

## EXISTENTIAL MOTIVES IN CITY PROSE

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**Abstract:** *In the twentieth century, through hermeneutic analysis of the content, ideas and plot of works of art reflecting city life in Russian and Kazakh literature, the psychology of the characters the most common existentialistic features and signs that are found in the people of the city were identified. Such issues as city lifestyle, adaptation to the city, various crimes that occur in the city, urban people tamed to cunning and deception, their selfishness and other issues were analyzed and investigated. Special attention was paid to the formation of existentialistic character in the people of the city. In particular, it was noted that the most important of them are the cruelty of people, dependence on money, lack of housing, poverty, theft, robbery, hard work and unemployment, trade.*

**Keywords:** existential motive; urbanization; Russian prose; Kazakh prose; estrangement motive; motive of life and death; motive of loneliness.

The rapid growth of cities, the large-scale development of urbanization, the excessive increase in the number of people and the quick entering of news into the city lifestyle have caused great interest in studying the problems of the city. Based on this, each sphere of science (philosophy, sociology, political science, Economics, ecology) began to study the city from different sides in accordance with its methodology, the object of study. As the description of the person of the city became the main object in the work of art, and the life of the city became the main object of research of literary science. From ancient times, the life of the city attracts the attention of ancient thinkers, poets and writers. The research of the city began with Aristotle and Plato, and later found its continuation in the works of T. More and T. Campanella. In the period of Renaissance, people began to think about the "ideal city", their utopian thoughts are widely reflected in the works of that period.

Despite the fact that the city has all the conditions for a happy life of people, to achieve happiness is not easy. Especially, finding a house, finding a job, having the necessary means for life, communicating with people, adapting to a certain environment, etc. there are enough problems. The problems of people in the city are multi-sided. People in the city are closely located with

each other, but do not know each other and do not pay attention to each other. They're always in a hurry. The meeting takes place in a hurry with familiar people. The place of stopping, the stop is the traffic light. They obligatorily stop at the traffic light. They get accustomed to come to the bus stop. They wait for a bus, when the bus comes, they go on their route. Life goes on like this. If you remember, in the novel "Castle" a German writer Franz Kafka people did not know about the existence of the owner of the castle K., nobody saw his face. All events take place in the city form of "Fortress". The novel states that Mr. K. could not get a job on his specialty.<sup>1</sup>

Nobody wants to talk to him, each of them is busy with their work. It means the order and rules in the city displace the person on the following places. The usual life of person is on the first place. French scientist Jean Baudrillard in his work "City and hatred", based on the French film "Hatred", looks for the circumstances that can occur in the extreme areas and regions of the city and which are the reasons why young people go to such a step with feelings of "anger" and "hatred". The author tries to understand the reasons that cause displeasure and anger in young people (in fact they may be another people also) in developed large cities, where all the achievements of civilization took place and most importantly in the peripheral areas there is a large number of crimes. And proves that the city plays an important role in the appearance of these situations. Despite the variety of difficulties of city life, the feeling of "affection to the city" has not faded away. The main beginning of this perception of the city should be looked for in the depths of human consciousness in which constant images and archetypes are hidden that turn the city into a universal metaphor. This topic has not yet been studied in literary science which emphasizes the importance of our topic.

### **Literature review**

As for the study of the theme of existential motives in urban prose, the existential motives in urban prose in Russian literature were studied in the articles of L. Grigorieva "About St. Petersburg component of the city text by Kuznetsova", V. B. Belukova "Existential motives in urban prose by Yuri Karabchievskiy", E. V. Kriklivets "Homelessness as a social and existential tragedy in prose by V. Astafiev and V. Kozko", T.V. Zavera "Death of the house in Russian city prose of 60-70-ies of XX century, D. D. Kuzmin "Existential time in the novel "Time and place" by Yu. Trifonov on the material of the novel "End of winter on Trubnaya. St. Petersburg component

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<sup>1</sup> T.V. Portnova, "Practices and methods for actualization of the scientific information in art excursions", in *International Journal of Environmental and Science Education*, 2016, vol. 11, no. 14, p. 6690-6696.

<sup>2</sup> F. Kafka, *Selections*, Raduga, Moscow, 1989.

of D. Kuznetsov's urban text" the prose of the writer Dmitry Kuznetsov is considered in the context of St. Petersburg prose.

The author pays the main attention to the motive of attachment to the city with Kuznetsov's heroes. In the article by V. B. Belkova "Existential motives in the urban prose of Yuri Karachevskiy" are taken on the object of study of existential motives in the prose works of Yuri Karachevskiy, written in 70-80th years of the twentieth century. In the works of the writer the problems of life and death, the meaning of life and loss, freedom and responsibility, loneliness of the individual were analyzed on the theme of the city. In the article by E. V. Kriklivets "Homelessness as a social and existential tragedy in the prose of V. Astafiev and V. Kozko", the aim in the article by V. Astafiev and V. Kozko was to determine the features of the transfer of the problem of homelessness from fiction. The scientist comes to the conclusion that in the absence of at least one of the models of home (home-family, home-homeland, home-home) it will disturb the harmonious development of the individual, it will be difficult to adapt to society, will cause emotional anxiety.<sup>2</sup>

In Russian urban prose of the 60-70s of the XX century, T. V. Zaver's research "Death at home in Russian urban prose" considers the features of the formation of the motives of death in the house in urban prose in Russian literature of the 60-70s of the XX century. On the basis of the novels and novelettes by authors Yu. Trifonov, B. Yampolsky, A. Bitov and V. Makanin, they research an influence of existentialism on the prose of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In D. D. Kuzmin's article "Existential time in Yu. Trifonov's novel" Time and place "on the material of the novel" the End of winter on Trubnaya" in Yu. Trifonov's prose features of formation of existentialist time are considered. In the book "Time and place" the author determines a new type of character revealing the ability of the character to adapt quickly to changes in society. Both in the Kazakh literature and in the works of individual writers existentialist motives served as the basis for many scientific articles. However, the theme of existentialist motifs in urban prose has not been researched yet.

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<sup>3</sup> Boudrillard, *City and hatred*, Available at <https://www.ruthenia.ru>.

<sup>4</sup> T.V. Portnova, "Historical aspects of project technologies development and opportunities for their use in scenic arts", in *Space and Culture, India*, 2018, vol. 6, no.4 , p.48-56.

<sup>5</sup> L.O. Grigoreva, "Petersburg constituent of city text of D. Kuznetsov", in *Cuadernos de Rusística Española*, 2011, vol. 7, p. 187-192.

<sup>6</sup> V.B. Belukova, "Existential motives of Yuri Karabicheskyy", in *Messenger of MSOU, Series: Russian Philology*, 2015, vol. 6, p 75-80.

<sup>7</sup> E.V. Kriklivets, "Homelessness as a social and existential tragedy in the prose of B. Astafyev and V. Koz'ko", in *Scientific Notes*, 2014, vol. 17, p. 135-140.

<sup>8</sup> T.V. Zaver, "Death of the house in Russian city prose of 60-70 XX century", in *Messenger of North (Arctic) Federal University. Series: Humanitarian and Social Sciences*, 2015, vol. 3, p. 76-80.

## **Methodology**

In determining the existentialistic motives in city prose hermeneutic analysis of works of art (scientific interpretation) was carried out. According to the explanation of the founder of hermeneutics F. Schleiermacher (1768-1834) it is a method of entering into the spiritual world of the authors of evangelical texts. F. Schleiermacher created the basis of the theory of interpretation of texts in his research "Hermeneutics". F. Schleiermacher believed that the researcher understands the text more deeply than the author, and can correctly assess it. American literary critic – E. Hirsch worked productively in the sphere of hermeneutics. In his works of the scientist "Reliability of interpretation", "Three dimensions of hermeneutics", "Goals of interpretation" theoretical problems of hermeneutics were considered. According to E. Hirsch, the purpose of hermeneutics is to find and understand the original, the basic meaning of the text. The scientist opposed different interpretations of one work, different understanding of each researcher. The task of the researcher is to determine the specific meaning originally set by the author, the core of the author's thought in the work.

Researchers suppose that in order to distinguish a text it is necessary to do a comprehensive, multi-faceted analysis. You should not only to understand the semantic content and features of the compositional structure of the text, but also to consider the author's position, the author's internal world, creative individuality, peculiarities of the worldview on whom he wrote the work. Hermeneutics does not consider works of art alone, but determines the necessity of knowledge and understanding within the traditional culture that helps its birth. For example, writers, representing the city prose, we took into a research object, get the basics for the works of the cities of direct relevance to their lives is typical of people in this city. For example, the events in the novel "The Life of Alexander Zil'ber" (1975), written in the autobiographical character of the Russian writer Yuri Karabchievsky, whose whole life was spent in Moscow, takes place in Moscow. The story of the novel by A. Nurshaihov "Mahabbat kyzyk mol zhyldar" takes place in Almaty, where the author lived in his childhood. The story of the novel "Years of joy and love" takes place in Almaty, where the author lived from the student years.

## **Results and discussion**

We have determined the below mentioned existential motives having analyzed the works written on the theme of city in Russian and Kazakh literature:

1. At the beginning it is difficult for any person to accept the anxious city life. Because a person comes to psychological deadlock due to not accepting the misbehaviour such as lack of house, cheating each other and cunning for

profit and benefit. As a result the motive of keeping away by the characters appears in the works of art. According to the researcher K.A. Abishev, keeping away is being strange to himself at first. The scientist makes the following conclusion: "In order to lose occurrence of keeping away step by step in the society, people's subjective level and their social independence must rise. Their mental and physical point of view about their life, society, the world should be developed and responsible for their nature and life should be increased. He made a conclusion that "This is the process that is historically realized". The literary critic Zh. Zharylgapov said: "As a result of speed of urbanization process the whole one generation that became fully separated from village was formed" and also came to conclusion that "Enormous changes that took place within the short time influence on human nature.

Although the changes that are brought by rocket period, technology that is developing very fast are directed to make practical work of person's life easy, to increase material benefits, to make person's life comfortable, to know the world and natural features, they also caused different paradoxes. In this regard we remember the following words in the work "An orphan colt" by Oralkhan: "We are having the most intelligent period, therefore I do not want to look at the face of the world that wants to look wise, do not think that it is because I hate it, never think it, it is may be I am tired of cunning sharp life".<sup>3</sup> I started to feel that I was born earlier. But Akbota was born later. She is worth the XVIII century... Based on the above the whole organism was poisoned, it means technosphere won biosphere.<sup>4</sup>

She is as a flower planted on the concrete and a fish in the oil". Really, the steppe Kazakh completely got accustomed to the city life whose centuries-old history was connected with nomad life.

2. Yu. Trifonov in his story "Exchange" (1969) deals with the motives of life and death in existentialistic plan through the violent son's actions who thinks his mother's flat more important than her life who was almost dying. In the story of the Kazakh writer Mukhtar Auezov "Educated citizen" it also narrates about the character Kadisha who was born and brought up in the city and whose aim and worry was to seize the legacy of her husband than to worry about his death.

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<sup>9</sup> D.D. Kuzmina, "Existential time in the novel of Y. Trifonov "Time and place" based on the material of the novelette "The end of the winter on Trubnoi", in *Urgent problems of linguistics and literary studies. Collection of materials of IV (XVIII) International conference of young scientists (20-22 April 2017)*, vol. 2, no. 18. p. 75-78.

<sup>10</sup> E.D. Hirsch, "Three dimensions of hermeneutics", in *New Literary History*, 1972, vol. 3, no. 2, p. 245-261.

<sup>11</sup> F. Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics*, European House, St. Petersburg, 2004, 242 p.

3. The motive of loneliness which is considered as one of the most important categories of existentialism is widely spread in the city prose. Feeling lonely and suffering of the main character Sasha Zil'ber in the novel of Yuiriy Karabchievskiy "The life of Alexander Zil'ber" and the main character Tashan in the novelette of the Kazakh writer Oralkhan Bokei can be evidence to these words. Akbota in this novelette also suffers from loneliness. The Kazakh writer Roza Mukanova in her stories "You" and "Composer" she pays more attention to the description of the art people who are isolated from society and feel lonely.

The concept of loneliness is typical to big cities. Doctor of medical sciences, professor S. Ordabekov in his article "Life. Regret. Loneliness" gives the following data from Loneliness Study: "42,6 million of Americans who are more than 45 years old due to different reasons are suffering from loneliness. According to the census of 2014 4/1, it means 25 percent of the world population suffer from loneliness.

Most of them are single, one in the family, live alone. The scientific group which researched more than 300 lonely people have determined that 50 percent of lonely people got older early. If believe in the data of 70 scientific – research group which researched 3,4 million people of North America, Europe, Asia and Australia, nowadays loneliness is entered in the list of the most dangerous factors for people's life, even more dangerous than obesity" .

It means, the authors mentioned in the works of literary art represent several author's positions in description of the problem of loneliness. Firstly, possibility of people's increasing is less. Because housing and finding a job are the main problems. Therefore birth of children in city families is limited. Decreasing of children's' number make us notice that human generation will not increase. Secondly, while the youth who arrive in city set their job and study problem their young period will pass away. Thus they will have to live alone. Or they may be deceived, might fail in love and stay alone. The stories also touch such difficult problems as abandoning the life and being alone due to severity in the city. They describe the psychological loneliness which is caused due to spiritual loneliness and the circumstances of different misunderstanding in the society.

4. It is rare that a person moved to big city quickly adapts to city life and buys a flat in shortest time. The motive of loneliness in the Kazakh prose is masterfully described in the stories of Kanagat Abilkaiyr "A paper city" and "A flat" by Koishybek Mubarak. Homelessness is a reason of losing self-confidence to himself, makes person's adaptation to society difficult and person's being emotionally anxious. It means we suppose that the problem of homelessness is the issue that cannot wait.

In the work of literary art the author's perception of the reality of life is appeared by the existentialistic mood of the characters. The existential mood in the work finds harmony with the worldview of the existentialistic trend formed

in the early XX century. The main representatives of the existentialistic movement are N. Berdyaev, L.I. Shestov, K. Jaspers, M. Heidegger, J.P. Sartre, A. Camus, G. Marsel and others. The existentialistic concept was developed with the concept of peace and loneliness. However, we cannot say that the connection of person with the environment, with other people is not considered in the conclusions of representatives of existentialism. Because the main feature which combines the largest representatives of this trend in world philosophy – M. Heidegger, K. Jaspers, J.P. Sartre, is human existence from the point of view of the concepts of "I" and "others". Researchers believe that a person, being aware of his world loneliness, alienate society and relations established in this society. It is obvious that existentialistic opinions in the XX century were appeared with the influence of the first world war and the second world war that the human had opened up to each other.

The Polish scientist E. Kossak said: "Expressing the mood of passivity, disbelief and despair, they testify to the dramatic way of people who have become disillusioned in history and progress and are looking for solutions out of this world, people turn to the idea of the tragedy of the universal fate". Literary critic Zh. Zharylgapov explains this opinion as follows: "A person adheres to the opinion of his loneliness in this mortal world when the existential flow of thoughts in social structures and contradictions on the world level deepen, and when there is a period of conflicts in consciousness". As a result of the war that took place in history, new world views were formed, which led to the formation of a new worldview in people. We can say that during this period the opinions of representatives of existentialism J.P. Sartre and M. Heidegger found public support. For example, if J.P. Sartre in his work "Existentialism is humanism" says: "There is no other world besides the human world... we remind the person that there is no other legislator, except himself, abandonment, he will decide his fate; since we show that to realize himself as a human being cannot by immersing himself in himself, but in the search for a goal outside, which can be liberation or some other specific self-realization", M. Heidegger concludes: "Man is and he is a man, because he exists. He acts in the openness of being, which is the very existence, which as a throw threw the real person in the "care".

The person thus abandoned stands "in" the openness of existence. "The world" is the light of being into which man enters with his abandoned existence". The opinions of the two scientists are harmonious, both say that each person is responsible for his or her life. People sometimes keep away from the world, abandon others, feels lonely. Since literature is also the science of anthropology, we can meet these problems from the characters' images. In the work of literary art, the author narrates based on the picture of a certain period and describes the life of those heroes who did not perceive the true life and who renounced it, striving for freedom. Our main purpose is to identify the circumstances that gave rise to the events that occurred with heroes and

show ways out of these situations. In Russian prose the theme of the city has developed and evolved since the nineteenth century. The work of Dostoevsky "A city without name", A. Herzen "Patriarchal morals of the city of Malinova", M. Saltykov-Shchedrin "History of one city", M. Gorky "Town of Okurov", A. Platonov "City of Gradov" and others can be evidence for this. In Russia in 1960-1970 the problem of migration developed rapidly, developed dynamically, the residents of the city began to grow rapidly. The psychology of people in adapting to the city was focused on new topics for writers.

In 1970-1980, works written on the theme of the city began to be combined with the heading "urban prose". Russian literary critic during the research of prose works written on the theme of the city of II half of the XX century in the author's thesis on "House and the homeless of the heroes of Russian urban prose of the 2nd half of the XX century", reveal existentialistic motives such as loneliness, compassion, fear from the work of writers. The researcher, besides the philosophy of existentialism, on the basis of examples proves that along with the philosophy of the existential experience of writers, also influenced their spiritual history, formed in connection with social and personal circumstances in life, the ability to feel and demonstrate the breath of time. Russian researcher V.B. Belukova in the article of the poet, writer Yuri Karabchievsky about existentialist motives in urban prose does not support the opinion of researcher Yu. Borev that "Existentialism is the only egoistic person in the absurd world", she makes a conclusion that the concept of "egoism" cannot give a complete description of a person forced to live in "absurd world, as an important existentialist question is a concept that consists of "four<sup>5</sup> main" separate life choices: the problems of life and death, problems of determinism, freedom and responsibility, the meaning of life and the problems of its loss, the problems of relationships and loneliness.

In the second half of the XX century, readers of Yuri Valentinovich Trifonov, one of the creators of urban prose in Russia, began to think about what place people occupy in this world through his works written on the theme of the city. In the story the writer of "The exchange" (1969), "Preliminary results" (1970), "The long goodbye" (1971), "Another life" (1975) describes the daily life of the representatives of the Moscow intellectuals. Yu. Trifonov in the story "Exchange" (1969) deals with the issues of life and death in existentialistic plan. Events of the story take place in Moscow. The hero

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<sup>12</sup> K.T. Zhanuzakova, B.Zh. Kozhekeeva, B.D. Zhumakaeva, "Hermeneutic", in *Messenger of Sh. Ualikhanov Kokshetau State University. Philology*, 2016, no. 3, p. 144-147.

<sup>13</sup> E.D. Hirsch, *Validity in interpretation*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1974, 302 p.

<sup>14</sup> E.D. Hirsch, *The aims of interpretation*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1976, 177 p.

<sup>15</sup> K.A. Abishev, *Philosophy*, Institute of Philosophy and Political Science, Almaty, 2001, 521 p.

<sup>16</sup> O. Bokei, *Works, Novelettes*, People-Chronicle, Almaty, 2013.

<sup>17</sup> S. Ordabekov, *Life. Regret. Loneliness*, Available at <https://turkystan.kz>.



Dmitriev, knowing that the mother is suffering from serious illness, due to corruptness of his wife exchanged the house that his father built with his own hands and in which he spent his childhood and used all the ways to move with his mother to another house. Dmitriev is more concerned about the matter of early registration of documents for the house and move out of his house with his mother than the question that the mother is seriously ill and is dying. Having heard for the first time that the mother is seriously ill Dmitriev remembers his past, childhood and youth, regrets that these moments do not return back. However, these memories cannot help him to retreat from his intention.

The writer shows from time to time that the hero is not too cruel. For example, during the dialogue between them with Tanya: "For a moment he felt very sorry for her, but then he remembered that somewhere far and near, across Moscow, on the bank of the same river, his mother is waiting for him, who is experiencing the suffering of death, and Tanya's suffering belongs to life, so – why should she be sorry? There is nothing in the world but life and death. And all that is subject to the first is happiness, and all that belongs to the second... And all that belongs to the second is the destruction of happiness. And there is nothing else in this world. Dmitriev got up in a jerk, with a sudden haste, as if someone strong grabbed and pulled his hands, and saying: "Bye! I'm coming away!" – and went with rapid steps along the corridor to the door. Tanya did not have time to tell him. Maybe she didn't want to tell him. It seems that with these thoughts of his hero, the writer wanted to convey to readers that the world consists only of life and death and that one day of life is already happiness. At the end of the work we see what is happening around his mother in the dialogue between the mother and the hero. But the mother, being close to death, gives her son her consent to the exchange the house without any opposition. Thus the writer shows that the humanity of the hero's mother Ksenia Fedorovna above all. With this work, the writer wants to note that nothing is more important than human life.

In the Kazakh literature the description of the city life was reflected in the works of the early XX century. The description of customs and life of city life originates in the prozes of Zh. Aimaulytov, S. Toraigyrov, M. Auezov and is continued in the works of A. Kekilbayev and T. Abdyk. At first city life seemed unfamiliar to the Kazakh people, whose centuries-old history is connected with a nomadic way of life. To steppe Kazakh, who has always been riding a horse, it was difficult to perceive the existence of urban life. Because residents of the city were in a state of psychological collapse due to lack of housing, deceit and cheating for profit and could not take it all. After that, in art works there was a motive of alienation of the city by heroes. In general, thinkers consider such concepts in man as alienation, the frustration within the category of existentialism. Literary critic Zh. Zharylgapov, having studied the concept of man in the Kazakh prose 70-80-ies, as a person, human identity, belonging to

the environment, society from different aspects, justified through prose works that the world artistic development of the XX century was influenced by modernized thoughts and the fact that the Kazakh literature could not be beyond. In the story of the Kazakh writer Mukhtar Auezov "Educated citizen" (1923) events take place in the city, located on the left bank of one of the big rivers in Siberia. In the story the author says that the character studies in the city, gets an education, and also shows the image of "educated citizens" deprived of human qualities. The actions of Zhumagul, who married the wife of his friend Kadisha after his death, can serve as proof of this word. The purpose of Kadisha, who grew up and was brought up in the city to seize the legacy of her ex-husband is also an immoral act. After the marriage of Zhumagul and Kadisha, the author describes the moment of their arrival in the village as follows: "When they arrived in the village, they were dressed in nice clean summer clothes, the young people looked like townspeople and seemed strange to the village. In Zhumagul's speech there were a lot of "you – we" and you could note the state of a stranger. These incompatibles are especially felt when the speech concerns the bride. Starting with how the bride greets her father-in-law and mother-in-law<sup>6</sup> saying "Hello!" and after entering the house, sitting next to her husband and whispering every minute with him showed a rudeness that has never taken place in the village. The bride in the life in spite of the fact that didn't study and was not from educated people, was the wife of the city teacher, developed a habit of those educated people. Although the new young couple did not feel this incompatibility, the adults and the young of the village quickly felt it.

Although through the above works both authors show that the city put the seeds of science and knowledge into the youth, it made them forget humanity and absorb abnormal behaviour.

Existential motives in city prose also widely took place in the works of Yuriy Karabchievskiy. The events in the novel "The life of Alexander Zil'ber" (1975) written in the autobiographical form by the writer whose whole life was spent in Moscow passed in Moscow. In the novel he described how the lyrical character felt loneliness. The main character Sasha Zil'ber feels himself lonely from his childhood. Sasha start to feel loneliness when he goes to the pioneers' camp. His agemates always abase him as he is a representative of another nation. Because he is Jewish. His father died in the war in 1942. His mother

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<sup>18</sup> Zh. Zharylgapov, *The conception of human in Kazakh prose of 70-80*, Abay State University, Almaty, 2000, 27 p.

<sup>19</sup> Zh.P. Sartre, *Existentialism is a humanism*, Available at <https://adebiportal.kz>.

<sup>20</sup> M. Heidegger, *Time and Being: Articles and Speeches*, Respublika, Moscow, 1993, 447 p.

<sup>21</sup> T.V. Zaver, *House and homelessness of the city prose heroes of the second half of the XX century*, NARFU named after M.V. Lomonosov, Akhrhangelsk, 2015.

<sup>22</sup> Y. Trifonov, *Eschange*, Available at <https://libcat.ru>.

got married for the second time. The character could not enjoy in his own house. Finally he left for Armenia and found peace and silence.

There is a full ground to say that the work is autobiographical one. Because although Yuriy Karabichevskiy was Jewish, he spent his whole life in Moscow. In the poems of Yu.Karabichevskiy Moscow is described as a close and an unfamiliar city. Once the poet says:

*“doomed with gloomy admiration  
to look at its calm (Moscow’s) eyes”* (“Tramway Moscow”, 1965) – once he says:

*Moscow appeared from fog,  
as a woman cheated on me,  
removes its eyes tiredly* (“Wild songs”, 1969), thus he shows Moscow as unsteady and betrayer. He started to feel himself strange:

*I am an adopted child and a doorbell baby,*

*I am not a stepson and not a son...*

*I am not offended at all:*

*I am strange to it although it is not strange to me.*

*Whatever, I am loyal to it until my death* (“Jubille prelude”, 1969).

It seems that this poem of the poet mutually connects with the novel “The life of Alexander Zil’ber”. The writer expresses his opinion showing clearly that although Moscow does not accept him, this city is not strange to him. The problem of character’s loneliness is noted in Kazakh literature in the novelette by Oralkhan Bokei “Zhetim Bota” (“An orphan colt”) (1981). In this story the character also feels loneliness and misses his far village. The story narrates that when the character – Taszhan who comes to Aktau in order to submit a project of new city was thinking alone in the hotel hears a woman’s voice asking for help and he hurries to help her then the woman slanders him and he is engaged in conflict. At that time an old man who is a hotel guard gives him his advice: “Remember...do not come closer to a city woman, especially to women who are drunken and crying – they poison you with troubles ...”. It seems that the writer expresses like this that improper actions in the city life give negative influence to Kazakh girls. The writer shows Taszhan’s emotions coming to his room after this situation through the character’s internal monologue: "I came here vainly. I would have gone to the summer pasture. I would drink kymyz and ride a horse than to be bored with city stuffy heat. And now no meaning to regret, it seems as if I have not seen my village for hundred years... ". Taszhan’s father was a Kazakh man who spent all his life in the village, but Taszhan is an architect who is making designs of new towns, it means he is a city Kazakh who got accustomed to city. Therefore there are two different opposite views between two characters about life. But the character who saw abnormal behaviour of the village girl regretted once. In fact he left his ancestral home, his parents and came for a new life in

the city – he saw such abnormal actions and behaviour. This case happened to many Kazakh people at that time.

The city also made negative influence on continuation of customs and traditions. Generation which does not appreciate their traditions and customs through quick absorbing city mentality appeared. If a writer of Russian prose Andrey Bitov touches this problem upon in his novel “The house of Pushkin”, in Kazakh prose Didakhmet Ashimkhanuly shows it through his tiercet “Bosaga” (“Doorpost”). The novel “The house of Pushkin” by Russian writer Andrey Bitov (1987) narrates that after the different events which took place in the XX century Russian cultural customs will not continue any more. The author blames Soviet people in this case and tries to show that they are taking a responsibility for this matter. Conflict between grandfather and grandson, it means between Modest Platonovich and Leva Odoevtsev (it seems that the author intentionally took representatives of two different generations) is shown in two different points of view. If the grandfather admits that classical Russian literature will not appear any more, his grandson believes that the Russian literature is still alive.

Excerpts from famous works are given in this work written in postmodern direction. It seems the author wants to show that these themes are eternal, although we notice they have lost their former meaning. For example the first part of the novel “Fathers and children” has no any relation to the work of I. Turgenev. But the problem between fathers and children also take place in this work. Personal opinion of the main character is not formed, therefore he can see his life within the museum only and his grandfather’s life position is strong and this is the main difference from his grandfather. The rest parts of the novel are formed based on this principle and called by the names of M. Lermontov (“Heroes of our time”), A. Pushkin (“Bronze Horseman”) and F. Dostoevkiy (“Poor people”). Recovering of the works that are not losing their importance despite a lot of time past such as the main work of A. Bitov “The house of Pushkin” and a leading sample is not by chance. that of the Russian literature, i.e. are. Through this the author renews readers’ consciousness and calls them not to forget the past. If to take being the work an object of often discussion into account we can say clearly that the author achieved his aim.

In the tiercet of the writer Didakhmet Ashimkhanuly “Bosaga” (“Doorpost”) he narrates about careless attitude of city people to the past and traditions. He points out that national consciousness and national being are started to be violated. The events in the work take place with participation of the main character Telzhan who grows in the village then gets education in the city. The following actions such as help of Telzhan to one old woman who falls over, knowing that she is living alone (leaving an old mother alone – shows unkind generation, cutting off of generation extension), sending of folk songs for publishing instead of Tanatar poet’s poems by his daughter (careless

attitude to the past), fighting of old grandmother's daughter and son for the house (being anxious about house but not about mother who gave a birth, particularly own children) make readers think. The last part of the tiercet is called "A yellow samovar". This part tells that Telzhan's mother dies and his wife cannot boil tea in samovar in the village. And when his sister-in-law said: "You haven't seen anything", Gulsan answered: "What have you seen? You saw only cow udders". It seems that this event gives today's picture of Kazakh daughter-in-laws. The author points that there is something in not being able to boil tea in samovar. A yellow samovar is a valuable legacy from mother-in-law to daughter-in-law, i.e. it is a continuation of dynasty, it is a continuation of *dastarhan* (a table with meals) and the obligation of daughter-in-law to boil and pour tea is the main custom of Kazakh people. It means the author reminds that continuation of customs is being forgotten and Kazakh family and dynasty values are being lost. And this kind of tragedies took place after coming to the city. Although city is a sign of civilization, you can clearly note from the above mentioned works negative sides of the culture formed in the city to national being.

A literary critic M. Orazbek, who researched works of Kazakh writers in the period of independence says the following in his work "Author and a creative process": "Such writers as Zh. Korgasbek, N. Oraz, T. Akhmetzhan, A. Altay, R. Mukanova, A. Kemelbaeva born the works which look for circumstances and damages of time as quicksilver and society as whirlwind from internal world, <sup>78</sup>spiritual life of characters in today's Kazakh prose". Political changes entered starting from 1990, trade developed with special temp, appearing of private relations, all property and science in the society, health protection, information and having different characters by organizations caused new changes in people's character and mind and also opposite behaviour and actions of people in Kazakh country.

Kiyak and Shokoladkara are anti-heroes as professional businessmen in the story "The underworld guest" by the writer Talaptan Akhmetzhan. "Kiyak got to know what the trade is thanks to his brother. He experiences money, cheating, cunning and trickery, entertainment, parties, ladies and all interesting things". In fact it is a real image of the person we can often meet in real life who is a "fun lover", "arrogant" and who enjoys the life, leans for support of his friends and acquaintances and the above "brothers and uncles". In the end

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<sup>23</sup> M. Auezov, *Educated citizen*, Available at <https://abai.kz>.

<sup>24</sup> A. Bitov, *The house of Pushkin*, Available at <https://www.opentextnn.ru>.

<sup>25</sup> D. Ashimkhan, *Bosaga*, Available at <https://kitap.kz>.

<sup>26</sup> M.C. Orazbek, *Author and a creative process*, Atamura, Almaty, 2006, 488 p.

<sup>27</sup> T. Akhmetzhan, *The underworld guest: Stories, novelettes and conversation-dialogue*, Elorda, Astana, 2001, 376 p.

<sup>28</sup> R. Mukanova, *Muse: Stories and drama novelettes*, Zhazushy, Almaty, 2006, 328 p.

of XX and in the beginning of XXI centuries Kazakh writers relied in their creative world on spiritual and moral condition of Kazakh people and human life. They made a force to describe how much influence the society where human character changed due to social changes made to personality and personal life. They described behaviour which spread quickly among Kazakh people through looking narrowly into person's psychics and individual life.

The writer Roza Mukanova in her stories "Ozin" ("You") and "Composer" she pays a lot of attention to description of the individuals who suffered from injustice in the society and beared heavy load of art and failed on the way of art or could not appreciate their happiness. For example, in the story of R. Mukanova "Ozin" ("You") fate of an artist who is internally upset and unintentionally agrees with loneliness reached a deadlock. Because the thoughts which went through the author's imagination and set in her creative world is misfortune of the art owner and loneliness in the crowd. The reason of being unhappy is that in this life she puts on the highest place only her art. She does not need wealth, even the august seat. She is a strange person and she isolated her from the whole society. The author describes the artist's image and character as follows and shows her relation to the character: "You are walking along the street in the feeling that anxious state of mind is needling your soul. Who knows that you are abandoning this meaningless life... You are wearing inelegant clothes and put a quill on your hat. You are hanging a simple baggie made of clobber on your neck. Yes, as if you really came down from the sky... And a crowd of people are fixing their eyes on you.

Someone is pointing with his finger and saying: "Look at that! An effendi is coming. Ah, look! Look at her walking!" and they are looking loudly. And someone is looking at the stranger's life and taking a look. Because You are strange and unclear to this place". Not only the artist's appearance is described differently from society but her internal world also. The author always describes the images of "the crowd" and the artist parallelly. In some places we can notice correspondence of the author's attitude with the artist's position. Firstly we can say that the author's following words "I was interested in Your freedom from this group whose life is similar to each other, who are envious and slander each other cruelly". "Jealousy which has got a lot of gossips and concurrence would pull you like a peel and a wool". Her relation to the main character and the Crowd (society) and her opinion, her exact conclusion about them are worth the author's position. Secondly, we can clearly feel the author's emotion of spiteful sarcasm which points the art owner's spiritual harm that she got from people and her helplessness. Thirdly, except the sorrow which is violent, jealous and willing to shame funny discourtesy and does not pay attention to the art in the society there is also displeasure and angeriness. So that we recognize a creative personality that the author created a character's nature that addicted to existentialism, offended and deadlocked in severe society. Recently when Kazakh writers describe city life they are trying to show the

difficulties which are often happened in the city through describing not only city people but also the animals inhabiting in the city. For example, the writer Askar Altay in his novelette “ҚАЛАДАҒЫ ҚҰТПАҢДАР” (Dogs in the city”) describes hard life of city people, their unkindness to each other and behaviour through the image of dogs. It is not difficult to understand a strolling life of wandering of five homeless dogs in the park – “A gigant Spotted dog (Ala tobet), a black ovcharka – Arrect ear (Tik kulak), a nice Yellow greyhound (Sary tazy), a mix of pug – Torsholak, a pretty lady-dog – White pug” points the life of homeless Kazakh people in the city. Before coming to strolling condition the Spotted dog spent his life “on the humid rubber floor and inside the hot iron box”. The iron box is a passenger car.

Its owner as soon as they open their eyes “pulls him out pinching his nape from warm bosom of his mother and breeding dogs”. He faced such severity as soon as he was born. And the white greyhound lives with lonely old lady and sees her kindness. But she becomes a witness of people’s unkindness to each other. The owner who was kind to her, needs her children’s goodness and kindness very much and in the end she dies in ther flat and lays there until her body becomes foul. It is easy to note from actions of the novelette characters that the old lady’s death affected only to the white pug. Thus the images of inhuman people are described through the dogs. The writer shows several reasons of existential characteristics of the city people through this work. We notice different difficulties in the life of five dogs. Each of them has hardships in the life. City people have these hardships. It means every difficulty busts a person’s nerves, injures their health and damages their psychics. No doubt that homelessness is a hot problem that makes any nation think. Losing the house, being homelessness are the cases that make people not to be confident and misdoubt in the future. The story “A paper city” by Kanagat Abilkaiyr in the Kazakh prose in which the writer bases on the theme of “Homelessness” is worth the attention. In this short story the character gives many annoying situations that he faced:

– *a problem of being in the quene for ages to get a flat*: About this the character says: "No need to prolong the speech, if to say shortly, I gave an application for a flat when I was twenty one and I got a one room shedder when I was forty seven".

– *a problem of built flats with low quality*: piercing of all flats starting from the floor twenty nine and reaching up to the basement through throwing lead by the character’s youngest child, absence of heating during the whole winter, often gas cutting off, breaking of water pipelines and so on.

– *careless attitude of administration to people is described in the story as follows*: Administration says: “It is not our obligation. Tell it to your local authorities that deal with these matters”. We looked for the head of local authority everywhere and hardly found him. “We may supply this house with heating

from next year”, – they said. “Until next year not only child’s tongue but also his whole body will stick to iron”. “In this case wait until summer, there are only three months left”. We said the God thanks that the heads gave us some time and talked to us a little, we burnt paper, poured hot water and hardly saved out our children’s tongues from the pipes”.

The story “A flat” by Koishybek Mubarak is also about social condition of modern Kazakh youth. Nowadays getting a flat in the city became an unachievable dream, the writer gives this situation brilliantly through mystic. Words of the character who heard the head’s following information and came to the said address: “Your turn for a flat came based on your application”:

*“I came to the said address with my wife and five children. While we were on the way my wife and six-year old daughter have already planned how to decorate our house.*

*– It’s a shame!.. No, it may be a mistake... I left my wife and children and rushed to work.*

*– The address of the house is not mentioned correctly... – I said being out of breath. The secretary shouted: /*

*– You do not raise up your heads... stupid... go and raise your head up... and you will see...*

*She shut the door with a bang. I did not understand anything and went back to that place. My wife and children were standing as a pleiad. I looked at the sky, we looked at the sky. It’s a shame! Our house was hanging on the sky. Nothing is seen after the floor seventeen. It rises higher and higher. How can we go up? While we were standing and cannot find a way from this situation someone from the floor eighteen shouted:*

*– Hey, why are you standing...*

*– How can we go up? – we asked shouting.*

*– Through flying...<sup>9</sup>*

*– How...*

*– In such away...*

*– Please come down and explain...*

*I and my wife begged together. He came down through opening a reflecting by the sun metal door. I thought I was dreaming. In order to wake up I bite my low lip. Blood flushed out, but I could not wake up.*

*– Stupid one, – said our neighbour. – You, stupid, before getting the key you should learn how to fly, – he said and went up immediately”.*

The character’s mood and condition who could not get a flat and left with his dreams in the end of the story is not a strange situation for people in

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<sup>29</sup> A. Altay, *A killer magpie*, In: *Novelettes and stories*, Arda, Almaty, 2013, 400 p.

<sup>30</sup> K. Abilkaiyr, *A paper city*, Available at <http://anatili.kazgazeta.kz>.

<sup>31</sup> K. Mubarak, *A flat*, Available at <https://koishybek.wordpress.com>

<sup>32</sup> Zh. Zharylgapov, L. Keneshova, “The conception of space and character in the works of Oralkhan Bokei”, in *Messenger of E.A. Boketov, Karagandy Oblast University, Philology Series*, 2016, vol. 4, no. 84, p. 14-19.



the society. Both writers show the problem of innumerable Kazakh people who came from steppe and could not find a small place in the city. They describe in detail the damages and consequences that hit national nature of the Kazakh people who suffered from homelessness. In these works written in the end of XX and in the first years of XXI centuries the habitat, social condition, time were not formed from the sight of common author's report or common familiar point of view in order to describe the view of the period. Contrarily they influence to readers think about and understand the past period through spiritual unrest, internal thoughts and feelings and confused actions of few characters.

### **Conclusion**

Conceptions of existential direction that got a beginning from the works of Husserl, Kierkegaard, Merleau-Ponty, Jaspers, Berdyaev, Shestov, Buber, Sartre, Camus, Beauvoir, Heidegger in the XX century were the bases for determination of existential motives in the city prose. The world of existentialists' conception is developed from the concept of loneliness. The main sign that combines the great representatives of this direction in the world philosophy is approaching to human's nature from the point of "Me" and "Others". For them the types of actions as social relations are abstraction and real truth is a subjective one. One of the main channels where such thoughts and conceptions come into is estranging of person through feeling his or her world lonely from society and the relations and norms formed in it. There is a conclusion with what all the works agreed which had a deal with existential perception and the conceptions and theoretical sides which they followed. It is gathering strength during cultural falling and spiritual crisis of existentialism. It means existential direction of thoughts keeps the opinion that a person understands his or her loneliness in the life when contradictions in the social structure and the world degree get deeper and during the conflicts in consciousness.

In the past century the opinions of G. Merleau-Ponty and Zh.P. Sartre that the world is full of cruel tragedy and contradicts came forward. This kind of thoughts was recognized not only as French thinkers' opinion but also as a theoretical basis of general existentialism. Thoughts of Heidegger that "Human is a human as he existences". He acts in the openness of being what is being itself which as a throw threw a simple person in the "care". "The world" is the light of being into which man enters with his abandoned being" is close to the ideas of Zh.P. Sartre "the world – empty". Existentialists tried to solve the way of getting out of deadlock through individual being and his or her "Me". Having analyzed the works written in Russian and Kazakh literature on the theme of city we have determined the motives of keeping away (estrangement), life and death, loneliness and homelessness that are typical to city prose.

Real description of the problems in the works typical to city people is one of the tendencies that makes a process of development of city prose clear. It means, comprehension of individual person's problems, his or her sadness and pleasure, feeling and instinct is an important stage in dialectical actions of literature. The city prose did not leave out of the influence to the worldwide literary development of the founders of existentialism and critical thinkers and word painters such as Heidegger, Jaspers, Sartre, Camus, Marsellie, Berdyaev. Having the problems such as estrange, loneliness, homelessness that are typical to city life shows the importance of our theme and we consider that this theme still needs to be fully researched.