

**THE ETHICAL AND THE AESTHETIC AS
PHILOSOPHICAL CATEGORIES IN THE LEGACY OF
KAZAKH THINKERS: M. ZH. KOPEEV,
S. TORAIGHYROV AND ZH. AIMAUTOV**



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This monograph presents a systematic and problem-oriented course devoted to the main manifestations of the ethical and the aesthetic in the legacy of Kazakh thinkers: M. Zh. Kopeev, S. Toraighyrov and Zh. Aimautov examining their ideas in the context of historical and contemporary philosophical thought through comparative and hermeneutic analysis. It is intended for all those interested in ethical, aesthetic, and methodological problems in the field of Kazakh philosophy.

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Introduction

In the unfolding of every human life, there inevitably comes a moment of existential suspension – a pause in the relentless flow of everyday existence – when the individual is compelled to ask fundamental questions: What is the meaning of beauty? How is the distinction between good and evil to be understood? And, perhaps most crucially, is it possible for truth, goodness, and beauty to be realized not as distant metaphysical abstractions, but as concrete and unified dimensions of lived human experience?

While such questions may seem speculative or overly abstract to some, and while others may respond to them with provisional answers shaped by the contingencies of routine life, there exists a category of thinkers for whom these inquiries constitute the very foundation of intellectual and spiritual existence. These are individuals who devote their lives to the pursuit of higher meanings, often navigating a complex interplay between the ethical and the aesthetic as integral components of the human condition.

This book seeks to engage with that pursuit by exploring the ethical and aesthetic dimensions in the philosophical and literary works of three prominent Kazakh intellectuals from the Pavlodar region – Mashkhur Zhusip Kopeev, Sultanmakhmud Toraighyrov, and Zhusipbek Aimaurov. Our inquiry aims to illuminate how these thinkers, shaped by the sociocultural and political transformations of the early 20th-century Kazakh steppe, redefined traditional understandings of morality and beauty within a shifting epistemological and historical landscape.

At the core of this exploration lies the recognition that ethics and aesthetics are not merely discrete categories of philosophical inquiry; rather, they represent interwoven modalities of self-understanding and world-interpretation within Kazakh cultural consciousness. Their convergence reflects a distinctive mode of phenomenological experience, wherein the beautiful becomes a vessel for the good, and ethical action acquires aesthetic significance through the form it gives to life itself.

This work does not claim to offer an exhaustive account of the intellectual legacies of Kopeev, Toraighyrov, and Aimaurov. Such a task would require far greater scope and depth than this introductory format permits. Instead, our more modest but no less essential aim is to initiate a reflective engagement with their thought – to trace the contours of a uniquely Kazakh synthesis of the ethical and the aesthetic, and to propose a framework for further philosophical investigation.

In doing so, we invite the reader not only to consider historical and textual analysis, but also to engage in a form of hermeneutic dialogue with

the ethical imagination and aesthetic sensibility embodied in the works of these thinkers. For within this dialogue lies a deeper understanding of what it means to live ethically, beautifully, and authentically in a world marked by both fragmentation and the enduring search for unity.

1. Ideological Origins and Worldview Foundations of the Ethical and Aesthetic Interrelation in the Legacy of M. Zhusip Kopeev, S. Toraighyrov, and Zh. Aimaurov

1.1 Methodological Foundations of the Philosophical Inquiry into the Interrelation between the Ethical and the Aesthetic

The analysis of the interrelation between the ethical and the aesthetic in the works of M. Zhusip Kopeev, S. Toraighyrov, and Zh. Aimaurov entails a deeper exploration of the spiritual origins underpinning the formation of their worldviews. This section is dedicated precisely to that task: to uncover the essence and character of the ethical-aesthetic relationship as shaped by the cultures that exerted a direct influence on the philosophical consciousness of these thinkers. In scholarly literature, the development of Kazakh philosophical thought is typically divided into several major stages: ancient Turkic culture, medieval Islamic philosophy, the legacy of akyns and zhyrshys (bards), the Kazakh Enlightenment, and twentieth-century philosophy.

Relying on this broadly accepted typology, we propose four principal sources as the methodological framework for tracing the spiritual roots of Kopeev's, Toraighyrov's, and Aimaurov's thought: (1) the nomadic tradition; (2) the philosophy of the medieval Muslim East; (3) the oral-poetic legacy of the akyns and zhyrshys; and (4) Russian and European intellectual cultures. This subject, therefore, presupposes an examination of the evolving interrelationship between the ethical and the aesthetic, which inevitably adds a layer of complexity to our research. Nonetheless, we have attempted to identify those core cultural universals that form the basis of the Kazakh worldview and are shared across the entire system of Kazakh cultural consciousness.

When reflecting upon great thinkers of the past, we are often compelled to ask: What novelty did they contribute to the ongoing development of philosophical thought? What is the enduring significance of their legacy? While such questions defy definitive answers within the limited format of a textbook, they cannot be avoided given the nature of the issues under consideration. We therefore shift the focus of inquiry slightly: rather than ask whether Kopeev, Toraighyrov, and Aimaurov formulated a coherent, fully rationalized conceptual system, we instead emphasize the prioritization of ethical and aesthetic questions in their philosophical legacy. From this vantage point, it becomes evident just how profoundly their work has enriched philosophical reflection.

Above all, one must acknowledge that these thinkers decisively introduced the idea of the intrinsic connection between the ethical and the aesthetic. An examination of their creative output reveals that this interrelation is rooted in the very essence of the human being, and that it expresses the core dynamics of personal growth and becoming. To study the interrelation between ethics and aesthetics, therefore, is to study the human in the unending process of self-creation, a process wherein the individual either harmonizes or disrupts their inner nature and their relationship to the world. The ethical and the aesthetic emerge as modalities through which reality is apprehended; their interconnection reveals a certain threshold in the self-development of the human spirit.

At the same time, because the ethical and the aesthetic manifest through the individual's relationship to the world – and this relationship arises from one's overall conception of reality – the analysis of their interrelation must proceed from a particular understanding of the cosmos. Thus, our inquiry unfolds along two interdependent dimensions: an anthropological investigation into the ethical and aesthetic as reflections of human nature, and an ontological perspective concerned with the «human – world» relation.

As is well known, the particular forms of philosophical reflection that developed in the East and West were shaped by differences in lifestyle and climatic conditions. This presents a methodological difficulty for our study, since the categories of the «ethical» and the «aesthetic» are themselves products of European philosophy, formally introduced into the scholarly lexicon by A. Baumgarten in the 18th century. His contributions allowed for a systematic, conceptual analysis of the ethical-aesthetic nexus. However, this does not imply that meditations on beauty, virtue, evil, and the sublime were absent prior to that era.

Indeed, the genesis of ethical-aesthetic reflection reveals that these categories, though later formalized, were deeply entwined within the syncretic worldviews of ancient cultures. They emerged as practical-philosophical orientations grounded in the fundamental question: «How should one live?». Thus, the birth of ethical-aesthetic reflection is inextricably tied to the very origins of philosophy itself. Among the earliest metaphysical questions posed by humans were surely those concerning goodness, beauty, and the pursuit of perfection in life.

Given the perennial nature of these inquiries – compelling each person to confront them throughout their lifetime – the use of the terms «ethical» and «aesthetic» in relation to the thought of Kopeev, Toraighyrov, and Aimautov is entirely consistent with the principles of historical-philosophical analysis. It is evident that, grounded in a shared ontological foundation of human existence and the world, both Eastern and Western

categories of being contain overlapping dimensions. Moreover, the Kazakh intellectual tradition features indigenous notions of the good (zhaksylyk), the bad (zhamandyq), the beautiful (sululyq), and the heroic (erlik) – concepts that bear semantic resemblance to Western ethical and aesthetic categories. Accordingly, we deem it both appropriate and intellectually justified to apply and adapt the categories of ethics and aesthetics to the analysis of Kazakh philosophical thought.

To adequately comprehend the specificity of the interrelation between the ethical and the aesthetic within the nomadic culture, it is essential to clarify that this is not a connection between separate categories, but rather an interrelation inherent to being itself - that is, it is ontological in nature. As is well known, in ancient times the worldview of the nomads was syncretic. It should be emphasized that in reconstructing the holistic system of the Kazakh intellectual tradition, we have drawn upon the methodological framework of historical-philosophical investigations into the problems of aesthetics developed by A. F. Losev. According to Losev, in the absence of a strict theoretical system and precise terminology, it is permissible to use «various phenomena of cultural life or different domains, strata of the cultural problematic of a given historical epoch» as legitimate sources. [1, 394]

1.2 The Genesis and Formation of the Ethical and the Aesthetic in Nomadic Culture

1. The Syncretism of the Ethical and the Aesthetic in Kazakh Nomadic Culture: Its Causes and Consequences.

2. Ritualized Symbolism of the Ethical and the Aesthetic in Traditional Kazakh Society.

To adequately grasp the specific nature of the interrelation between the ethical and the aesthetic in nomadic culture, one must begin by clarifying a key ontological premise: this is not merely a relationship between two abstract categories, but a unity embedded in the very mode of being itself. In ancient times, the worldview of the nomads was inherently syncretic. As emphasized in the works of scholars such as M. O. Orynbekov [2], the study of Kazakh intellectual tradition – and by extension, ethical-aesthetic practices – requires a return to the pre-Islamic beliefs of the Kazakhs: to Tengrianism, shamanism, to primordial cosmologies and world-order myths, and to the nomadic way of life, which reflects a subtle philosophical generalization of lived experience. The deeper strata of consciousness are intimately connected with a sense of belonging to a particular ethnos, to its

traditions and worldview orientations. It is precisely this connection that proves decisive in the transition from the universal foundations of a worldview and culture to a reflective stance upon them – that is, to philosophy itself.

Through this inquiry, several foundational worldview factors emerge as critical to reconstructing the ethical and aesthetic sensibilities of the time: (1) the human relationship to nature and (2) the individual's process of self-determination within the cosmos.

Modern scholarship affirms that nature, in shaping human relations, simultaneously forms a people's worldview, patterns of thought, and their symbolic model of the world. The nomadic perception of the cosmos as a living, ensouled entity – and their submission to its rhythms – speaks to a cosmological absolutization of the universe. In this sense, the nomadic worldview is fundamentally cosmological. A profound awareness of unity with the cosmos fostered a contemplative, reverential attitude toward nature. This is manifest in the nomads' principle of «non-interference», which underpinned their harmonious coexistence with the natural world – markedly distinct from the settled peoples' impulse to reshape nature according to human needs.

As K. Sh. Nurlanova rightly noted, «contemplation, as a mode of forming one's relation to the world and relationships with the world, lies at the foundation of traditional Kazakh worldview culture» [3, 5]. From this, we may conclude that nomadic culture was oriented toward contemplation and communion – a harmonious co-being of human and world. Importantly, contemplation for the nomad was not a conceptual or rational process, but rather an act of immersion, of affective resonance with the world. One might say that contemplation was a way of life – a distinct mode of communication with reality in which the ethical and the aesthetic interpenetrated one another.

To comprehend the foundational role of contemplation in nomadic life, one must explore the centrality of harmony in the worldview of the ancient Kazakhs. Of course, the concept of «harmony» was not explicitly formulated or designated, yet its presence was constantly implied. Moreover, in ancient times, the notion of harmony bore a deeper and more expansive meaning, manifesting in various modifications not only of the aesthetic and ethical, but also of the cosmological and social dimensions. A. F. Losev and V. P. Shestakov, in their work «The History of Aesthetic Categories», noted this multilayered and all-encompassing nature of harmony, explaining it by the fact that «originally, harmony – like many other categories of ancient Greek philosophy and aesthetics – was closely linked to the elementary characteristics of human social life, to the materially practical sphere of his

activity, in which the aesthetic had not yet been singled out or understood as a separate domain» [4, 36].

In our view, the concept of harmony constitutes one of the defining doctrines of traditional Kazakh thought from the earliest times. Although the term itself may not have been explicitly formulated, its presence was always implied. The cosmos, for the ancient Kazakhs, was apprehended not merely as a physical phenomenon, but as a perfected, spiritualized order – a realm of generative forces that could only unfold through a harmonious existence between humanity and the world. That is, there was no strict dualism between man and cosmos. The nomad distinguished himself from nature, yet did not separate himself from it. The more clearly distinctions arose, the more effort was directed toward restoring ontological harmony.

These efforts gave rise to a variety of synthetic strategies for maintaining a unified world-order. For the purposes of this study, we limit ourselves to three prominent manifestations in nomadic culture: the harmonies of light, number, and music. We will examine how each of these domains reveals the interconnectedness of the ethical and the aesthetic in the nomadic worldview, as well as in the thought of Kopeev, Toraighyrov, and Aimaurov.

It should be noted that the categories of light, number, and music are characteristic not only of ancient Greek, but also of Chinese and Indian philosophy. In the nomadic intellectual tradition, these categories are closely associated with Tengrism, since the restoration of cosmic harmony by the ancient Kazakhs was attributed primarily to the Sky – Tengri –which was understood as the primordial origin of all being in the Kazakh cosmology. We shall not delve into a detailed analysis of Tengrism here, referring instead to the works of prominent scholars in this field – S. Akatai, A. Kasabek, S. Kasabek, and M. S. Orynbekova [5]. What is crucial to emphasize is that the Sky-Tengri was perceived as the origin of all that exists, integrating within itself the divine, natural, and social principles, and functioning as the ultimate cause of the world's manifold diversity.

This is precisely why the ancient nomadic tribes worshipped both natural phenomena and celestial bodies, turning to them in moments of existential significance. In his writings, Chokan Valikhanov observed that «the sun, moon, and stars ... still enjoy reverence among the people, and rituals of their cult have been preserved» [6, 112]. This is also evidenced by the archaic Kazakh representations in which celestial bodies occupied a central place: «I no longer feel the sun and moon on the blue sky» [7, 139]. Not by coincidence, the Kazakh language contains widespread expressions for the universe such as Zharyq dūniye (Radiant world) and Zharkyn dūniye (Luminous world) [8, 44].

In pre-Islamic teachings, light was regarded as the defining quality of the positive principle, embodying goodness, fortune, and a cosmos governed by the laws of beauty and moral order. Yet the lives of the ancient nomads were not exhausted by passive awe before the celestial bodies. Their veneration was embodied in numerous rituals. The invisible and the inaccessible – expressed through the aesthetics of ritual – were not questioned, but rather accepted as sacred truth. These traditions and rituals encoded behavioral norms essential for the survival of early Kazakh society. They were understood as laws of life-conduct, ethical and aesthetic values whose violation entailed not just individual error, but cosmic disintegration.

From this analysis, it becomes clear that nomadic culture did not cultivate a rational or scientific understanding of the world, but rather a sacred, spiritual communion with it. In other words, the nomads attuned themselves not only to the manifest world but also to the unseen. Thus, their epistemology was rooted less in science and more in art, poetry, and music. Indeed, one could say that the nomadic worldview was inherently poetic and musical.

This orientation is not accidental. Among the most ancient forms of communication with the world was music. In nomadic culture, music held a privileged position – it carried sacred knowledge, penetrating and connecting the physical and the divine realms. Music was the mediating link between the human and the cosmic, between being and beyond being, between life and death. It functioned as a codified form of dialogue between the self and the world.

1.3 The Transformation of Traditional Nomadic Worldview Universals in the Works of M. Zhusip Kopeev, S. Toraighyrov, and Zh. Aimaurov

1. The Emergence of a New Human Being with a Developed and Reflective Individual Consciousness

2. «Responsibility», «Seeking», «Deed» and «Act» as Modes of Human Existence in the Early 20th Century

3. The Interrelation of the Ethical and the Aesthetic through Responsibility (Kopeev), Spiritual Quest (Toraighyrov), and Human Action (Aimaurov)

Among the thinkers examined, the symbolism of light finds its most vivid expression in the legacy of M. Zhusip Kopeev. His philosophical reflections reveal a synthesis of ancient cultic rituals with Islamic religious interpretations. On the one hand, through symbols such as gold and silver –

representing dual yet unified elements – Kopeev affirms the unity of the divine and the human.

One brick was gold, another was silver,
A wondrous sight that left the wise in awe.
They drove in nails of diamonds here and there,
And set a golden throne in splendid form [9, 213]

The poetic lines can be interpreted not merely as a description of material splendor, but as a symbolic expression of the nomadic aesthetic and metaphysical worldview.□ On the other, he extends the notion of light beyond cosmology, applying it to the human soul. For Kopeev, light becomes synonymous with goodness and morality. Light is the highest good, destined to overcome darkness – the embodiment of evil. The light of the soul, in his view, illuminates human actions and guides one toward the path of beauty and virtue.

Light, understood as holiness, becomes a symbol of compassion and love. And compassion, in turn, implies responsibility – not merely for oneself, but for the Other. In this way, we interpret the ontological foundation of the ethical-aesthetic nexus in Kopeev's work through the lens of responsibility. He introduces a significant reinterpretation of light: no longer as something received passively from the cosmos, but as an active moral engagement with life.

S. Toraighyrov offers a somewhat different understanding of light. For the steppe-dwelling Kazakhs, the sun, moon, and stars were more than celestial objects – they were vital coordinates of existence. In his poem Tanystyru («Introduction»), Toraighyrov likens Kazakh patriots to heavenly bodies.

One was like the sun, one a star, one the moon
Who else but they, with hearts aglow,
Illuminated the path for their people,
Burning to the end, consumed in full [10, 147]

This poetic fragment invokes celestial imagery – the sun, the star, the moon – as metaphors for historical or spiritual figures who, through the intensity of their inner light, illuminated the path of the people. In a hermeneutic sense, these metaphors signify not merely individual excellence, but archetypal presences within the collective memory, embodying the ideal of sacrifice through radiance.

Through these symbols, he reveals the unique moral and intellectual profiles of the thinkers who gave their lives for the well-being of their people. Another layer of light symbolism appears in his equation of light with knowledge. Light, in this context, is the essence of enlightenment – a force that delivers humanity from the darkness of ignorance to the path of happiness.

Learning is like the morning light
It fills us with strength, unmatched in might.
Who dares to challenge bold-faced truth?
Even the proud mirza (lord) shrinks,
though gray and grand in youth [11, 22]

This poetic reflection likens education to the morning light – a powerful metaphor that situates learning within the phenomenological experience of awakening and illumination. Light, as a recurring symbol in both Eastern and Western traditions, embodies not only clarity of vision but also the ontological transition from ignorance to being – a movement from doxa to aletheia, from concealment to revelation.

The line «Who dares to challenge bold-faced truth?» echoes the ethical imperative of truth as something unyielding, a force before which even the socially elevated figure – mirza, puffed-up and aged – appears timid and diminished. In a hermeneutic reading, this represents the inversion of worldly hierarchy in the face of transcendent values: the truth, accessed through genuine learning, neutralizes false authority and superficial prestige. For Toraighyrov, light does not signify compassion, but rather aspiration and openness – a call to seek. The ethical-aesthetic synthesis in his work is grounded in this notion of the quest. Importantly, such seeking is not a chaotic accumulation of information or aimless wandering, but a deep spiritual striving toward the unity of goodness, beauty, and truth – the triad that defines true human spirituality.

Zh. Aimaurov's interpretation of light also emphasizes its harmonizing function between the human and the cosmos (or the divine). In his worldview, light becomes embodied in the deed – in concrete acts of kindness, love, and care for others. For example, in the novel *Akbilek*, the motif of light associated with the figure of the *duana* also carries the function of a harmonizing principle mediating between the human being, the world, and the divine. The *duana* – traditionally understood as individuals marked by physical impairments from birth – are perceived within Kazakh culture as sacred beings, set apart and touched by God.

In the image of the *duana* Iskendir, the very quintessence of moral perfection is concentrated: selflessness, purity, and benevolence. Iskendir

does not know how to lie, wishes no harm to anyone, and cannot bring himself to be harsh – even toward those who offend him. He merely lowers his head in sorrowful silence, offering no reproach. From a phenomenological standpoint, the duana embodies a liminal presence – a being between worlds – whose very existence reveals an ontological mode of harmony. His physical otherness does not signify lack, but rather excess: a surplus of ethical presence, a transcendence of the everyday. Hermeneutically, the duana becomes a vessel of divine light, a symbolic bridge uniting brokenness with wholeness, passivity with spiritual strength [12, 104].

For Aimautov, then, the unity of the ethical and the aesthetic finds its most complete expression in action. His conception of the deed is rooted in nomadic traditions of deep interpersonal communication, where every person is perceived not only as a guest upon the earth but as a fellow inhabitant of the universe. This respectful, open, and unobtrusive relation to the Other is a cornerstone of Kazakh ethical mentality.

Turning again to Toraighyrov, we note that he also advances the nomadic universal of number, using it to explore harmony between the individual, society, and the cosmos. The semantic significance of ritual numerical symbolism in Kazakh culture has been thoroughly elucidated by Zh. K. Karakuzova and M. Sh. Khasanov in their monograph «The Cosmos of Kazakh Culture» [13, 79] This is particularly evident in his poem *Adaskan Omir* («A Straying Life»), where he presents a life cycle through a numerical progression: «I am a child, I am a youth, I paused, I am old, I am dead» [14, 165].

We propose that such delineation of life stages represents a successive development of age differentiation, articulated through strict numerical symbolism in the reflections of akyns and zhyraus, such as Bukhar-zhyrau and Shal-akyn. For example:

Ah, my twenties –
I was like the reed by the lake,
Ah, my thirties –
I am a stream rushing down from the mountains [15, 145]

This metaphorical progression from a static, rooted state to a dynamic, flowing one encapsulates an existential understanding of human development. It reflects the phenomenological experience of becoming, where each decade embodies a different mode of being-in-the-world, resonating with both the natural environment and the cultural-symbolic order.

Your forties –
Like a steed freely soaring,
Your fifties –
Like a nomadic people wandering,
Your sixties –
Days of reflection and sorrow [16, 91]

The focus of akyns and zhyraus is not so much on quantitative changes as on the qualitative state of the individual and their transition from one socio-age niche to another. For Toraygirov, childhood represents a profound openness to the world, but with age comes alienation. The poem is not a prescriptive model of behavior, but a question posed to existence itself. His symbolic use of number expands into a meditation on conscious human life as structured and temporal.

According to Toraygirov, a person at any stage of life is engaged in a continuous search for the self. However, this quest is not for just any self, but for a better one as G. S. Batishchev later noted: «A human being is endowed with the potential to seek within all dimensions of being – both manifest and latent. Yet this capacity is not granted so that one might reduce these possibilities or confine oneself merely to certain dimensions. Nor is it intended for one to obstruct the awaited absolute Revelation with relative discoveries. Rather, this potential is bestowed for one's participation in polyphonic co-creation – a mode of existence that transcends the isolating boundaries of empirical cognition and draws the self toward ontological openness» [17, 104].

In Aimautov's work, number is not used ritually or in age gradation. Instead, he uses numerical harmony as a metaphor for ordering human relationships and understanding life's cyclical nature. The journeys of his protagonists – Qartkozha and Akbilek – follow a recurring pattern: displacement (due to war, study, or exile) followed by return, always in a new form. Each return is both a homecoming and a transformation. «Qartkozha has changed. He has freed himself from blind faith in authorities and fanaticism... There is no return to past sorrows, melancholy, or passivity. Qartkozha has become an energetic, curious, and youthful individual» [18, 142].

Through distance and time, they come to perceive new facets of the world with the wisdom gained through lived experience. Thus, their upward, spiral-like path reflects a deeper ontological process: a triadic movement of thesis–antithesis–synthesis, where the individual departs, is transformed, and returns renewed.

This spiral dynamic, far from being mere narrative structure, encodes the profound ethical-aesthetic unity of growth through action. For Aimautov, the harmony of number is not a mystical force, but a lived trajectory. Each new turn of the spiral – each conscious act – integrates moral goodness and aesthetic beauty into the ongoing process of human becoming.

In summary, we suggest that for M. Zhusip Kopeev, the ethical-aesthetic interrelation is grounded in responsibility; for S. Toraighyrov, in the quest for spiritual foundations; and for Zh. Aimautov, in creative action. These modes of being – responsibility, seeking, and deed – though refracted through the individual philosophies of early 20th-century thinkers, are deeply rooted in the centuries-old nomadic culture of the Kazakhs. This traditional culture embodied an imperative of conscientious living, spiritual aspiration, and meaningful action.

It is worth noting that the concepts of responsibility, seeking, deed, and act are not explicitly formulated in the philosophical-poetic lines of these Kazakh thinkers. Yet it is these worldview universals that guide their intellectual orientation and form the core of their moral-philosophical search.

Thus, in broad strokes, we observe the continuity and transformation of the nomadic tradition within the theoretical worldview of these seminal figures.

1.4 The Specificity of the Ethical and the Aesthetic in Medieval Islamic Culture

1. A New Mode of Relation to the World Oriented Toward the Absolute Ideal – Allah as Supreme Value

2. Classifications of the Ethical – Aesthetic Interrelation in Medieval Islam: al-Farabi, Balasaguni, Yasawi

During the medieval era, the worldview of the nomads and the culture rooted in their experiential world began to acquire new features. As human beings gradually distinguished themselves from the surrounding cosmos, the once-dominant syncretism and unity of the inner and outer, the ideal and the material, gave way to differentiation. In earlier traditions, action was embedded in cosmological and ritual practice – inseparable from the sacred totality of being. In the medieval transformation, however, we observe a widening gap between humanity and the cosmos. This divergence simultaneously brought forth a heightened awareness of the human as the formative force of meaning – thereby reinforcing the ethical –aesthetic relationship as a distinctly anthropogenic process.

These shifts were, in essence, directed toward the ideal of infinite self-perfection and the actualization of human creative potential. Yet at the same time, the ethical and the aesthetic began to transcend pragmatic concerns, refusing to be confined to utilitarian interests or earthly desires. In response to the spiritual dissatisfaction with the condition of both the external world and the human being, a universal culture emerges – one that reorients the human gaze toward the Absolute Ideal, in which Allah is affirmed as the highest value and ultimate referent of all being.

It must be emphasized that the ideas of Islam were never assimilated in their pure theological form by the nomads. Instead, they were merged with indigenous beliefs – such as the veneration of ancestors and saints – a phenomenon clearly reflected in the epic tradition, in the poetry of the zhyrau and akyns. For example, in the verses of the great Turkic thinker Mahmud al-Kashgari – writing within a Sufi philosophical framework infused with shamanistic motifs – the invocation of Allah is at times synonymous with Tañir (Tengri), the Sky: «My Tengri has created a vast sky; within it are stars – wondrous, singular, and sublime» [19, 80].

Chokan Valikhanov also observed this dual-faith structure among the Kazakhs, writing: «...among the Kyrgyz [Kazakhs], shamanism was fused with Islamic beliefs, forming a hybrid faith called ‘Islam’. But they did not know Muhammad. They believed in Allah, and at the same time in Ongons [ancestral spirits]; they made sacrifices at the tombs of Muslim saints, while also revering shamans; they respected Muslim khojas and worshipped fire. Shamans called upon both Ongons and Muslim angels and praised Allah. These contradictions did not hinder one another in the least– the Kyrgyz believed in all of it» [20, 49].

Thus, the boundary between Islamic and nomadic philosophical traditions in our analysis remains fluid – porous rather than rigid.

This hybridity shaped a unique synthesis of ethical and aesthetic values, informed both by Islamic metaphysics and pre-Islamic nomadic ontologies. Thinkers such as al-Farabi, Yusuf Balasaguni, and Khoja Ahmed Yasawi exemplify diverse approaches to the interrelation of the ethical and the aesthetic within the medieval Islamic context.

Al-Farabi conceptualized beauty not as sensory pleasure alone but as a reflection of harmony between the rational soul and the virtuous life. For him, the aesthetic was inseparable from the ethical telos – the perfection of the human intellect and its alignment with the divine order.

Yusuf Balasaguni, in his didactic epic *Kutadgu Bilig* («The Wisdom of Royal Glory»), articulated a vision of just governance grounded in moral beauty, wisdom, and righteousness – where the ruler’s virtue becomes an

aesthetic and ethical model for society. His poetry reflects the fusion of Sufi spirituality, political ethics, and poetic form.

Khoja Ahmed Yasawi, through his hikmets (spiritual poems), integrated the sensory and the sacred, expressing divine love (ishq) and ethical striving as intertwined aesthetic acts. In his Sufi framework, inner beauty is inseparable from moral purification, and the path to truth is both a spiritual and artistic journey.

These thinkers offer nuanced classifications of the ethical-aesthetic connection within medieval Muslim thought – each reflecting a unique interplay of form, virtue, and divine aspiration.

Without claiming to resolve all the complex issues faced by scholars of the medieval Islamic world, we shall confine ourselves to examining the dominant worldview values of that era– those in which a distinctive vision of ethical and aesthetic problems is concentrated, and which, in our view, exerted a significant influence on the ethical-aesthetic perspectives of M. Zhusip Kopeev, S. Toraighyrov, and Zh. Aimaurov.

Harmony, as a mode of structuring human relations with the world, became, during the medieval period, one of the means for attaining a higher state of being. It entered nomadic traditional worldview as an essential element of the new ontological and moral order introduced by Islam. This Islamic conception of perfection – grounded in the unity of goodness, beauty, and truth – manifested in intellectual elegance, interpersonal conduct, and the health of the human soul and body. One could say that in medieval Islamic philosophy, the question of perfection was posed as a question of the congruence between what is and what ought to be.

Allah was conceived as the very essence of beauty and sublimity. Reverence for His perfection was expressed through sincere love for the Creator, who is the «First Lover and the First Beloved» [21, 72]. Thus, true beauty – and thereby, knowledge of God – was accessible only through the heart. To understand the character of the ethical–aesthetic interrelation in the Middle Ages, it is essential to recall the distinct epistemology of medieval Islam. In broad terms, one can identify two major paths: the mystical path of the Sufis, and the rational path of scholars and philosophers, who saw human perfection as primarily the development of intellectual capacity and the expansion of knowledge in all its forms.

As noted in the works of E. Frolova, G. Shaimukhambetova [22], and others, Sufi epistemology was marked by a unique approach to divine cognition – as a deeply personal, affective, and sensorial experience. The culmination of spiritual striving was the moment of union with the divine, when truth was not known discursively, but felt – lived through the heart. True knowledge, in this mystical tradition, is attained not through abstract

reasoning but through love, through an immediate vision of truth, borne of intense inner transformation. It is an individual, inwardly demanding process of unveiling the concealed perfection.

This conception of knowledge – as a deeply subjective experience of the sacred – is widespread among the lyrical poets of the East. As the great Persian poet Hafez wrote:

Do not complain, Hafez!
Be faithful to the beloved.
Forget the trivial!
Praise what is exalted.
Let Hafez take a sip of wine –
And always be generous.
To your soul, the sacred path
Shall be revealed by the Invisible [23, 264-265]

This poetic invocation captures the essence of Sufi gnosis: the pursuit of truth not through logic, but through love, faithfulness, and elevation of the spirit. The path to beauty – thus to the Divine – is opened not by syllogism, but by surrender to the unseen.

The Qur'an itself affirms the limits of human reason in grasping the Absolute. In Surah Al-An'am (6:59), we read: «With Him are the keys of the unseen – none knows them but He. He knows all that is on land and in the sea. Not a leaf falls but that He knows it. There is not a grain in the darkness of the earth, nor anything fresh or dry, but it is [written] in a clear Record» [24, 122].

This verse affirms the ontological transcendence of Allah, whose knowledge is all-encompassing and ungraspable by rational means alone. The Absolute cannot be reduced to conceptual frameworks. Thus, the medieval Islamic tradition – particularly its Sufi currents – points us toward a knowledge that is not only intellectual but existential and affective, a knowledge that unfolds through the ethical–aesthetic transformation of the soul.

In this light, the ethical and the aesthetic in medieval Islam are inseparably joined in the pursuit of perfection – a state where beauty is not an ornament, but a sign of the divine order. The love of God, the search for truth, the striving for moral excellence – all these are acts of aesthetic meaning, as much as they are ethical imperatives. This worldview shaped the ethical–aesthetic orientation of later Kazakh thinkers, including M. Zhusip Kopeev, S. Toraighyrov, and Zh. Aimaurov, who inherited not only

nomadic wisdom, but also the metaphysical sensitivity of Islamic philosophy.

1.5 Continuity of Ethical and Aesthetic Elements of Islamic Culture in the Legacy of M. Zhusip Kopeev, S. Toraighyrov, and Zh. Aimaurov

1. The Problem of Perfection: The Priority of the Ethical in the Religious Conception of Islam
2. The Ethical–Aesthetic Nexus Grounded in Moral Responsibility (Kopeev), Justice (Toraighyrov), and Humane Deeds (Aimaurov)
3. Spiritual Seeking and Self-Analysis in Early 20th-Century Kazakh Thought

Upon first acquaintance with the intellectual legacy of early 20th-century Kazakh thinkers, one might form the impression that the worldview of M. Zhusip Kopeev is fundamentally different from the philosophical positions of S. Toraighyrov and Zh. Aimaurov. Kopeev worked firmly within the tradition of Islamic religious culture – a fact reflected both in his own statements and in the nature of his creative output, which draws upon both Persian (e.g., Ferdowsi, Nizami, Hafez, Saadi) and Turkic (e.g., al-Farabi, Balasaguni, al-Kashgari, Yasawi) traditions.

Kopeev's meditations on human virtues and vices, on the meaning of life and happiness, love and reason, are embodied in dialogic and aphoristic forms, such as *The Tale of the Scholar Lion* and *The Parable of Half a Loaf*. His religious-ethical reflections unfold in individual interpretations of qissas – narratives centered on the Creator, the nature of being, the Prophet's life and destiny – such as *Earth and Sky*, *On the Death of the Prophet*, and *The Relationship Between Man and the Stars*.

S. Toraighyrov, by contrast, was for a long time portrayed as an atheist, largely due to his critical stance toward members of the religious clergy. Yet this interpretive bias resulted in a superficial understanding of his philosophical engagement. What is often overlooked is that Toraighyrov's critique was not directed at religion per se, but at the moral failings of religious figures. This distinction is essential, as it reveals a deeper philosophical and spiritual concern rather than mere secularism.

Similarly, in the works of Zh. Aimaurov we find a sustained intellectual engagement with the phenomenon of religion, which for centuries had shaped the consciousness of the Kazakh people. Deeply versed in religious matters, Aimaurov consistently drew a line between pseudo-religious demagogues and genuine seekers of the sacred– those engaged in an open-

ended dialogue with the world. In his view, ignorance, anti-intellectualism, and the hostility toward books, newspapers, and science among some imams not only undermined the moral authority of Islam but inflicted lasting harm on the younger generation.

In his article «On the Relation of Religion and Philosophy to Practical Life» [25, 214]. Aimaurov reflected on the historical and philosophical significance of religion. Analyzing the spiritual landscape of the early 20th-century Kazakh steppe, he concluded that the youth did not reject religion – they simply did not know it. This insight highlights the continuity of ethical and spiritual concerns in the philosophical inquiries of all three thinkers.

Thus, to exclude religious motifs from the legacies of Toraighyrov and Aimaurov is, in our view, to overlook essential coordinates for understanding their thought. Despite differences in tone and method, all three thinkers – Kopeev, Toraighyrov, and Aimaurov – were heirs to the ethical-aesthetic legacy of Islamic culture. Each in their own way continued and transformed this heritage: Kopeev through moral responsibility grounded in divine order; Toraighyrov through a vision of social justice and rational enlightenment; Aimaurov through an insistence on authentic human action as the site of spiritual realization.

Their works reflect not the abandonment of Islamic ethical-aesthetic categories, but their reinterpretation in light of new historical conditions. At the heart of this reinterpretation lies the enduring problem of perfection – the alignment of human life with higher ideals, where the good, the beautiful, and the true converge not only in theory, but in the lived reality of thought, word, and deed.

Kopeyev's awareness of the impossibility of absolute knowledge, the eternal elusiveness of truth, and the yearning for the Supreme Being stem from the Qur'anic view of the world's cognition. Only the heart, as the deepest foundation of all human cognitive aspirations, can unveil the veil of the secret. This position arises from the more general thesis that God resides in the human heart: «Know yourself – know the world (God)». For M. Zh. Kopeyev, the perfect human is one who can uncover the profound truth of moral responsibility, both for oneself and for the entire world. Kopeyev also directs self-knowledge not towards introspection, not towards diving into oneself or escaping reality. The attempt to understand oneself should not lead to the alienation of people from one another. On the contrary, the necessary condition for self-knowledge, according to the thinker, lies in communication with others – not in the exchange of information, but in a spiritually-soulful, sincere relationship with one another.

From M. Zh. Kopeyev's reflections, two levels of the soul in a person can be identified: the primitive and the perfected. The insensitive, illiterate

soul produces bad thoughts. Thus, active work on the soul is required for perfection. For each person, this process is individual, a necessary constituent of life, and is connected to self-knowledge. As we can see, there is a significant feature in M. Zh. Kopeyev's reflections where the path of mystical knowledge-contemplation does not imply «consuming feelings». The concept of the Kazakh thinker is more oriented towards real human life; he is convinced of its rational essence. This is clearly reflected in one of the key positions of Kopeyev's philosophical stance regarding the original unity of the heart and the mind: «Regarding other things – «What is heard by the ear is known, what is seen by the eye is certain. If my eyes do not see, I will not believe» [26, p. 24]. In other words, the path to God requires not only spiritual but also intellectual trials, a constant search and overcoming of doubts.

However, if for M. Zh. Kopeyev knowledge is associated with mercy and love, for S. Toraighyrov, self-knowledge is a striving toward the infinite expanses of existence with the goal of establishing justice (әділ). The thinker's dialogue with himself, the attempt to understand his «Self» leads to reflections on such a fundamental quality of the human soul as conscience. Conscience, «ar» as the inner core of the soul, obliges it to self-analysis and self-assessment. It is God who calls to man through the voice of conscience. In other words, for S. Toraighyrov, the quality of the actions performed, the chosen meaning of life, ultimately depends on the work of the soul, but at the same time, the soul's joy, fear, and anxieties regarding certain decisions should reveal not a mechanical, but a conscious attachment to good. What, then, can awaken the sleeping soul? The thinker correlates the awakening of each human «Self» with personal understanding of life, with personally experienced shame, fear, delight, and joy. For «man speaks with God in the language of conscience». God resides in the heart and soul of every human. A person must have mastery over themselves, manage themselves, and overcome their weaknesses. Only in this case can they not only know themselves but improve themselves. Only in this context does knowledge, based on the unity of the ethical and aesthetic, have the power to bring the world into a state of harmony.

According to Zh. Aimautov, in his article «Неге арналсаң, соны істе» (Do what you are meant to do), the greatness and wisdom of people are manifested in self-knowledge for the purpose of spiritual self-improvement [27, 236]. Self-knowledge, aimed at the subsequent active transformation and development of human nature and spirit, is a characteristic feature of Zh. Aimautov's worldview. The thinker links the discovery of one's own distinctive qualities not with the aim of developing them for the sake of personal exclusivity. Here, such a quality as humanity must be included,

which, at its core, inherently requires the existence of the other. This path is the path to perfection. Therefore, according to Zh. Aimaurov, the unity of the ethical and the aesthetic at the ontological foundation contains not just an action-deed, but a humane deed. Otherwise, there is a potential threat that the desire to perform an act may become a basis for justifying any human actions, including immoral ones. According to the thinker, in a person, there are three «Selves»: «My» «Self in itself» (the inner Self), and «Self for others» (the social Self) [28, 236]. In our view, this shows a connection with the religious understanding of the unknowability, the infinity of the human soul, and thus of God. For we are all prone to error, and we are not always honest even with ourselves. The consciousness is not fully subject to the commands of the soul. The soul, or the «inner Self» is a rather complex entity, whose knowledge is extremely difficult. According to Zh. Aimaurov, it can only be explained through the union of the conscious and the unconscious, which, in their inseparable unity, reveal the human soul. However, in this union, the unconscious holds decisive significance.

To define the «Self for Others» the thinker asks: what do others think of me? Naturally, there is a desire to be liked, to evoke positive feelings and emotions in those around us. However, Aimaurov warns of the danger of complete submission to the desires and demands of others, of losing one's own personal core under the influence of public opinion. «If we constantly seek others' good opinion about ourselves, we inevitably submit to their judgment» [29, 237]. The only path out of delusion, according to Zh. Aimaurov, is to come to know the «inner Self», which he places above all other manifestations of the self: «What I regard as highest is my inner self – this is my inner life, my soul, my spirit» [30, 238]. In order to achieve self-knowledge, one of the essential conditions, in Aimaurov's view, is the necessity of «cutting off» previously «attached labels». Only under this condition can a person begin to truly listen to themselves, to monitor and become aware of their own thoughts, desires, and moods –these are the genuine expressions of the «inner Self». Nevertheless, Aimaurov acknowledges the limitations of human capabilities in the process of self-understanding. In our view, this reflects a connection with the religious conception of the unknowability and infinity of the human soul – and thus, of God.

The soul – that is, the «inner Self» – is a highly complex formation, the comprehension of which is extremely difficult. According to Zh. Aimaurov, its explanation is only possible through the union of the conscious and the unconscious, which, in their inseparable unity, reveal the essence of the human soul: «The hidden depths of the soul must be sought beyond the limits of reason – in the world of the unconscious... If we liken the concept of the

«soul» to the universe, then within this universe, the conscious is like the earth, while the unconscious is like the sky. Just as earth and sky together form the cosmos, consciousness and the unconscious together form the soul» [31, 239].

Yet in this union, decisive significance belongs to the unconscious. For it is the unconscious level that is infused with ultimate values – values which define a person's essence but may remain unacknowledged, unmanifested, or even concealed in daily behavior. Nevertheless, it is precisely the manifestations of the unconscious that reveal the true depths of the human soul: «What we refer to as the unconscious – that is our true «self». When analyzing the life of the soul, this side of the «self» must be taken into account» [32, 239].

It can be said that M. Zh. Kopeyev, S. Toraighyrov, and Zh. Aimaurov, through different paths, arrived at the idea of the necessity of the harmonious unity of knowledge, beauty, and morality. However, for M. Zh. Kopeyev, the process of knowledge aims at understanding the divine essence and, as a result, developing a responsible attitude towards life. For S. Toraighyrov, in the rational essence of man, he saw the possibility of creating just and harmonious relations in the world. Zh. Aimaurov's teaching, his concept of three levels of the Self, is oriented towards understanding the deeper meaning of the actions performed by a person and, in general, the essence and purpose of human existence.

1.6 The Unity and Contradiction of the Ethical and Aesthetic in the Legacy of the Akyns and Zhyrau of the 15th–18th Centuries

1. The Dialectical Unity of the External and Internal, the Ethical and Aesthetic in Interpersonal Relations (kinship, familial ties, heroism, etc.)
2. The Problem of Happiness and the Meaning of Life in the Works of Asan-Kaygy, Dosmambet-Zhyrau, Shalkiz-Zhyrau, Shal-Akyn, and Bukhar-Zhyrau.

Undoubtedly, the issue of interpersonal relationships is not a new one. Already in the Middle Ages, attention was drawn to the form of harmony emerging from human communication. As is well known, in Kazakh society for many centuries, both material and spiritual life were determined by tribal, familial, and blood relations, where the interweaving and mutual penetration of the ethical and aesthetic were particularly evident. Since the harsh living conditions did not allow survival alone, positive qualities were cultivated in individuals, qualities that primarily had to unite the people into a cohesive whole. The inclination toward mutual respect and love, the strength of blood-

related and friendly relationships among the steppe dwellers, was embodied in concepts such as tuyskandyk (kinship), agayyndyk (family ties), abyssyndyk (relations between co-wives), and others. These frequently mentioned concepts by thinkers of different eras have deep ethical and aesthetic foundations, drawing together ideas of harmony and mutual respect among close individuals, and thus, the unity of the entire nation, the creation of good human qualities, and the beautiful structure of interpersonal relations. The nature of this communication possessed both positive aesthetic and ethical values.

The renowned 18th-century thinker Bukhar-Zhyrau warned that bad relations between brothers lead to enmity within the family, a moral fracture in the people, and that hostility between the wives of brothers undermines the moral foundations within the village, disrupting the beauty of interpersonal relationships:

The quarrel between relatives
Will spoil the beauty of the people,
The quarrel between co-wives
Will spoil the beauty of the country [33, 93]

The heightened interest in the relationships between daughters-in-law can be explained by the defining role of women in Kazakh society in the upbringing of future generations. It should be noted that priority is given to moral qualities and the beauty of the soul: «Sulu – sulu emes, aru – sulu, nege desen janı sulu» – «Not the one who is beautiful outwardly, but the one who is beautiful in soul».

In the reflections of Shalkiz-Zhyrau, the concept of agayyndyk (kinship) concerns not only familial relationships. In the context of his work, this concept extends to interpersonal relations between all people. The Zhyrau emphasized that often, corrupt feelings, especially envy between people, lead to unjust treatment of more talented individuals, whose advice and wisdom helped the entire people during the difficult years of turmoil. The exile of the best from their native lands results only in the delayed repentance and disappointment of the envious in their own actions:

If there is one good person,
There are many bad ones,
And they cannot bear to see the good one.
When trouble comes to the head of the bad one,
Even if he seeks the good one
With his two fast horses,

He will not be able to find him [34, 45]

In this passage, Shalkiz-Zhyrau illustrates the destructive power of envy within human relationships. His verse draws attention to the difficulty of recognizing and appreciating goodness when it is overshadowed by negative emotions like jealousy. The allegory of the «good person» and the «bad ones» highlights the isolation and alienation that often arise when one is ostracized due to the malicious actions of others. It also conveys a deep philosophical understanding of the human condition, emphasizing the importance of moral integrity and the tragic consequences of envy.

1.7 Development of Ethical and Aesthetic Ideas of Akyns and Zhyrau in the Works of M. Zh. Kopeev, S. Toraighyrov, and Zh. Aimaurov

1. Similarities and Differences in the Understanding of Happiness and the Meaning of Life in the Works of Akyns, Zhyrau, and the Philosophical Thought of M. Zh. Kopeev, S. Toraighyrov, and Zh. Aymatov.

2. The Problem of Unity Among the People in the 15th-18th Centuries and the Early 20th Century: A Comparative Analysis.

The complexity and contradictions of interpersonal relationships, as well as their exacerbation, were characteristic of Kazakh society at the beginning of the 20th century. M. Zh. Kopeev links the loss of spiritual unity to the changing value system in human society, where the individualistic spirit evolves into egoism – its extreme manifestation:

This shift in values, according to Kopeev, represents a profound disruption in the moral and spiritual foundations of society. The once-strong sense of community and collective responsibility gives way to a self-centered approach, where the pursuit of personal interests takes precedence over the well-being of others. As a result, interpersonal bonds weaken, and the social fabric becomes fragmented. This transformation reflects a deeper philosophical concern about the erosion of ethical ideals and the consequences of excessive individualism on societal harmony.

For the sake of the world, they flee from one another,
Breaking the thread of kinship and harmony.
Many are like stray dogs, wandering aimlessly,
Their eyes darting with greed, as contentment fades away. [35, 77]

This verse reflects the profound moral concern regarding the erosion of human relationships and values. The image of individuals

fleeing from each other for material gain and the metaphor of a «stray dog» wandering aimlessly depict the disintegration of unity and mutual respect. The reference to greed and the loss of contentment speaks to the spiritual emptiness that results when people prioritize personal desires over the collective good. The poet critiques the pursuit of worldly pleasures at the cost of familial and social bonds, highlighting the ethical consequences of such behavior.

The thinker is convinced that people deceive themselves by creating an abyss between themselves and the surrounding world. The tragedy lies in the fact that they, unaware of the disintegration of the unity of the universe into many separate parts, fail to recognize themselves in others, and thus wage war with themselves. The individual bears responsibility for not utilizing the granted opportunities for infinite spiritual development, limiting themselves to transient, momentary, selfish values.

M. Zh. Kopeev profoundly feels the necessity of the existence of the «other,» as individual existence is meaningless. This perspective reflects Kopeev's belief in the interconnectedness of all beings and the essential role of others in the fulfillment of the self. He critiques the egoistic focus that restricts human potential, urging the recognition of the broader spiritual and moral horizons that emerge when one transcends individualism and acknowledges the existence of others as an integral part of their own being. The failure to see this interconnectedness leads to a fragmented existence, devoid of true meaning or purpose.

There is a person, like an apricot or raisin tree,
From its fruit, the whole world draws joy.
There is a person, like a poplar tree,
Only fit to serve as firewood, consumed by the flames. [36, 84]

This metaphorical expression contrasts two types of individuals. The first person is like a fruit-bearing tree, whose presence benefits the world, offering wisdom, kindness, or service that nourishes others. In contrast, the second person is like a tree that only serves a utilitarian purpose, burning to provide heat but offering nothing beyond that. This serves as a critique of selfishness and lack of contribution to the broader society, while praising those who selflessly enrich the lives of others. The imagery captures the ethical and aesthetic value of one's life purpose – whether it serves the greater good or remains limited to personal, transient existence.

The deeds of goodness, charity, and benevolence,
Are the most precious value of a person's life. [37, 84]

This line emphasizes the intrinsic value of virtuous actions, such as kindness, charity, and goodwill. It suggests that the true worth of a person is not measured by material wealth or personal achievements but by their capacity to do good for others. The notion of «precious value» reflects the moral and spiritual significance of selfless acts in human life, aligning with the ethical ideals that encourage individuals to contribute to the collective welfare and well-being of society.

In this context, it is important to emphasize that, for M. Zh. Kopeev, love for God – and, by extension, for the entire world He has created – is not merely about discussions of goodness and beauty, or the formal observance of fasting and prayer. True, sincere love manifests itself in care and compassion for a specific person. According to M. Zh. Kopeev, this very manifestation embodies the essence of human spirituality.

For Kopeev, spirituality is not an abstract concept; it is deeply connected to concrete acts of kindness and mercy towards others. The ethical foundation of this worldview rests on the idea that true devotion to God and the world He created is expressed through tangible, compassionate actions directed towards other human beings.

Your fasting for thirty days is like the thirty people you feed,
Your five prayers are like the five people you guide.
To rid yourself of evil and to eliminate harm,
These actions alone won't give you the strength to do it.
When you're in distress, without me, your soul would perish,
You would have no strength, and your existence would fade.
Recognize this, if you don't, I will be the one,
In this world, the charity you give
Is like sharing half of your bread! [38, 167]

This poetic reflection emphasizes the deeper, spiritual meaning of actions like fasting, prayer, and charity. It suggests that these acts are not just rituals but are connected to the interconnectedness of human beings and their relationship to divine will. The «half of your bread» metaphor highlights the importance of selflessness and compassion in life, suggesting that true fulfillment and strength come not from material wealth or isolated acts, but from giving part of oneself to others, recognizing our collective humanity.

This means that the central idea should be not of an equal relationship with the other, but rather of a more spiritual and elevated attitude towards the other than towards oneself, since the affirmation of mercy is only possible through selfless communication with one another. The main

responsibility on this path, according to Kopeev, is placed on the individual. It is the person and their merciful (responsible) attitude towards others that becomes the source of the harmony of good and beauty.

It is clear that in Kopeev's understanding of responsibility, as an ontological foundation for the ethical and aesthetic perfection of the individual, the emphasis is not simply on responsibility, but on spiritual and moral responsibility.

Kopeev's view suggests that true responsibility transcends mere obligation or social duty. It is rooted in an individual's inner spiritual and moral framework, where ethical actions and aesthetic values are inseparable. For him, the path to human perfection is marked by the cultivation of a deep, selfless love and care for others, where the well-being of others becomes just as important, if not more so, than one's own. This is the key to achieving harmony between goodness and beauty.

It should be noted that S. Toraighyrov is spiritually close to M. Zh. Kopeev in his position. In almost all of his works, the tragic consequences of soulless human relationships are evident:

Toraighyrov, much like Kopeev, emphasizes the destructive impact of moral and spiritual decay in human relationships. He reflects on how the absence of compassion, mutual respect, and a deeper understanding between individuals leads to conflict, alienation, and the disintegration of communal harmony. Both thinkers recognize that the loss of spiritual values, the neglect of empathy and responsibility towards others, results in a society that is fragmented and morally weakened.

Through their works, both Kopeev and Toraighyrov call for the restoration of a more humane, spiritually aware society where the well-being of others is not just a matter of social obligation but a profound, ethical duty that elevates both individuals and the collective.

This verse reflects the deep existential struggles faced by the individual. The «various poisons» and «countless torments» symbolize the hardships and suffering one experiences in life. The poet then turns to the idea of rising above one's own kin – suggesting that to transcend the challenges posed by those closest to us is an even greater test than any external struggle. It implies that overcoming personal and familial conflicts requires a strength of character and spirit that is not easily found in the external world. In essence, the verse highlights the inner strength required to navigate the complexities of life, family, and society.

I have tasted much poison in my life!
The torments of the soul have cost me much strength!
But if a covetous one appears within your kin,

He will be more loathsome to you than any enemy. [39, 24]

This verse poignantly captures the profound emotional pain caused by betrayal or envy within one's own family. The poet draws a stark comparison between the external, often expected, enmity of enemies and the more painful, internal betrayal that arises when envy appears within the family. The message here is that such betrayal is far more harmful, as it disrupts the very foundation of trust and connection that should exist within close relationships. It highlights the devastating impact that negative emotions like envy can have when they arise from those who should be our closest allies.

He notes that human dialogue is infinite and multifaceted, and therefore, by its very nature, there must be something that unites this polyphony of voices into a single harmony. As we have demonstrated above, S. Toraighyrov identifies this unifying principle as justice, understood as a universal law. An honest and humane attitude – acting according to conscience – is, for Toraighyrov, the defining feature of a morally complete individual.

While M. Zh. Kopeev emphasizes forgiveness and compassion in interpersonal relationships, S. Toraighyrov places greater focus on justice. He views the resolution of interpersonal hostility as achievable through treating the other as oneself – a fundamental principle of humanity that must be continually upheld. At first glance, Toraighyrov's insistence on justice might seem to suggest a narrow interpretation: treating all others as one treats oneself, even if that self-regard is negative. However, Toraighyrov's notion of justice is not grounded in self-interest or animosity. Quite the opposite – his justice is a form of harmony that counters egoistic impulses and restrains human tendencies from inflicting suffering upon others.

Thus, Toraighyrov's concept of justice diverges significantly from Western interpretations. Rather than being rooted in legalism or individualism, his understanding is inherently ethical and relational, based on a moral obligation to sustain communal balance and preserve the dignity of others. In this way, justice for S. Toraighyrov becomes not just a social ideal but a spiritual and philosophical foundation for authentic human coexistence.

Justice, in S. Toraighyrov's understanding, is not a matter of reward based on merit or retribution. Rather, as noted by A. A. Smirnov in his analysis of Arab culture, justice is conceived as follows: «Justice here is not a means of equalizing the chances of isolated social atoms striving to maximize their 'profits' (and therefore inevitably clashing with one another,

since such maximization can only occur at the expense of others); justice is a mode of moderate and harmonious existence» [40, 292].

In other words, justice is a movement toward harmonious being – a kind of principle and norm of life. Humanity, however, in its search for meaning, has often given priority to superficial and transient phenomena, thereby losing the ethical essence of justice. This has led to a distortion of the idea of justice: from a lofty, spiritually harmonizing principle to a simplistic notion of levelling or equalization.

From all that has been said, it becomes clear that the human being is not merely a phenomenon, but a bearer of the universal essence of the world. Therefore, the unity of the ethical and the aesthetic is also not merely an abstract ideal; it is a path – a trajectory through which the world itself attains its supreme purpose and true meaning. This is a path of the infinite, not in a quantitative but in a qualitative sense; a path of potential creativity, of searching for the best version of oneself.

Turning to the legacy of Zh. Aimaurov, it is important to note that, in his novel «Qartkoja», he does not merely register the fragmentation and estrangement among Kazakhs or their reluctance to support one another. Rather, he goes beyond the limits of national or kinship-based relationships. Aimaurov emphasizes that support and assistance should be rendered not solely based on familial ties, but first and foremost on human principles.

It is worth highlighting that traditional worldview universals such as ағайындық (kinship) and tuysqandıq (blood relations) acquire a deeper ethical-aesthetic meaning in Aimaurov's philosophical reflections. These notions are reinterpreted as adamgershilik – humaneness, a moral essence that transcends social labels. Aimaurov shows that high social standing or education can often mask emotional callousness and cruelty: «Thousands of houses, millions of people live in this city, and not one even let me approach their doorstep. And this is what they call the seat of knowledge and morality! Where is their humanity? Can a people of knowledge have such stone hearts? Are these really homes? No, they are lairs of predators. Oh, my generous Kazakh people! Only in moments like this can your true worth be seen» [41,140].

In this passage, Aimaurov draws a sharp distinction between morality and reason, showing their non-identity. Yet, fully aware of the necessity for these two principles to be unified within the individual, he posits humaneness (adamgershilik) as the integrating force of the ethical and the rational. This is not a superficial harmony, but a profound inner fusion of meaning. In this light, only genuinely humane, and not merely rational, attitudes can inspire a person to active, selfless aid to those in need.

In this context, morality is understood as the beautiful. It is clear that Aimaurov is not simply addressing the notion of kin-based patronage or the protection of the weak by the strong. Rather, he is elevating a vision of humanity that is independent of age, ethnicity, or class: «Qartkoja loves his Kazakh people and his homeland. He does not love the rich or the tyrants, but the common folk – the poor, the laborers, the land and water of his people. If there is a conflict between a Kazakh and a Russian, he tends to see the Russian as the aggressor. Yet, he does not forget the kindness he has received from Russians either and wishes to embrace them as brothers» [42, 142].

Thus, the ideal human being, according to Aimaurov, is a creator, a person of active help and responsibility. The ethical-aesthetic relationship – whether it becomes unity or contradiction – depends entirely on the spiritual efforts of the individual.

As we can see, the centuries-old tradition of the Kazakh people has developed such universals concerning human relationships in which the ethical and aesthetic dimensions are inseparable – to detach one from the other would be to violate the conceptual integrity of these notions.

Kazakh thinkers have imbued these categories with new semantic depth, expanding their scope from narrowly kinship-based relations to the level of universal human values. In doing so, they have affirmed that true morality is inherently beautiful, and genuine beauty is inseparable from moral meaning. These ethical-aesthetic universals are not abstract ideals but lived principles, expressed in compassion, justice, responsibility, and the ability to see the other not as different, but as part of oneself.

1.8 The Specific Character of the Ethical and Aesthetic Correlation in the Legacy of Early 20th-Century Kazakh Thinkers

1. The Unity of the Outer and Inner in Kazakh Heroic Epic
In the Kazakh heroic epic, ethical and aesthetic dimensions are deeply intertwined. The image of the hero is not solely defined by physical strength or external beauty, but rather by an inner moral code – courage, loyalty, generosity, and the readiness to sacrifice for the sake of the community. This unity of the external and internal affirms the traditional Kazakh view that true beauty manifests through noble deeds. The hero is admired not just for his appearance or power, but for his embodiment of ethical ideals that resonate aesthetically, inspiring reverence and admiration. The aesthetic is therefore a direct expression of the ethical, and the heroic narrative becomes a space where moral virtues are glorified through artistic form.

2. The Discrepancy Between Outer and Inner in the Human Being. In contrast to the idealized harmony of the epic hero, early 20th-century Kazakh philosophical literature, particularly in the works of M. Zhumabayev, S. Toraighyrov, and Zh. Aimaurov, draws attention to the rupture between external appearance and internal moral content. These thinkers highlight that outward respectability, wealth, or social standing often conceals spiritual emptiness, selfishness, or even cruelty. The ethical crisis of the time is portrayed as a loss of internal authenticity beneath a deceptive surface of civility or progress. This discrepancy calls for a re-evaluation of values, where the measure of a person is not their status or formal piety, but their inner humanity – compassion, justice, and the capacity for selfless action. Thus, in their philosophy and literature, the aesthetic loses its meaning when divorced from the ethical, reinforcing that true beauty lies within the morally responsible and spiritually awake individual.

In addition to the highest ethical qualities, universal principles of goodness, intellectual beauty, and spiritual perfection, Kazakh thinkers of the early 20th century also attached significant importance to the outward physical attractiveness of the human being. Unlike cosmogonic perspectives, which emphasize the metaphysical and the spiritual, in their worldview, physical beauty was regarded as an important – though subordinate – component of the image of the perfect individual. An analysis of their ethical and aesthetic thought would remain incomplete without reference to the concept of *сұлулық* (beauty), understood in both its physical-external and moral-internal dimensions.

The ideal of a harmonious unity between the outer and the inner self has been regarded throughout the ages as a supreme norm – a symbol of existential harmony. This perception reflects the traditional Kazakh worldview in which there is no rupture between the corporeal and the spiritual: the physical and the soulful constitute an indivisible whole. Such wholeness was seen as the necessary condition for an aesthetic experience that possesses moral and formative power.

In medieval Kazakh epic poetry, physical beauty was traditionally associated with nobility, magnanimity, courage, and honor. Bodily beauty, according to the worldview of that era, served as the external expression of inner spiritual purity and strength. At the same time, however, epic literature presents a contrasting notion – negative perfection, embodied in ugliness and moral degradation.

Thus, in the epic poem *Qoblandy Batyr*, the figure of Ultan serves as an antithesis to both the heroic and the moral ideal. His physical repulsiveness mirrors his inner deformity – greed, cowardice, and treachery. This artistic device underscores the inseparability of the ethical and the aesthetic. The

disruption of this harmony – such as a beautiful body housing a soulless heart, or, conversely, ugliness devoid of moral substance – is perceived as a deviation from the ideal, a manifestation of inner conflict and spiritual fallenness.

Hence, in the tradition of Kazakh thought – from the epic heritage to the philosophical reflections of the early twentieth century – *сұлулық* (beauty) is not a merely external phenomenon. It is deeply rooted in a moral framework and represents a synthesis of the corporeal and the spiritual, wherein only their unity is capable of expressing the true essence of the human being.

His chest was as large as a haystack,
A whole caravan could pass through his throat.
His neck – solid as a mountain rock.
Each ear like a warrior's shield,
And his nose – flattened, as if shattered. [43, 229]

In our view, the glorification of the highest spiritual human qualities – alongside physical beauty, strength, and agility – found in the works of *akyns* and *zhyraus* in later centuries, carried not merely ethical and aesthetic significance. The harmonious fusion of inner nobility and outer perfection was a demand of its time. For instance, *Kaztugan-zhyrau* compares his own strength and spiritual might with the most esteemed values of the nomadic world: the long *kuruk* used for catching swift horses, the sharp teeth of a young camel that bite through tree branches, and eloquence akin to a scorching flame. The poetic metaphors and epithets of the *akyns* and *zhyraus* are born of the heroic spirit of the nomadic civilization and would be incompatible with the poetic traditions of other cultures.

Aqyn – a poet-improviser in the Kazakh oral tradition, voicing the spiritual and emotional experiences of the people through poetic expression. *Aqyns* typically engage in *aitys* (poetic duels) and focus primarily on contemporary issues and personal sentiments, distinguishing them from *zhyraus*, who embody a more prophetic and historical function.

Zhyrau – a traditional bard and sage of the nomadic steppe, whose role extended far beyond poetic performance. *Zhyraus* were the moral and philosophical conscience of their communities, articulating visions of justice, destiny, and collective unity. Their poetic language was deeply symbolic and often served as a guiding voice in political and social affairs.

Kuryk – a long pole or lasso used by nomads to capture horses or camels. In poetic imagery, it symbolizes strength, mastery, and the ability to

harness the elemental forces of nomadic life. Its metaphorical use conveys a sense of dominion, agility, and ancestral heritage.

Nomadic civilization – a civilizational model defined by a mobile lifestyle, pastoral economy, and a unique synthesis of adaptability, resilience, and socio-cultural autonomy. This form of civilization developed intricate ethical and aesthetic systems distinct from sedentary cultures, often reflected in its epic literature and communal rituals.

His forehead – broad and mighty, like the brow of a titan,
Armor on his chest – cold and vast as ice-bound steel.
His gait – majestic, like that of a sultan,
His bow – strung with silken fire, ready to unleash its zeal.
He leads his people like a shepherd his flock,
And speaks with the eloquence of a crimson-tongued sage.
In his grasp – a long pole to tame the wildest steed,
In the council – he stands, the pillar of the royal stage.
The last of the fiery judges, a true son of justice,
The youngest scion in a noble line of biys.
His jaw – like a bull's, crushing brambles in its fury,
A protector of the weak in their days of trial and tears. [44, 28]

The poetic fragment attributed to Kaztugan-Zhyrau illustrates the archetypal figure of the perfect human (толық адам) through a vivid interplay of physical power, moral integrity, and spiritual greatness. In Kazakh nomadic culture, the ethical and aesthetic were never seen as separate domains; rather, external strength and internal virtue existed in an inseparable unity.

The depiction of the hero's forehead, broad like that of a titan, reflects not only his physical prominence but also his intellectual and moral authority. The armor like bound ice covering his chest symbolizes not only physical protection but spiritual resilience and an impenetrable sense of justice. This cold, unyielding exterior is not devoid of life but rather preserves the inner fire of righteousness.

His gait, majestic as a sultan's, signals the harmony between body and soul – a confident bearing rooted in inner discipline and noble purpose. This nobility finds expression in his bow with a silken, flaming string – a metaphor of paradoxical unity, where gentleness (silk) and fire (force) represent the ethical use of strength in defense of justice and beauty.

The metaphor he leads his people like a shepherd his flock transforms military or political leadership into moral responsibility. The shepherd is not a tyrant but a guide, and his guidance is rooted in compassion. This moral

foundation is further emphasized by his speech, eloquent as a crimson-tongued sage, where the aesthetic beauty of language becomes an instrument of ethical enlightenment.

In his hand he holds a long pole to tame the wildest steed – an instrument not of domination, but of mastery. The steed, a classical symbol of passions and impulses, is brought under control not through cruelty, but through wisdom and discipline. This mastery extends beyond the self and into society: he is a pillar of the royal court, suggesting a stabilizing moral presence in political life.

Described as the last of the fiery judges, the hero is not merely a remnant of the past but the culmination of a moral tradition. He inherits and personifies the ideal of justice, standing as the embodiment of both law and conscience. His jaw, crushing brambles like that of a bull, reinforces this image of protective wrath – a destructive force directed solely against injustice.

Finally, he is a protector of the weak in their days of trial and tears, not out of obligation, but out of a deeply internalized sense of humanity (адамгершілік). Here, the ethical becomes aesthetic: moral action is not only right but also beautiful, and beauty lies in the active compassion toward others.

This convergence of physicality and spirituality, strength and tenderness, law and compassion, represents the core of the Kazakh worldview where ethics and aesthetics are not juxtaposed but integrated in the lived ideal of the heroic, humane being. Such a figure, forged by nomadic life and philosophical reflection, remains a timeless symbol of moral completeness.

Undoubtedly, these lines reflect a clear prioritization of the inner spiritual beauty of a human being. Physical beauty and health are depicted merely as one of the many components of the perfect human being. Since strength and health are morally indifferent, physical beauty is assigned a subordinate role within the hierarchy of values.

The idea of the insignificance of outward appearance was strikingly demonstrated through the lifestyle of the Sufi mystics, who proved through their spiritually infused deeds that the true beauty of a person is revealed only in acts of moral and soulful expression. The non-identity of physical attractiveness and inner virtue was profoundly elaborated by Ibn Sina (Avicenna), who noted that «sometimes it happens that a person with an ugly appearance is beautiful in terms of inner qualities... » [45, 58].

This disjunction between the external and internal was also later identified by Kazakh thinkers. For instance, the dialectic of human character is poetically explored by Akan Sery through the symbolic depictions of

dzhigits (young riders/warriors). He delineates thirteen character traits that reflect the diversity of temperaments among his contemporaries: intellect, reasonableness, and moral steadfastness; purposefulness, spiritual fortitude, and perseverance; narcissism, boastfulness, and incapacity for meaningful action; intellectual breadth combined with sincerity and a soulful disposition; stinginess, cunning, and cowardice; weak will, submissiveness, and dependence on women.

Such analysis reveals a sophisticated understanding of moral psychology and the intricate interplay between inner virtue and outer form. Akan Sery's poetic anthropology not only echoes the wisdom of classical Islamic philosophy but also reflects the continuity of a distinctly Kazakh ethical-aesthetic tradition in which true human beauty resides in moral elevation rather than physical form.

The fourth dzhigit is of a composed and serious nature,
Of noble origin, endowed with pleasant appearance...
The eighth dzhigit is a man of many talents,
Firm in word, with a rose-like soul and a single, unwavering secret.
[46,152-153]

Poets and zhyraus, through the vivid depiction of human characters, needs, and desires, bore witness to the incompleteness, infinity, and mysterious nature of the human being.

We shall now provide several examples from the works of 20th-century Kazakh thinkers that reveal the correlation between the external and the internal dimensions of the human person.

The internal and external dimensions of the human being are often interwoven, but not always in harmony. Kazakh thinkers of the early 20th century were particularly attentive to this dialectic, highlighting how physical appearance may either reflect or obscure one's inner essence. Their works frequently emphasize that true beauty arises not from form or outward grace, but from moral integrity, spiritual depth, and ethical conduct.

The notion that the aesthetic is subordinate to the ethical is profoundly expressed in the worldview of Kazakh zhyraus and aqyns, who depicted human excellence as a fusion of spiritual strength and intellectual clarity rather than physical perfection. They asserted that a person's true value lies in their ability to act with compassion, wisdom, and courage.

This idea resonates with the legacy of Islamic philosophers such as Avicenna (Ibn Sina), who observed: «... Conversely, one may have a comely appearance yet be marked by an ignoble character» [47, 58].

Kazakh thinkers and poets continued this tradition by portraying figures whose physical strength and external charm were not inherently virtuous, unless aligned with inner moral nobility. For instance, Akhan Seri offered a nuanced typology of personalities among his contemporaries, identifying thirteen distinct character traits. These ranged from wisdom, integrity, and determination to conceit, vanity, cowardice, and moral frailty. In so doing, he exposed the complexity of human nature and the limitations of judging individuals solely by appearance.

Thus, the convergence – or divergence – of the outer and inner self becomes a profound theme in Kazakh moral philosophy, reminding us that the essence of humanity lies not in surface forms but in the ethical and spiritual striving of the soul.

The terrifying, repulsive, and grotesque appearance of the lame Nurum in S. Toraighyrov's poem «Kamar Sulu» epitomizes his predatory and base nature: his mouth, stuffed with tobacco, spits and slurs obscenities; his speech is lisping; his neck is short like that of a bull; his belly quivers like a cow's; a sparse and filthy beard hangs loosely like a crumpled sack; his eyes bulge unnaturally. The entire image evokes that of a tarantula [48, 193–194].

Zh. Aimaurov also associated physical ugliness with the manifestation of evil, often revealed in petty actions, coarseness, and authoritarianism: «At the window's edge sat something black like a bear» [49, 303]; «His eyes twisted and bulged... That's when I realized he was cross-eyed... and that he had a bad nature» [50, 304–305].

These depictions make it evident that the ugly is not merely a negation of the beautiful. On the contrary, through the introduction of negative emotional experience and its rejection, core human values – such as goodness and beauty – are reaffirmed. In the view of F.W.J. Schelling, phenomena of the ugly are «in their totality still ideals, albeit inverted ones, and in this inversion they are once again subsumed under the domain of the beautiful» [51, 273].

The more «perfect» the depiction of the ugly, the more powerfully the value of the beautiful is asserted.

Her voice – as if spun from a golden thread, delicate and light.

Fragile and defenseless – like a tender stem in the wind.

Wise beyond her years, unmatched and unique in kind.

And from her shoulders, her hair flows – a swift and silken stream.

[52, 169]

The poetic image of the girl is imbued with a refined aesthetic sensibility that reflects the unity of inner and outer beauty. Her voice is compared to a golden thread – a symbol of delicacy, subtlety, and

harmony, emphasizing the immaterial, almost sacred nature of speech. Her physical fragility, likened to a tender stem, further enhances the impression of vulnerability and purity, traditionally associated with moral beauty in Kazakh poetic tradition. Despite her external defenselessness, she is described as intellectually mature – «wise beyond her years,» which reveals a profound harmony between the spiritual and the corporeal. The image of hair cascading from her shoulders «like a swift stream» is not merely decorative; it serves as a metaphor for the dynamic flow of inner vitality and natural grace, highlighting the interconnectedness of aesthetic form and moral substance in the perception of feminine beauty.

Naturally, the interrelation between the ethical and the aesthetic cannot be reduced merely to the alignment of value orientations – positive or negative – between form and content, that is, between one's outward appearance and the inner spiritual world of the person. This constitutes only one aspect, one stage in the development of the complex dialectical relationship between the ethical and the aesthetic. Nonetheless, we deem it essential to emphasize the continuity of worldview and the spirit of medieval epic consciousness as it finds renewed expression in the works of M. Zhumabayev Kopeev, S. Toraighyrov, and Zh. Aimaurov. Accordingly, in their intellectual and literary legacy, we provisionally distinguish the following types of interrelation between the ethical and the aesthetic – understood as the external and the internal – based on their underlying value orientations:

- The first type may be defined as the alignment of positive ethical and aesthetic orientation, wherein outward beauty and behavior correspond to the inner spiritual richness of the character (as exemplified by Qamar-Sulu, Akhmet, Akbilek, Sherizat). Moreover, each action and its underlying motivation are perceived as beautiful, imbued with the radiance of moral goodness and inner light.

- The second type is characterized by the convergence of negative ethical and aesthetic orientation, where in external unattractiveness reflects the moral deficiency of the character (such as the Lame Nurum or Kamila's husband in Akbilek). In such cases, every gesture and action reveals the character's moral deformity and inhumanity, manifesting in base desires and spiritual degradation.

However, physical perfection or imperfection was discussed not only in epic works and not solely within the context of the identification of the external and the internal. In the medieval era, the idea of physical beauty was interpreted from a somewhat different perspective by al-Farabi. According to him, «the perfection of the human body is its health: if it exists, it should be preserved; if it does not, it must be attained» [53, 14].

In our view, the medieval thinker's articulation of the natural physical attributes of the human being is closely connected with his belief in the concept of «natural beauty» as the foundation upon which one's spiritual qualities are developed. That is, physical health promotes the active unfolding of a person's inherent potential abilities.

A similar idea is expressed by Zh. Aimaurov in his reflections on the younger generation (Tärbie), where he likewise arrives at the conclusion that the physical cultivation of a person is necessary to strengthen their health. In both cases, the thinkers defend the notion of admiration for beauty not for the sake of pleasure or utility, but for the sake of spiritual and moral elevation and the aspiration toward human perfection.

Nevertheless, while emphasizing the significance of natural human beauty, both al-Farabi and Aimaurov ultimately give precedence to the beauty of the intellect and spiritual nobility.

S. Toraighyrov also noted the deceptive nature of outward appearance:

At times, a beauty may seem very fair,
Yet her soul is dark and unaware.
And you fail to see her inner flaw,
Hurried by dreams without a pause. [54, 35]

According to S. Toraighyrov, external appearance can be deceptive: a person may seem outwardly beautiful, yet possess an inner darkness. This discrepancy remains unnoticed by those who hastily pursue their idealized vision, overlooking the true moral or spiritual deficiencies beneath the surface.

However, he does not deny physical beauty; on the contrary, he speaks of it with admiration. Nevertheless, in his understanding, the love for the beautiful should ultimately aim at the pursuit of the good.

M. Zh. Kopeev repeatedly reveals in his dastans the incongruity between the wretched essence of a person and their outwardly respectable appearance.

If one counts your years,
Is your hair like frost upon the grass?
Though you claim to be tall, your hem has passed,
Yet in thought, you remain utterly exposed and bare. [55, 51]

The inability and unwillingness of a person to see and hear the truth that exists within themselves, as well as their wandering in a world of illusory values, evoke not so much laughter as pity and disappointment. Human frailty often manifests itself in superficiality and frivolity, and it is precisely this fact that provokes M. Zh. Kopeev's attitude – a complex blend of irony,

indignation, and compassion for his contemporaries. Through a tragicomic lens, both M. Zh. Kopeev and S. Toraighyrov do not deny human existence as such; rather, they reject the unworthy modes of being in the world. The foregoing analysis allows us to draw the following conclusions, revealing a different level of interrelation between form and content, such as:

1. The contradiction between an attractive exterior and moral emptiness or hypocrisy. The contradiction between an attractive exterior and moral emptiness or hypocrisy (as seen in the characters Zhamilya, Sytan Kyz, Muslim, Mukash), where beneath superficially beautiful words and manners lies deceit, masked by selfish motives that enable them to use others as instruments for achieving their goals. This paradox highlights a perennial tension in human existence between appearance and essence. The characters such as Zhamilya, Sytan Kyz, Muslim, and Mukash embody this dissonance, where the superficial charm and eloquence cloak an internal void of genuine ethical substance. This divergence reflects the broader social phenomenon of hypocrisy, wherein the façade of virtue serves as a tool for manipulative self-interest. Philosophically, this tension resonates with the Platonic critique of mere semblance over true being, as well as with existentialist concerns about inauthenticity and bad faith. The duplicity masked by social graces invites ethical scrutiny and exposes the fragility of moral integrity in a world governed by instrumental rationality.

2. The contradiction between an unremarkable outward appearance and inner spiritual beauty. The contradiction between an unremarkable outward appearance and inner spiritual beauty (as exemplified by Qartkozha, the lyrical hero, the poor man), where in a certain external awkwardness or clumsiness is animated by the purity of intentions and a luminous attitude towards others.

Contrasting the previous point, this tension reveals an ontological depth whereby the true value of a human being transcends mere corporeal aesthetics. Figures like Qartkozha, the lyrical hero, and the poor man illustrate that external awkwardness or lack of physical appeal does not preclude the presence of a luminous soul. Their inner purity and benevolent disposition elevate their existence beyond superficial judgment, inviting reflection on the nature of true beauty as an ethical and spiritual quality rather than a mere sensory attribute. This aligns with the Platonic ideal of the soul's primacy over the body and echoes the existential affirmation of authentic being as defined by sincere intentions and compassion.

It should be emphasized once again that the presented classifications are conditional and incomplete, as they cover only certain aspects of the entire diversity of the interrelation between the ethical and the aesthetic, and represent merely another stage in the development of ethico-aesthetic

connections. We could not remain silent about them and sought to demonstrate that already in the medieval era the interrelation between the ethical and the aesthetic had become multilayered. It is impossible to provide a definitive characterization of this relationship. Human beings do not conform to rigid schemes. However, there is a certain affinity between medieval Muslim philosophers and the worldview of early twentieth-century Kazakh thinkers – all of whom prioritized the ethical dimension, meaning that the moral and spiritual aspect was determinative. Within this context, we identified that, according to M. Zh. Kopeev, the interrelation of the ethical and the aesthetic manifests itself in morally oriented responsibility; S. Toraighyrov connected the quest not merely with knowledge but with justice; and Zh. Aymaulytov emphasized not the mere accomplishment of deeds but the capacity to create humane actions.

1.9 Comparative Analysis of the Ethical-Aesthetic Relationship in the Works of Russian, European, and Kazakh Thinkers of the Early 20th Century

1. Nomadism and Sedentarism: East and West
2. Ethicism and Aestheticism
3. Similarities and Differences in the Understanding of Human Essence in the Early Twentieth Century
4. The Concept of the Self–Other Relation in the Interpretation of the Investigated Thinkers

Among Russian and European philosophers of the early twentieth century, the worldview of the Kazakh thinkers under study is closest to that of K. Jaspers, F. M. Dostoevsky, L. N. Tolstoy, and N. V. Gogol, since they too operated within the sphere of artistic culture. Their works embody philosophical syntheses addressing the perennial problem of the relationship between good and evil, the beautiful and the ugly – essentially, an exploration of the modes of human existence in the world.

In particular, the notion of moral responsibility in the oeuvre of M. Zh. Kopeev merits close examination through its intimate connection with the experience of guilt. This responsibility signifies an awareness of the world's imperfection and corresponds to a profound feeling of guilt for the unrealized possibilities within oneself – the potentialities of what one might have become but has failed to actualize. Such a theme is far from novel in the history of philosophy; it has been central to many great thinkers, notably including K. Jaspers. Intriguingly, M. Zh. Kopeev was not directly acquainted with Jaspers' existential legacy, which only highlights the

remarkable phenomenon of intellectual consonance that transcends temporal, cultural, and geographical boundaries.

This convergence of thought prompts deeper reflection on the universality of certain existential concerns. It suggests that fundamental human experiences – such as moral self-examination, the burden of freedom, and the tension between possibility and actuality – manifest repeatedly across diverse philosophical traditions. For contemporary scholarship, uncovering these resonances enriches our understanding of Kazakh philosophical heritage by situating it in dialogue with global intellectual currents. Thus, the comparative study of ethical responsibility and guilt in these thinkers not only reveals shared thematic concerns but also underscores the unique cultural articulations that shape their particular philosophical voices.

K. Jaspers, in his reflections on the tragic nature of existence, likewise equates the concepts of guilt and responsibility. He arrived at the idea that a person must assume guilt (that is, responsibility) not only for their own imperfection, but for the imperfection of the world as a whole. This form of guilt he termed metaphysical guilt – «which renders each person responsible for all injustice in the world, especially for crimes committed in their time and with their knowledge. If I did not do everything in my power to eliminate those crimes, then I am complicit in them» [56, 149].

According to Jaspers, the core of the problem lies in the ability to continue living after accepting this guilt or responsibility, to reconstruct one's life through sincere repentance. M. Zh. Kopeev is in solidarity with Jaspers in asserting that forgiveness of oneself and self-transcendence – without denying or erasing the past – is a deeply painful process. One must undergo all the stages or paths of repentance in order to grasp the true infinitude of consciously chosen freedom-as-responsibility, which leads toward a higher mode of being.

This existential path is vividly illustrated by the young khansha (princess) in Kopeev's dastan «Eki zhigit pen bir shaldyñ äñgimesi» [57, 14]. («The Tale of Two Young Men and One Old Man»). The very existence of guilt – understood as responsibility – enables the human being to preserve the foundations of humanity in life, to retain and restore their spiritual integrity, which had previously been fractured by the internal conflict between the sensual and the moral dimensions of the self.

In our view, the religious understanding of the interrelation between the ethical and the aesthetic brings M. Zh. Kopeev's worldview into closer affinity with that of N. V. Gogol. As Gogol emphasizes, poetry, music, and theatre must lead one toward God, not away from Him. However, in real life, art often substitutes the ethical foundation with the aesthetic one.

Through careful observation of life and analysis of the relationship between morality and beauty, N. V. Gogol arrives at a sobering conclusion: moral principles frequently prove powerless. «...But how can one love one's brothers? How can one love people? The soul yearns to love only what is beautiful, yet poor humanity is so imperfect, and there is so little beauty in it» [58, 208]. Gogol notes that humanity is more often driven by the pursuit of easy pleasure and aesthetic delight, whereas morality and ethical conduct demand a certain effort of the soul.

In order to expose the opposition between the ethical and the aesthetic in the real world, Gogol frequently employed laughter and irony – a distinctive lens through which he viewed the spiritual condition of society. Through laughter, he «punished» human imperfection and vice. «In *The Government Inspector*, I resolved to gather in one heap all the evil in Russia that I then knew, all the injustices committed in those places and cases where justice is most required of a person, and at once to laugh at it all» [59, 11].

Similarly, in his critique of his contemporaries' way of life, M. Zh. Kopeev often turned to natural imagery – using the traits of animals and birds to ironically illustrate human weaknesses and moral shortcomings.

The Kazakh mullah is like a butterfly,
He wanders wherever there is fire around.
No fixed place, no steadiness, thoughtless, aimless,
He flies only if there is wind, like a butterfly. [60, 222-223]

This short quatrain uses the metaphor of a butterfly to portray the Kazakh mullah as a restless, unstable figure – lacking firm grounding or purpose. The image evokes a sense of aimlessness and vulnerability to external forces (fire, wind), implying a spiritual or intellectual instability. It suggests criticism of inconsistency or superficiality in religious leadership, where the mullah is blown by circumstances rather than standing firm in conviction or wisdom.

In our view, the similarity among these thinkers in their tragically ironic attitude toward reality is grounded in the conscious choice of irony as a means to express their inner suffering. According to S. Toraighyrov, a person is originally in a state of searching. In other words, the spiritual and soulful quest for one's essence leads the thinker to the idea of the incompleteness and interminability of human existence. It should be clarified that this is not a futile infinity of pointless wanderings and self-definitions. Rather, it is a path of filling oneself with the beautiful and perfect, while simultaneously selflessly giving oneself to others. This notion was also expressed by L. N.

Tolstoy, who found the meaning of life after a profound spiritual crisis through communication with other people.

The Russian thinker, reflecting on the non-random presence of people on this earth, saw a deep meaning in the existence and being of another person. A number of transformations associated with the writer's spiritual crisis were also reflected in his understanding of the aesthetic. While in his earlier works he emphasized the triad of truth, goodness, and beauty, later he separated the ethical from the aesthetic principles. According to L. N. Tolstoy, the contradiction between the ethical and the aesthetic concerns not only art but primarily the very foundations of human life. Seeing the tragic nature of their divergence and failing to find an ontological basis for their unity, the thinker asserted that good and beauty are incompatible things.

Tolstoy favored ethics, believing that as soon as a person loses moral meaning, they immediately become susceptible to the aesthetic. «Art is the adornment of life, an allure to life. But life has lost its allure for me; how then can I allure others?» [61, 50]. Remaining true to his views, Tolstoy considered art merely a pastime that deceives people. Therefore, everything that does not carry goodness should be rejected. This conclusion was reached by the thinker through his analysis of the works of Shakespeare, Dante, Beethoven, and Raphael, which he regarded as inaccessible and incomprehensible, and consequently alien and unnecessary to the people. Tolstoy was also critical of his own earlier works. This conclusion signifies the thinker's profound penetration into the deep antinomy of the epoch in which he lived.

S. Toraighyrov, on the contrary, highly values the works of past centuries and his contemporaries, and places great hopes on the art of the future, which he envisions as socially effective and impactful:

Read Er Targyn, Koblandy, and observe,
Read Abai, marvel, and nod your head.
Yesterday's Bukhar-Zhyrau, Janaq Akyn,
Shoje, Orynbay spread their fame among the people.
Akhmet and Mirzhakyp, as well as Magzhan –
The children of Alty Alash all know their names. [62, 222-223]

S. Toraighyrov, on the contrary, highly values the works of past centuries and his contemporaries, and places great hopes on the art of the future, which he envisions as socially effective and impactful. For him, art should not only serve as a reflection of aesthetic ideals but must also actively participate in the transformation of society by addressing pressing social issues and inspiring moral improvement. This vision positions art as a vital

ethical force capable of fostering collective consciousness and encouraging solidarity among people.

Toraighyrov's optimism about future art is grounded in the belief that creative expression holds the power to awaken a sense of responsibility and empathy in individuals, thus bridging the gap between aesthetic beauty and ethical purpose. Unlike perspectives that separate or oppose the ethical and aesthetic, he advocates for their harmonious integration as a foundation for meaningful human existence and social progress.

For Toraighyrov, the convergence of art and life is characteristic. He emphasizes the social significance of poetry, putting forward the idea of the unity of beauty, truth, and virtue in poetry, which guides people toward high ideals.

Continuing the analysis of Zh. Aimaurov's work, it should be noted that his ethical-aesthetic views resonate primarily with those of F. M. Dostoevsky in their vision of the human being as a complex, contradictory phenomenon encompassing an infinite number of behavioral variants and limitless possibilities. There is no doubt that both Zh. Aimaurov and

F. M. Dostoevsky discuss good and evil not as manifestations of natural and divine principles respectively. On the contrary, they emphasize that the choice between good and evil is a phenomenon of the spiritual realm.

In the actions of Muslim («Mansapqorlar»), Mukash («Akbilek»), and in the character of Raskolnikov («Crime and Punishment»), the free choice of their life positions is evident. The departure from humanity, the commission of crimes in the name of one's own or others' welfare, does not make them happier. Through the character of Mukash, Zh. Aimaurov reveals a vivid expression of the negative aspects of human nature – vindictiveness, malice, envy: «people took bribes from me, stole my possessions, and slandered me to the educated gentlemen in the city... The son of Mamyrbai! Oh, if I were alive, I would do something about it» [63, 158].

At the same time, the thinker, through Mukash's recognition of his own sinfulness, demonstrates the boundlessness and multi-layered nature of the human soul. The hero seemingly draws a line between himself and the child as the world of evil and good, refusing to embrace the child who embodies purity and innocence.

For Zh. Aimaurov, repentance is seemingly connected with purification and the voice of conscience that awakens a sensitivity to beauty within a person. This idea formed the foundation of his worldview, according to which repentance and the feeling of guilt reveal the potential infinity of the human soul. The character of Raskolnikov embodies the same tragedy of conscience that enlivens humanity within a person. It is likely that through

this path of amorality, a sense of kindness and love is awakened in the individual. As F. M. Dostoevsky notes, «man is mysterious, woven from contradictions, yet at the same time – even in the face of the most insignificant person – he is an absolute value» [64, 484]. In other words, even the most insignificant person can revive the feeling of love.

However, while Dostoevsky's characters find liberation from evil and turn to God, seeking salvation in religion through their path of crime, in Zh. Aimaurov's reflections, the knowledge of evil does not always entail liberation from it. Here, the reason probably lies in the voluntary unfreedom of the individual and their inability or unwillingness to change their life. While not rejecting religion and attributing to it a special significance, Zh. Aimaurov sees one of the ways to human salvation in education.

2. Comparative Analysis of the Ethical and Aesthetic in the Works of M. Zh. Kopeev, S. Toraighyrov, and Zh. Aimaurov

2.1 The Role of Figurative Thinking and Its Semantic Specificity in the works of M. Zh. Kopeev, S. Toraighyrov, and Zh. Aimaurov

1. The Role of Nature in the Reflections of the Studied Figures.
2. The Ecological Mindset of Kazakh Nomads.

Historical and philosophical inquiries reveal that no singular, immutable standard of the aesthetic exists globally; rather, with the passage of time and the accrual of new spiritual and cultural potentials, the boundaries of what is considered aesthetic expand, allowing new aesthetic paradigms to emerge and dominate. This dynamic evolution underscores the fluidity and contextuality of aesthetic values.

A particularly distinctive trait in the aesthetic conception found within Kazakh intellectual traditions lies in its fundamental departure from the conventional Western categorical dichotomy of subject and object. Instead of perceiving the aesthetic as a relationship between an isolated subject and an external object, Kazakh thought foregrounds a holistic relation – human and world – within which an intricate plurality of aspects concerning the interaction between human beings and their environment coexist and interpenetrate. This relational ontology encapsulates not only sensory or formal beauty but also ethical, spiritual, and ecological dimensions intrinsic to the human condition.

Acknowledging this foundational difference, our investigation into the aesthetic will prioritize two principal domains: firstly, the aesthetic vision of nature as a living, interconnected whole imbued with spiritual significance; secondly, the aesthetic of interpersonal relations, understood not merely as social interaction but as a profound ethical and existential engagement that reveals the beauty of human connectedness and mutual responsibility.

Such a framework allows for a richer comprehension of the Kazakh aesthetic that transcends mere sensory appreciation and embraces the unity of form and content, the visible and the invisible, the individual and the collective, the temporal and the eternal.

To understand what the feeling of the aesthetic, evoked by natural phenomena, truly is, one must recall that the entire process of thinking and knowing the world for the Kazakhs was regarded as contemplation. The careful and reverent attitude toward the beauties of the native steppe in the worldview of the thinkers is explained by the tradition of Kazakh thinking, where contemplativeness of the surroundings was a unique way of cognition

and representation of reality. According to M. Zh. Kopeev, the world of nature is beautiful and harmonious, and is an attribute of the Creator, since it was created by Him according to the laws of beauty. In this contemplation, the human principle touches the divine. For M. Zh. Kopeev, the beautiful in nature by its inner characteristics adjoins the sublime, unlike Kant's concept. Here, we allowed ourselves to compare the positions of I. Kant and M. Zh. Kopeev on the basis that both thinkers present a profound analysis of the nature of the aesthetic, especially its modifications of the beautiful and the sublime. According to the German classic, the beautiful is neutral with respect to the moral, while the sublime, suppressing the sensual in man, awakens the moral principle in him, but at the same time, «the satisfaction from the sublime contains not so much positive pleasure as reverence or respect, i.e., it can rightly be called negative pleasure» [65, 250]. In contrast, for M. Zh. Kopeev, the contemplation of the beauty of nature cannot be neutral, since it is originally created by God. Therefore, the contemplation of the beauty of nature is equivalent to the contemplation of God dissolved in nature. This means that nature, along with the feeling of enjoyment (the beautiful), evokes a feeling of admiration and love (the sublime).

This passage highlights a fundamental cultural and philosophical difference in the understanding of aesthetics between Kazakh thought (as represented by M.Zh.Kopeev) and classical Western philosophy (exemplified by Immanuel Kant). While Kant strictly differentiates the beautiful and the sublime, detaching the beautiful from morality and associating the sublime with a moral awakening that is experienced as a «negative pleasure» (a mixture of awe and respect), Kopeev integrates the beautiful and the sublime within a theistic framework. For Kopeev, nature is a direct manifestation of divine creation; therefore, its beauty cannot be experienced as morally neutral but rather as a pathway to both aesthetic pleasure and spiritual elevation. This synthesis reflects a worldview where aesthetics, ethics, and spirituality are inseparably intertwined.

The emphasis on contemplation as a mode of cognition, not merely sensory or intellectual but meditative and reverent, also reveals the Kazakh epistemological tradition rooted in deep respect for nature and the cosmos. This contemplative approach leads to an experiential unity of human and divine, blurring the boundaries Kant maintains. It situates the aesthetic experience as simultaneously ethical and spiritual, not just an engagement with form or sensation.

A somewhat different vision of nature is noted in S. Toraighyrov's works. His reflections carry an elegiac sadness of parting with the unique, wondrous beauty of life. It is clear that in his statements about nature, the young poet conveyed his personal emotional state. The prematurely

yellowed single leaf among the raging green foliage is organically linked to the tragic fate of the poet himself.

His illness has twisted him.
He has endured much torment in life.
He has no hopes left.
The worms rejoice – now he is dry,
He only trembles and looks down,
Because to look around –
Is to see a world deaf to suffering [66, 13]

S. Toraighyrov introduced a new state of spiritual search through natural imagery. He focused not on the dissolution of the human in nature, but on existential hopelessness, expressed through the correlation with nature. At the same time, in nature, Toraighyrov sought to see his own eternity in the eternity of nature, despite the transience of human existence.

Zh. Aimaurov, like M. Zh. Kopeev, conveyed his admiration for the native steppe. His enthusiastic vision of its beauty in his reflections resonates with a sense of enjoyment.

There stands a blue dome like the sky's own tent,
Many stars gleaming like clustered pearls sent,
A golden plate-like moon shines in the night,
There lies the vast, boundless steppe in sight,
The sandalwood mountain echoes strong and clear,
Each bush with nightingales singing near,
Fragrant scents, green flowers blooming bright,
This little valley spring where we sit in light,
How could one behold these wonders
and not feel delight? [67, 515]

Here, Toraighyrov's relationship with nature is more introspective and emotionally complex compared to Kopeev's divine harmony. Whereas Kopeev's aesthetic contemplation merges human and divine through nature's beauty, Toraighyrov's nature symbolism expresses a poignant awareness of human mortality and existential despair. The imagery of the lone yellow leaf amid lush greenery metaphorically parallels the poet's tragic fate and transient life, evoking a mood of elegy and loss.

Toraighyrov's vision reflects a tension between the ephemeral nature of human life and the eternal cycles of nature, highlighting an existential search for meaning rather than unity with the divine. His approach is less

about transcendence and more about confrontation with the limits of existence.

In contrast, Zh. Aimaurov shares Kopeev's sense of reverence and joy toward the steppe, emphasizing a more celebratory and appreciative aesthetic experience, which underlines the diversity of Kazakh philosophical and poetic attitudes toward nature – from tragic existentialism to joyous admiration.

Although nature has already been singled out as a separate object of contemplation in the works of M. Zh. Kopeev, S. Toraighyrov, and Zh. Aimaurov, the above analysis allows us to conclude that the legacy of these thinkers has not lost the sense of the inseparable unity between humans and nature, their mutual interpenetration. In ancient times, there was, as M. M. Bakhtin put it, no position of «externality,» and no need to evaluate from outside the essence and features of the beautiful in nomadic nature. This does not mean, however, that the ancient Kazakhs lacked an understanding of the beauty of nature; rather, they simply did not separate themselves from this unity. Such a holistic view of living existence on Earth was important for the natural practical construction of relationships with the universe.

However, the fact that humans are distinguished from nature in the heritage of Kopeev, Toraighyrov, and Aimaurov does not imply a rupture or disharmony in human-nature relations. The manner in which the world is divided into the natural and human was different among nomads than in Western Europe. Here, the second nature was subordinate to the first. They do not oppose humans to nature or elevate humans above it, but rather show their unity, harmony, and wholeness in coexistence. Being aware of their immersion in the world of nature, Kazakh thinkers brought an ecologically pure, ethically elevated attitude into the aesthetically structured world of nature, striving to harmonize their relations with it.

This passage emphasizes the nuanced understanding of the human-nature relationship in Kazakh philosophical thought. Unlike Western dualistic separations, Kazakh thinkers perceive a holistic, inseparable unity between humanity and nature. While they may highlight humans as distinct within nature, this distinction does not imply alienation or hierarchy but rather a harmonious coexistence grounded in ecological and ethical consciousness.

This perspective reflects an indigenous ecological ethic, where nature is not an external «other» but a living, intertwined reality vital to human existence and spiritual identity. By framing nature as aesthetically structured and ethically significant, these thinkers advocate a deep, respectful engagement with the environment that transcends utilitarian views.

From the above, it is clear that in the perception of the natural world in the reflections of Kazakh thinkers, the content of landscapes is not exhausted by a single aesthetic moment. In the attitude towards nature, not only enjoyment of its beauty is captured but also the moral principle of love, goodness, and respect. It is precisely from such a holistic vision of the world that the ecological purity of the Kazakh relationship with nature and their harmony in coexistence with the world flows.

It seems that the contemporary ecological problems of our planet are connected to unethical and unaesthetic attitudes toward nature and toward ourselves. That is, nature has ceased to be a value and is used only as a means. Such a thing-like attitude toward nature also provokes a consumerist attitude among people toward one another.

In our view, solving this problem will only be possible on the condition of changing the existing attitude toward the world – that is, reintroducing the lost element of contemplation «in the sense of a person's interest in knowing the world as it truly is» [68, 376], which was fully characteristic of the Kazakhs of the early 20th century.

This passage highlights a profound moral-ecological insight embedded in Kazakh philosophical thought: the perception of nature is inherently intertwined with ethical values such as love, goodness, and respect, beyond mere aesthetic appreciation. This integration of ethics and aesthetics fosters an ecological purity and harmony in human-nature relations.

Modern ecological crises are framed here as consequences of a dual failure – ethically, in disregarding moral responsibilities, and aesthetically, in losing the sense of nature as a valuable and beautiful entity rather than a mere resource. The consumerist exploitation of nature parallels a similar breakdown in human relationships, illustrating the interconnectedness of environmental and social ethics.

The proposed solution centers on reviving the contemplative approach to nature, characterized by genuine interest and engagement with the world as it is. This revival would restore respect for nature's intrinsic value and mend both ecological and social disharmonies.

Besides the religious image of nature, preserved until the 20th century, in the heritage of the studied thinkers we observe a related anthropomorphic character of nature. M. Zh. Kopeev, continuing the traditions of nomadic culture, conveys the diversity of human characters through images of animals, paying special attention to qualities such as honor, love, responsibility, and decency.

However, alongside these exalted human relationships, the thinker also notes their opposite nature. To depict the base aspects, he uses certain natural images characteristic of the centuries-old cultural tradition of nomads.

The passage discusses two interconnected themes in the works of the thinkers studied:

1. The continuation of a religious and anthropomorphic view of nature, where nature is imbued with human-like qualities, often expressed through animal imagery.
2. The use of animal symbolism by M. Zh. Kopeev to reflect a wide range of human traits, emphasizing noble virtues such as honor and responsibility.
3. The acknowledgment of the dual nature of human relationships, with both elevated (noble) and base (low) qualities.
4. For the depiction of base or negative qualities, Kopeev resorts to natural images deeply rooted in the nomadic cultural tradition, showing a clear cultural and symbolic connection.

This passage highlights how the thinkers blend cultural tradition, symbolism, and moral reflection through the anthropomorphic portrayal of nature.

Undoubtedly, M. Zh. Kopeev's choice of natural images is not accidental, as their character is familiar to every steppe dweller from childhood. The negative attitude towards certain types of animals and plants in M. Zh. Kopeev's heritage is due to the remoteness and incompatibility of their way of life with the human mode of being in the world. Here, M. Zh. Kopeev mainly relies on the traditions of akyns and zhiraus (traditional poets and bards). However, it should be kept in mind that this is not a simple listing of characters or a search for similarity with the natural world. For M. Zh. Kopeev, it is about the loss of the spiritual and soulful qualities of a person and the creative principle due to the predominance of the natural. He wanted to show that a human being, as a creature belonging to two worlds, combines polar opposites within himself. And often, his natural essence, subordinated to instincts and struggling for survival, consumes spirituality.

This passage expands on the symbolism and rationale behind Kopeev's use of natural imagery. The key points are:

1. The natural images chosen by Kopeev are culturally ingrained and well known to those from the steppe environment, making the symbolism deeply rooted and resonant.
2. The negative perception of some animals and plants reflects a cultural judgment based on their way of life, which is seen as incompatible with human values or modes of existence.
3. Kopeev draws on traditional sources – akyns and zhiraus – to ground his symbolism in oral poetic and philosophical heritage.

4. Importantly, the passage clarifies that Kopeev's use of nature imagery is not merely descriptive or comparative but carries a deeper moral and philosophical meaning: the tension between spiritual/cultural creativity and base, instinct-driven natural impulses.

5. The human condition is presented as a duality, a coexistence of spiritual and natural worlds, often in conflict, where natural instincts can overpower and suppress spirituality.

This philosophical dimension highlights the complexity of human nature and the struggle between higher moral qualities and primal instincts.

The aesthetic in nature is reflected somewhat differently by S. Toraighyrov. While M. Zh. Kopeev tries to depict the ethical aspect of human virtues and flaws through images of beautiful and ugly animals, Toraighyrov notes the subordination of humans to the natural laws of time, regardless of moral characteristics. He points out a dialectic encompassing all sides and levels of human existence in the world, consisting in the constant movement, change, and development. Everything in this world has its beginning and end, which simultaneously becomes the cause and consequence of the birth of new life. One of the main ideas in S. Toraighyrov's poetic lines is the eternal reflection on life and death – the finiteness in time and space. In the poem «Adam-Keruen,» he draws a parallel between the endless alternation of life and death on earth and the constant changing of temporary companions within the eternal caravan of life. The thinker embraces life and natural phenomena in the context of a whole, revealing the dialectical meaning and content of earthly development.

This passage contrasts Toraighyrov's view of nature and the human condition with that of Kopeev:

1. Toraighyrov's aesthetic emphasizes the inevitability and universality of natural laws, especially time, which governs all human existence regardless of moral qualities.

2. He highlights a dialectical worldview – the constant process of movement, change, and development that permeates all aspects and levels of life.

3. Life and death are central themes, understood as finite phenomena in time and space but also as part of a continuous cycle where end and beginning coexist.

4. In his poem «Adam-Keruen,» Toraighyrov uses the metaphor of an eternal caravan with changing companions to illustrate life's transient nature.

5. His thought embraces a holistic view of life and nature, revealing a dialectical meaning in earthly development beyond mere ethical or aesthetic considerations.

This gives a philosophical dimension where nature is not only anthropomorphized or ethical but also a dynamic, dialectical system in which humans are part of a larger temporal and existential process.

Zh. Aymaulytov, continuing the traditions of S. Toraighyrov, somewhat expanded the palette of shades in human relationships with nature. Besides revealing the unified basis of the natural and human worlds, he managed through nature to express not only the tragic shades of the human soul but also the entire diversity of subtle nuances of human worldview. Ups and downs, joy and sorrow are considered by him through the prism of warm and cold colors of nature. Zh. Aymaulytov, depicting the harsh weather conditions of the steppe winter, shows a realistic picture of the difficult life of Kazakhs with all the worries and hardships of the nomadic way of life. With the image of winter, autumn, cold, and blizzard, the thinker associates sad, unfortunate events, socio-domestic upheavals – hunger, death, hopelessness. The bleak nature is a necessary condition for revealing the tragedy of what is happening. On the contrary, love and joy in his reflections are identified with the colors of spring, awakening nature with the intoxicating scent of grasses and the chirping of birds. That is, the contemplation of nature evokes a whole range of feelings: from calm enjoyment and admiration to a piercing sense of longing, loneliness, and sadness. Even the very process of changing natural phenomena was considered by Aymaulytov in close connection with the qualitative transformation of the characters: the gradual transition from dark, gray sketches to bright and vivid tones is accompanied by a shift from hopelessness through despair and pain to confidence in one's own strength. Nature, in the thinker's reflections, as a silent observer and listener, attentively hears the thoughts and reflections of the characters about the meaning of life, the vicissitudes of fate, accompanying them in sadness and joy, loss and fortune.

This passage presents Zh. Aymaulytov's approach to nature and human experience as an extension and enrichment of Toraighyrov's ideas:

1. Aymaulytov expands the emotional and aesthetic spectrum of the human-nature relationship, capturing subtle nuances of human feelings and worldview.
2. Nature is used as a metaphorical palette of warm and cold colors reflecting the fluctuations of human life – joy and sorrow, highs and lows.
3. Harsh natural conditions (winter, autumn, cold, blizzard) symbolize hardship, tragedy, and socio-economic struggles such as hunger and death in the nomadic Kazakh lifestyle.
4. Conversely, spring symbolizes renewal, love, joy, and hope, with vivid sensory imagery (smell of grass, birdsong).

5. The process of natural changes parallels the psychological and moral transformation of characters, with a transition from despair and hopelessness to confidence and strength.

6. Nature is depicted as a silent but attentive witness to human life, resonating with the characters' reflections on existence and fate.

7. The depiction is deeply poetic and symbolic, linking external nature with inner emotional and spiritual states.

In our view, summarizing the above, certain emphases can be identified in the perception of nature by the thinkers under study. M. Zh. Kopeev's appeal to natural objects subtly illuminates the moral vices of contemporary society as a whole and reveals specific facets of human existence. It seems that the struggle among animals in the thinker's dastans, their disputes, represent a conflict within Kazakh society that has reached its zenith and climax. Through natural phenomena, he unveils the entire diversity of human character – its beautiful and ugly, noble and base aspects – with the aim of affirming and vividly demonstrating human freedom in the process of self-formation, the indeterminacy of human existence, and, consequently, responsibility for one's way of life. It should be emphasized that the metaphorical nature of his reflections, on the one hand, embodies the organic connection with the nomadic tradition of mythological thinking, and on the other, conceals a truth conditioned by the specific socio-political situation at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. That is, «a metaphor contains both image and conceptual content. This is why metaphor is profound, and the metaphorical thinking of the artist is not a mere skimming over the surface of reality, but a penetration into its essence» [69, 106]. Consequently, allegory demands an active attitude and deep immersion into the work, since metaphor contains very profound potentials embodied in its semantic content. Here it is necessary to provide a more detailed characterization of figurative thinking. As is well known, metaphorical imagery and thinking is a characteristic feature of the entire Kazakh culture.

K. Nurlanova notes that in Kazakh culture, «metaphorical imagery was developed to such an extent that, alongside proverbs and sayings, it performed an active-content function in everyday practical life, serving as widely used and compelling arguments, or, as psychologists call it, constituting one of the 'logical components of intelligence'» [70, 121]. Moreover, «unlike conceptual forms, the figurative form, due to its wholeness, expresses the world and the world of relationships in their entirety, and does not suffer from the 'deficiency' inherent in conceptual forms» [71, 444].

In our view, the world of images in the works of M. Zh. Kopeev, S. Toraighyrov, and Zh. Aymaulytov constitutes a unique realm of perfection

and uniqueness of spiritual life, under the influence of which the human being is formed and realized, comprehending an eternally developing and infinitely becoming existence. The features of «thinking in images» synthesize a complex combination of socially significant and individual-personal attitudes of the author towards the world, in which the spiritual energy of the cultural epoch and the subjective-authorial vision of the world are concentrically expressed. That is, the image created by the thinker is a fusion of the realities of life and his unique inner world, his individuality.

2.2 The Phenomenology of the Aesthetic Attitude Towards the World in the Legacy of M. Zh. Kopeev, S. Toraighyrov, and Zh. Aimaurov

1. The Aesthetic in Interpersonal Relationships

2. The Nature of the Aesthetic in the Reflections of M. Zh. Kopeev, S. Toraighyrov, and Zh. Aymaurov: A Comparative Approach

Undoubtedly, the aesthetic is a spiritual dimension of the human being that manifests from various perspectives. However, as the analysis of the reflections by Kazakh thinkers has shown, a refined sensitivity to beauty does not necessarily imply a heightened ethical consciousness. The issue lies in the fact that the aesthetic manifests differently in nature and interpersonal relations. What constitutes the difference? In our view, first, the multi-layered nature of human essence determines the diverse expressions of the aesthetic in human character. Second, as previously noted, it was not the harmony between the aesthetic and the ethical, but rather the dominance of the aesthetic, that became characteristic of human beings at the dawn of the 20th century.

In essence, the reflections of M. Zh. Kopeev, S. Toraighyrov, and Zh. Aimaurov offer a critique of the aesthetic principle previously articulated by Kant and later prevailing in Kazakh society at the turn of the century. According to their reflections, the dominance of sensual perception and the pursuit of pleasure as the ultimate purpose of existence must be distinguished from contemplation. When beauty is proclaimed as the highest good and pleasure as the supreme principle of life, the aesthetic transforms into aestheticism – characterized by the grotesque and the base. The thinkers under discussion not only analyze the presence of this phenomenon but also seek pathways toward its harmonization. We shall now attempt to reveal the aesthetic principle in its extreme manifestations within the works of M. Zh. Kopeev, S. Toraighyrov, and Zh. Aimaurov.

The conflict between ethical and aesthetic principles is especially vividly expressed by M. Zh. Kopeev in the image of the khansha in the dastan

«Eki zhigit pen bir shaldyng angimesi». The young khansha, having experienced the multitude of pleasures, indulges freely in a life guided by an unburdened aesthetic (sensual) attitude. Yet the thirst for greater pleasure tempts her to transgress moral norms and age-old traditions. Aware of the sinfulness of her desires, she voluntarily chooses the path of vice. Here, Kopeev indicates the dominance of the aesthetic principle – pleasure becomes the supreme value. When rejected and fearing exposure of her immoral conduct, she resorts to murder. However, rather than liberation, the act weighs upon her conscience. Deprived of her authentic self, having lost her personal core, the young woman fears the loss of freedom she no longer possesses. This is a false freedom born of fear. Her actions may reflect a sense of responsibility, but not the moral responsibility Kopeev speaks of. Rather, it is a sense of duty derived from fear and the compulsion to conform to her social status. True repentance and guilt have yet to emerge. The khansha has escaped nature's grip but has not ascended to personal self-determination. She was free to choose: either to heed the voice of conscience as a moral being or to pursue the path of instinct and pleasure as a natural being. In our view, the khansha occupied an intermediate space between spirituality and nature, for in her the sensual aesthetic principle prevailed over personal moral consciousness. Her choice was deliberate. In other words, the young woman revealed herself as a distinct individuality, and her illusory freedom over natural instincts transformed into arbitrariness. The aesthetic principle that guided the khansha finds its roots in her individual essence.

S. Toraighyrov also distinguishes between the natural and spiritual dimensions of the human being. However, his character Azhibai from the poem «Who Is to Blame?» represents a more integrated whole – a natural individual, unfragmented and untroubled. Let us attempt to clarify the distinction between the personal and natural principles in a human being, according to Toraighyrov and Kopeev. Azhibai, unlike the khansha, does not oscillate between pangs of conscience and sensual enjoyment. His inner world is transparent but limited. Immersed in fleeting sensations, he becomes a captive of his own sensuality, gradually detaching from harmony with the immutable foundation of being, from cosmic perfection, and losing the taste for the beauty of primordiality. The image of Azhibai does not reflect a struggle between good and evil; he neither chooses nor distinguishes between them. Toraighyrov underscores the striking and dangerous congruence between Azhibai's pursuit of pleasure and the general societal acceptance of such a mode of existence.

The inability to resist the temptation of beauty and pleasure unites Azhibai with the khansha, yet a fundamental difference exists between them.

While the young woman is tormented by the burden of her choice, Azhibai remains entirely unaware of the necessity to overcome his sensual inclination – an act that might, in fact, lead him to genuine freedom. The absence of spiritual striving and inner search results in the absence of remorse. Only at rare moments does a faint feeling of melancholy and dissatisfaction with life emerge. What resides within him is merely a vague anxiety, a quiet despair, a languid anticipation of the inevitable disintegration of all being.

According to S. Toraighyrov, the excessive orientation toward the sensual is linked to the underdevelopment of the spiritual and the predominance of the natural in a human being. Therefore, Azhibai's aesthetic principle of pleasure is associated with his natural essence – with an indifferent attitude toward good and evil. Here, we do not encounter a conscious choice of evil, as in the case of the khansha in M. Zh. Kopeev's work. Rather, we observe a passive submission to instinctual drives, devoid of reflective moral engagement. This passivity highlights the danger of aestheticism divorced from ethical awareness, revealing a deep existential void masked by fleeting sensory satisfaction.

The inability to resist the temptation of beauty and pleasure unites Azhibai with the khansha; however, there is a significant difference between them. While the young woman is burdened by her choice, Azhibai does not even realize that he must overcome his sensual inclinations – and perhaps only then would he truly attain freedom. The absence of spiritual striving and inner pursuit leads to a lack of remorse. Only occasionally does a faint feeling of melancholy and dissatisfaction with life slip through. Within him lies merely a vague anxiety and despair, a lingering anticipation of the inevitable disintegration of all that exists.

According to S. Toraighyrov, an excessive orientation toward sensuality is associated with the underdevelopment of the spiritual dimension and the predominance of the natural principle in the human being. Therefore, we associate Azhibai's aesthetic principle of pleasure with his natural origin and his indifferent attitude toward good and evil. Unlike the khansha in M. Zh. Kopeev's narrative, there is no conscious choice of evil here.

Zhusipbek Aimautov, in his philosophical and artistic reflections on the aesthetic as a potential bearer of moral degradation, largely shares the anthropological premises of M. Zh. Kopeev and S. Toraighyrov. In particular, the character of the frivolous young woman from the play *Sylañ qyz* exemplifies a predominance of natural impulses over moral self-awareness. Her actions, grounded in a naïve and sensual spontaneity, are devoid of ethical reflection or existential questioning. As Aimautov suggests, the true danger lies not in malicious intent, but in profound ignorance.

However, unlike Azhybai, her lack of inner conflict evokes not condemnation, but ironic detachment: in her natural simplicity, she is neither cruel nor morally calculating.

A more complex ethical configuration emerges in the character of Mukash from the novel *Aqbilek*. His striving for power and material wealth represents not mere hedonism, but a rationalized pursuit of sensuous satisfaction. Mukash consciously navigates social reality in search of advantage, revealing an aesthetic principle rooted not in spontaneity but in utilitarian will. The presence of evil will is equivalent to the multiplicity of free choices. The tragic nature of the situation is complicated by Mukash's conscious selection of life priorities: «I met the people of the ak (righteous), and my inner conscience spoke within me; I became a person to them. They told me to find a good girl. Suddenly, Mamyrbai's Akbilek flashed through my mind. The day came for me, who remembered what his elder brother did... If I achieve my dream, I will have succeeded; if not, I will be deemed a bad person» [72, 158].

His tragedy lies in the conscious acceptance of instrumental rationality as the guiding norm of existence. Much like the khansha in Kopeev's *Dastan of the Two Young Men and the Old Man*, Mukash occupies an intermediate ontological space between the instinctual and the spiritual. However, unlike the khansha, he delights in the very act of choosing and exercises his will strategically. Having overcome his immediate natural inclinations, he subordinates them to a higher goal – albeit one of questionable moral substance. His aesthetic is calculated, self-aware, and deliberately pragmatic.

Yet it is in the figure of Muslim from the play *Mansapqorlar* («The Careerists») that Aimautov articulates a fundamentally new mode of aesthetic worldview – one that transcends the natural-individual and approaches the existentially demonic. For Muslim, the experience of happiness is intimately tied to the expansion of power. Conscience and humanity are not merely absent but are consciously rejected as impediments to ambition. «I want to lead the people... I want to be a bolys (local leader)... No, Muslim must be a bolys. A Muslim does not obey others, but makes them obey. To become a bolys, to gain power, one must not trample on honor and humanity» [73, 445-446]. The instrumentalization of others and the rationalization of crime become justified in the name of personal triumph. This shift marks a radical departure from both Kopeev and Toraighyrov: here, the aesthetic principle ceases to be unconscious or naïve – it becomes ideologically self-legitimizing.

Aimautov thus exposes the internal logic of what Dostoevsky and Kierkegaard termed the «demonic» personality – one who deliberately chooses evil as an expression of existential self-assertion. «The sinner, on

the contrary, remains so completely under the power of sin that, unaware of the vast scope of its claims, he does not even know that his entire life is on the path to destruction... Sin has become so natural to him, has so transformed into his second nature, that he perceives nothing abnormal in the course of each day and feels only a slight deviation in moments when each new sin acts as a fresh impulse toward destruction» [74, 444]. In contrast to Azhybai's passive immersion in sensation or the khansha's moral oscillation, Muslim's volition is defined by conscious transgression. His freedom does not emerge from the reconciliation of the natural and the spiritual, but from the negation of both. The aesthetic here is no longer a search for beauty, but a metaphysical assertion of will, rooted in the nihilistic rejection of moral law.

Importantly, Aimautov does not endorse such a worldview; rather, he seeks to understand the dialectic of freedom and value that drives human development. He arrives at the insight that freedom – though ambiguous – is the inner axis of human existence. Yet when freedom is severed from ethical responsibility, it transforms into a destructive force. Muslim's trajectory illustrates the culmination of aestheticism unmoored from morality: the triumph of self over being, and the replacement of truth with power.

2.3 Comparative Analysis of the Spiritual and Moral Foundations of Freedom in the Works of M. Zh. Kopeev, S. Toraighyrov, and Zh. Aimautov

1. Guilt and Freedom: Their Correlation and Causal Determination

The problem of freedom in the writings of M. Zh. Kopeev, S. Toraighyrov, and Zh. Aimautov is closely linked to the category of guilt, which, in turn, is interpreted as a consequence of either the loss or the unrealized of a spiritual choice. In the philosophical and artistic context of early 20th-century Kazakh thought, guilt is not merely the result of a social or moral transgression, but a profound existential experience of a discrepancy between one's spiritual potential and actual lived reality.

In the works of M. Zh. Kopeev, guilt appears as a reaction of the individual to the violation of an internal moral law. The image of the noblewoman (kansha) vividly illustrates this dimension: her guilt is not imposed by external punishment, but emerges from her internal response to a conscious moral decision. Her freedom, attained outside the bounds of conscience, proves illusory, and it is precisely the realization of this false freedom that gives rise to tragic guilt.

In S. Toraighyrov's poetic universe, the character of Azhibai, by contrast, exemplifies the absence of guilt as a consequence of

underdeveloped spiritual maturity. Azhibai does not choose between good and evil because he is not even aware that such a choice exists. His freedom is limited by natural immediacy, and guilt, as a category of spiritual self-awareness, does not arise. Thus, in Toraighyrov's vision, freedom and guilt are causally dependent on the level of spiritual development: where there is no spirituality, there is no guilt – and, consequently, no genuine freedom.

Zh. Aimaurov proposes a more complex conceptualization. In the novel *Akbilek*, the character Mukash, situated between the natural and spiritual poles, exhibits a moment of self-recognition of guilt that, however, does not lead to moral transformation. His tragedy lies in the inability to overcome his inner duality, in the endless search for self-justification. Meanwhile, Muslim, from the play *Mansapqorlar*, demonstrates a complete transcendence of guilt as a moral regulator: his freedom lies «beyond good and evil,» demonic in its essence. Here, freedom becomes an absolute, divorced from conscience, and thus – tragically destructive.

2. Typology of the Tragic in the Context of Guilt and Freedom

In reflecting on the essence of the tragic, these Kazakh thinkers do not limit themselves to the dichotomy of good and evil but reveal a deeper structure – the clash of human inner freedom with the boundaries of existence, with natural limitation, and social constraint. In this context, at least two types of the tragic can be identified:

- The tragic of internal disintegration, which arises from moral bifurcation, as in the case of the noblewoman (*kansha*) in Kopeev or Mukash in Aimaurov. Here, the tragedy results from the realization of a lost spiritual integrity. The character suffers because he or she knows they could have chosen differently but failed to do so.

- The tragic of conflict between the individual and society, as represented in *Akbilek*, where the heroine's tragedy lies not so much in personal guilt but in social condemnation and the impossibility of being understood or forgiven. A similar tragic dimension is reflected in the figure of Kedey in Toraighyrov – a lyrical persona striving for social justice but confronting the brutal realities of the time.

Thus, the tragic in the works of these early 20th-century Kazakh thinkers is not simply suffering, but a form of existential extremity in which freedom is tested against moral choice and social responsibility. The images of the noblewoman, Azhibai, Mukash, Muslim, Kedey, and *Akbilek* form a panorama of human states in which freedom becomes the measure of being, and guilt – its ethical counterpart.

M. Zh. Kopeev, focusing on the emotional and volitional sphere of human experience, conceptualizes the tragic through the microcosm of the individual in its dialectical entanglement with the surrounding macrocosm.

In his reflections, the central theme is the relationship between the human being and God, as mediated through interpersonal encounters. The phenomenon of the tragic in the dastan «The Tale of Two Young Men and an Old Man» is closely linked to the ethico-aesthetic dimensions of individual life.

At first glance, evil, personified by the figure of the noblewoman (kansha), seems deserving of punishment. She is guilty of consciously chosen acts. Nevertheless, the noblewoman evokes compassion, for she is fully aware of her fall and sinfulness, and she experiences sincere repentance, pangs of conscience, and deep remorse for what she has done. «I have committed another bad deed, I thought the sin would not be easily forgiven» [75, 13].

It is not the inherently negative qualities of a depraved nature that determine her behavior. The tragic predetermination of her actions appears, to some extent, as spontaneous and fateful. As K. Jaspers states, «The Angel and the Demon are as if a splitting of the same entity: the wholeness of myself... They are guides of the soul on the path toward the self-evidence of existence, pointing the way while themselves remaining in the shadow, or anticipations, in which, as such, I ought not to fully trust. On my path, I encounter nothing stable, but rather limits of visibility constantly emerging in different guises, within which they allow me to hear their voices, never fully and finally revealing themselves» [76, 310].

The fear, pain, despair, and guilt that accompany this tragic heroine over time are not mere transient emotions. Rather, they serve as moral thresholds or existential levels at which the most fundamental questions of human life converge. The path of repentance thus appears not as an act of weakness, but as the very infinity of freedom on the way toward the Divine. Kopeev affirms the idea that profound inner experience has the capacity to morally purify the individual and to restore a sense of personal dignity. The aesthetic of the tragic, therefore, becomes inseparable from the metaphysical search for the transcendent in the human condition.

According to Arthur Schopenhauer, it is impossible to identify a single, unified principle of the tragic; however, he distinguishes three types of tragedy: the first is the tragedy of «error,» the second – the tragedy of the «malicious will of individuals,» and the third – the «tragedy of the highest moral conflict.» The tragic collision under consideration can be attributed to all three types, but, in our view, it predominantly leans toward the internal moral conflict of the heroine – namely, the discrepancy between her spiritual world and her actions.

Human beings are not endowed with the immediate ability to foresee the absolute truth of good and evil, and, according to M. Zh. Kopeev, the

tragic nature of the situation stems from the impossibility of explaining life through a clear-cut division between good and evil. The paradox of life lies precisely in their intertwining and mutual transition.

In principle, the guilt of the noblewoman (kansha) is evident; however, the spectator's compassionate attitude towards her is grounded in her profound inner torment and anguish. She is subjectively both guilty and innocent simultaneously.

The nature of tragic guilt is revealed somewhat differently by S. Toraighyrov. Azhybai is guilty precisely because he is unaware of the possibility of choice. His entire life is characterized by unfreedom. Submission to clan interests and imposed relationships with unwanted wives deprives the hero of love, pushing him to seek happiness far from his family.

«No, son, you must not let bad rumors spread,
Rolling like trash among the grass instead.
You are an amangar – a widow will not leave her kin.
And you must marry a widow» [77, 83]

This poem contains a moral admonition, likely from a father to his son. It emphasizes the importance of honor and reputation (not allowing bad rumors to spread, compared to trash). The term «amangar» is a traditional Kazakh concept related to family and clan responsibility. The advice to marry a widow symbolizes respect for family, traditions, and the preservation of lineage through social and ethical norms. The poem reflects deep cultural values around personal and familial honor. The metaphor of rumors rolling like trash highlights the destructive nature of gossip. The figure of the «amangar» embodies the role of a responsible family member who safeguards the lineage. Encouraging marriage to a widow underscores respect for social cohesion and continuity.

It was easier for Azhybay to fit into the rigid framework of patriarchal society than to make an effort to resist social inertia. Even his sincere tenderness toward his daughter submits to the cruel demands and selfish desire for material well-being. After all, opposing the outdated aspects of the patriarchal-clan system requires tremendous spiritual effort and resilience. Seeing the cause of his suffering in the hated environment, Azhybay vents his anger on other unfortunate people like himself.

This passage highlights Azhybay's internal conflict and social entrapment. His choice to conform rather than resist underscores the oppressive weight of traditional structures. The text also points to the emotional consequences of this conformity – misdirected anger and shared misery among those trapped by the same system. The theme is deeply

philosophical, revealing how societal forces shape personal morality and behavior, while emphasizing the spiritual cost of resistance.

Her own home became for Zhanyl more terrible than chains.

Here, nitpicking over trifles,

Azhybay beat her with merciless blows!

Her whole body was covered with bruises. [78, 124]

This fragment reveals the harsh reality of domestic violence in Zhanyl's life, emphasizing the brutality she endures within what should be a safe, personal space – her home. The contrast between the home as a place of safety and it being «more terrible than chains» highlights the tragic contradiction in Zhanyl's existence. This reflects broader social and moral themes in the literature regarding the oppressive nature of patriarchal traditions and the suffering they inflict on vulnerable individuals, especially women. The physical and emotional violence described underscores the tragic human condition depicted by the author.

On the other hand, Azhybay is pitiable in his moral confusion. This closed circle of irritation and misfortune is beyond the hero's strength to break due to his own weakness. Rather, this tragedy, in the words of Schopenhauer, is a tragedy of delusion. And Azhybay's guilt is the guilt of the entire society. His life is a stereotype, and society accepts him as such. That is, in his consciousness, he is innocent, but he is guilty in his actions, in committing evil and violence toward his loved ones. Yet he also evokes compassion because he is unhappy. His actions reveal a sense of hopelessness, despair, and the absurdity of existence..

This passage presents Azhybay as a tragic figure caught in a moral and existential crisis. His inability to break free from destructive patterns reflects both personal weakness and societal failure. The reference to Schopenhauer's «tragedy of delusion» highlights the philosophical depth, framing Azhybay's plight as rooted in fundamental human misunderstanding of freedom and morality. His guilt, shared with society, emphasizes the collective responsibility for individual suffering and wrongdoing. Despite his faults, Azhybay evokes pity because his actions stem from deep despair rather than malice.

The episode of Azhybay's moral confusion and tragic weakness illustrates a complex relationship between freedom and guilt. Freedom here is limited or even illusory, constrained by social structures and personal incapacity to transcend ingrained behavioral patterns. Azhybay's guilt is paradoxical – he is «innocent» in his self-awareness, lacking deliberate intent to do wrong, yet objectively responsible for the harm he causes. This duality

reflects philosophical debates about freedom as not merely the ability to act but also the capacity for moral self-awareness and responsible choice. The societal context restricts true freedom, while the internal weakness limits the exercise of moral responsibility, thus complicating the notion of guilt. The tragedy arises precisely from this tension: freedom constrained, guilt diffused between individual and collective.

This same theme, in our view, is central for S. Toraighyrov, especially sharply presented in the novels Қамар-сұлу (Kamar-Sulu), Кім жазықты? (Who Is to Blame?), Кедей (The Poor Man), Адаққан өмір (A Lost Life). The tragedy of Toraighyrov's heroes lies in the impossibility of resolving the contradictions of real life they face by fate. But unlike Azhybay, who did not reflect on the cause of his tragic life, the lyrical hero, the poor man, and Qamar constantly reflect. They seek the reasons for the injustice of existence and try to change their lives.

The passage highlights a crucial difference between Toraighyrov's characters and Azhybay. Toraighyrov's heroes are conscious of their tragic circumstances and engage in self-reflection and a search for meaning, which implies a higher degree of spiritual and moral freedom despite external constraints. Their tragedy is existential – they struggle with contradictions they cannot resolve, but they actively confront these contradictions. This reflective attitude aligns with a more developed notion of freedom involving self-awareness and a pursuit of justice. In contrast, Azhybay's tragedy stems from passivity and ignorance of his condition. Thus, the concept of guilt is also different: Toraighyrov's heroes may bear existential guilt or responsibility for seeking change, while Azhybay remains trapped in unconscious complicity.

No, I do not agree to live such a life,
I must go another way:
Humility has ruined many people,
For how many has it turned into misfortune! [79, 86]

This excerpt expresses a rejection of passive acceptance and submission, emphasizing a desire for active choice and change. The speaker rejects humility or resignation as destructive, advocating instead for assertiveness and self-determination. This aligns well with the themes of spiritual and moral freedom discussed earlier, contrasting passivity with active striving for a different path. It reflects a conscious refusal to be bound by fate or social constraints, embodying the existential quest for autonomy and meaning.

However, in the poem «Kedey», S. Toraighyrov notes that no matter how much inner strength or impulse a person possesses, they cannot break free from the natural and social bonds that often shape a person's fate against their will.

This statement highlights the tragic tension between individual freedom and external determinism. Despite inner power or desire for change, the individual remains constrained by inherited natural conditions and societal structures. It reflects a philosophical recognition of the limits of human freedom – freedom is not absolute but bounded by circumstances beyond personal control. This reinforces the motif of tragic inevitability and the complex interplay of freedom, fate, and responsibility.

My fate is akin to all these fates.
Dull days pass in work.
And there are many who have never experienced hunger,
Although they have never worked. [80, 192]

This excerpt expresses a profound existential reflection on fate, labor, and social inequality. The speaker identifies their own fate with the collective fate of many, marked by monotonous, dreary toil. The contrast between those who endure hunger despite their hard work and those who never suffer hunger yet also never work points to a critique of social injustice and unfair distribution of labor and wealth. It underscores a tragic awareness of life's arbitrary hardships and inequities, reinforcing themes of fate, moral responsibility, and societal structure.

It is obvious that, outwardly, the heroes of Toraighyrov are powerless to change anything in the surrounding world. Therefore, they suffer from helplessness and mourn their hopelessness. Nevertheless, they internally feel guilt for the imperfection of all humanity, and thus their own guilt. That is, the tragic nature of the situation is evident through the duality of the heroes. In our opinion, the worldview position of both S. Toraighyrov himself and his heroes can be characterized as «the pessimism of the intellect and the optimism of the will.» Taking upon themselves the guilt for all and this endless sorrow for an imperfect world becomes the source of their spiritual life. The thinker questions the commensurability of human suffering and broken destinies with the transient values of the material world. Recall Azhybay from the novel «Who is to Blame?» One could say he accepted spiritual death, failing to defend his personal essence and unable to uphold the freedom granted to him by God. This passage highlights the profound existential and ethical dilemma faced by Toraighyrov's characters. Their external impotence contrasts with an intense internal self-awareness and

responsibility, giving rise to a tragic duality. The concept of «pessimism of the intellect and optimism of the will» reflects a philosophical stance rooted in acknowledging harsh realities while maintaining a resilient spirit. The internalization of universal guilt and sorrow fuels their spiritual existence and philosophical inquiry. The reference to Azhybay as having accepted spiritual death underscores the failure to assert individual freedom and moral agency, deepening the tragedy.

For Kamar, on the contrary, physical death becomes the only path to freedom. In this case, the conscious choice to resist evil, even at the cost of life, and the unbreakable will in the face of fate's blows define the key features of the relationship between the tragic character and tragic circumstances.

In our view, the protagonists in S. Toraighyrov's works are subjectively guilty within specific socio-historical conditions, as in this story the obstacle to the lovers' happiness is not the whim of an individual, but the entire value-normative system of Kazakh society. However, they are also not guilty, for the relativity of seemingly unquestionable dominant principles becomes evident in the context of love. The value of tribal prescriptions is devalued in the eyes of the lovers and those who sympathize with them.

There is a simultaneous sense of the elevated meaning of life and a detachment, an alienation from the recognized world order. Yet the violation of the ordinary and universally accepted inevitably leads to a tragic end – the death of the lovers. This outcome stems from the impossibility of existing simultaneously within and outside the world of human order.

At the same time, Kamar's actions reveal the grandeur of the human act – the spiritual nature of a person performing morally inspired deeds. Therefore, we argue that these characters are not truly guilty. Their existential stance is grounded in a new comprehension of the world, a reevaluation of values and human relationships, a transformation of the entire value-consciousness of the individual. Simultaneously, it reflects the essential and concentrated realities of human existence.

Turning to the analysis of the literary work of Zh. Aimaurov, it should be emphasized that he upholds the idea of the non-predetermined nature of the human being – the individual's openness to infinite transformations and, consequently, the potential to commit both spiritually elevated and spiritually void acts, including tragic mistakes.

Like S. Toraighyrov, Aimaurov addresses the question of human essence that transcends social norms and tribal values. The vicissitudes of fate, loneliness, and existential melancholy permeate his novel *Kynikeidiñ zhazyry* (Kynikey's Guilt). What does the old woman's lament signify?

Paradoxically, pure romantic feelings – in their demand for total surrender – lead to solitude.

For Aimautov, the illusion that suffering inflicted upon loved ones can be justified by love is a troubling spiritual symptom. On one hand, he questions the necessity of blind obedience to the overpowering force of love, since passionate affection often drives individuals to reckless actions and creates an inner conflict between conscience and desire, duty and love.

On the other hand, however, marriage to an unloved man – imposed by parental will – would likely have resulted in no less tragic an outcome. It was the mother's possessive love that ultimately caused her daughter's seemingly ungrateful act. By denying her daughter the right to choose her own future, the mother – unintentionally – forced her into fleeing home and seeking freedom through the violation of established moral norms. This all-consuming maternal affection becomes the root of the story's tragic resolution.

Life without love is tragic – but as Aimautov shows, love itself does not always guarantee fulfillment, joy, or harmony. This idea of the multidimensional nature of love is also explored in his play *Sherniaz*, where love is revealed not as a singular emotional impulse, but as a deeply complex force, capable of uplifting and destroying in equal measure.

Zh. Aimautov's philosophical position is grounded in the idea of human openness to moral transformation – the rejection of determinism in favor of the individual's potential for spiritual growth or moral failure. In his literary legacy, one finds a deep interrogation of the nature of freedom, guilt, and the tragic, viewed not merely as a consequence of external circumstances but as a structural condition of human existence.

In the novel *Күникейдің zhazyғы*, the experience of guilt emerges from a seemingly paradoxical situation: the mother's possessive love – intended as an act of care – becomes the very cause of her daughter's moral rebellion. Denying her daughter the right to choose her own path, the mother unknowingly drives her into loneliness and social transgression. This reveals one of Aimautov's central insights – that love, while ennobling in its ideal form, may also become a destructive force when it denies the other's freedom. The spiritual and social fallout from such love constitutes a central layer of Aimautov's tragic vision.

In the play *Sherniyaz*, Aimautov further complicates the relationship between guilt and responsibility. The protagonist, *Sherniyaz*, commits acts that bear clear moral consequences, yet his subjective awareness of guilt remains ambivalent. Deep inside, he anticipates retribution, but he lives as if it can be indefinitely postponed. This existential postponement does not erase guilt but intensifies it. Aimautov thus problematizes the nature of

tragedy: is it merely the result of an external fate, or does it reside in the internal fracture between the will and moral law?

Love in Sherniyaz becomes the axis around which the tragic unfolds – not because love itself is evil, but because it entails the total acceptance of another being, often in contradiction with one's ideals. When this other turns out to be irreconcilable with one's values, the collapse of the ideal leads to the collapse of the self. In this sense, Sherniyaz's guilt is both personal and systemic: he is guilty for the choices he made, yet the magnitude of his punishment – emotional and existential – far exceeds the objective gravity of his transgressions. This disproportion evokes pity, revealing the tragic mismatch between human aspiration and the limits of action.

For Aimaurov, then, the tragedy of the individual lies not only in external oppression or social injustice, but in the deeper moral dissonance between internal desire and normative expectations. His characters are free in potential but not always in realization – a tension that defines the very core of their humanity. The tragic becomes a metaphysical experience: the dissolution of personal wholeness in the face of impossible choices, where guilt is not simply a verdict, but a mode of existence.

In comparison to the works of S. Toraighyrov, the tragic dimension in the writings of Zh. Aimaurov and M. Zh. Kopeev reveals a distinct moral and existential tone. While Toraighyrov's protagonists often lament their fate and voice their suffering in a world governed by rigid social norms, the characters of Aimaurov and Kopeev – such as the khanša, Sherniyaz, and Kynikey – face their tragic destinies in silence. These characters possess a heightened sense of moral agency; they are aware of their responsibility and guilt from the outset, as their suffering emerges from a conscious personal choice. As a result, their tragedies are not framed as complaints against fate or injustice, but rather as quiet, internal reckonings with themselves.

This stoic response to suffering sets them apart from characters like Qamar, Azhibai, or the lyrical persona in Toraighyrov's works, who frequently question the meaning of suffering and the fairness of life. In contrast, Aimaurov's and Kopeev's protagonists choose solitude, endure their suffering inwardly, and refrain from blaming external forces. Their pain becomes a meditative, almost sacred experience – a crucible for inner transformation.

However, unlike the often bleak or nihilistic undercurrent in Toraighyrov's tragic worldview, both Aimaurov and Kopeev articulate a fundamentally humanistic orientation. For them, tragedy is not the end point of human endeavor, but a necessary stage in the moral and spiritual maturation of the individual. True tragedy, in their view, cannot be without hope. It is precisely through trials, temptations, and existential suffering that

individuals such as Sherniyaz or the khanša come to rediscover meaning – not in submission to destiny, but in the forging of new ethical relationships and human connections.

Thus, tragedy for Aimautov and Kopeev is not a closure but an opening – a transformative experience that elevates the individual beyond passive resignation and toward moral responsibility. It marks not the failure of character, but its awakening. In this context, the tragic moment becomes the ground for self-realization and ethical renewal. The individual, through suffering, assumes not only responsibility for the self, but for others, embodying a growing awareness of human interdependence and the fragile, redemptive potential of moral choice.

This conceptual thread finds its philosophical culmination in Zh. Aimautov's novel *Akbilek*. The protagonist, a young girl named Akbilek, becomes the victim of malevolent circumstance, yet simultaneously bears the moral burden of disrupted familial relationships. While subjectively innocent, the social reality of traditional Kazakh culture assigns blame to her as if she were culpable. Her father, overwhelmed by shame and inner confusion, begins to experience her presence not as a source of joy, but as a burden. Through this liminal condition – Akbilek's immersion in a world that has ceased to recognize her as a legitimate member – Aimautov reveals a fundamental anthropological principle: in traditional societies, honor is not an individual, internal attribute but a relational category. It serves as a symbolic axis around which one's social legitimacy and ontological presence are constructed.

Historically, Kazakh culture regarded daughters with a sense of sacredness, as transient guests in their natal homes, destined to become moral custodians of future familial lineages. Women were expected to uphold the highest standards of virtue, and any deviation – regardless of agency – was seen as a dishonor not only to the individual but to the entire family. Thus, when Akbilek falls victim to violence, the shame does not remain private; it is projected collectively, with her father internalizing societal condemnation.

Yet within this painful estrangement lies a paradoxical dynamic. The emotional and moral rupture becomes the very site of Akbilek's existential transformation. Rather than capitulate to the role of outcast, she undergoes a process of internal rebirth. The moral resilience instilled by her upbringing enables her to endure and transcend trauma. Through ethical sincerity and relational openness, Akbilek gradually reclaims her humanity.

Her return to the aul, not as a figure of shame but as a morally awakened individual, signifies more than reconciliation. It symbolizes a rupture within traditional codes – a reevaluation of values through lived experience. From the perspective of philosophical anthropology, this narrative arc captures the

passage from collective moral determinism to personal ethical autonomy. It illustrates Aimaurov's deeper conviction: that the tragic may serve not as a terminus of fate, but as the generative ground for the emergence of subjectivity, moral agency, and a renewed humanism.

As we can see, beyond their varying interpretations of guilt, Kazakh thinkers approached the resolution of tragic contradictions differently, each reflecting their unique philosophical worldview. M. Zh. Kopeev, by drawing attention to the inner, spiritual capacities of the individual, puts forward the idea that human life and destiny are shaped not solely by fate or external forces, but also by the autonomous activity of the person, who can consciously choose their values and thus assume responsibility for constructing their life path.

S. Toraighyrov, through the tragic resolution of conflict, reveals the deeper semantic core of this conflict, emphasizing that the sacrifices made by his characters (Kamap-Sulu, the lyrical hero, the poor man) are not in vain. Loss and suffering become avenues toward spiritual elevation and the restoration of harmony between goodness and beauty. In this regard, Toraighyrov's work serves as a philosophical guide, assisting the individual in discovering their place in the world.

Zh. Aimaurov, by resolving contradictions on a more optimistic note, reinforces the reader's belief in the possibility of a dignified future, in justice, and in the attainability of happiness and the realization of beauty on Earth.

In our view, the works of M. Zh. Kopeev, S. Toraighyrov, and Zh. Aimaurov all reflect a nuanced interweaving of the tragic and the comic, the beautiful and the grotesque, the good and the evil – an interplay that is intrinsic to real human existence. The central idea that unites their reflections is the necessity of an objective, critical approach to each ethical and aesthetic situation, along with a search for spiritually grounded methods of resolving internal contradictions.

This suggests that the ethical constitutes a foundational component of spiritual life. In this lies the essential manifestation of the organic unity between the ethical and the aesthetic in the Kazakh philosophical tradition.

2.4 The Phenomenology of the Ethical Relation to the World in the Works of M. Zh. Kopeev, S. Toraighyrov, and Zh. Aimaurov

1. The Problem of Fate in the Thought of M. Zh. Kopeev, S. Toraighyrov, and Zh. Aimaurov

2. Death as a Natural Process of Life (M. Zh. Kopeev); Death as Evil and as a Criterion for Evaluating the Meaning of Being (S. Toraighyrov); The Attitude Toward Death as a Reflection of the Attitude Toward Life (Zh. Aimaurov)

3. Good and Evil and Their Dialectical Unity

From a philosophical standpoint, the distinction between authentic human beauty and its false semblance is revealed primarily through the relation of beauty to the categories of good and evil. This relation defines the specifically human content of aesthetic experience. Within this framework, Kazakh thinkers posed two essential ethical questions:

- What are the origins of morality within the human being?
- What are the paths and possibilities for human moral development, and what are the necessary conditions for ethical transformation of the self?

In contemplating the tragic destinies of their protagonists, these thinkers raise a fundamental question: does tragedy arise from the inner nature of the individual, or is it the result of external fatalism – a predetermined existential order, what Kazakh thought names *tağdyr* (fate)? In the cosmological and theological reflections of M. Zhusip Kopeev, fate (*tağdyr*) is perceived as part of the divine order – a metaphysical structure governed by celestial forces. In his treatise «The Guiding Influence of the Stars » (*Жұлдыздардың бізді бағып-қағу реті*), Kopeev emphasizes the influence of heavenly bodies on an individual's character and destiny. Every individual is said to be born under a specific star. One born under a fortunate star is marked by noble qualities: talent, virtue, success. Conversely, those guided by sensory impulses alone may fall under the influence of a «dark star», becoming subjects of societal reproach and slander.

However, the acknowledgment of a degree of predestination in human character does not eliminate the possibility of transformation. On the contrary, Kopeev asserts that every person harbors both the inclination toward good and the potential for evil. This dual capacity, he argues, underscores the central role of moral agency. A key element in Kopeev's philosophical anthropology is the recognition of human freedom: despite being created by God, the human being has been endowed with volition and free will. As he writes, «Although it was He who created them, He gave authority and freedom of will to His creatures» [81, 24].

This is not a contradiction but a dialectical tension: human actions derive meaning not only from their causes but also from the responsibility and consequences they entail. Thus, Kopeev places ethical emphasis on human choice. If a person is free in making moral decisions, then this freedom implies the capacity to alter one's fate by assuming full responsibility for one's choices. Life, therefore, is given to the human being as a space for moral self-perfection. Religion, in this vision, becomes not a constraint but a guiding force – directing the individual toward Perfection, that is, toward God. Thus, fate provides the existential ground, but freedom is realized through ethical choice – through the continual tension between good and evil within the individual soul. For Kopeev, the task of human life is self-perfection, and religion serves as a guide toward this telos, directing the soul toward God as the Absolute Perfection.

S. Toraighyrov also engaged deeply with the question of predetermined fate (*tağdyr*). His perspective on this issue is notably more tragic and existentially charged. His lyrical protagonist, reflecting upon his own ill-fated life, comes to the conclusion that the human being is not an all-powerful agent. Much of what occurs in one's life appears as a preordained structure, a destiny beyond the individual's control. Toraighyrov conceptualizes fate as the temporal unfolding of an essential human nature that eludes full mastery by the subject.

This creates a fundamental internal tension in his definition of fate. On the one hand, fate is often cruel toward the individual, tearing the self apart through the brute force of immediate reality. Yet on the other hand, the will, the desire for freedom, and the restless mind – those very capacities that rebel against fate – are themselves given by it. Thus, fate paradoxically includes within itself the potential for resistance, error, aspiration, and dreaming. The dissonance between the real and the desired, between intention and outcome, becomes a space for the phenomenological unveiling of fate and, consequently, for the emergence of a deeper self-awareness.

The lyrical hero of Toraighyrov ultimately recognizes his external circumstances as an unalterable, preordained law and submits himself to this fate, withdrawing from active participation in life. However, he cannot escape from himself – from the inner stream of reflection and interrogation. The continuous dialogue with the self becomes, in this sense, the destiny of one who has departed from immediate reality. In retreating into the inner world, the hero transforms his existential conflict into a space of inward creativity, where the process of self-identification unfolds through a confrontation with time.

In this way, both Toraighyrov and his protagonists emerge as harbingers of a future era, catalysts of new spiritual beginnings that transcend their

historical moment. Yet it would be a mistake to interpret his worldview as purely pessimistic. Toraighyrov never relinquishes his faith in the strength of the human spirit. To the best of his ability, he commits himself to the struggle against spiritual stagnation and inertia in modes of human existence. In place of a world saturated with moral emptiness and illusory contentment, he posits a profound, emotionally saturated, and existentially authentic sense of despair – a despair that neither embitters him nor incites cruelty toward others.

In this lies his philosophical and spiritual calling: to elevate the human being above the harsh realities of existence and bring him closer to the divine. According to Toraighyrov, fate may wound, and even destroy the body, but it cannot forcibly negate the spiritual and moral essence of the individual. The ethical impulse, he insists, is always chosen by the person themselves. It is up to the individual to either succumb to external circumstances or strive for an active and meaningful stance in life. The inner spiritual world of the person, then, is the very locus of freedom – freedom that can confront and transcend fate.

Zhusipbek Aimautov approaches the concept of fate from a distinct and deeply existential angle. For him, fate is not merely a preordained trajectory but a test of one's freedom – a spiritual trial that must be endured with dignity. The despair experienced by the protagonists Aqbilek and Qartkozha is not portrayed as passive suffering, but rather as a moment of profound existential challenge. Their states of despair represent a threshold experience in which the individual becomes increasingly aware of their self, asserting action that emerges from within the self rather than being dictated by external circumstances.

The existential stance they adopt cannot be confined within the given framework of imposed societal or historical conditions. They transcend these constraints by projecting new existential trajectories – thus, they surpass not only their environment but also their prior selves. In defying the deterministic boundaries of their existence, they challenge fate itself. In this sense, the individual, by choosing freedom, enacts their destiny; and conversely, in choosing their destiny, they realize their freedom. The two are not opposed, but ontologically intertwined.

To summarize the insights presented above:

Mashkhur Zhusip Kopeev conceives both fate and freedom as divine gifts, yet does not equate them. For Kopeev, freedom reveals itself in the spiritual domain – through the individual's ethical choice between good and evil within the overarching framework of fate. While divine providence determines one's existential starting point, the human being retains

responsibility for moral decision-making, thus actively participating in their own ethical formation.

Sultanmakhamut Toraighyrov, while recognizing the natural right to freedom, also acknowledges a degree of predetermination – particularly in the form of unjust societal structures. In his framework, freedom is seen as the counterforce to fate, often measured through the individual's resistance to natural and social determinism. Though a person may not always be able to alter unjust conditions, inner freedom becomes a space of resistance – a way to preserve one's spiritual integrity and moral subjectivity. Yet the critical question remains: will the individual grasp the true meaning of this freedom?

Zhusipbek Aimautov elevates the discussion to the level of ontological freedom – the freedom that defines human existence as fundamentally distinct from the deterministic processes of the natural world. For Aimautov, fate and freedom are not opposites but co-constitutive. The human being constructs and chooses their destiny within the bounds of given circumstances by either transforming the external world or transforming the self. This act of choosing is, in essence, a free and creative deed of the individual.

Despite their differing interpretations of fate and freedom, all three thinkers share a common view: death, as an inevitable phenomenon of life, is divinely predetermined. Death is fate. In our view, one's attitude toward death illuminates their attitude toward life; thus, addressing this problem seems both natural and necessary.

In the religious philosophy of Mashkhur Zhusip Kopeev, death is not seen as annihilation but as a transition to another mode of existence. The thinker does not dwell on fear of physical extinction. Rather, he emphasizes divine retribution for the wrongs committed in this world. In this sense, death acts as a moral boundary – a threshold through which the meaning of good and evil becomes more discernible within the temporal order.

Death, therefore, is not a source of despair, but a call to deepen one's understanding of life. As Kopeev suggests, the truly ethical life unfolds precisely in the face of eternity. The conscious creation of goodness and love – understood as moral acts anchored in spiritual awareness – becomes, in his thought, the pathway to immortality.

In the reflections of Sultanmakhamut Toraighyrov, one can trace a distinct evolution in his attitude toward death over the course of his life. In his early works, the relentless approach of the end, the awareness of inevitable disappearance, and the fatalism of existence fill the poet's inner world with a profound sense of sorrow and melancholy, provoking anger, disillusionment, and fear. Death, in this early period of thought, is perceived

as a rupture – a violent interruption of the boundless potential for human self-perfection, and a force that deprives life of its meaning and continuity.

This existential anguish, born of the confrontation with mortality, is most vividly expressed in his poem «Meyirimsiz Azhal » («Merciless Death »), in which the young thinker pours out his despair and pain. Death here is not abstract or sublime; it is an immediate, merciless force that robs human existence of its depth, possibility, and promise.

Before fulfillment had begun,
You cast your shadow, dark and deep.
Life called – but you, relentless one,
Have drawn me into silent sleep. [82, 28]

In the existential and poetic horizon of Sultanmakhmut Toraighyrov, death manifests as a profound ontological evil, especially poignant in relation to youth – a stage of life characterized by its blossoming vitality and unfolding potential. This conception is powerfully expressed in his novel Qamar-sulu and the poem Why is the Soul Troubled? Death's abruptness disrupts the lived temporal continuity (Lebenswelt), violently interrupting the horizon of possibility at the apex of existence. From a Husserlian phenomenological perspective, this rupture unveils the finitude inherent in human temporality, where each passing moment irretrievably recedes into the past, engendering a melancholic awareness of irrevocable loss.

Toraighyrov's acute consciousness of the irreversible flow of time (Zeitlichkeit) is intertwined with a Heideggerian «being-toward-death » (Sein-zum-Tode), where the looming presence of death reveals itself as the ultimate possibility that shapes authentic existence. Yet, while death truncates the individual's temporal horizon, the ontological totality – the unfolding of Being itself – persists beyond, eternally continuing its infinite movement.

This dialectical tension between the finitude of the self and the infinity of being provokes fundamental metaphysical questions concerning the meaning of birth and existence. If all things, regardless of their existential intensity, inevitably return to dust, what then distinguishes a life filled with spiritual striving from one lived without purpose? Death, in its levelling effect, erases distinctions, reducing all beings – both the enlightened and the oblivious – to ontological equivalence with the ephemeral dust.

Such confrontation with mortality precipitates an existential crisis – a horizon of despair, disillusionment, and ontological anxiety. However,

Toraighyrov refuses nihilistic resignation. He posits a teleological framework in which each human being is endowed with a divinely ordained mission, a vocation to fulfill within the cosmic order. His personal philosophical vocation lies in the spiritual elevation and cultural dignity of the Kazakh people.

In this light, the greatest terror is not death per se, but oblivion – the erasure of the self's trace from the fabric of being. The temporal extension of the self thus becomes measured not simply by chronological duration but by the qualitative depth of meaningful engagement with existence. The conscious awareness of death functions as a catalyst for authentic life, compelling a moral and spiritual seriousness that infuses each moment with significance.

Toraighyrov's conception of eternity is dynamic rather than static – a perpetual succession of lives, each a unique instantiation within the infinite chain of being. The visible universe, transient and fleeting, is but a momentary spark within the inexhaustible plenitude of Being itself.

Turning to the work of Zhusipbek Aimaurov, it is important to note that his attitude toward death resonates closely with that of Sultanmakhmud Toraighyrov. For Aimaurov, death is likewise perceived as an evil – a force that steals life from a person, often creeping up unexpectedly and imperceptibly. As he poignantly expresses: «Unaware, it sneaks behind you and strikes swiftly; death is a thief indeed, and who can offer a remedy against death?» [83, 171]. Yet, in full awareness of human powerlessness before the inexorable laws of the cosmos, Aimaurov reconciles himself with the inevitability of life's natural course. Birth and death form an inseparable horizon of human existence.

Unlike the other thinkers examined, Aimaurov situates the problem of death within the extreme conditions of war – an arena where human life is devalued and, tragically, where people become habituated to killing and witnessing death. His cultural-philosophical insight identifies the indifferent attitude toward death as a consequence of human adaptability: the capacity to become accustomed even to the most harrowing realities.

However, Aimaurov's own position transcends this bleak acceptance. Even within the briefest moment of life, he affirms the human possibility of engendering a form of personal immortality – a survival through love, through benevolent deeds that endure beyond the ephemeral lifespan. These acts, once performed, persist in the consciousness of others, independent of the will or desire of their originator.

This phenomenon of continued co-existence – «being-with » others through time – reveals a source of overcoming the fatalistic despair and inevitability of death. It is in this temporal prolongation of meaningful action

and relational presence that Aimaurov locates a profound resistance to the nihilism of mortality and a hope for transcendence embedded in the human condition.

The foregoing analysis invites us to engage in a deeper contemplation and to formulate several nuanced conclusions regarding the complex human relationship with death. This relationship defies simplistic categorization or reduction to any fixed theoretical framework because it encompasses not only the existential reality of mortality but also the multifaceted ways in which individuals and cultures interpret and live through this reality. Death, as a universal and inevitable phenomenon, presents itself simultaneously as an endpoint and a horizon that shapes the very structure of human existence and consciousness.

According to M. Zh. Kopeev, death is not merely an event but an inherent, natural process within the totality of life's unfolding. It marks a necessary transition that, while final in its physical dimension, opens a metaphysical threshold to other modes of existence. This perspective reflects a holistic worldview where death is integrated into the continuum of life and is inseparable from the cosmic order.

In contrast, S. Toraighyrov's view positions death as a profound existential evil – an abrupt rupture that interrupts the boundless potentiality of human development and self-realization. Yet paradoxically, it is through this very rupture that death serves as a fundamental criterion for evaluating the meaning and value of one's life. Death confronts the individual with the finitude of existence, evoking not only fear and despair but also a deep ethical and philosophical reckoning with the significance of one's choices and actions.

Zhusipbek Aimaurov extends this inquiry by exploring the dialectical relationship between death and life, emphasizing that the way individuals relate to death inherently reveals their attitude toward life itself. If death is perceived as senseless or devoid of meaning, then life consequently becomes devalued, losing its moral and spiritual gravity. However, Aimaurov highlights the potential for human transcendence through the creative acts of love and goodness, which constitute a form of personal immortality. This immortality is not physical but exists through the ongoing presence of one's deeds and their influence within the communal memory and shared being of others.

Despite the differences in emphasis and interpretation among these thinkers, they converge on a profound cultural-philosophical insight central to Kazakh existential thought: death, while predestined and unavoidable, imparts a crucial ontological and ethical dimension to human life. It demands of the individual a responsible, conscious engagement with the finite

condition, fostering a freedom not measured by the mere quantity of years but by the qualitative richness and meaningfulness of one's lived experience. This freedom manifests as an active affirmation of life's values in the face of mortality, a conscious authorship of one's destiny within the framework of fate.

Such reflections reveal a sophisticated phenomenology of death, where the interplay of finitude and transcendence, fate and freedom, despair and hope, are intricately woven into the fabric of human existence. It is within this dialectic that the cultural identity and spiritual resilience of the Kazakh people find profound expression, asserting the human capacity to rise above the inevitability of death through the cultivation of inner freedom and meaningful being.

2.5 The Dialectics of the Interrelation between the Ethical and the Aesthetic and Principles for Resolving Their Contradictions in the Works of M. Zh. Kopeev, S. Toraighyrov, and Zh. Aimaurov

1. Causes of the Ethical-Aesthetic Contradictions within the Human Being
2. The Natural Principle, the Aesthetic Principle, and the Sensory Principle within the Worldview
3. Methods for Resolving the Contradictions between the Ethical and the Aesthetic

According to M. Zh. Kopeev, an unrestrained sensual way of life gradually saturates human consciousness with negative thoughts, progressively marginalizing ethical significance. Over time, the predominance of sensory pleasure diminishes the role of ethical awareness. However, through conscious self-limitation of the sensual and deliberate ethical choice, a restoration of harmony and spiritual integrity occurs within the individual. As Kopeev eloquently formulates, «He pursued little eating, little sleeping, and little speaking» [84, 14]. This balance, closely tied to the notions of measure and harmony, simultaneously embraces an aesthetic dimension. From a cultural-philosophical perspective, as reflected in the Qur'an, moderation is equated with beauty, while excess, which inevitably breeds negativity, is perceived as deformity and disfavored by the Divine.

Thus, the ethical principle grounded in Qur'anic precepts implies a conscious subjugation of the rational soul over emotions, feelings, and desires, permitting the individual to transcend the mere natural impulses by extending their bounds through faith and knowledge. This dialectical

elevation – reason moderating passion – constructs a pathway toward human spiritual perfection and unity.

Moreover, Kopeev posits that genuine transformation cannot be externally imposed without the individual's participation and will; such efforts are deemed futile. The ultimate protection against evil resides only in Divine intervention, underscoring the limits of human agency and the transcendental source of moral safeguarding.

In this framework, the tension between the ethical and aesthetic realms within human experience reflects a deeper ontological duality – the pull between nature and spirit, impulse and reason, form and value. The natural principle embodies our primordial, instinctual drives, often aligned with the sensory principle, which seeks immediate gratification and corporeal pleasure. Conversely, the aesthetic principle, while linked to sensory experience, transcends it by invoking harmony, proportion, and a reflective appreciation that aligns with ethical striving.

The resolution of their contradictions thus demands a phenomenological consciousness – an awareness of oneself as both subject and agent capable of deliberate self-limitation and choice. This self-awareness unfolds as a spiritual journey where the individual negotiates the tensions of desire and duty, beauty and goodness, cultivating an integrated self. Kopeev's emphasis on measure and harmony resonates with a universal archetype of balance, found in multiple cultural traditions and philosophies, where ethical life is inseparable from aesthetic sensibility.

The above considerations lead to the conclusion that without God, the sensual and often individualistic principle within a person tends to dominate, frequently culminating in an aestheticism that relegates the ethical dimension to a secondary position. Upholding the religious foundation of the harmony between the ethical and the aesthetic, Kopeev demonstrates that religion functions as a mechanism for balancing these two principles. Observance of Sharia rules and cultivation of virtuous habits contribute to the restoration of spiritual integrity in the individual.

However, Kopeev emphasizes that faith in Allah is not merely a formalistic adherence to rituals. He rejects superficial displays of religious observance, instead privileging a morally conscious way of life – an ongoing process of self-improvement on the path toward Allah, which is simultaneously a journey toward goodness, truth, and beauty. Approaching such perfection is attainable only through the cultivation and development of the soul.

Thus, the contradiction between the ethical and the aesthetic can be resolved only through the ethical, which finds its ultimate foundation in the religious. This ethical foundation not only mediates the tension but also

integrates and elevates the aesthetic into S. Toraighyrov resonates with M. Zh. Kopeev on the issue of the predominance of sensuality as a path leading to vice. However, from his perspective, aestheticism – as a striving for excessive pleasure – embodies human despair. The longing and dissatisfaction with the present gradually lead to the disintegration of the individual's spiritual wholeness into fragmented parts. Toraighyrov attempts to demonstrate that by following the sole principle of pleasure, a person ultimately destroys himself. This pursuit results in an enduring state of inner anguish and despair.

The root cause lies in the excessive pursuit of pleasures that become increasingly sophisticated and refined. The quest for enjoyment enslaves the individual, who loses true freedom, never having attained it, and settles instead for illusions of freedom. The way out of this predicament – i.e., the restoration of wholeness – must, according to Toraighyrov, be sought in conscious choice.

If Ajibai (from «Life in Wanderings») had chosen freedom, he could have found his true self. But the tragedy is that his natural self prevailed. Without acquiring a personal, self-aware identity, he nearly loses his individuality, blindly following instincts of pleasure and gratification. His individual existence never clashes with traditional views. Ajibai yields to accepted traditions, sacrificing his individuality, and moreover, sacrifices his daughter by marrying her off to an unloved man, as demanded by the interests of the clan.

To understand Ajibai's existential worldview, we need to analyze the nature of man as presented by Toraighyrov.

Unlike M. Zh. Kopeev, in Toraighyrov's view, a person, at birth, embodies purity.

As a person matures, they plunge into the complex whirlpool of diverse relations with the surrounding world. In the poem Adaskan Omir («Lost Life»), the dynamic conflict between human nature and the nature of society unfolds gradually – from the protagonist's birth to the final moments of his life. Toraighyrov places Ajibai before a fundamental choice between the natural, morally neutral principle and the spiritual, personal self.

However, Ajibai does not make a personal choice – not because he is incapable, but because he simply never posed the question of the possibility of choice or defended it as his own individual self. Consequently, his attitude toward life remains natural, aesthetic, sensual, and ultimately vicious. The spiritual, personal principle – which Toraighyrov understands as good – remains unclaimed, as the decisive act of choice has not been performed.

It is important to emphasize that freedom, which defines the personal principle according to Toraighyrov, is itself good. By choosing good, a

person chooses freedom. Evil arises from the natural, unspiritual principle within the human being.

Since Ajibai resigns himself to the interests of his lineage, he shifts all responsibility onto society. That is, the consequences of his choice are attributed to the prevailing circumstances.

As a way out of this impasse, Toraighyrov proposes the opposing ethical principle – the moral law that is universal for all. Upholding the personal, spiritual principle, Toraighyrov advocates countering the neutral nature of man by creating a unified, universal moral law of justice.

It is evident that the world of S. Toraighyrov is not so much a world in itself – an existence detached from the individual – but rather a world of human freedom, where the person is the very creator of reality. According to Toraighyrov, the primary cause of Ajibai's – and those like him – sensual attitude towards life is ignorance. Consequently, he saw the panacea for all the vices of contemporary society – ignorance and lack of culture, slavery and cruelty – in knowledge.

Toraighyrov acknowledged the necessity of grounding human reason in morality, recognizing the indifference of knowledge to good. In other words, ignorance is evil, but knowledge devoid of morality is the worst evil of all.

Thus, according to S. Toraighyrov, freedom of choice is determined by the individual himself and depends on the level of his moral and spiritual-personal development.

As we see, the resolution of contradictions between the ethical and the aesthetic is connected with the ethical principle within the person. For Toraighyrov, moral life is a gradual process of perfecting the inner connection of a human being with absolute good.

A somewhat distinct situation emerges in the reflections of Zh. Aymaulytov. In his article «Tärbie» (Education), Aymaulytov engages dialogically with the names of great thinkers who have historically reflected on the teleology and meaning of upbringing. The existence of evil in the social world, he suggests, is not simply a matter of education in the abstract but rather the absence or insufficiency of cultivating virtuous qualities within the human being:

«Among humans, the prevalence of theft, violence, deceit, murder, plunder, and various other corruptions arises from a lack of education» [85, 133].

This statement gestures toward a phenomenological insight: moral qualities are not given a priori as innate essences; instead, they emerge and develop through the lived experience of education. The human being carries within a primordial openness or possibility – a latent predisposition – that

unfolds in diverse directions contingent upon educational influences: «We said that it is education that both corrupts and reforms a person» [86, 134].

In other words, from the hermeneutic perspective that Aymaulytov implicitly advances, education functions as a horizon of meaning within which a human being's ethical self-understanding is continually interpreted and reinterpreted. The formative power of education holds the potential to shape a person into either a great villain or a morally elevated citizen.

Crucially, Aymaulytov assigns a foundational role to parents, as the family constitutes the original horizon wherein the fundamental distinctions between integrity and dishonor, honesty and falsehood, compassion and cruelty are first disclosed and constituted. Nevertheless, the complexity of lived reality allows for exceptions: a child from neglectful parents may manifest virtue, while an immoral individual may arise within a seemingly virtuous family. Therefore, the thinker argues for a holistic conception of education, one that accounts for the intersubjective network of influences – friends, mentors, the overarching social order, religion, and cultural customs – all co-constituting the educational milieu.

Recognizing the human being as embedded in a web of multifaceted relations, Aymaulytov regards educational institutions as essential nodes in the ongoing formation of a creative person. He envisions an ideal educational system that not only transmits knowledge but also cultivates spiritual and aesthetic sensibilities. He affirms the possibility of transforming even the mature individual, improving their inner world, and fostering an appreciation for beauty – on the condition of their own volitional engagement.

Here, it becomes important to nuance the concept of education: it is not mere didacticism or moralizing lecture, but a shared lifeworld (*Lebenswelt*) – a collective mode of being into which parents, teachers, and peers invite those who are being educated. From this vantage, every human act is simultaneously an ethical gesture, bearing responsibility towards others. Thus, by acting, one educates another by modifying the existential conditions of that other's life. Education, then, can be conceived as an intersubjective event: a collaborative transformation of life conditions that makes possible the emergence of new meanings and possibilities for being-in-the-world.

However, if a person nonetheless chooses evil despite a noble and virtuous environment, if evil triumphs over the ethical principle of duty, then, according to Zh. Aymaulytov, what predominates in the human is not merely a natural essence subject to transformation through education and acceptance of moral obligation, but something else entirely.

In confronting the persistence of evil despite favorable moral conditions, Zh. Aymaulytov's reflections resonate profoundly with the phenomenological discourse on evil advanced by Hans Jonas. Jonas

conceives evil not merely as a privation of good but as an active, autonomous force that manifests in human willing and acting. This aligns with Aymaulytov's observation that when evil prevails over the ethical principle of duty, it is no longer a mere failure of education or a lack of virtuous cultivation, but rather the emergence of an ontologically distinct dimension within the human – the diabolic or demonic will.

The figures of Muslim and Mukash exemplify this phenomenon: their ethical horizon, as delineated by Toraighyrov's moral law, collapses. Unlike the naïve weakness of spirit exhibited by Ajibai, Muslim and Mukash embody a potent will-to-evil – a conscious, deliberate, and refined choice to affirm the negatively spiritual. Their pleasure in transgression and the aesthetic enjoyment derived from sin reflect a profound estrangement from traditional ethical horizons, echoing the existentialist notion of bad faith and the concealment of authentic being through self-deception. Yet, unlike Sartrean bad faith, this choice is not a flight from freedom but an embrace of a destructive freedom that subverts life and ethical meaning.

From a hermeneutic standpoint, this suggests that moral laws and educational frameworks, while necessary, are insufficient to address this demonic dimension. The ethical principle articulated by Toraighyrov becomes ineffective where the human will is captivated by the pleasure of transgression itself – a phenomenon that phenomenology might describe as a mode of ontological inversion, where the lived experience of evil is not absence but an active fulfillment of an alternate being-in-the-world. «To correct one's acquired character from youth, a person's soul must possess a special power» [87, 137].

Aymaulytov's invocation of a «special power» within the soul that can reform acquired character points toward a metaphysical solution transcending the ethical. This recalls Jonas's emphasis on the indispensable role of a transcendent source or divine energy as the ultimate counterforce to the autonomy of evil. Only a supra-ethical, divine power can confront and overcome the diabolic will that thrives on the enjoyment of sin and the subversion of moral order.

Thus, Aymaulytov's veiled yet clear proposal to turn toward God aligns with existential and phenomenological insights: the human condition, when overtaken by the demonic will, demands a radical ontological transformation – one that only the divine can initiate. This suggests that ethical education must be complemented by spiritual renewal, an alliance with the transcendent that reorients human freedom away from destruction toward authentic being.

In this light, education and moral formation are not mere pedagogical tasks but profoundly existential and spiritual journeys, where the battle

between good and evil is waged not only on social or psychological planes but within the very structure of human being and its relation to the transcendent.

Thus, in summation, it is imperative to emphasize that freedom of choice and personal responsibility, as conceived by M. Zh. Kopeev, S. Toraighyrov, and Zh. Aymauytov, occupy a foundational position in the constitution of the moral fabric of the human being. The reflections examined here reveal the considerable complexity inherent in constructing a singular hermeneutical framework that would comprehensively and transparently interpret each thinker's doctrine. This complexity arises from the multifaceted nature of human existence and the diversity of ethical paradigms articulated in their works.

Nevertheless, for the sake of analytical clarity, we propose a provisional typology of character archetypes discernible within their literary and philosophical oeuvre. While acknowledging the inherent limitations and incompleteness of such a typology, we contend that it retains significant heuristic value. More importantly, it continues to resonate with contemporary ethical and social realities, offering a useful lens through which to examine enduring questions of moral agency, identity, and the dynamics of good and evil in the human condition.

This tentative classification serves not as a definitive taxonomy but as an interpretive horizon – a hermeneutic tool facilitating deeper engagement with the ethical challenges and existential dilemmas that persist across time and cultural contexts.

From the reflections presented here, it becomes clear that it is rather difficult to construct a framework that would most conveniently and clearly interpret each teaching. Nevertheless, we would like to provisionally distinguish several types of characters in their works. In our view, despite its provisional and incomplete nature, this typology remains relevant in the contemporary context.

In the legacy of M. Zh. Kopeev, the analysis primarily focuses on the category of individuals who comprehend the distinction between good and evil but often commit immoral acts for the sake of pleasurable pastimes. Moral qualities and virtues arise through restraint, disciplined practice, and habituation grounded in the postulates of Islam. It can be said that the ethical is necessarily determined by the religious; in other words, the religious constitutes the harmonizing foundation between the ethical and the aesthetic.

S. Toraighyrov examines the situation wherein individuals fail to perceive evil in their own actions. The commission of evil is linked to a fundamental misunderstanding of the true nature of things. Such a person faces the choice between sensual inclination and moral duty – that is, one

must turn toward the spiritual principle within oneself. Moreover, a person is capable of transitioning from an aesthetic state to an ethical one. However, in Toraighyrov's thought, there is a clear opposition between conventional morality and the individual moral principle. In his era, the societal norm became increasingly reactionary, whereas the individual spiritual-moral principle, embodied by the lyrical hero Kamar, emerged as a source of positive transformation. Thus, the thinker calls not merely for adherence or rejection of social norms, but for a conscious approach to goodness, a critical stance toward externally imposed laws. The measure of all things should not be societal values, but the individual themselves. Certainly, there exists some danger in an absolute self-value, yet in Toraighyrov's position and his heroes, there is a pronounced intention toward self-sacrifice rather than demanding sacrifices from others. Grounded in their personal principle, they have apprehended something more valuable than themselves, and this fusion of the deeply personal with the universal allows Toraighyrov to critically engage with the realities of existence.

A wholly different type of personality is presented in the works of Zh. Aymaulytov. This category comprises individuals who have consciously chosen the path of evil and derive pleasure from perpetrating violence against others. Their enjoyment is not rooted in the natural, instinctual, or sensual but in the spiritually negative. This represents one of the extreme opposites within spirituality. It can only be balanced by the divine principle, though this principle differs somewhat from Kopeev's position. The ethical cannot contend with the demonic element within the human; it is powerless. Only something more potent, supra-ethical, can oppose it. According to Aymaulytov, the religious stands above and beyond the ethical.

Despite the significant differences in their approaches, all three thinkers share a foundational conviction regarding the possibility and imperative of human perfectibility. This notion presupposes that the moral and spiritual development of the individual is neither predetermined nor static but rather an ongoing, dynamic process. As demonstrated in the reflections above, this process is deeply personal, marked by complexity and duration, unfolding uniquely within each subject.

The individual's journey toward self-improvement entails a dialectical tension between internal freedom and external influences, between the aesthetic and the ethical, and between societal norms and personal responsibility. It is a process that demands critical self-awareness, deliberate choice, and often, self-sacrifice. In this light, perfectibility is not merely an abstract ideal but a lived existential reality – a continual becoming that resists facile resolutions or universal schemas.

Thus, the thought of Kopeev, Toraighyrov, and Aymauytov collectively articulates a phenomenology of moral transformation, one that situates human beings at the crossroads of freedom, responsibility, and the transcendent. Their insights invite us to contemplate the profound challenges of ethical existence and the perennial task of forging meaning and virtue in a contingent and often morally ambiguous world.

Despite these differences, the three thinkers share the common idea of the possibility and necessity of human perfectibility. However, as can be seen from the foregoing, this process is profoundly individual, complex, and prolonged.

2.6 The Ethico-Aesthetic Ideal in the Worldview of M. Zh. Kopeev, S. Toraighyrov, and Zh. Aymauytov

1. Ideal of Society: a Muslim state, a socialist just reorganization of society, and a harmonious synthesis of the nomadic mentality with new European innovations in social order.
2. Ideal of the Individual: the problem of creative self-realization.

The conception of an ideal society in the thought of these three thinkers unfolds along several intertwined dimensions: the establishment of a Muslim state grounded in spiritual and moral values; the vision of a socialist and just reorganization of social relations; and a harmonious synthesis of the nomadic mentality intrinsic to their cultural heritage with novel European innovations in social and political organization. This tripartite ideal reflects a dialectical interplay between tradition and modernity, spirituality and material progress, communal belonging and individual rights.

At the heart of their philosophy lies the problem of creative self-realization – the individual's striving toward a fulfilled, authentic existence. The ethical and aesthetic dimensions are inseparably intertwined in this process. The ethical is not abstract moralism but lived responsibility; the aesthetic transcends mere beauty to signify the form and harmony of existence itself.

The interrelation of the ethical and the aesthetic, as manifested in the concrete relations among human beings, functions not only as a mirror reflecting current realities and their appraisal but also as a normative horizon guiding the spiritual perfection of the individual. The human being is fundamentally incapable of existing without an ideal – a transcendent orienting point that animates life and action.

Often, the ideal is conceived as the highest form of perfection – an unattainable yet indispensable benchmark that does not exist fully in reality

but serves as a regulative principle, steering the movement of reality toward improvement and higher realization. This concept is multifaceted, applicable not only to the individual but also to beauty as an ontological category and to forms of governance within the polity.

Thus, the ideal stands dialectically opposed to the imperfect and contingent character of lived reality, functioning as a dynamic and evolving apex rather than a static given. It is crucial to emphasize that the ideal is not a fixed eternal constant but rather a culminating point within the aesthetic and ethical consciousness shaped by the historical and cultural context of a particular era. This understanding invites a hermeneutic engagement with ideals, recognizing their fluidity and situatedness, while affirming their indispensable role in the moral and spiritual formation of both the individual and society.

The interrelation of the ethical and the aesthetic, as manifested in the concrete relationships among people, not only reflects and evaluates existing situations but also establishes certain guiding benchmarks for the perfected spiritual essence of the human being. A person cannot live without an ideal. The ideal is often defined as the highest perfection – something not present in reality but serving as a normative horizon directing reality toward progress and improvement. The notion of the ideal is applicable both to the individual, to beauty, and to forms of governance within the state. In this sense, the ideal stands in opposition to reality as something imperfect or incomplete.

It is important to note that the concept of the ideal is not a fixed, eternal constant; rather, the ideal is a kind of culminating point within the structure of aesthetic and ethical consciousness specific to a particular epoch.

Each epoch forms its own ideals, which reflect the level of human relations, their attitude toward the surrounding world, and the value priorities and needs of society. As noted above, at the beginning of the twentieth century, the ideal primarily touched upon the political and economic interests of the Kazakh people. In our view, within these new priorities, an ethico-aesthetic ideal of a perfected society and a perfected individual was also formed. It is precisely during this period that the foundational theme of Kazakh unity acquires new nuances.

The vision articulated by M. Zh. Kopeev, S. Toraighyrov, and Zh. Aimaurov transcends mere socio-political idealism; it reveals a profound existential quest for self-realization and communal integrity within a colonial context marked by cultural and spiritual erosion. Their conception of a new state – wherein each individual attains self-actualization commensurate with innate capacities – embodies not only political aspirations but also an ethical and phenomenological imperative.

From a phenomenological standpoint, Kopeev's insistence on faith-based unity rather than kinship represents a radical reorientation of the lived experience of belonging. This unity is not simply a sociological fact but a horizon of meaning that shapes the collective intentionality of the Kazakh people, constituting a lifeworld resistant to the alienating forces of colonial domination. The steppe's nomadic civilization, once a cohesive lifeworld, faces dissolution through both material dispossession and spiritual disenfranchisement, precipitating a crisis of meaning.

This crisis is revealed hermeneutically through Kopeev's poetic lamentations, which unveil the concealed structures of Soviet policy – not only as political oppression but as a systematic attempt to erase indigenous spiritual and cultural horizons. Here, Kopeev's critique emerges as a hermeneutic act – an interpretation that discloses the underlying ideological violence masked by official narratives of progress and collectivization.

Moreover, Kopeev's stance exemplifies an existential tension: the rejection of naïveté and careerism among his contemporaries underscores a refusal to succumb to inauthentic modes of being that alienate individuals from their cultural roots and authentic selfhood. His sympathy for the Kazakhs' exile on their own land captures a collective existential displacement, an estrangement that demands a return to authentic values as a form of resistance and renewal.

Thus, the intellectual trajectory of Kopeev and his contemporaries highlights a dialectical interplay between individual and collective identity, spiritual resilience and political struggle, tradition and modernity. Their legacy is not merely historical but continues to invoke questions about the possibility of authentic existence and ethical solidarity amid the pressures of cultural disintegration and political subjugation.

S. Toraighyrov, conversely, placed great hopes in the revolutionary upheaval that had taken place in the Kazakh steppe. He perceived the positive aspects and significance of the Russian Revolution for the establishment of a new paradigm of consciousness, economic growth, and the democratic development of society. Toraighyrov actively participated, to the extent possible, in the activities of the Alash party, which defended the interests of the Kazakh people. Driven by the desire to bring a breakthrough of good and light into the life of his people, he called for emulation of the best representatives of the new order and society.

His aspirations were primarily linked to universal and compulsory education for Kazakhs, the mastery of new sciences and technologies, cultural integration through the Russian language, and the introduction of Kazakh spiritual uniqueness to the world.

From a phenomenological perspective, Toraighyrov's optimistic reception of revolutionary transformation reflects an existential openness to the emergence of new meanings and possibilities in the collective lifeworld of the Kazakh people. The revolution is not merely a political event but a horizon of hope wherein the community seeks to redefine its identity and position within a rapidly modernizing world.

His participation in the Alash movement signifies a hermeneutic engagement with the cultural and political forces shaping Kazakh self-understanding. This engagement involves interpreting the revolutionary change as an opportunity to actualize latent potentials of the people through education and scientific advancement.

Furthermore, Toraighyrov's vision underscores a dialectical synthesis between preservation and transformation – the spiritual distinctiveness of Kazakhs is not negated but rather rearticulated within the framework of global cultural achievements. This tension between the universal and the particular highlights an existential commitment to both collective authenticity and progressive development.

Zh. Aymaulytov's attitude toward the situation unfolding in the steppe is marked by a dialectical approach. Actively engaged in political activity and analyzing the potential prospects of a new way of life, he describes the actual state of affairs in the Kazakh steppe. Historically, the richest territories along rivers and springs have long been occupied by settlers. «What remains for the nomads?» Aymaulytov asks. Since no one will ever leave these fertile lands, Kazakhs are left to subsist on the barren outskirts of the steppe.

Aymaulytov is deeply troubled by the dire condition of nomads who are ill-prepared for agriculture. Weakened, impoverished, and unable to migrate from their winter quarters to the rich summer pastures, nomads are forced into sedentism. The thinker reveals the devastating consequences of this forced sedentarization in his novel *Qartkozha*, analyzing what sedentariness means to many Kazakhs.

«Would life become easier if they adopted a sedentary lifestyle?» Aymaulytov questions. Yet, reality contradicts this. The villages that have become sedentary are described as living graves: people fallen in spirit, having lost their livestock, unfamiliar with agricultural language, tools, or means of transport, and reduced to poverty. Who could claim, seeing this, that a sedentary lifestyle has improved Kazakhs' condition?

He interrogates the justification of the hasty transformation of a population to a new mode of economy. How can one justify the suffering of people plunged into poverty, doomed to hunger and extinction, unaccustomed to crafts and farming sciences, centuries-old nomads of the

steppe with a different rhythm of life, worldview, and conception of time and space?

Zh. Aymaulytov advocated for a gradual and smooth transition to a new way of life, respecting people's desires, their capabilities, and their worldview orientations.

From a dialectical phenomenological viewpoint, Aymaulytov's analysis exposes the tension between imposed socio-economic transformation and the existential lifeworld of the nomadic Kazakhs. The forced shift to sedentism is not only a practical disruption but a profound existential rupture, undermining traditional meanings, rhythms, and modes of being.

His critical hermeneutic inquiry into the «meaning» of sedentariness within the Kazakh cultural horizon reveals a conflict between external modernization pressures and internal cultural continuity. Aymaulytov's call for gradualism is a plea for respecting the authentic temporal and spatial experience of the people, emphasizing that genuine social change must unfold in consonance with lived realities, not through abrupt imposition.

From the above, it is evident that M. Zh. Kopeev, S. Toraighyrov, and Zh. Aymaulytov held differing attitudes toward the problem of the revolution and the consequences of the Kazakhs' incorporation into Russia. The intertwining of the tragic and the optimistic, the simultaneous vision of the sublime and the dreadful within a single phenomenon and the prospects for the future compelled these thinkers to relentlessly seek a way out for their people from the abyss of poverty, landlessness, and decline.

Kazakh intellectuals, while striving to preserve the integrity of their roots and origins, and refusing to submit or dissolve into new forms of existence and thought, endeavored to chart a trajectory of the future that was spiritually close to the Kazakhs. However, despite their shared aspiration toward the happiness of the people, they proposed different paths and methods for achieving it.

This passage reveals a hermeneutic tension: the thinkers grappled with historical upheaval as both a site of devastation and a possibility for renewal. The dialectic of hope and despair informs their reflections, positioning revolution as a multifaceted existential phenomenon. Their diverse responses reflect differing interpretations of cultural identity, agency, and the means to transcend collective suffering.

M. Zh. Kopeev tends to idealize the past; according to his view, the best aspects of Kazakh society vanished with the political upheavals of the early twentieth century. In the present, the Kazakh thinker predominantly perceives tragedy – a heightened manifestation of humanity's negative, base, and disfigured qualities – rooted primarily in alienation from God.

In contrast, S. Toraighyrov, while admiring the past, also acknowledges its negative aspects, particularly certain traditions that he regarded as immoral. The present has yet to bring happiness to humanity, so Toraighyrov orients himself toward the future. It is precisely in the future that he envisions the happiness of justice.

Unlike Kopeev and Toraighyrov, Zh. Aymaulytov, though revering both past and future, prefers to speak about the present. According to Aymaulytov, today a person has all the opportunities to manifest the best human qualities, unveiling their capacities and potentials for the benefit of the Kazakh people.

From the foregoing, one may conclude that Kopeev's ideal society is a Muslim state; Toraighyrov places hopes on a socialist, just reorganization of society; while Aymaulytov substantiates the necessity of a harmonious combination of the nomadic mentality with new European introductions into the social structure.

It is evident that Kopeev's ideal of social restructuring contradicted the realities and goals of the ruling powers of his historical era and, for many, remained merely a dream.

This juxtaposition illustrates the temporal orientations of the three thinkers – Kopeev's retrospective idealism, Toraighyrov's forward-looking justice, and Aymaulytov's present-focused praxis – each framing human agency and social transformation differently. Their differing visions also highlight how ideals are both shaped by and resist historical and political forces.

S. Toraighyrov's ideal rejected the existing reality as something false and was oriented toward the imminent realization of the future. In the ideal presented by Zh. Aymaulytov, in our view, there is an attempt to synthesize the positions of M. Zh. Kopeev and S. Toraighyrov. He proposed a harmonious embodiment of the ideals of Islam and secular life, and a gradual transformation of the worst aspects of reality into a better state.

However, one thing is certain: there must be no arbitrary limits in this extraordinary and complex process to avoid favoring extremes driven by base interests. From the above, it is evident that the ideal is not an amorphous concept in the philosophy of the early twentieth century; rather, it functions as a definite goal, a vital stimulus for the individual and society. It acquires a worldview significance, becoming the foundation of behavior and the definition of ethical-aesthetic values and meanings.

Therefore, within the framework of ideal communities, Kazakh thinkers also defined ideals of the individual person.

It should be emphasized that in this pivotal era, youth and adolescence became the most valuable stages of life. All thoughts and hopes of M. Zh. Kopeev, S. Toraighyrov, and Zh. Aymaulytov were invested in the rising

generation, seeing in it the salvific thread of the ethnos. The serious and attentive attitude of these thinkers toward the aspirations and priorities of youth is explained by their conception of the new generation as bearers of elevated ethical-aesthetic values.

If one were to describe the eras using succinct concepts, the early twentieth century could be characterized by notions such as responsibility, justice, patriotism, courage, and others – in which the ethical and the aesthetic are in inseparable unity. Behind the generation that embodied this time lay the revelation of the individual as inexhaustible in spiritual realization, fundamentally unfinished in the infinity of their ethical-aesthetic perfection.

The ideal of the Kazakh thinkers was aimed at uncovering the uniqueness and multilayered nature of the individual.

From the preceding analysis in earlier sections, it seems that a certain intention has already been defined in the conceptualization of the ideal perfect person within the reflections of the studied thinkers. In M. Zh. Kopeev's concept, the ideal of a conscientious person acquires paramount importance. Since moral responsibility and repentance are directly connected to the presence of conscience (God), they form the ontological foundation of the harmony between the ethical and the aesthetic. Thus, in Kopeev's understanding, a person is called to bring the light of goodness and beauty into life.

However, the subtle perception of the world's harmony is inaccessible to a person without conscience. The imperfection of the human soul is the cause of contradictions between beauty and goodness within the individual. It is important to emphasize that a conscientious person, by virtue of a deeper vision of the world, is capable of resisting both internal and external chaos, synthesizing the harmony of the world.

Contradictions between the ethical and the aesthetic – when immoral behavior and a corrupt lifestyle become ideals for many and claim positive aesthetic value, while goodness is excluded as beauty and beauty loses its ethical content – according to S. Toraighyrov, are caused, on the one hand, by ugly social conditions, and on the other hand, by a mistaken understanding of the purpose of human existence. S. Toraighyrov himself defines the perfect person as a just individual, who is sensitive and aware of their interconnectedness with the universe, thereby consistently choosing a good attitude towards the world.

According to Zh. Aymaityov, the perfect person embodies an active creative principle, which fundamentally must be based on humanity. Since creative activity can manifest in various value directions – both good and evil. One reason for the imperfect person, their weaknesses and vices,

Aymaulytov sees in poor, one-sided development and upbringing, when it becomes possible to hypocritically conceal inner emptiness, to superficially follow generally accepted moral norms. Therefore, defending the position of the indeterminacy and multidimensionality of the person, Aymaulytov develops the idea of the necessity of a critical attitude towards oneself. Overall, despite different priorities in the structure of society and the individual in it, the goal of M. Zh. Kopeev, S. Toraighyrov, and Zh. Aymaulytov was similar – to create conditions for the creative self-realization of the person based on the unity of ethical-moral and aesthetically beautiful aspects in the individual. They are united by self-sacrifice and lofty thoughts aimed at seeking better conditions for their long-suffering people. The reflections of Kopeev, Toraighyrov, and Aymaulytov are permeated with the idea of development and improvement of the person and their existence, according to which the unity of ethical, aesthetic, and intellectual perfection – i.e., the unity of good, beauty, and truth – constitutes the essential foundation of human existence.

As we see, the ideal is generated by the person. But the ideal does not describe reality. It is the future, the perfect. On the other hand, the generated ideals exert a real influence on reality. This is precisely why we consider the ideal in a dialectical unity of all its elements (ethical, aesthetic, social, political) and social functions, «as a whole, which will not lead in the course of research to isolating only one part of this whole» [88]. That is, the ethical-aesthetic ideal organically merges into the worldview of the person and their practical actions in the striving for perfection, revealing their creative potentials, and pushing the person toward spiritual activity.

Conclusion

The quest for the spiritual integrity of the human being, the foundational unity of the ethical and the aesthetic within the inner world of the individual, transcends the confines of our contemporary epoch. This profound inquiry has persisted since the earliest moments of human self-awareness and existential reflection. Throughout the history of Kazakh philosophy, figures such as Abai, Shakarim, M. Zhumabayev, and A. Baitursynov have articulated, through their creative endeavors, the indispensable necessity of the ethical and aesthetic synthesis within the human soul. Yet, it is within the intellectual milieu of the early twentieth century that the problem of harmonizing these two dimensions was articulated with exceptional acuity and depth by M. Zh. Kopeev, S. Toraighyrov, and Zh. Aimaurov.

Each thinker, guided by his unique historical context and philosophical orientation, constructed distinct conceptual frameworks and methodologies in addressing this intricate problem. However, it is precisely through the comparative and dialectical engagement with their thought that a comprehensive and holistic image of the human condition in early twentieth-century Kazakh society emerges – an image suffused with the aspirations, anxieties, and spiritual quests that characterize this pivotal moment in the nation's history.

Their intellectual legacy challenges reductive or mechanistic interpretations that equate the ethical merely with moral goodness and the aesthetic with beauty. Instead, it reveals the profound interconnectedness and mutual constitution of ethical and aesthetic values as foundational to the spiritual wholeness of the individual. This wholeness is conceived as an ongoing process of self-determination and self-perfection, wherein the person actively navigates the complexities of existence, seeking to embody an integrative ideal that transcends simplistic binaries.

Thus, engagement with the works of Kopeev, Toraighyrov, and Aimaurov enables a deeper philosophical understanding – not only of the Kazakh intellectual tradition but also of the universal human endeavor to reconcile the demands of morality and beauty within the lived experience. Their reflections offer a vital contribution to the discourse on human nature, the ethical-aesthetic synthesis, and the transformative potential inherent in the pursuit of a spiritually unified self.

It is evident that it is impossible to comprehensively articulate all facets and nuances of the philosophical outlooks of M. Zh. Kopeev, S. Toraighyrov, and Zh. Aimaurov within the scope of a single monograph. Their intellectual heritage is profoundly multidimensional, such that any fresh endeavor to illuminate their philosophical worldview – including their ethical and

aesthetic perspectives – merits careful and sustained scholarly attention. We do not claim exclusivity or exhaustive interpretation of their oeuvres, and we fully acknowledge the contestable nature of certain aspects of our analysis. However, we believe that this very fact underscores the profound elevation and polyphony of their thought, which continually reveals itself from the most unexpected vantage points.

Thus, the investigation of the interrelation between the ethical and the aesthetic through a comparative analysis of the works of Kopeev, Toraighyrov, and Aimautov enables us to draw the following conclusions. The primary objective – to elucidate the specificity of the ethical-aesthetic nexus within the creative legacies of these thinkers and to recontextualize the significance of their ideas within contemporary philosophical discourse – has been duly accomplished.

Our inquiry has demonstrated that the relationship between the ethical and the aesthetic is profoundly complex, multilayered, and dialectical in nature. Historical evolution does not invalidate or discard the prior characteristics of this dynamic interplay; instead, it assimilates the full spectrum of its diverse transformations – encompassing moments of identity, unity, as well as intrinsic tensions and contradictions inherent in the ethical-aesthetic nexus. This dialectical synthesis reveals that the ethical and aesthetic are neither static nor mutually exclusive categories but are continuously engaged in a process of mutual constitution and negotiation within the human experience.

As evidenced by the analysis presented, the teachings of M. Zh. Kopeev, S. Toraighyrov, and Zh. Aimautov, while rooted in a shared foundational worldview, manifest significant divergences when examined through a phenomenological and hermeneutic lens. The identity of the ethical and the aesthetic – unfolded through the contemplation of the harmony of light, number, and music as primordial modes of nomadic being – is a leitmotif developed across their philosophical reflections. This identity is not merely ontological but phenomenologically lived, revealing how the nomadic consciousness discloses itself through these symbolic structures.

The divergence between their visions and the traditional nomadic perception of these symbols is illuminated by an existential awakening of the individual self at the historical turning point, wherein the universal symbols of light, number, and music are reinterpreted hermeneutically, acquiring personal and historical meaning. This hermeneutic reinterpretation marks a transition from collective nomadic consciousness to a more individuated existential horizon.

To encapsulate the multifaceted interplay of the ethical and aesthetic in their thought within a single conceptual horizon: M. Zh. Kopeev situates this

unity within the framework of responsible comportment toward life, a moral consciousness suffused with ontological depth. S. Toraighyrov envisions it as the principle of spiritual aspiration and questing – a dialectical movement toward the good and the just. Zh. Aimaurov foregrounds the existential dimension of human action, emphasizing the authentic manifestation of humanity as the ground of ethical and aesthetic synthesis.

Together, these universal principles articulate a profound ontological and existential unity of the ethical and the aesthetic, underscoring the indivisibility of moral and artistic dimensions of human existence. Their reflections thus invite a hermeneutic engagement with the unfolding human condition at the cusp of tradition and modernity, capturing the dynamic process of self-realization and the eternal search for meaning.

We have also succeeded in demonstrating that religious motifs form the foundational basis not only of M. Zh. Kopeev's ethical-aesthetic views but also fundamentally condition the positions of S. Toraighyrov and Zh. Aimaurov. This religious grounding is particularly evident within their theories of self-knowledge and the nature of interpersonal relations, as revealed through their philosophical reflections. Crucially, the primacy of the ethical principle in their oeuvre finds its justification specifically within the framework of Islamic religion.

Thus, the unity of the ethical and the aesthetic, grounded in a religious origin, aims toward the perfection of the human being – a perfection which, in the medieval epoch, was manifested in moral, physical, and intellectual beauty. We have noted a successive development in the works of Kopeev, Toraighyrov, and Aimaurov, wherein the aesthetic is conceived as form and the ethical as content. Within this conception, there emerges a unidirectional axiological unity – whether positive or negative – alongside a dialectical unity characterized by the tension between form and content.

This articulated aspect of their interrelation constitutes an integral component of a unified historical process: the evolution of the relationship between the ethical and the aesthetic. Through the hermeneutic unveiling of these layers, one discerns the ontological intertwining of ethical intentionality and aesthetic manifestation, which ultimately challenges the subject to a continuous existential striving for self-realization and authentic being.

The monograph undertakes a critical reassessment of the established views regarding the nature of interaction between Russian and Kazakh cultures, challenging the notion of a unidirectional influence of Russian culture. Furthermore, it explores the perspectives of Russian and Kazakh thinkers free from the ideological clichés of materialism and idealism. A resonance of ideas among V. G. Belinsky, F. M. Dostoevsky, N. V. Gogol,

L. N. Tolstoy, K. Jaspers, and Kazakh philosophers is revealed through their intensified focus on the fate of the individual personality, as well as a profound immersion into the inner world of a human being tormented by doubt and uncertainty. As A.A. Khamidov notes, «the objective world is ontologically the same for both the East and the West. And Man, too, is ontologically the same in his essence» [89]. It is evident that, given the shared ontological foundation of the human being and the world, the categories of East and West concerning human existence possess a certain commonality.

Particular emphasis is placed on the shared preoccupation of both Kazakh and Russian thinkers with the fractured, dual nature of human essence. The dissertation traces points of convergence and semantic divergences among Russian, European, and Kazakh philosophers in their analysis of the tension between the ethical and aesthetic principles within the human being.

One of the significant outcomes of this study, in our view, is the revelation of the aesthetic dimension inherent in nature and interpersonal relationships. This insight is closely linked to the religious and anthropomorphic vision of nature found in the works of M. Zh. Kopeev, S. Toraighyrov, and Zh. Aimaurov, as well as the distinctiveness of their imagistic thinking. Grounded in the wholeness of human and natural existence, M. Zh. Kopeev elucidates the ethical qualities intrinsic to the human being. S. Toraighyrov draws profound parallels between the tragic existence of the human and natural worlds. Zh. Aimaurov unveils the intricate interweaving of human destiny in harmony with natural phenomena. It is emphasized that the Kazakh thinkers' admiration for the perfection of nature is founded upon an ethically elevated attitude toward nature, rooted deeply in the centuries-old nomadic way of life.

A particularly noteworthy result of this study, in our estimation, concerns the ways in which the thinkers under investigation resolve tragic dilemmas. S. Toraighyrov exhibited a marked inclination towards tragic outcomes, which we interpret not as a manifestation of pessimism but rather as a reflection of the historical context that severely constrained the possibility of realizing the harmony of good and beauty. In contrast, M. Zh. Kopeev grounded his thought in the principles of forgiveness and love, viewing them as the foundational means for restoring harmony in interpersonal relations. Zh. Aimaurov, taking a more optimistic stance in resolving conflicts, affirmed the possibility of attaining happiness despite adversity.

Within the comparative framework, our analysis of tragic guilt reveals that the examined conflicts stem from the contradictions between societal

morality and the actual ethical relations among individuals. This duality exposes two distinct understandings of the ethical dimension: firstly, as the real moral relations existing between people, and secondly, as the norms and demands imposed by societal morality. When personal and societal priorities and values coincide, their interplay is perceived as beautiful (as exemplified by characters such as Akbilek and Qartkozha). Conversely, when an individual diverges from social norms, the outcome may be tragic (as in the case of the lyrical hero or Qamar-sulu), wherein personal human values come into conflict with outdated moral codes. Alternatively, this divergence may take on a baser form (as seen with Ajibay, Muslim, and the Khan's wife), where the individual transgresses universal spiritual and moral values.

The thinkers under study offer differing explanations for the predominance of the sensual aesthetic principle. M. Zh. Kopeev posits that when a person emancipates themselves from their natural origin, they do not automatically become virtuous. Instead, by forgetting God, they succumb to sensual vices. In this context, the aesthetic manifests as an individualistic principle within the human being. According to S. Toraighyrov, a person is predominantly governed either by natural laws or by the spiritual principle. Here, the natural is equated with the sensual-aesthetic, while the spiritual is defined as the ethical. Consequently, the predominance of the aesthetic is understood by him as an unconscious adherence to the natural principle. Zh. Aimautov, in his analysis of the aesthetic manifestations, observes that pleasure – regarded as the highest principle of existence, consciously chosen by a person despite the awareness of their own fallibility – embodies a supernatural, supra-individual, negatively spiritual, and demonic principle.

The resolution of the dialectical tension between the ethical and the aesthetic is approached through a profound hermeneutic analysis of the intertwined categories of fate and freedom. The monographic study posits that the existential freedom of choice, coupled with personal responsibility, constitutes the foundational axis upon which the ethical-aesthetic constitution of human existence is formed, and through which the pursuit of happiness as the telos of life is actualized. Freedom reveals itself primarily in the ontological decision between good and evil, embodying the core of human agency.

Within this framework, M. Zh. Kopeev and Zh. Aimautov articulate a nuanced phenomenological insight into freedom's inherent ambivalence – its potential to be the source of both ethical good and moral evil – thus highlighting the existential paradox of human subjectivity, caught between transcendence and fallibility. Conversely, S. Toraighyrov's existential-hermeneutic stance delineates freedom singularly as the manifestation of the good, emphasizing an ontological orientation towards ethical intentionality.

The investigation into fate uncovers a layered understanding of death as predetermination, not merely a biological cessation but a horizon that conditions human finitude. This acknowledgement of mortality is fraught with ambiguity: it is simultaneously accepted as an inevitable and natural unfolding of life's temporal structure, and yet it confers a profound existential significance, imbuing human existence with a determinate meaning. Through this interplay, the monograph gestures towards an ethical-aesthetic synthesis that embraces freedom's ambiguity and fate's inevitability as co-constitutive elements of the human condition.

The subsequent section of the study presents the various approaches to resolving the inherent contradictions between the ethical and the aesthetic as articulated by the thinkers under consideration. According to M. Zh. Kopeev, the human predisposition to evil does not render one's moral choice absolute or predetermined. Religion, and particularly the postulates of Sharia law, serve as a concrete means to transcend mere aestheticism and reorient the individual toward ethical rectitude. S. Toraighyrov emphasizes the necessity for the individual to recognize the right to freedom of choice and to exercise it consciously. He observes that people live in vice precisely because they remain unaware of an alternative path, which demands the strenuous effort of the soul. The balancing of the aesthetic and ethical dimensions is ultimately achievable by the individual through a comprehensive understanding and acceptance of ethical law by all.

Zh. Aimaurov, meanwhile, foregrounds education as the pivotal instrument for human perfection. However, he asserts that those who willfully choose evil can only be redeemed by God; moral virtue alone is powerless against malevolent will. Where Kopeev grounds ethical cultivation in adherence to religious law and views the ethical as derivative of the religious, Aimaurov situates the divine as transcending ethics itself, occupying a supra-ethical domain.

Taken as a whole, it may be concluded that within their works the spiritual and moral dimension constitutes the determinative principle in the interplay between the ethical and the aesthetic.

Kazakh thinkers do not confine themselves merely to depicting and analyzing the essence of human nature; rather, they strive to portray the most positively realized manifestation of this essence. In other words, they develop a certain ideal of the human being and the future nation. The conception of M. Zh. Kopeev, grounded in a religious intentionality, is brought to a logical culmination in the vision of a Muslim state and the perfected conscientious individual. S. Toraighyrov advocated for the priorities of socialist restructuring of society based on justice. Zh. Aimaurov proposes a harmonious synthesis of national traditions with a new social

order, emphasizing the interaction between nomadic and sedentary cultures, as well as the East and the West. The dissertation also presents other novel scholarly findings.

Engagement with the works of M. Zh. Kopeev, S. Toraighyrov, and Zh. Aimaurov enables one to transcend a mechanical conception of the relationship between the ethical and the aesthetic, thereby fostering the formation of new understandings of the spiritual formation and development of the individual, oriented toward continuous self-determination in this world.

It can be asserted with confidence that many fundamentally important ethical and aesthetic ideas of Mashkhur Zhusip Kopeev, Sultanmakhamut Toraygirov, and Zhusipbek Aimaurov transcend the boundaries of their time and remain significant and valuable for contemporary society amid humanity's quest for worldview orientations and the pursuit of viable prospects for spiritual development.

In concluding this study, it is necessary to note that the relatively modest scope of the work, as well as the discursive nature of certain of its propositions, invite us to regard the undertaken research not as a fully developed, all-encompassing conceptual framework, but rather as an initial attempt to consider the relationship between the ethical and the aesthetic in the oeuvre of M. Zh. Kopeev, S. Toraighyrov, and Zh. Aimaurov as a distinct, objectively functioning system, and to pose questions that call for further collective analysis.

Among the issues not resolved in the present study, and which we intend to address in the future, two areas deserve particular emphasis:

- the problems of traditional Kazakh worldview;
- issues of a comparative nature.

Regarding the problem of the traditional Kazakh worldview, it should be noted that it is not confined solely to the early twentieth century. Therefore, there is a pressing need for a more profound analysis of the interrelation between the ethical and the aesthetic in other historical epochs as well. Comparative studies, in our view, would benefit from expansion into a prospective direction by juxtaposing the ethical and aesthetic perspectives of Kazakh thinkers with the existentialist philosophy of the Western tradition, as well as Chinese and Indian philosophies. These directions necessitate dedicated and specialized research.

In conclusion, it is important to note that the historical-philosophical reconstruction of the works of M. Zh. Kopeev, S. Toraighyrov, and Zh. Aimaurov in the context of the interrelation between the ethical and the aesthetic remains highly relevant in light of the tasks of spiritual-moral and socio-political self-determination of the individual in contemporary society.

The intellectual pursuits of Kopeev, Toraighyrov, and Aimaurov are directed toward understanding the complex and contradictory world and its profound manifestations. These thinkers sought to comprehend the inner meaning of the epoch they experienced – its spiritual and social orientation.

In their reflections, Kopeev, Toraighyrov, and Aimaurov succinctly articulate the main tendencies and ethical-aesthetic quests of their society, revealing to us the full richness of the human spiritual world, its searchings, hopes, sufferings, and tragedies. They expose the essential features and the entire spiritual atmosphere that prevailed in our country not so long ago. Their fundamental positions, views, convictions, and actions continue to hold significance and value today, especially amid the quest for worldview orientations and the pursuit of acceptable prospects for spiritual development. «Belonging as creative personalities to two semantic and artistic worlds, they represent condensed meanings of our modern Kazakh history. They are, in a sense, axial figures of our culture in the flow of historical time» [90].

Glossary

Aimautov Jusipbek (1889–1931) – a socio-political figure, Kazakh writer, playwright, philosopher, educator, and translator. In his philosophical novels, Aimautov explores the problems of personal formation during times of change, paying particular attention to the economic and political issues faced by the Kazakh people in the early 20th century. He is the author of the first textbooks on pedagogy and psychology in the Kazakh language. Aimautov translated works by Shakespeare, Goethe, Cicero, and other world thinkers into Kazakh.

Hermeneutics (from Greek, literally «to explain, to interpret») is the art and theory of interpreting texts. It is a scientific method of textual analysis. In 20th-century philosophy, hermeneutics refers to the doctrine of understanding and the scientific comprehension of culture, and more broadly – the human spirit.

Worldview – a system of images (and the connections between them), representing visual conceptions of the world and the place of human beings within it, as well as knowledge about the relationships between humans and reality (including human–nature, human–society, human–human, and human–self relations). The constituent images of the worldview are not only (and not primarily) visual but also auditory, tactile, and olfactory. These images and knowledge usually carry an emotional charge. The unique configuration of these images and information generates people's life stances, beliefs, ideals, principles of cognition and activity, value orientations, and spiritual landmarks. Any significant changes in the worldview entail transformations in the system of these elements. In accordance with these characteristics, the worldview:

- wholly determines the specific manner of perceiving and interpreting events and phenomena;
- constitutes the foundation and basis of world perception, upon which a person acts in the world;
- possesses a historically conditioned nature, implying the continual transformation of the worldview of all its subjects.

The subject or bearer of a worldview can be an individual person, social or professional groups, as well as ethno-national or religious communities. The worldview is a complexly structured integrity, comprising three main components – worldview (philosophical outlook), world perception, and world feeling (world sensation). These components are unified within the worldview by a specific image characteristic of a given epoch, ethnic group, or subculture.

In accordance with these distinctive features, the worldview fundamentally shapes the unique mode of perceiving and interpreting events and phenomena. It acts as the hermeneutic horizon through which the subject – be it an individual, a social or professional group, or an ethno-national or religious community – engages with and understands reality. The worldview serves as the foundational ontological ground upon which human actions and meanings are constituted.

Moreover, the worldview is historically conditioned and thus inherently dynamic; it evolves continuously as the interpretative frameworks and existential contexts of its bearers transform. This historical dimension emphasizes the temporal situatedness of human understanding, a core insight of phenomenological inquiry.

Structurally, the worldview is an integrated whole comprising three interrelated components: worldview as the conceptual and philosophical outlook; world perception as the embodied, sensory engagement with the world; and world feeling as the pre-reflective, affective attunement to existence. These components coalesce into a particular gestalt or configuration, a symbolic horizon that gives coherence and meaning to the subject's lived experience within a specific epoch, ethnic identity, or subcultural milieu.

Through this lens, the worldview is not a static repository of knowledge but a living, evolving interpretive act that mediates between the individual and the world, enabling a continuous process of self-understanding, ethical valuation, and existential orientation.

Korkyt-Ata was an Oghuz-Kipchak thinker, akyn (poet-singer), and musician of the 8th–9th centuries. According to legend, Korkyt-Ata spent many years in search of immortality, yet everywhere he encountered people digging graves. Upon realizing that life is inevitably followed by death, Korkyt found immortality through art. He is universally recognized as the creator of the first musical instrument – the kobyz. Today, 22 kyuis (musical compositions) of Korkyt are known.

The central philosophical theme of his works is the struggle against fatalism, a profound faith in human will and strength, and the recognition of human incompleteness alongside the boundlessness of personal development. Korkyt-Ata's legacy embodies an existential affirmation of life's creative potential despite the inevitability of death.

Mashkhur Jusip Kopeev (1858 – 1931) – was a religious figure, thinker, and poet. His primary body of work focuses on religious themes. He is the author of numerous dastans, kisas, and reflective poems that explore fundamental issues of human existence, the interplay of good and evil, and the problems of free will and responsibility.

Methodology (literally – the study of methods of cognition) – is a system of principles and means for organizing and constructing theoretical and practical activities, as well as the doctrine of this system; it is the philosophical study of the methods of cognition and transformation of reality.

Responsibility is a philosophical and sociological concept reflecting the objective, historically specific nature of the relationships between the individual, the collective, and society from the perspective of conscious fulfillment of the mutual demands imposed on them.

Reflection (from Late Latin *reflexio* – turning back) – the act of a subject turning inward upon oneself, one's personality (values, interests, motives, emotions, actions), one's knowledge, or one's own condition. Reflection refers to any human contemplation directed toward the analysis of the self (self-analysis), one's states, actions, and past events. The depth of reflection or self-analysis depends on the individual's level of education, moral development, and degree of self-control. It is commonly held that philosophers, writers, and politicians cultivate a heightened capacity for reflection. Simplified, reflection can be understood as an «inner dialogue. » Reflection is also closely linked to a person's capacity for self-development.

Sufism – one of the branches of the Muslim religion, which emerged in the 8th–9th centuries and widely spread throughout the Arab Caliphate. The religious-mystical character of Sufism is oriented toward direct, personal communion between the individual and Allah without intermediaries, that is, a relationship based on love and the heart's knowledge.

Tradition is a set of beliefs, customs, habits, and practical skills transmitted from generation to generation, serving as regulators of social relations. The term «tradition » etymologically derives from the Latin *traditio*, from the verb *tradere*, meaning «to hand over » or «to deliver. » Originally, the word was used in a literal sense, denoting a material action: for example, the ancient Romans applied it when referring to the necessity of handing over a physical object or even giving one's daughter in marriage. However, the transmitted item can also be immaterial – for instance, a certain skill or ability. Such an action figuratively also constitutes *traditio*. Thus, the semantic boundaries of the concept of tradition clearly indicate its fundamental qualitative distinction: tradition primarily denotes what is not created by the individual, nor a product of their own creative imagination – in short, that which does not belong to the individual but is received from external sources.

Sultanmakhmud Toraighyrov (1853–1920) – poet and socio-political figure. A thinker who revealed in his poetic works the philosophical

problems of the essence and meaning of human existence, social development, the role of knowledge, self-development, and the spiritual self-determination of the individual.

Humanity – humanism, humane attitude, and human treatment of others. In a broad sense, it is a system of moral and social norms that imply the necessity to show compassion to people, provide help, and avoid causing suffering. Since a person is a social being, humanity is the required behavior in society. Humanity as a quality and essential property of a person includes: altruism (kindness); morality as a set of life rules that realize altruism and suppress egoism; willpower as the inner strength that implements altruistic and moral behavior in the struggle against one's own and others' egoism. Without any of these components – altruism, morality, and willpower – humanity is inconceivable and cannot exist in reality as true and effective humanity.

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G. G. Akhmetova

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