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Integration of World Literary Traditions and Innovative Artistic Searches in Contemporary Kazakh Prose

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to explore the ways, in which contemporary Kazakh prose writers create innovative texts characterized by hybridity peculiar to the era of postmodernism. In our study, we view the prose in contemporary Kazakhstan as a phenomenon of glocalization, since it combines global trends in postmodern literature with an original local flavor. Drawing on the short stories by five distinguished young prose authors and using narrative, hermeneutic and comparative methods of analysis, we identify innovative forms of dealing with social problems and universal values, as well as conveying the characters' inner feeling in contemporary Kazakh artistic prose. We provide examples of the influence of global artistic techniques on Kazakh literary works and their integration with Kazakh folklore to reflect the fate of the Kazakh people during the period of political and social instability in the country during the transitional period. The results of the qualitative analysis show that young prose authors' creativity forms a new color by integrating national folklore motifs with traditions of world literature based on Gothic and mystical themes. Through hybrid texts based on references to terror and mysticism, they raise issues of national identity and national code in their own unique styles incorporating mythopoetic expressions.

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1. Introduction

Postmodernism as a trend in global literature fits the literary aspirations of contemporary Kazakh prose authors in the era of independence and freedom. According to Saulembek^[1], an essential feature of postmodernism is that the logical development of an event or a conflict in the plot of a work is not mandatory, and readers are given the freedom to independently develop this idea and draw their own conclusions. In general, postmodernism in literature is characterized by authors' neglecting norms and canons of a plot construction and creatively experimenting with time as an individual category^[2]. It opens up new possibilities for fancifully combining pictures of reality and fiction through the transformation of structure, metaphorical style and mythological imagery^[3]. Through the lens of postmodernism, literary works are analyzed in terms of intertextuality, temporal distortion, fragmentation, and magical realism^[4]. Thus, the analysis of Martin Crimp's "Attempts on Her Life" shows such postmodern traits as the lack of a carefully constructed plot and well-made character, as well as the multiple use of references to seminal books of literature and religions^[5]. Postmodern works are regarded as hybrid texts based on mixtures of genres and styles^[6]. For example, "The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime" by Mark Haddon refers to Sherlock Homes' style and abounds in multiple meanings and connotations^[7, 8].

The hybridity of postmodern literature is also reflected in magical realism, in which magical elements are incorporated in the story in a natural way, as if there was no difference between fantasy and reality^[9]. According to Siskind^[10], magical realism is "a universal aesthetic that unveils the supernatural core of the real anywhere". Figlerowicz and Mertehikian^[11] view it as a glocal phenomenon, occurring both at a global and local level and involving both homogeneity and heterogeneity^[12], as well as hybridization and transculturation^[13]. Of particular interest in cultural art is creative integration of global and local cultural tradition^[14]. Among the most prominent authors writing in the mode of modern realism are Gabriel García Márquez, Mikhail Bul-

gakov, George Luis Borges and Carlo Fuentes. By using indigenous elements like folklore and cultural beliefs presented against real-life settings^[15], their literary texts acquire a unique identity^[3]. Peculiar to magical realism are such components as ambiguity, symbolism, and national and local myths^[16]. Through folklore, postmodern prose writers dwell on people's values such as consciousness, tradition, religion, and culture^[17].

Another interesting feature of postmodern literature, which is relevant for our analysis of modern prose in Kazakhstan, is hybridity emerging from the interaction of postmodernism and Gothic literature. In their analysis of cross-generic dynamism of gothic literature, Afrougheh et al.^[18] define Gothic-postmodernism as a link between Gothic literature and postmodernism, expressing the psychological and philosophical implications of terror in postmodern literature. Early Gothic works, such as "The Castle of Otranto" by Horace Walpole and "The Mysteries of Udolpho" by Ann Radcliffe, are characterized by using supernatural elements, dark sceneries and occult events to create an atmosphere of suspense, mystery and horror. Likewise, in postmodern works the perception of the reality can be realized through the presence of the unreal and supernatural. The fundamental concept in Gothic literature is terror, and in postmodern literature terror is viewed as an experience of a society in the postmodern age^[19]. Thus, in their strive for understanding social processes, postmodern authors deal with social issues connected with the use of advanced technologies^[20], individuals' role in reshaping society for its better growth^[21], or aspects of family life including the dysfunctionality in the family system^[22].

The purpose of this paper is to identify specific forms of artistic expression in contemporary Kazakh prose since gaining independence in 1991. It examines short stories by contemporary Kazakh writers from the point of view of particular ways of depicting reality by mixing Gothic, mystical and folklore motifs, which have not yet attracted sufficient attention from literary scholars. In this paper, the prose in contemporary Kazakhstan is treated as a phenomenon of glocalization, as it combines global trends in postmodern

literature with an original Kazakh flavor. Specific examples provided in the paper show the influence of global artistic techniques on Kazakh works as a special way of understanding the world. Studying the impact of Gothic and mysticism on local literature is significant for contemporary literary criticism.

2. Materials and Methods

The research materials were drawn from collections of short stories by five contemporary Kazakh writers: Madina Omarova, Koyshibek Mubarak, Ayagul Mantaeva, and Maksat Malikov, Almas Myrzakhmet. The corpus of literary texts selected for the present investigation totals 1104 pages. These books were chosen as objects of the study based on their initial publication in the Republic of Kazakhstan in the post-Soviet era, their original language being Kazakh, their categorization as small-scale epic prose, as well as their significance in the contemporary culture of the country. The integration of the mystical and gothic forms of expression in the world literary tradition makes the selected short stories written by modern Kazakh authors relevant for our investigation.

To explore the forms of artistic expression in the selected works by modern Kazakh prose authors, we employed complex analysis combining narrative, hermeneutic and comparative methods. In our study, narrative analysis was used to assess whether the authors of the literary works under investigation opened the way to new research while preserving the world literary tradition. The hermeneutic method was used to identify various meanings and provide explanations of the content, style and artistic structure of the text. The comparative method was used to single out similarities and differences between the literary styles typical of the prose authors and compare them with the artistic features belonging to the world literary tradition. Such complex qualitative analysis allowed us to identify artistic forms of expression belonging to modern Kazakh prose authors that creatively integrate local features with global literary traditions.

3. Results and Discussion

Madina Omarova's prose is an outstanding example of the first works in the Gothic style in the literature of Kazakhstan^[23]. In her short stories, the author raises a variety of

core problems. Thus, the collection of short stories "Qadir tuni" ("Night of Predestination") is drawn in a variety of literary genres such as miniatures (i.e., compositionally complete works with one dominant compositional element, being reinforced by the author's expression and dominant image), etudes (i.e., a small literary genre that raises one single issue), cypettes (i.e., short literary works containing only two or three plots but raising large-scale problems in a social or mythological context). However, Omarova's work is very interesting in terms of the level of the topics raised and the diversity of the subject materials^[24]. It has a thriller character, where the author completely oppresses the readers' minds and plays with their psychology. The writer and modern critic Talacbek Asemkulov relates the crux of this work to the concept of Hemingway's story "Wyoming Wine"^[23]. In his opinion, the thriller is in the direction of danger and a person who has read a lot of thrillers and is addicted to dystopia often has eyes widening and tears coming out.

The style of Madina Omarova's works is similar to that of Jacques Chazot, Charles Nodier, Petruc Bopel, and Larisa Petrushevskaya, who wrote in the Gothic style. However, in Omarova's works, traces of her national identity are clearly visible, and her characters are villagers who managed to keep Kazakhness intact. Taking the mystical trend in foreign literature as an example, Omarova tries to combine national knowledge and the system of global currents based on a magical plot^[25]. In her adoption of the Gothic style, Madina Omarova gave a new form to Kazakh literature, trying to convey the difficulties of the first years of independence of the Kazakh people, when the behavior of the general public was unpleasant^[26]. Each generation was born in a way suitable for the situation of its time, the taste of the people of its time. The product of Madina Omarova, born from a small path, is a requirement of today's time. This is the reason for the complete change of today's thought form and multi-aesthetic taste. Aliya Bopezhanova^[27] notes the complexity and contradictions of Madina Omarova's characters, the transformation of the idea underlying the work into an image, that is, a world of heroes that the young writer brought to Kazakh prose as a new and original world. Thus, the critic believes that Madina Omarova's prose can be called a new word in modern Kazakh literature.

In Kazakh literature, the concepts of Gothic and mysticism are characteristic of most of the writers who came to

literature along with Madina Omarova. Many writers, taking advantage of the rich heritage of ancient mythological networks and oral literature, were able to present many works that would appeal to the reader's taste. The artistic system of Kazakh prose has always had a great influence on folklore motifs, images, and mythological stories. Mysticism and myth are considered to be genres that appeared in the infancy of human consciousness^[28]. One of the researchers of mythopoetic verses in contemporary Kazakh prose Ainur Toleu maintains that myth is the root of the nation, and in the formation of a certain national identity, national code, writers should follow the roots of that nation^[29]. She believes it is appropriate for young writers during the period of independence to turn to mysticism and myth again. It can be observed that the mystical prose, which began with Goethe's work "Faust" in foreign literature, has become the object of most of today's young prose writers.

In the "Qazaq adebi tilinin sozdigi" ("Dictionary of the Kazakh Literary Language")^[30] mysticism is defined as belief in the supernatural, mystical power. According to "Kazakhstan ulttyq encyklopediyasy" ("Kazakhstan National Encyclopedia")^[31], mysticism is a religious-idealistic view of the world, which is based on belief in supernatural forces. It is closely related to irrationalism and asceticism and is characterized by exoterism or secrecy. Mysticism, first of all, is a desire to know the spiritual world and through psychological experience, actions arising from this, exercises of the soul and body. Mythopoetics is a complex interaction between the author (poetics) and national culture (myth). It seems that young writers in the literature of the period of independence want to understand that the Kazakh society is getting separated from its roots in the process of globalization based on their mystical, magical, mythopoetic works.

In recent years, Kazakh prose has increasingly featured characters who are "disappointed in the world" and seek purity around them. In the stories "Kuzgi bir keshte" ("On an Autumn Evening") and "Zhol ustinde" ("On the Road"), it is surprising that Almabek's son and a girl named Zhanna (who died) only meet certain people in this world. The fact that a six-year-old girl falls in love with a five-year-old boy named Askhat, ignores other people and does not notice them, as well as a person's desire for purity is one of the signs of the loss of harmony in life. As the author puts it, "I live alone in a one-room apartment. How scary it is to be alone in a

big city with a population of over a million people, because a person can no longer be a support for another person," it is easy to understand that a hard-to-cure disease is gaining momentum in society. By the way, why is an angel named Zhanna looking for Askhat? Because Askhat is pure, he is innocent. What does she care about a jealous woman who is jealous of her husband for other people, or about a lonely woman smoking a cigarette? However, our lonely woman Mariyash is a better character. She can think. Perhaps this is why the angel (possibly the dead girl) approached her. "In what part of the big city does she live now? Does she still love Askhat? Why did she come and where did she go?" - this is how a short mystical story ends, which leaves many questions^[24].

The story "Kysta" ("In Winter") also shows oppressive melancholy. There is nothing superfluous in each word, although the story is short, the author wants to say a lot in it. Again, the same living orphan - an old man, in whose house there are books by Marx and Lenin, portraits of Stalin, an old dressing gown, an old jacket - all these are discarded things that exude loneliness and despondency. The writer conveys the idea that even recently shining figures and accumulated material values turn into dust over time, emphasizing their powerlessness before eternity: "People who rejoiced at the flakes of falling snow did not think about the approaching frost. Now, along with the gloomy sky, everything around was plunged into despondency"^[24]. This is not just a landscape, but a philosophy of life, masterfully intertwined in the parallelism of nature and human destiny. He, walking to the bus stop with indifference inspired by the despondency in his grandfather's house, says: "No matter how much I tried to convince myself that spring would soon come, I still could not believe it." The protagonist does not look for spring in nature, but for spring in human life. Such hopeless expectation, limited faith in good and the expectation of greater evil are continued in all of Madina Omarova's characters.

One of the striking manifestations of the aesthetic tendency of postmodernism is socialist art. Postmodernism, in essence, does not create ideals, since it clearly shows the turns of life and distances from reality. Postmodernists do not seek to solve the problems of existence or create their own philosophy, they want to simplify and make life understandable, rethinking the existing cultural heritage. This is one of the key ideas of the socialist art movement. In this context,

it is worth highlighting two main concepts that explain the phenomenon of postmodernism: deconstruction (complete rejection of the old, creation of the new at the expense of the old) and decentration (disappearance of stable meanings of any phenomenon). Socialist art officially emerged as a parody of the art forms of the Soviet era and, in general, of the images of modern mass culture. This is clearly reflected in its ironic name, combining the concepts of socialist realism and pop art. If pop art in the West was a reflection of the excessive production of goods and the level of consumption, then in the USSR the object of socialist art was the excessive production of ideology. Conceptualism and an emphasis on materiality also influenced Sots Art to a certain extent.

In recent years, in Kazakh fashion, the character's separation from the world and the search for purity from the surroundings have received more attention. In the story "Qysta", Omarova^[24] describes an orphan in a Marx and Lenin shirt, a Stalin jacket, a coat of arms, who feels loneliness and sadness from the world, which he threw away a long time ago. In this way, the writer conveys the transformation of the person who was born only yesterday, the accumulated world into the dust of time, and his helplessness in front of eternity. The character is not looking for the heaven of nature, but the heaven of human nature. Omarova took her image from society. Cruelty and disability, good and bad, intense lust and indifference, most of the time is a closed window, a thread that does not end in human nature. It is also a dream of the human child's blind eyes and deafness in "Qatygezdik" ("Cruelty"), arrogance in "Qarga" and "Ana Gumyr", immorality in "Coffee with Cognac", disability in "Aktaban" and "Mysyq". In the works of Madina Omarova, the diversity and multiplicity of the narrative are revealed, and the hundredth reality of the temporal space is revealed. Even more important is the character's own truth at the top of the soul. The writer uses the semantics of the world. This story, which is told only from one side, begins with a natural phenomenon. Further, a familiar human being, a foreign voice, and a simple narration will bring the reader's attention to the epic. The moment when the mystery character, who is lying too quietly and listening, reveals that he is a dead man. In general, in the output of Madina Omarova, the plot has a wide range of internal and external dimensions. She wants to convey the life of today's life to the reader, who observes, perceives, and evaluates ethics through the eyes

of today. It is natural that the topic is today's, and its clear, narrative format is also more relevant.

In Madina Omarova's works^[24], the posthuman appears as a unilinear figure, and the reader is affected by an actionist effect. It is not always clear whether the performance has ended or not. The unpredictable duration and content of each specific event become an integral part of the effect of the work. One of the manifestations of the aesthetic tendency of postmodernism is the concept of the world and the individual, put forward by happening. That is, the individual lives in the elements, the world of random events, and although they feel completely free as a subject, ultimately submits to a single action. The parallel development of plots in this literary work gives readers the opportunity to choose, giving them a chance to be both the author and the character. The image of the posthuman does not need any description. Some people may regard the actions of the characters in this work as servility, while other readers may see this as an attempt to adapt to the times. The author also lacks an agitational position on "how it should be". Any event or action involving the author, character and addressees can be viewed in terms of the participation of happening elements. In this context, Madina Omarova's work "Tapsirma" also analyzes the personal characteristics of a posthuman through actionist methods. The work includes the following lines: "I am completely alone here. I have many enemies. And I am alone. But once I had an heir, a son. My only son... I had a wife, with whom we were united in great love... She was the queen of this palace. When they were here, this place resembled a royal palace, how wonderful and majestic it was. And now you can see for yourself - it has turned into a bank building, an office. I have already grown old," he ran his hand over his head. We looked down. For some reason, I started laughing" (^[24], pp. 58–59). In these lines, the concept of the "environment in action" of happening is fully manifested. In a person's life, as well as in the future turns of their destiny, the environment and the space in which one lives play an important role. A paradoxical question logically arises: "How can a conscious person be controlled by unconscious things and the environment?" It is worth remembering that a happening is not just a part of the plot of an event, but an artistic movement that turns an event and action into an end in itself. A special feature of a happening is a combination of the main patterns of various types of art.

Actionism in the given excerpt is manifested in the fact that the features of the characters and the environment surrounding them absorb elements of pop art and aleatoricism. As Ilyin^[32] claims “postmodern chimerism, although unique in its incomparability and paradoxicality, is an unconscious attempt at a holistic and ideological-aesthetic understanding of life, which manifests itself in an original fragmentation. At the end of the twentieth century, the result of human experience was a fragmentary state of thinking that no longer lends itself to holistic synthesis. The contradictions of modern life do not fit into any reasonable framework, and when we try to explain them theoretically, they appear only as concepts intersecting with the fruits of imagination and consciousness” (p. 6). The image of the posthuman presented to the reader fully corresponds to this concept, since the very concept of the posthuman becomes a paradox in culture. In works that include details of the happening, the posthuman, although he seems to be an ordinary character who does not have superpowers, is able to travel in his thoughts through several worlds and turn into different characters.

The goal of Madina Omarova’s writing is her own history, her own era, the various fates and moods of the past, sorrow and suffering, etc. full of type. When the human being is given a life and the pain of death is depicted in a real way with the principle of contradiction, it is the signature of the pen. The writer shows the heart, soul, emotional balance, conflict of character, and the difficulties in the discussion of destiny through her works on issues such as the fate of the nation in the period of stagnation, political and social conflicts in the country, human nature in the transitional period, and spiritual addiction. The writer’s adaptation of the mystical process in the world literary tradition, as well as the innovative search of writing, enriched with a new form, are clearly reflected in the discovery of the content expressed through the mythopoetic expressions in his stories based on the Gothic, magical style.

Koyshibek Mubarak’s works written in gothic and mystical genres remind of Milorad Pavich, Gabriel García Márquez and Carlo Fuentes, whose realism is depicted in a mystical way, with borders between realism and mysticism blurred^[33]. Mubarak^[34] often uses the motif of cloth, the concept of fire, and the phenomenon of a mirror in creating a plot for his mystical works. In the story called “Toranghyly siqyry” (“The Magic of Torangyly”), the protagonist lives in

the world of fairies. In the story, the young man was going from the bus station to Besbastau, a place one hundred and fifty kilometers from Torangyly. It was a talisman given by a beggar woman he met in the city that the protagonist was taking to this place. A beggar woman once gave him a charm and said to hang it in front of the mirror at night. Even though he did not expect any miracle, he took it to the mirror and went to bed. When he felt that someone was staring at him, he saw a girl wrapped in white flowers in the mirror. The protagonist was dizzy, and his ears were ringing. He heard the pleading voice of a girl asking to save her and release her. In this way, the hero meets the mystical character of the story. He leaves his home and goes to the fairy girl’s world. Then he gets married and has a child in the land of fairies and lives happily. However, it is time to return home. Having returned to his world, he leaves the former Torangyly station. Nothing has changed. It is the same bus that he rode a long time ago. It is interesting that only one day has passed since the protagonist left. But having entered the world of fairies as a young man, he turns into a gray-haired old man within a day. At the same time, the hero met his long-awaited beau by burning the paper given by the beggar woman and entered the other world through the motif of fire. According to Toleu^[29], fire is closely related to women, because it is usually a woman who collects firewood from family members, lights a fire and lifts a cauldron. It is natural for any nation to have mystical and mythical knowledge about fire. It is not at all difficult to see that a great breakthrough in human life was achieved by mastering fire. The fear of fire and the knowledge of fire can be found in many ancient mythical characters. Dragons that spit fire from their mouths and the fire of hell, which corresponds to the Islamic belief in old knowledge, are also the result of human understanding of this fire.

A distinctive feature of *Koyshibek Mubarak*’s works is the combination of mystical and gothic genres, blurring the boundaries between realism and mysticism. This approach is not unique to Mubarak alone; representatives of world literature such as Milorad Pavic, Gabriel García Márquez and Carlos Fuentes also worked in this direction. These writers enriched realism with mystical elements, developing plots in a special fantasy world. In Mubarak’s mystical works, the motif of fabric, the concept of fire and the phenomenon of a mirror are used as the main plot devices. Especially in the story “Torangynyn siqyry”, the motif of fire plays an im-

portant role, since with its help the main character passes to another world. In the study of Ainur Akhmetova^[35], these elements are associated with ancient mystical ideas of mankind about fire. Fire is perceived not only as a source of physical energy, but also as a spiritual force embodied in various mythological images. One of the key features of Koyshibek Mubarak's work is his ability to combine national consciousness with modern literary forms based on mythology. In this context, the motif of fire and the symbol of the mirror in his works are used as symbols of mystical and spiritual transformations. The role of the mirror as a border is an important symbol of the connection between two worlds. The main character enters the world of spirits through the mirror, which once again confirms the relevance of mystical elements in Mubarak's work.

The author's story "Suretshi" ("The Artist") also contains a mystical detail about the mirror. In the story, the artist was dying for his paintings. He put his soul into his drawings, only when he painted with a brush given to him by his teacher when he first entered the College of Artists. As a youth, he was passionate about everything. But he did not admire the beauties he met on the street. All he had to do was see their face and he would come home and start painting it. All he had to do was put the ball leaning against the wall in front of the mirror, and the same beauty would come out of the mirror. The artist would go through ancient archives and paint a picture of an ancient princess on a copper plate. At the moment the painter, who came home and painted a picture, got into the hair of the princess, a soldier with a sallow mustache came out of the mirror and chopped off the artist's head. Therefore, a mirror is a boundary connecting another space and our world. Here, the author often uses this property of the mirror to present mystical characters. In this way Mubarak^[34] uses knowledge of folk mythology to create original stories, which can be called a precious spiritual heritage of ancestors.

The mystical elements in Koyshibek Mubarak's short story "The Artist" have been widely analyzed by literary scholars. The role of the mirror motif as a mystical symbol is especially important and requires special attention. In this work, the mirror is presented not only as a physical object, but also as a boundary between different spaces and realities, which is one of the characteristic features of Mubarak's stories. According to Ainur Akhmetova^[35], in the

work "Suretshi" ("Artist"), the author reveals the inner world of the artist, his passion for art and connection with mystical images. The artist's transition through the mirror to another space symbolizes not only the fantasy world, but also the inner spiritual experience. In this case, the mirror eliminates the boundary between the artist's soul and his art, making them one. According to literary scholar Zhakulaev^[36], this method allows for a deeper exploration of the relationship between reality and mysticism in human consciousness. The artist's investment of a part of his soul in his works enhances the mystical nature of the creative process. The opinion of the literary critic also plays an important role in the analysis of Mubarak's works. According to him, the author's use of the mirror symbol is an example of how mystical elements of world literature find new expression in Kazakh prose. The connection between the mirror and art shows how Mubarak sought to reveal the complex internal conflicts of human nature. Critical assessment of this work emphasizes Mubarak's mastery in combining mystical elements and mythology, creating a unique world. Using the mirror motif, Mubarak introduces symbols of folk mythology into a modern literary context, opening new horizons for Kazakh literature.

Along with mystical characters, the writer's work "Murde" ("Corpse") contains elements of the Gothic style. In the story, the young man, who saw the young girl on the coffin, struggling with her life, tried to stop the crowd, but no one could hear or see him. Everyone's eyes were heavy and filled with sadness. When he reached the gravediggers, he asked what had happened to them that they were going to take the living person to the afterlife. Then the young man went to the cemetery, hugged the grave and wept asking the girl to forgive him for not interceding for her. The girl's voice said that it was not his fault, and the young man, who fell into a trance, looked around to see if he had heard wrongly. Then he went and saw that on the other side of the grave a blonde girl was lying down, wrapped in a white veil. At this point, the reader is convinced that the protagonist really saw the girl's soul. He asked the girl to get out, but she replied she could not because her body was under the grave. The young man got up and ran towards the village. As soon as he took the shovel that was standing on the threshold of the outer house, he came to the grave and began to dig the grave. When the soul reached the fool and lifted the girl, the earth

became a roar and covered her head. In this way, the boy stayed with the girl forever. It should be noted that there is a ban on digging a grave in the Kazakh tradition. The protagonist dug a grave and died himself. It is known that death itself causes fear in the human soul. The young man talking to the girl's soul creates fear and panic in the reader. It indicates that the author should not necessarily impose national knowledge on the mythical plot, and that behind it such tragic events could follow. According to Zhakulaev^[36], the author plays with human imagination by describing the story as if it were happening in the real world. Death always causes fear in a person. Thinking about what happens after the soul leaves the body is always a mystery, both interesting and scary for a biped. It is true that mankind believes in the existence of a secret.

When discussing the role of Gothic elements and the emotional impact of Koyshibek Mubarak's "Murde" ("Corpse"), it is important to take into account the opinions of literary critics. According to Zhakulayev^[36], the author connects human imagination with the real world, deeply exploring the fear and horror inherent in human nature. In the story "Corpse", the theme of death occupies a central place, and one of the characteristic properties of Gothic literature is the reflection of deep social problems through the forces that cause fear. Literary critics note that in this story, Mubarak raises philosophical questions about death and eternity. The young man's attempt to save the girl by talking to her soul and digging up her grave demonstrates how the author combines Gothic plot elements with national myths inherent in Kazakh culture. Thus, Mubarak accurately reflects the mystical fears present in people's minds in the context of modern literature. In addition, the work raises philosophical reflections on death, which becomes a characteristic feature of Mubarak's work. According to Zhakulayev^[36], Mubarak's Gothic style is aimed at revealing spiritual conflicts occurring in the human soul. The themes of death, soul and eternity are revealed through deep psychological elements that cause fear in the reader. These critical reviews allow us to better understand Mubarak's work and show how his story "Corpse" uses elements of the Gothic style in Kazakh literature.

Mubarak's works are characterized by horror, mysticism, and mystery typical of Gothic prose. The image of freedom of consciousness is depicted, as sometimes the character talks to himself internally, sometimes externally. In the

story "Love", two lovers got into a car accident. A man who does not believe that his lover is dead falls into an unreal psychological state. That is, through the cross between the soul and the body, the author enters the door of two worlds. This story described in terrifying detail the abyssal events in an incomprehensible environment and the agony of the soul. In Gothic, through fiction such mysterious forces and secret events create fear^[36]. Indeed, throughout the story, a sense of fear awakens in the mind of the reader. Koyshibek Mubarak's distinctive feature is that in creating portraits of artistic images, he chooses a man for the images that leaves his world and inhabits the earth, and a woman for mystical characters with mystical power. The roots of this are clearly based on myths. It is clear that in order to write prose in a mythical place, the author must have a thorough knowledge of folklore, and must not make mistakes that would lead to the boiling of the nation's knowledge and life.

According to scholars, Koyshibek Mubarak's story "Mahabbat" ("Love") masterfully combines the classic features of Gothic prose with national literature. The story, where two lovers get into a car accident, and the hero cannot come to terms with the death of his beloved, demonstrates the author's ability to depict deep psychological tension. Literary scholars highly appreciate the emotional tension in Mubarak's work, as well as the ability to plausibly convey the internal contradictions of the characters^[35]. Deep social and philosophical meanings are hidden behind the events in the Gothic style. According to critics, Mubarak touches on complex issues, depicting the spiritual crisis in society, the struggle of people with their inner world and the process of distancing themselves from reality.

Among the writers who use the mythological network to express their ideas artistically is Ayagul Mantaeva^[37], who deeply immerses herself in the psychology of her characters, brings people face to face with their nature, and leads them to reveal themselves, is also. Another characteristic that distinguishes her is that each story deals with the meaning of belonging, the closure of the universe, and the existence of a person. Thus, the story "Qabir guli" ("Grave Flower") is a type of a person's first thought about death. The first death that the character of the story encounters is the death of a bent man who plays the fountain. The key to the success of the story lies in the peculiarity of the narrative form, that is, in this work, the character-narrator, who is not the author,

appears in the image of the narrator. In this story, the Muslim-Kazakh tradition of reading the Koran and laying soil at the grave is not seen. The character wants to put flowers on the grave. So here the writer uses the western mythical element in many details. The red flower is strongly attached to Napoleon and Josephine. It is said that Napoleon's wife used to wear a bunch of violets in her hair with a big flower that she would wear. On the day of marriage with Josephine, the famous craftsman did not come out of his house and gave her a violet flower. The employee who brought a violet flower to the base was well received. From the side of the garden, the craftsman, who had not come to many places, went to look for the flower himself. He took the base but could not find it. He looked for it along the street, but there was nothing to look for. The commander wondered how he could repent in the eyes of Josephine without a violet flower. In June, the violet flower is frozen and curled up. The commander filled his arms with violets and went home. Josephine, with a smile on her face, took the violet and said that this flower had been plucked from a grave, and she went away. The mortal man bowed down, admitting that the flower had been plucked from the grave, fell at the feet of the craftsman, and bowed his head. After a long time, Napoléon fell in love with the intelligent Josephine and was locked in loneliness. Napoleon planted a violet flower near the grave of his beloved. On the last painful day of his life, Napoleon touched Josephine's envelope, plucked a single violet flower and put it in his pocket. Soon the great craftsman himself would die".

In her story "Grave Flower" Mantaeva writes the following details. On the last day of August, on the death of Burym, the daughter of Esirkep Koke was very sad. He did not wake up after sleeping at night. When she went to the grave, she was struck by the fact that Burym had plucked a beautiful red flower from the bare grave. This was the first time she had seen such a fragrant flower. She wanted to give this flower to Burym, but she could not. The character here also died after smelling the flower from the grave. Using the world mythic story in detail, it is written in a brand new story that is relevant to the Kazakh society. At the turn of the century, Ayagul Mantaeva developed a rich literary style. First of all, she prepares the reader from a psychological point of view, she tries to find out the solution of the thought that has been expressed as much as possible, and ties the knot. The writer has created her own world in the relationship be-

tween life and death, love and happiness. Another feature of Mantaeva is that she is familiar with the world classic. For example, the "genius" in the story "Depeccia" reminds Abytalip in "Bopandy Station" by Chingys Aitmatov. The main character of the story of "Jayhap" does not want to bring anything to life, it is sad and sorrowful, and it also passes away. Hamlet's words to Ophelia will ring in your mind when he says that he wants to burn a single unhappy soul without killing them. The value of Mantaeva's prose is a new layer of thought, knowledge, and aesthetics, which was alien to Kazakh literature until now.

Regarding the story by Ayagul Mantaeva "Flower on the Grave", one can highly appreciate her new aesthetic views, which she brought to Kazakh literature (Sultan-galiyeva & Sagidulliyeva)^[38]. Mantaeva's work, touching on the eternal themes of life and death, encourages the reader to deep reflection. Through every detail, she reveals the inner world of a person and depicts complex psychological processes. The writer's characters depart from everyday life and face death, which leads them to the awareness of the boundaries of human existence and the knowledge of their own essence. Mantaeva's work brings to Kazakh prose not only a new style, but also philosophical depth. Her ability to masterfully combine Western and Kazakh mythology, as well as the addition of symbolism, previously uncharacteristic of national literature, is considered an important innovation. Using mythological motifs, Mantaeva deeply conveys thoughts about a person's place in life, his attitude to death and the transience of time. Mantaeva not only raises philosophical questions, but also deeply immerses the reader in the psychological experiences of her characters. The symbolic meaning of the red flower in her story "Flower on the Grave," as well as details about Napoleon and Josephine, show a new perspective on the attitude toward death in Kazakh society. Thus, Mantaeva introduces mythological motifs characteristic of world literature into Kazakh literature, creating a new example of national culture and worldview.

In each of her works, Ayagul Mantaeva is able to express such valuable thoughts as the meaning of belonging, the closure of the universe, and the essence of man. The fate of the heroes, full of life, full of twists and turns, shows the perspective of today's life, the suffering of the human soul. Today's human condition, suffering, and life-long regrets demand long attention, deep listening and understanding from

the author that strives to change the current situation in the society through prose.

Mysticism is known to be used in a broad and narrow sense. In the broadest sense, the interpretation of the phenomena of nature and society is based on the belief in secrecy, irrational, supernatural origin. Mysticism in the narrow sense is the belief in the ability of a person to communicate directly with supernatural phenomena (god, devil, spirit, magical power, fate, etc.), given by special ways of communication with the supernatural, transcendent world, that is, not only theoretically, but also personal experience means by. The above-mentioned mystical images can also be seen in the works by *Maksat Malikov*^[39], who is passionate about innovation. The stories included in the collection “Zhumbaq kitap” (“Mystery Book”), are freely adapted to the mystical, utopian, fear-inducing form of world literature. The simplest form of mysticism is magic. Magical works are given through communication with the souls of the dead, spirits, devils, gods, who possess the secrets of magical power management, due to the belief in the most sacred abilities and capabilities of a person.

Man and death are presented as mystical elements in the work “Face to Face with Death”, in which a young journalist decides to interview the deceased in search of news that will shock the country. He decided to interview Azhal (Death). Just before that, he remembered reading a story of a man in some newspaper called “The Man Who Chased Death”. At that moment, he was angry that the character in the story was confused. And he had never seen journalists interview Azhal. So he settled his questions about Azhal and went in search of Azhal. Finally, he met Azhal, who was looking for him, in the house of Allah. The journalist saw Azhal’s face and color for the first time, who was not at all like a man or the devils of legend. Talking about the time and space in the story, although the space begins on the surface of the earth, it continues by traveling to the other world. The journalist who has traveled to another world in terms of time knows that a day has passed when he comes back to earth. But his appearance is different, his complexion is gray.

Analyzing this story, it can be noted that the author shows death not only as an abstract concept, but also as the embodiment of the basic psychological fears of a person. In this work, death is depicted not only as a mystical phenomenon, but also as an image that has social and philo-

sophical significance. The work “Olimmen betpe-bet (“Face to Face with Death”) rethinks the traditional idea of death in Kazakh literature. Through a dialogue between a journalist and death, the author philosophically explores the limitations of human life and the impact of death on it. Here, the change of time and space demonstrates the author’s skill in creating a connection between reality and the mystical world. The work calls for rethinking the usual views on death and revising the ways of perceiving it. In addition, the writer’s approach to depicting the connection between man and death through a special mystical method is highly appreciated. The key feature of the work is the journalist’s journey to another world and his return, when, despite the fact that only one day has passed, he undergoes both spiritual and physical changes. The subjective nature of time and the limited space allow the author to seek answers to key questions about the perception of death in human consciousness. This work demonstrates a new approach to the mystical genre in Kazakh literature, enriched with philosophical reflections. The author deeply explores the connection between life and death, prompting the reader to think about the finiteness of human existence.

As the name suggests, “The Man Who Chased Death” is about a young man who sees Death in his dreams at night and searches for it from every corner during the day. A guy who meets death only in his dreams is determined to find it. A black car hits the man who searched the streets of the city for Azhal, and now he meets face to face with Azhal, whom he has been chasing forever. Reading these stories reminds us of the writing style of the Japanese writer Yukio Mishima. The characters in Mishima’s works are also mortal. The characters of Maksat Malikov’s two stories “Face to Face with Death” and “The Man Who Chased Death” are not afraid of the apparition of Death embedded in the human mind. The hero, who can communicate with death and follow its footsteps, shows that there is a time for death for everyone. An outstanding feature of Maksat Malikov’s works is his attempt to create a new world through medieval Japanese fairy tales and Eastern philosophical prose. In his opinion, Kazakhs should once again look at their roots in the process of globalization. It can be clearly felt that he expresses his dissatisfaction with the happenings in the society, which are foreign to the national identity, with the characters being eager to die, traveling to the mysterious world, looking for paradise.

Maksat Malikov's story "Olimdi izdegen adam" ("A Man Seeking Death") examines a person's view of death and its acceptance from a special philosophical point of view. This work can be assessed as a new example of depicting the theme of death in Kazakh literature, which combines mystical and psychological depths. Malikov's character sees Death only in his dreams, and during the day he looks for it in real life, showing the complex relationship between life and death. At the culmination of the work, the character is hit by a black car and comes face to face with Death, which allows the author to convey the process of accepting death by a person. The view of death in this work enriches Kazakh literature with philosophical and mystical elements that were previously rare. According to literary scholars, these works by Malikov are recognized as a new direction in Kazakh literature, calling for the preservation of national identity and a new awareness of one's roots in the context of the globalization of Kazakh society^[40].

The young writer *Almaz Myrzakhmet*^[41] is one of the authors of works that arouse the interest of readers, combining traditional imagery with innovation. His work "Tus zhanaryndagy zhas" ("Tears in a Dream") is based on a short and attractive plot. It is as if he gave birth to a new world, a new channel in prose, using plots that are beyond the comprehension of his contemporaries. As usual, the beginning of Gothic works is clear. The narrator had a nightmare that night. He thought the crows were eating the white bull alive. He threw a stone to scare the birds, and they started to rush towards him. He screamed and ran away and hid in the house. He woke up shaking from the sound of crows banging on the door and window. At first, we perceive the main character as a pleasant, well-educated person. However, at the climax of the plot, the hero in the form of an arrogant, selfish guy fearlessly and cruelly digs a stake into the head of Kemel's corpse, disturbs the ghosts, and gives false honor in front of his friends.

A few Gothic elements can be found in this short story. The plot is based on secrecy and the secret is kept until the end of the work. For example, the secret death of the hero's son in the work. The main character does not understand himself he knocks a stake on the head of the deceased Kemel and falls into a fever. The plot consists of an atmosphere of fear and dread and constant threats to the safety and honor of the main character. When he went to his son, his eyes were

spinning, his heart was broken. The ghosts, hiding in the shadows of the graves and watching everything from outside me, began to crawl around him. The grave of the perfect deceased seemed to be swallowing him inside and dragging him into the abyss. He was about to run away as soon as he got up. But some strong hand grabbed the hem of his coat. The fight in a dangerous, dark scene creates an atmosphere of mystery and fear. The main feature of Gothic works is that the main events take place in the dark night, in tombs or abandoned places where people do not live. The struggle in the inner world of the person in the story, the victory of evil, the pain of the human soul, and the impressive expression of fear in the characters give the work a different tone.

It is worth noting that *Almaz Myrzakhmet*'s work "Tus zhanaryndagy zhas" ("Tears in a Dream") brought a new style and Gothic elements to Kazakh literature. *Myrzakhmet*'s prose is based on short but deep plots that show his unique ability to explore the inner world. The author plunges the modern reader into emotional depths through frightening events and internal struggles of the characters. In the story "Tears in a Dream" the fear and mystical atmosphere are masterfully depicted, and here the attention of the reader is directed not only to the actions of the character, but also to his inner feelings. According to *Satbaeva*, *Myrzakhmet* combined Gothic elements with traditional motifs of Kazakh folklore, bringing a new direction to national literature. Especially the episode, in which the main character puts his hand in the head of Kemel's body, shows the crisis of a society that has moved away from spiritual values and ethical norms^[38].

In addition, it is worth highly appreciating the work of internal dynamics. *Myrzakhmet* creates complex psychological portraits, showing the contradictions of the inner world of characters, as well as the harmful influence of arrogance and egoism on human life. The atmosphere of tragedy and fear, victory over evil and moral decline of the hero give the work a special depth and drama. This story of *Myrzakhmet* not only introduces new genre elements into Kazakh prose, which were not there before, but also, preserving national values, touches on topics close to the modern reader. The work is estimated as unique, having an impact on the development of the Gothic genre in Kazakh literature and attracting the attention of literary critics.

Myrzakhmet's works are distinguished by the predom-

inance of gothic expressions and psychological colors. In particular, the work “Self-Portrait” creates the impression of skillfully painting the layers of mystery and inner life of the main character. This work is about an artist who broke up with his wife three months ago and was disappointed in life. After the failures in his life, the artist focuses on his work again. Today he will draw his picture. Before dawn, he completes his image with a magical secret without even looking in the mirror. However, when the artist wakes up and looks at his work at night, he says nothing but “Impossible...”. The reason is that all night long, he represented his mother’s happiness as a child. What the artist is afraid of looking in the mirror is the self-portrait of the person in that unconscious world. In this story, the writer delves into the depths of the human soul, the sequence of events is distinguished by unexpected surprises, moments full of fear and terror for the main character. He writes about the fear of looking in the mirror in the human mind^[42]. In this way, Almaz Myrzakhmet uses an innovative method to describe the emergence of fear in the human mind in order to draw the reader’s attention, experimenting in the depiction of new content in a new way that contributed to the Kazakh literature of the new century.

Regarding Almaz Myrzakhmet’s work “Self-Portrait”, it can be noted that it is rich in deep psychological and symbolic elements. In the story, the author skillfully depicts a person’s fear of self-knowledge by looking into the inner world of the character. It is especially important to note that the symbol of mirrors is used as a powerful tool for revealing the unconscious world of the character. This story is especially valuable because it realistically and emotionally shows the psychological tension that arises from the inner struggle of a person. Analyzing the work “Self-Portrait”, it is possible to highlight how Myrzakhmet, using the motif of mirrors, portrays a fearful character before meeting himself. The mirror reflects not only the physical appearance of a person, but also his inner feelings and emotions. The artist’s reluctance to face his inner world and fear of accepting it raises such questions as unconscious fear and the desire to avoid self-knowledge.

This work by Almaz Myrzakhmet can be considered as a new interpretation of the characteristic features of Gothic prose in Kazakh literature. The fear of looking in the mirror, the past of the character and his internal contradictions

form the psychological basis of the work. Unexpected and fear-filled moments in the work convey the emotional and psychological difficulties that arise when a person collides with his own essence. This story confirms that Almaz Myrzakhmet brought new content and experimental methods to Kazakh literature, giving it a new impetus. His creative approach can be considered as one of the new philosophical and psychological trends in modern Kazakh literature.

4. Conclusions

At the end of the 20th century, when the Kazakh people were an independent state, the themes of “eternity” (life and death, good and evil, love and evil, loneliness, solitude), the finiteness and infinity of the world, the spatial and temporal relations came to the fore. The prose works of such writers as Madina Omarova, Koyshibek Mubarak, Ayagul Mantaeva, Maksat Malikov, and Almaz Myrzakhmet use mysticism, magic and myth as an artistic method to express social problems, which is a new feature in Kazakh literature. In the micro-plot works born in the era of independence, the image of today’s society, the sadness and need of the people, and the scenes of the spiritually depraved times gave rise to artistic-ideological and innovative search. The qualitative analysis of the prose of postmodern Kazakh prose writers shows that their creativity adds national color to Kazakh literature and forms a new color in connection with the trends of world literature. Each of them not only describes the social image of today’s society, the psychological state of people in their own unique style, but each of them is able to raise the issue of national identity and national code in their works. Throughout their works, traces of mastery in depicting the actions and inner world of the characters, which are skillfully and realistically depicted, accurately reveal the value of the writer’s thoughts on the meaning of belonging, the closure of the universe, and the nature of the human being. Young prose authors’ adaption of the mystical process in the global literary tradition, as well as the discovery of the content expressed through the mythopoetic expressions in their stories based on the Gothic and magical style are expanded by using folklore details, thus enriching Kazakh literature and raising it to a higher level.

For further development of the research, it would be important to study the elements of postmodernism in mod-

ern Kazakh prose in more depth and analyze their influence on national literature. In particular, it is necessary to pay attention to how postmodernist tendencies were formed in Kazakh literature and how they can be compared with global postmodernism. In addition, the study of how postmodernist approaches influence Kazakh cultural codes, traditional values and mythology may become a relevant direction for future research. Such a study would reveal the influence of national characteristics and global literary trends on the development of postmodernist Kazakh prose.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization, R.B.S.; methodology, S.S.S.; analysis and interpretation, Z.Z.M. and G.S.S.; resources, A.A.A., G.S.A. and K.B.Z.; writing—original draft preparation, Z.Z.M., G.S.S., A.A.A., G.S.A. and K.B.Z.; writing—review and editing, R.B.S. and S.S.S.; supervision, R.B.S. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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