïla-d-ï'
fearless son-PL-POSS3 perish-GER fall-DISTR-PST-3
'And in this unequal battle Kasym's sons, the cattle-breeders, fearless like golden eagles perished.'

Like in Altay, in the Kyrgyz language the image of the golden eagle characterizes a courageous man, for example, *bürküt qabaqtuu* 'golden eagle character', i.e. a man with a courageous and fearless character (according to informant A. Dž. Batilov).

In the Altay language this male image is used to characterize not only a fearless man but one handsome in appearance. If a symbol of beauty in a girl is a swan, in man it is a golden eagle. It is of interest to find a context in which both images are compared and in which this meaning is expressed most vividly, see (10).

(10) *Ot-čiček-tü d'alaŋ-da quu-lar ošqoš boylu-lar qayqa-gïla-yt,*
flower-with glade-LOC swan-PL like mate-PL swing-DISTR-PRS
olor-dïŋ orto-zïn-da Kün-D'arqïnï – qaan quu, ekinči
they-GEN middle-POSS3-LOC Kün D'arqïnï tsarina swan second
qadarlay.küreeley d'iit-ter qara mürküt-ter-diy d'ayqan-ïž-at,
circle youth-PL black golden.eagle-PL-COMP swing-COOP-PRS
olor-dïŋ orto-zïn-da Qarïš baatïr – qaan mürküt
they-GEN middle-POSS3-LOC Karïš hero tsar golden.eagle
'On the glade girls like swans are swimming with flowers, among them (is) Kün-Jarkï, the tsarina-swan, and in the second circle youths like black golden eagles are swinging, among them (is) Karïš-hero, the tsar-golden eagle.'

The Altay image of *mürküt* 'golden eagle' may be compared in its semantics with the Russian and Kazakh images of the falcon.

Why is the falcon image so common in the world view of Russian and Kazakh peoples and the golden eagle with the Altay and Kyrghyz?

The spread of the falcon image among Russian and Kazakh peoples is mostly connected with the fact that falcons usually inhabit forest-steppe regions, while mountain regions are golden eagle habitat, and golden eagles have been well known to the Altay and Kyrgyz peoples who inhabit the Altay and Tien Shan mountains from time immemorial. The falcon is a totem-bird of the ancient Slavs and Kazakhs, in whose societies the falcon was closely linked to the sport of falconry. Nowadays,

too, the falcon is used for hunting in the Kazakh steppes. Falconry even became a kind of national game.

Among the speakers of Russian the image of the falcon is associated with men or young men famous for their boldness, courage and handsomeness. The expressions like *falconine look, falconine eyes* (about clear and alert eyes), and *to look at someone like a falcon* 'to look at somebody proudly and loftily' are used in everyday speech. In the Kazakh language the image of the falcon is used to characterize a brave, fearless and strong man. The Kazakh people speak about a handsome man as *aq sũŋqarday* (literally 'white falcon') (Sansyzbaeva 2000: 71–71).

The Altay people regularly use the image of the falcon to describe the outward characteristics of a man, for example, a proud and strict look; see the possessive noun phrase *mürküt körüži* 'falcon look or falcon's look' (see the Russian examples above). This is illustrated by examples (11) and (12).

(11) *Ol öskö ulus-taŋ qop-qoo sïn-ï-la, omorqoq mürküt*
he other people-ABL very.slender figure-POSS3-INSTR proud falcon
körüž-i-le aŋïlan-ïp tur-gan
look-POSS3-INSTR differ-GER AUX-PF
'He differed from other people in a very slender figure and a proud falconine look.'

(12) *Onïŋ.učun qïpčaq-tïŋ mürküt-tiy sooq körüž-i-niŋ*
therefore Kypchak-GEN falcon-COMP cold look-POSS3-GEN
tüb-in-de toŋ-up qal-gan qarïqčal, d'ïldïs-tïy d'araš
bottom-POSS3-LOC freeze-GER stay:aux-PF sorrow star-COMP beautiful
abaqay-lar-ï qanayïp.ta d'ažït-sa, qačan.da qayïl-baytan
wife-PL-POSS3 in.any.way caress-COND whenever melt-NEG.PRS
'That is why in the depth of the Kypchak's look, strict like a falcon's, sorrow froze which has never melted, however strong the caresses of his wives (were), beautiful like stars.'

In Kyrgyz, the zoomorphic symbol *bürküt* is applied only to describe a form of the nose: *bürküt murun* 'hooked-nosed'; lit.: 'falcon nose' (according to the informant A. Dž. Batilov).

The images of *aq quu* 'swan' and *elik* 'roe' as symbols of female beauty are widespread in the Altay language. Perhaps, the image of the swan is a symbol of female beauty in many typologically different languages. This is not surprising, as the grace and the white plumage of the bird cannot but arouse admiration. The Altay image of *aq quu* 'swan' personifies a very beautiful and graceful girl. In the Kazakh language the zoomorphic image *aqqu* 'swan' also bears the seme ‹beautiful slender girl› and is very common in poetry (Sansyzbaeva 2000: 7). Separate components of exterior beauty are also connected with the image of the swan. A dazzlingly white face is compared to the white colour of swan plumage in (13).

(13) *Kenetiyin aq quu ošqoš čïray-lu Elik-Baš, kün-ge*
suddenly white swan like:PSTP face-with Elik-Baš sun-DAT
küy-gen-diy, küreŋ bol-o ber-d-i
tan-PF-COMP brown become-GER AUX-PST3
'Suddenly the dazzlingly white face (literary the face like a white swan) of Elik-Baš became brown as if it had become sun burnt.'

This comparative image is typical only of the Altay language, but the description of a walk is obviously common in different languages. 'Swan step' is one of the most expressive means of describing an easy graceful step both in the Turkic and Russian languages; compare in Russian *a swan step* and *a swan walk* 'easy and stately walk'; in Kazakh *aqquday bolïp žüzi* is said of a beautiful (swanlike) walk, see an Altay example in (14).

(14) *Qayran köörkiy seniŋ bazïd-ïŋ ček le*
dear darling your walk-POSS2SG exactly
ap-apaġaš quu ošqoš
very.white swan like:PSTP
'Darling, your walk is like that of a very white swan.'

As for the expressive comparison of a beautiful, long and lithe neck with the swan's neck, here the semantics of the image coincide both in Kazakh (*aqqu moyïn*) and in Russian (*lebedinaja šeja* 'the swan's neck') (Sansyzbaeva 2000: 7). In the Altay language, we come across examples from the context in which it is said *qas moyïndu* (literally 'with the goose neck') about a man having a long and beautiful neck (15).

(15) *Qas moyïn-du, qandïq-tïy čïray-lu qïs-tar*
goose neck-with kandïk-COMP face-with girl-PL
azïra-zïn
grow-IMP3
'Let them grow girls with a swanlike neck and a face like a *kandïk*
(Erythronium sibiricum, a taiga plant of the liliaceous kind with edible tubers).'

The image of *elik* 'roe deer' in the Altay people's perception is a symbol of beauty as well, but in this particular case the roe's eyes are mainly compared to a girl's eyes, making use of an idiom attribute expressed by a participle in *-GAn*, for example, *čočïġan* 'frightened' together with the phrase *eliktiŋ köstörindiy* 'roelike eyes'. Thus, the whole expression meaning 'eyes like the eyes of a frightened roe' personifies not only the beautiful shape of the eyes but the defenselessness and expressiveness of the beauty's eyes, see (16) and (17).

(16) *Čočï-ġan* *elik-tiŋ* *kös-tör-in-diy* *kös-tör-lü* *d'aražay-dï*
get.frightened-PF roe-GEN eye-PL-POSS3-COMP eye-PL-with beauty-ACC
as-qan *qursaġ-ï* *tamzïq* *ta,* *toq* *ta* *emtir*
cook-PF meal-POSS3 tasty and nourishing and PRTCL
'The food prepared by a beauty with eyes resembling the eyes of a frightened roe turned out to be tasty and nourishing.'

(17) *Čočï-ġan* *elik-tiŋ* *kös-tör-in-diy* *kös-tör-iŋ*
get.frightened-PF roe-GEN eye-PL-POSS3-COMP eye-PL-POSS2SG
ič-im *öykö-t,* *köörkiy-im.*
inside-POSS1SG worry-PRS darling-POSS1SG
'Darling, your eyes resembling the eyes of a frightened roe worried my soul (literary my inside).'

Apart from the comparative image, there evolves the meaning *elik körüštü d'aražay* 'beauty with a roelike look (literary a beauty having the look of a roe)'. In the above phrase *elik körüštü*, *körüš+tü* functions as a relative adjective; see also (18).

(18) *D'e* *elik* *körüš-tü* *d'aražay* *onï* *d'ïlu*
well:PRTCL roe look-with beauty he:ACC warm
utqï-d-ï.
greet-PST-3
'The beauty with a roelike look gave him a warm greeting.'

In the Russian language, especially in poetry, the symbol of gracefulness and shapeliness is a gazelle, a doe, or a chamois. In the following set-phrases based on the simile for a timid/fearful one, like a doe/chamois, not only a child's or a girl's fearfulness has been emphasized but also her embarrassment before strangers and her particularly graceful movement in the state of embarrassment. For example, of Tatjana: "wild, sad, silent and fearful like a forest doe" (A. S. Puškin: *Evgenij Onegin*).

Thus the Altay image of female beauty, *aq quu* 'swan', may be compared with Russian and Kazakh images. As far as the image of a roe is concerned, it is the characteristic property of the Altay people. It turns out that the Altay people are not very familiar with such animals as gazelles, does, or chamois, which is why no such comparisons with the above-mentioned animals exist.

Bird images also have a national and cultural specificity, the bases of which are both religious views and the lifestyle of a particular ethnic group: *golden eagle* for the Altay people and *falcon* for the Russian and Kazakh peoples.

The flowering of exterior beauty is conventionally linked with youth, and in this connection the Altay people have found very expressive zoomorphisms to render the idea of age, and in this series we find the phrase *tülküdiy qïzïl tušta* (literally: 'as the red fox's time') where the red colour and the image of *tülkü* 'fox' personify the flowering of beauty and youth. The phrase may be applied to both girls and young men.

The phrase *börüdiy kök tušta* conveys the period of youth, strength and fearlessness flowering (literally: 'the time of a blue wolf'). It is naturally applied to boys and young men only. The phrases *börüdiy kök* and *tülküdiy qïzïl tušta* may be used simultaneously to focus on and strengthen the moment of youth and the flowering of strength, see (19) and (20).

(19) *... börü-diy kök, tülkü-diy qïzïl küč-tü tuž-ïm. Ed-er,*
wolf-COMP blue fox-COMP red strength-with time-POSS1SG do-AOR
tud-ar, tab-ar, d'uur öy-üm de-p ayd-at.
build-AOR find-AOR gather-AOR time-POSS1SG say-GER say-PRS
'The time (mine) of beauty, youth, strength and fearlessness flowering. They say, it is time to do, build, find and gather.'

(20) *Örö kör-zö, küč-i köp, tömön kör-zö,*
upwards look-COND strength-POSS3 much downwards look-COND
köz-i töp, börü-diy kök lö tülkü-diy qïzïl tuž-ï
eye-POSS3 calm wolf-COMP blue PRTCL fox-COMP red time-POSS3
'If he looks up, there is strength in the eyes (literally: much strength), if he looks down, there is self-control in the eyes (literally: his eyes are calm), it is the time of strength, fearlessness, youth and beauty flowering.'

Proceeding with the topic of the representation of youth and beauty by means of zoomorphic characteristics, one more image is worthy of mention, one which is not so well known to informants and which we came across in the works of the famous fairytale writer Tanytpas Akulova. This image is *albaadïy qara* 'like a black sable', which also expresses the exterior beauty of a man, and in combination with the word *tužï* 'time' points to age. The black colour cannot be treated straightforwardly in this case; it conveys the meaning 'saturated, brilliant dark-brown colour', with beards in sable fur being black.

The Altay know that it is possible to identify both the age and the state of an animal by the colour of its fur. Both black sable and red fox acquire such saturated colour at the beginning of winter, when the fur of a young, well-fed and strong beast becomes fluffy. As in previous cases, this phrase is used with the expression *tülküdiy qïzïl tužï* as they (black sable and red fox) are similar and either denotes the flowering of youth and beauty (21).

(21) *Tülkü-diy qïzïl, alba-dïy qara čoŋ.d'iit tuž-ïn-da bu*
fox-COMP red sable-COMP black flowering time-POSS3-LOC this
qayqamčïlu telekey-deŋ ïrïs ayrïl-ïp qal-atan ba?
wonderful world-ABL happiness leave-GER stay:aux-PRS PRTCL:INTER
'At the time of youth and beauty flowering is it possible that happiness will leave this wonderful world? (literally: the peak of youth (time) like a red fox and a black sable).'

In the description of exterior beauty, the Altay people may use a metaphorical expression *qabaqtarï qara kiš* 'eyebrows like black sables'. The words *albaa* and *kiš* in the meaning 'sable' are absolute synonyms, in southern regions of Altay either version of this zoonym is employed; see (22).

(22) *D'ergele-ž-ip* *d'ort-qon* *boylu-lar-dïŋ* *kör-gön* *kös-tör-i*
ride.side.by.side-COOP-GER trot-PF mate-PL-GEN see-PF eye-PL-POSS3
d'ïldïs-tar *ošqoš,* *čïray-lar-ï* *qïzïl* *bulanat-tïy,* *qabaq-tar-ï*
star-PL like face-PL-POSS3 red rose.bay-COMP eyebrow-PL-POSS3
qara kiš.
black sable
'The young galloping abreast have eyes like stars (lit.: 'looking'), rosy faces (lit.: 'red like rose bay') and eyebrows like black sables.'

Other Turkic peoples of Siberia, like the Altay, in describing the appearance of a handsome man, make use of the same figure of speech – eyebrows like black sables as a symbol of beauty. In the Sakha olonkho entitled *Nyurgun Bootur the Swift* the beauty Tuyaryma-Kuo has sable eyebrows: Her long, black eyebrows are like Kamchatka sables, black with silver. As if they were chosen from the individual sable's beard.

Zoomorphic characteristics of a man's appearance are illustrated in Table 1, in which the type of zoomorphic image is given. But before turning our attention to the table, we would like to examine the problem of simile and metaphor distinction in more detail.

In Altay, image-bearing characteristics are given by means of set-phrases. Some of them function in both ways: as similes and metaphors.

Let us take as examples two expressions – *mürküttiy körüštü* 'a look like that of a golden eagle' and *mürküt körüštü* 'having a golden eagle's look' or 'with a golden eagle look'. In the first case we consider the image created to be an example of simile because the *comparandum* (i.e. the thing to be compared), that is to say *look*, and the *comparatum* (i.e. the thing to which the comparison is made), that is to say *mürküt*, are present together with the marker of comparison in the form of the suffix *–tiy* (compare with the English words *like* or *as* or *so*). The way the Altay phrase is constructed makes it prototypical, that is to say recognizable by Altay speakers in all possible situations. Considering all the facts mentioned above, we may treat *mürküttiy körüštü* as a simile. In the second example *mürküt körüštü* 'having a golden eagle's look' or 'with a golden eagle look' the suffix of comparison is absent, and the whole image transforms into a metaphor. Here arises the question of the distinction between simile and metaphor. Both are figures of speech, but a metaphor is defined as a direct comparison between two or more seemingly unrelated subjects. In the simplest case, a metaphor takes the form: "The (first subject) is a (second subject)." A metaphor, according to Lakoff & Johnson (1980), consists of two parts: the target and source. The target is the subject to which attributes are ascribed. The source is

the subject from which the attributes are borrowed. In the example *mürküt körüštü* the word *körüš* 'look' in its relation to a human being is compared to the word *körüš* 'look' in its relation to *mürküt* 'golden eagle', the aim being to describe the man by taking well-known attributes from the golden eagle. In this case, the man's look is the target and the golden eagle's look is the source. In Lakoff's nomenclature, metaphors are named using the convention "target IS source", with the word IS always capitalized; in this notation the metaphor discussed above would state that "the man's look IS the golden eagle's look". Some scholars claim that metaphors differ from similes in that the two objects are not compared but treated as identical (see also Ujomov 1970). Hence, the phrase *buqa moyïndu uuldar* 'boys with the bull's neck' should not be understood literally but as having the transferred meaning 'with strong and sturdy necks'.

In their semantic treatment and interpretation, *qas moyïn* 'goose neck' and *turna but* 'crane leg' play the role of metaphorical epithets. On the other hand, the metaphor *küčük* 'puppy' in the sentence *Sen, küčük, suunï keč* 'You, puppy, row across the river' serves as a form of address.

Table 1. Zoomorphic characteristics of man's appearance in Altay.
(S means simile and M means metaphor.)

Zoomorphisms	Translation	S	M
	Beauty:		
Tülküdiy qïzïl tuzï (idiom)	The time of exterior beauty and flowering of youth (lit. 'the red fox's time')		+
Qara kištiy čoŋ d'iit tužï (idiom)	The time of exterior beauty and flowering of youth (lit. 'the time of the black sable's youth')		+
Sïgïndïy erler	Stately, handsome strong men (lit. 'men like Siberian stags)	+	
Sïgïn erler	Stately, handsome strong men (lit. 'Siberian stags men')		+
Aq quu ošqoš čïraylu	Having a snow-white face, dazzlingly white face (lit. 'face like a white swan')	+	
Čačï:	Hair:		
Qusqundïy qara čačtu	Raven-black (literally - black hair like a raven)	+	
Qusqun qara čačtu	Raven-black (literally – raven-black hair)		+
Qoyondïy aq baštu	Grey head (literally - grey head like a hare)	+	
Qoyon aq baštu	Grey head (literally – hare-grey)		+
Qoyondïy qažayġan	Becoming grey (literally – to become as white as a hare)	+	
Qoyon qažayġan	Becoming grey (lit.– to become hare-white)		+
Aq quudïy qažayġan	Becoming grey (lit. 'to become as white as a swan')	+	

Zoomorphisms	Translation	S	M
Qabaq:	Eyebrow:		
Qabaqtarï qara kiš	About beautiful, long and black eyebrows (lit. 'eyebrows like black sables')		+
Kös:	Eye:		
Šülüzin köstü	Lynx eyes		+
(Čočïgan) eliktiŋ közindiy köstü	About big and expressive eyes (lit. 'eyes like a frightened doe's eyes')	+	
Körüš:	Look:		
Mürküttiy körüštü	About a proud and strict look (lit. 'having a look like that of a golden eagle or with a golden eagle's look')	+	
Mürküt körüži	About a proud and strict look (lit. 'having a golden eagle's look or with a golden eagle's look')		+
Elik körüštü	About a tender and beautiful look (lit. 'a doe's look')		+
Moyïn:	Neck:		
Buqa moyïndu	Bull's neck (strong, sturdy)		+
Qas moyïndu	Goose's neck (long)		+
Tiš:	Tooth:		
Qoy tiš	About small and straight teeth (lit. 'sheep's teeth')		+
At tiš	About big front teeth (lit. 'horse's teeth')		+
Kögüs:	Chest:		
Momon kögüs	About a protruding and pointed shape of the chest with a short neck (lit. 'a mole's chest')		+
But:	Legs:		
Turna but	About long and thin legs (lit. 'crane's legs')		+
Bazït:	Step:		
Aq quu oškoš bazïttu	About an easy/light and stately step (lit. 'a step like that of a swan')	+	
Qas ošqoš d'aybaŋdap bazaar	About a waddle step (lit. 'to step like a goose, waddling')	+	

As a result of our research, we come to the conclusion that zoomorphisms possess all the main features of expressive lexis: figurativeness, expressiveness, emotionality and evaluation. They occupy a central position among different types of personal characteristics.

The principal feature of Altay zoomorphisms is inherently their figurativeness, as they are based on illustrative notions about animals. Some proportion of figurativeness may be noticed even in such metaphorical images as *tülkü* 'fox' (cunning), *čočko* 'pig' (untidiness), *momon* 'mole' (stupidity), and so on. In the semantics of any zoomorphism, there are components characterizing the exterior features of a man, and only in some of them do they enter the nucleus of meaning. They are clearly visible in beauty symbolism, which Altay speakers associate with both the

male images *sïgïn* 'Siberian stag', *mürküt* 'golden eagle', and the female images *aq quu* 'swan' and *elik* 'doe'.

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Abbreviatons in the morphological analysis

ACC	accusative	LOC	locative
ABL	ablative	NEG	negative
AOR	aorist	POSS	possessive
COMP	comparative	PL	plural
COND	conditional	PART	participle
COOP	cooperative	PF	perfect
DAT	dative	PRS	present
DISTR	distributive	PRTCL	particle
INSTR	instrumental	PST	past
INTER	interrogative	PSTP	postposition
GER	gerund	SG	singular

Informants

1. Batilov, Almaz Dženiševič, born 1976 in the city of Karakol in the Republic of Kyrgyzstan.
2. Maxin, Aržan Mixajlovič, born 1983 in the village of Kelej, the Ust'-Kan district of the Altay Republic.
3. Manataeva, Svetlana Vasil'evna, born 1971 in the village of D'odro, the Ongudaj district of the Altay Republic.