



DOI: 10.22363/2312-9220-2026-31-3-647-657

EDN: BFEBCC

UDC 82.01

Research article / Научная статья

Initiation as a Plot-Forming Element of M. Elizarov's Novels

Oleg A. Kling^{}, Ivan O. Ermolaev^{}✉

Lomonosov Moscow State University, Moscow, Russian Federation

✉ jahislove888@gmail.com

Abstract. The article examines the concept of initiation, which is analyzed in detail in the works of traditionalist thinkers (R. Guénon, J. Evola, M. Eliade) and plays a plot-forming role in many works of the contemporary Russian writer M. Elizarov. The aim is to explain the place that initiation occupies in the novels of the author. The task is to analyze the specific forms that it takes in these novels. The thesis is put forward that initiation is understood by Elizarov as the character's existential transition from a profane (ordinary) state to a sacred (magical) one. This transition is a staged process and can be undergone by the character either completely or partially. The actual magical initiation is preceded by a warrior one, and the acceptance of military initiation is impossible without previous marginalization, which is not an immediate part of the initiatory process, but serves as its necessary prerequisite. Although initiation is a process that takes place “inside” a person, it cannot be carried out without performing special actions – rituals. The initiatory rites featured in Elizarov's novels serve similar functions, but have a large number of formal differences, each of which is also discussed in the article.

Key words: character, mysticism, traditionalism, contemporary Russian prose, modern Russian prose, author

Author contributions. Development of the idea, research data collection & analysis, writing – Ivan O. Ermolaev; editing – Oleg A. Kling. All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

Conflicts of interest. The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Article history: submitted January 25, 2026; revised March 18, 2026; accepted May 20, 2026.

For citation: Kling, O.A., & Ermolaev, I.O. (2026). Initiation as a Plot-Forming Element of M. Elizarov's Novels // *RUDN Journal of Studies in Literature and Journalism*, 31(3), 647–657. <http://doi.org/10.22363/2312-9220-2026-31-3-647-657> EDN: BFEBCC

© Kling O.A., Ermolaev I.O., 2026



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/legalcode>

Инициация как сюжетобразующий элемент романов М. Елизарова

О.А. Клинг , И.О. Ермолаев  

Московский государственный университет им. М.В. Ломоносова, Москва, Российская Федерация

 jahislove888@gmail.com

Аннотация. Рассматривается понятие инициации, детально проанализированное в трудах представителей традиционализма (Р. Генона, Ю. Эволы, М. Элиаде) и играющее сюжетобразующую роль во многих произведениях современного русского писателя М. Елизарова. *Цель* – проанализировать конкретные формы, которые инициация принимает в прозе писателя. Выдвигается тезис о том, что инициация понимается Елизаровым как экзистенциальный переход персонажа из профанного (обыденного) в сакральное (магическое) состояние. Данный переход носит стадийный характер и может быть пройден персонажем как полностью, так и частично. Собственно магическому посвящению предшествует воинское, принятие которого невозможно без предшествующей маргинализации. Последняя не является непосредственной частью инициатического процесса, но выступает его необходимой предпосылкой. Несмотря на то что инициация представляет собой процесс, происходящий «внутри» человека, она невозможна без совершения субъектом особых действий – обрядов. Фигурирующие в романах Елизарова инициатические обряды выполняют сходные функции, однако обладают рядом формальных различий, которым также уделяется внимание в исследовании.

Ключевые слова: персонаж, мистика, традиционализм, современная русская литература, современная русская проза, автор

Вклад авторов. Разработка идеи, сбор и анализ исследовательских данных, написание статьи – И.О. Ермолаев; научное редактирование – О.А. Клинг. Все авторы прочли и одобрили окончательную версию рукописи.

Заявление о конфликте интересов. Авторы заявляют об отсутствии конфликта интересов.

История статьи: поступила в редакцию 25 января 2026 г.; отрецензирована 18 марта 2026 г.; принята к публикации 20 мая 2026 г.

Для цитирования: Клинг О.А., Ермолаев И.О. Инициация как сюжетобразующий элемент романов М. Елизарова // Вестник Российского университета дружбы народов. Серия: Литературоведение. Журналистика. 2026. Т. 31. № 3. С. 647–657. <http://doi.org/10.22363/2312-9220-2026-31-3-647-657> EDN: BFEBCC

Introduction

M. Elizarov is a contemporary Russian writer, winner of a number of literary awards, in whose work elements of traditional realism organically coexist with mysticism. Numerous scholarly articles, as well as D.Y. Yuryev's PhD thesis, are devoted to various aspects of Elizarov's work – its poetics, axiology, intertextuality, and other dimensions (2016). The mystical component of Elizarov's works was

analyzed in the works of E.A. Pogorelaya (2009), N.P. Dvortsova (2010), S.F. Merkushov (2014), T.S. Agadzhanova and M.V. Yuryeva (2020), V.I. Pavlyukova (2016), O.V. Shchegolkova (2022), I.O. Ermolaev (2024a; 2024b; 2026). Initiation – the act of introducing a person to a mystical reality – was identified by A.A. Astvatsaturov as a significant unit of the writer’s artistic world. In the article *Archaic Ritual in the Works of Mikhail Elizarov* Astvatsaturov, following A. van Gennep and V. Turner, calls initiation a “rite of passage”, referring to the transition from the mundane world to the mystical world. Drawing on the short story collection *We Went Out to Smoke for 17 Years*, the researcher shows that the main characters of Elizarov’s works are almost always people who are in the process of initiation: “These characters are not characterized by a stable state. They are internally mobile, transcend their own boundaries, [...] exist between statuses” (Astvatsaturov, 2022, p. 167). At the same time, Astvatsaturov’s attention focuses on those works of the writer for which the “motive of failure, failure to complete the ritual” is important: “a series of rituals [...] will not end with the ritual initiation of the character, although he will remain in the intermediate, i.e. liminal phase for quite a long time” (2022, p. 168).

The relevance of this study is confirmed by the attention of the scientific community to Elizarov’s work in general and to the mystical component of Elizarov’s works in particular. The scientific novelty of the study lies in its first attempt to analyze the initiatory rite, as Elizarov understands it, in its entirety, up to the successful initiation. The most adequate material for the task, according to the co-authors, comprises the writer’s novels – *The Librarian*, *Earth*, and *Cartoons*. The solution to this problem draws on the results achieved by one of the co-authors, I. Ermolaev, in the article “Modes of existence of characters in M. Elizarov’s prose” (2026). In this work, which uses M. Heidegger’s terminological apparatus, the fundamentally different human states recorded by the writer are considered and it is established that the existence of his characters can reside in one of four modes: the everyday (ordinary) mode, implying the filling of the existential contour with the substance of everyday reality; marginal, suggesting the emptying of the existential contour; warrior mode, expressed in the contact of the existential contour of the former marginal with the mystical reality and the character’s willingness to intensify this contact; or magical, entry into which means blurring the existential contour and merging existence with the substance of mystical reality. The character’s complete or partial passage of the existential route “everyday person – the marginal – the warrior – the mage” is the central plotline of Elizarov’s major works, and the acts of transition from mode to mode invariably prove to be plot-forming. In addition, they are always ritualistic in nature, being rites of initiation.

The Concept of Initiation: Traditionalist Authors and M. Elizarov

According to M. Eliade, “...initiation is understood as a set of rituals and oral instructions, the purpose of which is to radically change the religious and social status of the initiate. In philosophical terms, initiation is equivalent to an ontological

change in the existential state. By the end of the trials, the neophyte acquires a completely different existence than before initiation” (2002, pp. 12–13). The various types of initiation can be classified into two broad categories: 1) the coming-of-age, “through which people [...] become truly *human beings*”; 2) specialized initiations “that individuals undertake in order to go beyond the ordinary and receive protection from *Supernatural Beings* or even become like them”, necessary “to fulfill a mystical vocation” (Eliade, 2002, pp. 317–319). With regard to Elizarov’s characters, whose existential dynamics consists in the tension between the poles of the ordinary and the mystical, the discussion concerns initiation in the second sense, which in the works of some representatives of traditionalism turns out to be the only one.

The reference to traditionalism is also relevant due to the almost literal similarity of the characteristics given to initiation and its components on the one hand by its adherents, and on the other – by Elizarov and Elizarov’s philosophizing. It is enough to compare the following fragments:

1) “(the initiatory mystery) is such by the very nature of things and, therefore, could not be transmitted in any way, because, being a mystery of a purely internal order, it is ‘inexpressible’” (Guénon, 2004, p. 427);

2) “The nature of the initiatory mystery is inexpressible, ‘inexpressible’ – words do not express it” (Elizarov, 2023, p. 228); “The point is that the initiatory mystery is an indescribable and unspeakable event...”¹.

It is also significant that, in defining initiation, the writer directly resorts to the construction “according to Guénon...” (Elizarov, 2023, p. 261). Having established the close connection between Elizarov’s understanding of initiation and that of traditionalists, it is necessary to focus on the latter: being close to Elizarov, but, due to the analytical rather than artistic nature of the texts transmitting it, more systematic, this understanding can serve as an explanatory model for some of the plot elements generated by the prose writer.

J. Evola believes that “the prerequisite for understanding initiation is the theory of multiple states of being, of which the human state is only one of many possible” (2020, p. 161). In Elizarov’s artistic world, corresponds to the character’s opportunities to be affiliated with everyday reality (to function as a person in his natural state), to be affiliated with mystical reality (to become a magician, a supernatural being) and to be in an intermediate state (which corresponds to the modes of the marginal and the warrior). “... the human condition, with all the limitations it imposes on ordinary individuality, can be overcome. We are talking about a change of state, a transition from one way of being to another in a completely objective sense. [...] the initiate [...], in principle, no longer belongs to the human species” (Evola, 2020, p. 161). The stadiality of the initiatory process is analyzed by R. Guénon, who speaks of “the stages and degrees of the same initiation” (2004, p. 573) of the “minor” and “great mysteries”, namely “...the ‘minor mysteries’

¹ Elizarov, M.Y. (2020). *Earth* (p. 765). AST; Edited by Elena Shubina Publ. (In Russ.)

include everything that relates to the development of the possibilities of the human condition” (2004, p. 574), and “the ‘great mysteries’ relate to the actual realization of superhuman states” (2004, p. 574). In Elizarov’s prose, the former are experienced by the character when his existence enters the warrior mode, the latter when it enters the magical mode. It is also relevant for the writer’s works that every being can actually reach only the point where his own capabilities end, therefore, some will turn out to be suitable only for the “minor mysteries” or even for a more or less limited part of the latter; but this only means that they are not able to follow the initiatory path, “not that they follow a different path than those who can go further than they do” (Guénon, 2004, p. 573). Elizarov illustrates this thesis by showing the reader the existential dynamics of various characters, identical up to a certain point, after which it stops for many and continues for one. Such are the cases of Vyazintsev and Volodya Krotyshev, who are initiated as warriors on an equal basis with others, but who approached initiation into magicians alone; the remark addressed to Volodya by Gapon is indicative: “I would myself with a willing heart, but you see, our senior comrades do not invite us...”². The “call” coming from the “senior comrades” is another important aspect of initiation. “Initiation requires the presence of a representative of an organization that owns and preserves esoteric and initiatory teachings, who is able to pass them on to a neophyte” (Evola, 2020, p. 174). In Elizarov’s prose, the function of a mystagogue (from ancient Greek: “one who initiates into the mysteries”) is assigned to any entities that are in closer contact with mystical reality than the initiate: a character who is himself a warrior can initiate a character into warriors (experienced readers in *The Librarian*), a magician character (the inhabitants of the “Ivyushka” cafe in the *Earth*) or a direct unit of mystical reality with subjectivity (Books in *The Librarian*), the list of possible initiators into magicians is narrowed due to the incompetence of the warrior characters in this capacity. The affiliation of a mystagogue to an organization with appropriate powers is possible (the magician Razumovsky in *Cartoons* is an employee of a Affairs Division), but not mandatory; most often it is realized by characters whose existence is in a military mode (libraries and reading rooms in *The Librarian*, mafia clans in *Earth*).

A significant addition to the considerations already expressed will be the comparison of initiation with the alchemical Great Work adopted in traditionalism, which shows the relationship of the initiatory process to the marginal existential modality that plays an important role in Elizarov’s works. Great Work involves three stages:

- 1) the result of the *Black Work* is “a state of dissociation of the organism, which is no longer held together by the vital force” (Evola, 2019, p. 137);
- 2) the result of the *White Work* “expresses a state of active ecstasy that interrupts a person’s normal state” (Evola, 2019, p. 180);
- 3) the *Red Work* allows for “reintegrating in a supernatural way” (Evola, 2019, p. 205).

² Elizarov, M.Y. (2020). *Earth* (p. 745).

According to J. Evola, “...there are certain reasons to draw parallels between the *White Work* and the *Red Work* and initiation into classical Minor and Major [= Great] Mysteries, respectively” (2019, p. 222), the exact analogues of which in Elizarov’s artistic world are the initiations into a warrior and initiation into a mage. Marginalization, which cannot be considered part of the initiatory process itself, performs in this world the function of the *Black Work*, i.e., the disintegration of a character’s natural, everyday existence, necessary for existence to be able to reintegrate into another supernatural, mystical status.

The Specific Forms Taken by Initiation in the Novels of M. Elizarov

Having defined the essential, meaningful characteristics of initiation in Elizarov’s prose, we can turn to the consideration of accidental, ceremonial characteristics.

Elizarov describes military initiatory rites in more detail than magical ones, and the results of their conduct are always presented directly to the reader, unlike the results of magical ones, which invariably placed by the author outside the narrative framework of the works. The protagonist’s military initiation is captured in detail by the writer in *Earth*, the branching system of military initiations organizes the plot of *The Librarian*.

Numerous military initiation rites recorded in *The Librarian* follow the same scenario – the initiate reads one of the Books of the socialist realist Gromov for the first time. The military initiation with the participation of Books illustrates two important principles of initiation. Firstly, it is the principle of the “ineffability” of the initiatory mystery mentioned above: the effect of reading a Book is not achieved by anything other than reading it, cannot be imagined by those who have not read it, nor adequately described by them. Secondly, it is the principle of the irreversibility of initiation (“initiation of any degree is a permanent acquisition for a being who has received it” (Guénon, 2004, p. 449)): a book that has been read cannot become unread again. An important difference between the military initiations featured in the novel is who or what performs the function of a mystagogue in them. In the cases of the very first readers who were at the origins of Gromov’s universe, the responsibility for the transmission of the military modality lies with the Books themselves, which possess subjectivity. The books dedicate people who are not chosen at random, but who have “initiability”, i.e. “a certain ability or natural predisposition” (Guénon, 2004, pp. 373–374) to existential dynamics with a mystical orientation; in Elizarov’s artistic world, initiation is identical to marginality – the discrepancy between existence and the social framework offered to it, which is illustrated by the biographies of all the initiated characters. As more and more people initiate, Books shift their mystical function to those already initiated, first to “wandering apostles”³, then to members of organizations. Significant

³ Elizarov, M.Y. (2012). *The Librarian* (p. 18). Ad Marginem Publ. (In Russ.)

for understanding the essence of Elizarov's military initiation are also the changes taking place with the initiate as a subject and object of social relations within such an organization: only with initiation does Vyazintsev get the opportunity to actually lead the library, participate in military councils with other libraries, as well as to acquire his own armor as well as to acquire his own armor and "the right to a woman"⁴.

According to R. Guénon, initiatory tests are an essential component of initiation. If in *The Librarian* they are limited to the need to observe the Conditions of Continuity and Thoroughness when reading a Book (Vyazintsev succeeds only on the third attempt), then in *Earth* the whole military initiation is reduced to their passage. In relation to Volodya, we are talking about the ordeal of meeting with one of the mystagogues, the mage Lesha the Screamer: the initiate should calmly listen to the extremely loud cry of the magician, after which he should hit the Screamer with more or less tangible consequences for him. Volodya passes the test with exceptional honor, as a result of which he receives meaningful verbal parting words from the mystagogues (comrades of the Screamer, other mage who constantly live in the "Ivyushka") and a visible sign of a change in his existential modality – his left ear, "clouded"⁵ by Lesha's cry, sensitive to fluctuations of mystical reality; In most cases, bodily transgression concerns Elizarov's characters only after they reach the magical stage of initiation; therefore, Volodya's partial transgression can be considered as the germ of his future existential dynamics.

The ordeal ("eternal labor"⁶) is also inextricable from the magical initiation in *The Librarian*; moreover, this rite itself is inseparable from the state it causes. The character's existence as a magician lasts as long as the ritual continues, and consists entirely of passing it – literally in accordance with the characteristic J. Evola gives to the *Red Work*: "The 'I' is transformed in the course of these actions, while being the actions themselves" (2019, p. 203). We are talking about a cyclical reading by the character of the complete works of Gromov, which gives the reader immortality and the absence of physiological needs, which are necessary precisely and only so that the reading does not interrupt: initiation and its result in this case are mutually conditioned and pass into each other. According to the Books, only one representative of the Gromov's universe can and should receive magical initiation.

Accordingly, there are no anthropic characters in the novel who can perform the function of a mystagogue in this rite. This is ontologically fixed for Books, and a special role belongs to a certain part of the seven-volume set – the Book of Meaning. To its first reader, Rudenko, the Book of Meaning points to the man it chose for initiation into the magician, Vyazintsev, and reveals to Vyazintsev the form and essence of the initiation prepared for him. It is characteristic that shortly before the protagonist begins to read the Seven Books, one of the elders of the Gromov's universe, Gorn, begins to prepare him for initiation (this word appears

⁴ Elizarov, M.Y. (2012). *The Librarian* (p. 243).

⁵ Elizarov, M.Y. (2020). *Earth* (p. 407).

⁶ Elizarov, M.Y. (2012). *The Librarian* (p. 360).

directly in her remarks), which she intends to conduct on her own. However, reality forces Gorn, a perfect warrior, but not a magician, to demonstrate her mystagogic incompetence and leave Vyazintsev alone with Books.

The hierarchy of the funeral mafia includes more steps, and therefore the magical initiation of the main character of *Earth* is conducted by anthropic characters – magicians Denis Borisovich and Gleb Vadimovich, and the term “initiation” is used again by themselves. During the conversation with the mystagogues, Volodya experiences a rapidly worsening transgression, fixes his simultaneous stay in several layers of reality, which he perceives as a test, a “painful hold” performed on him⁷. “At the same time, my prophetic ear, usually sensitive to any otherworldly danger, remained silent, did not respond with white noise”⁸: becoming a magician, Volodya becomes affiliated with mystical reality, and the need for a mediator disappears; the whole existence of Krotyshev, and not one autonomous ear from it, becomes “prophetic”, communes with mysticism. The culminating component of the ceremony is the physical contact with the mystagogue: “Denis Borisovich sympathetically scooped my palm into his cool, sluggish squeeze”⁹, the character notes, “the freckles of his oratorical saliva landed on my face and immediately dried up”¹⁰, which makes the protagonist recall his beloved’s story about a man who was once initiated into a magician by squeezing a sorceress’s hand and swallowing her spit.

The most specific is the structure of the magical initiation at the center of the plot of the novel *Cartoons*. What distinguishes this rite from those discussed earlier is that, firstly, it is successfully performed without a military initiation preceding it, and secondly, it refers the visible manifestations of its results to the future. This last property, as immanent in every initiation, is mentioned in the *Earth* (“Initiation does not have to happen like this. It is enough that it is laid down as a potential opportunity that can be used or postponed”¹¹), however, of the Elizarov characters mentioned above, only Shulga and Lagudov were affected by its realization: after reading the first Gromov Books in their lives, they realized the existential dynamics that became available to them not immediately, but years later, reminding themselves of the opportunity they had by reading other Books. In *Cartoons*, the mystagogue Razumovsky talks about Herman repeating his existential dynamics as something that will certainly come true, but in the text of the novel, Herman’s existence appears technically not yet entered into a magical mode. As for the absence of military initiation in Herman’s experience, which means that his existential modality immediately changes from marginal to magical, this circumstance is facilitated by the acquisition by the character’s existence of qualities that are essentially military, without initiation, even in a marginal mode.

⁷ Elizarov, M.Y. (2020). *Earth* (p. 736).

⁸ Elizarov, M.Y. (2020). *Earth* (p. 763).

⁹ Elizarov, M.Y. (2020). *Earth* (p. 751).

¹⁰ Elizarov, M.Y. (2020). *Earth* (p. 754).

¹¹ Elizarov, M.Y. (2020). *Earth* (p. 765).

Herman's magical initiation consists in showing him a filmstrip, the content of which is a series of magical initiations that took place earlier and led to the emergence of a "galaxy of mentors-students"¹², whose next link is to become the protagonist. Elizarov records in detail the dying of the character's former existence: as he gets acquainted with the contents of the film, his legs and lower back first swell, then his whole body goes numb, and finally – like Volodya Krotyshev as a result of military initiation – his ears pop. Deprived of his former subjectivity, Herman gets the opportunity to become a receptacle of another subjectivity: the mystagogue transfers it to the protagonist who has lost his will, forcing him to reproduce the facial expressions, articulation, words, feelings and thoughts of the painted double. In the *Cartoons*, a part of the initiatory scenario is reproduced three times, stipulated by Guénon, but almost does not play a role in Elizarov's other works – the endowment of the transmuting being with a new name. Gorn, promising Vyazintsev to initiate him into a magician on his own, comes up with a new surname for him, but the initiation takes place according to a different model, allowing the initiate to retain his former name; Volodya has been nicknamed Krot (Mole) since adolescence, which has an important symbolic meaning in the artistic world of *Earth*, but it is impossible to describe it as an initiatory name. The nicknames Rambo, Razum (Mind) and Greben (Comb) Herman, Razumovsky and Grebenyuk (mystagogue of Razumovsky) are also not given during initiatory rites, however, due to circumstances of militarily colored marginalization, without which their further initiations would be impossible, and therefore these nicknames turn out to be essentially closer to initiatory names in their traditionalist understanding. Special attention should be paid to the nickname Razum (Mind), which the marginal character continues to use after becoming a magician and even replaces the name he received at birth in oral communication. On the other hand, initiatory meaning is acquired by the innate names themselves, the reactualization of which after initiations serves as a sign of overcoming the previous, marginal existence; thus, Grebenyuk's initiation is commented on in the filmstrip with the words: "This ends the story of the boy Vitka Greben and begins the story of the teacher Viktor Tarasovich Grebenyuk"¹³, and Herman's initiation is accompanied by a painted double with a remark: "Just don't call me 'Rambo'. After all that has happened, I am disgusted by my nickname..."¹⁴. The lexemes "Arkadyevich" and "uncle" share this same meaning: the initiated Razumovsky suggests that the interlocutor accompany the nickname Razum (Mind) with one of them.

Conclusion

This work is the first attempt at a comprehensive examination of initiation in the works of M. Elizarov. It was found that Elizarov's understanding of initiation is close to the understanding offered in the works of traditionalist thinkers. Drawing

¹² Elizarov, M.Y. (2010). *Cartoons* (p. 195). AST; Astrel Publ. (In Russ.)

¹³ Elizarov, M.Y. (2010). *Cartoons* (p. 200).

¹⁴ Elizarov, M.Y. (2010). *Cartoons* (p. 249).

on the traditionalist studies by M. Eliade, R. Guénon, and J. Evola, the co-authors interpret initiation as a character's change in existential modality – from marginal to warrior (“minor mysteries”, or warrior initiation) and warrior to magical (“great mysteries”, or magical initiation). Based on the novels *The Librarian*, *Earth*, and *Cartoons*, the co-authors identify the key characteristics of initiation in Elizarov's prose – both essential (the two-stage initiatory process, the need for a special predisposition of the character, identical to marginality, as well as the presence of the mystagogue figure) and accidental, the diversity of which corresponds to the multiplicity of initiatory rituals described by the writer. In conclusion, the co-authors conclude that initiation is a crucial element of Elizarov's artistic world and plays a plot-forming role in his novels.

References

- Agadzhanova, T.S., & Yuryeva, M.V. (2020). The mythologism of Mikhail Elizarov's novella *Nails*. In *Actual Issues of Modern Philology: Theory, Practice, Development Prospects: Proceedings of the V International Scientific and Practical Conference, Krasnodar, May 23, 2020* (pp. 186–190). Kuban State University Publ. (In Russ.) EDN: HGGGJE
- Astvatsaturov, A.A. (2022). An archaic ritual in the work of Mikhail Elizarov (based on the material of the story *We Went Out to Smoke for 17 years...*). *Text and Tradition*, (10), 153–173. (In Russ.) <https://doi.org/10.31860/978-5-94668-365-4-153-173> EDN: FPBJV
- Guénon, R. (2004). Notes on initiation. In *The Symbolism of the Cross* (T.M. Fadeeva, & Yu.N. Stefanov, Trans., pp. 355–691). Progress-Tradition. (Original work published 1946). (In Russ.)
- Dvortsova, N.P. (2010). Metaphysical tales of Mikhail Elizarov. In S.A. Komarov (Ed.), *Fiction, Criticism and Journalism in the System of Spiritual Culture* (Issue 7, pp. 160–167). Tyumen: Pechatnik Publ. (In Russ.) EDN: SCFSOR
- Eliade, M. (2002). *Secret Societies: Initiation Rites and Ceremonies* (G.A. Gelfand, Trans.). Sofia; Helios. (Original work published 1959). (In Russ.)
- Elizarov, M.Y. (2023). *Burattini: Essays*. AST; Edited by Elena Shubina Publ. (In Russ.)
- Ermolaev, I.O. (2024a). Magical objects and their place in Mikhail Elizarov's prose. *Voprosy Literaturny*, (4), 36–50. (In Russ.) <https://doi.org/10.31425/0042-8795-2024-4-36-50> EDN: RSYDEV
- Ermolaev, I.O. (2026). Modes of existence of characters in M. Elizarov's prose. *The New Philological Bulletin*, (1), 201–210. (In Russ.) <https://doi.org/10.54770/20729316-2026-1-201> EDN: LRFAXN
- Ermolaev, I.O. (2024b). The features of incantations in M. Elizarov's prose. *The New Philological Bulletin*, (2), 247–259. (In Russ.) <https://doi.org/10.54770/20729316-2024-2-247> EDN: FPIKOI
- Evola, J. (2020). On the concept of initiation. In *The Bow and the Club* (V.V. Vanyushkina, Trans., pp. 158–188). Vladimir Dal. (Original work published 1968). (In Russ.)
- Evola, J. (2019). *The Hermetic Tradition* (G.A. Butuzov, Trans., 3rd ed.). Terra Foliata Publ. (Original work published 1931). (In Russ.)
- Merkushov, S.F. (2014). Gnosticism, the Soviet urban folklore and art of M. Elizarov. *Vestnik Tverskogo Gosudarstvennogo Universiteta. Seriya: Filologiya*, (3), 339–343. (In Russ.) EDN: TDWLOF
- Pavlyukova, V.I. (2016). Poetics neomifologizma in the novel M.Y. Elizarova “Nails”. *Bulletin of BSU. Language. Literature. Culture*, (1), 72–76. (In Russ.) EDN: XDBPOX

- Pogorelaya, E.A. (2009). ...*There is a bloody glow in the faces...*: Mikhail Elizarov. *Voprosy Literaturny*, (3), 135–148. (In Russ.) EDN: TZGJUP
- Shchegolkova, O.V. (2022). Border trends in M. Elizarov's novel "Earth". *Philology and Culture*, (3), 195–201. (In Russ.) <https://doi.org/10.26907/2074-0239-2022-69-3-195-201> EDN: CXVCWH
- Yuryev, D.Y. (2016). *Mikhail Elizarov's Prose (Poetics and Moral Issues)*. [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. North-Caucasus Federal University. (In Russ.) EDN: TJDMEL

Bio notes:

Oleg A. Kling, Doctor of Philological Sciences, Professor, Head of the Department of Literary Theory, Lomonosov Moscow State University, 119991, 1 Leninskie Gory, bldg 51, Moscow, 119991, Russian Federation. ORCID: 0000-0003-1543-5253; SPIN-code: 3633-7782. E-mail: teolit@philol.msu.ru

Ivan O. Ermolaev, Postgraduate Student at the Department of Literary Theory, Lomonosov Moscow State University, 119991, 1 Leninskie Gory, bldg 51, Moscow, 119991, Russian Federation. ORCID: 0009-0007-8239-0864. E-mail: jahislove888@gmail.com