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Internal Perspectivism and Empathy in Ismail Kadare's Novels in the Communist and Post-Communist Period

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Abstract. This paper compares the literary work of the Albanian writer Ismail Kadare in the communist and post-communist periods, pointing out the stylistic traits that have made his work resistant to the communist rule. In a political context which managed to disfigure literature as a tool of the daily interests of politics, Kadare succeeded in protecting language from an Orwellian absolute repression. During the communist period, Kadare broke out not only of the Albanian political isolation but also of the stylistic limits and literary incapability of Socialist Realism. Yet, scholars such as the eminent Balkan historian Noel Malcolm (1997) have condemned Kadare for opportunistic relation with the regime, and this opinion emerged every time the writer was announced as candidate for the Nobel Prize. The paper argues that Kadare's narrative style characterized by lack of authoritarianism is the best argument which refutes this condemnation. The stylistic features of his prose are analysed through linguistic indicators such as agency, transitivity, passivation, animacy, free direct and indirect discourse, intensifiers, deictics, thematization, and cohesion. This study points out the internal perspectivism in Kadare's prose written during the communist period and identifies metafiction and inter-subjective focalization in his post-communist novels.

Keywords: Ismail Kadare, interior monologue, inter-subjective focalization, metafiction, mind style

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1. Introduction: The writer's survival in totalitarianism

The work of Ismail Kadare created after he left Albania attracted the attention of the international literary criticism more than in his homeland, Albania, and the surrounding Albanian-inhabited countries. Kadare received the prestigious English award *The Man Booker International Prize* (2005), the Spanish literary honour *Prince Asturias Award for Literature* (2009), the *Jerusalem Prize* (2015), the *Neustadt International Prize* (2019) and has been mentioned as a possible recipient of the *Nobel Prize in Literature*. The most appraised novels in the author's oeuvre, such as *Pallati i ëndrrave* (*The Palace of Dreams*, 2011 [1981]), *Prilli i thyer* (*Broken April*, 1990 [1980]), *Ura me tri harqe* (*The Three-Arched Bridge*, 2005 [1978]), and *Kronika në gur* (*Chronicle in Stone*, 1987 [1970]), were written during the communist regime, whereas his post-communist opus has been valued abroad more than at home, in particular *Vajza e Agamemnonit* (*The Daughter of Agamemnon*, 2006 [2003]), *Pasardhësi* (*The Successor*, 2005 [2003]), and *Piramida* (*The Pyramid*, 1996 [1992]). Albanian literary criticism has not expressed enthusiasm about the novels that Kadare wrote after leaving Albania, and there is a predominant opinion about the waning quality of his work after the fall of the regime. Furthermore, there has been criticism regarding his ambiguous relationship with the dictator, and this denunciation sounds like a typical dictatorial mentality intending to punish a writer because he needed to survive in "the strictest Marxist-Leninist regime on earth – with the possible exception of North Korea" (Vickers–Pettifer 1997: 1). Peter Morgan argues that "Ismail Kadare chose to compromise in order to continue living and writing in Albania, without adopting the suicidal role of the heroic outsider on the one hand, and without supporting the dictatorship on the other" (2010: 86).

Albanian literary critics have primarily focused on Kadare's political messages, pointing out the political allegory and irony in his work, which expressed opposition towards dictatorship. Outside his country, he has been acclaimed not only for the allegoric resistance through literature but also for the realism, regarded as "the last great chronicle of everyday life under Stalinism" (Morgan 2006: 7). James Wood praises both his irony and narrative skills: "Kadare is inevitably likened to Orwell and Kundera, but he is a far deeper ironist than the first, and a better story-teller than the second. He is a compellingly ironic storyteller because he so brilliantly summons details that explode with symbolic reality" (2010: 141–142).

After he left Albania in 1990, Kadare engaged himself directly into politics by appearing in the media through declarations, articles, and interviews, trying to influence the public opinion about important issues such as the war in Kosovo or the fall of communism in Albania. Although the political dimension of his work has been extensively discussed, the writer himself expresses aversion against labelling his work as political: "[w]hen I say I am not a political writer […] I am aware that a dosage of politics is unavoidable in literature, as politics is a part of the writer's

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life and he should not be embarrassed about this. However, reflecting the political context of your life in your own work does not mean that you are a political writer"[1] (Furxhi 2005). When awarded the *Booker Prize*, Kadare declared for *The Guardian* that he cannot be portrayed solely as a Balkan writer, nor as a political writer, as writers cannot be reduced to these labels (Henley–Scott 2005).

Living in France, Kadare used the opportunity to directly articulate his political messages in the media, and he was very vocal against the use of violence by repressive regimes, particularly in the case of Albania and Kosovo. However, he kept his political engagement completely detached from the literary work, staying away from the typical cliché of heroic dissident Eastern writers in the West. According to Morgan, "[t]his is what makes him a great writer rather than a political dissident" (2006: 10).

A central dimension in Kadare's work was national identity, and many of his works under the communist regime covered themes of the Albanian national history and culture. Morgan observes the political power of these themes, declaring that "[w]here Orwell and other earlier critics of totalitarianism focused on aspects of individual desire as inimical to dictatorial control, Kadare showed prescience in identifying ethnic identity as a destabilizing force in communist dictatorships and as a resurgent political force at the end of the post-war era" (2002: 379).

Ethnicity was an unacceptable category in the Marxist-Leninist ideology, wherefore Kadare's insistence on national identity was a challenge and a threat for the dictatorial system. The communist-controlled readership experienced the ancient identity of Albania in Kadare's work as superior compared to the harsh and grim dictatorship. The foregrounding of the national dimension in his work does not produce an isolated local narrative about the exotic nation whom internationals should be curious about. On the contrary, as Angusheva has asserted, Kadare's novels transmit universal messages initiating an intercultural narrative (2004: 51–54). When awarding the *Ballkanika* prize for literature, the American scholar Andrew Wachtel declared for the Albanian media:

> Personally, I prefer novels which are not necessarily governed by the Balkan reality. In my opinion, novels which should get this literary award are those which contain typical Balkan features; however, at the same time, they should be able to reach beyond them. […] American readers think that literature which comes from dark places should reflect the reality of such places. Regretfully, writers believe that the stereotype of the folkloric Balkans should be transmitted the way the international reader expects it. But it is true that the American or the English reader is looking for the typical and for the peculiar in this kind of literature, otherwise they would not have been interested in it. (*Gazeta Shqip* 2010)

1 The translations from the Albanian and Kosovo media are by L. T. throughout the article.

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The theme of ethnicity is still fundamental in Kadare's recent prose; however, it is not associated with the "demonization of the Other" as it used to, according to scholar Shaban Sinani (2016: 125–127). Initially, according to Sinani, this demon was the Western imperialism and the Ottoman Empire, later on the Soviet imperialism, then China, and so on, but in his most recent prose Kadare reduces the amount of stereotyping "the enemy" and raises the dose of the readers' empathy for the Other.

2. Narratological components and ideology

Kadare's non-intrusive narrating technique and the foregrounding of the "narratorial distance" (Ducrot–Todorov 1979: 331) made it possible for him even in circumstances of the most extreme totalitarian conditions to create fiction away from the authoritarian position and to let readers interpret freely (Tahiri 2009, 2015). The stylistic affinities of Kadare and, in particular, the perspectival narration are conventional traits of contemporary literature. According to Jesse Matz (2004: 53), there are three main reasons for the departure of perspectival writers like Woolf and Faulkner from the traditional objective narration, the first of which is the epistemological motive of the writer, or the desire to show how knowledge and understanding take place. There is also an aesthetic motive for choosing the perspectival narration which offers subtle nuances compared to the unvaried omniscient narration, and furthermore there is the ethical motivation to make readers understand different perspectives and to reflect on their own. Without dismissing the other two motives, it seems that the ethical motivation has been pivotal in this case as the perspectival narration in Kadare's work is a strong divergence from Socialist Realism, a doctrine which implied a lot of dogmatism, moralization, and propaganda, imprisoning readers within the imposed ideological interpretation of the text.

Kadare managed to break out of the stylistic bareness of the novels of Socialist Realism, which have been sometimes qualified as "panoptical narrations", applying Foucault's (1977) notion of the scheme of "the disciplinary society" to the formal relations between characters and narrator. Literary critics have used this model of disciplined societies such as schools, prisons, and other controlled institutions to describe realist fiction as a genre which exhibits total control in the life and thoughts of characters. Dorrit Cohn discusses the Foucauldian reading of novels, applied in particular to the writers belonging to realism "as a genre whose form replicates the malevolent power structures of a society that both produces and consumes it" (1999: 166). It is exactly what Kadare's work prevented through his fiction, namely the replication of the dictatorship's repressive structure into language. To put it in Cohn's words, his fiction refused to give in to the absolute rule by using the "form".

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For Cohn, different narrative techniques correspond with different ideological orientations (1978: 177). Furthermore, Auerbach (1968: 552) attributes social and political significance to the precise and impartial presentation of the internal world of characters because, according to him, this literary trait is a concrete means of arousing tolerance and understanding between people.

Internal perspectivism in fiction has often been associated with understanding and empathy. One of the linguistic indicators strongly associated with the representation of the characters' consciousness is the free indirect discourse (FID). According to findings in cognitive narratology by Fletcher and Monterosso (2016), who modified text samples by increasing the amount of FID in contrast to narrated thought in the original, the increase of the usage of FID invites the emotional reaction of readers and makes them feel empathy for the characters. However, another scholar in this field, Suzanne Keen (2016), does not agree that this narratological component is uniquely capable of prompting readers' empathy as their reactions depend on their literary competence. She says that findings regarding the effect of FID is "often promulgated in the popular press in an oversimplified form" (2016: 110) and thus may cause simplification of the research about the stimulation of empathy in readers. Furthermore, while discussing techniques inviting the reader's empathy, Vera Nünning (2015) recommends for literary cognitivists to be more cautious, reminding them of the Proteus Principle (Sternberg, 1982), according to which there is no simple form-to-function mapping. Nünning emphasizes the fact that readers are not passive, and they have "the ability to deal with narrative as a cognitive schema, and to create and comprehend complex narratives" (2014: 150).

Some scholars think that recognizing someone else's frame of mind is as ancient as human interaction. In his book *How Literary Worlds Are Shaped*, Pettersson refers to Michael Corballis's "reformulation of the old hypothesis that the origins of language are gestural, since even iconic gesturing presupposes one of the prerequisites of language, the ability to adopt the mental perspective of another individual" (2016: 20). Pettersson discusses findings in recent evolutionary anthropology about the crucial importance for individuals to learn to "imagine themselves 'in the mental shoes' of some other person, so that they can learn not just from the other but through the other" (2016: 25). Furthermore, he mentions the evidence that "the area made use of when a subject is trying to gain insight into another person's mind is one of the most evolved parts of the brain, the middle of the prefrontal cortex" (2016: 25), which implies that imagining someone else's outlook is one of the crucial differences between humans and other primates.

In order to demonstrate the narrative features in Kadare's fiction that contribute to freely understanding the mind of the other, a fragment from his novel *Prilli i thyer* (*Broken April*, 1990 [1980]) will be analysed, focusing on the linguistic devices responsible for creating the illusion of inner speech and for building up the character's "mind style", a concept coined by Roger Fowler as a reference to "any

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distinctive linguistic presentation of an individual self" (1977: 76). Fowler's notion has been taken on by several scholars (e.g. Booth 1983, Fludernik 2009). In *Mind Style 25 Years On* (2007), Semino reviews the contributions made on the notion of mind style, pointing out its significance as it refers to the characters' minds, which is central to understanding fiction. Leech and Short consider mind style as "a realization of a narrative point of view" (2007: 152), and they analyse it through the "style markers", which are particular linguistic features of style in a specific text.

Broken April was written in the communist period and has been translated into English directly from the original, which is not the case with most of Kadare's novels, as they have been mainly re-translated from their French versions into English. This is a novel about revenge in the North Albanian highlands according to the provisions of the ancient Code. Gjorg, a young mountaineer, has avenged the death of his elder brother and expects to be killed himself in accordance to the provisions of the Code that regulates their life. Although some scholars consider this novel attractive for the Western reader because of the local colour of the vendetta (Elsie 2005), we believe that Kadare depicts the despotic character of the Code and suggests its resemblance with the communist regime of the time through the tyrannized and repressed mind style of Gjorg, the main character in *Broken April*. His mind style will be analysed by means of linguistic features such as agency, transitivity, passivation, animacy, free direct and indirect discourse, intensifiers, deictics, thematization, and cohesion.

Below is the closing passage of the novel *Broken April*:

> At that moment, Gjorg was walking with long strides on the Road of Banners, that he had reached an hour ago. The air was rippled with the first shiver of dusk when he heard, off to one side, a few short words:
> "Gjorg, give my greeting to Zef Krye…."
> His arm, in a sudden motion, tried to slip the rifle from his shoulder, but that gesture became confounded with the syllables *qyqe*, the last half of the hateful name, which made his way confusedly to his consciousness. Gjorg saw the ground reel, and then rear up violently to crash against his face. He had collapsed.
> For a moment, the world seemed to him to have gone absolutely still; then through that deafness he heard footsteps. He felt two hands moving his body. He's turning me on my back, he thought. But at that instant, something cold, perhaps the barrel of his rifle, touched his right cheek. God, according to the rules! He tried to open his eyes, and he could not tell if they were open or not. Instead of his murderer, he saw some white patches of snow that had not yet melted, and among those patches, the black ox, which still had not been sold. This is it, he thought, and really the whole thing has been going on too long. Again, he heard footsteps, drawing away, and a number of times he wondered,

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> whose steps are those? He felt that they were familiar. Yes, he knew them, and the hands that had turned him on his back. They're mine! The seventeenth of March, the road, near Brezftoht. He lost consciousness for a moment, then he heard the footsteps again, and again it seemed to him that they were his own, that it was himself and no one else who was running now, leaving behind, sprawled on the road, his own body that he had just struck down. (Kadare 1990: 215–216)

There is a double syntactical role of Gjorg in this passage both as subject and object of the verb. The nouns denoting parts of his body become subjects in the role of actors in contrast to Gjorg, who takes the role of the experiencer. This suggests not only lack of the will to act but also lack of awareness and lack of control towards one's actions, and the text foregrounds the agency of the character's limbs unconnected and alienated from his own self. The character's semantic and syntactic passive role affects the reader to see him as a mechanical performer rather than someone responsible for his actions. Gjorg is experiencer both in relation with the outward environment but also with his own self: the shortness and the tense of the sentence – "[h]e had collapsed" – imitates the physical action of falling by transmitting his internal perspective of experiencing the fall and his becoming aware about falling after it had already happened, as if he had been an observer. Gjorg is experiencing unconsciously the actions of another actor: the part of the character which is a victim is being acted upon by a second detached self. Consequently, his alternation from the subject role to the object role signifies his effort towards his own identity, which ends in annulment. These linguistic indicators are reinforced with indicators of FID, where the words and thoughts of the character and the narrator are blended. Intensified repetition of the third person pronoun sets up the narrator's distance and focuses the reader's attention on the character, creating the impression of immediately transmitted experience. The syntactic order of clauses imitates the experience of Gjorg and follows his actions, creating an impression of direct transmission of his thoughts and feelings. This style inclines towards psycho-narration, a term coined by Dorrit Cohn (1978) to indicate not only the character's thinking process but emotional extra-linguistic processes as well.

In the last paragraph of the text, which is the ending of the novel, the character's double function both as object and subject symbolizes his split identity. His self that emerged on the specific date when he committed the murder, the unconscious crime-committing self, performs his actions mechanically obeying to the ancient Code until it eventually manages to completely extinguish the other self. The final position of the verb clause "had just struck down" is both the end of the character's life and the end of the novel's text, metonymically connecting the signifier with the signified. The character's split identity ends with the complete fusion within the sign.[2]

2 A reduced version of the linguistic analysis of this passage was used as a demonstration for the pedagogical benefits of stylistics in teaching literature in Tahiri 2015.

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As Sinani rightfully claims (2016: 333–348), the discourse and the theme in *Broken April* are ethnographical; however, the novel does not glorify the ancient code of revenge, but, on the contrary, it foregrounds the totalitarianism of the code, figuratively denoting the weight of oppressive dictatorships. The internal perspective of narration manages to portray the character as a victim of alienation that the ancient code causes to him.

The concrete analysis of this fragment indicates FID as well as other style markers of internal perspective in narration. Kadare managed to stay away from the role of the preaching narrator and let the readers do the work of interpretation themselves. All the foregrounded linguistic indicators in the text create the distance of the narrating self from the experiencing self, transmitted through character focalization although the discourse markers belong to the third-person narrator.

3. The inter-subjective perspective of narration

Kadare claimed that his oeuvre had historical distribution from the antiquity to modern times as well as geographical distribution from Albania to Egypt. All those thousands of pages are driven by the writer's mission to nourish the power of imagination and the freedom of thought, which he continued to perform after leaving his country and settling in Paris. Kadare's prose created after the fall of communism is stylistically more innovative with a particular focus on the perspective of narration and the presentation of the characters' internal world. In his most recent prose, the perspectival technique is even more foregrounded, and the author often transmits unfinished versions of events. The characters in his latest novels have more subjective traits, and their identity is constantly changing. In fact, even in communist Albania, Kadare was accused of deviating from Socialist Realism with fragmented and foggy characters.

In the work created after the fall of communism, Kadare continued experimenting with interior monologue and the characters' limited perspective. The related metaphorical terms "perspective of narration", "point of view", and "focalization" are most commonly discussed concepts in narratology. The term perspective has been used by some scholars like Fowler (1986) following Uspensky (1973) and distinguishing between internal and external perspective – the former one denoting the character's perspective and the latter one offering the narrator's point of view. Point of view has been classified in relation to focalization, and Genette (1980) distinguishes between the external and internal focalization as compared to the objective stance, or zero focalization. The focalizer is called reflector by Stanzel (1984), and there has been continuous narratological discussion on this classification (e.g. Mieke Bal, Gerald Prince, Ansgar Nünning, etc.). Christian Huck draws attention to the visual predisposition of the narratological terminology related to "perspective"

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and takes the example of the Englishman James Holman, who travelled 250,000 miles in the first half of the 19th century; however, as he had been blind since the age of twenty-four, his experiences were considered invalid, and he was soon forgotten. "The Enlightenment's epistemological paradigm of the eyewitness did not allow for other sense data to become the basis for new knowledge", says Huck pondering if there is an "aural, olfactory or even a haptic" counterpart to a point of view: a point of smell, maybe, or a point of taste (2009: 201–202). In fact, many of the discussions about the point of view or focalization highlight the broader meaning of these notions including not only the visual but also the cognitive, emotive, and ideological orientation.

Besides perspectival narration, additional stylistic features that we would like to point out in Kadare's post-communist prose are the instances of self-reflection and metafiction when the text self-consciously takes as its subject its own narration. The term "metafiction" was initially used by Scholes in 1970; however, Shklovsky (1921) pointed out self-references within the narration of *Tristram Shandy*, and Booth (1952) discussed self-conscious narration. Genette (1980) considers meta-narration as a function of the narrator, whereas Prince (2003) considers it as function of the text. One of the first comprehensive studies of metafiction was done by Hutcheon (1980), who looks at metafiction as a narrative technique as well as the essence of the novel and as a superior form of literary creativity. In the light of the Aristotelian concept of mimesis, Hutcheon considers metafiction as a "reworking of the mimetic novelistic tradition" (1980: 5) which both acknowledges the artifice of art and at the same time demands responses from the reader, who becomes co-creator in interpretation. According to Waugh (1984), metafiction foregrounds the relation between fiction and reality, whereas for Currie (1995) it is the discourse between literature and literary criticism. On the other hand, Nünning (2004) distinguishes between meta-narration and metafiction as the first one reflects on the narrative process, whereas the latter one is self-reflection about fiction – hence, self-narration is present in non-fiction texts as well.

Kadare's post-communist novel *The Accident* (2010) has received contradictory evaluations, sometimes seen as a detective story, a political allegory, as a story of love and power, or it is disappointingly considered as an "accident" in the oeuvre of this author. *The New Yorker* calls it a difficult novel with "a very interrupted form, continually looping back on itself, so that dates and place names seem almost scrambled and the reader must work a kind of hermeneutic espionage on the text" (Wood 2010: 142–143). The novel begins with the crash of a car heading towards Vienna airport, causing the death of the passengers – a mysterious couple who, according to the confused driver's report, was trying to kiss at the moment when the accident happened, as if the kiss had triggered the crash. The story unfolds through the testimony of the couple's friends, of letters and phone calls, exploring human relations, politics and war, love and power, all interconnected by the dark and

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dreamy setting, typical of Kadare. Although it looks like one, it is not a conventional detective novel, not only because the mystery is never solved but also because both the obscurity and the explanations move into many directions within a narration of shifting points of view. The twelve-year love affair of the couple occurring in hotels in Europe ends with an accident which could be murder, suicide, or an agreement for suicide, as one of the characters was connected with the NATO decision to bomb Serbia and with the investigations in The Hague. Let us see a passage of this novel presenting the reflection of the accident investigator, who is the narrator of the story:

> Like every story, it would have three phases: the first purely imagined, the second clothed in words and the third finally told to others. He had a presentiment that he would only be able to manage the first. And so, one night in late summer, he started to imagine their story. But this effort of imagination was so strenuous, and consumed so much passion and empathy, that it drained his entire life-blood away. (Kadare 2010: 146)

In this fragment, the reference to the phases of telling a story invites the reader's self-awareness about the fact of being told a story. At the same time, paradoxically, the reader is invited to see this story as a reflection of the phase of "pure imagination" because the narrator is not able to "clothe it in words and to tell it to others". Furthermore, the process itself of the "imagination of the story" is difficult and "drains the life-blood away". This double status of the story, which is simultaneously told and not told, powerfully suggests to the reader that the narration is not about reality, and it is not able to replicate the "life-and-blood" reality; however, the story is reality itself.

There are many narrative instances of self-reflection in this novel, some of them highly figurative as, for instance, the request of the accident investigator to be buried with a piece of the broken mirror of the crashed vehicle, which for him carries the key to the mystery. Hence, the mirror recalls the mimetic power of the fictive narration, but at the same time it suggests the impossibility of narration as the investigator cannot get hold of the story, and, therefore, he is left with only a broken piece of the reflection of the story in the mirror.

To illustrate the narrative technique of the character's point of view in Kadare's prose, let us see another fragment from this novel:

> At that time, our whole lives were enveloped in lies, like a dense fog obliterating every horizon. There wasn't a glimmer of light anywhere. One after another, plots loomed out of the mist, first vaguely, like the shape of a foetus in its mother's womb, and then in clear outline. Some people still believed that even if one plot failed to topple the dictator the next might have better luck. But each plotter turned out to be more abjectly faithful than the last. The

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> conspirators' letters from prison became more and more ingratiating. Some requested Albanian dictionaries, because they were stuck for words to express their adoration of the leader. Others complained of not being tortured properly. The protocols sent back from firing squads on the barren sandbank by the river told the same story: their victims shouted, 'Long live our leader!', and as they conveyed their last wishes some felt such a burden of guilt that they asked to be killed not by the usual weapons but by anti-tank guns or flamethrowers. […]
> Sometimes the leader's mind was easier to read. He had enslaved the entire nation, and now the adoration of the conspirators would crown his triumph. Some people guessed that he was sated with the love of his loyal followers, and that he now wanted something new and apparently impossible – the love of traitors, behind which the West was hidden, NATO, the CIA, which he had persuaded himself he hated, but in fact secretly loved. […]
> One imagined him howling during the night […] Who was standing in his way? And he would guess who: it was his loyal followers, who clung to his coat-tails and would not let him go. At the very foot of the rainbow, they held him back from making that great leap. (You won't allow me to live.) They pinned him by the arms, they clung to his buttons, his bloodstained boots: you belong to us, not them. Do not leave us. He wanted to shriek at his contemptible pack of lackeys: 'It's you who are in my way. (You have destroyed my sex life.) Wait and see.' And he could lash out at them. The more they ingratiated themselves, the harder his whip fell. Then, even as they screamed, he thought they were making fun of him, or so he came to believe. In the end, they were the victors.
> Outside, the snowstorm had subsided. Besfort Y. felt tired. He could no longer tell how much of this farrago he had merely rehearsed in his mind, what he had actually told Rovena, and still less how much of it she had listened to. (Kadare 2010: 238–242)

In *The Accident*, the objectivity of the narrator is expressed through metonymy: the story is told by an anonymous investigator who is collecting the evidence after the accident in order to find out the truth. Hence, the interplay between facticity and fiction is suggested, as the narrator is looking for "facts." As seen in the fragment above, the character's internal perspective is indicated through linguistic traits such as deictic expressions, usage of tense, cohesion, and FID. In the last paragraph, there is a shift from the interior monologue to the external perspective, which is figuratively expressed with the spatial deixis: "Outside, the snowstorm had subsided". There is a movement from the "inside" world of the character to the "outside" setting, and the psycho-narration of his thoughts seems to take place on the threshold of the non-verbal, suggested in particular by the evaluative tone of "this farrago" and intensifiers such as "no longer, merely, actually, still less". What is

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in particularly interesting in this passage is the insertion of the words and thoughts of one character within the perspective of the other: in this case, the dictator's and Rovena's point of view within the interior perspective of Besfort. This insertion is represented graphically with brackets and linguistically with the second-person pronoun. This narrative technique creates a unique blend between the focalization of different characters, where their languages become one. Although there are graphological and morphological indicators of boundaries, the reader is invited to see the uttered words and thoughts as belonging simultaneously to multiple mindsets and beliefs. This kind of narration constructs the inter-subjective consciousness and the interconnection of individual cognizance, which goes beyond the isolated individual such as in the fragment above, which inter-relates the focalization of the character with his lover's as well as with the standpoint of the communist dictator. With the portrayal of the inter-subjective focalization in his most recent prose, Kadare has developed to the maximum the technique of transmitting the internal language of thoughts, thus making his work more challenging for the reader. This unification of subjectivities is very similar to the daily experience of others' emotions, even when they are not articulated verbally. The writer has ultimately displayed the fact that the language of the other, be it speech or thoughts, allows for dialogism and absence of uniform and single narration. As Bakhtin points out, the speech and the thoughts of characters allow for dialogism, and this constant dialogue of different languages in any point of narration enables the writer to avoid a single and unvarying code (1982: 259–422).

4. Conclusions

This study compares the prose created in the communist and post-communist period by Ismail Kadare, most likely the only Albanian writer known broadly outside his country. In the communist era, Kadare's narration foregrounds the style markers of the internal perspective, creating the impression of proximity with the inner world of the characters without exerting domination over them, contrarily to the dictatorship that kept people under absolute control. This narrative strategy opened up paths of intellectual freedom for readers and replenished with energy the publicly consumed language under dictatorship. Without aiming at simplified conclusions about relations between the narrative form and its ideological functions, the narratorial distance in Kadare's prose is identified as a strategy of challenging the authoritarian structures of the communist society by refusing to reproduce those structures in the language of fiction.

In the post-communist period, the national and political dimensions are less prominent in Kadare's work, while, on the other hand, he has been present in the public opinion about important issues such as the war in Kosovo or the

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fall of communism in Albania. In his fiction, he diminished the stereotyping of the "enemy" and intensified the empathy for the Other. His latest novels are stylistically more innovative and continue to refine narratorial perspectivism. The writer has sharpened his unobtrusiveness by exploiting effects of a dynamically ambiguous interaction between the mindsets of characters. He manages to create a blend of inter-subjectivity between the characters' point of view and to portray inter-subjective focalization. Furthermore, he foregrounds the relations between reality and fiction with instances of self-reflection and metafiction when the text self-consciously takes as its subject its own narration.

Kadare continues to narrate through uncompleted versions of events, melting the boundaries between fiction and reality, creating fluid characters which flow into each other's consciousness, dissolving the self of the author as a final source of meaning and truth. This stylistic choice of the great Albanian writer is congruent with the need of the formerly communist-controlled readership still struggling to get free from the detention of dogmatic thinking and authoritarian agendas in the new democracies.

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