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The Lexical Field as a Form of Fusion between the Author, Narrator, and Character in Ismail Kadare's Novel "The Inhibited"

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the linguistic strategies employed by Ismail Kadare in one of his most significant literary works, focusing in particular on the dynamic relationship the author establishes with his own narrative. Central to this relationship is the infiltration of the narrative voice into what is termed "enunciation," whereby the boundaries between author, extradiegetic narrator, and character become blurred. The study aims to investigate a phenomenon increasingly evident in 21st-century literature: the merging of narrative voices as a reflection of the re-emergence of the author within the fictional text. In Kadare's prose, the discursive framework reveals innovative modes of organizing narrative discourse, guided by an inherent tendency toward osmosis—a gradual and deliberate interpenetration of the author's voice into that of his characters. Within the broader inquiry into narrator-character dynamics, each mode of discourse functions as a distinct narrative conduit. Among these, the lexical field becomes a privileged site where the dissolution of boundaries among author, narrator, and character underscores the fluidity and multiplicity of perspectives. We argue that Kadare's linguistic strategies signal a shift from conceiving language as a fixed mirror of reality to embracing a more dynamic, open-ended approach—one that values ambiguity and harnesses the generative potential of discourse as both a creative and interpretive force.

Keywords: Discourse Analysis; Discourse; Narrative; Narrator; Character; Discourse Structure

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1. Introduction

For a long time, the author and the narrator were regarded as two distinct entities—a distinction rooted in classical narratology. Influenced by formalist, structuralist, and New Criticism approaches, this tradition placed the separation of the narrator from the author at the core of narrative analysis, ultimately leading to the proclamation of “*La mort de l’auteur*”^[1]. However, according to Piper^[2], at least until the beginning of the 19th century, “it was commonly accepted that [...] the poet relates the events partly in his person”, which means that there are no prior reasons that exclude the fact that the author can wear the clothes of the narrator. For Margolin, “The term ‘narrator’ designates the inner-textual (textually encoded) highest-level speech position from which the current narrative discourse as a whole originates and from which references to the entities, actions, and events that this discourse is about are being made”^[3]. It is the Chicago School scholars, with a rhetorical approach, who, focusing on the relationship between the narrator and the implied author, see the distance between them as an untrustworthiness of the narrator’s instance because the reader shares with the implied author values that are foreign to the narrator. Dan Shen claims that “it is [...] between the narrator’s explicit discourse and the author’s implicit discourse that the clash can be found”^[4]. Debates about the narrator are still alive and testify to the complexity of the issues related to this figure. Some scholars have developed models through which the presence of the narrator can be identified based on the information provided in the text. According to Eckardt^[5], the meaning of linguistic expressions is intrinsically dependent on the context in which they are used. This context must provide sufficient data to enable the reader to identify at least a speaker, a receiver, and other strategically necessary elements that shape the communicative act. Based on this premise, the reader discerns the figure of the narrator through various means, one of which—central to this paper—is the linguistic level. Specifically, the communicative situation in which the narrator is actively positioned extends beyond the mere transmission of information to the reader; it plays a crucial role in shaping a relationship that, as we will explore, fosters a direct author-reader connection. This connection is not established solely through the use of personal pronouns but also through other linguistic markers—subtle yet revealing traces that signal the presence of the author

within the text.

What is striking in the novels of recent decades is the increasing prominence of the narrator—no longer merely a conduit for the story but a central presence in its own right. Behind this narrator stands not just an implicit author but a complex narrative voice that often eclipses characters, actions, and motives, shifting the focus from events to the act of narration itself. We recall here that the implicit author or nonactual fact-telling are concepts used to avoid the author, on whom, according to Eckardt^[5], the presence or absence of the narrator depends entirely. So the narrator, who stands on the same ontological level as the character and the events described^[6], whether in the third or first person, is monopolizing the narrative, including in what he narrates fragments from his personal life. The figure of the author, excluded from the analysis of literary works during the structuralist period, has gained ground despite the cognitivist studies of the last decades, which have turned their attention to the reader. It seems as if the instance of the narrator, a virtual instance that connects the text with the recipient, has entered a crisis. The author’s return to the work seems to be related to the fact that “there are numerous nonperipheral examples of literacy narratives—in particular, those written in a plain third-person omniscient narrative style”—for which there is no reason to believe they have fictional narrators”^[6]. However, how do these theoretical issues translate into the literary creativity of Albanian novelists? In Albanian literature after the 90s, and especially starting in the first years of the 21st century, many novels have been published, and there seems to be a tendency to move away from traditional narrative techniques. As in recent developments in world literature, in the Albanian novel, the authors’ tendencies go opposite to the scholarly approaches of the structuralists Genette, Todorov, Barthes, and Greimas. In this context, in the Albanian literary environment, the pioneer of innovations cannot but be Ismail Kadare. It is precisely this author, who has always brought new forms to Albanian literature, who, in his discursive game, dissolves the boundaries between the instances of author, narrator, and character, trying to expand the observation on Albanian society and the communist dictatorial system in Albania from 1945–1990, but also on the difficulties of being a writer in this period. “Although he was a political conformist, who could blame him for this then?—Kadare was and remained a dissident in literary theory within the country and a giant

among Albanian novelists”^[7].

“Kadare is undoubtedly the most versatile writer of our time,” who “is swept by all the waves of modern contemporary art”^[8]. Kadare’s work is the richest and most diverse in Albanian literature. He masterfully mastered all literary genres and knows hundreds of editions and reprints of his works and translations into forty-seven foreign languages. Despite the quantity and variety, what can be noticed in this author’s works is that none of the texts stands as a separate universe, isolated or without a relationship with the others. He always finds a connecting thread, which mainly belongs to the lexical field, that connects the works. The existence of these lines, connected in an uninterrupted system that reveals itself, has also been pointed out by researchers Kuçuku and Kryeziu^[9]. Kadare’s rich literary creativity, which began in prose in 1963 with his first novel, “The General of the Dead Army,” testifies to his national essence. As a master of language, he is also the most original in organizing the discourse structure in his novels, trying to move from the conception of language as a representation or mirror of reality to a more open approach to ambiguity and the effective use of language^[10].

The skill of this writer has attracted many scholars who have emphasized the originality and mastery of this author in the use of artistic language^[11]. However, the relationship the author builds with what he creates is no less important. In narrative works, we can distinguish two parts from the beginning: one is narrative, in which the author presents the facts as they develop in the reality of his fantasy, sometimes personally intervening with observations and thoughts, which unmistakably bear his authorship, and the other is enunciative, where the one who speaks, thinks and observes is not the author, but the character. The debates that continue on the function and position of the narrator demonstrate the complexity of the issues related to this narrative instance. For Kaplan^[12], the meaning of linguistic expressions is in direct relation to the context of what is said, which must be able to provide indications to determine in the reader’s mind at least a speaker, a receiver, the time, the place, and the environment, as strategically necessary elements for identifying the speaker.

Structuralist and post-structuralist frameworks predominantly argue for the removal of the author from textual analysis, focusing solely on textual structures and their in-

herent meaning. However, recent critical discourse indicates a shift, highlighting the renewed relevance of the author’s presence within literary texts, especially through narrative strategies and linguistic techniques. Despite this development, there remains a notable gap regarding how exactly this fusion between author, narrator, and character is linguistically articulated in contemporary literature, and specifically through lexical choices. The work of Ismail Kadare provides a unique and compelling case study to address this gap. Kadare, an internationally acclaimed author, utilizes language in ways that both challenge and transcend traditional narrative frameworks. His literature often blurs the boundaries between historical reality, fictional narrative, and authorial intention—making it fertile ground for analyzing how linguistic strategies mediate the interplay among authorial presence, narrative voice, and character representation. Kadare’s narrative approach is particularly relevant because it reflects the linguistic, cultural, and political complexities of his context—post-totalitarian Albania—where traditional narrative structures struggle to fully express historical and existential absurdities. Language, under these conditions, becomes a crucial tool for conveying nuanced dimensions of truth, fiction, and ideological critique. To bridge this research gap, the current study aims to explicitly address the following research objectives:

- To identify and analyze the linguistic strategies, specifically lexical fields, employed by Ismail Kadare to fuse the boundaries between the author, narrator, and character.
- To explore how this lexical fusion contributes to a dynamic narrative voice and layered narrative structure in Kadare’s fiction.
- To investigate how the blurring of authorial, narrative, and character boundaries influences reader perception, engagement, and interpretation of narrative reliability and truthfulness.

By focusing on these objectives, the study seeks to demonstrate the urgency and critical importance of investigating the lexical field as a linguistic phenomenon that captures the evolving authorial presence within contemporary literary discourse. A key aspect of this relationship is how the narrative voice infiltrates what is spoken—“enunciation”—blurring the boundaries between the author, the extra-diegetic narrator, and the character. This fusion gener-

ates intermediary zones of discourse that bear the imprints of the author and the character, creating a layered and fluid narrative structure. The blurring of boundaries creates a more interactive reading experience by inviting readers to question the truthfulness and reliability of the narrative. When fact and fiction intermingle, readers must navigate their interpretations and consider the author's intentions, which can lead to a deeper engagement with the text. This interaction fosters critical thinking as readers reflect on how narratives shape perceptions of reality. By drawing attention to its fictional nature, metafiction challenges traditional storytelling conventions and encourages readers to reflect on how stories are told. This self-referential approach emphasizes the interplay between fact and fiction, as it often incorporates real-life events while simultaneously questioning their representation.

In the past century, language and linguistic studies extended to all fields of study. Language appears as the key to everything, as Wittgenstein asserts, supporting the idea that the limits of his language also constitute the limits of his world^[13]. In this perspective, starting from the postmodernist approach to language, which is based on the notion of play, the irrationality of the world, and consequently of the language used by writers, is not just a sensation or an existentialist theoretical abstraction but seems to become a reality in the creativity of writers, and in our case, Kadare.

2. Methodology

This study employs a multidisciplinary approach, integrating literary and linguistic analysis to examine *The Inhibited (A Girl in Exile)* by Ismail Kadare (translated by John Hodgson, published by Vintage Books, 2018 edition). Specifically, it employs textual analysis focused on selected portions of the novel, particularly emphasizing focalization strategies and narrative techniques that employ compound points of view, using Rudian, Linda B, and the extra-diegetic voice as major narrators. The selected portions include key chapters and passages where the fusion of authorial, narrative, and character perspectives is most explicitly articulated. These sections were chosen due to their prominent illustration of lexical and narrative fusion, effectively serving the study's research objectives.

The theoretical framework guiding the analysis is primarily Michael Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics

(SFL), specifically focusing on Halliday's concept of ideational and interpersonal metafunctions, which explore how language constructs experience and interaction. Additionally, Bakhtin's concept of dialogism and polyphony provides the secondary theoretical basis. As Bakhtin states: "Each word tastes of the context and contexts in which it has lived its socially charged life; all words and forms are populated by intentions"^[14]. According to this view, no word or discourse element can exist independently but inherently interacts with previous and subsequent discourses.

The primary data was collected from the novel through a close reading approach, identifying and selecting lexical instances that clearly reflect a fusion between authorial discourse, extradiegetic narrative voice, and character speech. These data were then categorized based on Ryan's^[15], Genette's^[16], and Cohn's^[17] narrative classifications, distinguishing lexical features that reflect authorial intervention, narrator reliability, and character focalization. Ryan emphasizes the necessity of considering ideological characterization through voice, cautioning that it is insufficient to rely solely on the presence of voice without psychological grounding: "...to make an ideological characterization, it is not enough to rely only on the presence of a voice (without feeling the need for this presence to be based on a psychological characterization)"^[15].

Data analysis followed a two-step procedure. The first step was descriptive, where lexical items were categorized according to their narrative function: those belonging to authorial commentary, extradiegetic narrative interventions, or direct character discourse. The second step involved interpretative analysis, examining how these lexical choices influenced the blurring of narrative boundaries, thus reinforcing the hypothesis of fusion between authorial and narrative voices.

A key aspect of the methodology is the attention to Kadare's strategic use of autofictional elements, where the writer explicitly appears as a character. Such elements embed the author's personal reflections directly into the characters' discourse, fostering deeper reader engagement and reinforcing the fluid boundary between fiction and reality. The descriptive and interpretative analyses are supported by textual evidence drawn explicitly from the novel. Key lexical items from the registers of the three narrative instances (authorial discourse, extradiegetic narration, and homodiegetic

narration) were systematically coded to establish clear linguistic patterns. This coding process involved categorizing lexical instances according to their functional role in shaping the narrative structure—whether revealing authorial intent, narrative mediation, or character focalization. By analyzing these coded lexical choices step by step, clear patterns emerged, demonstrating how the fusion of narrative boundaries occurs linguistically and systematically within the text. Kadare's *The Inhibited* was selected from his extensive oeuvre because it offers a vivid example of authorial presence and metafictional strategies characteristic of contemporary narrative practices, making it an ideal case study to explore the fusion phenomenon targeted by this research.

3. The Fusion of Narrative Voices: A Theoretical and Methodological Illustration

This section provides a conceptual and methodological illustration of how narrative voice fusion operates within Ismail Kadare's novel, *The Impeded - Requiem for Linda B*, published in 2009. It does not represent empirical findings but rather demonstrates, through detailed textual examples, how linguistic and discursive elements theoretically enable and reveal the fusion between the author, the extradiegetic narrator, and the homodiegetic narrator. By closely examining selected passages, this analysis exemplifies the complexity of assigning narrative voice and authorship within the novel's discourse structure, providing a methodological basis for further systematic linguistic analysis. The examples chosen here, particularly the dialogue between Rudian Stefa and the ghost of the partisan, highlight key theoretical issues concerning the attribution and interplay of narrative voices, supporting the study's subsequent empirical analysis.

The subject of the novel "The Impeded - Requiem for Linda B," is constructed as a combination of two worlds: that of the capital of Albania, Tirana, and the lost city where Linda B is forced to live. On one side, we have the writer Rudian Stefa; on the other is Linda B., an eighteen-year-old girl whom the totalitarian system has forbidden from setting foot in the capital. The reality of Tirana, with "Cafe Flora," the intersections of the streets around Skanderbeg Square, the gardens of the Academy, the former royal palace, and the fallen leaves of the park in front of the "Dajti" hotel, which

in the memory of the writer Kadare evoke nostalgia, takes on an extremely dramatic hue when the narrative comes from the point of view of a girl who is forbidden to set foot in the capital. Rudian and Linda B. have a common point: the obstacle that the state places on both of them, the first for the publication of his drama and the second for visiting the capital. This common point and the characters' efforts to overcome the obstacles give the author a hand in building the structure of the events and the discourse, which we will analyze. The equivalence with the story of Orpheus serves in this novel to show that man's relationship with obstacles is always tricky and sometimes tragic. However, they can be overcome only when the man, the artist, manages to break the rules. To break these rules, the writer is helped by language.

The main protagonist of this story is the playwright Rudian Stefa, who accidentally signs a book to an unknown girl. The reason for signing this book is Linda's friend, Migena. Migena creates a relationship with the playwright, which she keeps hidden from her close friend. At the same time, this unforgivable act of Migena was a betrayal of her friend and the beginning of significant problems for Rudian. Rudian is called to the party committee without knowing why. There, he faces a double test, where, on the one hand, he tries to understand his difficulties.

On the other hand, he tries to understand the truth about Linda B. Crossing dangerous areas is an anxious and shocking crossing but also an exploration of conscience. In this way, he manages to understand many things about his fate and the fate of others. Linda's suicide has concrete but also unknown motives. By ending her life tragically, Linda gives us an understanding of the illusion of life that sounds like a black existential metaphor. Linda's figure is a gloomy and terrifying reality. She is truly a human being but without life rights. The tragic fate of Linda, Rudian's drama, is a complex interweaving drama with a double essence, an invisible slide from the plane of animated development into a mixture of things with opposite origins. This work takes on vast dramatic dimensions within itself as a structure that rises above the very genre of artistic drama and above the very real drama that unfolds before man's eyes during the totalitarian regime.

In "The Inhibited", particularly on the dialogue between the character Rudian Stefa and the ghost of the partisan, the way this discourse is constructed raises an essential

question: to whom does this speech, as reproduced by the narrator, truly belong? At first glance, the scene may seem like an unnecessary detail that does not advance the plot. However, it intensifies the sense of reality, reinforcing the mimetic illusion. According to the structuralist distinction between event and discourse, the ghostly encounter clearly belongs to the realm of discourse, which, in turn, is controlled by the narrator. Though the narrator is an inherent narratological element, their presence cannot be fully understood without considering its extratextual origin and effect.

Halliday^[18] states: “A text is the product of ongoing selection in an extensive network of systems – a system network. Systemic theory gets its name from the fact that the grammar of a language is represented in the form of system networks, not as an inventory of structures [...] structure is the outward form taken by systemic choices, not the defining characteristic of language [...] a language is a resource for making meaning and meaning resides in systemic patterns of choice.”

In the binomial diegesis/mimesis, Genette argues at length that: “the only correct equivalence of diegesis/mimesis is narrative/dialogue (narrative mode/dramatic mode) [...], where of course situations that are considered general and that writers attribute to a character are implied^[16]. The typical discourse of artistic narrative is a reproduction of the fictional. However, we think that when the fictional reproduces the fictional (we are dealing with a meta-discourse since there is an analogy with some titles of Kadare’s works), in this case, the distance between the author and the narrator decreases. The ghost scene is a pure moment that the reader, although he knows that Rudian created it, does not perceive as such. However, even though, in our case, we have a presence not only of the voice but also of the psychology of this voice that presupposes that he wrote the drama, the reader still gives the authorship right to the novel’s writer. Rudian, although he is an entirely constructed character, we know (insofar as we may be interested in him as a character within the event constructed by the author) everything about him. However, the fact that we are dealing with a created character leads us to think that this scene is a signifier of the author. It is an artistic fiction within fiction. According to the structure of a dramatic work, the graphic presentation gives it the status of a literary work. It cannot be separated from the rest of what the author has created, so this scene is also

read as if it had been created and written by the author. It is interesting to analyze the role of the narrator in this fragment of the work.

It is clear that “the author, a real being, is not and cannot be part of an imaginary situation. The author and the work are separated by the abyss that separates the real from the imaginary^[19]”, but more than a physical being, it is a psychological being. Some facts we find within the scene make us think that it is not easy to attribute it to the narrator, the voice in the work. We do not find sentences in which we are given the information that Rudian is writing. As mentioned above, chapter eight begins immediately with the scene: “ACT TWO. The shore of the swamp. In it, two steps from the water, the lifeless body of a partisan...”^[20]. In this case, the absence of the narrator’s voice directly connects with the written drama, and we consider it one of those cases where we find ourselves faced with an event narrated by itself. The anthropomorphic form to which we can relate would be the character, but we always associate the narrator with a source of the voice, which seems to be missing due to the form. We read the introduction to the second act of the drama, and it is not narrated to us by the extradiegetic narrator, who begins to narrate in the second paragraph. We also have the same problem identifying the voice in cases where part of the discourse transmitted to us is the captions used in the text. The narrator’s voice cannot justify their existence because they are graphic elements that cannot be reproduced as the characters’ discourse would be reproduced, nor are they narrated as actions. We encounter the use of captions several times, even in the case where we are told that Rudian reads the fragment aloud:

“He read the beginning of the text aloud, to better imagine the impression it might make.”

COMMISSION MEMBER 1: (Addressing the accused,) Defendant, you are guilty of the murder of the partisan Robert K. in October 1943, in a place called Fushë e Qyqes. Explain yourself.

DEFENDANT: It was not murder. I was not a murderer either. It was the decision of the partisan court, and I was its bailiff.

COMMISSION MEMBER 2: The reason for the sentence?

DEFENDANT: (Unsure) A whim, arrogance, mockery of comrades.

COMMISSION MEMBERS The reason for the condemnation?

THE DEFENDANT: (Uncertain) Fantasizing, conceit, mocking one's friends. COMMISSION MEMBERS (Almost in unison). This motive is surprising^[20].

The ghost scene in the novel "The Inhibited," due to the way the discursive structure is organized, does not allow us to identify the consistent mental presence of the narrator. This consistency would imply a consistency in the purity of the voice that narrates and the preservation of the point of view from the positions of the extradiegetic narrator. Of course, in such cases, when we cannot create a complete image regarding the figure of the narrator because he appears fluctuating, it is easier to attribute the discourse to the author. This choice is for another reason. As long as the narrator/author discussion is valid in debates about narrative works, this debate is fully valid even when we discuss which voice is the one from which the narration is directed, in the case of *Act Two* or Chapter Eight, which are the same thing in a novel. The discursive reproduction of the ghost scene and its graphic one leads us to think that we can talk about the fusion of different voices within the same discursive structure. Since we recognize that the narrator only has the right to reproduce discourses, the author-character metamorphosis cannot fully function in this case. The inability to attach the narrator's voice to the writing process, which can be more attached to the writer, supports our opinion that this scene, although it may seem like the character's discourse, is not such. The voice that narrates always has an uncertainty, a point of doubt regarding the source. The uncertainty, in this case, has to do with the fact that although the narrator at a second moment in the chapter tells us:

"Rudiani was thinking about the new sisterhood." immediately after this statement that certainly belongs to the narrator's voice, the following begins: "The ghost, illuminated in purple or white, approaches"

COMMISSION MEMBER I. Robert K., you were killed by a bullet to the head on September 29, 1943, in a place called *Fushë e Qyqes* on the shore of an unnamed swamp. What was the reason for the conviction by the partisan court?^[20]

But what cannot escape our observation is the fact that while, as mentioned above, we are told that we are dealing with Rudian's thoughts regarding the new sisterhood, at the

end of the ghost scene, the narrator claims that this is not simply a thought-out scheme, that is, it is not a reported discourse, but whole pages of writing, just as we find them written in the work in question (eight pages are taken from the dramatic part). "For a long time, he had been staring at the written pages, almost in amazement, as if they were not his own^[20]".

However, what is also striking are the different ways used to provide the necessary information that we do not find in the dialogues between the characters of the drama:

"GHOST: No partisan court has condemned me. I was killed with a bullet in the head by the man standing in front of you.

THE KILLER stands motionless. It is understood that he does not hear anything that is being said. He sees the heads of the two members turning from the space, where, to his eyes, there is nothing^[20]."

None of the sentences taken in italics belong to the murderer, the character of the drama, to justify the graphics as taken above. In this case, the present tense proves that we have a case of reported discourse. However, whose discourse is reported? It is assumed that those written after the character, the murderer, belong to him. These are Rudian's (we can call them his because they are being written) thoughts, even though the reader is already disconnected from the mediation of the narrator. We will consider this unusual for the reason that while it seems written in capital letters "MURDERER," we expect that it is in continuity with the character's life, as in any other typical case in a drama or at least to find it used, which does not happen. The opposite happened just one page ago, although we have done with the reported discourse: "The dialogues then came flowing. [...] Why, what was stopping them? Because he continued as before. That is, they could not kill him because he was mocking? It seemed. That is, could he be killed when he realized that he had to be killed? In other words, to stop mocking, to pave the way for his murder? (The Silence of the Defendant),^[20] at its end, we see the use of the didaskalia as if the entire scene were graphically presented as a drama. The intentionality of this exchange, which is towards the fusion of subjects, is right. Breaking or crossing borders is the only way to remove the "obstacles" between the worlds.

The present tense of the verb "approach" makes this sentence seem like those cases in which the event narrated

by itself and does not have a well-defined narrator. We judge this mediation between two fictional worlds, that of the first degree and that of the second degree, as an artistic discovery by Kadare. This sentence, which can also be considered a reported discourse, does not have much value in defining the voice. However, in creating the possibility to move on to the elaboration of the scene, which is listed immediately, but graphically, in its writing, there is a disconnection from the sentence above. These artistic findings, we emphasize once again, lead us to think that, even if we were to consider it possible to analyze the scene as a reported discourse, the graphic distance from the rest of the narrator's discourse belies this and makes this part of the work have a kind of autonomy from the rest of the narrative in the work: "Rudiani was thinking about the new sisterhood. The ghost, illuminated in purple or white, approaches. MEMBER 1 of the COMMISSION: Robert K., you were killed with a bullet in the head on September 29, 1943, in a place called 'Fushë e Qyqes' on the shore of an unnamed swamp. What was the reason for the conviction by the partisan court?"

Nevertheless, whose discourse is being reported? It is assumed that what is written after the character, the murderer, belongs to him. These are Rudian's thoughts (if we can call them such because they are being written), which come right there, even though the reader is already disconnected from the mediation of the narrator. We would consider this method unusual for the simple reason that when we see "MURDERER" written in capital letters, we expect the following statements to be by this character, as in any other typical case in a drama, or at least to find captions used, which does not happen. The opposite happened just one page earlier, where even though we were dealing with reported discourse, "The dialogues then flowed. [...] Why, what prevented them? Because he continued as before. That is, they could not kill him because he was mocking? as it seemed. That is, he could be killed when he understood that he had to be killed. In other words, to stop mocking, to pave the way for his murder?" (The Silence of the Defendant) At the end of it, as can be seen, we find the use of captions, as if the entire scene is graphically presented in the form of a drama. The intentionality of this exchange, which leads to the fusion of subjects, is obvious. The violation or crossing of borders is the only way to remove the "barriers" between worlds.

4. Merging the Narrator with the Character

As numerous studies have demonstrated, the figure of the narrator takes on diverse forms, one of which pertains to the extent of their presence within the narrative. Each story contains subtle textual markers - "spies" - that, in various ways, reveal key characteristics of the narrator's voice, highlighting its significance as an essential aspect of narration. The absence of first-person narration in identifying the narrator's role within the novel suggests an unreliable narrative voice, particularly in relation to the events being recounted. As a result, the boundaries between extradiegetic and intradiegetic discourse become fluid, enabling direct communication between the author, their intent, and the reader - ultimately shaping the interpretation of the work. The structuring of the narrative across multiple levels, particularly through the character of Rudian Stefa, who is also a writer, further facilitates the merging of the narrator with the character, reinforcing the complexity of narrative perspective. The lexical similarity observed between the narrator and the character is clearly noticeable throughout the work. It is not difficult to notice this similarity if we compare these two sentences: "*Apart from singing, the tradition did not provide any other means that would help Orpheus to put the terrible dog of hell under anesthesia...*"^[20] and "*They were in the same place where they had had their previous encounter, where the library was at an angle to the window. Almost the same words had been said, and those tears of hers were the same. ... with unexpected ease, his hand had done what he had measured himself for two or three times in his life without ever being able to do, grabbing the girl by the hair*"^[20], where: "grabbing the hair" and "putting to sleep" have the same logic of using verb nouns. Moreover, what is noticeable in these two fragments is the fact that they are characterized by the same authority of the narrative voice, which has no ambiguity in what it narrates. Although it is assumed that the first paragraph belongs to Rudian since it is his fantasy that produces such a scene, and in the second, it is the extradiegetic voice that narrates, there is still no contradiction between them that would allow us to determine to whom the discourse belongs. For this, we think that the voices mix at different levels, and we can affirm that we find a progression of this mixture in the text that is enough to lead

to the total fusion of the two voices.

Evidently, the novel lacks a first-person use by the main character, which would build a complete identity for him. But even though we do not encounter a first-person narrative, the seemingly marginal data that we encounter in the discourse create the opportunity to identify the fusion of subjects into a single one:

“He did not know the cruelty of writers. It never occurred to him that if the roles were reversed. It was Rudian Stefa who was questioning him; he would tie him to the chair, not with a turban, but with his hands in handcuffs, and shout at him, ‘You scum of the state, tell me how you gouged out Father Meshkalla’s eyes during torture because he baptized a baby, ...’”

and

“... The only thing the waiters knew how to do brilliantly was interrupting thought. He thought about the handcuffs because his eyes had remained on the other person’s hands. There, with handcuffs on his hands, he would interrogate him. Moreover, Vietnamese coffee was forced to be swallowed not from cups but in half, and the radio was broadcasting Fidel Castro’s six-hundred-minute speech. Because he was painful, eh, because he was so fragile that he would accidentally remind someone of a book signing, all the while being careful not to hurt them. Well, do not expect the same from us.”^[20]

Analyzing the above fragments, we can identify several elements in which the narrative voice is as tense as Rudian’s thoughts: “However, with his hands in handcuffs, he would tie him to the seat while shouting at him, you scum of the state, tell me...”, and even further on, where we are dealing with Rudian’s internal discourse, the tones are just as tense: “And with Vietnamese coffee, so that he could swallow it forcibly, not with cups, but with mouthfuls and under the radio that was broadcasting Fidel Castro’s six-hundred-dollar speech.” Even at the beginning of the first paragraph, he says, “He did not know the cruelty of writers.” It encourages the unification of the narrator and the character into a single subject and, consequently, of the voice. Moreover, in the second paragraph, where it seems that we are dealing with Rudian’s thoughts: “Damn, he thought. The only thing that the waiters...” seems to be a continuation of what was said above: “Because his eyes were still on the other’s hands, he found himself thinking about the handcuffs,” a

sentence that lets us understand that even above when the handcuffs are mentioned, we are dealing with the character’s thoughts, which are interrupted by the waiter’s intervention. Although at first glance it seems as if the narrator constructs the discourse, it is enough to remember that not only is the third person used in it, but we also use the character’s proper name: “It never occurred to him that, if the roles were reversed and it were Rudian Stefa who was questioning him...”, the statement that we have a reprise of thoughts on the part of the character lets us understand that the voice is unified. More than we are dealing with the use of reported discourse, according to Genettian typology, here we can say that the use of the proper name of the character serves to justify the use of the plural “writers” and the use of the pronoun in the first person plural “Well, do not expect the same thing from us.” The first person can be broken down into the author and character writers.

Whenever Rudian appears in the narrative, everything related to him is conveyed through third-person narration—a narration shaped by various forms of discourse. At times, it employs displaced discourse; at others, it relies on reported discourse, through which the extradiegetic narrator communicates the protagonist’s actions and emotions to the reader. An analysis of the construction of discourse in the novel reveals that reported discourse is often presented without explicit declarative markers. The clearest indication of the absence of voice fusion lies in how the character’s voice emerges within the narrator’s discourse: it appears in fully formed sentences, frequently exclamatory in nature. Importantly, the syntactic coherence of the narrator’s sentences remains intact; Rudian’s words, though structurally independent, co-exist dialogically with those of the narrator, maintaining a distinct yet interwoven presence in the text: “Rudian sought to meet the other’s eyes again, to understand if what he had noticed in them a few moments ago was really a sign of compassion, or if it had seemed so. He did not need anyone’s compassion. And even less his. What responsibility did he have if a girl he had never seen had drowned herself a thousand kilometers away? Let him save his compassion for someone else if he knew that feeling. Or did he think he would make her feel guilty for giving that girl a signed book? The investigator’s scumbag, who knows what he remembered, along with those other carnations, that writers were strange, that they would strangle a chick, and his con-

science would kill him for months on end. Kaqol continued to vent to himself. He did not know the cruelty of writers. It never even occurred to him that if the roles were reversed, it was Rudian Stefa who was questioning him; he would tie him to the chair, not with a turban, but with his hands in handcuffs. At the same time, he shouted at them, You scum of the state, tell me how during the torture you gouged out Father Meshkalla's eyes because he baptized a baby and how you cut off with scissors right in front of a painter's eyes, his canvases, while he shouted, 'You had better cut off my fingers, but not those,' and so on and so on, and so on for forty years in a row."^[20]

In an obvious way, Rudian's voice intervenes in the narrator's discourse. The use of the question mark in the sentences in the passages marks the fact that we are dealing with what the character says; even the register of the words "trap" and "kaqol" is related to the character, but the voice that brings them to us is the narrator. Otherwise, if we did not have these markers of the character's voice, the narrative would seem monological, originating from the narrator's unique voice. However, there is almost such a homogeneity between the two voices that we can speak of polyphony, dialogism, or, if it is a fusion, a synthesis. The two voices, because they approach an almost total fusion in this case, become one; this is because the narrator seems to lose his point of view and consistency.

Consider, in this case, a quotation of the words of another without a declarative formula, without a connection between the narrator's words and those quoted. We have the right to consider this statement, which conveys the character's thoughts, as he said, although we find in them the use of the third person. If we did not have the use of punctuation marks or the tense tone of the statements, we would judge that we are dealing with a narration of the character's thoughts by the author. However, the fact that Rudiani himself addresses himself not in the first person: "*having been so fragile, that he accidentally reminded the other of a book signature, being careful not to hurt him.*" but with "*the other,*" as the example proves, leads us to assert that the discourse that seems to be constructed only by the narrator's voice is a combination of voices. The way it is constructed in this case is one of the ways of realizing what Genette calls immediate discourse^[16], in which the narrator is removed, and the character replaces him.

The fragment seems ambiguous, among other things, because what we see is the presence of an introductory sentence: "*Rudiani sought to meet the eyes of the other again...*" which proves that the voice is that of the narrator. The fact that we mentioned that the third person is used throughout the discourse also strengthens this idea. However, the insertion of the character's discourse is so natural that only the punctuation marks, the change in tone (the first sentence has a laid-back narrative tone), and the use of the verb "*continued to blow*" allow us to identify the trustworthy source of this discourse. These elements cannot be ignored, especially in the absence of the use of the first person, which would fully identify the character to separate him from the author. The incoherence of the use of the third person can be attributed to a transgression not simply on the narrative levels but under the logic of mixing the discourses of two entities belonging to two different worlds.

5. Discussion

This discussion systematically synthesizes key findings, explicitly highlighting how each finding aligns or contrasts with existing literature on narrative structures, linguistic strategies, and authorial presence.

- The return of the author within narrative structure:
The findings demonstrate that linguistic elements serve as primary indicators of the author's return to the narrative structure, challenging earlier structuralist views advocating the author's detachment^[15, 17]. The analysis of Kadare's *The Inhibited* reveals contemporary authors employing language to embed their reflections directly within narratives, marking a clear departure from previous notions of the author as purely extratextual. This aligns with recent theoretical proposals emphasizing renewed significance of authorial presence in contemporary fiction^[15].

- Lexical and toponymic indicators of authorial presence:

The findings confirm that lexical and toponymic elements within Kadare's work function not only as narrative devices but as markers of autobiographical presence, consistent with previous studies highlighting how authors utilize their personal geographies and lexicon to strengthen narrative authenticity and reader

engagement^[21, 22]. Kadare explicitly integrates biographical experiences through detailed toponyms, reinforcing the fusion between authorial and narrative voices.

- Fusion of extradiegetic and homodiegetic narration: Contrary to traditional narratological distinctions between extradiegetic (authorial) and homodiegetic (character-based) narrators, Kadare deliberately blends these narrative forms. This fusion aligns with Bakhtin's dialogic theory^[14], revealing an inherently intertextual and polyphonic narrative structure. Kadare's blending of voices underscores thematic concerns—particularly absurdity and existential suffocation under totalitarian rule.
- Authorial defiance through narrative and linguistic strategies: These findings strongly align with Wittgenstein's linguistic theory^[13], emphasizing language as both a boundary and a resource. Kadare's narrative structure portrays writing as an existential act of defiance against oppressive political realities, supporting previous research highlighting literature under authoritarian conditions as acts of resistance and emphasizing narrative voice as a tool for reclaiming authorial and personal agency^[22].
- Metafictional techniques and reader engagement: Kadare's use of metafictional elements creates layered dialogues that actively engage readers, prompting them to question narrative reliability and ideological implications. This resonates with Ryan's^[15] assertions regarding narrative voice and ideological characterization, reinforcing that narrative polyphony can deepen reader engagement through complex narrative structures.
- Linguistic reality as a form of artistic liberation: Finally, Kadare's linguistic approach is identified not merely as representational but existential, where narrative voice and lexical choices merge authorial identity with fictional characters to express creative freedom. This aligns with literary criticism recognizing Kadare as a writer whose linguistic strategies elevate narrative language's semantic potential, positioning him among major literary figures employing linguistic fusion to transcend political and ideological constraints^[21, 22].

6. Conclusions

Ismail Kadare navigates skillfully between the realms of reality and unreality, blending dreams with the troubled world to illuminate the mysterious shadows of existence^[23]. The entire narrative structure—whether orchestrated through authorial discourse, extradiegetic narration, or character-based perspectives—serves the overarching purpose of transcending traditional narrative boundaries. As demonstrated in the ghostwriting scene, this fusion of perspectives challenges established narratological distinctions and creates new possibilities for narrative expression.

Initially, the discourse in *The Inhibited* might appear as an assemblage of heterogeneous elements, seemingly incompatible with traditional narrative coherence. However, viewed through the lens of narrative fusion and boundary dissolution, these disparate materials gain coherence and poetic integrity, contributing to a more profound interpretative meaning. Such a narrative structure creates the illusion of omniscience, giving an impression of seamless authority and total knowledge. Yet, this narrative simultaneously embodies the ideological values prevailing within the depicted society, reflecting a homogeneity that influences the world portrayed by Kadare.

Third-person narration, though seemingly objective, often limits character agency by imposing external perspectives. Kadare's narrative technique, however, deliberately avoids claims of total authorial omniscience, refusing to consistently provide internal focalization from a single character's viewpoint. Instead, the novel adopts an "internal focus," permitting more liberal and flexible interpretations of social and ideological norms^[17]. Thus, the author creates a complex interplay between objective narration and subjective experience, highlighting narrative as inherently interpretive rather than absolutely authoritative.

The purposeful construction of fused narrative boundaries enables Kadare to incorporate his personal history directly into the fictional narrative. This methodological approach aligns with Gérard Genette's theoretical insights into literary space and time. In his essay "Space and Time," Genette identifies the "telescopic nature" of literary works, characterized by disrupted linear temporalities and interconnected episodes through flashbacks and transversal relations^[24]. Kadare's writing mirrors this phenomenon, intertwining personal experience and imaginative fiction to

construct a narrative layered in temporal and spatial dimensions.

Ultimately, Kadare's narrative form does not merely arrange pre-existing realities; rather, it invites the reader to actively interpret and connect textual signs. Through the interplay of diegetic and metadiegetic levels, Kadare demands a participatory reading process, wherein readers construct meaning by navigating between reality and fiction, past and present. Thus, the structural fusion within Kadare's novels transcends mere stylistic innovation, fostering a deeper engagement with literary meaning and the complex realities of human existence.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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