

RESEARCH ARTICLE

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DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE AUTHOR AND THE PROTAGONIST IN ILDAR ABUZYAROV'S "FINDING A VOICE"

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Abstract

This article examines the characteristic features of the short prose of the modern writer Ildar Abuzyarov, whose work represents a unique synthesis of Russian, Eastern and European cultures. The relevance of the study is due to the need to better understand the diversity of cultural interactions reflected in the author's works, as well as their influence on the formation of characters' images. The main focus of the work is on the significant historical context in which Abuzyarov's work develops. Three main types of character nominations used by the author are examined, which makes it possible to identify their connection with three concepts of personality. These concepts, in turn, correlate with the genre paradigm of modern works of art, which creates a multi-layered narrative structure. The analysis reveals that Abuzyarov's characters not only reflect cultural realities, but also become conductors of deep philosophical reflections on the nature of man, his identity and place in a changing world. The article emphasizes that through the nomination and construction of characters, the author actively works with issues of self-identification, cultural code and intercultural communication. The work is an attempt to systematize and highlight the features of Ildar Abuzyarov's short prose, focusing on his contribution to the modern literary tradition and the significance of cultural interactions for understanding the literary process.

Keywords Author's «I» prose, modern literary process, type, artistic world.

INTRODUCTION

The literary process of late 20th – early 21st century Russia is a multilayered and multifaceted phenomenon, where writers seek to comprehend new realities, re-evaluating former spiritual values and social ideals. The work of Ildar Abuzyarov, one of the prominent representatives of contemporary Russian literature, has recently become the subject of study by literary scholars and critics. In the context of the multipolarity of the literary process during this period, I. Abuzyarov's works draw

attention as an example of the complex interplay of various writing techniques. This study presents an analysis of contemporary academic research dedicated to characterizing Abuzyarov's creativity, aiming to identify the key features of his narrative strategy.

The creative work of Ildar Abuzyarov, a writer operating at the intersection of Russian and Tatar cultures, can be divided into two significant periods, which reflect the stages of his artistic

evolution.

The first period of Abuzyarov's work is characterized by the use of magical realism, which served as a key tool for exploring cultural, philosophical, and existential questions. In a personal conversation with the author of this dissertation, Abuzyarov noted:

"For me, the first period, which also falls under magical literature, though I no longer categorize it as such, is traditionally associated with the Latin American wave of magical literature. During this initial phase of my life, I was learning to write by drawing from Latin American authors, which I called magical playful literature."

The second period, which began after a six-year hiatus in his creative work, marks a transition to autofiction:

"Now I am in my second period, which I call autofiction,"

This shift reflects a profound internal transformation in Abuzyarov's creative strategy and a significant change in his aesthetic and philosophical perspectives.

The prose of Ildar Abuzyarov up to the 2010s was analyzed by V.R. Amineva in the article "Features of the Subject Sphere in the Works of Russian and Tatar Writers" and by M.I. Ibragimov in the essay "National Identity of Tatar Literature: Contemporary Research Methods." In the 2010s–2020s, the circle of researchers expanded. Dirk Uffelmann explored Abuzyarov's works in "Playing Nomadism, or Postcoloniality as a Technique (The Case of Ildar Abuzyarov)." Elements of poetics in some of Abuzyarov's works, analyzed in the context of the contemporary literary process, were examined by V.R. Amineva and A.N. Nabiullina in "Nomination as a Method of Character Identification in the Prose of I. Abuzyarov." Further studies included "The 'Underground' Man in Contemporary Russian-Language Prose (Based on

the Works of I. Abuzyarov)" by A.N. Nabiullina and V.R. Amineva, as well as "Sacrifice and Self-Sacrifice in the Prose of I. Abuzyarov: Deconstruction of Mythological Plots" by V.R. Amineva and A.N. Nabiullina, among others.

The analysis of Ildar Abuzyarov's short story "Finding a Voice" provides a deeper understanding of the key themes and motifs characteristic of this author's work, as well as insights into the unique features of his poetics. As a representative of Russian-language literature in Tatarstan, Abuzyarov often explores issues of identity, inner search, and spiritual transformation in his works. These themes are also reflected in "Finding a Voice," where the symbolism of the voice becomes a central metaphor for understanding both individual and cultural self-awareness.

In "Finding a Voice," the voice serves not only as a means of communication but also as a symbol of attaining inner strength and the right to self-expression. The protagonist undergoes a complex process of finding their own voice, which can be interpreted as a symbolic journey toward understanding their own identity and place in the world:

"To exist in this world," she pondered, "one must at least have a starting point, a piece of work that would mark the beginning of their literary life. And to stand firmly on one's feet, one must have support, a foundation, or rather, a model of the land pieced together from hundreds of sheets filled with 'powerful' poems and 'profound' stories, as critics like to say."

The author uses this motif to convey the idea of liberating individuals from external and internal constraints, whether they be social, cultural, or psychological. In Abuzyarov's works, this process of finding a voice is often intertwined with themes of inner struggle and self-discovery, as seen in other stories where characters face trials to uncover their true selves.

A central motif in the story is silence, which is overcome through spiritual and personal awakening. The protagonist spends much of the narrative in a state of inner silence, symbolizing their alienation from the world and themselves. However, this silence is not static; it is continuously refracted through the search for and striving toward self-expression.

Abuzyarov demonstrates that the voice is not merely a mechanical tool for speech but an expression of a person's true essence. In this context, the story can be interpreted as a parable about the necessity of overcoming inner muteness, which symbolizes the loss of genuine connection with oneself and the surrounding reality.

An important feature of Ildar Abuzyarov's prose is its intertextuality. The short story "Finding a Voice" contains references to literary traditions where voice and silence serve as key symbols. For example, the motif of silence can be interpreted in the context of existentialist works by authors such as Albert Camus and Jean-Paul Sartre, for whom silence signified a loss of connection with being and the meaninglessness of existence. However, in Abuzyarov's case, the voice becomes a symbol of overcoming this void, filling it with meaning through creative self-expression.

A notable trend in contemporary literature is the exploration of the relationship between the author, the writer, and their characters. The question of the connection between the author and the protagonist holds a central place in modern literary studies, as it reflects the complex interplay between the fictional world of the text and the real-life personality of the author.

In recent decades, there has been growing attention to the autofictional approach, where the boundaries between the author's biography and the fictional world become blurred, creating new forms of interaction between the author and the character. This research will examine the main

theoretical approaches to the author-character problem, as well as analyze examples of contemporary works in which this relationship is expressed through various narrative strategies and techniques.

The study focuses on issues related to identity, authorial intent, and autofiction as significant phenomena in the context of modern literary practice. Abuzyarov's narrative strategies often intertwine elements of personal experience with symbolic representations, highlighting his unique contribution to the autofictional trend in contemporary literature.

In S.E. Kamilova's monograph, three types of authorial "I" are identified:

- Introverted type of authorial "I" in contemporary short stories
- Juvenile-retrospective type of authorial "I" in contemporary short stories
- Lyric type of authorial "I" in contemporary Russian and Uzbek short stories

This study focuses on the third type, the lyric "I," in Ildar Abuzyarov's short stories.

"In a number of contemporary works of short prose, the dominance of lyrical elements is evident, expressed through the lyric consciousness of the author-narrator. This consciousness is marked by a focus on the internal world, where societal and social issues are generalized through the prism of personal worldview."

The lyrical "I" becomes a defining feature in Abuzyarov's stories, manifesting as a stream of experiences that forms the narrative core. This stream is composed of diverse emotions, associations, memories, contemplations, and meditations. Associative thinking, illogicality, spontaneous shifts in emotions and mood, and a chronotopical multiplicity are characteristic traits of contemporary short stories with a lyrical "I."

In Abuzyarov's prose, the lyrical "I" serves as both a personal and universal lens, enabling the narrative to explore complex intersections of individuality and society. The blending of introspection with broader societal reflections highlights the multilayered narrative strategies employed by the author. This lyricism is integral to the poetic and philosophical depth of his stories, as it provides a narrative space where internal struggles and social themes converge seamlessly.

Ildar Abuzyarov's short story "Finding a Voice" serves as a vivid example of employing the lyric type of authorial "I," which, through the emotional and metaphorical richness of the narrative, delves deeply into the subjective experiences of the protagonist, their inner struggle, and quest for genuine identity.

S.E. Kamilova, in her work "The Contemporary Short Story: Content Vectors and Narrative Strategies," notes that the lyric type of authorial "I" intensifies the protagonist's experiences and creates a special unity between the protagonist and the author, as well as between the artistic and the personal. This manifests through emotionally charged storytelling and poignant imagery.

In this story, Abuzyarov merges the author's voice with the protagonist's, conveying a continuous process of self-discovery and spiritual enrichment:

"I don't exist," thought Cissoida, returning from a literary gathering, "I don't exist in literature, and thus, I don't exist in reality. After all, literature is my whole life..."

At the heart of the story lies the protagonist's metaphorical acquisition of a voice, which simultaneously represents their inner transformation and their pursuit of meaning in a world that transcends external social and cultural circumstances. Through the protagonist's symbolic interactions with the surrounding reality, they attempt to comprehend their inner self,

achieve harmony, and free themselves from external judgments and conventions. This thematic foundation imbues Abuzyarov's work with a lyrical resonance, transforming the story into a kind of monologue filled with emotional nuances and reflection.

The authorial "I" in the story is expressed through the protagonist's inner monologues and their keen perception of the surrounding world, underscored by the motif of the "voice," symbolizing personal freedom and self-expression. As noted by Uzbek literary scholars, in lyrical narratives, personal emotions become the central axis of the narrative, allowing the author to make the protagonist not only the bearer of plot actions but also the core of the story's meaning and emotional depth.

In this case, the protagonist's voice becomes a metaphor for their inner liberation and search for true selfhood. Through this journey, Abuzyarov reveals a profound spiritual transformation, culminating in the protagonist's attainment of harmony between their internal world and its external expressions.

A distinctive feature of Ildar Abuzyarov's short story "Finding a Voice" is its rich symbolism and refined poetics, which reveal the delicate nuances of the protagonist's experiences. The lyric type of authorial "I" creates an effect of "transparency" into the protagonist's inner world, while attention to detail emphasizes their sensitivity and ability to perceive the world through the prism of aesthetic and moral values.

The protagonist's lyrical reflection imbues the narrative with intensity and emotional depth, allowing the reader to fully experience the richness of the character's inner world and their complex journey toward finding their voice:

"So, I hold a special pen – a gel pen. It has a convenient shape. It suits both a child's small hand and an adult's. Its style is equally fitting for both

women and men."

Through such details, Abuzyarov not only reveals the protagonist's reflections but also symbolizes their growing awareness of individuality and universality in self-expression.

Thus, in "Finding a Voice," Abuzyarov achieves a striking and emotional effect, where the lyric type of authorial "I" allows for a profound exploration of the protagonist's inner world. As S.E. Kamilova aptly notes, such narrative strategies enable the author to convey the protagonist's personal experiences and philosophical reflections, emphasizing their spiritual growth and quest for individual harmony.

This combination of poetic expression and symbolic depth makes "Finding a Voice" a compelling exploration of the human journey toward self-discovery and the power of authentic expression.

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