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## Theoretical studies and research in Kazakh literary studies during the period of independence

This article offers a comprehensive examination of the theoretical orientations and scholarly investigations that have emerged within Kazakh literary studies during the period of national independence. Following the attainment of sovereignty, Kazakh literary scholarship was liberated from the ideological constraints characteristic of the Soviet epoch and thereby acquired the capacity to establish autonomous scholarly paradigms. This historical juncture created favorable conditions for the substantive integration of Kazakh literary studies into the global academic discourse. One of the principal domains addressed in the article is literary theory. In the independence era, foundational categories of literary theory — such as artistic method, literary movement, literary trend, poetic system, genre theory, the national spiritual code, and the aesthetics of modernism and postmodernism — underwent significant conceptual renewal and received expanded theoretical elaboration. The study systematizes and critically analyses research devoted to these theoretical issues, elucidating the interconnections among key theoretical constructs and their manifestations in Kazakh literature. It further identifies the methodological specificities of various scholars, clarifies the scholarly significance of these categories for understanding literary processes, and pays particular attention to new interpretations of postmodern aesthetics in contemporary prose and poetry. The primary aim of the research is to examine the work of literary scholars who, in the years of independence, investigated such theoretical problems as genre, artistic method, and literary trend, and to provide an evaluative perspective on contemporary theoretical developments in Kazakh literary studies. The article synthesizes the conceptual approaches of national scholars, highlights their contributions to the advancement of literary theory, and considers seminal studies that have shaped the theoretical discourse. Additionally, the analysis addresses research on the typology of romanticism and realism as artistic methods, the relationship between method and literary trend, and the dynamics between genre and method. The methodological framework of the article is grounded in systemic-structural analysis, the descriptive method, analytical inquiry, and content analysis. These approaches are employed to investigate scholarly works devoted to poetry and prose produced during the independence period. The findings substantiate the conclusion that a defining characteristic of Kazakh literary scholarship in the independence era is its aspiration to conceptualize the aesthetic essence of national literature within the broader context of global theoretical paradigms, as well as its pursuit of an expanded methodological horizon for contemporary literary studies.

*Keywords:* contemporary Kazakh literary studies, problems of literary theory, literary genre, artistic method, literary trend, postmodernism.

### Introduction

Literary theory investigates the essence and structure of literature, uncovers the nature and characteristics of literary works, and interprets the meaning and significance of literary evolution. Literary theory examines and analyzes the distinctive features of verbal art, its social function, the principles and methodologies of understanding and interpreting literary works, as well as the study of literary genres and their types, poetic systems, language and style, and the issues of literary movements and trends. With the advent of independence, literary theory began to develop new directions and innovative approaches in response to the social and cultural transformations taking place in society and literature. Both literature and literary scholarship, which had long been constrained within the framework of socialist realism and bound by Marxist-Leninist methodology, turned toward new trajectories in accordance with the intellectual and ideological demands of independence. The entire sphere of spiritual and cultural life was now free to develop. This, in turn, placed new responsibilities before literary theory — to reinterpret the national art of words, to reexamine literary phenomena, various genres and works of literature, and to reconsider the nature of aesthetics through a renewed lens of understanding. In analyzing literary works and revealing the laws of the literary process, it became necessary to reassess previous evaluations and interpretations in accordance with the demands of the time

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and to view them from the perspective of an independent national consciousness. During the Soviet period, Kazakh literary studies functioned within the rigid ideological framework of socialist realism, which restricted methodological pluralism and marginalized alternative theoretical approaches. Literary theory was predominantly subordinated to ideological imperatives, limiting critical interpretation and the development of independent scholarly paradigms. The achievement of national independence fundamentally transformed this situation by dismantling ideological censorship and enabling methodological diversification. As a result, literary scholars gained the opportunity to reassess artistic methods, literary movements, genre theory, and aesthetic concepts from the perspective of national consciousness and global literary theory.

In the initial years following the attainment of independence, research in the field of literary theory remained limited. However, as time passed, scholarly interest in this area steadily increased, leading to the publication of an increasing number of academic studies. Scholars, critics, writers, and readers alike began to engage in discussions concerning the theoretical foundations of literature. The emergence of such multifaceted perspectives, voiced by representatives of various disciplines, signaled a healthy and dynamic development within the literary discourse. However, as poets, writers, critics, readers, and literary scholars alike began to voice their opinions on the theoretical aspects of literature actively, the lack of systematic and comprehensive theoretical generalization gave rise to certain challenges. As a result, unverified assumptions and issues that remained outside the scope of thorough scholarly investigation began to distort, or at least obscure, the general understanding of literary theory and of literature as an art form. This indicates that the field still contains a considerable number of unresolved conceptual and methodological problems [1; 32]. Nevertheless, the theoretical exploration of Kazakh prose, lyric poetry, and drama has been revitalized through a number of individual scholarly studies. Significant contributions have been made by researchers such as R. Nurgali, B. Maitanov, Z. Akhmetov, Q. Mashhur Zhussip, B. Khanarbaeva T. Yesembekov, T. Rakhymzhanov, Q. Alpysbaev, Zh. Dadebaev, B. Karibaeva, A. Sharip, K. Akhmetov, Kh. Sadykov, S. Makpyrov, G. Piralieva, B. Zhetpisbaeva, A. Isimakova, E. Tileshov, Zh. Aimuhambet, Zh. Zharylgapov, Q. Zhanuzakova, M. Aitimov, U. Erkinbai, S. Erzhanova, A. Usenova, A. Zhaksylykov, R. Sultangalieva and G. Saulembek.

These works explore the theoretical problems of literature by applying the modern methods and achievements of world literary scholarship, thereby expanding the conceptual and methodological foundations of Kazakh literary theory.

In the present study, the concept of artistic method is understood as a system of aesthetic principles that determine the writer's mode of perceiving, interpreting, and artistically representing reality, whereas literary trend refers to a historically formed creative orientation based on shared ideological, aesthetic, and stylistic features. Such terminological clarification ensures methodological precision and conceptual coherence within the analytical framework of the research.

#### *Materials and methods*

The methodological framework of this study was shaped by the careful selection, classification, and examination of materials that constitute the core of its subject and scope. The primary research methods employed include systematic-structural analysis, descriptive analysis, analytical methods, and content analysis. These approaches enabled a comprehensive review of scholarly works that investigate Kazakh poetry and prose within various theoretical lenses, as well as studies devoted to the creative output of individual writers. The scientific and theoretical positions of leading scholars in Kazakh literature and literary theory were taken as guiding reference points, and their conceptual conclusions informed the overall direction of the research.

The systematic-structural analysis method was particularly instrumental in conceptualizing Kazakh literary studies of the independence period as a coherent scholarly system. Within this framework, diverse branches of literary scholarship — such as theoretical explorations in prose studies, innovative approaches to poetry analysis, emerging paradigms in literary theory, and research grounded in national ideology — were examined in their interrelations. The employed methodology enabled the delineation of scholars' research objects and theoretical frameworks, the elucidation of the internal structure of scientific thought, and the identification of the developmental stages and directional specificities of literary studies.

The descriptive method was used to identify, classify, and characterize new scholarly tendencies and theoretical concepts that emerged in Kazakh literary studies during the independence era.

Content analysis was applied to examine scholarly works published throughout the years of independence from both qualitative and quantitative perspectives. This method helped determine which theoretical

terms, research directions, and thematic issues have been most prominently discussed in Kazakh literary studies over the past thirty years.

### *Results and discussion*

In the early years of independence, research in Kazakh literary studies was primarily devoted to issues concerning the history of literature. During this period, much scholarly attention was directed toward the recovery and examination of the literary and intellectual legacy of those figures whose names and creative works had previously been suppressed or prohibited from academic study. Consequently, biographical and cognitive studies with a strong historical and cultural orientation became predominant.

Works related to literary theory, however, began to revive and gain momentum only toward the end of the twentieth century and the dawn of the twenty-first. At this stage, scholars moved beyond general characterizations and descriptive analyses of Kazakh literature and writers' creative practices. Instead, they started to produce research grounded in concrete theoretical approaches, focusing on the essential concepts and categories of literary theory — such as literary kind, genre, form, artistic method, movement, trend, style, and poetics — and applying hermeneutic, semiotic, comparative, typological, and structuralist methods to the interpretation of literary texts.

The artistic structure and poetics of Kazakh poetry, as well as the theoretical issues of Kazakh lyric poetry, have been explored in a number of individual studies and monographs. These include K. Mashkhur Zhussup's "The King of Words Is the Poem" ("Өлең — сөздің патшасы", 1991) and "Style and Imagery in Kazakh Lyric Poetry" ("Қазақ лирикасындағы стиль және бейнелілік", 1999); B. Karibayeva's "Contemporary Kazakh Lyric Poetry: Issues of Genre and Style" ("Қазіргі қазақ лирикасы. Жанрлық-стилдік мәселелері", 1993) and "Poetry and Lyric Poetry" ("Қара өлең және лирика", 2001); Z. Akhmetov's "Foundations of the Theory of Kazakh Verse" ("Основы теории казахского стиха", 1995) and "Kazakh Versification" ("Казахская стихосложение", 2012); S. Negimov's "Poetry of Akyns and Zhyrshys: Genesis, Stylistics, Poetics" ("Ақын-жыраулар поэзиясы. Генезис. Стилистика. Поэтика", 2001); S. Erzhanova's "Kazakh Poetry in the Period of Independence" ("Қазақ поэзиясы тәуелсіздік тұсында", 2010); and A. Usenova's "The Structure of Modern Kazakh Poetry: Tradition and Development Trends" ("Қазіргі қазақ өлеңінің құрылысы: дәстүр және даму үрдістері", 2010), among others.

During the years of independence, the complex nature of Kazakh prose and various literary issues of the Kazakh novel were analyzed on the basis of theoretical concepts. Significant contributions were made by V. Maitanov in his works "The Kazakh Novel and Psychological Analysis" ("Қазақ романы және психологиялық талдау") and "The Author in the Narrative System of the Novel" ("Романның баяндау жүйесіндегі автор"); T. Yesembekov in "Dramatism in Kazakh Prose" ("Қазақ прозасындағы драматизм") and "Poetics of the Literary Text" ("Көркем мәтін поэтикасы"); T. Rakhymzhanov in "Poetics of the Contemporary Kazakh Novel" ("Қазіргі қазақ романының поэтикасы"); Q. Alpysbayev in "The Historical Work in Kazakh Literature: Cognition and Artistic Representation" ("Қазақ әдебиетіндегі тарихи шығарма: таным және көркемдік"); Zh. Dadebayev in "Reality of Life and Artistic Solution" ("Өмір шындығы және көркемдік шешім"); G. Piraliev in "Inner Monologue" ("Ішкі монолог") and "Issues of Psychologism in Contemporary Kazakh Prose" ("Қазіргі қазақ прозасындағы психологизм мәселелері"); A. Isimakova in "Kazakh Artistic Prose: Poetics, Genre, Style"

In the classification and analysis of the types and genres of drama, significant scholarly contributions are found in R. Nurgali's works "The Art of Drama" ("Драма өнері", 2001) and "Arqau" ("Арқау", 1991). Summarizing and further developing the ideas presented in his earlier research, the scholar provides profound and substantial insights into the genre-specific features of drama, its various forms, and the key issues of situation, conflict, and character in dramatic works.

Another important aspect of research in this field is the focused study of the works of individual Kazakh playwrights, which have become the subject of specialized scholarly investigations. In this regard, notable contributions include Zh. Abilov's "The Dramaturgy of Qaltai Mukhametzhanov" ("Қалтай Мұхаметжановтың драматургиясы", 1995) and "The Genesis and Genre Foundations of Kazakh Comedy" ("Қазақ комедиясының генезисі мен жанрлық негіздері", 2001); A. Sharauov's "Issues of Dramaturgy. S. Zhunisov as a Playwright" ("Драматургия мәселелері. С.Жүнісов — драматург", 2002); and S. Qulbarakov's "The Dramaturgy of T. Akhtanov" ("Т. Ахтанов драматургиясы", 1993), among others.

Literary movements and trends, as well as the concepts of artistic method and genre, represent fundamental issues in literary theory. It is impossible to comprehend and evaluate the entire scope of artistic de-

velopment, including national prose, poetry, dramaturgy, and the phenomena of the contemporary literary process, without addressing these essential concepts.

In Kazakh literary studies during the years of independence, the issues of literary theory such as literary genre, artistic method, literary direction, movement, and school were examined in a number of individual scholarly works. In this regard, noteworthy studies include M. Karayev's "The Issue of Artistic Method in the Historical Development of Kazakh Literature" ("Қазақ әдебиетінің тарихи даму кезеңдеріндегі көркемдік әдіс мәселесі", 1995); E. Tileshov's "The Artist and the Artistic Method" ("Суреткер және көркемдік әдіс", 2005); L. Safronova's "The Author and the Hero in Postmodernist Prose" ("Автор и герой в постмодернистской прозе", 2007); B. Kanarbayeva's "Modernism in Kazakh Literature" ("Қазақ әдебиетіндегі модернизм", 2010); Q. Zhanuzakova's "The Artistic World of Romanticism in Kazakh Prose" ("Қазақ прозасындағы романтизмнің көркемдік әлемі", 2010); Zh. Zharylgapov's "Kazakh Prose: Trends and Methods" ("Қазақ прозасы: ағымдар мен әдістер", 2009), "Typology of Literary Trends in National Prose" ("Ұлттық прозадағы әдеби ағымдар типологиясы", 2011), and "Kazakh Prose: Modernism and Postmodernism" ("Қазақ прозасы: модернизм және постмодернизм", 2015).

In addition, articles by prominent literary critics such as B. Maitanov, A. Isimakova, T. Asemqulov, S. Qaskabasov, and A. Abilqassymuly deserve special mention. These studies analyze the establishment of artistic methods such as Romanticism and Realism in national literature, as well as the manifestation of modernist movements — Symbolism, Naturalism, Sentimentalism, Neomythologism, and Existentialism — in Kazakh literary works. Furthermore, the ongoing discussions surrounding Postmodernism are examined through the analysis of the overall literary process and the creative works of individual writers and poets.

Before independence, literary scholar M. Karayev had written several works devoted to the study of the method of realism, and he further developed his research in "The Issue of Artistic Method in the Developmental Stages of Kazakh Literature" ("Қазақ әдебиетінің даму кезеңдеріндегі көркемдік әдіс мәселесі", 1995). In this study, the chronological boundaries of Realism and Romanticism, as well as the theoretical issues and key principles of the realist method, are examined in depth. The relationship between folklore and written literature is analyzed from the perspective of artistic method. [2; 9]. It can be observed that the scholar's concepts of "pre-realism" and "pre-romanticism," as well as their defining characteristics, were not theoretically specified in detail.

In his study "The Artist and the Artistic Method" ("Суреткер және көркемдік әдіс"), researcher E. Tileshov analyzes Kazakh Romanticism — its emergence, expansion, and establishment as an artistic method — focusing primarily on the Romanticism of the poet M. Zhumabayev as the main object of his research. The author rightly emphasizes that "the issues of Romanticism are not limited solely to Zhumabayev's poetry but require broader investigation within Kazakh literary scholarship as a whole. The Soviet-era literary criticism, which prioritized Realism as the only valid artistic approach while disregarding or criticizing other literary movements, should no longer serve as a model for contemporary literary studies." [3; 11]. E. Tileshov notes that "Enlightenment realism, sentimentalism, romanticism, symbolism, realism — these constitute, in essence, the sequence of artistic methods in the poet's creative evolution". Analyzing the characteristics and stages of sentimentalism, symbolism, and Enlightenment realism within Magzhan's poetry, the researcher identifies the causes, foundations, and typology of the poet's Romanticism. [3; 33]. The central focus of the study, however, lies in the typology of the Romantic literary trend — revolutionary or progressive Romanticism, social-conservative Romanticism, elegiac-philosophical Romanticism, religious Romanticism, and individual Romanticism. The author demonstrates, through textual analysis, that all these subtypes of Romanticism are reflected in Magzhan Zhumabayev's poetry. Poems such as "Ertegi", "Korkyt", and "Batyr Bayan" are regarded as outstanding examples of the Romantic poem, analyzed in terms of Romantic imagery, figurative expression, and lyrical intensity.

In contemporary world literary studies, including Kazakh literary scholarship, the concepts of artistic method, literary trend, and movement have not yet been fully defined in terms of their distinctive characteristics and precise definitions. These terms are often used interchangeably in various studies. For this reason, romanticism, sentimentalism, naturalism, and realism, among others, are sometimes referred to as methods, sometimes as movements, or as directions in literature. In his comprehensive monograph "Kazakh Prose: Trends and Methods" (2009), Professor Zh. Zharylgapov pays particular attention to these issues. Beyond exploring literary movements within national prose, the scholar examines the typology of romanticism and realism as artistic methods, the interrelation between artistic method and literary movement, and the connections between genre and artistic method, providing a profound theoretical analysis. He notes that, "Of course, it is not correct to equate content in artistic creation solely with method, or to think of content only in terms

of method. It is important to focus on which aspects of the work's content form or are perceived as a method. Without doing so, we cannot enumerate the literary movements and directions that constitute certain methods and adhere to various principles of depiction." Through this reasoning, the scholar analyzes and clarifies the defining features that reveal the nature of the concept of artistic method. [4; 67]. From this point, the scholar identifies five key features that distinguish the artistic method from other categories within the system of artistic means. Furthermore, the romanticism and realism artistic methods, along with their place and development within national prose, as well as their internal currents, are examined in separate chapters.

The scholar examines the principles of classical romanticism in national literature through the works of S. Seifullin and M. Auezov's writings of the 1920s. The author argues that Auezov's creative method cannot be confined solely to realism, substantiating this claim by identifying romantic tendencies in the writer's stories — such as romantic pathos and subtle lyricism, romantic plots and psychological depth, as well as elements of grotesque depiction, contrasting imagery, and romantic irony. In the monograph, the development and rise of Kazakh prose are analyzed in connection with the establishment of the realist method. The literary scholar considers Enlightenment realism, critical realism, and socialist realism not as separate types of realism, but as methods defining distinct developmental stages of Kazakh prose. The specific features, principles, and evolution of each are identified through analyses of individual writers' works. These studies are particularly valuable because they move beyond descriptive classification and offer a systematic differentiation between artistic method, literary trend, and genre. However, the persistence of terminological inconsistency in subsequent research indicates that this theoretical issue remains unresolved and continues to require further methodological clarification. The researcher's exploration of these issues continued in his subsequent studies, further deepening the discussion of literary methods in Kazakh prose [5].

In Kazakh literary studies, the method of romanticism and its theoretical issues have not yet been sufficiently explored. During the Soviet period, romanticism was often regarded merely as an appendage or "label" of socialist realism. Researcher K. Zhanuzakova, in the study "The Artistic World of Romanticism in Kazakh Prose" (2010), examines the nature, artistic universe, and developmental trajectory of romanticism within national prose. The artistic world of second-half 20th-century romanticism is analyzed through categories such as the image of the author, narrative organization, character typology, and stylistic and linguistic features. The researcher identifies and interprets the phenomena of romanticism and neo-romanticism, which, while aligned with realist traditions, gained deeper philosophical and mythological dimensions and evolved into new qualitative forms of romantic expression. These tendencies are traced in the works of writers such as T. Abdikov, A. Kekilbayev, M. Magauin, O. Bokey, A. Nurshaikhov, and D. Isabekov, among others. The study also addresses romantic tendencies in post-independence literature, emphasizing that "the idea of independence gave new momentum to literature, imbued creative works with a romantic spirit, and introduced political, historical, social, and spiritual transformations into the public consciousness" [6; 22].

Professor B. Maytanov, a prominent scholar engaged in exploring the theoretical dimensions of literary studies, in "Modernist and Postmodernist Trends in Contemporary Kazakh Prose," examines the manifestations of modernist features in the works of M. Magauin, T. Abdikov, A. Kekilbayev, R. Seisenbayev, and A. Tarazi. Furthermore, he analyzes the prose of D. Amantai, A. Altai, R. Mukanova, and A. Ikhsanov within the framework of postmodernist poetics — through techniques such as allusion, reminiscence, intertextuality, hypertextuality, black humor, and self-parody — and interprets them in relation to the modes of postmodern world perception [7].

In "Magzhan — the Symbolist," literary scholar B. Kanarbaeva provides an extensive examination of symbolism based on M. Zhumabayev's poetry. In her subsequent monograph "Modernism in Kazakh Literature" (2010), she offers a comprehensive analysis of several literary movements that subtly emerged within national literature. The study explores the nature of symbolism, sentimentalism, futurism, acmeism, and surrealism — currents that, having remained in the shadow of socialist realism, had long been excluded from scholarly focus. Kanarbaeva emphasizes that "Saken's futurism originated in the avant-garde style," and by analyzing the poet's revolutionary fervor, rhetorical vigor, and ideological engagement, she concludes that "from the contemporary perspective, Saken's futurist style can be recognized as one of the legitimate artistic methods of Kazakh literature, shaped by the spirit of its time" [8; 188]. The scholar further notes that elements of acmeism, a literary movement founded by Nikolai Gumilev and Sergey Gorodetsky, can be traced in several works of Kazakh literature — including S. Mukanov's "Syrdaria", G. Mustafin's "Millionaire" and "Karagandy", G. Slanov's "Zhanar Tau", and T. Zharokov's "The Desert Revived into a Forest."

Within this context, the author examines Kasym Amanzholov's poetic works and narrative poems through the acmeistic lens. She observes that "in the poetry of the acmeists, images are depicted as indestructible — they neither burn in fire nor sink in water, embodying the fierce spirit of a roaring lion. Even the flowers blooming in their poetic gardens exude an extraordinary fragrance. Such vivid and powerful imagery is also characteristic of Kasym's poetry" [8; 221]. Discussing the distinctive features and evolution of surrealism in world literature — a movement whose adherents "embraced the use of spiritism, hypnosis, and hallucinatory visions in the creative process" — B. Kanarbaeva analyzes Zh. Aimauytov's "Eles" and T. Abdikov's "Aqiqat" and "On Qol" within the framework of surrealist aesthetics. She interprets these works as exemplifying surrealist techniques in portraying impending societal transformations, revealing the writers' mastery in depicting the fragmentation of human consciousness and the inner conflict of the self through surrealist stylistic devices.

In his subsequent monograph, "Typology of Literary Movements in National Prose" (2011) Zh. Zharylgapov conducts a comprehensive analysis of major world literary movements that influenced the formation of Kazakh prose, including sentimentalism, naturalism, and existentialism, examining their poetics individually. The author provides a scholarly justification of the typological features of modernist movements, drawing on the works of writers such as B. Mailin, M. Auezov, Zh. Aimauytov, A. Suleimenov, T. Abdikov, A. Kekilbaev, D. Isabekov, O. Bokei, and M. Magauin. Through these examples, he reveals how these movements manifested within Kazakh prose and how each writer's style reflected distinctive artistic traits.

In the first chapter, the movements of sentimentalism and naturalism are examined and analyzed separately. The scholar notes that "sentimentalism was one of the key movements that influenced the formation of romanticism and laid its aesthetic foundations. A sentimentalist writer employs various techniques to move and stir the reader's emotions. By portraying the tragic fates of people, representatives of this movement often evoke feelings of melancholy, emotional fragility, nostalgia for the past, and despair about the future." The author thus evaluates and characterizes the distinctive nature of this literary movement. [9; 7]. The sentimentalist features of works such as "Akbiyek," "Kamar Sulu," and "Korkemtai," as well as M. Auezov's short stories, are explored in greater depth. M. Auezov's "Scenes from the Steppe" cycle of stories is analyzed in terms of how the author expresses mood through contrasting landscapes, the symbolic meaning embedded within the natural scenery, and the interplay between sentimentalist and romantic elements as literary-aesthetic components. The study also highlights the writer's subjective emotion and his creation of a sentimental ideal. Examining the works of writers such as B. Mailin, Zh. Aimauytov, and S. Yerubaev, the scholar precisely defines the features and principles of the naturalist movement. He challenges those who equate naturalism with tastelessness or a lack of artistry, arguing instead that naturalism played a crucial role in the development and refinement of realism. Analyzing S. Yerubaev's novel "My Peers", the scholar identifies the writer's innovative approach in depicting the everyday life of workers — a social group that had previously received little artistic attention. S. Yerubaev's attempt to portray various characters through naturalistic techniques demonstrates his experimental spirit and his contribution to expanding the thematic and stylistic range of Kazakh prose.

The second chapter of the monograph is devoted to analyzing modernist movements such as neomythologism and existentialism, which emerged in Kazakh prose during the 1960s under the influence of the "thaw" period. The researcher notes that the literature of this era "paved the way for new perspectives on human existence, directing attention toward individual aspirations, perceiving the human being as a spiritual and psychological phenomenon, and reassessing the relationship between the individual and objective reality through new philosophical criteria." Taking this into account, the author concludes that "a new aesthetic emerged in the 1960s–1980s, which we propose to define as "post-socialist realism" [9; 72]. Thus, according to the author, the rise of modernist movements led to the decline of socialist realism as a dominant artistic method. It is reasonable to agree with the scholar's view that many works of the period no longer fit within the framework of this method. Zh. Zharylgapov demonstrates this by analyzing the prose of writers such as T. Abdikov, M. Magauin, A. Kekilbaev, and O. Bokei, highlighting innovative features such as the indefiniteness of time and place, a reconceptualization of temporal and spatial categories, the representation of human feelings and thoughts through echoes of consciousness, the rejection of socially active protagonists, and the use of psychological and philosophical techniques. Examining M. Magauin's "The Death of the Greyhound," the scholar identifies features of stream-of-consciousness narration, observing that "the writer, by viewing human society through the eyes of a speechless creature, leads the reader to the idea that human existence is full of contradictions and absurdity" [9; 79]. Works such as Ä. Kekilbaev's "Kui" and "The End

of the Legend”, T. Abdikov’s “The Fires of Hell Are Flickering”, O. Bokei’s “The Snow Girl,” “The Devil’s Bridge,” “The Nature of Sand,” and R. Seisenbaev’s “The Devil’s Throne” are examined within the framework of neomythologism, focusing on the use of mythological systems and legendary structures, the creation of mythologized images, and the phenomenon of mythic transformation. Regarding the existentialist movement, the scholar explains that “the concept of existentialism originates from the notions of the world and loneliness, existentialism tends to gain strength during periods of cultural decline and spiritual crisis” [9; 110].

One of the most frequently debated issues in Kazakh literary studies during the years of independence is the phenomenon of postmodernism. Although many literary scholars and critics have expressed their views on this topic, their opinions remain far from unified. The question “Does postmodernism exist in Kazakh literature?” continues to elicit differing responses. The theoretical interpretations of modernism and postmodernism in Kazakh literary studies reveal typological parallels with the conceptual frameworks developed by Western scholars such as J. -F. Lyotard, F. Jameson, J. Baudrillard, and I. Hassan. However, in contrast to Western models, Kazakh literary theory reconfigures these paradigms through the prism of national spiritual codes, historical experience, and cultural memory, thereby producing an original conceptual synthesis.

S. Kaskabasov argues that “Postmodernism is widespread in highly industrialized, post-industrial societies, as they have already broken away from classical literature. We, however, have not detached ourselves from classical traditions, nor can we, since a post-industrial society has not yet fully formed in our context.... Thus, the postmodernist techniques adopted by some of our writers are merely external imitations rather than an organically developed national phenomenon.” [10].

In contrast, literary critic A. Isimakova contends that “Postmodernism is not a theory devised by a few theorists in agreement. Each era gives rise to its own literature and its own interpretive frameworks. Therefore, it is impossible for us to simply shut the door on postmodernism by declaring that we do not need it.” She traces the origins of the postmodernist current in Kazakh literature to Tursynzhan Shapay’s book “The Soul of the Kazakh” (Qazaqtyn jany), identifying subsequent writers who adopted postmodernist tendencies such as D. Amantai, N. Oraz, A. Zhaksylykov, M. Omarova, and L. Konys [11; 264]. In his article “Contemporary Kazakh Poetry and Postmodernism,” B. Maytanov observes that “postmodernism is currently undergoing a profound crisis. The nature of future artistic methods, movements, or trends remains uncertain. Therefore, there is little reason to rush into rigid theoretical definitions. It would be inappropriate to demonize postmodernism as something monstrous, yet at the same time, considering it the only legitimate artistic method or trend of our era would also be misguided. The real issue lies in the writer’s ability to create works born of genuine talent and nourished by truth — regardless of whether they use a pen or a computer” [12]. He scholar identifies postmodernist elements in the poetry of T. Medetbek, A. Qairan, T. Abdikakimuly, Zh. Bodesh, B. Sarybai, B. Qaragyzyuly, and A. Zhatqanbai. Researcher Saltanat Zhusip, in turn, discusses how poets such as T. Abdikakimuly, E. Raushan, and S. Aqsunqaruly have consciously experimented with poetic form in an effort to shape a postmodernist style, developing a corresponding linguistic and conceptual framework. She also analyzes the works of a number of contemporary poets — Maraltai Raiymbekuly, Akberen Elgezhek, Erlan Zhunis, Ularbek Nurghalym, Yrysbek Dabei, and Azamat Taskarauly — examining selected poems through the lens of postmodernist criteria and highlighting their innovative explorations within the current Kazakh poetic landscape [13]. Critic A. Abilqasymuly, analyzing postmodernist works within the framework of contemporary Kazakh literary processes, classifies modern Kazakh postmodernism into three distinct categories.

First, he identifies what he terms “non-national postmodernism”, represented by the circle led by Didar Amantai, who, at times, overlooks the Alash national consciousness and becomes detached from ethnic roots. As an example, he cites Amantai’s collection “Flowers and Books”.

Second, he distinguishes “national postmodernism”, warmly received by the public and rooted in the national spirit. This group includes Tynyshtykbek Abdikakimuly’s linguistic-cultural dilogy (“The Fragrance of the Qas Sak”), Amirkhan Balqybek’s fragmentary-synthesis novella “When the Wolf Became God”, Jusipbek Qorgasbek’s pamphlet-style novella “The Prime Minister”, Asqar Altai’s philosophical-mythological military novel “The Gleam of Light Fallen on the Tumaq”, Duman Ramazan’s legend “The Migration”, as well as the short stories of Talgat Kenesbaev and other traditional writers.

Third, he defines the works of the new generation of poets and writers, such as Aqberen Elgezhek and Azamat Taskarauly, as belonging to “neo-Alash postmodernism”, a movement that seeks to advance in parallel with global civilization [14]. The critic also notes that postmodernism can only be fully understood

through its own specific terminology and, accordingly, emphasizes that the time has come to compile a dictionary of postmodernism.

In the aforementioned articles, the movement of postmodernism and its manifestations in national literature are examined in a limited and generalized manner, in accordance with the concise scope of small literary genres. In contrast, the monographs by L. Safronova, “Author and Hero in Postmodernist Prose” [15], and by S. Takirov and Zh. Zharylgapov, “Kazakh Prose: Modernism and Postmodernism” [16], A. Dzhundubayeva, “Narrative strategies in postmodern prose” [17], A. Ismakova, “Literary criticism in the period of independence” [18], G. Saulembek, “Postmodernism in modern prose” [19] provide an in-depth and comprehensive analysis of postmodernism and its related issues.

In her study “Author and Hero in Postmodernist Prose”, L. Safronova explores several key questions: to what extent postmodernist prose has developed, how the author and the character are constructed within this literature, and in what ways the author–character system intersects within postmodernist prose genres. By examining the interrelation of the “reader–character–author” system, the study provides a theoretical foundation for analyzing the structure of contemporary postmodernist texts.

The research identifies the following theoretical dimensions: “The problem of the author and the hero in modern literary studies, philosophy, and psychoanalysis; the author, hero, and genre in postmodernist prose; the typology of postmodernist heroes (characters) and the problem of the author; and the author, hero, and communicative strategies of the postmodernist text” [15; 199].

Meanwhile, the monograph by S. Takirov, Zh. Zharylgapov, and A. Zhakulaev entitled *Kazakh Prose: Modernism and Postmodernism* is particularly valuable for its comprehensive examination of the postmodernist movement, alongside the previously discussed modernist trends. The authors devote separate sections to the history and theory of postmodernism, emphasizing that postmodernism does not represent a single, unified theory. By systematizing the diverse perspectives of both international scholars — such as J. - F. Lyotard, I. Hassan, F. Jameson, J. Butler, J. Baudrillard, M. Epshtein, and I. Skoropanova — and Kazakh literary critics, including B. Maitanov, A. Ismakova, A. Kodar, G. Eleukenova, and T. Asemkulov, they reveal the essence of postmodernism, its distinctions from modernism, and its defining characteristics and principles as a literary, cultural, and philosophical phenomenon.

In contemporary Kazakh prose, the authors identify elements characteristic of postmodernist literature — such as intertextuality, subconsciousness, allusion, reminiscence, stream of consciousness, dark humor, polyphony, ambiguity, and the indeterminacy of resolution — in the following works: M. Magauin’s “Zharmaq”, “The Two”; R. Mukanova’s “The Captive”; D. Amantai’s “I Miss You”, “The Devil and the Poet”, “Flowers and Books”; A. Altai’s “The Miscarriage”; and A. Kospagarova’s “He”. Based on these observations, they conclude that these works can justifiably be regarded as written in a postmodernist mode [16; 141]. The diversity of scholarly opinions regarding postmodernism in Kazakh literature demonstrates not only the complexity of the phenomenon but also the transitional state of contemporary literary theory. While skepticism toward postmodernism often stems from concerns about national identity and cultural continuity, its selective and context-specific manifestations in Kazakh prose and poetry suggest the emergence of a distinctive national model of postmodern aesthetics rather than a mere imitation of Western paradigms. In general, the statement that “postmodernism, as one of the global literary-theoretical paradigms, has acquired its own distinctive features within Kazakh literary studies. Unlike Western postmodernism, Kazakh postmodernism is regarded as a continuation of the interrupted modernist tradition” can be considered the shared conclusion and central premise of contemporary research on postmodernism in modern Kazakh literature [20; 640].

On the basis of the analyzed scholarly positions, we argue that postmodernism in Kazakh literature should not be interpreted as a mechanical imitation of Western literary models, but rather as a natural continuation of the interrupted modernist tradition within the framework of national cultural development. Postmodernist elements in Kazakh prose and poetry demonstrate a profound interconnection with national worldview, mythological consciousness, historical memory, and symbolic aesthetics, thereby forming a distinct national variant of postmodern poetics. Consequently, Kazakh literary postmodernism emerges not as an imported artistic paradigm, but as an organically evolved phenomenon shaped by the internal logic of national literary transformation.

Synthesizing the above-reviewed studies, it can be concluded that the theoretical development of Kazakh literary studies during the period of independence has evolved along several major trajectories. First, the rethinking of artistic method and literary trends enabled a deeper conceptualization of the dynamics of the national literary process. Second, the interpretation of modernist and postmodernist aesthetics within the

framework of national literary tradition contributed to the formation of an original theoretical paradigm. Third, the systematic advancement of poetics and genre theory through typological, comparative, and interdisciplinary approaches significantly expanded the methodological foundations of literary research. These processes collectively indicate a profound methodological transformation of Kazakh literary studies and its progressive integration into global literary-theoretical discourse.

### Conclusion

The post-independence period signaled a transformative phase in Kazakh literary studies, characterized by intensified theoretical inquiry and the emergence of new scholarly paradigms. Recent research has significantly advanced the examination of foundational categories of literary theory — such as artistic method, literary movements, and aesthetic directions — while reevaluating the conceptual frameworks of national literary studies within the broader context of world literature.

During this era, literary research expanded beyond textual and author-centered analyses to incorporate the social, cultural, and ideological dimensions of the literary process. The development of methodologies grounded in national specificities, the adoption of interdisciplinary approaches, and the integration of international theoretical insights have collectively enhanced the scholarly depth and methodological sophistication of the field. These developments broadened the disciplinary scope of Kazakh literary studies, reinforced its cultural significance, and supported its integration into the global academic landscape.

Although the independence period laid the foundation for new research trajectories and contributed to raising the theoretical level of the discipline, several issues within literary studies and literary theory remain insufficiently systematized and require further comprehensive investigation. A critical assessment of the methodological bases, achievements, and limitations of contemporary research efforts — both specialized and complex in nature — constitutes an essential task for the future development of national literary studies. The results of this study may be effectively applied in university courses on literary theory, the history of Kazakh literary studies, and research methodology.

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### Тәуелсіздік кезеңіндегі қазақ әдебиеттану ғылымындағы теориялық зерттеулер мен ізденістер

Мақала тәуелсіздік кезеңіндегі қазақ әдебиеттану ғылымында қалыптасқан теориялық бағыттар мен ғылыми ізденістерді кешенді түрде талдауға арналған. Егемендік жылдары ұлттық әдебиеттану кеңестік идеологиялық шектеулерден арылып, дербес ғылыми бағдарын қалыптастыруға мүмкіндік алды. Тәуелсіздік кезеңі қазақ әдебиеттануына әлемдік ғылым кеңістігімен терең ықпалдасуға кең жол ашты. Әдебиеттану ғылымының негізгі саласының бірі — әдебиет теориясы. Тәуелсіздік жылдары әдебиет теориясында жаңа заман талабына сай жазылған ғылыми зерттеулердің негізгі тақырыптық, теориялық арналарын айқындап, даму сипатына талдау жасау маңызды міндет болып саналады. Осы кезеңде әдебиет теориясының негізгі категориялары — көркемдік әдіс, әдеби бағыт, әдеби ағым, поэтикалық жүйе, жанр табиғаты, ұлттық рухани код, модернизм және постмодернизм эстетикасы секілді ұғымдар жаңа қырынан зерттеліп, олардың мәні мен мазмұны кеңейе түсті. Зерттеуде тәуелсіздік кезеңіндегі қазақ әдебиеттануы ғылымы мен әдебиет теориясындағы әртүрлі зерттеу еңбектері сараланып, талданған. Аталған категориялардың өзара байланысы мен қазақ әдебиетіндегі көрінісі жүйеленіп, зерттеушілер еңбектеріндегі өзіндік ерекшеліктер талданып және олардың әдеби процесті танудағы рөлі айқындалып, постмодернизм эстетикасының қазақ прозасы мен поэзиясындағы орнына қатысты жаңа пайымдар дәлелденеді. Мақаланың мақсаты — тәуелсіздік жылдары әдеби жанр, көркемдік әдіс, әдеби ағым сынды әдебиет теориясының мәселелерін зерттеу нысанына алған әдебиеттанушы ғалымдар еңбегіне талдау жасау, әдебиет теориясындағы ізденістерге баға беру. Зерттеу барысында отандық ғалымдардың бүгінгі қазақ әдебиеттануында теориялық тақырыптарды игеруге жасаған талпыныстары мен ізденістері, әдеби-теориялық көзқарастары жүйеленіп, әдебиет теориясының дамуына қатысты еңбектерге сипаттама жасалады. Сонымен қатар романтизм мен реализмнің көркемдік әдіс ретіндегі типологиясына, көркемдік әдістің әдеби ағымдармен арақатынасы, жанр және көркемдік әдістің байланыстары сынды теориялық мәселелерді терең зерттеп, салмақты таразылаған еңбектерге баса назар аударылып, осы бағыттағы зерттеулер кеңірек талқыланып, мәліметтер беріледі. Мақалада негізгі зерттеу әдістері ретінде жүйелі-құрылымдық талдау, дескриптивтік, талдау, контент-талдау әдістері қолданылды. Осы әдістер арқылы түрлі теориялық ұғымдар аясында қазақ поэзиясы мен прозасын, ондағы жекелеген авторлар шығармашылығын қарастырып, зерттеген ғалымдардың еңбегі тексеріліп, таразыланды. Зерттеу нәтижесінде қазақ әдебиеттануының тәуелсіздік кезеңіндегі басты ерекшелігі — ұлттық ғылыми дәстүрлерді әлемдік теориялық үрдістермен сабақтастыра отырып, қазақ әдебиетінің эстетикалық табиғатын жаңаша түсіндіру және әдебиеттану ғылымының әдіснамалық өрісін кеңейту екені дәлелді түрде тұжырымдалды.

*Кілт сөздер:* қазіргі қазақ әдебиеттануы, әдебиет теориясы мәселелері, әдеби жанр, көркемдік әдіс, әдеби ағым, постмодернизм.

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### Теоретические исследования и изыскания в казахском литературоведении в период независимости

Статья посвящена комплексному анализу теоретических направлений и научных исследований, сформировавшихся в казахском литературоведении в период независимости. В годы суверенитета национальное литературоведение освободилось от идеологических ограничений советской эпохи и получило возможность формирования самостоятельных научных ориентиров. Этот период открыл широкие возможности для углублённой интеграции казахского литературоведения в мировое научное пространство. Одной из ключевых областей является теория литературы. В годы независимости основные категории литературной теории — художественный метод, литературное направление, литературное

течение, поэтическая система, природа жанра, национальный духовный код, эстетика модернизма и постмодернизма — получили новое содержание и расширенное теоретическое осмысление. В статье систематизируются и анализируются исследования, посвящённые проблемам литературной теории в указанный период. Рассматривается взаимосвязь теоретических понятий и их проявление в казахской литературе, выявляются особенности научных подходов различных исследователей, уточняется роль данных категорий в изучении литературного процесса. Особое внимание уделяется новым интерпретациям эстетики постмодернизма в современной прозе и поэзии. Цель исследования — проанализировать труды литературоведов, изучавших в годы независимости такие теоретические проблемы, как жанр, художественный метод и литературное течение, а также дать оценку современным теоретическим поискам в казахском литературоведении. В исследовании систематизируются научные подходы отечественных учёных, их усилия по освоению теоретических вопросов, характеризуются ключевые работы, внесшие вклад в развитие литературной теории. Кроме того, анализируются исследования, посвящённые типологии романтизма и реализма как художественных методов, соотношению метода и литературных течений, а также взаимосвязям жанра и метода. Методологическую основу статьи составляют системно-структурный анализ, дескриптивный метод, аналитический подход и контент-анализ. С их помощью изучаются труды учёных, исследовавших поэзию и прозу в период независимости. По итогам исследования обоснован вывод о том, что ключевой особенностью казахского литературоведения периода независимости стало стремление к осмыслению эстетической природы национальной литературы в контексте мировых теоретических процессов и расширению методологического горизонта современной науки.

*Ключевые слова:* современное казахское литературоведение, проблемы теории литературы, литературный жанр, художественный метод, литературное течение, постмодернизм.

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