



THE ARCHETYPE OF THE EMPTY CITY IN MODERN KAZAKH AND INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT: The purpose of the study is to analyse the archetype of the empty city in literature and to uncover its symbolic importance and influence on cultural and historical perception. The study examines the thematic works by Kazakh, English and American authors. The various cultural and historical contexts in which the image of the empty city appears, alongside its impact on readers' perceptions are also considered. The main findings reveal that the empty city symbolises the collapse of a familiar way of life and experience of significant losses, embodying major historical and social upheavals. This image evokes strong feelings of isolation, alienation, and despair in characters, compelling them to seek new ways of survival and adaptation to altered circumstances. In literature, empty cities and auls often symbolise the loss of cultural identity and severance from historical heritage, becoming metaphors for societies forced to adapt to new realities. The study also identifies that, despite its bleakness and destruction, the empty city carries the symbolism of hope for revival and restoration. The protagonists strive to rebuild shattered communities, revive cultural traditions, and discover

new sources of strength and inspiration, highlighting the pursuit of renewal and the preservation of cultural heritage. The atmosphere created by the imagery of empty cities intensifies feelings of fear, despair, and hopelessness, serving as a backdrop for dramatic events and the internal conflicts of characters. Collectively, the archetype of the empty city plays a substantial role in literature, enabling authors to explore and express important aspects of the human experience. It provides powerful symbolic imagery through which profound cultural and historical processes and characters' internal experiences are conveyed. These images contribute to the creation of layered and profound literary works that resonate with readers and help them comprehend complex social and emotional themes.

KEYWORDS: cultural identity, psychological impact, emotional perception, symbolism, social change, internal conflicts.

EL ARQUETIPO DE LA CIUDAD VACÍA EN LA LITERATURA MODERNA KAZAJA E INTERNACIONAL

RESUMEN: El objetivo del estudio es analizar el arquetipo de la ciudad vacía en la literatura y descubrir su importancia simbólica y su influencia en la percepción cultural e histórica. El estudio examina las obras temáticas de autores kazajos, ingleses y estadounidenses. También se tienen en cuenta los diversos contextos culturales e históricos en los que aparece la imagen de la ciudad vacía, junto con su impacto en la percepción de los lectores. Las principales conclusiones revelan que la ciudad vacía simboliza el colapso de un modo de vida familiar y la experiencia de pérdidas significativas, encarnando importantes trastornos históricos y sociales. Esta imagen evoca fuertes sentimientos de aislamiento, alienación y desesperación en los personajes, lo que les obliga a buscar nuevas formas de supervivencia y adaptación a las circunstancias cambiantes. En la literatura, las ciudades vacías y los auls suelen simbolizar la pérdida de la identidad cultural y la ruptura con el patrimonio histórico, convirtiéndose en metáforas de sociedades obligadas a adaptarse a nuevas realidades. El estudio también identifica que, a pesar de su desolación y destrucción, la ciudad vacía conlleva el simbolismo de la esperanza de renacimiento y restauración. Los protagonistas se esfuerzan por reconstruir comunidades destrozadas, revivir tradiciones culturales y descubrir nuevas fuentes de fuerza e inspiración, destacando la búsqueda de la renovación y la preservación del patrimonio cultural. La atmósfera creada por las imágenes de ciudades vacías intensifica los sentimientos de miedo, desesperación y desesperanza, sirviendo de telón de fondo para acontecimientos dramáticos y los conflictos internos de los personajes. En conjunto, el arquetipo de la ciudad vacía desempeña un papel sustancial en la literatura, permitiendo a los autores explorar y expresar aspectos importantes de la experiencia humana. Proporciona poderosas imágenes simbólicas a través de las cuales se transmiten profundos procesos culturales e históricos y las experiencias internas de los personajes. Estas imágenes contribuyen a la creación de obras literarias profundas y con múltiples capas que resuenan en los lectores y les ayudan a comprender temas sociales y emocionales complejos.

PALABRAS CLAVE: identidad cultural, impacto psicológico, percepción emocional, simbolismo, cambio social, conflictos internos.

L'ARCHÉTYPE DE LA VILLE VIDE DANS LA LITTÉRATURE MODERNE KAZAKHE ET INTERNATIONALE

RÉSUMÉ : L'objectif de cette étude est d'analyser l'archétype de la ville vide dans la littérature et de mettre en lumière son importance symbolique et son influence sur la perception culturelle et historique. L'étude examine les œuvres thématiques d'auteurs kazakhs, anglais et américains. Les différents contextes culturels et historiques dans lesquels apparaît l'image de la ville vide, ainsi que son impact sur la perception des lecteurs, sont également pris en compte. Les principales conclusions révèlent que la ville vide symbolise l'effondrement d'un mode de vie familial et l'expérience de pertes importantes, incarnant des bouleversements historiques et sociaux majeurs. Cette image évoque chez les personnages de forts sentiments d'isolement, d'aliénation et de désespoir, les poussant à rechercher de nouveaux moyens de survie et d'adaptation à des circonstances modifiées. Dans la littérature, les villes vides et les auls symbolisent souvent la perte de l'identité culturelle et la rupture avec l'héritage historique, devenant des métaphores pour les sociétés contraintes de s'adapter à de nouvelles réalités. L'étude identifie également que, malgré sa morosité et sa destruction, la ville vide porte le symbolisme de l'espoir d'un renouveau et d'une restauration. Les protagonistes s'efforcent de reconstruire des communautés brisées, de faire revivre les traditions culturelles et de découvrir de nouvelles sources de force et d'inspiration, mettant en évidence la recherche du renouveau et la préservation du patrimoine culturel. L'atmosphère créée par l'imagerie des villes vides intensifie les sentiments de peur, de désespoir et d'impuissance, servant de toile de fond à des événements dramatiques et aux conflits internes des personnages. Collectivement, l'archétype de la ville vide joue un rôle important dans la littérature, permettant aux auteurs d'explorer et d'exprimer des aspects importants de l'expérience humaine. Il fournit une imagerie symbolique puissante à travers laquelle sont transmis des processus culturels et historiques profonds ainsi que les expériences internes des personnages. Ces images contribuent à la création d'œuvres littéraires riches et profondes qui trouvent un écho chez les lecteurs et les aident à comprendre des thèmes sociaux et émotionnels complexes.

MOTS-CLÉS: identité culturelle, impact psychologique, perception émotionnelle, symbolisme, changement social, conflits internes.

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1. Introduction

The archetype of the deserted city in literature functions as a powerful symbolic image, embodying a range of meanings and emotions, including loneliness, loss, despair, and the desire for renewal and metamorphosis. Characterised by desolate streets, dilapidated infrastructure, and silence in once-vibrant areas, this image serves not just as a backdrop but also as a narrative catalyst that influences plot and character

evolution. It signifies significant societal upheavals, including warfare, colonisation, diseases, and ecological catastrophes, frequently resulting in the disintegration of cultural identity, historical continuity, and collective memory. In literary traditions spanning from Kazakh to English and American contexts, the desolate city serves to examine themes of alienation, psychological trauma, and the precariousness of civilisation. It paradoxically represents hope, acting as a transitional area for rejuvenation, self-discovery, and the redefinition of cultural norms. Through the utilisation of this archetype, authors produce profound, emotionally impactful narratives that confront universal human issues – loss, survival, and the persistent yearning for renewal amidst destruction.

This motif runs through various literary traditions, including Kazakh, English, and American literature, serving as an illustration of social, cultural, and historical upheavals. In Kazakh literature, this archetype is particularly important for depicting changes related to national identity, traditions, and colonial history. In English and American literature, it often appears in post-apocalyptic scenarios or social criticism, symbolizing the vulnerability of society and the psychological consequences of its collapse. This study is significant because of its cross-cultural analysis of this archetype, providing insight into how other literary traditions use the theme of the empty city to convey meaningful cultural, emotional, and historical experiences.

Several researchers previously addressed the archetype of the empty city in literature and culture. L. Britt and W.H. Hammett (2024) explored the archetype of empty cities as potent literary symbols that encapsulate collective trauma. Their analysis reveals how these deserted urban spaces metaphorically represent the emotional and psychological aftermath of systemic oppression and inequality. Through this lens, empty cities are not merely physical spaces of abandonment but serve as powerful vehicles for expressing shared experiences of loss, disempowerment, and cultural rupture. G. Rose (2022) examined visual methodologies, including the analysis of symbolic images of empty cities in literature and art. Rose emphasised that empty cities have often been employed to create powerful visual metaphors conveying profound cultural and social meanings. A.S. Cornejo (2023) explored the destruction of cities as an archetypal motif in literature, linking it to the concept of “urbicide” – the mass destruction of cities. In A.S. Cornejo’s work, empty cities symbolise not only physical destruction but also the demise of entire cultures and value systems. The researcher notes that such cities evoke societal fears of the disappearance of civilisation and order, opening a space for profound reflection on social and cultural changes. J.M. Gurr (2020) analysed archetypes, including empty cities, as symbols of physical desolation and social transformations, reflecting degradation and isolation in urban life. The author

concluded that these images underscore fundamental changes in urbanised spaces. J. Pederson (2020) examined the archetype of empty cities in the context of collective trauma, demonstrating how these images symbolise destruction and emptiness in the aftermath of catastrophe. Pederson argued that empty spaces in literature amplify emotional impact, associating them with isolation and hopelessness.

S. Von Behren et al. (2023) examined urban archetypes and asserted that modern cities are losing their uniqueness, transforming into homogenised spaces. This leads to feelings of emptiness, a loss of identity, and alienation among residents. J. Hay (2020) analysed how post-apocalyptic literature uses empty cities to symbolise collapsed civilisations and the consequences of disasters. These images provoke a reassessment of values and a reconsideration of life in a ruined world. J. Hay concluded that empty cities become metaphors for the inevitability of change and the necessity of adaptation to new conditions. T. Lee (2021) explored the theme of empty cities within the context of various future scenarios. The author concluded that such cities serve as a platform for creating alternative worlds, whether utopian or dystopian. T. Lee argues that through the imagery of empty cities, authors model new social and cultural structures, envisioning possible trajectories for the development of civilisation. In the study of T. Schwarze (2023) researcher analysed the ideas of H. Lefebvre, including his views on archetypes in spatial studies, emphasising that archetypes such as empty cities reflect complex processes of urbanisation and social alienation. The author concluded that archetypes in the works of H. Lefebvre provide deeper insight into the mechanisms of power and capitalism's influence on urban environments and society.

E.T. Zhanyzbekova (2019, 2020) examined neomythological elements in Kazakh literature, including the use of the empty city archetype to convey symbolic meanings. E.T. Zhanyzbekova concluded that these images played a key role in constructing cultural and historical narratives. In a joint study with S.M. Altybaeva and E.T. Zhanyzbekova (2016), the authors analysed the structural elements of the Kazakh novel-myth, including the symbolism of the empty city. The authors highlighted that such imagery helped convey profound cultural and historical meanings. T. Nurgaziev (2023) investigated archetypes and symbols in Kazakh literature from a psychoanalytical perspective, including empty cities. T. Nurgaziev concluded that such imagery could reflect collective fears and hopes. B.Z. Omarov et al. (2020) focused on native land in Kazakh poetry and prose, employing narrative approaches. In their study, the empty city emerges as a symbol of disconnection from the past, a loss of ties with one's roots and homeland. The authors demonstrated that the image of the deserted city expresses feelings of alienation and isolation arising from changes in the social and cultural environment.

Despite numerous studies, important aspects of the archetype of the empty city remain unexplored. Psychological and emotional responses from readers, as well as variations in these reactions depending on cultural backgrounds, have not been sufficiently examined. Moreover, its impact on the archetype on plot development and characterisation requires further analysis. The question of how modern media and digital technologies alter perceptions of this archetype also demands more investigation. It is essential to understand how the image of the empty city reflects social and cultural changes in the contemporary world.

The purpose of the study is to analyse the archetype of the empty city in Kazakh and English literature. To achieve this purpose, the following tasks are set: to investigate the symbolic meaning of the empty city archetype in Kazakh and English literature; to determine the influence of the archetype on the perception of historical and cultural changes in Kazakhstan; and to compare its use in Kazakh literature with that in English and American literature.

2. Materials and Methods

This study employs a qualitative research design grounded in literary analysis and cultural hermeneutics to examine the archetype of the empty city across selected Kazakh and English literary works. The analysis integrates symbolic, psychological, and socio-historical approaches, with a foundation in C.G. Jung's (2003, 2015) archetypal theory and Y.I. Manin's (2022) structural metaphor framework. Primary methods include thematic content analysis and comparative analysis, focusing on how the empty city motif is constructed and interpreted within different cultural contexts.

For the practical analysis of the empty city archetype, the following works of English and Kazakh literature were chosen: *The Day of the Triffids* by J. Wyndham (2022), *I am Legend and Other Stories* by R. Matheson (2019), *The Fog* by J. Herbert (2018), *Titus Groan* by M. Peake (2024), *Blood and Sweat* by A.-J. Nurpeisov (2013), *Thorny Path: Historical and Autobiographical Novel and a Short Story* by S. Seifullin (1975), *Nomads* by E. Esenberlin (2021), *Abay's Way* by M.O. Auezov (1997).

The literary works were selected based on their explicit use of the empty city archetype as a central narrative or symbolic element. The chosen texts span diverse genres and historical periods, ensuring a representative cross-section of both Kazakh and English traditions. Theoretical sources were selected for their relevance to archetype theory, urban symbolism, trauma studies, and cultural identity, prioritising works that offer interdisciplinary insights into the psychological and sociocultural dimensions of space and narrative.

The comparative analysis of Kazakh, American, and English literature is crucial for revealing both universal and culturally unique significances inherent in the image of the empty city. This study juxtaposes literary traditions influenced by divergent historical trajectories, such as Kazakhstan's experiences of colonisation and collectivisation against the West's encounters with industrialisation, global conflict, and post-apocalyptic imagination, revealing how analogous symbols express unique cultural anxieties, values, and aspirations. This method underscores the vacant city's role as a collective symbol for loss, transformation, and renewal, while simultaneously mirroring distinct socioeconomic concerns and historical recollections. It facilitates a profound comprehension of the archetype's versatility and importance within literary contexts, enhancing both cross-cultural literary analysis and the extensive examination of symbolic space in narrative.

The study also examined the interpretation of the symbolic meanings of the empty city archetype in the context of Kazakh culture and history. Historical events, social changes, and cultural traditions that might have influenced the use of this archetype in Kazakh literature were reviewed. Parallels are drawn between the analysed studies, identifying common and distinctive features, and the way different cultural contexts affect the symbolic meaning of this archetype was considered.

In conclusion, an analysis was conducted on how the empty city archetype influences the perception of historical and cultural changes in Kazakhstan. Various aspects of the perception and interpretation of the symbolism of empty cities were considered, such as associations with loss, isolation, and the hope for rebirth. It was established that the imagery of empty cities plays an important role in the formation of collective memory and cultural identity.

The study is based on analysing key theoretical materials and literary works, which allows for the identification and interpretation of the symbolic meanings of the empty city archetype in various cultural contexts. Based on this data, a comprehensive assessment of the importance of this archetype for understanding cultural and historical processes in Kazakh and English literature is conducted. Thus, the study highlights the importance of this archetype for the formation of collective memory and cultural identity, including its unique aspects in different cultural contexts.

3. Results

3.1. Symbolism and psychological impact of the empty city archetype

In literature, the depiction of the desolate metropolis serves as a potent archetype that transcends geographical and cultural confines. Grounded on Jungian archetypal theory, the vacant city functions not only as a physical locale but also as a symbolic realm where personal and communal feelings of loss, transformation, and

renewal are portrayed. The collective unconscious, as posited by C.G. Jung (2003), contains archetypes like the "empty city" that embody common psychological and emotional tendencies. These abandoned locations frequently arise during crises—post-apocalyptic collapse, colonial disturbance, or societal upheaval—bearing significant consequences for story structure and character development.

The empty city archetype functions as a complex literary symbol (Jiao, 2024). Psychologically, it frequently symbolises internal desolation: alienation, sorrow, and identity dissolution. Socially, it represents cultural disintegration and the erosion of historical continuity, especially in circumstances when tradition is violently interrupted, such as in conquered or industrialised cultures. Paradoxically, this emblem of abandonment also embodies the opportunity for renewal. The abandoned city frequently serves as a liminal place, delineating the division between what has been forfeited and what may arise (Doszhan, 2023). This serves as the threshold upon which characters face their most pressing existential crises, such as solitude, purpose, and survival, where societies are compelled to reinvent themselves.

This theoretical framework enables us to interpret the vacant city not merely as a lack of inhabitants or activity, but as a potent metaphor for historical pain, cultural evolution, and psychological dislocation. In both Kazakh and English literature, the motif is utilised to illustrate the disintegration of the familiar and the ambiguous advent of new orders – be they dystopian or redemptive.

Y.I. Manin (2022) offers a unique approach to the analysis of the empty city archetype using mathematical metaphors. Researcher views the empty city as a structural model symbolising broken connections and structures, reflecting themes of isolation and desolation. Manin emphasises the importance of historical and cultural contexts for understanding the empty city archetype, exploring how these images reflect historical events and collective trauma. The use of mathematical models helps to uncover hidden structures and symbols that may remain unnoticed in literary analysis, promoting a deeper understanding of the symbolism and themes of the works.

To investigate the deployment of this archetype across various cultural contexts, we initially analyse a selection of significant literary works in which the motif of the desolate metropolis is strongly included. These works exhibit considerable diversity in genre, historical context, and subject emphasis, yet all employ the archetype to illustrate profound societal or psychological changes. Table 1 delineates the socio-political settings of each work to establish a comparative perspective. This demonstrates how several authors utilise the same symbolic imagery to represent unique historical and cultural contexts.

Table 1. Social and political contexts of the use of the empty city archetype in English and Kazakh literature.

Title of the work	Social context	Political context	Description
The Day of Triffids by J. Wyndham	Post-apocalyptic society, the destruction of social bonds	Absence of centralised governance	A global catastrophe leads to the collapse of civilisation and the emptying of cities.
I am Legend and Other Stories by R. Matheson	Survival in extreme isolation	Pandemic and its consequences	The transformation of people into vampires and the complete desolation of the city, reflecting the collapse of society.
The Fog by J. Herbert	Panic and chaos as a result of a natural catastrophe	Destruction of state infrastructure	A mystical fog causes mass panic and leads to the breakdown of social structures.
Titus Groan by M. Peake	Closed feudal society focused on traditions	Lack of political dynamics	The Castle of Gormenghast symbolises stagnation and isolation in a feudal society.
Blood and Sweat by A.-J. Nurpeisov	Social changes in early 20th-century Kazakh society	Collectivisation and its consequences	The destruction of the traditional way of life in the Kazakh steppes due to collectivisation and repression.
Thorny Path: Historical and Autobiographical Novel and a Short Story by S. Seifullin	Social upheavals and population migrations	Civil war and political repressions	The destruction of traditional settlements as a result of civil war and political changes.
Nomads by E. Esenberlin	Periods of war and resettlement in Kazakhstan's history	Colonial policy of the Russian Empire	Empty settlements symbolise historical wars and colonisation.
Abay's Way by M.O. Auezov	Cultural and social changes in Kazakh society	The policy of the Russian Empire and its influence on Kazakh culture	The destruction of traditional values and cultural ties under the influence of colonial policy.

Source: compiled based on G. Rose (2022).

3.2. *Literary case studies: cross-cultural comparisons*

In *The Day of the Triffids* by J. Wyndham (2022), the archetype of the empty city symbolises both physical destruction and social decay. Following a global catastrophe that blinds most of the population, the protagonist, Bill Masen, awakens in a hospital to find London transformed from a vibrant metropolis into a desolate wasteland. The once-bustling city is now marked by empty streets, abandoned cars, and looted shops—images that highlight the fragility of civilisation and how quickly order collapses in the absence of societal structures. As Bill wanders through this silent, chaotic landscape, the city becomes both a symbol of a lost world and a hostile new reality. The absence of people and the breakdown of governance give way to anarchy, intensifying the atmosphere of fear and hopelessness. For Bill and the other survivors, the empty city is not just a backdrop but a crucible that tests their moral principles, resilience, and capacity for adaptation. It becomes a space for survival, transformation, and self-discovery, where they must confront dangers once unimaginable in the civilised world and make difficult decisions in order to endure.

In the novel *I Am Legend and Other Stories* by R. Matheson (2024), the archetype of the empty city is a central element that enhances the atmosphere of despair and isolation surrounding the protagonist, Robert Neville. The empty city in this work symbolises not only physical desolation but also deep psychological loneliness, fear, and the collapse of human civilisation. The plot unfolds in a post-apocalyptic world where the population has almost entirely been wiped out by a pandemic, which transforms people into vampires. Robert Neville remains the only surviving human in Los Angeles, and the city becomes a symbol of his total isolation. Empty streets, abandoned buildings, and the absence of life around him create a bleak and oppressive atmosphere. The book provides detailed descriptions of scenes where Neville moves through the empty city, carrying out his daily tasks: repairing his house, searching for supplies, and destroying vampire nests. These moments highlight his loneliness and helplessness in the face of a crumbling world.

An example of this is the scene where Neville inspects abandoned supermarkets and film studios, which were once bustling with life. These places are now empty and dead, emphasising the scale of destruction and the decay of civilisation. The empty city has a strong impact on Neville's mental state. He feels like the last representative of humanity, constantly confronting feelings of hopelessness and fear. Descriptions of his solitude and daily struggle for survival make his character deeply tragic and evoke sympathy from the readers. Through the imagery of abandoned streets and buildings, R. Matheson emphasises the fragility of society and the power of nature to destroy everything that was built by humans. This archetype helps the readers

understand and emotionally experience Neville's feelings, making his story deeply poignant and unforgettable.

The Fog by J. Herbert (2018) in his novel uses the archetype of the empty city as a key element, highlighting an atmosphere of fear, uncertainty, and chaos. The empty city becomes a symbol of the destruction of the familiar world and the complete collapse of social structures. The plot of the novel centres around a mystical fog that is released from an underground storage facility and gradually spreads across the UK, causing mass panic and chaos. Under the influence of the fog, people lose their sanity, become aggressive, and commit acts of violence, leading to the desolation of entire cities. As a result of these events, once lively cities are turned into deserts where ruin and death prevail. J. Herbert describes scenes of empty streets, destroyed buildings, and abandoned homes, creating a sense of total destruction and the loss of control. These images intensify the feelings of anxiety and hopelessness experienced by the characters in the novel.

The fog in the novel is a catalyst that exposes the darkest sides of human nature and destroys social bonds and structures. As a result, cities that once symbolised order and civilisation become embodiments of chaos and savagery. The empty city has a significant impact on the characters in the novel. The protagonists are forced to battle not only physical dangers but also the psychological pressure caused by isolation and a sense of helplessness. Holman and the other survivors face moral dilemmas and are forced to adapt to new conditions where familiar norms and rules no longer apply. The archetype of the empty city in the novel *The Fog* by J. Herbert (2018) serves several functions: it creates an atmosphere of fear and chaos, symbolises the destruction of social and moral structures, and acts as a backdrop for the development of the characters. The empty city in this work is not merely a setting but a symbol reflecting the destructive forces capable of annihilating civilisation and turning it into ruins. Through the imagery of deserted cities, Herbert emphasises the fragility of society and the power of nature to destroy everything humans have built.

The archetype of the empty city is manifested through the imagery of Gormenghast Castle and its surrounding lands, creating an atmosphere of isolation, stagnation, and estrangement in the novel *Titus Groan* by M. Peake (2024). The emptiness and desolation of these places symbolise the stagnation and decay of both physical and moral structures. Gormenghast Castle, an immense, grim, and abandoned structure, becomes the central image of the novel. It is filled with long, empty corridors, neglected rooms, and deserted halls, which evoke a sense of stagnation and immutability. The castle's imagery reflects the physical neglect and moral isolation of its inhabitants, who live according to strict, ancient rules and rituals, disconnected from the outside world. The book describes numerous scenes where the characters

wander through the empty, echoing halls and corridors of the castle, emphasising their alienation and inability to break free from the cycle of traditions and customs. For example, Titus, the main protagonist, has felt like a prisoner within these walls since childhood, yearning for the freedom and novelty he lacks in this stagnant world. The empty Gormenghast Castle symbolises not only physical desolation but also moral decay. Characters such as the Countess and the Earl lead lives devoid of genuine meaning and purpose, adhering to meaningless traditions and rituals. This stagnation and isolation symbolise the loss of vital energy and an inability to change.

The characters feel trapped by the castle and its traditions, unable to alter their fate or find a way out of this stagnant world. Titus, the castle's heir, strives to break free from its oppression and find his own path, yet the castle and its emptiness continue to exert a strong influence on him. One key scene involves Titus's decision to leave the castle in search of freedom and independence. His departure symbolises an attempt to escape the cycle of traditions and stagnation, which he associates with the empty halls of Gormenghast.

The influence of the archetype of the empty city can also be observed in the work *Blood and Sweat* by A.-J. Nurpeisov (2013). In this novel, it is used to depict the devastation and decline that befell the Kazakh steppes and coastal settlements during a period of dramatic historical changes. Empty cities and settlements symbolise the destruction of traditional ways of life and the identity crisis faced by the novel's characters.

The events of the novel take place during the early decades of the 20th century when Kazakhstan experienced severe social and economic upheavals associated with collectivisation, civil war, and political repression. In this context, empty cities and abandoned settlements become symbols of these destructive processes. Nurpeisov describes how once-thriving auls became deserted, as people were forced to leave their homes in search of a better life or due to political persecution. These images evoke a sense of hopelessness and despair, emphasising the scale of the devastation brought about by historical changes.

The ruined and abandoned auls reflect the severance of ties with the traditional way of life, the loss of cultural roots, and the sense of alienation experienced by the novel's characters. The empty city has a significant impact on the inner world and motivations of the novel's characters. They are forced to adapt to new conditions, struggle for survival, and seek new ways to preserve their identity and heritage. Yeraly and the other characters face moral dilemmas and personal crises caused by the destruction of their familiar world. A key scene is the moment when Yeraly decides to stay and fight for the revival of his aul, despite all the difficulties. His decision

symbolises hope and the desire to preserve his cultural and social identity despite the destruction and changes.

In the novel *Thorny Path* by S. Seifullin (1975), the archetype of the empty city is used to depict a period of social and political upheaval in Kazakhstan at the beginning of the 20th century. Empty cities and deserted auls symbolise the destruction of the traditional way of life and the widespread changes faced by the novel's characters.

The narrative unfolds against the backdrop of events related to the October Revolution and the Civil War, which brought significant changes to Kazakh society. As a result of these events, many cities and settlements became deserted, creating an atmosphere of ruin and disorder. Seifullin describes how once-vibrant places transform into wastelands dominated by chaos and uncertainty. The book contains scenes in which the protagonist, Murat, travels through abandoned auls, attempting to find survivors and understand what has happened. The depiction of ruined homes and empty streets emphasises the scale of the catastrophe and the transformation of a familiar world into ruins. The abandoned settlements reflect a rupture with the past and the loss of cultural identity. Murat and other characters face moral dilemmas and personal crises caused by the destruction of their familiar world. They are forced to adapt to new realities, where the usual norms and rules no longer apply.

In the novel *Nomads* by E. Esenberlin (2021), the archetype of the empty city is used to portray abandoned and destroyed settlements, symbolising the historical and cultural upheavals endured by the Kazakh people. These images underscore the theme of loss and the need to adapt to new circumstances, reflecting turbulent times in Kazakh history. *Nomads* spans several centuries of Kazakh history, illustrating periods of wars, conflicts, and migrations. In this context, empty cities and auls act as symbols of destruction, loss, and forced change. For example, the book describes scenes where once-prosperous settlements are abandoned due to enemy invasions or internal conflicts. E. Esenberlin vividly depicts deserted dwellings, empty steppes, and ruined fortresses, painting a picture of a world where the customary way of life has been shattered. These images amplify the sense of hopelessness and loss experienced by the novel's characters. The empty cities in the novel symbolise not only physical destruction but also the loss of cultural traditions and historical continuity. The ruined settlements serve as metaphors for a society forced to endure severe trials and adapt to new realities. They reflect processes of disintegration and the severance of connections with the past. An example of this is the scene where the novel's protagonist, Ablai Khan, returns to his native aul and sees that it is deserted and ruined. This moment underscores not only physical loss but also the profound

emotional and cultural rupture experienced by the protagonist. The empty aul becomes a symbol of the lost connection to ancestral lands and traditions.

The archetype of the empty city exerts a profound influence on the characters of the novel. The protagonists are forced to seek new paths for survival, adapt to changing conditions, and rebuild lost connections. Ablai Khan, for instance, undergoes both internal and external trials in his effort to restore peace and order among his people. A pivotal scene is the moment when Ablai Khan decides to revive the ruined settlements and bring his people back to their native lands. This decision symbolises the aspiration to restore lost identity and cultural continuity despite all the hardships. The archetype of the empty city in the novel *Nomads* plays a crucial role in creating an atmosphere of historical upheaval and loss. Empty cities and auls symbolise the destruction of the traditional way of life and the necessity of adapting to new conditions, profoundly impacting the characters and their inner conflicts. Through this image, E. Esenberlin (2021) highlights the importance of preserving cultural heritage and striving to restore historical and cultural continuity amidst devastating events.

In the novel *Abay's Way* by M.O. Auezov (1997), the archetype of the empty city manifests through depictions of abandoned and ruined settlements, which symbolise profound social and cultural changes occurring in Kazakh society. These images emphasise the theme of loss, historical rupture, and the necessity of adapting to new realities. *Abay's Way* covers various stages of the life of the great Kazakh poet and thinker Abay Kunanbaev, portraying the historical events and cultural transformations he experienced. In the work, empty cities and abandoned auls serve as symbols of the destruction of the traditional way of life under external influences, such as the colonial policies of the Russian Empire and modernisation.

An example of this is a scene where Abay visits the deserted lands of his ancestors and sees that they are no longer inhabited. This moment underscores not only physical loss but also the profound emotional and cultural rupture experienced by the protagonist. The empty lands become a symbol of the severed connection with his native land and the traditions of his forebears. A key scene is the moment when Abay decides to revive the cultural and spiritual traditions of his people despite all the difficulties and destruction. This decision symbolises the aspiration to restore lost identity and cultural continuity despite all the challenges. Through this image, the authors emphasise the importance of preserving cultural heritage and the endeavour to restore historical and cultural continuity amidst destructive events. The results of the analysis of the works also reveal that all archetypal works pursue certain themes and motifs in their narratives (Table 2).

Table 2. Themes and motifs associated with empty cities.

Title of the work	Main themes	Motifs
The Day of Triffids by J. Wyndham	Apocalypse, survival	Loneliness, destruction, nature versus civilisation
I am Legend and Other Stories by R. Matheson	Isolation, struggle for survival	Loneliness, despair, monsters
The Fog by J. Herbert	Chaos, fear, disaster	Fog, panic, destruction
Titus Groan by M. Peake	Traditions, isolation	Stagnation, confinement, archaism
Blood and Sweat by A.-J. Nurpeisov	Social changes, collectivisation	Destruction, loss, adaptation
Thorny Path by S. Seifullin	Political repression, migration	Struggle, loss, transformation
Nomads. by E. Esenberlin	Wars, resettlements, historical changes	Loss, traditions, survival
Abay's Way by M.O. Auezov	Cultural change, colonialism	Rupture, traditions, revival

Source: compiled based on L. Britt and W.H. Hammett (2024), G. Rose (2022), J.M. Gurr (2020).

3.3. Interpretative synthesis: from destruction to renewal

The empty city in literature often serves as a stage for profound personal transformations in characters, who are forced to reconsider their life priorities and values. In the midst of desolation and ruin, the characters confront inner demons and existential questions, making their journey towards renewal all the more significant. These transformations take place against the backdrop of destroyed buildings, deserted streets, and abandoned objects, which amplify the atmosphere of loneliness and abandonment. Such visual elements enable readers to immerse themselves in the world of the narrative and feel the depth of loss and the hope for renewal. The symbolism of the empty city allows authors to explore themes of loss and recovery on various levels – ranging from individual to collective. In literature, the empty city becomes not merely a setting but a powerful symbol reflecting the internal and external changes experienced by characters. Protagonists wandering through empty streets encounter remnants of former grandeur and traces of past life, evoking nostalgia, pain, and a yearning for restoration. They are compelled to reconsider their roles in the altered world, seeking new sources of strength and motivation.

Moreover, the empty city symbolises the fragility of human civilisation and highlights humanity's dependence on social and cultural structures. It serves as a

reminder of how quickly the familiar world can change and underscores the importance of preserving and restoring lost connections and traditions. Ruined buildings and deserted streets become metaphors for the severed ties between people and the disintegration of social structures. Characters travelling through empty cities often discover abandoned objects that once held value for their owners. These discoveries remind them of the past and prompt reflections on the importance of cultural heritage and the necessity of its preservation. This archetype also acts as a warning about the consequences of destructive actions and inaction, emphasising the need for a careful attitude towards one's surroundings and cultural legacy. Literature employing the imagery of empty cities frequently draws attention to the causes behind the desolation and ruin (Amangazykyzy et al., 2025; Navas and de Almeida, 2024). These may include wars, ecological disasters, social conflicts, or technological failures. Authors illustrate how human carelessness, aggression, or passivity can lead to devastating consequences for civilisation. The empty city becomes a symbol of caution, urging readers to consider the importance of responsible stewardship of the world around them.

Empty cities in literature also provide a backdrop for examining relationships between people during crises (Lauta and Geiko, 2022; de Moraes and Fittipaldi, 2024). Characters left behind in deserted cities are often compelled to seek new allies and forge connections with other survivors. These relationships can be complex and contradictory, reflecting both the struggle for survival and the necessity of cooperation. Authors explore how crises influence human relationships, provoking displays of solidarity and mutual assistance as well as conflicts and betrayal. Empty cities become arenas for the development of intricate interpersonal dynamics, heightening the drama and emotional tension of the narratives. They are also often settings where characters face trials that test their moral principles and personal qualities. Under these conditions, characters are forced to make difficult decisions and take responsibility for their actions. They encounter moral dilemmas that compel them to reconsider their values and principles. The empty city becomes not only a backdrop for the action but also an active element that influences the internal transformations of characters. It stimulates their growth and self-discovery, helping to reveal their true nature.

In literature, the empty city often symbolises hope for revival and restoration (Kieliszek, 2023; Kieliszek and Gocłowska, 2019). Despite the devastation and desolation, protagonists strive to rebuild shattered communities, restore cultural traditions, and find new sources of strength and inspiration. This aspect underscores the drive for renewal and the preservation of cultural heritage, despite all challenges and trials. The empty city becomes a symbol of embarking on a new path, where

characters can start afresh and construct a new, better world. They draw strength from their past while striving to create something novel and sustainable. The empty city allows authors to explore and convey significant aspects of the human experience. It provides powerful symbolic imagery through which profound cultural and historical processes and the internal experiences of characters are conveyed. These images contribute to the creation of rich and multi-layered literary works that resonate with a broad audience and help readers comprehend complex social and emotional themes. The empty city becomes an essential tool for addressing intricate emotional and social issues, creating deep and multifaceted works that engage a wide readership.

American, Kazakh, and English literatures offer unique interpretations influenced by their respective historical and cultural contexts. In American literature, especially in post-apocalyptic narratives such as “I Am Legend” by Richard Matheson, the desolate urban landscape symbolises personal isolation, existential anxiety, and the psychological ramifications of society disintegration, frequently as a reaction to pandemics or technological catastrophes. In John Wyndham's “The Day of the Triffids”, English literature similarly depicts the desolate metropolis as a representation of civilisational vulnerability and the swift disintegration of social order, while placing a stronger focus on collective anxiety and moral ambiguity during crises. Kazakh literature, exemplified by “Blood and Sweat” by A.-J. Nurpeisov and “Nomads” by E. Esenberlin, utilises the desolate city or aul as a metaphor for historical trauma, coerced displacement, and the degradation of cultural identity resulting from colonisation, collectivisation, and political oppression. Western literature frequently emphasises individual psychological transformation in the wake of calamity, but Kazakh narratives highlight collective loss, cultural disintegration, and the attempt to preserve legacy. Notwithstanding these distinctions, all three literatures employ the desolate metropolis to address themes of memory, identity, and the potential for rejuvenation.

The comparative research of English and Kazakh literary works demonstrates that the archetype of the empty city functions as a universal symbol of disruption, albeit its specific implications differ based on cultural and historical contexts. In English literature, especially within post-apocalyptic novels, the desolate city frequently symbolises societal disintegration, existential solitude, and the fragility of contemporary civilisation. These cities serve as platforms for personal survival and psychological inquiry. Kazakh literature often used the imagery of abandoned cities and auls to convey historical trauma, including colonisation, collectivisation, and cultural disintegration. The desolate city represents the severance of ancestral connections, customs, and identity. Notwithstanding these distinctions, both literatures utilise the desolate city as a potent symbol for transformation – be it personal, societal,

or cultural. It is a realm of decay and contemplation, yet also of defiance and rejuvenation, where individuals are driven to face internal conflicts and external dangers while pursuing new directions.

4. Discussion

The analysis of the archetype of the empty city in literature reveals several key aspects. First, the empty city symbolises loss and destruction, reflecting historical and social upheavals that lead to the desolation and ruin of once-thriving places. This image arises as a result of various cataclysms, be they wars, epidemics, economic crises, or natural disasters, which destroy infrastructure and force people to abandon their homes. Empty cities are often described with an emphasis on abandoned buildings, overgrown streets, and a sense of time having come to a standstill. These images evoke profound emotional responses from both characters and readers. Characters confronted with empty cities experience an acute sense of isolation, as familiar social structures and support systems have disappeared. This alienation is intensified by the transformation of familiar places into unfamiliar and hostile environments, stripped of life and movement. Despair arises from the recognition of losses, both material and spiritual, and the uncertainty of the future.

Empty cities in literature often serve as a backdrop for exploring characters' inner conflicts, their struggles for survival, and attempts to adapt to new conditions (Altay et al., 2025). They are compelled to find new ways of interacting with the world, often re-evaluating their values and goals. In such conditions, profound aspects of character and hidden resources emerge, allowing authors to delve deeper into their protagonists and create rich, multi-layered narratives. In addition, empty cities serve as potent symbols for critiquing modern society, highlighting the fragility of civilisation and the inevitability of change. They become metaphors for the destruction not only of physical structures but also of social connections, cultural continuity, and identity, prompting readers to reflect on the importance and value of what is often taken for granted.

A. Nurstom (2021), in the study of shelters in post-apocalyptic literature, focused on how empty cities become not merely a backdrop for the narrative but essential components in the development of characters. The author argues that such cities serve as unique transformative spaces where protagonists, confronted with the loss of their former world, are given the opportunity for profound self-reflection and inner renewal. These cities, as ruins of a destroyed civilisation, become symbols of new beginnings, where the characters must not only adapt to a new reality but also find the strength to establish new social orders. This study emphasised that empty

cities in post-apocalyptic worlds often function as laboratories for cultural and social experiments. It is here that characters re-evaluate their previous perspectives and principles, recognise the inevitability of change and taking responsibility for the future. According to A. Nurstom, the empty city is not merely a place of alienation and decay but also a catalyst for personal evolution, facilitating the transition from the past to possible scenarios for a new future. These findings have a direct correlation with this paper. Both studies highlight that empty cities are not solely symbols of destruction but also spaces that provide unique opportunities for the creation of new worlds and structures.

The empty city also symbolises the loss of cultural identity and historical continuity, compelling society to adapt to new realities (Efremov, 2025a). M. Amangazykyzy et al. (2021) highlighted that empty cities in urban prose symbolise a break with the past and the necessity of adapting to new social and cultural realities. They argue that urban prose often employs the imagery of deserted and ruined cities to convey a sense of loss and alienation associated with modernisation and urbanisation. These conclusions share common ground with this study, which also examines the archetype of the empty city as a symbol of the destruction of traditional ways of life and the loss of cultural identity. They underline that empty cities in literature reflect large-scale historical and social upheavals that lead to the devastation and desolation of once-thriving places. In both studies, the archetype of the empty city evokes in characters a sense of isolation, alienation, and despair, compelling them to seek new ways of adaptation and survival in changed circumstances.

Despite the evident desolation, the empty city can symbolise hope for revival and restoration, as the protagonists strive to rebuild the ruined settlements, restore cultural traditions, and discover new sources of strength. This aligns with the findings of O. Valikova (2018), who asserts that Kazakh literature often employs images of masks and other symbols to depict cultural identity and hope for renewal. She examines how these symbols convey profound cultural meanings and stimulate cultural restoration. Her research and this paper share common ground in emphasising the importance of symbolic imagery in conveying ideas of revival and renewal. O. Valikova demonstrated how masks and other symbols in Kazakh prose reflect the aspiration to revive cultural traditions, whereas in this paper, the empty city symbolises hope for the restoration and renewal of a ruined world. Both approaches illustrate that symbolic images play a pivotal role in literature in expressing complex cultural and emotional themes, highlighting the aspiration for revival and the preservation of cultural identity despite destructive changes.

N. Khudaibergenov et al. (2018) analysed the early reflections of universal human values in Kazakh prose. They concluded that Kazakh prose uses images of

empty cities and other spatial symbols to create a powerful atmosphere that enhances readers' perception of universal human values such as freedom, justice, and hope for a better future. The authors' work underscored that empty cities in Kazakh prose serve not merely as a backdrop for the narrative but as an active element shaping the emotional states of both protagonists and readers. The atmosphere created by such imagery amplifies themes of loss and revival, emphasising the importance of preserving cultural heritage and striving for restoration. These findings correlate with this paper, which also highlights the role of empty cities in creating the atmosphere and emotional background of literary works. Both studies stress that empty cities are vital tools for conveying complex emotional and cultural themes, crafting a sombre and oppressive atmosphere that intensifies readers' perceptions of themes of loss, revival, and hope for a better future. Thus, the study by N. Khudaibergenov et al. and this paper complement each other, demonstrating how the archetype of the empty city is employed to create a powerful atmosphere that shapes readers' understanding of key themes and values in literature.

J. Peacock (2023) analysed gentrification in contemporary speculative literature, where cities lose their uniqueness, transforming into homogeneous and sterile spaces. J. Peacock emphasised that such changes lead to the loss of cultural heritage and the alienation of residents, creating a sense of emptiness – not physical, but cultural and social. These findings correlate with this study, in which empty cities are viewed as symbols of loss and destruction. J. Peacock's study helps to understand how contemporary urban processes can result in new forms of emptiness, highlighting the destructive impact on identity and social connections, which amplifies feelings of isolation and alienation.

K.R. McNamara (2021) examined the city as a symbol of cultural and social changes, focusing on its capacity to reflect and intensify social conflicts and ideological divides. The author considered cities not only as physical spaces but also as dynamic arenas where diverse interests and cultural narratives clash, leading to the exacerbation of social contradictions and the creation of new forms of inequality. In the context of empty cities discussed in this paper, K.R. McNamara's conclusions play a crucial role, emphasising how such deserted spaces can serve as powerful metaphors for critiquing contemporary society. Empty cities become symbols not only of physical destruction but also of the collapse of social structures that prove vulnerable in the face of cultural and social upheavals. The study resonates with this paper, illustrating how the imagery of empty cities in literature is used to depict the fragility of civilisation and underscore the need to rethink social structures. They serve as a reminder that, despite outward stability, societal and cultural systems can easily collapse if not adapted to changing circumstances.

A. Hoffman (2019) explored how urban imagery can function as traps for protagonists, symbolising not only physical constraints but also social barriers that hinder their freedom and development. A. Hoffman highlighted that such depictions of cities in literature often reflect the inevitability of social changes, which lead to the destruction of familiar ways of life and demand that characters adapt to new, often hostile conditions. In this context, the city becomes not merely a setting but an active participant in the narrative, creating an atmosphere of pressure and hopelessness. The study intersects with this paper, where empty cities are considered symbols of destruction and loss, and spaces where characters confront internal and external challenges. A. Hoffman's study deepens the understanding of how empty cities can embody not only physical desolation but also psychological traps that compel protagonists to overcome their fears and limitations. Interaction with such urban spaces becomes not only a trial but also an opportunity for personal transformation, which directly aligns with the discussion in this paper about the role of empty cities in literature as catalysts for change and adaptation in a shattered world.

T. Read (2019) and A. Mukherjee (2021) in their studies deeply analyse the archetypal and psychological aspects associated with urban imagery, particularly focusing on their impact on the psychological states of characters. T. Read considered urban imagery as a reflection of internal conflicts, demonstrating how these images can become symbols of personal crises and the struggle for self-identification. Researcher asserted that characters' interactions with empty or ruined cities often personify their inner fears and doubts, creating powerful metaphors for personal transformation. Meanwhile, A. Mukherjee examined the mental states of characters immersed in urban spaces, emphasising how these images can intensify feelings of alienation and isolation, thereby exposing the depth of their internal struggles. Both studies share common ground with this paper, which considers empty cities not merely as physical spaces but as symbols of profound emotional and psychological transformations. These cities become arenas where characters confront the destruction of both the external world and their inner selves, requiring them to rethink their goals and identity. T. Read and A. Mukherjee enriched the analysis by suggesting that empty cities should not only be viewed as narrative backdrops but also as active elements that provoke and accelerate the personal changes of protagonists, aligning with the main theme of this paper on the role of such cities in literature.

O. Walker (2019) and S. Bolea (2020) analysed internal conflicts and archetypal structures, uncovering how they manifest through various literary images, including empty cities. O. Walker highlighted how archetypes associated with empty cities serve as catalysts for revealing hidden aspects of characters' personalities, their inner fears, and ambitions. The author views these cities as symbolic spaces where

protagonists confront their deepest conflicts and are compelled to make decisions that shape their further development. S. Bolea, in turn, explored how such archetypal images can embody the darker sides of human psyche, acting as reflections of inner fears and moral dilemmas faced by characters. These studies intersect with this paper, which examines empty cities not only as physical spaces but also as powerful symbols of inner transformation and struggle. The imagery of empty cities becomes an arena where characters' internal conflicts surface, forcing them to confront their weaknesses and overcome inner barriers.

The archetype of the abandoned city serves as a powerful narrative device that reflects and influences cultural and historical consciousness (Efremov, 2025b; Shershova and Chaika, 2024). In Kazakh literature, the image of an abandoned village or city often symbolizes the trauma of colonization, forced collectivization, and socio-political upheaval, reflecting a collective memory shaped by displacement and destruction. These literary images do not simply narrate historical events, but also symbolically encode them, transforming the physical destruction of communities into metaphors for lost traditions, suppressed identities, and lost communal ideals. By integrating past experiences into the symbolic structure of an empty city, Kazakh authors emphasize the vulnerability of cultural continuity and the need for historical recognition. In this context, literature serves as a repository of cultural memory, where the devastated metropolis functions as a mnemonic catalyst, prompting both characters and readers to confront the consequences of historical change and reevaluate their cultural heritage.

The motif of the empty city is common in English and American literary traditions, especially in post-apocalyptic and dystopian fiction, reflecting fears about modernity, technological progress, and the breakdown of society. This archetype symbolizes both a historical rupture and foreshadows future collapse, reflecting fears about social decline, ecological catastrophe, or moral decay. These narratives shape cultural perceptions, encouraging a critical attitude toward current events and prompting reflection on the vulnerability of modern civilization. The devastation of the city points to the collapse of social cohesion, while providing an opportunity to rethink the ideals and structures of society. In both Western and Kazakh contexts, the empty city functions as a liminal space that embodies historical pain and shapes cultural discourse, providing authors with a symbolic canvas to reflect on themes of loss, resilience, and the desire for restoration.

Thus, the analysis of the archetype of the empty city in literature demonstrated its multifaceted functions, reflecting profound social, historical, and psychological aspects. This image symbolises destruction and loss, conveying the scale of historical and social changes that lead to the desolation and degradation of once-thriving places.

The empty city evokes feelings of loneliness, alienation, and hopelessness in the protagonists, prompting them to find new ways to survive and adapt to a changed reality. The empty city also embodies the loss of cultural identity and the rupture with historical continuity, becoming a metaphor for a society forced to adapt to new conditions. Despite the apparent destruction, the empty city carries the symbolism of rebirth and restoration. Characters strive to rebuild ruined settlements, revive cultural traditions, and discover new sources of strength, underscoring their drive for renewal and the preservation of cultural heritage. This multi-layered image helps authors convey complex emotional and social themes, making their works deeper and more nuanced.

5. Conclusions

The archetype of the empty city in literature functions as a complex metaphor embodying historical upheavals, psychological emptiness, and the evolution of cultural identity. In both Kazakh and English literary traditions, the image of an abandoned city or village symbolizes the collapse of established social structures and the erosion of collective memory. It embodies the consequences of war, imperialism, collectivization, pandemics, and natural disasters, which together constitute a thematic representation of historical trauma. Empty territories, personified by crumbling infrastructure and silence, evoke a deep sense of alienation and disconnection, serving as dramatic backdrops where characters face existential dilemmas and adapt to a changed reality.

In Kazakh literature, the deserted city serves primarily as a metaphor for cultural deprivation and disconnection from historical roots under the influence of imperialism and modernization. In contrast, in English and American literature, this archetype is often used to explore individual alienation and the vulnerability of civilization in the face of global catastrophe. Despite these cultural differences, a common narrative emerges: the empty city becomes a realm of transition – between memory and oblivion, despondency and courage. These literary works regularly associate the archetype with the potential for renewal. The main characters attempt to rebuild communities, preserve traditions, and rethink social values. Consequently, the archetype functions not only as a representation of destruction, but also as a powerful literary tool for conveying optimism, continuity, and humanity's enduring capacity for adaptation and renewal.

The archetype of the empty city plays an important role in literature, enabling authors to explore and express significant aspects of the human experience. It provides powerful symbolic imagery through which profound cultural and historical processes

and the internal experiences of characters are conveyed. These images contribute to the creation of rich and multi-layered literary works that resonate with readers and help them comprehend complex social and emotional themes.

A limitation of the study is its focus on literary works, which does not account for visual and other cultural forms where the archetype of the empty city may also manifest. Promising areas for future examination could include the archetype of the empty city in visual arts and cinema to broaden the understanding of its symbolism and influence. Cross-cultural comparisons could also be explored to identify commonalities and distinctive features in the use of this archetype across different cultures. Finally, an analysis of the influence of the archetype of the empty city on modern urban planning and architecture could provide new insights into the field of urban studies.

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