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# Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy* as an Intertext to the *Smile of Dyonisus* by K. Gamsakhurdia

Ana Dolidze

## Professional Biography

In 2011 Ana Dolidze graduated with honours the BA in Georgian Literature at the Faculty of Humanities of Ivane Javakhsishvili Tbilisi State University. She enrolled as an MA student in the Faculty of Humanities after her graduation. The topic of her MA research was “Vazha Pshavela as a translator” – much less studied in Georgian literary scholarship. Ana Dolidze was awarded with diplomas and certificates for participating in four major academic conferences. After completing her MA in 2013 Anna Dolidze's project *The Lingvo-Personal Coexistence of a Writer and a Translator in the Legacy of Vazha-Pshavela* (#52/68) won the Presidential Grants' Contest for Young Scholars. In 2014 Ana Dolidze became a doctoral student and committed herself to studying contemporary Georgian literature. At the same time her grant project *The Psycho-Semiotics of Dream in Georgian Literary Discourse* (DO/277/1-20/14) won a doctoral research grant.

## Abstract

The article aims to explore literary parallels between the writings of the two authors of two different nationalities and epochs. These works are: *Divine Comedy* by Dante Alighieri from the 16<sup>th</sup> c. and the novel by the 20<sup>th</sup> c. Georgian modernist author Konstantine Gamsakhurdia *The Smile of Dyonisus*. The literally parallel is based upon their thematic similarity. Both authors use the theme of descending into hell as the main pattern. Considering the fact that Gamsakhurdia was well acquainted with the Alighieri's work and analyzed it critically, we are obviously dealing with the use of text as a model.

**Keywords:** *Alighieri, Gamsakhurdia, Hell, Archetype, Paralel.*

It is hard to make a comparative analysis between the two novels that are a few centuries apart and their unity solely relies on the common theme shared. Yet, since the common theme is “descent into hell” we are dealing not with simply a comparative study but with a classical intertext, especially since the megatext here is the famous novel such as Dante Alighieri's *divine Comedy*.

The classical 20<sup>th</sup> century Georgian writer Konstantine Gamsakhurdia was always concerned with the masterpieces of the arts and he considered Dante Alighieri's *Divine*

*Comedy* among those masterpieces. He even translated this comedy and dedicated a special research to the life and work of Dante Alighieri. He admired the literary-philosophical thought of the great master as much as his single phrases (*immortal sententia*) from his literary legacy loaded with historicism; he also appreciated the fact that “the history of Georgia reminds us of the history of Italy in many ways”.

Italy – the prettiest part of Europe was the most unfortunate on the European land”. [Gamsakhurdia, 1963 : 59]. He applies the same sentiment to his own homeland that makes his interest for Dante ten times greater.

Konstantine Gamsakhurdia in his quite a lengthy research paper “Dante Alighieri” argues about how the history of Italy was reflected in the literary work of Dante Alighieri, he considers the accounts of Dante’s biographers and draws his own conclusions of their truthfulness. He dedicates a separate chapter to the person and character of Beatrice, discusses the origin of the term *Renaissance* and asks questions about what is meant by the Italian Renaissance; he compares Rustaveli with Dante, distinguishes the key motif in *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin* as well as in *The Divine Comedy* – the journey through the hell. He discusses the whole of the Dante’s literary legacy and considers in great detail all three parts of the *Divine Comedy*.

We find particularly interesting those approaches demonstrated by Konstantine Gamsakhurdia to *The Divine Comedy* by Dante Alighieri, which may also emerge in *The Smile of Dionysus* since the main theme in this work is also the descent into hell. Konstantine Gamsakhurdia writes: “in the comedy by Dante not only the history of modern Italy is represented but the whole of the antiquity, Christian Rome and the Early Renaissance Philosophy and eschatology”. *Divine Comedy* by Dante is the focus gathering the aryl of rays where the fluids of the ancient philosophy, Christian mysticism and Arab culture and the great ideas of the Early Renaissance Humanism meet. [Gamsakhudia, 1863: 59]. Neither is in the novel by Konstantine Gamsakhurdia reflected only the Georgian history, yet, the fate of the homeland is inseparably linked with the personal tragedy of the main character. The novel represents the spiritual crisis of the West, The synthesis of Georgian and ancient mythologies, struggle between Western and Eastern philosophical doctrines and in the end the struggle between Christianity and paganism shown in the psyche of the character.

Konstantine Gamsakhurdia considers the circumstances, in which conquering Italy and Spain by the Arabs played a crucial part in acceleration of the early Renaissance, since the Roman Catholic monks fought against paganism so keenly that they destroyed mercilessly the culture of antiquity that was brought back to Europe precisely by the Arabs. Therefore,

in Gamsakhurdia's opinion it is not a coincidence that Dante locates next to Plato, Aristotle and other scholars in his second cycle an Arab scribe, the commentator of Aristotle – Averroes.

We do not encounter real historical people in Konstantine Gamsakhurdia's "hell". Its inhabitants are sorted according to their sins, also there are characters which have met the main character Konstantine Savarsamidze and attracted his attention. Yet, one circumstance is worth noting: the two of the Konstantine's friends are guiding him through the hell" one is a Circassian Muslim – Khalil Bey, the other one is a German Christian – Herbert Shtuders. It is precisely communion with them that presents the double origin of the Georgian character as both Eastern and Western.

In Dante's "Hell", we meet the Popes, Emperors, Bishops and perverted aristocrats, also, alchemists, astrologists, magicians and the masters of "black magic". The idea of placing the latter ones in hell was characteristic to the epoch, since the Roman Catholic church of the middle ages fought against them cruelly and saw the "demoniacs" everywhere. The main inhabitant of the Gamsakhurdia's "Hell" is Slansky, a Mongol with yellow epaulettes nicknamed as "Bloodthirsty Bear", who stole from Savarsamidze the most precious thing he had – an "Emerald ring" of his mother. The epithets for Slansky are ironical and refer to Russia (according to the writer the Mongol blood prevails among the Russians; the yellow epaulettes are also the accessories of a Russian cavalryman; bear is also a Russian totem and a symbol of Russian culture). The character fought the main battle against them in hell.

Konstantine Savarsamidze meets his old acquaintances in hell "moneylenders, thieves, murderers, the dishonest rich, prostitutes and pimps, the collaborator journalists and writers who sold their pens and word for gold" [Gamsakhurdia, 1961: 944]. There are lots of morally degraded people in *The Divine Comedy* by Dante, but *The Smile of Dionysus* bears the trace of its own epoch that is presented by its contemporary "professions" (such as pimps, journalists etc...).

Konstantine Gamsakhurdia refers to the archetype that might have become a foundation for *The Divine Comedy* by Dante and mentions that the idea of descending into hell is underlying "the eastern epic poem of Gilgamesh decoded from the cuneiform inscriptions. Much later we have the famous biblical myth of Christ's descent into hell following the descent of Odiseus into Hades. In the end Eneas goes down into the world of shadows [Gamsakhurdia, 1963: 103]. After this note Gamsakhurdia emphasizes the goal of descending into hell: Gilgamesh goes to look for his friend Enkidu, Dante is searching for the soul of Beatrice. We face the question: what is the aim of Constantine Savarsamidze? The aim of Constantine is to meet his father and ask for forgiveness. The character has been

tortured all his life by knowing that he neglected the father's dream of running a vineyard, instead he sold the lands left to him and wasted all the money on the "aimless wondering" across the Europe.

„Your curse has become true, father, I have become barren like our alder tree in Etsera” - tells Konstantine Savarsadmidze to his parent who he met in hell, - „... My old vineyard wasted and I could not start a new one, bless me, give me back your frozen land, give me back your vineyard, father“ [Gamsakhurdia, 1961: 944]. The father put the son on his knees the same way as he used to put a child on his knees, stroke him but failed to bless him because he had lost his voice. This symbolic episode indicates that the character is not going to acquire happiness in either real life, since he is left without a fraternal blessing. The theme of vineyard, which is crucial in Georgian literature, is alien for the Dante's comedy.

Konstantine Gamsakhurdia while making a comparative analysis between *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* and *The Divine Comedy* pays attention to who the characters travel with through the hell. "Dante is guided by his craftsman Virgil, Odysseus is guided by sailors", while Tariel, the character of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* follows his adopted brothers Avtandil and Phridon. Gamsakhurdia himself does not betray a Georgian tradition and accompanies his character by his friends.

The Georgian scholar and the writer also pays attention to another meaningful aspect: "Gilgamesh runs down into the underworld, Dante goes there in a state of being half awake ("came to myself, like someone woken by force, and standing up, I moved my eyes, now refreshed," *Inferno* IV:1-63 The First Circle), Odysseus goes in there on a ship, and the Patman's messenger flies down there [Gamsakhurdia 1963 : 106]. Gamsakhurdia describes the Dante's transition from the state of sleep to the state of sobriety as "the moment of mystical silence" and explains it by the Christian worldview of the writer. Contrary to this he attributes the conquering of Kajeti fortress with the sword by the Rustaveli's characters to the cult of knightly chivalry and paganism. Konstantine Gamsakhurdia himself offers the way of Dante to his own character and transfers him to hell in a state, of lethargy yet the writer preserves individualism and expresses the crossing of the boundary between the two worlds by slipping down into the abyss. His choice is conditioned by the image of the character, which even though has the blood and nature of the knights – the dukes of Argveti, but has not inherited their spiritual strength.

Gamsakhurdia points out that "the similarity between Dante and Rustaveli is to be found even in their bold expressions"; he brings relevant examples from *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* and *The Divine Comedy* and adds that Dante "mentions many times embarrassing male organ and „fart-hole“ without any hesitation [Gamsakhurdia, 1963: 107].

Gamsakhurdia does not hesitate using these words himself and he describes the man-scorpions in hell, who have double faces, four legs and four arms and two male organs in the front and in the back.

Konstantine Gamsakhurdia reveals a bias or maybe an influence by the Dante's *Divine Comedy* at one place. The main character of the work by Dante Alighieri is the author himself while the main character of the novel *The Smile of Dionysus* by Konstantine Gamsakhurdia is Konstantine Savarsamidze. A reader may find so much similarity between the author and the main character (not only due to the name), that the writer is asking in the afterword not to attribute to him the sins of the character.

Konstantine Gamsakhurdia sees the main difference between Dante and Rustaveli in the excessive religiosity of Dante, which is not so strong in the case of Rustaveli. The similarity between the two is found in the original stimulus of both poetic expressions towards the eternally feminine element (*L'eternal Feminin*). „It is only that Rustaveli is more sober“ – adds Konstantine Gamsakhurdia, –„Dante's admiration for this “eternal feminine” crosses the line of religious ecstasy. Obviously a great courage was required of Dante and Rustaveli in the middle ages in order to reveal such an explicit eroticism“ [Gamsakhurdia, 1963 : 10]. Gamsakhurdia himself parts with both writers, Rustaveli and Dante and chooses the sexless Dionysus as his sweetheart instead of an eternal virgin, while he exceeds both writers in terms of eroticism. He reveals exceptional courage in the 20<sup>th</sup> century by describing a male attraction to another man.

We also refer to that fundamental difference, which is noticeable in the model of “that world” described by Dante Alighieri and Konstantine Gamsakhurdia. Dante distinguishes between hell, purgatory and paradise. Whereas, considering the traditional faith of Gamsakhurdia, the otherworld is understood only in terms of heaven and hell. It is noteworthy that Savarsamidze meets his acquaintances only in hell. Only one character of the novel is found in heaven – Parviz – the (male) beloved of Savarsamidze.

Dante Alighieri, even though half-asleep goes to the otherworld alive. However, Konstantine Savarsamidze dies in the state of being half-asleep – he is torn apart by a double-edged sword. Dante knows that after his death he will definitely go to heaven because he is already purified. Savarsamidze, on the other hand, is predestined to hell. God tells Helios who reaches heaven that his hands are covered in blood; the character is asking forgiveness but God disappears. While Dante is granted to see Beatrice in the last circle of the purgatory, Konstantine savarsamidze sees God – Helios first, who disappears and in the end he sees his beloved. This should not have been a coincidence. Konstantine

Gamsakhurdia escapes religiousness, to be more precise – religious dogmatism. However, both writers give to the descent into hell a meaning of purgation.

It is noteworthy, that neither Dante, not Gamsakhurdia address the Christian god. In the beginning of the third part – *Paradiso*, Dante calls upon Apollo, the muse of ancient poetry, Gamsakhurdia calls upon Helios (who was identified as Apollo in the 5<sup>th</sup> c BC). The calling upon Helios must have a different meaning in the novel by Gamsakhurdia. Helios is the father of the mythical king Ayet of ancient Colchis. Therefore naming Helios as god was related to the idea of the divine origin for the Georgians and encouraged the national pride in Gamsakhurdia, who was an extremely nationalist writer.

For both Dante and Gamsakhurdia hell is presented as the world of evil, as the death of the soul, defilement of flesh, aesthetic ugliness, while paradise is the source of light, absolute truth and aesthetic beauty. Both writers consider heaven and hell in earthly terms presenting them as complete allegories. Both works present a deeply individual person as the central figure of the journey, who suffers the pain, sin and troubles of his homeland as well as the whole universe.

It is worth noting that each part of Dante's poem consists of 33 praises, which might be referring symbolically to the time of the Christ's earthly ministry. Gamsakhurdia's novel contains 13 praises. It is rather unusual to divide a novel in such a way that refers to the Dante's influence, yet, the individualism of the writer emerges again in the number 13, which is a reference to the allusion of the 13<sup>th</sup> disciple of Christ and therefore is considered as accursed. We reckon that the number 13 not only defines the fate of Savarsamidze's but also the whole epoch emptied of spirituality.

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# The Epitaphs of the Amilakhvari Family from Samtavisi

(19<sup>th</sup> c.)

**Elza Khaindrava**

**Professional Biography**

Elza khaindrava enrolled in the BA in History at the Faculty of Humanities of Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University in 2005. She graduated the same course in 2009. The same year Elza Khaindrava enrolled in the MA in Caucasian Studies at the Faculty of Humanities of Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University. She obtained her MA degree in Caucasian Studies in 2011.

Elza Khaindrava became a Doctoral student in 2012 pursuing her studies in Georgian History. She worked as a professor's assistant in the spring semesters of 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, 2015-2016 in the general course of the Georgian History.

She has participated in various conferences. Her publications include:

1. "For the Family History of Maghaladze", Georgian Source Studies, Vol. XVII-XVIII, pp. 108-114, Tbilisi: Universal Publishing, 2015-2016.
2. "The epitaphs of the Amilakhvari Family from Samtavisi (XVIII c.)", Acad. Journal "Caucasian Studies", VII, pp. 242-249, Tbilisi: Tbilisi University Press, 2015.

## **Abstract**

The article presents the 19<sup>th</sup> century epitaphs of those members of the Amilakhvari family, whose data can be traced in archives of some other sources. This research aims to encourage the establishment and emendation of the chronological and genealogical accounts about the Amilakhvari Family.

**Keywords:** *The Amilakhvari Family, Samtavisi, Epitaph, Chala.*

The Samtavisi Cathedral is well known in Georgian Academic literature. The Church with its lapidary and fresco inscriptions are fundamentally studied by M. Brose (1), Th. Jordania (9), A. Khakhanashvili (16), S. Barnaveli (3), V. Beridze (4), P Zakaraia (7;8), N. P. Severov (10), G. Sokhashvili (11; 12).

Yet the scholarly interest somehow overlooked the epitaphs of the graves of the Amilakhvars buried in Samtavisi.

Inside the Samtavisi Cathedral more than 40 graves are preserved dated to the 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> cc. a separate research has been done about the epitaphs of the 18<sup>th</sup> c. graves.<sup>1</sup>

This article presents the 19<sup>th</sup> century epitaphs of those members of the Amilakhvari family, whose information can be traced in archives of some other accounts.

The aim of the research is to reveal the individual members of the Amilakhvari family and recover the 19<sup>th</sup> c. history of the family (of the time of slavery as well as after its abolishment) on the grounds of comparing it against other data.

This research will encourage the establishment and emendation of the chronological and genealogical accounts about the Amilakhvari Family.

### #1 Epitaph of Agathonike Amilakhvari

The Epitaph is located within the centre of the inner space of the church. It has 10 lines in Mkhedruli alphabet. The size of the stone: 48X27; The area of the inscription: 30X19; Height of graphemes: 3-0.5 ბმ.

Damage: The upper part of the stone is broken, some graphemes cannot be read. The inscription has no date or it may be erased.

1. The name of mine was Agathonike
2. And the Family name was Amilakhvari
3. .... by birth the son of Revaz Amilakhvari
4. And having an younger brother Otar also Amilakhvari
5. I have [am] 54 years [old]
6. This grave is erected as a monument
7. Prepared by the daughter of Melikv
8. I have [am] 54 years [old]
9. This grave as a monument
10. [was] prepared by the daughter of Melikv
11. for her still living husband
12. for the wish to have it adorned at some point
13. for the one who is now killed by death and turned into earth

The grave does not give the dates of birth and death. Therefore it is very difficult to find out which Revaz Amilakhvari is the father of Agathonike.

I. Chikovani writes in his work that Agatone (Thornike) Amilakhvari was the son of Revaz the

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<sup>1</sup> Regarding this subject see in more detail my previous article "The Epitaphs of the Amilakhvari family from Samtavisi (XVIII ბ.)", *Caucasian Studies*, Vol.VII, pp. 242-249, Tbilisi: Tbilisi University Press, 2015.

son of Otar (1737-1775) and the son of Mariam the daughter of Bezhan, the Duke of Aragvi. He dates his birth and death to 1776-1826. (Chikovani, 2010:11). If Revaz Amilakhvari died in 1775, then his son Agathone could not have possibly been born in 1776. The author also mentions that Agathonike was engaged to Efemia, the daughter of Ivane Rusashvili (Chikovani 2010:11).

Since we only know one Agathonike (Aghathonike) from the Amilakhvari family, it should be thought that the person mentioned in this epitaph should be exactly that Aghathonike that is mentioned in the following two documents:

1) The Court Statement about Aghathonike Amilakhvari's abandoning of his wife issued on August 20, 1800 – Datua, the son of Ioane Naziri Korchibashishvili complains against Aghathonike for the fact that 9 years ago Aghathonike asked the hand of his sister Melania in marriage and then abandoned her. The senior judges made him pay 3840 roubles. The court ruling was confirmed by King Giorgi XII (1746-1800) in a different document on September 6, 1800. (Dolidze 1977: 218).

2) The Court Ruling of the mediators about the distribution of the property and slaves of the Amilakhvari family issued on February 10, 1808. Otar, Aghathonike and Erasti Amilakhvaris move out together with their brothers (Dolidze 1977: 394)

It turns out that Aghathonike together with major-general Otar Amilakhvari applied to the council of nobles for the acknowledgment of their nobility on March 3, 1821. This application was processed and the title was granted on April 27, 1826 (fund 213: case 205).

This document clarifies that Aghathonike lived in the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> and the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> cc.

The inscription of the grave mentions the elder brother of Aghathonike – Otar. Most likely, mentioning of Otar in the epitaph must be conditioned by the fact that he was the head of the household of the Amilakhvari. At the time when there were manors in Georgia, every manor had a primate or the head of the manor house. Manors were abolished in the 18<sup>th</sup> c. and the rule should have been abolished as well, yet, it seems like in the 1<sup>st</sup> half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the old tradition remained in the consciousness of Georgian noble families.

## **#2 The 1860 Epitaph of Giorgi Amilakhvari, the son of Joseph**

The epitaph is located by the north wall, consists of 4 lines in Mkhedruli alphabet; the size of the stone is 34X40; The area of the inscription is 29-38; Height of graphemes: 5.5-1.5 ბმ.

Damage: The stone is covered with yellow spots on different areas.

The inscription provides the dat: 1860.

1. Ta...i (tavadi – Prince) Giorgi, the son of Ioseb [Joseph]
2. Amilakhvari
3. Passed away
4. On the 20<sup>th</sup> day of September in 1860.

Giorgi, the son of Ioseb is buried by the side of his mother, Elisabeth Kherkheulidze, the daughter of Aghatang.

Giorgi Amilakhvari was married three times: his first wife Sophia magalashvili, the daughter of Gabriel with whom he had five sons (Revaz, Ivane, Nikoloz, Grigol and Mikheil) and two daughters (Mariam and Anastasia).

After Sophia passed away, Giorgi married Mariam Pavliashvili, the daughter of David and had one son Alexander (1850-1919).

After the death of Mariam, Giorgi Amilakhvari married Anastasia Paul (1821-1890), the daughter of Jacob and they had a daughter Elisabeth (Chikovani 2010: 8)

Giorgi Amilakhvari applied to the Council of the Nobles to grant him the status of a nobleman for which he submitted a genealogical scheme with a brief description (fund 213: doc. 136). The description says that he is married to the daughter of the prince Gabriel Maghalov, Sophia and has sons: Revaz, Ivane, Nikoloz and Grigol.

### **#3 1862 epitaph of Nikoloz Amilakhvar, the son of Givi**

The epitaph is located opposite the sanctuary. It is carved in Georgian and in Russian. The Georgian inscription is made using the Mkhedruli alphabet and consists of 6 lines; Stone size: 109X60; Area size: 39X22; Height of graphemes: 3.5-0.5 cm.

Damage: the frame of stone has yellowed; Some of the graphemes are hard to read.

The inscription gives a date - 1862.

1. Under this stone the body is resting [the son of – moved from the 3<sup>rd</sup> line in translation] of Nizhego[ro]d
2. Dragoon regiment Poruchik Prince Nikolaoz
3. Amilakhvari, the son of Givi, murdered on May 24
4. In 1862, during the battle against the Abazekh [Abkhazians] by the bank of
5. The river Belaia near the Abazekh [Abkhazian]
6. Station, on the 29<sup>th</sup> year of his life.

Nikoloz was the son of Givi Amilakhvari, the son of Bardzim and the Dutchess Anastasia He is mentioned together with his parents and siblings in the 710<sup>th</sup> document of the fund N207. His father, Givi is asking for acknowledgment of his title as a Prince. The document lists all the members of his family (see the details below).

We find out from the inscription that Nikoloz, as a military person, Poruchik of the Dragoon regiment, took part in the 1862 battle by the river Belaia. It is likely that the inscription here refers to the river in the north of Caucasus, the left tributary of the river Kuban. This assumption

is based on the fact that exactly at that place is located the Abadzekhi Station, where there was the front line of the battlefield during the Russian-Cherkezian war (1859-1864). It seems that during this very war was killed Nikoloz in the age of 29.

#### **#4 1877 epitaph of Alexandre Amilakhvari, the son of Nikoloz**

The epitaph is located opposite the sanctuary by the column on the north. The epitaph is carved in Russian and in Georgian with the Mkhedruli alphabet; It contains 10 lines; Stone size: 44X37; Area size: 20X34; Height of graphemes 3-1 cm.

Damage: The right side of the stone is faded and the graphemes are readable with difficulty.

Yet, the inscription gives the date - 1814-1877.

1. In the place of your rest oh Saviour, where
2. where all the saints are resting, grant rest
3. Oh Christ, to your servant, Prince
4. Alexander Amilakhvari, the son of Nikolaos who
5. was born on January 10, 1814 and passed away on No-
6. vember 6, 1877.

Alexandre, the son of Nikoloz applied to the council of Nobles in 1834 with a request. He needed the reference letter about his origin for his military appointment (fund 213: doc. 37).

Alexander is also mentioned in the reference letter issued by the Council of Nobles in 1847 where his Princely origin is confirmed. This document says that Alexandre was 32 for the time and had a wide Euphrosyne (fund 213: doc. 710). This Euphrosyne is the daughter of Rostom Tsereteli (Chikovani 2010: 21).

I. Chikovani gives the date of birth as October 10, 1816 (Chikovani 2010: 21). Most likely, I. Chikovani should be referring to the date of his baptism.

#### **#5 1877 epitaph of Givi the Son of Bardzim Amilakhvari**

The epitaph is located by the south door carved in Georgian and Russian. The Russian text consists of 11 lines, the area of the inscription is: 70X63; height of graphemes: 5.5-3.

Damage: The Georgian text is hardly readable.

The Russian inscription provides the date – 1877 ѳ.

1. The spring of life, Christ, un-
2. Reachable depth of goodness. Who
3. I, run to and pray to
4. I, your unworthy servant, do not remember
5. My innumerable sins
6. Let my soul abide with the righteous

7. And grant it eternal peace
8. Under this stone is resting Prince
9. Givi the Son of Bardzim and the grandson of David
10. Amilakhvari
11. Passed away on July 19, 1877. 68 years old.<sup>2</sup>

The fund N213 of the Central Historical Archive of Georgia preserves the following accounts about Givi, the son of Bardzim.

Document N55, June 4, 1841: The office of the Most Holy Governing Synod of Georgia and Imeretia addresses the Council of Nobles regarding the case of the Prince of Gori Givi Amilakhvari, his wife Anastasia, the daughter of Luarsab and their sons Ivane and Nikoloz: They want to know whether their noble origin has been confirmed and if not, then when did the case start. Answer: They are not yet confirmed, and the case was processed on January 15, 1821.

Document 710 [Russian]: "About the approval of the noble origin of the Amilakhvari Family (began on October 28, 1847, ended on November 17, 1847)".

Bardzim, the son of David had three sons: Unter-Officer Givi - 36, Joseph- 28, and David – 23.

Givi was married to Anastasia who was 35, the daughter of the Prince and Duke Luarsab and they had children: Ivane – 16, Nikoloz – 12, Mikheil – 10, Grigol – 7, Elisabeth – 9, Ketevan – 6, Natalia –4.

They lived in the village Chala of Gori Uyezd.

Givi Amilakhvari created personally the document dated to February 21, 1846: A landowner Givi, the son of Bardzim is asking a certificate confirming his noble origin; he needs to submit the document with the school application for his children ( fund 213: doc. 49).

This fund also preserves the geneology scheme constructed by Bardzim the son of David on January 31, 1856. This scheme shows that Ivane, the son of Givi Amilakhvari was a captain at headquarters and the other other son Mikheil was an Junker.

The same document states that the Amilakhvari Family owned lands and peasants in the following villages: Chala, Kaspi, Pkhvenisi, Dzeveri ...

## **#6 1883 Epitaph of Mikheil the son of Givi Amilakhvari**

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<sup>2</sup> "The spring of life, Christ, the unreachable depth of beatitude, I, unworthy servant, long for you and pray to you: Forgive my innumerable trespasses, let my soul rest in heaven of the righteous and grant it eternal peace. Under this stone rests the prince Givi, the son of Bardzim and the grandson of David Amilakhvari. Died on July 19, 1877, in the age of 68".

The epitaph is located opposite of the sanctuary, towards the south door; the epitaph is carved in Russian in 5 lines; the stone size: 180X83; are of the inscription: 71X68; height of graphemes: 9-3 cm.

Damage: the stone is cracked in the middle

The inscription mentions the date: 1832-1883.

1. Prince
2. Mikhail Givovich
3. Was born on July 25, 1832.
4. Passed away on December 15, 1883.<sup>3</sup>

Mikheil is the son of Givi the son of Bardzim. He is mentioned in the genealogical scheme created by his grandfather, Bardzim, the son of David in 1856. He presented the scheme to the Council of Nobles. This data shows that Mikheil was a Junker (fund 213).

I. Chikovani dates the birth of Mikheil Amilakhvari to April 10, 1833 (Chikovani 2010:19). Chikovani's account most probably relies on the data in his birth certificate.

Since 1873 Mikheil is a captain at headquarters. He was married to Anastasia (1844-1920), the daughter of Estate the Duke of Ksani (Chikovani 2010:19).

#### **#7 1887 epitaph of Ivane Amilakhvari, the son of Teimuraz**

The epitaph is located opposite the sanctuary. Mkhedruli alphabet, 6 lines; stone size: 40X38; Area of inscription: 36X34; height of graphemes: 6-1 cm.

The inscription gives a date: 1887.

1. Here rests the body
2. Of the Prince
3. Ivane, the son of Teimuraz
4. Amilakhvari
5. deceased
6. March 23, 1887.

Ivane Amilakhvari was the son of the captain Teimuraz (1802-1839), the son of Ivane and Salome (1806-1850), the daughter of Ivane Pavlenishvili. Ivane was born in 1829. He married Nino Ivanovna Aldatova in 1854. They had children: Teimuraz, Salome, Alexandre, Giorgi, Konstantine, Sofio and Mariam (16).

In the document dated to 1847, which is issued by the Council of Nobles regarding the

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<sup>3</sup> "The Prince Mikheil Amilakhvari, the son of Givi was born on July 25, 1832 and passed away on December 15, 1883.

verification of the noble origin of the Amilakhvari family, there is also mentioned a widow of Captain Teimuraz, 40 year old Salome and her children: Ivane and Elisabeth (fund 213: doc. 710) Ivane Amilakhvari addresses the Council of Nobles with a request in 1848. He asks a certificate confirming his noble origin, which he needs for applying for a job in the office of the Tzar and the Emperor.

The application to the Council of Nobles filled in by the Princes of Gori Uyezd Bardzim, the son of David and Captain Teimuraz, the son of Ivane has an appended genealogical scheme dated to 1829, which mentions Ivane, the son of Teimuraz as well (fund 213).

### **#8 1894 epitaph of Natalia Amilakhvari-Alekseev-Meskhiev, the daughter of Vakhtang**

The epitaph is located in the centre of the interior space. Mkhedruli alphabet; 8 lines; Stone size: 59X36; area dimensions: 49X31; height of graphemes: 4-1 cm.

Damage: Some graphemes are faded away.

The inscription refers to the dates of the birth and death of Natalia: 1826-1894 წ.წ.

1. Of the prince Vakhtang
2. Amilakhvari
3. Daughter Natalia
4. Alekseev-Meskhiev [in marriage]
5. Was born on August 26
6. 1826
7. Passed away on the 17<sup>th</sup> of
8. February, 1894.

Natalia is the only daughter of Vakhtang Kaikhosro Amilakhvari and Ana Gedevanishvili, the daughter of Betsia.

Natalia was married to Iakinthe Aleksi-Meskhishvili, the son of Dimitri.

Natalia Amilakhvari addressed the Council of Nobles in 1870. She requested a verification of her being a descendant of the noble family of the Amilakhvari (fund 213: case 1538).

Natalia and Iakinthe produced one son – Nikoloz. He is usually mentioned by Natalia herself in the document submitted to the Council of Nobles. This document shows that Natalia lived in the village Chala (Gori Uyezd).

The text is compiled in the Georgian and Russian languages.

Fund also preserves a certificate, which attributes Natalia to the Amilakhvari family. The certificate states that Natalia was born on August 26 and was baptized on September 15.

Natalia's intercessors were her relatives: Giorgi, the son of Ivane and Captain Luarsab, the son of Kaikhosro Amilakhvari (fund 213: case 1538, document 76)

### **#9 1895 epitaph of Giorgi, the son of Ivane Amilakhvari**

The epitaph is located in the centre, turned towards the west door. Mkhedruli alphabet, 5 lines; stone size: 37X39; area dimensions: 38X31; height of graphemes: 6-1 cm.

Damage: The stone has yellowed

The inscription gives the date: 1820-1895.

1. Prince
2. Giorgi, the son of Ivane
3. Amilakhvari
4. Was born in 1820
5. Passed away on March 28, 1895.

Giorgi had another name Pachua (Chikovani 2010:28). He was the son of Ivane, the son of Kaikhosro and Ketevan, the daughter of Nikoloz Baratashvili (17), His wife was Mariam, the daughter of Giorgi Sarajishvili (Chikovani 2010:28) and they had ten children: Ketevan (Kekela), Alexander, Christophore, Sofia, Nino, Ekaterine, Ivane, Grigol, David and Vasili (17).

I. Chikovani dates the death of Giorgi, the son of Ivane to 1821 (chikovani 2010:28). This may well be the date of his baptism.

Giorgi is mentioned in both the document and the appended geneology scheme created by Giorgi, the son of Ioseb (fund 213: doc.136), according to which he is 25, is married to Mariam, the daughter of a citizen Sarajiev and they have a two year old daughter Ketevan.

There is also a document of intercession issued by Giorgi on April 24, 1870 to his cousin Natalia Amilakhvar-Aleksi-Meskhishvili.

"on the 24<sup>th</sup> day of 1870 I, Prince Giorgi Amilakhori, the son of Ivane signing this below, fully appreciating the value of nobility grant this certificate cerifying that the deceased Prince Vakhtang Amilakhvari, the son of Kaikhosro and his daughter, the legitimate state consultant Natalia belong to my noble family and are direct descendants on the male line of one of the heads of my family tree. Among them, Vakhtang would be my third degree relative since he is my father Ivane's own brother; his daughter Natalia is my fourth degree relative that I verify by my own signature. The text is provided in Georgian and in Russian (fund 213: doc. 76).

Therefore, the epitaphs of the graves discussed in the article gives us all sorts of accounts: Sometimes we learn dates of births and deaths of people, their names and titles. The names of the members of the Amilakhvari family that we came across in these epitaphs allowed us to figure out their relationships with other people mentioned in documents by collating them and identifying them with more precision on the grounds of comparison. From the documents preserved at the central historical archive of Georgia we see that the members of the Amilakhvari family discussed above still occupy military titles and positions in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, they serve the Tzar and own large lands and servants. During the same period, the members of the Amilakhvari family were also actively involved in the process of the formation of an integrated title of aristocracy and they tried to prove their noble origin by official documents.

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# The Peculiarities of Presenting Violence in the Work of Jean-Marie Gustave Le Clezio

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Professional Biography

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## Abstract

The theme of violence in the work of Le Clezio is first of all created by contrasting the special units such as nature and urban environment and the images and symbols reflecting their opposition. A modern city through the eyes of a writer poses a danger to the existence of the human being, since it generates false values of life. Its extremely abstract architecture emphasizes the suffocating nature of the space. The influence of modern technologies on human beings is also considered as forms of violence. So are the consumer principles that are revealed at its most precisely in urban environment. The existence of a human being under such conditions is evaluated as a war.

**Keywords:** *Imagination, violence, city, nature, war.*

The theme of violence and aggression appears to be one of the most significant aspects in the work of the modern French writer Jean-Marie Gustave Le Clezio. Le Clezio, the Nobel Prize holder of 2008 keeps expressing from his first novel his frustration over the degradation of existence and the mortal influence that modern technologies have over people. Le Clezio presents such nuances of the modern life where the artificial character of life is revealed. The writer wants to show that the true existence is "elsewhere" and "on the other side" and calls the reader to find seek that place. Le Clezio's characters, possessed by the same quest are constantly in motion, they are traveling, move from one place of the world to the other or they just wander in nature. Yet, their wandering does not mean visiting exotic places according to the prearranged route. The travels of the characters is presented as a spiritual search, in which the priority is given to discovering and perceiving the smallest and the least meaningful that develops an alternative vision of reality. Refreshing one's vision and creating a new optics of eyesight is the key to obtaining a true existence.

There is falsehood, in the opinion of the writer, that reveals most of all within the urban environment and which is also the source and a promoter of aggression. Aggression, which generates and develops within this space, is unnoticeable at the first glance, but it fully consumes human individualism and identity. We speak of the aggression of psychological nature, which accompanies human life in a hyper-commercial world guided by modern technologies. The source of violence in such a world is identified as social system, the basis of which is the principle of provoking desires and then satisfying them.

In this setting the needs and necessities of people are determined by advertising and human beings turn only into consumers. In the environment of mass consumerism, when production takes place in excess and the pressure of advertising is enormous, human being becomes dependent on things. Development of modern technologies increased the role of material things even to a greater degree that caused the decline and degradation of natural human skills. Human being, pressurized by the invasion of material objects, becomes and acts like a robot, which continues his/her life in an automatic mode according to the rules preset by the system. In this situation human being appears as a victim of the violent system, since his/her prior right to live according to natural human needs is violated. Demonstration of this very type of violence is the motto of Le Clezio's works. The writer equals it to war to live in a society like this and he believes this war undermines individualism. The theme is particularly urgent in his earlier works, particularly in 1960-ies and 1970-ies. This is the time when the invasion of modern technologies in social life gained unbelievable pace and became the object of discussions for intellectuals as an existential issue. Miriam Stendal Bullo reckons that Le Clezio experiences the influence of the philosophers of that generation and particularly that theory of Martin Heidegger, which applies to the human dependence on material things [ბულო, 1999:185]

Le Clezio's approach to the hierarchy established between humans and things is obviously voiced by the view of the late philosopher, who notes in one of his works: "We can say 'yes' to the ineluctable use of technological objects and can at the same time say 'no' to them, insofar as we refuse to allow them to claim us exclusively and thereby warp, muddle, and, ultimately, lay waste our essence" [Heidegger, 1976:145].

Precisely the sorrow over the existence emptied by technologies highlights the novels by Le Clezio such as *The Interrogation* (1963), *War* (1970), and *The Book of Flights* (1969), which has been selected as the research corpus for this article. This article will try to study all the important aspects of the research be it linguistic construction, image, symbol or a myth, the combination of which makes it possible to read the theme of violence in the above mentioned novels.

The reference to violence becomes clear even in the titles of the mentioned works. The title *The Interrogation* brings an association of sentencing related to crime; The work presents an unbelievable violence exercised on human consciousness by modern lifestyle: "I'm crushed by the weight of myconsciousness. I'm dying of it"[Le Clezio, 1963:56]. This Phrase of Adam Pollo fully reflects the acuteness of psychological aggression highlighted throughout the novel.

„War“ has a direct connotation of a concrete form of violence. "A war has started" [Le Clezio, 1973:7] – proclaims with a prophetic tone the incipit of the novel „Each second, as it rolls on, it uproots all things in its path, reduces them to dust ...Nobody will survive unscathed. ... Nobody will remain on foot, nobody will be spared [Le Clezio, 1973:7]. This is the continuation of the incipit and the whole of the novel follows the peripeteias of the brutal war. The apocalyptic discourse that permeates the narrative of the novel makes the anticipated results of the war look even more disastrous: „Destruction is already near. It will happen shortly. This is written in the centers of crossroads, when it is blocked by the moving knot of a crowd; it is written on traffic roads, by the funny insects made of metal that fly 120 km an hour and on the wings of aircrafts. This is

painted on the white facades of erected houses, on the rows of the dirty glasses of windows, on stations, hospitals. This is written everywhere but nobody wanted to read it” [Le Clezio, 1973:233].

As about *The Book of Flights*, the title presents a reference to the theme of violence since it speaks of flight, of escaping something that is intolerable and unbearable. Ogan feels the suffocating power of the city and one day he decided to leave. So the image of the city as a violent space is shaped, which the writer contrasts with nature as an opportunity of existing in absolute freedom and truth. Opposition between nature and urban world emerges in all three novels and the imaginary structure of violence is based on it. Natural landscapes, their frequent and long descriptions, the excitement of characters over the particulars of nature and emphasizing the physical experiences drawn from the influence of nature obviously refers to the priority of natural space and diminishes the urban space. The letter only creates aggressive background in all his novels.

Le Clezio mentions his negative attitude to city life in more than one interview. He says in his article published in 1969 in the newspaper “Le Monde” that the city is a certain enticement that induces people into itself thanks to the amazing effects of modern technologies, while in truth it induces them into eternal battle, which is the synonym to the daily life in the city: “There is no peace in them [/cities]. There is always war between their walls along their streets”[Onimus, 1994:78].

Le Clezio considers the urban space as an artificial space created by human hands and therefore damaging the authentic, original image of nature. In this context, the writer detects the dangerous signs brought about by the progress of civilization. The degeneration of original space or primordial nature reaches such a level thanks to the incredible speed of the development of modern technologies, that it becomes perilous to human existence: “This advancement [...] of what we call civilization, does not go quietly and peacefully but it takes an aggressive form and this development leads us to a certain battle, to constant fight between people and between the human being and nature ... [Lost, 1971:63].

By danger Le Clezio means first of all, a human right to moving freely that is complicated in the space obstructed by concrete reinforcements. The excess of topographic details, which are required by the city décor contrasts with the “empty order” of natural space. Various scholars single out certain metaphors and linguistic elements accompanying special structures, which present at its best the opposition between nature and the city. To be more precise, these terms are “ordre vide”(“empty order”), or “terrain vague”(“wasteland”)[Michel 1986:23], which are used in relation to natural spaces and their opposite term “trop- plein” (“overfull”)[ Thouraya Ben Salah 2014:81], which defines the character of urban space. The writer prefers the emptiness of landscape, since it contains freedom, looks like an empty paper and is the symbol of openness to all kinds of opportunities. The characters in their escape from this dull daily existence find a shelter precisely in wandering throughout this empty landscape and spend their days in the discernment of nature. The shelter for the characters, which voluntarily parted with society is to be found mainly in the beach, mountains or desert. The letter becomes the object of excitement in more than one novel due to its “empty order”, especially in the novel *Desert*.

The “nakedness” and “emptiness” of the landscape characteristic to the desert, does not diminish the meaning of space at all. On the contrary, the writer shows that this “emptiness” is the fullest since it contains in itself the original state and a chance of recovery. This is the place where everything can start again. The wish for recovery and renewal is the prerequisite to true life. There is only one opportunity within the modern city: One can only live according to the preset order, which undermines freedom. This very limitation reveals the first sign of violence: endless cascades of streets, buildings, cars and their audio and visual effects, which create the urban space, causing disorientation and vertigo. Le Clezio explains this suffocating aspect in one of his interviews and speaks of the priority of the “empty space”, which, at least provides a chance of “walking”: “What is terrifying in the city, it is .... the sense of belonging, impression of everything being overcrowded, that everything is occupied. I often tell to myself, it should be appalling to be born nowadays, to be born into this world, where everything is already occupied, where you already no longer have a chance to not only own something, but even to walk, because the empty ground is precisely the place to walk” [Ezine 1995:58].

Le Clezio turns to extreme abstractionism while picturing urban landscapes and presents the city as the piece of land consisting of concrete constructions. The writer brings to the front the details such as asphalt roads, electric and railway lines, crossroads, glass decorations, lights, monotonous houses and the buildings of various functions: parking places, airports, hypermarkets and their endless sections, shopping malls, night clubs: “A few million tons of gigantic cement blocks are erected on earth... kilometers of railway and highway roads, the woods of columns and telegraph posts, lakes, glass cubes, nickel beaches, wavy fields. No other landscape has been so broad, so deep. Never have the mountains been so high, the canyons so dizzy. There has never been so many metal and stone, so much material” [Le Clezio 1973:66].

In the opinion of Jeanne Onimus, the city presented by Le Clezio is the fruit of abstract way of thinking, which banishes idea and subsequently the reign of technologies reaches its peak: “The city, like a drug, drives the human being insane” [Onimus, 1994:75]. It is also an expression of emptiness, “a desert full of many rooms” [Le Clezio, 1969 :182] and, where the spirit is lost. Order, perfectionism and technologies, which should signify the glory of the city, reaches such a level that instead it becomes intolerable and causes the degradation of thinking. Extreme abstractionism, which is defined in the décor of the city, is precisely the sign of regress and has destructive power. It is directly linked with mechanics and produces analytical thinking. Modern world is the result of analytical thinking and is turned into techno structure [Onimus, 1994:76]. This form of thinking diminishes and sterilizes human existence and creates a ground for the battle against nature. It destroys peace, separates us from our roots and induces us into the whirlpool of violence. This form of thinking makes mechanized human mind and soul by imposing on them recurring work, during which the speed of execution increases. Anxiety and restlessness takes over. People walk in streets briskly, everybody is in a hurry [Onimus, 1994:65]. They look like marionettes led by invisible hands: “The world is populated by marionettes; automatic creatures live in the world [Le Clezio, 1969:182].

Urban environment, as a techno structure, can only produce material things: “they are here, the damn things: they rest along the corridors in supermarkets having come from all the corners of the world” [Le Clezio, 1973:232].

Thinking gets lost in the number of things: “Here we have a quantity, no individual thought, not even wishes” [Le Clezio, 1973:92]. In the process of production of things, the human being turns into a mere tool for creating things [Onimus, 1994:66]. If the human being loses the skill of producing, he/she is only rejected by the structure. Therefore, the urban space offers to the human being only a limited and artificial existence. The misery of it also reveals in the characters’ attitude to the city who are possessed by a passionate desire for escaping from the city: “The city of metal and concrete, I no longer want you, I reject you!” [Le Clezio, 1969:63] – this is how escaped Ogan sees the city.

Endless streets and the people roaming about in them, who Le Clezio calls a crowd, are the inseparable elements of the city décor. The crowd presents an empty and dull existence of the people who depend on things on one hand, and on the other, it implies to indifference kindled within this existence. The writer calls the movement of the roaming mass of people a motion of people who are doomed to death: “these are the people who are moving towards death, death is their fate” [Le Clezio, 1973:77].

The mechanical existence excludes the ability of compassion. Therefore, the communication among people is reduced to minimum. Each of them is enclosed in his/her self and cannot understand the other person. This phenomenon is often illustrated by the blocks of flats that fill up the urban space. These “white” “multi-windowed” [Le Clezio, 1973:60] buildings refer to the existence becoming monotonous. At the same time, they point to the isolation of human beings and the absence of the desire to overcome “Me” for the sake of understanding the other: “Human beings shut themselves in shells and walk in streets like in cars with tinted windows” [Le Clezio, 1973:90].

The houses are those very “shells”, where human beings are shut and try to communicate with others and to understand them. Calling the house windows as “uniform detention cells” [Le Clezio, 1973:169] in the novel *War*, he associates houses with a prison and intensifies the sense of closure and isolation. The main character of the novel *The Book of Flights*, young man Ogan running away from home since it seems like a prison to him: “Everything started that day when he discovered a prison. He is looking around him and sees walls that retain him he sees the vertical panels of the wall, which obstruct his success. Home is a prison. The room he is in is also a prison [Le Clezio, 1969:35].

Escape is the only way of fleeing this suffocating existence. Therefore, his characters often do that. The main character of *The Interrogation*, Adam Pollo prefers to live in an abandoned house in the suburbs, separated from all. The main character of *The Book of Flights*, Ogan, who ran away from home and from the city travels around the world. The nature of the voluntary flight from society of these characters and their isolation is explained by searching. This is a search for the true and authentic existence, going to a foreign land and knowing others that at the same time means knowing one’s own self. Remaining in the city makes them suffer from the sorrow of closure and loneliness Ogan feels himself entrapped between the walls erected at every step. Different kinds of noises of the city drain him and the endless streets are driving him mad: „It [the city] persecuted

him inconspicuously, entrapped him between its walls, wore him out by its volcanic noise, drove him insane by its straight roads, which had no end [Le Clezio, 1969:125].

Therefore, urban space is inclined towards suppressing and erasing identity. Escaped Ogan starts traveling around the world that ends with him discovering the civilization and cultures of “others” and his desire to share them. Le Clezio wishes to demonstrate the world in its colorfulness and all its expression. The human being ought to seek, see and experience each of these expressions since the true life is to be achieved only through the wholeness of all the constituent elements of the world. The city, meanwhile, encourages the opposite tendencies. This closed space of the city feeds the ego of the individuals living in it and offers them the Jungle Laws as the rule of their lifestyle. The individuals shut in the custody of their own “I” or their culture do not notice and cannot understand anybody and anything except their own selves. Precisely Jungles and Hell are the most frequent metaphors that Le Clezio uses as a reference to the meaning of the city: “As in jungles where there are millions kinds of leaves, millions of insects, fruit, worms, roots, snakes .... Exactly this way I want to learn walking in streets, because I know that there are mortal powers, dangers and poisons everywhere” [Le Clezio, 1973:189].

Unlike Adam and Ogan, the character of *War*, Bea B does not run away from the city, On the contrary, he spends all days in wandering about in streets. The girl observes every single detail that creates this space and the feeling of danger never leaves her alone” “It seems that all the violence of the world, all its glory and power have gathered and left the trace here”. The girl was walking in the street in the evening and could not feel peace” (Le Clezio, 1973:77).

The object of the girl’s observation are night club, supermarket, parking space, streets and the crowd walking in the street, traffic roads and the speeding cars through the tinted windows of which it is impossible to see human beings sitting inside” [Le Clezio, 1973:168]. The life of a human being in the city is like a war. It is a bloodless war without the dead and the wounded, the war of technologies and systematic order against living creatures: “This is a brutal and silent war, merciless, ungrateful, war without the dead where there are no wounded, nor were there the puddles of blood. This is without doubt a blind war, which was not conducted for the sake of some over-worshipped word or idea but it destroyed the world” [Le Clezio, 1973:27].

The phenomenon of the modern war can easily be understood by visiting different buildings, considering their content and their functions and it becomes obvious that that these buildings which look ordinary at the first glance such as railway, hospitals, morgues, banks etc... create the history and content of this silent war through their function, which defines the human existence: “If we wish to know the causes of war, its course, history,, we need to see these extraordinary places: railway stations, hospitals, dining halls, morgues, slaughter-houses, casinos, bars, shop chains, cold rooms, banks, petrol stations, churches, social security offices and airports”[Le Clezio, 1973:177]. Human beings become the victims of the constructions created by them and their meanings which given also by them and they agree to living under their power.

Therefore, we can conclude on the grounds of the present analysis that in the above listed novels Le Clezio presents a form of violence which takes place against the human being in the modern world and which is of a psychological nature. It is directed towards erasing

the natural human image and turning it into a soulless, technological instrument. The degradation of human existence develops with utmost force within the city. The writer sees the source of aggression precisely in the city, with its overloaded topography, with its extreme architectural abstractionism, order and perfectionism and functional content. In order to emphasize the aggressive character of urban space, the writer argues in preference of natural spaces, which as he believes, is the chance of eternal renewal and true existence.

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# For understanding the ‘Youth’ of the Maccabean Martyrs

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## Abstract

*The Martyrdom of the Maccabees* is a Hagiographical piece based on bibliology books. The [Georgian] text of *The Martyrdom* was published by Prof. Ivane Imnaishvili in 1980. Yet, the martyrdom from a literary point of view has not yet attracted a scholarly interest. This article presents one of the key aspects of the piece and attempts to understand the youth of the martyrs.

**Keywords:** *Maccabees, Maccabean, Non-Canonical, Hagiography, Imagology, Youth, Young.*

The books of the Maccabees are attributed to the group of non-canonical<sup>1</sup> books of the *Old Testament*. A diverse literature has reached us regarding them whether it is bibliology, Hagiography or hymnography. The object of our interest at present is a hagiographical work.

The National Centre of Manuscripts named after Korneli Kekelidze preserves two manuscripts (Sin-62, 10<sup>th</sup>c.; A-95, 11<sup>th</sup>c.), which contains the hagiographic work about the seven Macabbean sons and their mother Solomonia. The interrelation between these texts was studied by Prof. Ivane Imnaishvili who concluded that the texts presented in the manuscripts Sin-62 and A-95 should belong to the same edition. Moreover, the

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<sup>1</sup> Non-canoncity refers to the absence of the Holy Spirit’s intervention in the process of making the Holy Scriptures.

difference between them is so little that he considers Sin-62 to be the original version of A-95 [Imnaishvili, 1980: 40].

The brief plot summary of *the Macabbean Martyrdom*: The faithless king Antiochos/Anthiochos<sup>2</sup> requires the Jews to worship idols and eat pork, otherwise he punishes the disobedient ones by tormenting and eventually executing them. The seven faithful brothers<sup>3</sup> and their mother stood up to the king through their disobedience. In spite of the King's repeated urges, the brothers expressed their willingness to be tormented<sup>4</sup>, after having announced earlier that they are not concerned with the punishment of this world and they long for the heavenly kingdom.

In the very beginning of the story, the author tells us that he is going to tell us about the king who was defeated by a woman and her sons through the help of God. He compares this fact with the example of the biblical David: "and we saw how God defeats men by the hands of a woman and the king by the minors, so David also was an youngster yet, he saved Israel" [Imnaishvili, 1980: 30].

According to the recalled episode, we can emphasize the meaning of adolescence. It is interesting what distinguishes and what is characteristic to a youngster that enables him to defeat the one who is stronger than him.

*The Bible* or the book of books has a peculiar answer. According to Matthew the attitude of Jesus to children is thus: "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven" [Matthew, 18:3-4]. Christ calls his disciples to abandon the way of pride and be humble, obedient, as sincere as children ... in the book of the Evangelist we read immensely important words regarding children: "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do" [Matthew, 11:25-26]. According to the Gospel, the savior speaks about the divine wisdom, which is not as clear and obvious to anybody as it is for children.

Thus, according to the Christ's commandment, in order to enter the Kingdom of heaven one has to first "turn into a child", which itself means acquiring the qualities characteristic to children.

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<sup>2</sup> The years of the reign of Antiochus IV 175-163 BC [Batoshvili, 1991, 124].

<sup>3</sup> We find the names of the martyrs neither in biblical books, nor in the *Martyrdom*, yet, the calendar of the Orthodox Church lists their names: Abim, Antonine, Guri, Eleazar, Evsevon, Alim, Markele [Calendar of the Georgian Orthodox Church, 1976: 225].

<sup>4</sup> According to the Church calendar, the Maccabeans were martyred in 166 BC [Calendar of the Georgian Orthodox Church 1976, 225].

First of all, a child perceives the world through unconditional “trusts”. The attempts of analyzing, judging and checking come with age. The younger the person is, the stronger is his/her faith (faith in God as well as in surrounding humans). Faith itself involves obedience, since when a person believes in something (or somebody) he/she trusts and obeys him/her without questioning. The author of *The Martyrdom* also, when he brings an example of biblical David and compares his acts with that of those children’s, considers humility as the primary guide to victory. According to the words of the hagiographer, king David defeated the multitude of warriors without a sword through his faith in God and humility, since the victory is given not to the great army, but to whoever He (the Lord) finds deserving [II Mac. 15:21].

Therefore, it is obvious why the author of *The Martyrdom* brings in a relevant place the example of young yet faithful David defeating the Goliath [I Samuel, 17:45].

The hagiographer brings an example of the fall of Antiochus as an example of pride against humility: “God let him die through the hand of a woman, for he was looking down on the faithful... and when his pride reached God, his kingdom fell by God’s providence” [Imnaishvili, 1980:30].

Saba-Piruz Metreveli rightly notes in his article “Child in the Georgian Hagiography” that “childhood and adolescence are identified with the way to humility, without which nobody enters the kingdom of heaven” [Metreveli, 2004:12]. Therefore, the author of *The Martyrdom* argues that Childhood (considered not in terms of age, but of an inner state) that involves unconditional trust and obedience to God helps people to achieve victory (in both spiritual and physical terms). The hagiographer declares such a state to be the foundation of the victory of the Maccabean martyrs and their mother.

As it has been revealed, the author of the work decided to describe the self-sacrifice of the martyrs and created the example of hagiographical work. According to the peculiarities of this type of writing one of the main requirements for the main character is to have a pre-image a certain role model who he is supposed to imitate in his acts and speech. Every martyr is an imitator of Jesus Christ. Christ not only is their guide to heaven, it is not only that every martyr has to become like Christ himself, but Every martyr intends to turn into Christ. This issue raises a question: who was the object of imitation in the case of the Maccabean martyrs while they tried to defend the law and reject the sacrifice to idols<sup>5</sup> considering that they lived in 166 BC before Christ was incarnate?

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<sup>5</sup> This word is also used in other pieces of Georgian hagiography such as *The Martyrdom of 9 Brothers in Kola; The Songs of Repentance....* .

More than one biblical and in particular Old Testament characters are listed in the work as an archetypal image of martyrs. Solomonia expects her children to discard the order of King Antiochus: “Remember my children the saints who were before you, remember their countless deeds that let them inhabit the kingdom of heaven...” [Imnaishvili, 1980:31]. As we find out, the pre-Christian martyrs were expected to express the same attitude as the new martyrs did (the expectation was mainly set by the political and religious situation). First of all the martyr ought to believe, and trust to the word of God and besides, if it is necessary, confirm the word of God, which means being physically tortured for the sake of God’s commandment and His Law.

In order to have the Maccabean brothers “inhabit the kingdom of heaven in their unity”, they need to imitate the “earlier saints”. Who are those earlier saints? - three brothers: Ananias, Azarias and Misael, who were put in a furnace, where they got stronger and put suppressed the flame of the fire by giving themselves to God and not listening to the command of the King and God saved them” [Imnaishvili, 1980:31]. Solomonia is not satisfied by the names of the three Babylonian children, she calls her sons to imitate Moses, remember Joseph and resemble Elijah the Thesbites. She does not forget the first created human beings and addresses her 6<sup>th</sup> son with simple yet profound words: “Be my child, like your brothers since you are like the 6<sup>th</sup> day, when God created the first human being, Adam”. [Imnaishvili, 1980:36].

The citation confirms that the woman has studied the Law; her words apart from being encouraging, inspiring spiritual bravery and a guiding mother<sup>6</sup>, also depict the image of an amazing preacher and a learned person. She has a certain reason for mentioning the biblical names: she wants each of her sons to share the deeds and characters of those people that will secure their victory.

Part from the fact that the Maccabees had to share the faith and blood of the relative saints in their defense of God’s commandments, Solomonia also has her own role model: She resembles Abraham sacrificing his son Isaac to God and the reason is not her mercilessness or hatred of her children, but it is her love for them and her fervent desire to give them to God as a gift: “as Abraham did not despise his son Isaac and sacrificed him to God, I also want to sacrifice you to the living God. If I hated you I would not put you through this torment the same way as Abraham brought his son to God” [Imnaishvili, 1980:31]. By such an act, the mother, on top of wishing well to her children, also shows a great example of her love for God. Maybe this act of an adult (of both Abraham and Solomonia) is greater than the obedience of the children since considering the natural

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<sup>6</sup> If we follow the inter-textual study of iconography and literary images, Solomonia resembles one of the images of the Mother of God, in particular it is the guiding image of *Theotokos – Odigitria*.

processes such a level of obedience is less expected from an adult. Such a thing is only possible for the people who are children at heart, those who share in the grace of unconditional faith.

While talking about the acts of the martyrs one rather important issue is raised: How possible it is to discuss the sense of devotion in the context of the young Maccabean martyrs?

Among the people listed by the mother as the proposed role models to her children, the most curious is Elijah the Thesbites.<sup>7</sup> In spite of the fact that the information about this particular saint is quite vast, Solomonia draws attention to one particular aspect. She notes briefly the prophet's deeds and addresses her children: "Remember, my sons, the prophet Elijah the Thesbites who confronted the king and defeated him eventually" [Imnaishvili, 1980:31] (She does not say anything else about him).

It is likely that Solomonia's emphasis on the prophet's contradicting the king must imply to the idea that the Maccabean martyrs are commanded to defeat the godless king through their words first and then the deeds.

We see a doubtless expression of polemics in the Jewish side in the words of the fourth brother. Like the brothers, he also considers the devil to be the father of Antiochus and laughs at him when the latter offers him wealth and friendship: "Listen to me King, your god was not carved skillfully by a carpenter, but you commissioned to make his likeness" [Imnaishvili, 1980:35]. According to what the Maccabean brother said, unlike the idols of the king Antiochus and his companions, the living God is the object of worship for the martyrs. The deity of the pagans is not uncreated, it is carved and not even skillfully. This metaphor expresses not through imagination but through aesthetic expression the truth of Christians – their God is uncreated. The ones who walk the true path, the law of Moses guides: "You shall have no other gods before[a] me. You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below" [ἄδθ. 20:3-4]. Therefore, in agreement with the Law, the only object of worship for the Maccabees is the Lord God and there is no one except Him. It is obvious

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<sup>7</sup> According to the biblical tradition, Elijah stands up in front of the godless king Akab. The king considers him to be a curse and demands him to deny his own faith and worship the main idol Baal like the others do. In order to show the soullessness and idleness of the idol, Elijah asked the population of Israel, the Baal priests under the protection of the wife of Akab, Jezebel to gather on the mount of Karmil. Akab agreed and everyone gathered there. According to the Elijah's proposal they had to bring sacrifices their gods on the alters without making fire. If one of the lambs set on fire by itself, that would have been an evidence that the god of the sacrifice was the true God and the one who sacrificed was the servant of truth. The all day long prayers and begging performed by the priests went in vain – their lambs stayed without a fire. After the prayer of Elijah though the fire appeared not only on the sacrifice but the sacrificial vessel also caught the fire. Subsequently the surprised pagans fell on the ground and worshipped the true God (yet, after a certain time, the king persuaded by the queen started persecuting Elijah again and pursued the path of godlessness [III kings 17;18]).

that this commandment itself excludes the recognition of another god, therefore, it is irrelevant for the Maccabean martyrs to worship an idol (their Law (the same as the word of God) forbade them to depict even “Yahweh” aiming to avoid giving a certain form to God since He is invisible to human beings).

We see a truly Christian attitude in the words of the fourth brother when the king commands “to strip the skin off his head” and cut off his hands and legs, ears and his tongue”. This command incites a sense of gratitude in his heart and he says: “It is good of you because you will cast out a sin from my head and by cutting off my ears I shall not hear your disgraced voice; and by cutting out my tongue I shall not have chance to converse with you” [Imnaishvili, 1980:35]. The young man expresses his gratitude to his torturer, since he draws him away from sin by his ruthless actions. He ends his assertive response with the following words: “Even if you cut off my hands and my legs, you will not separate me from the Lord my God in front of which all the knees bend and every tongue praises him with the voice of chanting” [Imnaishvili, 1980: 35]<sup>8</sup>.

The brothers give variety of answers to the king before the actual martyrdom, yet their message usually is the same: no matter what the king does to them, the Maccabees seeking heavenly crowns and treasures are not going to be defeated by the momentary pain experienced in this world.

Important impression of the brothers is given by their oral responses to the king and their mother. Their speeches reveal their knowledge of the Law and their erudition. Each response is so powerful that the king kills the fifth brother without asking him questions or giving him a chance for a dialogue: “and the king ordered to bring the fifth one and he got scared of making him suffer, so he killed him and added him to the rest of his brethren” [Imnaishvili, 1980:36].

Considering the *Martyrdom*, it is likely that Antiochus not only was disappointed by the firmness and meekness of the children, but he sees them as his verbal opponents; this is confirmed by his decision to cut off the tongue of the sixth brother [Imnaishvili, 1980:36].

It is interesting that every new maneuver of the king is responded by kindness and a miracle. In the view of Antiochus, he can silence the eloquence of a martyr by cutting out his tongue. Yet, to his great misfortune, another disaster arrives upon the ruthless ruler: “and the saint opened his mouth and showed him his tongue. His mouth was bright as if he just had wine. And when the king and his companions saw, he was greatly surprised and frightened. And when his tongue was cut out, he was bleeding terribly, yet,

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<sup>8</sup> Compare with the *Songs of Repentance* by David the Builder – I. Praise; Bible – Isaiah, 45:24; Rom. 14:11; Phill. 2:10-11.

his mouth was shining bright. And the godless king said: I was defeated and fell by the children, how are we to believe from now on in the power of the god we serve? [Imnaishvili, 1980:37] After this the hagiographer explains the next reason of the king's outrage, which follows the response of the fourth brother: "And the King was terrified by the saint and madly infuriated" [Imnaishvili, 1980: 36]. Therefore, the essence of punishment on the side of the Maccabees lies in their exemplary and reasonable responses. Antiochus feels it very well. It is likely that he, disappointed by reality of their irony responds to the eldest brother who is determined to fight "by his own will": "stop wising in front of me, be aware that I have an authority to kill you" [Imnaishvili, 1980:36]. He reminds him with a threatening voice that he has no time and is in no state of displaying his wisdom, but it is better for the Maccabean child to get more sensible. The king gets shamed and disgraced for his threatening words towards the children: "When the king heard it, he filled up with anger and said: I shall cut up your body into pieces" [Imnaishvili, 1980:33]. By no attempt whether verbal or physical violence managed the king defeat and subordinate the Jews. This increased his desire for revenge even to a greater extent so that he made his punishment more severe for every next brother.

This is how the author of *The Martyrdom* describes the state and actions of the king with no spiritual insight and separated from human nature in the moment when he sees a miracle: "The godless king was like a greedy dog never satisfied by eating corpses and drinking blood" [Imnaishvili, 1980:37]. This example of the author's evaluation clarifies his own position as a true Christian who finds such an action unacceptable and he uses the metaphor of a greedy dog in order to emphasize the contrast and present the cruelty of a human being who was initially created in the image and likeness of God.

The Antiochus' desire to save Solomon's seventh son is nothing but his attempt to recover his battered pride and the others' respect towards himself. Exactly this pride makes him call the mother towards repenting her old age and spare at least "one bunch of grapes".

The king's hopes are disappointed again. He failed to fulfil what he intended. The full stop to his defeat was made by the youngest, the seventh Maccabean brother. He called the godless monarch not to delay him in joining the heavenly kingdom. "When the king heard the words of the child, he felt furious for being embarrassed in front of his companions and ordered to cut him" [Imnaishvili, 1980:38].

The Hagiographer does not leave unmentioned the fate of the martyr and notes that "then the godless surrounded him like a gazelle surrounded by dogs and the evil ones dug out his eyes, cut of his ears, hands and legs surround [Imnaishvili, 1980:38].

In the end, the final point to the king's defeat is marked with the way he executes the mother without a word: "when the king acknowledged his own defeat, he ordered the mother to be tormented" [Imnaishvili, 1980:38]. This fact can be discussed as the expression of psychological justice and precision. Apart from the fact that the defeated king does not even wish to get into debates with Solomonia, he also knows that the mother herself will not wish to either survive or consider his offers. The mother, who just a few minutes ago was "standing and saw some of them killed and some of them alive did not change her heart, nor she was terrified, but she rejoiced for inhabiting the Kingdom of heaven together with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, because a sword failed to cleave her strong heart" [Imnaishvili, 1980:38].

It should be mentioned that the hagiographer more than once shows the mother's joy. This moment is one of the defining conditions of the composition. She, after the death of almost every child expresses her joy and gratitude to God. The woman compares her children with the seven days of the Genesis and regards each of them as the ones who bring the joy of those days. Solomonia herself is going to retire after the death of the youngest son as God had a rest from his works on the seventh day [Imnaishvili, 1980:38].

Thus ends the act of the martyrdom of the Maccabees that allows the readers follow the storyline of their martyrdom and fills them with compassion. This elevated and tragically beautiful image ends with the highly artistic words of the author who describes Solomonia as the rejoicing mother of seven bridegrooms: "The Maccabean woman rejoiced as if at the wedding of her sons" [Imnaishvili, 1980:38].

Considering all the above mentioned, the Maccabean brothers should not be considered as children by age. This is evidenced by their sensible responses given to the king. From a Christian point of view all is possible for a faithful believer even if he/she is a child. Yet, we might consider the youngest seventh son as relatively small in age. Solomonia was particularly concerned about him and worried that his young age could have led him astray from the heavenly crown that was given to his elder brothers: "when the last son was left, his mother worried for him, encouraged him and prayed to God that he would give him courage to join his brothers and become perfect for she was scared of him getting entrapped in the snares of the evil one" [Imnaishvili, 1980:37]. Solomonia's anxiety is not unreasonable since the youngest child witnessed the death of the six of his brothers. We should not forget that he saw everything with his own eyes and at the time like this it is perfectly possible for the so called vertical line expressing the spiritual line to decrease and human nature to prevail over the divine. In spite of this we still think that

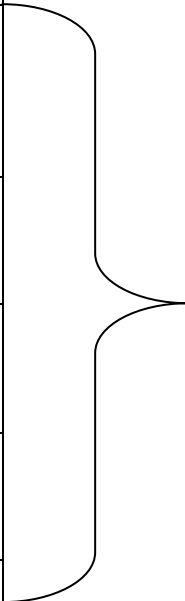
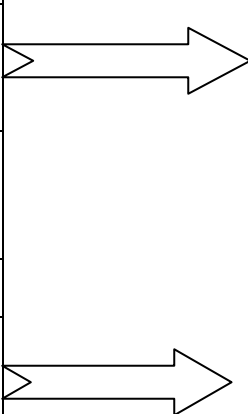
the Maccabean brothers are not children. They can be seen more in terms of adolescent boys.

Together with the facts listed above, it is noteworthy to remember that the lexicographic tradition considers different versions of understanding the word “child”. In the ancient Georgian language the word “*გრძს/ყძს*” (minor) meant a child, an young boy, while according to Sulkhan Saba Orbeliani the word covered the age from 10 to 20. Yet, the letter implies that an young man can also be called “*გრძს/ყძს*” (minor) [Metreveli, 2004:12]. We think that the reference by the word in the discussed story is made precisely to young men.

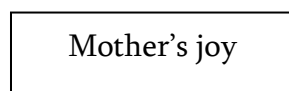
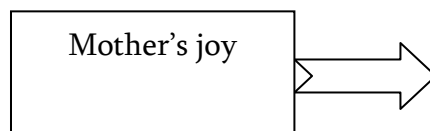
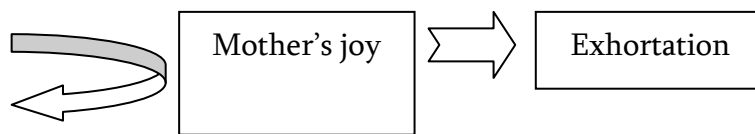
Apart from the ability to responding sensibly, one of the other evidences for the Maccabean martyrs’ not being children by age is the age of their mother. According to the story, Solomonia is an old lady. The *Martyrdom* emphasizes it three times [Imnaishvili, 1980:37,38,32].

Regarding the raised issue another episode attracts our attention in *The Martyrdom*. The king Antiochus starts interrogating the Maccabean brothers with the eldest one after having asked them “which one of them was the eldest, since they all looked of the same age” [Imnaishvili, 1980:32]. What can be meant by the author’s version of “right?” We think the king found it difficult to figure out the age differences between the brothers not only because they all were similarly (filled with divine wisdom) expressive (“right”), but also because they were physically equal while being ready to be martyred. This moment also makes us think that the Maccabean martyrs should not be regarded as youngsters (Each of them must have been at least an year older than the following one, therefore the difference between the eldest and the youngest must have been noticeable especially since the age difference is more obvious in childhood than it is in adulthood). Therefore the mother’s teaching to the youngest son does not mean that he must have been an infant. He was younger than the rest of his brothers but we cannot define his exact age.

It should also be mentioned that Solomonia exhorts not only the youngest son. Repetitions present one of the characteristic features of this work (See Appendix 1). By this we do not mean the order of the brother’s being tortured (Reader/listener knows from the beginning the teleology of *The Martyrdom* (the aim of the hagiographer is to present each martyrdom step by step). Here the storyline develops against the background of Solomonia’s inner state: her emotions are expressed at the execution of each Maccabee. For more evidence we shall provide a chart presenting the composition of the work that considers the order of the brother’s martyrdoms as well as the role of the mother during their martyrdom.

<p>I. Emergence of the king →</p>	<p>The Maccabees appear ←</p>	<p>Mentioning of the perished and the faithful</p>
<p>II. Mother's address to her sons; Exhortation of the 1<sup>st</sup> son</p>		
<p>III. The author's astonishment</p>		
<p>IV. The king's fear of being defeated</p>		
<p>V. The calling of the 1<sup>st</sup> son by the king, dialogue, torture</p>		
<p>VI. The calling of the 2<sup>nd</sup> son by the king, dialogue, torture</p>		
<p>VII. The calling of the 3<sup>rd</sup> son by the king, dialogue, torture</p>		
<p>VIII. The calling of the 4<sup>th</sup> son by the king, dialogue, torture</p>		
<p>IX. The author's speech</p>		
<p>X. the martyrdom of the 5<sup>th</sup> brother without a dialogue</p>		
<p>XI. The calling of the 6<sup>th</sup> son by the king, dialogue, torture</p>		
<p>XII. The author</p>		
<p>XIII. The defeated king, The calling of the mother by the king, dialogue, torture</p>		
<p>XIV. The calling of the 7<sup>th</sup> son by the king, dialogue, torture</p>		

XV.	King's order to torture the mother, no dialogue
XVI.	The state of the surrounding people
XVII.	The author's finale



Thus, as a conclusion to the discussion above, the word „ἄρσ“ must mean an young man in horizontal line if the text is considered in the image of a cross, while the vertical meaning in terms of imagology it refers to innocence, unconditional faith, the fullness of obedience. Besides, if we consider it together with the appendix attached, it is obvious that the mother's exhortation and encouragement of her youngest son is not to be explained by the young age of the son. Therefore, we are left with a less chance of discussing the merit of the Maccabean martyrs within the context of the images of the young martyrs.

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# “Sound Poetry” in the Context of New Syncretism

*(Zurab Rtveliashvili)*

Nana Gaprindashvili

## Abstract

The article aims to study the most characteristic feature of modern literary art – new syncretism on the example of Zurab Rtveliashvili, Sound Poetry and his art in general. The essence of new syncretism is to be found in the removal of the established genre borders by their hybridization.

**Keywords:** *New syncretism, Sound Poetry, merging the traditional and non-traditional arts, Zurab Rtveliashvili.*

Art has experienced many changes throughout the centuries of its development. In the beginning it was born as a syncretic field that means the inseparable unity of different arts such as dance, poetry and singing. Syncretism was characteristic generally for the early society and revealed in cultural and religious beliefs as well as in different areas of economy (such as hunting, agriculture etc...).

The society's intellect, beliefs were changing and refining side by side with social development. Society was forming new and higher spiritual and material needs and it reflected on the peculiarity of the artistic-aesthetic perception of the world. The process of separation between the fields of art and establishment of so called homogenous<sup>1</sup> arts began.

The fact that the vector of the forms of artistic creativity moved from syncretism towards differentiation was also caused by the fact that it somehow limited the development of the arts involved as well as the artist, obstructed the skills of his/her artistic expression.<sup>2</sup> Thus literary art shaped as a homogenous art, which applies artistic-aesthetic world to the language through the use of a word.

However, one should note that it is impossible to separate the arts from each other completely and syncretism still remains in art to a certain degree in a certain dose as its significant marker. This applies to the old as well as relatively new arts such as Theatre,

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<sup>1</sup> By the term homogenous art we mean those arts that rely on one material medium (for example: literature – written word, music – sound, etc...)

<sup>2</sup> It should also be mentioned that one part of artists and thinkers (such as Novalis, Wagner ... ) were for syncretic art and believed that art would fulfill its mission better that way.

opera, cinema etc... The same should be repeated about oral art. Eloquent writing creates a original synthesis with music, theatre or cinematography. It can be said with confidence that each epoch has its own syncretism. I think, in the 21<sup>st</sup> c., in the postmodern epoch, the era of the new syncretism has started. The art of the 20<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> cc will respond to its own customers' (reader, listener, observer) requirements and reacts to them. Globalization in general and cultural globalization in particular

The new historical-social and cultural-aesthetic epoch encouraged a search for new forms, genres, and directions. Literature, like the other arts responds and reflects in one way or the other the peculiarities of the society's development. The moment arrives when this or the other arts cannot remain within the frames of classical characteristics and seeks novelty, which may be presented in the image of new syncretism. This becomes implemented by the aid of hybridization and means the abolishment of the established boundaries for different arts, merging the traditional and non-traditional arts, joining the arts with certain domestic activities or enterprises etc. This, on one hand, is an original form of self-expression and on the other hand, it is also a response to the peculiarities of the society's development. It also offers new aesthetic values to the society, the taste and aesthetic requirements of which are more or less standardized.

Nicholas Berdyaev wrote: The old ideal of the classically beautiful art has become ultimately tarnished, and there is a feeling for a return to its images. Art has convulsively striven to go beyond its limits. The borderlines have shattered, such as distinguish one art from another and indeed art in general from that, what yet already is not art, from what is higher or lower than it. There has never yet been so acutely put the problem of the relation of art to life, of creativity and existence, never yet has there been such a thirst to pass over from the creativity of producing art to a creativity of life itself, new life (Berdyaev, 1918:3, Russian edition). If we did not know that the author said these words at his public lecture exactly a hundred years ago in 1917, we could easily apply it to our present day for its being so relevant to the modern reality. Only the accent is different. Those words were considered in the context of the crisis of art at the time. However, we can reconsider them today in the context of modernization of art. Yes, the ideal of classical art is altered today. Art is desperately trying to expand its boundaries and meet the standards of modernity.

Syncretism is particularly important in new reality when the multicultural world and the

issues related to it gain more and more urgency. Writer finds the “new language” even here, through which he/she manages to express himself/herself in the concrete socio-cultural world, grant aesthetic pleasure to the reader as well and convey his/her own message.

Zurab Rtveliashvili’s art is also immensely important in this respect. Georgian literary critics wrote about him: “we see a high level of abstraction in Zurab Rtveliashvili’s poetry – there is a mythology of riot. This abstraction of rebellion is the axis of Rtveliashvili’s poetry. His poetics bears a reference to the aristocratic nature of rebellion. Every such experiment can be considered as social and political criticism and not as a personal and subjective complaint... Zurab Rtveliashvili ... remains as a lingual poet even when he explores the space outside the boundaries of poetry, such as blackmail and politics. It is especially complex and twice as challenging when lingual poetry manages to retain lyrics and radical criticism in itself at the same time.

The vector of content spreads in different directions; breaks unexpectedly, ends in ambiguity or in a perplexing transcription, with an exclamation mark. It can be said that the poetics of Zurab Rtveliashvili continues the line of the great Georgian and Russian poet, Vladimir Maiakovski, it is a postmodern extension of his civil and futuristic lyrics. It is not easy to find an analogy to it in today’s environment precisely due to the shyness caused by decentralized liberalism and toleration characteristic to Postmodernism: “Every radical criticism leaves a fine trace of Modernism” (Chikhladze, Electronic Source).

Zurab Rtveliashvili has been living in Sweden for several years. He is creatively active in Scandinavia as well as in other European countries. In one of his interviews, the poet describes his diverse artistic activities: “I appear in art and literary spaces with my poetic performances and lectures, I played the main characters in two of the movies by quite famous German film director Julian Radlmaier’s at his own request. The rating for the first movie *A Spectre is Haunting Europe* was fairly high; it was named as the best movie in alternative cinema nomination in 2013. The work on the second movie will be finished shortly and I hope that the Georgian audience will also be able to see it soon. In Sweden I have a publisher, a great Swedish poet Christian Karlsson, who published my first collection of poems “poetry dictatorship,” in 2015 in Swedish. My works are included in many famous anthologies, now as a performance artist and author I actively cooperate with one of the cult avant-garde theatres in Stockholm. In 2014-2015 the theatre called “Guillotine” hosted my first play at the experimental stage, which had a positive response from theater critics; I still continue to work on individual performances...” (Rtveliashvili, Electronic Source).

The art of Z. Rtveliashvili is more or less novel and contains many novelties for contemporary Georgian literature. At the first glance, it appears exotic, yet, it is the result of much more serious aesthetic explorations. Such artistic-aesthetic novelties cannot emerge on an empty place. The poet masters creatively rather splendid Georgian, European and Russian experience in this respect. Every novelty has its own reason. The peculiarities of Zurab Rtveliashvili's poetry are also conditioned by many factors. One of them should be pointed out to be the long for self-realization in the foreign literary-aesthetic environment, the desire for overcoming the language barrier etc.

The author created the samples of "Sound Poetry"<sup>3</sup>, which he linked organically to the other arts and to the daily routines taken up to the level of arts. By doing so he came up with the new type of artistic-aesthetic hybrid based on the principle of syncretism. The essence of this hybrid reveals in transformation of the experimentally applied lingual tissue into a poetic text and presenting it to the listener in a form of theatrical-dramatic declamation. This was supported by the poetic talent of the poet in terms of virtuosic mastering skill of form and sound as well as a performing skill by which he made up a certain performance mixture of different arts. Poet turned towards the method of Para-verbal communication, which, as he claims, allows him to reach contact with the audience/listener on a different energy level. He is reading his "sound poetry" rather emotionally:

„sad aba sad asad,  
terror, terror, ror,  
barak obam, bam, bam,  
mubaraq,  
erorrrr, therorr, rorr,  
mirorrr,

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<sup>3</sup> Sound Poetry (Lautgedichte, soundpoem, звукостихи) is not a discovery of only one epoch or one poet. The art of poetry goes back to this type of experiment from time to time. Maybe not every epoch, but many of them has its own sound poetry, in which the phonetic aspect of the text gains a certain independence and often becomes the end in itself for the author. Yet, the sound poetries of every type and every epoch have different contents and concepts.

The roots and prehistory of sound poetry should be sought in the early past. For example: different types of folk texts, invocations, children's rhymes, refrains, imitative texts. In general, the history of sound poetry is closely related to folk traditions. Sound poetry existed long before Z. Rtveliashvili in Georgian literary tradition. Particularly fertile appeared to him the artistic-aesthetic tendencies of the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> c. in the poetic experiments of Dada and Futurism, Zaum etc. „Sound Poetry' as normally defined makes a first appearance in the early 20th century as an outsider of the great army of Modernism. (Of course there were sounds long before that but they needed clothes that convinced listeners that they were really something else)" (Jas. H. Duke, Internet Source).

barak oba am bam bam

mubaraq muubarraq“ ....

This poem by Zurab Rtveliashvili is based on the traditions of Dadaism-Futurism and Zaum traditions. As it is commonly known, the essence of Dadaist-Duturistic and Zaum poetry is the rejection of natural language or its particulars and replacing them by the elements similar to the natural language. Yet, we ought to mention, that, as it is referred in academic writing Zaum does not involve the complete rejection of an idea: „People come to Zaum language ... when they do not want to name the thing, but only imply to it“(Kruchenikh, 1923:45 [Russian]). The same can be replicated in relation to Dadaist and Futuristic poetry by adding that “Futurists (as well as Dadaist and Zaum authors [N.G]) established the cult of form, which they discussed without the connection to the content. They attempted to reflect the new life by employing new artistic methods. The most important in this was the fact that they experimented with a word, tried to refresh the poetic language and used endless experiments for this. The most radical expression of this experiments was so called Zaum, Zaum language (comes from Russian “Za”-for and “Um”-mind/sense), in which words were made up of such sounds, the unity of which did not make sense. It is not possible to grasp and understand logically the meaning in Zaum texts, because Zaum is a language that does not acknowledge the traditional communication functions. Zaum text allows any kind of experiment: repetition of meaningless sounds and syllables, division of words, their deliberate deformation, joining two separate morphemes together etc.” (Gaprindashvili, 2014:251).

In this work of Z. Rtveliashvili everything has its own name and we cannot say that the emotional-intuitive outweighs the rational. We think there is a certain balance well preserved between the two considering those impulses that are given in the text. The reader is provided with an energetic impulse for a vivid and diverse interpretations.

Zurab Rtveliashvili manages rather skillfully to manipulate with words and sounds relying on energetic and spontaneous improvisation. The combination of words and sounds presented by him creates an aesthetic phenomenon, the basis of verbal communication for the new intermediary art. The author often employs the method of declamation, recitative, (a declamatory melody, which is close to normal speech), different kinds of noise, tune, musical instruments etc. All this contributes to widening the boundaries of the expression in his work. Emotional and intuitional essentials are significantly involved in the perception of his art and especially in the texts with vaguely expressed lingual meaning. The most important thing is that the experimental poetry of Zurab Rtveliashvili is created through the organic synthesis of two semantics – poetic and extra-poetic.

I think it is not a coincidence that the Georgian poet chose Sweden as the arena for his experimental

art. This country has serious tradition of sound poetry, textual-sound composition, radiophone poetry and generally, in terms of development of intermediary novelty in art. Swedes are recognized in the whole world as the pioneers of Sound Poetry.

The poet emphasizes in one of his interviews that the language barrier that he experienced in a foreign country was and still remains his serious problem. Yet, he says elsewhere, that “language does not matter for a poet, language does not have a defining power, it depends on what type the poet is. In this case, when you not only employ verbal forms of communication in your art, but mix with other artistic forms of performance, it makes your communication with the audience, authors, writers, publishers much easier, because they start thinking of you differently and also think about the project that they can involve you in... whether it is a DVD version of an ordinary printed copy of a book” (Kevanishvili, Online resource).

Zurab Rtveliashvili, as it is accepted in Sound Poetry, uses those “words”, which have no meaning except the purely phonetic. As academic literature states “Sound Poetry deviated from the Semantic main line and it no longer depends on the system of the universally accepted rules and concepts. Here irrationalism steps in, the conceptual ambiguity ... At some point one might follow Derrida and speak of the acoustic deconstruction of linguistic objects” (Hultberg, Online Resource).

It has already been noted that in the case of Zurab Rtveliashvili’s ‘performing’ the author’s original declamation is the most important aspect. Declamation of a poem is a normal phenomenon, yet, in this case this is the author’s own presentation, which is an important guide in terms of thought-creation and interpretation. Apart from declamation-articulation, Zurab Rtveliashvili’s experimental art borrows the extra-verbal factors of performance from other experimental arts: Body art, performance elements ... the unity of which allows the author to adopt a certain role and creates a playground for exercising more power over the listener.

Zurab Rtveliashvili’s performances are interesting and diverse. For example one of his performances *Borsch for Europe* was performed at the Gilgotin Theatre in Stockholm where the poet brings in a domestic context by cutting vegetables with noise accompanied by the sounds of drums and contrabass. He turns the noise of cutting cabbages, carrots and other vegetables into unique components of his performance.

The art of Z. Rtveliashvili is immensely energetic. He also calls others to being active when he says: “from the existential point of view yes, we are less able, we ought to set ourselves free from the culture of death and ghosts and turn our vector of development towards the constant rebirth and the culture of quantum consciousness” (Rtveliashvili, Online Source).

Therefore, Zurab Rtveliashvili’s phenomenon is created with a free combination of organically

combining different arts and on the other had through the comparison of artistic and domestic activities. is created with a free combination. I think, his strive towards the self-realization in a foreign literary-aesthetic environment, his desire for overcoming the language barrier and to offer new aesthetic values to the society that is used to standardized taste and aesthetic expectations are those impulses that moved Zurab Rtveliashvili to plan new strategies in his works and make new type of performance, create so called “sound poems”, which will be understandable without a translation to the listeners of any nationality. The form of conveying the poetic text allows the author to express the depths of the idea. Therefore, Zurab Rtveliashvili managed to pass the lingual boundary by his poetic experiment and turn it into a part of the new and alien culture.

This new type of synthetic art opened new opportunities of artistic expression to the artist and granted him a chance of creating essentially new artistic values.

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# The Allegory of the Man who Fell Into a Well in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* and its Artistic Function

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## Abstract

*The Knight in the Panther's Skin* offers an allegory of the man who fell in a well. The story is real and is used for developing a communication between characters; it also has a function of identifying the psychological condition. The allegory by its meaning is very important and has a function and a mission of foretelling the future. With the allegory of the man who fell in a well we met Avtandil, Tariel and Asmat (the main characters of the poem). This allegory is a prediction of Tariel's being taken away from the cave or being woken up from the "cave consciousness". This article offers an analysis regarding Avtandil, tariel and Asmat as a paradigm images of the man who fell in a well.

**Keywords:** *allegory, man who fell in a well, cave consciousness.*

The research on the allegorical nature of Shota Rustveli's poem *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* started as early as in the time of Vakhtang VI when the king did a lot of research on Rustaveli's work. Georgian writers of earlier times mentioned the allegory of the poem. David Guramishvili pointed to the meaning of the allegory in his poetry:

*When the wise rhetor Shota planted the tree of parables*

*He made its roots deep and applied branches bearing fruit*

*They gave double fruit to whoever shook it*

*I have never heard a verse as eloquent as by the ones of Rustveli [Guramishvili 1955:22].*

The quotation from Guramishvili indicates the symbolic allegoric and parable like nature of the poem which is expressed through his phrase: "He made it deep rooted". Several episodes in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* must be explained as a symbol, allegory and enigma. In this article we will discuss the allegory of the man who fell in a well but let's go back to the text first:

*THE knight replied: "This only resembles one thing: Two men were journeying somewhere along some road; the one who was behind saw the one in front fall into a well. He came up, called down, weeps and cries 'Woe!'*

*"THUS he spoke: 'Comrade, stay there, wait for me, I go to bring ropes, I want to pull thee out.' The man who was beneath laughed, he marvelled greatly, he shouted up:*

*'Unless I wait, whither can I flee from thee, whither can I go?'*<sup>1</sup> (256-257).

Before discussing the episode I think it is necessary to identify the story told by the two rhymes above, what does this: Is this a tale or an allegory? I think, it is useless to try to give a traditional explanation for those terms. It will only be sufficient to mention the explanation given by Sulkhan Saba Orbeliani from his dictionary of the Georgian language: "Tale in Armenian means Allegory, the same meaning it has in our language" (Sulkhan Saba Orbeliani, 1966:58). "Allegory (+13:24 Mathew ZA) (+Tale B) is a word giving an example, or indication, or a marker" (Sulkhan Saba Orbeliani 1966, 320). Sulkhan Saba Orbeliani gave the same meaning to both allegory and tale. He said that they are short stories and "verbal examples". The same dictionary explains the meaning of the example as: "what you would like to make whether it is a church, or house, or tent, images or flowers, shown for making things similar to them" (Sulkan Saba Orbeliani 1966, 424). So the "verbal example" must be defined in terms of an artistic value of the text or allegory. So the story of the man who fell in a well in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* is allegory since the "verbal example" is clear and it definitely has the function of allegory. The allegory of the man who fell in a well has the key meaning for identification of the artistic function of Avtandil's coming to the cave, the dwelling of Tariel and Asmat in the cave, communication between them.

Those two above mentioned verses have important meaning for studying the psychological conditions of the characters because they show us the individual thoughts of Avtandil, his wisdom and unique skills. He never acts directly, he prefers to be careful and to use direct actions even if it involves hurting the others around him; he, as a mentally strong person is perfectly aware of the difficult situation throughout his search of the unknown knight. he was taken by impatience and desired to learn about the knight as soon as possible. He did not expect such a sharp reaction from the woman. Asmat's refusal of talking about Tariel reveals her psychological condition, for the last seven years she had withdrawn from society, there was no one who could reach the cave and she did not know of anyone who could rescue Tariel from his

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<sup>1</sup> Rustveli:1966

suffering. She did not expect anyone to be so kind to understand Tariel's difficult inner suffering, rise above himself and support him. She would not be surprised if the interested person e.g. Avtandil, failing to reach his goal may even kill her. She thinks somehow that death will free her from her suffering. This is confirmed in the conversation of Asmat and Avtandil.

The dialogue between Asmat and Avtandil in the cave portrays their psychological profiles. Avtandil tries to get information about Tariel as he tried during the last three years of looking for him, but after the unexpected reaction of Asmat he becomes anxious and takes extreme measures: He captures the woman and threatens to kill her if she does not tell him about the "bright faced" knight. Avtandil realized soon that the erroneousness of the method, released the woman and started crying; It. It is not usual for Avtandil to act in this manner, his credo is: "do the things you hardly wish to do, do not follow your own desires" and from other side Asmat does not let him even look at her and refuses to talk to him despite his plea. Shota Rustveli employed a rare metaphor to show Avtandil supplication: "Like a partridge under an eagle, so the lady was trembling", this metaphor shows the psychological portrait of both characters very well. Asmat as a lady trying to defeat herself from Avtandil because she finds the aim of Avtandil unacceptable. She is trying to keep a secret and Avtandil asks to tell it. Asmat is presented as a partridge and Avtandil as an eagle. This contradistinction does not solve the problem. Those two birds have opposite characters, one is wild and the other is weak and powerless in front of the strong one. Avtandil is trying to persuade Asmat using this method but he fails to do so. His aim is to get information about Tariel, or at least to find out who he is. This episode gains a special meaning after this allegory. The dialogue between Asmat and Avtandil is a preparation for a meeting of Avtandil and Tariel.

Before the meeting of Avtandil and Tariel in the cave there is another meeting between Asmat and Avtandil where the allegory of the man who fell in a well comes up in their conversation. This man who fell in a well is imprisoned and needs freedom. This allegory is connected with Asmat and Avtandili: man who fell in a well stands for Avtandil and the man outside the well is Asmat, and it is the main rationale of the allegory, yet it is not the full explanation of the allegory because with this allegory Avtandil shows us the situation he is in; he has no other way except the one possibly offered by Asmat. After meeting of Tariel and Avtandil the allegory gets a deeper meaning and several functions. It has the mission to identify the future attitudes of Tariel and Avtandili: 1. It shows that Asmat who lives in the cave with Tariel ought to rescue Avtandili, she must arrange a friendly meeting between Tariel and Avtandili; 2. After the meeting of the two heroes Tariel living in the cave is expected to help Avtandil by telling him his story in order to appear truthful in front of his beloved Tinatin; 3. After telling his story to

Avtandil it seems that Avtandil must also help Tariel and only after this will Tariel be able to win the throne of India and inhabit it.

Living in a cave has an important meaning for Tariel because in order to leave the cave one has to first get help in overcoming "cave consciousness". This has to be solved at the first meeting of Tariel and Avtandil. Avtandil, the knight raised in wisdom pronounced a parable in his dialogue with Asmat, that played a crucial in defining his future relationship with Tariel and has a rather prophetic character.

Let's remember what the first meetings of Asmat and Avtandil and later Avtandil and tariel were preceded by in the cave. After finding the place where Tariel lives the aim of Avtandil is to find him safe, he had two different occasions when he witnessed the meeting of Tariel with human beings: 1. First when Tariel appeared unexpectedly in the happy and relaxed Arabia after the ceremony of the coronation of the daughter of the king, everyone is happy in the country and old king worries only because he has no male heir; he considers Avtandil as like him but not his equal. Yet, during hunting he finds out that Avtandil is not out of his league and the king is happy about it. After the hunting trip they met a weeping knight dressed in a panther's skin. The king desired to know him, so he sent his one servant first and twelve later to bring the unknown knight to him but he was unable to bring the knight by his will, they tried to capture the knight but when he noticed them he killed them all. 2. On the second occasion Avtandil met three brothers who told him about having seen a man dressed in panther's skin and how he fought them away smashing a head of one of their brothers. All these episodes present the knight's isolation and alienation from people and his peculiar attitude to humankind.

Of course it is true that Avtandil is trying to be gentle because this unknown knight never let anyone near him. So the lady in the cave who knows him is a real chance for him to get to know this mysterious knight. Yet, Asmat refused and the only word said by Avtandil: "Beloved" managed to soften her heart and she promised to help Avtandil to meet Tariel, while exactly at that time Avtandil tells the allegory of the man fell in a well.

The aim of the allegory and its function are already clear. It precedes the meeting of Tariel and Avtandil. According to this allegory Avtandil has two meanings: as a communicator with Asmat and as a communicator with Tariel. Avtandil is the one who is the well and later we find that the Tariel is the person who was in the well, needs help. In truth, even Asmat is the one who is in the well; Rescuing Tariel and letting him go out from the cave means to rescue Asmat to let her be free from the cave where she is staying because of Tariel. This allegory lets Asmat think that Avtandil is a wise person, she knows his value: "you seem to be the one needs praised by sapient". It seems like the artistic side of the allegory ends here. The allegory helped Avtandil and all ended well. But just at that time we recognize the most important meaning of the

allegory, which starts later: this is the foretelling function and mission. Tariel and the man who fell in a well must be placed into a paradigm structure because he needs help as does the man who fell in a well and also Avtandil who went to look for him.

All of this means that compositional point of view of the poem and this allegory are the main artistic components of them poem. The meaning and function of the allegory manifest the future prediction that Avtandil and Tariel must help each other and become true friends. In any case both characters present a paradigm of the man fallen in the well and the man who was outside the well trying to rescue him. This paradigm has two sides: 1. Tariel must rescue Avtandil and 2. Avtandil must help him.

According to mythological religious literature cave has a symbolic meaning and function. In *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* it has multilateral function: Biblical, Mythological, Philosophical, Historical, Literary and Hagiographical, so it expresses a love-hate model since it has negative and positive sides. According some of ancient myths, the first man who was from underworld settled in the cave and it means: life-death-life and the cave emerges as just a pre-Christian symbol and the model of church. The well was the source of life which purified the human soul. According to the Bible the well is the source of life and another image of the cave. We have thoroughly examined the notions of the cave and well in other researches.<sup>2</sup> The consciousness of the man who fell in a well indicates two different types of human consciousness: 1) Cave consciousness or slavish consciousness and 2) free consciousness. So the main point of human life is to achieve the heavenly wisdom by overcoming the “cave consciousness” and to reach the greater idea of the sun. The paradigm of Avtandil and Tariel paradigm reminds us of Biblical Joseph who was dropped in a well. It was the beginning of his future; he was bought by the Egyptian merchants and was taken to Egypt. The well was a guarantee for Joseph to be rescued (Genesis 37,14-28; Kiknadze 2004:91). Also the history from the Bible about Daniel how he was dropped in the lion's den and his life was saved. In hagiography of the well has a symbolic meaning: St Shio of Mghvime, lived in a cave in order to reach spiritual maturity and purification St Evagrius lived in the well for the same reason. The well also has a mythological meaning in fairy tales.

The allegory from *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* is a hypodigm for the characters of “Davitiani”, for David Guramishvili who was kept by the Leks and was dropped in a hole and was later rescued by the Mother of God. R. Gabashvili drew a parallel between the allegory about a man who fell into a well from *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* and Sancho Pansa in *Don Quichotte* who fell in a hole and Don Quichotte went to fetch a rope (Gabashvili 1944,

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<sup>2</sup> See Sulava:2004, pp. 216-232, and Sulava:2009.

185-186). Being fallen into a well or in a hole is a way to spiritual purification. In ancient mythology and literature human struggle on the way to sanctity (κάθαρσις) has two stages: 1. Martyrdom (πάθος) and 2. Catharsis (κάθαρσις). No spiritual development can be imagined without one of them for the way to spiritual purification necessarily lies through martyrdom. This principle in Christianity derives from the Gospel. The first aim for human beings is to escape from the well, from the cave. The long and hard process of escaping from the hole, well or the cave in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* comes not only from Christianity but from Antiquity. The poem for this reason adopts the function of a renaissance story. Well, cave is the place where the process of human spiritual purification has to start and human beings should be able to acquire the heaven in life. The aim is to rebuild the bridge between the heaven and earth, which was demolished earlier.

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# Comparative Study of the Literary works by Moses of Chorene and Koryun Khatuna Gaprindashvili

## Professional Biography

Khatuna Gaprindashvili was born on October 1, 1983. She completed her studies at the multiprofile lyceum in Chiatura in 2000. The same year she enrolled in the faculty of Eastern Studies at Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University. Ms. Gaprindashvili graduated BA in Armenian Studies. In 2006 she successfully defended her MA dissertation on “Georgia and the Georgians from the viewpoint ancient Armenian writers (V-XVII cc.)” in 2004 and obtained her MA degree in Armenian Studies. At present Khatuna Gaprindashvili continues her studies at the Faculty of Humanities on the doctoral program of Armenian Philology. The topic of her PhD research is *The Life of Koryun Mashtots (Georgian Translation, Research and Commentaries)*. She has been working since 2008 at the National Centre of Manuscripts as a research-assistant. Ms Gaprindashvili is an author of 11 academic publications.

## Abstract

The work considers the creation of the Armenian, Georgian and Albanian alphabets by the famous public figure Mesrop Mashtots. On the grounds of a textual analysis of the Armenian writers Koryun and Moses of Chorene the factual differences between them are presented. Comparative study offers a firm basis for considering the reliability of the accounts offered by Moses of Chorene.

**Keywords:** *Koryun, Moses of Chorene, Mesrop Mashtots, Georgian Alphabet.*

*Life of Mashtots* by Mesrop Mashtots' disciple Koryun is usually referred to as the earliest and original version of the life of Mesrop Mashtots. Scholarly opinions vary about identifying the secondary source of the life. Part of the scholars offer such an order: Koryun, Moses of Chorene, Lazarus of Pharp [Հարությունյան, 1892: 208; Անանյան, 1964: 7], The other group chooses Lazarus Of Pharp after Koryun followed by Moses of Chorene [Բյուզանդացի, 1900: 9; Մանանդյան, 1962: 31; Կորյուն, 1981: 18; Աճառյան, 1984: 5]. There is a group of scholars who questions the reliability of the accounts of Moses of Chorene [Մարկվարտ, 1962: 135; Օրմանյան, 1959: 274; Ֆնտզյան, 1930:73]. N. Akinian refers to Koryun as the only contemporary historian of the time, he discards all other authors of the same period including Lazarus Of Pharp (he has in mind that chapter, where the deeds of Mashtots are discussed, and considers the first half of the History written by Lazarus of Pharp in the 8<sup>th</sup> c. [Ալիհնեան, 1935: 459]) and Moses of Chorene [Ալիհնյան, 1949: 245].

Such a critical approach to the accounts given by Moses of Chorene was caused by the existence of multiple and contradictory discussions and evaluations against the historian and his works. This process was over in the scholarship by the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> c., when the study was published, the value of its history was recovered and a view emerged that

Moses of Chorene might have been a younger disciple of Mesrop Mashtots who lived and created his *History* in the fifth century [Մայիսյան, 1961: 69-70]. The Georgian and European scholars of Armenian studies refused to share this view of Armenian scholars and they dated by the 11<sup>th</sup> c. Moses of Chorene who was traditionally considered as the 5<sup>th</sup> c. historian in the past. [Movses Khorenats, 1984: 6-13].

Armenian scholarship often calls Moses of Chorene as the “Father” of the ancient Armenian historical legacy, “Armenian Herodotus”, “Armenian Tacitus” ...

The history of Armenia is described in Moses of Chorene’s work from the beginning to the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD. *Armenian History* consists of three parts: 1. About the tribal belonging of the Armenian aristocracy; 2. The history of Armenian ancestors in the middle period; 3. The last part of the history of the homeland of Armenian people [Movses Khorenats, 1984].

The work of Moses of Chorene has often been a subject of scholarly interest. This time we shall emphasize the third part of the work where the deeds of Mesrop Mashtots are discussed and especially his creation of the Armenian, Georgian and Albanian alphabets. The aim of our study is to reveal the similarities and differences between the works of Moses of Chorene and Koryun. Such a comparative analysis will allow us to either rely on the credibility of the accounts given by Moses of Chorene or to question them.

We present those factual differences in the work, which revealed as a result of textual comparisons.

The first and the foremost difference between these two writings is that Moses of Chorene who is traditionally considered as the 5<sup>th</sup> c. historian by Armenian scholarship uses that version of the maker of alphabet (Mesrop), which refers to a later period and was not yet used even in the 7<sup>th</sup> century. Until the 8<sup>th</sup> c. the authors such as Koryun (5<sup>th</sup> c.), Eznik of Koghba (5<sup>th</sup> c.), Patriarch Proclus of Constantinople (5<sup>th</sup> c.), Lazarus of Pharp (5<sup>th</sup> c.), Catholicos Abraham (7<sup>th</sup> c.), Ioanne of Odzuni (early 8<sup>th</sup> c.) and Moses of Kalankatu (7<sup>th</sup> c.) call him Mashtots. In the work of Moses of Chorene we find once the name Mashtots in the 10<sup>th</sup> chapter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> book:

«Եւ վկայ քեզ ի մօտոյ երաշխաւորեցէ Եկէտիաստէ (Sic!) գիրք Եւսեբի Կեսարացոյ, զոր ետ թարգմանել երանելի վարդապետն մեր Մաշտոց ի հայ լեզու:» [the same is confirmed by Eusebius of Caesaria in his *Ecclesiastical History*, translated into Armenian by our blessed spiritual guide Mashtots] [Մովսէս Խորենացի, 1991: 120].

In the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> part though, where a few chapters are dedicated to Mashtots, the historian calls him Mesrop, the founder of Armenian script and writing. In this respect the work by Moses of Chorene is rather close to the shorter edition of Koryun (the short version uses the name Mesrop everywhere). Even though the historical narrative often follows the uncut version, there are cases, when it differs essentially from both editions [Javakhishvili, 1935: 158].

Moses of Chorene fills the history of discovery of Armenian graphemes with such new details that are not confirmed by earlier sources.

The 52<sup>nd</sup> chapter of the *History* describes the cruelty related to St John the Chrysostom in the time of the Emperor Arcadius in Constantinople. According to the historian when the Persian king Vram send the Armenian King Vramshapuh to Mesopotamia with a peacemaking mission, Vramshapuh discerned the need of having Armenian alphabet.: The

Armenian king was disturbed by the fact that he did not have an interpreter with him. Meanwhile one of his companions named Habel promised him that he would bring an Armenian alphabet designed by Bishop Daniel [Մովսես Խորենացի, 1991: 325]. Moses of Chorene attributes the creation of the Armenian alphabet to Habel with the help of the Bishop Daniel: «Ձոր [Հարէլն] առեալ, և երթեալ նովաւ հանդերձ քաջ հմտացեալ ի Դանիէլէ, կարգեալ ըստ ձևոյ օրինակի յունականին զվաղնչուցն գրեալ շարագիր տառից՝ եկեալ ետուն ցեծն Սահակ և Մեսրոպ:» [He [Habel] went and obtained a comprehensive information from Daniel, [they] put the alphabet in a Greek order, brought it and handed it to Sahak the Great and Mesrop] [Մովսես Խորենացի, 1991: 326].

Koryun does not describe the journey of the King Vramshapuh to Mesopotamia in his work, nor does he mention the facts of finding information about the Daniel's alphabet. According to the story Catholicos Sahak and Mashtots introduced to the King the idea of creating a new alphabet. The King Vramshapuh told them in return about a Syrian bishoo Daniel, who by quite unexpectedly turned out to be an owner of Armeian graphemes. Koryun does not explain how the Armenian king knew about the Daniel's graphemes. [Կորյուն, 1981: 90].

The length of teaching using the Daniel's alphabet is also presented in a different way. Both works agree that Daniel' alphabet was brought to Armenia during the reign of Vramshapuh. Catholicos Sahak and Mashtots decided to teach children and at the same time test the new alphabet by using it in their teaching. According to the *Life of Mashtots*, the alphabet was brought on the 5<sup>th</sup> year of the reign of Vramshapuh, it was taught during two years and finally they realized that these graphemes did not provide sufficient expression for the Armenian language. Moses of Chorene marks the timeline for testing the alphabet as «քաւսս սաւսս» [several months] and he does not refer to the exact time. Neither does the historian comment on the character of the Daniel's alphabet, or about how it ended up with the Syrian bishop. Koryun calls it the script, which «յայլոց դպրութեանց թաղեալք և յարուցեալք դիպեցան, յետ այնորիկ դարձեալ կրկին անգամ ի նոյն հոգս դառնային, և նմին ելս խնդրէին ծամանակս ինչ»: [presented the bookishness of others, originated from a dead language and was reused again, [because of which] it was expected to fulfil a similar function throughout certain time] [Կորյուն, 1981: 94].

The story of Mashtots' journey for the search of the alphabet is described differently in these two sources. Since the alphabet of Daniel did not turn out to be sufficient for expressing fully the Armenian language, Mashtots left for Mesopotamia at the order of the king and the consent of Sahak. He took a group of his disciples with him. Yet, Koryun says nothing about why he went to Mesopotamia. According to Moses of Chorene, however, Mesrop went to Mesopotamia in order to visit Daniel and get additional information from m about the Armenian alphabet. After his unsuccesfull visit to bishop Daniel Mesrop moved to Edesa [Մովսես Խորենացի, 1991: 327].

*The History* by Moses of Chorene is the only source, which mentions the fact of Mashtots' visit to Bishop Daniel and obtaining information from him. The Moses of Chorene's history therefore stands closer to the brief edition of Koryun's work, in which Mesrop accompanied with his disciples goes to Daniel personally in order to bring the alphabet from him [Կորյուն, 1994: 117].

After the failure of Daniel's alphabet, the second phase of the creation of the Armenian alphabet begins. According to Koryun's *The Life*, Mashtots himself is the creator of the Armenian alphabet. He, like his father, bore (created) new graphemes and granted new images to them in Samosar with the help of Hrophanos.

«Որում պարզեւէր իսկ վիճակ յամենաշնորհողէն Աստուծոյ. հայրական չափուն ծնեալ ծնունդս նորոգ և սքանչելի՝ սուրբ աջովն իւրով, նշանագիրս հայերէն լեզուին: Եւ անդ վաղվաղակի նշանակեալ, անուանեալ և կարգեալ, յօրինէր սիդորայիւք կապօք:» [He, with his pure attempt, begot in a fatherly manner new and amazing progeny – The graphemes of the Armenian language. He depicted quickly [these graphemes], gave them names, put them in order and made up letters] [Կորյուն, 1981: 96].

Moses of Chorene attributes the discovery of the Armenian alphabet to divine revelation: «Եւ տեսանէ ոչ ի քուն երագ և ոչ յարթութեան տեսիլ, այլ ի սրտին գործարանի երևութացեալ հոգւոյն աչաց թաթ ձեռին աջոյ՝ գրելով ի վերայ վիմի. զի որպէս ի ձեան վերջք զծին՝ կուտեալ ունէր քարն: Եւ ոչ միայն երևութացաւ, այլ և հանգամանք ամենայնին որպէս յաման ինչ ի միտս նորա հաւաքեցաւ:» [Then he saw in the depths of his soul, through the eyes of his mind and not in his dream or daydreaming, the right palm, writing on a rock so as if it was leaving the traces of lines on the snow. This was revealed not only in front of Mesrop's eyes, but the characteristic signs of all [the graphemes] were collected in his mind like in a vessel] [Մովսէս Խորենացի, 1991: 327].

Scholars interpret the vision of Moses of Chorene in different ways: Hr. Acharian calls the divine miracle, which other historians repeated after him later, the result of misunderstanding Koryun [Աճառյան, 1955: 30-31]. According to A. Kranian, Moses of Chorene provides less technical details than Koryun about the fulfilled task and grants a more mystical character to his History [Կռանեան, 1992: 61-62].

The vision of Mesrop is described differently in the 1843 and 1865 Venetian editions and the №1661 manuscript preserved at Echmiadzin of Moses of Chorene's *History of Armenia*. They mention the 7 vowels created by Mesrop: «...գրելով ի վերայ վիմի. Ա, Ե, Է, Ը, Բ, Ո, Ի»: The Venetian editions rely on the manuscripts dated with 1303, 1660, 1671 and 1683, while the Echmiadzin manuscript №1661 is rewritten in 1676-1678.

According to Fr. Muller, the alphabet found at Daniel was of a semitic origin: it had no vowels. Mesrop created these 7 vowels according to Greek signs, added and filled the missing gaps in the graphemes of Daniel the Syrian. Fr Muller, relying on the texts published in Venice and the Echmiadzin manuscripts, reckons that Moses of Chorene considers Mesrop as nothing more than the discoverer of the 7 vowels of the Armenian alphabet [Միլլէր, 1889: 87].

The educational activities of Mesrop Mashtots in the neighbouring Kartli and Albania are particularly interesting. Moses of Chorene, unlike Koryun, describes briefly the Mesrop's journey to Kartli and Albania. Mesrop creates the Georgian alphabet with the help of the translator Jagha, with the support of King Bakur and Bishop Moses. The History by Moses of Chorene is the only source that offers the names of those of Mesrop's disciples who were left as supervisors in Kartli.

«Եւ ընտրեալ մանկունս, և յերկուս բաժանեալ դասս, և վարդապետս թողու նոցա յաշակերտաց իւրոց զՏէր խորձենացի, և զՄուշէ տարօնեցի:»

[He selected children, divided them in two groups and left for their guidance [the two of] his disciples: Ter of Khordzen and Mushe of Taron] [Մովսես Խորենացի, 1991: 372].

After having worked in Kartli, Mesrop moved to Albania and created an Albanian alphabet with the help of King Arsvghen, Bishop Jeremiah and Benjamen the translator. Comparative study revealed another significant difference: as *The life of Mashtots* states Sahak and Mashtots pursued translation work after creating the Armenian alphabet for the sake of promoting Armenian literary tradition. Catholicos Sahak started translating books from Greek: «Ձեռն ի գործ արկանէր ի թարգմանել և ի գրել մեծն Բսահակ՝ ըստ յառաջագոյն սովորութեանն:» «Բսկ երանելոյն Սահակայ զեկեղեցական գրոց գումարութիւնն՝ կանխաւ ի յունական բարբառոյն ի հայերէն դարձուցեալ, և բազում ևս զհայրապետաց սրբոց զճշմարիտ զիմաստութիւնն:» [„The great Sahak began to translate and write according to his previous custom.“ „The blessed Sahak in the beginning translated from Greek full ecclesiastical books and the wisdom of Holy Patriarchs“] [Կորյուն, 1981: 124].

*The Armenian History* by Moses of Chorene offers a completely different account:

«և գտանէ զմեծն Սահակ թարգմանութեան պարապեալ յասորոյն՝ յոչ լինելոյ յունի: Քանզի նախ ի Մերուժանայ այրեալ լինէին ընդհանուր աշխարհիս յոյն գիրք. դարձեալ ի բաժանել զաշխարհս Հայոց՝ չտային պարսիկ վերակացութն յոյն ուսանել դպրութիւն ումեք յիրեանց մասինն, այլ միայն ասորի:» [Mesrop] learned that due to the absence of Greek [books] Sahak the Great had started translating from Assyrian. The thing is that Mehruzhan burned all the Greek books in our country; Besides, at the time of the division of Armenia, on behalf of the Persians [in Armenia] the Persian officials did not allow anyone to adopt the Greek literary customs, but only the Assyrian ones [were allowed] [Մովսես Խորենացի, 1991: 329].

This account of Moses of Chorene is repeated in the brief edition of Koryun. The brief edition, like the sources, mentions the parables of Solomon as the first translated works, yet it makes it perfectly clear here that Mashtots translated 22 books of the Old Testament. Moses of Chorene is not satisfied with the books of the Old Testament and adds the books of the New Testament as well.

«Եւ իսկոյն ի թարգմանութիւն ձեռն արկեալ, խորհրդարար սկսանելով յԱռակաց, բովանդակ զքսան և երկու յայտնիսս և զնոր Կտակս յեղուլ ի հայ բան, նա և աշակերտք նորա Յոհան եկեղեցային և Յովսէփ պաղնացի. միանգամայն և զարուեստ գրչութեան ուսուցանել տալով իւրոց մանկագոյն աշակերտացն:» [Mesrop] began to translate immediately and started deliberately with the Parables [of Solomon]. He completed the translation of 22 books together with his disciples Hohan of Ekegec and Joseph of Pagin and they also translated the New Testament. At the same time, he taught the art of writing to his junior disciples [Մովսես Խորենացի, 1991: 327].

S. Malkhasian, the modern translator of *The History* by Moses of Chorene mentions in this respect that “It would have been impossible for Mashtots and his two disciples to complete the translation of both Old and New Testaments in Syria. This contradicts Moses of Chorene himself since at one place (part 3, ch. 54) he mentions that St Sahak translated the Holy Book from Syrian, since it was not in Greek. At other place (part 3, ch. 61) he

writes that St Sahak and Mesrop undertook immediate translations”. In the opinion of S. Malkhasian, the place of the New Testament might have been added later [Մովսես Խորենացի, 1981: 385-386].

There is another factual difference traced between the *Armenian History* by Moses of Chorene and *The Life of Mashtots* by Koryun. *The History* describes Catholicos Sahak sending with his epistles Mesrop and his grandson Vardan to the Emperor Theodosius and bishop Attikos in Byzantium. The Koryun’s work does not mention the fact.

Two places attract our attention in *The History* by Moses of Chorene:

1. Catholicos Sahak emphasizes in his epistle to the Emperor Theodosius that the Greek part of Armenia<sup>1</sup> did not adopt that alphabet, which Mesrop obtained by great efforts in the country of the Assyrians.

«Այնչափ ստեղծալ զմեզ, մինչև զնշանագիրս անգամ ոչ ընկալան, զորս եբեր նոյն այր՝ զոր ստաբեցի առ ձեր բարերարութիւնդ, բազում անգամ ճգնեալ դորս յԱսորոց աշխարհին.» [They despise us so much that they even refused the idea of adopting that alphabet, which was brought to your majesty by our man. He obtained [these letters] by enormous efforts in the country of the Assyrians [Մովսես Խորենացի, 1991: 333].

2. The ceaser speaks of the alphabet granted through the divine grace in his responding epistle to Sahak: «բայց զի յետոյ պատմեաց մեզ Մեսրոպ, եթէ կատարումն արուեստիդ ի շնորհաց վերնոյն եղև՝ գրեցաք՝ զի ամենայն փութով ուսցին, և զբեզ պատուեալ ընկալցին՝ որպէս զարդարև վարդապետ իւրեանց, հանգոյն արքեպիսկոպոսին Կեսարու...» [Since the when Mesrop told us that the art of writing was granted by the grace from abov, we wrote to him to study it carefully and accept you with respect as a true spiritual guide like the Archbishop of Caesaria] [Մովսես Խորենացի, 1991:335].

The mentioned data is rather contradictory: in one case we have the story of finding the Armenian alphabet in the country of Syrians (we should mention here the alphabet of Bishop Daniel), and the story of the alphabet being originated by the divine revelation in the other case [Աճարյան, 1956:42-44].

Moses of Chorene ends his work by telling the story about the deaths of Sahak and Mesrop.

What are the sources of *The History* by Moses of Chorene? There is a theory that Moses of Chorene must have been guided by the Koryun’s *The life of Mashtots* while writing his work. The historian quotes him sometimes, and sometimes he adds his accounts according to his opinion [Ասատրեան, 1962: 208]. Yet, unlike Lazarus of Pharp, does not list Koryun as a source but notes “as we have heard from reliable people”. He mentions Koryun only once when he tells us about the trip of Koryun and Ghevond to Byzantium. In scholars’ opinion Moses of Chorene must have been in possession of an edition different from long and short editions, or the historian might be conveying the accounts relying on oral tradition. The use of the name “Mesrop” in his work refers to the late period [Javakhishvili, 1935: 156].

It may be said that the main idea in both narratives by Moses of Chorene and Koryun is the same. Both authors aim to present Mesrop Mashtots as the enlightener of Armenia,

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<sup>1</sup> It is commonly known that Armenia split in two parts in 387: the eastern part fell under the influence of Persia, and the western part fell under Byzantium.

Kartli and Albania and as the one who made alphabets for them. Yet, in order to fulfil the task they tell such different stories that we are dealing with two completely different sources.

Those scholars, who believe the work of Moses of Chorene is reliable, consider the nature of the work. This group of scholars notes that unlike the original source, which is only hagiography and is dedicated to Mesrop Mashtots and his glorious efforts of creating the alphabet, the work of Moses of Chorene is the Armenia's general millennial history. It presents the life of Mashtots and his deeds in connection with the events of the time. *The History* by Moses of Chorene has the clearcut arrangement principles. It is commonly accepted that he lived in the time when the movement for creating an Armenian alphabet was rather active. He was the disciple of Mesrop Mashtots and had learned from him about the creation of the Armenian alphabet. He also knew a lot from the older disciples of Mashtots and he also made use of Koryun. In one case we have hagiography and history in the other, in which, quite naturally, facts may be missed out, added or removed. The future of these works is also significant – the number of references, frequency of their rewriting. We should not also forget that the works by Koryun and Moses of Chorene were produced in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. They, especially the work by Moses of Chorene, were rewritten many times later and since they were handbooks, they were sometimes rewritten by less educated scribes and this must have often caused damages to the accuracy of the texts [Մաթեմոսյան, 1990: 101]. Scholars thus try to justify the differences between the works of Koryun and Moses of Chorene.

According to Gr. Khalatian, Moses of Chorene wrote *The History* with his own additions and changes: The journey of Vramshapuh to Mesopotamia at the order of the Persian king Vram; Arranging the alphabet by Habel with the help of Bishop Daniel – these accounts are not confirmed in the short edition of Koryun influenced by Moses of Chorene. Gr. Khalatian believes that the facts of the journey of Mashtots to Mesopotamia, the meeting with Bishop Daniel, encounter with the pagan Plato in Edessa, search for Epiphanius, meeting Hrophanos and especially the miraculous vision, the vowels depicted on rocks, translation of the Old and New Testaments are nothing but fiction and invented stories [Խալատյան, 1904, 361-367].

The narrative about Mashtots in the work of Moses of Chorene is noteworthy also for the fact that the theme of creating the Armenian alphabet is the only one, which is presented not in one way, neither it keeps consistency in one two or three chapters one after the other, but it spreads throughout 11 chapters and is included in different themes. Ar. Hasakian mentions in this respect that such a narrative style is unusual for Moses of Chorene and the structure of his *History*. In his opinion, the detection of contradictions of logical or informative nature in *the History* of Moses of Chorene should be explained with the changes made to his text. Therefore, if we have frequent divergences or find some informative or stylistic tautologies, which we find in the part about Mashtots, we should be surely dealing with the damage and distortion of the text [Սահակյան, 2012: 52-53].

According to Ar. Hasakian, if we take out the narrative about Mesrop from *The History* of Moses of Chorene, we shall have in the stories the true and authentic account of Mesrop and the discovery of the Armenian alphabet. In spite of such an evaluation or the criticism against Moses of Chorene, the scholar attributes the story of the creation of the Georgian

and Albanian alphabets to the pen of Moses of Chorene and notes that this part leaves the traces of stylistic incompatibility and informational tautology with the other parts that were added by the editor to the story about Mashtots [Uuhuljjuń, 2012: 59]. We believe that this is not the case. Even in this scenario Ar. Sahakian fails to part with the biased tendencies of those Armenian scholars whose sole purpose is to present Mesrop Mashtots as the creator of the Georgian and Albanian alphabets.

Group of scholars explain the different accounts of Moses of Chorene by the misinterpretation of Koryun. This view contradicts the biographical account of Moses of Chorene, in which he calls himself a disciple of Mashtots and Sahak: In order to master perfectly the monuments of spiritual literary legacy, the Armenian scholars were required to demonstrate the Greek language proficiency skills and be well acquainted with Greek culture. With this aim Sahak and Mashtots together with a few other young men was sent to Egypt in the age of 20-25 in order to pursue his studies in Alexandria. Moses of Chorene studied well the Greek language and literature, rhetoric, grammar and other “arts” in Alexandria, he extended his previous knowledge he had gained in Armenia [Movses Khorenats, 1984:5]. Hr. Acharian calls the story of the journey of Moses of Chorene to Alexandria imaginary [Աճարյան, 1961: 35].

It should be noted that not only studying the narrative part on Mashtots, but also studying generally the work of Moses of Chorene revealed that the historian often adds or changes the history according to his own wishes. Among the whole material he has he always singles out that version of the story, which glorifies Armenians and refers to their superiority in historical events [Uurqujuń, 1956: 42]. Moses of Chorene could not possibly misunderstand Koryun since he himself was well aware of the truth. Was not the great work of creating the Armenian alphabet fulfilled in his own times? Then what is the reason of such differences?

Moses of Chorene is not a complier who would present the collected material consistently, but he edits and transforms the material agreeing with the events taking place in his own times (a group of scholars, as we already mentioned, dates Moses of Chorene with the 9<sup>th</sup> c.) [Thomson, 1980: 1-8]. This often complicates the process of studying and researching *The History* of Moses of Chorene, because it is way too hard to establish where does the narration of the documentary material ends and the voice of the author comes in. One is obvious: if Moses of Chorene presents the significant story of creation of the Armenian alphabet in such a distorted way and then the historians of the later generations follow him automatically, it is way too hard to accept and share the accounts of the activities of Mashtots in Kartli and Albania without a criticism and consider it as a reliable source!

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# Chechen Heroic “Illi” and the Ballads of the Eastern Georgian Highlanders

*(similarities and differences)*

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## Professional Biography

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## Abstract

Chechen heroic *illi* and Georgian *ballad* present precisely and powerfully the mentality of the warrior society of the Chechen and Georgian highlanders, their heroic ideals and the psychology of the people who are involved in battles on a daily basis. As a result of comparative study artistic, structural and conceptual similarities as well as differences between the two genres of folklore have been revealed.

**Keywords:** *Folklore, Chechen, “Illi”, Georgian Ballad.*

“Illi” is one of the most important genres of the Chechen folklore. Like the Georgian ballad, it describes the reality of the 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> cc., the heroic acts of young men, their riots as well as their battles for protecting their community and their villages, with the purpose of either revenge or rescuing their beloved ones.

A Chechen song of “Illi” presents a poem praising a particular heroic act. “Illi” like a ballad is a piece created in lyrical-epic genre, in which a dramatic plot is accompanied by the deep emotional feelings of the narrator. The Chechen Illi often consists of more than 60-70 lines and exceeds considerably the examples of Georgian heroic poetry. The folk text as a rule really exists in the moment of saying and performing. The Georgian highlanders: The Tushetians, the Pshavs and the Khevsurians just like Chechens used to perform the epic poem accompanied by a musical tune on a musical instrument. Therefore, The Khevsurians call the ballads “simghere” (from simghera - a song or singing) considering its syncretic

nature and the manner of performance. In Chechnyan the same name applies to the epic-historical poem which is called Illi that means a song.

Georgian ballads and the Chechen “Illi” have similar ideologies, similar moral values. These two genres of folklore present accurately and strikingly the mentality of the Chechen and Georgian highlander warrior societies, their heroic ideals, the psychology of the people involved in fighting on a daily basis. The ideal hero of the Georgian ballad is called „კაი კმა” “kai kma” (good fellow), which finds its equivalent in “Illi” as “дика к|ант” (dika kant), or Iah Yolu Kant“ (яхь йолу к|ант).

Georgian ballads differ from the genre of “Illi” by the glorious and eminent death: he dies with dignity and fame. According to Z. Kiknadze “the hero of the ballad leaves home with the intention of not coming back” (Kiknadze, 2001:254), since according to the Georgian epic texts, the ordinary death of a man means falling on a battlefield, while dying home, in bed equals unlucky, disgraceful and dishonorable death.

Contrary to the Georgian ballads, the Chechen Illi ends with the victory of the main character. The exception may only be one or two songs among which is “The Illi on the Fall of the Village of Daadi from Tsantaro” (Илли, чеченская..., 2011: 140-153). The victory of the hero is such a fundamental law for the texts in the genre of Illi that Khochbar, who dies in all the versions of the Dagestanian Ballad, escapes the ordeal, the flaming bonfire, finds his way through by fighting and survives in the Chechen epic song. In Chechen text the double of khochbar is called Bahadur Khushpar (Илли, чеченская..., 2011: 118-123).

In the Georgian ballad the action takes place in even more realistic circumstances. The authenticity of the story is confirmed by the detailed description of micro-toponyms and the action space. It is true that the names of Geographical locations are also mentioned in Chechen epic songs, but Illi rather frequently contains semi-fairy tale plots and tries to submit the narrated story to its own structure.

Chechen song sometimes does not reveal the first name of the character since the main hero of Illi is often an orphaned boy whose father is dead. The nameless character of the illi song is often referred to as the son of a widow. (жерочун к|ант).

In the opinion of V. Propp, a historical song is not created in the same way as are the other texts of verbal folklore. A historical song is largely created by the participant of the historical event, witness or the one who knows about the subject (Пропп, 1976: 112). In the same way as the Chechen texts of illi, in the ballads of the Georgian highlanders are based on real stories of battles, i.e. they describe real facts. Both have real people as their main characters, who in most cases knew the society in which the song was created.

A Georgian scholar researching the genre of ballad T. Makhuri, refers to several models of Georgian folk epic ballad. They are: 1. Ballads based on the stories of combats and mutual

murders. 2. An unequal fight of the hero with his enemy. 3. The theme of captivity: rescuing the hero from custody or the death of the hero in captivity. 4. The rise and fall of the hero (Makhauri, 2003: 24-42).

Chechen Illi more or less knows all these four models, but the motif of liberation of the fiancé from the violent kidnappers is presented more colorfully. Unlike the Georgian ballads, the main character of the Chechen Illi marries his liberated fiancé. Such an ending draws illi closer to the fairy tale finale.

The lower time line in the ballads of the Eastern Georgian highlands does not pass beyond the 17<sup>th</sup> c. The songs tell us about the heroic deeds and fights of boys starting from the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> c., when Zurab, the Duke of Aragvi fought tirelessly against the Pshavs and Khevsuians for securing his own supremacy and ending with the middle of the last century, when the masses of the Khevsurians were brought to lowland at the decision of the Soviet Government. One of the last stages of the folk performances of the Georgian highlanders is marked with passionate epic songs for those Chechen soldiers who managed to continue their fight for liberation in the mountains of Caucasus even under their deportation. (Mamisimedishvili, 1997: 56-57). After this, we may say that new songs of heroic character have not been created in Georgian folklore.

Ballad has its own specific signs, as G. Kalandadze explained “ballad is a poetic work belonging to lyrical-epic genre. It is lyrical as long as the personal feelings of the narrator are expressed in it, his/her spiritual world, while it draws near epic creations by its descriptive content. (Kalandadze, 1957: 7).

The number of characters is limited in ballads due to the tense and compact plot. According to X. Sikharulidze, “in older cycles of heroic stories the heroism is usually linked with one hero, therefore there is also one character occupies the central place in the work” (Sikharulidze, 1949: 240).

In the heroic ballads of Tusheti, Pshavi and Khevsureti the stories take place in eastern Georgia and also in the highlands of the modern day Chechnya and Ingusheti. Therefore, the folk songs reflect the toponyms originating from the neighbouring Ingusheti and Chechnya such as Maisti, Mitkho, Chante, Pkhachekha, Jarega, Tituli, Arlo water, Terelo, Teretego, Sakhano grove, Ghilgho, Khamkha, Netkhicho, Tkobaerdi, Nekapso, Timgha...

We often encounter Chechen and Ingush characters in ballad songs with first names: Istabar, Kibila, Siragha, Kortua, Astemura, Andaruko, Elimarza etc...

Ballads inform us about some of the local customs and religious beliefs of the Chechens. In spite of the rise of Islam the Chechens and Ingushs still venerated the cross and a patron saint in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> c. One of the Khevsurian ballads says:

“The Kists will head towards the lowland, they called upon their cross” (Shanidze, 1931: 84).  
or

“The Ghilghvs will come to Ghilgho, they called upon their cross” (Shanidze, 1931: 85).

It is a common knowledge that the word cross in the highland dialects of Georgia stood for a patron saint as well as a chapel, which the local population was seriously committed to.

It is worth noting that the Chechen characters in the Georgian heroic ballads are referred to by an ethnonym “Kisti”. The same name is used by Vazha Pshavela as a reference to the Chechens and Ingushs in his epic poems, where he creates unforgettable literary images of Kist heroes.

The Chechen as well as the Georgian folk heroic poems pose the necessary stylistic elements to be a lyrical deviation, rhetorical exclamation, address, dialogue. Unlike the Chechen heroic song, repetition of the already stated, long addresses and military appeals are not characteristic to the Georgian ballads, which describe the dramatic events more briefly and laconically. Since the texts of the “illi” genre involve the motifs characteristic to fairy tales as well as ballads, we may consider that these two genres preceded the formation of “illi”. As they assume “at the earlier stage of development when ballad was a song designed for a team-dance, its text was distinguished by being short and when the song eventually parted with the dance and ballad turned into a narrating poem, its length and size also increased. Therefore relatively later ballads appear as fairly long poems of lyrical-epic character”.

Fundamental difference between the Georgian ballads and Chechen heroic songs is the finale. The hero of a Georgian ballad mainly dies on the way in a duel (pkhoveli and Shavaneli, I encountered a Kipchaq, Ghamberd and Shakhana, etc...). Therefore the Georgian “Singhere” (song) only conveys the final minutes of the life of the main character. Whereas, the Chechen illi describes the victory of the hero over the enemy and his safe return home. In spite of differences the thematic of the Chechen illi and the main motifs are not alien to the Georgian ballad and vice versa, we might encounter the particulars of the Georgian heroic ballad in the texts of Chechen song. In both of them the action sometimes takes place in the same dimension of time and space. Such structural and conceptual links between the Georgian highlanders and the Chechen people were formed as a result of a long term close relations between them.

### **Georgian characters in Chechen heroic songs**

Like the Georgian ballads, in the Chechen heroic songs we encounter the theme of the relationship with neighbours. Georgian characters, single motifs related to Georgia and its beliefs are reflected in the following Chechen songs *Illi about the highlander shepherd*, *Illi about Zhamirza; the Son of Madi from Chechen*; *Illi about the Georgian Prince Anzor and an*

*Ossetian Virgin; Illi about the fall of the village of Daad from Tsantaro; Illi about the Anzor's Daughter, Zaze; etc...* (Илли, чеченская..., 2011).

In the songs of Illi genre Georgia and the Georgians are rather hyperbolized. Georgia is presented in the Chechen songs as a mighty, glorious, rich country and the Georgians appear as athletes who are often just and kind, sometimes arrogant and brutal invincible conquerors.

In the Chechen illi about a Mountain Shepherd a young fellow visits Kadar the mullah with a request of explaining his dream. At his arrival in Dagestan, he sees a few mullahs sitting cross-legged on a Georgian carpet while they are studying wisdom from books. The text about the origins of the carpet draws the reader's attention rather especially. The word "Georgian" in this case implies to the high quality of the thing or an object since the mullahs were meant to sit on the best carpet, which according to the spirit of the text could have only been the Georgian one. On the other hand, in this particular episode of the song mentioning an object of the Georgian origin may actually be indicating a real situation. As it is commonly known, during the attacks by the Leks, the Dagestani feudals were removing from Georgia objects of treasure, which were meant to be used for different purposes. The Georgian carpets were so famous in northern Caucasus by their high quality that they obtained a special place even in Chechen heroic songs.

According to the same song, Georgia was regarded as the richest sight recalling an image of a fairy tale country where one can find and access the most inaccessible thing on earth. In order to learn the meaning of his strange dream, the Chechen young man is required to accomplish the order of a wise old man Insi Iraskha: He has to bring to him the right shoulder of a special lamb that should allow him to tell his fortune. The shepherd boy could not find even in that very "Great Georgia" a seven year old white lamb that would not have even one white hair, in the end he finds one in Tusheti (Илли, чеченская..., 2011: 47).

*The song about Zhamirza, the son of Madi from Chechan* tells us about the failed march of the Georgian general Ortham to Chechan-Aul. Ortham surrounded the village by his troops and request the Beautiful Albika to be given to him. Yet, Jamirza who returned from his trip unexpectedly beheaded the Georgian general (Илли, чеченская..., 2011: 59-71). The defeat of the Georgian general is considered as the greatest heroic act in the song.

The song about the Georgian prince Anzor and an Ossetian girl is based upon the same motif. According to the song the Georgian prince fell in love with an Ossetian girl, who was the youngest sister to her five brother. Prince Anzor promises that he will not ravage Vladikavkaz, he will not destroy the mosque, will not touch the population of the city: he will not hurt either women or children if the girl is given to him. Prince Anzor let a huge army head towards the city. On the third day of the battle the brothers of the girl fell on the battlefield one by one. The wounded eldest brother asked his sister to run to Chechnya on horseback and ask for help. As it happened, The Chechen Zaitan Shikhmirza from the village

Gexi helped the Ossetian girl, he defeated the countless army and forced the Georgian prince Anzor to run away from the battlefield. The survived brothers gave their sister to Zaitan Shikhmirza as a sign of gratitude (Илли, чеченская..., 2011: 95-101).

Both Chechen songs present their antiheroes as mythologized Georgian characters equipped with special powers. Both - the General Ortam and the prince Anzor emerge into a real world from the world of almost a fairy tale or demonism in order to kidnap a beautiful princess (ძებოთუბნახვო). They stand out by their arrogance and cruelty. Both ballads are constructed on traditional epic episode called *Battle for the Fiancée*. Even though in a different song called *the ballad about the fall of the village of Daad from Tsantaro* the theme of military-political confrontation is dominant. Daadi from Tsantaro built a new Aul – Dada-Yurt, the military groups of which terrified the princes of surrounding or remote areas. The aul used to get refilled by the stolen sheep and precious goods which was equally distributed to the villagers by Daad from Tsantaro. The princes of neighbouring and remote areas who were bothered by the Daad's attacks, addressed the Padishah Emperor for help. Padishah sent a messenger to Georgia on the same day and ordered a Georgian commander to destroy the village of Daad from Tsantaro. The Georgian commander according to the illi was sitting in his garden and listening to music performed on zurna, he was drinking Georgian wine and eating a smoked barbeque. He sent numerous soldiers to Chechnya headed by a proud giant Anzor. The illi has an immensely thrilling episode. It conveys using traditional elements the preparation of the Dada-Yurt population for the great war, their self-sacrifice and their death. The illi describes the giant prince Anzor as especially brutal who did not spare the village population, neither women, nor children and the elderly (Илли, чеченская..., 2011: 140-153). However, it is commonly accepted in history that Dada-Yurt has never been conquered by a Georgian commander. It was destroyed in 1819 by a Russian general A. Ermolov. Georgian commanders in alliance with the Russians might have been taking part in the expedition led by general A. Ermolov among the others, that would contribute to creating an image of enemy our of the Georgians in the eyes of the Caucasian people. I think that the mythological beliefs about Georgia and the Georgian people in Chechen songs must be originating from the times, when the Georgian kings and princes used to organize grand expeditions in northern Caucasus with the purpose of spreading Christianity and securing their political influence. According to I. Munaev the real historical and military-political events were turned by folklore into the traditional epic topics describing the battle conducted for acquisition of one's wife (Илли, чеченская..., 2011: 227).

*The song about Anzor's daughter Zaze* presents the Georgian character of the host of the Chechen fellow. Who makes such a sacrifice that is practically impossible in real life (Мунаев, 2011: 134-139). The foundation of illi is a Chechen folklore impression of Georgian hospitality and best hosting tradition. Everything starts with a fairy motif: a nameless main character, a Chechen orphan saw in his dream Zaze, the beautiful daughter of prince Anzor. The young man being hopelessly in love said farewell to his mother and went to Georgia

where the Anzor's daughter lived. He bravely greeted gathered Georgians on his arrival and asked them who was the oldest and who was the wisest in the village. One of the villagers realized that he needed a host and asked him to his own house. The Georgian host first gave the Chechen boy delicious dishes, meat and alcohol, then asked him about the purpose of his visit. The stranger opened up his heart to the Georgian host:

“I dream of at night and see in front of my eyes during a day  
Zaze, the beautiful daughter of Anzor the Georgian  
I am drying like a tree without water in wilderness  
Heartbroken by her majestic beauty  
And I came to see the one I have not seen yet  
In real life clearly  
And after seeing her I will not leave without Zaze” (Илли, чеченская..., 2011: 137).

It turned out that Zaze had given a promise of marriage to the Georgian man. In spite of this, the host in his kindness managed to suppress his own feelings for the woman, took the feelings of the guest to his heart and persuaded Zaze to marry the Chechen fellow instead.

Anzor is probably the most widespread name of a nobleman in the texts of Chechen illi . Majority of the Georgians in Chechen songs are called Anzor as unusual as it may sound. The Georgian tradition does not know the female name Zaze at all. It is true that the song about the Anzor's daughter Zaze combines fairy elements, but it is redesigned according to local reality and is attuned to the folk customs. This detail emphasizes the trustworthiness of the story and grants the episode an artistic credibility.

The earlier time reflected in Chechen epos is the epoch of the saga and goliaths. The mythical period of the battles between the daeva and heavenly beings preceded historical time in Georgian folk tradition. According to Z. Kiknadze, the fight of the ballad hero against internal and external enemies presents the archetypal paradigms of the battles between the patron saints of the village community and daevas (Kiknadze, 2008: 259). As a result of the battles between daevas and patron saints were created the military and religious societies of the highlands of eastern Georgia. According to U. Dalgath, “The Heroic-epic texts differ from the sagas of Erstkho population by the emphasis on local-ethnographic side. It presets not only such traditional epic themes as a fight for a fiancé, driving away cattle, tradition of revenge, but also historical-patriotic themes” (Далгат, 1972: 209).

Illi is not an epos in its classical understanding, since its heroes are not related to one another like they are in sagas. However, in Chechen heroic songs we encounter the same kinds of tropes that were characteristic to ancient epen. According to I. Munaev, the existence of such artistic elements in the texts of illi must be conditioned by the influence and authority of the epos about the saga of the Erstkho (Илли, чеченская..., 2011: 16). The hand-to-hand

fighting of the hero against the enemy is presented by illi in a form of hyperbolic formula reflecting the time of the fight:

|уьйранна болийна т|ом суьйренга белира,  
Суьйранна болийна т|ом |уьйренга белира»  
„The battle that started in the morning lasted till the evening,  
The battle that started from the evening lasted till the next morning“  
(Илли, чеченская..., 2011).

Presenting a battle this way is more characteristic to a fairy epos. In general, even though the heroic songs that are dedicated to the heroic acts committed by particular people belong to the later period of folk oral tradition, but we find some fairy-mythological elements in them.

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# **Autofictional Narrative to rewrite the past**

## ***Irakli Charkviani's Autonovel in Relation to Autofictional Prose***

### **Nino Mainguy-Bardzimashvili**

#### **Professional Biography**

Nino Mainguy-Bardzimashvili (born June 4, 1984) is a PhD student in comparative literature at Ivane Javakishvili Tbilisi State University. She obtained her BA degree in Literary Relations and Translation and an MA degree in Translation Studies from TSU. She also has another MA degree degree in Philosophy and Arts from the University of Oslo. The topic of her thesis is autofictional prose of the 20th century and the place of autofiction in literary theory.

#### **Abstract**

*The given article studies the novel "Tranquil Swim" by Irakli Charkviani in relation to autofictional prose; it explores the forms of narratives used in this book and their functions. Te article also discusses autofiction as a phenomenon and different terms and issues related to it.*

***Keywords: Autofiction, narrative, autobiography, novel, fiction***

This paper discusses Irakli Charkviani's novel as an example of autofictional prose and explores the narrative forms used in the novel and their importance for the author in interpreting and dealing with the traumas of his past. What makes the novel particularly interesting for this research is that the author develops two different types of narrative - an autobiographical narrative and an autofictional narrative. Hence, we have both, nonfictional or autobiographical and fictional or autofictional narratives which add complexity to the subject of the study. The same applies to the plot. In accordance with the two narratives, we are dealing with a double plot or a plot inside a plot. The first one being the story writer builds on biographical events and the second one developed in his mind, in his subconscious even, which he describes so convincingly that we believe the author has truly lived it. The two narratives or, in other words, the two plots take place in a certain geographical and social environment. The autobiographical narrative is set in Georgia, in Charkviani's motherland and the autofictional plot develops in a fictional world where the author is free from the objective reality. Here he breaks the frames that history sets for him and this lets him make anything happen.

When one mentions term - "autofiction" questions are expected. What is autofiction? How do we know it is autofiction? What makes a narrative autofictional? Some signs of this phenomenon have been in the literature for a long time but the term was introduced by Serge Doubrovski in 1977. Since then many authors write or claim to write autofiction prose, some others are considered autofiction writers (for example, Marguerite Duras) even though they refuse to be ones. Autofiction is often associated with French writers such as Christine Angot<sup>1</sup>, Herve Guibert, Serge Doubrovsky<sup>2</sup>, Catherine Millet<sup>3</sup>, Nelly Arcan<sup>4</sup> (Canadian

French-speaking author), Patrick Modiano<sup>5</sup>, Marguerite Duras<sup>6</sup>, Amelie Nothomb<sup>7</sup>, Annie Ernaux<sup>8</sup>.

Autofiction is a widely discussed subject among literature scholars but when it comes to defining it, everyone finds it difficult to find one conclusive definition. We can say that autofiction is an invented, fictional autobiography. It combines two completely opposed styles: autobiographical style and fiction.

Alongside with a number of developments and innovations in art and literature of 20th century, the traditional understanding of autobiography also changed. Autobiographers no longer considered that describing their own biographical facts was enough so the autobiographical truth or reality gave way to self-discovery and self-construction. As Paul John Eakin notes, autobiography is no longer a reconstruction of historically verifiable facts and events that happened in person's past, nor does search for a "self" make sense while writing an autobiography. This process should rather become a tool for creating one's identity:

“... that autobiographical truth is not a fixed but an evolving content in an intricate process of self-discovery and self-creations, and, farther, that the self that is the center of all autobiographical narrative is necessarily a fictive structure.” (P.J. Eakin. 1985: 3)

I think I'm really not interested in the quest for the self any more. Oh, I suppose, everyone continues to be interested in the quest for the self, but what you feel when you're older, I think, is ... that you really must make the self. It's absolutely useless to look for it, you won't find it, but it's possible in some sense to make it. (P.J. Eakin. 1985: 55)

It was because of above-mentioned reasons that autofiction emerged in the 20th century and became so popular that it is today a part of literature from different countries.

A writer may have a number of reasons for creating a fictional autobiography. When we study Charkvianis "Auto Novel", we clearly see his reasons for fictionalising his autobiography. We can claim that he uses autofiction as a form of criticism, self-criticism and, finally as an attempt to heal from the past traumas. Autofiction definitely gives an opportunity of self-criticism as here the author has no need to restrict himself to the truth or frame himself inside the objective reality while telling his story. He can place the conscious and the subconscious, objective and subjective realities at the same, equal level. We believe that this kind of "game" with reality and the biographical truth makes it easier for the writer to look at his own personality with a critical eye and talk more openly about his own shortcomings or mistakes. Since he does not have the responsibility of respecting the precision of autobiographic facts, the writer can actually find other ways and stories of expressing the inner truth, his personal reality. In autofiction, the writer does not try to embellish his personality. Here the most shameful and reproachful emotions, actions, tendencies become the starting point for starting talking about the self. We can bring autofictions by the authors like Hitomi Kanehara, Annie Ernaux, Catherine Millet, Nelly Arcan as examples.

The autofictional prose is a kind of conflict between the objective reality and the reality of the author. It is a most rote and a fight against what is unacceptable but inevitable. Author uses a fiction as a weapon against the existing reality and by doing this he is trying to "delude the reality" and replace it with his version of the truth.

Before we go any farther, it is necessary to define what we mean by "reality" and "truth". Since there are many different understandings of these concepts, we choose short and very direct definitions given in Oxford Dictionaries:

"Reality - The state of things as they actually exist, as opposed to an idealistic or notional idea of them; A thing that is actually experienced or seen, especially when this is unpleasant; A thing that exists in fact, having previously only existed in one's mind." [English Oxford Living Dictionaries, Online Source].

"Truth - That which is true or in accordance with fact or reality". [English Oxford Living Dictionaries. Online Source].

According to the Oxford Dictionaries, reality is something that actually exists and is visible and perceptible. The reality is just a realized form of a dream. The reality is the truth linked with the existing facts.

Based on the complicated and debatable nature of the subject, Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann offer a rather simple and "ordinary" understanding of the term "reality": "It will be enough, for our purposes, to define "reality" as a quality appertaining to phenomena that we recognize as having a being independent of our own volition (we cannot "wish them away")"... (Berger, Luckmann, 1966; 13)

When discussing reality and truth we will, on one hand, point out the facts objectively visible and perceptible and, on the other hand, the personal reality of the author that exists only in his mind and might be more obvious and actual for him than the objective reality. This personal reality is not describable and establishable with strict historical facts.

Catherine Cusset gives an interesting explanation of the concept of truth in autofiction in her article "*The Limits of Autofiction*". She claims that the truth, in this case, is for the writer to be able to go deep in his own emotion, getting rid of anything that is not linked to it and afterwards giving the reader the pure, bare form of this emotion that can then be adopted by the reader because if the writer manages to go deep enough in the emotion, it becomes so universal that anyone can claim it as his own:

"What is "truth"? In the context of autofiction, I would call "truth" the capacity to go back inside an emotion, to erase anything anecdotic that wouldn't be part of that emotion and would water it down, in order to offer it to the reader in a bare form, devoid of anything too idiosyncratic, so that he can claim it as his own. When the writer reaches a deep enough level of emotion, it becomes anybody's emotion: something universal." [Cusset. 2012:2 <http://www.catherinecusset.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/THE-LIMITS-OF-AUTOFICTION.pdf> 29.12.2016]

Before we move on to discussing fiction, we want to introduce the definition of one more term - "narrative".

Different scholars give different definitions of narrative. Genette, for example, offers several interpretations of the term:

"A first meaning... has *narrative* refer to the narrative statement, the oral or written discourse that undertakes to tell of an event or a series of events... A second meaning... has *narrative* refer to the succession of events, real or fictitious... and to their several relations of linking, opposition, repetition, etc. ... A third meaning... has *narrative* refer once more to an event: not, however, the event that is recounted, but the event that consists of someone recounting something: the act of narrating taken in itself. (Genette, 1980. 25-26) <sup>15</sup>

Since exploring and juxtaposing various interpretations of the narrative is going to lead us away from our main subject, we will choose the definition given in the Oxford Dictionaries because of its simplicity: "A spoken or written account of connected events; a story." [English Oxford Living Dictionaries. Oxford University Press. Online Source].

Narrative exists in different fields of art such as music, theatre, cinema and so on. In fact, narrative can be any form of expression that uses a sequence of events, happenings. The term "narrative" itself comes from the Latin verb *narrare* and means to tell, to narrate. Narrative system is studied by narrative studies that focus on both written and oral narrative. Obviously, oral narrative existed long before we have any recordings of written narratives. Storytellers are known to have been popular since the ancient times.

Narrative can be *linear* when the events are described chronologically or *nonlinear* when this chronology is disrupted. In our opinion, the nonlinear narrative is typical for autofictional prose because here exploring, inventing and reconstructing is more important than a chronological sequence of facts. This becomes obvious when we look at the texts such as "Fils" by Serge Doubrovsky, "Autofiction" by Hitomi Kanehara, "The Sexual Life of Catherine M.", "Suzanne and Louise" and "Ghost Image" by Herve Guibert, "The Possession" by Annie Ernaux and others.

If in the beginning of the 20th-century narrative writing was associated with fiction and, accordingly, meant that narrative had to use fictional, invented stories that were not based on real facts, today narratology sees literary narrative as a part of a much broader concept together with nonfictional life narratives such as biography and autobiography.

The main characteristic of autofiction is invention, imagination. Fiction is a form of narrative that is composed of imagined, invented stories.

Autobiography always takes us to "The Autobiographical Pact" that establishes a certain agreement between an author and a reader; this agreement implies that the autobiographical writing should contain real, true biographical facts. When it comes to autofiction, "The Autobiographical Pact" loses its relevance. We must agree in the first place that what mainly

distinguishes autofiction from autobiography is the following: Autobiography is based on the historically verifiable facts while autofiction, as Serge Doubrovsky himself says is a fictionalisation of strictly real facts and events: "Fiction, d'évènements et de faits strictement réels". [S. Doubrovsky. 1988: 69] Irakli Charkviani not only fictionalises historical facts in his auto-novel but creates a fictional version of himself and, together with this creates a fictional life which, we argue, serves to create an alternative ending to the tragic historical events his friends suffered. Charkviani names his autofictional ego Rumi. According to Jean-Pierre Boulé's interpretation of Doubrovsky's description of the main characteristics of autofiction, the writer, the narrator and the main character should correspond the same person and should inhabit a fictional space: "writer, narrator and main character correspond to the same person, whilst inhabiting a fictional space". [J.P.Boulé. 2009: 64] These aspects and elements are skillfully handled in "Tranquil Swim".

We can definitely say that Charkviani's novel has obvious characteristics of autofiction.

Doubrovsky set certain criteria to autofictional writings but Phillippe Gasparini considers that so many criteria are impossible to apply to one genre and that Doubrovsky's theory is ineffective exactly because of this. Gasparini reduces the number of Doubrovsky's criteria to ten in his book "Autofiction, Une Aventure du Langage" (Gasparini, 2008: 209). Another scholar, Phillippe Vilain uses Gasparini's choice of criteria for autofiction in his book "L'autofiction en théorie" (Vilain, 2009; 17). Here are these ten criteria:

- 1- onomastic identity of the author and hero-narrator;
- 2- subtitle: "novel";
- 3- primary importance of the narrative;
- 4- pursuit of an original form;
- 5- writing that aims to "immediately articulate";
- 6- reconfiguration of linear time (through selection, intensification, stratification, fragmentation, disorientation);
- 7- a significant use of the present tense;
- 8- an effort to only tell "strictly real facts and events";
- 9- the urge to "reveal one's self truly";
- 10- a strategy that aims to require active engagement from the reader.

Let us begin with stylistic aspects:

"Tranquil Swim" is written by a modern person so it is natural that it carries a number of characteristics that are typical for contemporary literature. One of them is scabrous language that is very usual in postmodern literature. However, we must press on the fact that Charkviani's language, even scabrous, is refined and the artistic side of the writing is definitely high. The book in general leaves the feeling of simplicity on one hand and of artistic subtlety on the other. What makes the book even more interesting and pleasant to read is its unconventional plot, the contrastive game between true to reality facts and imaginative stories and, finally, a very distinguished original writing style of the author.

Irakli Charkviani uses dialogues, monologues, addresses the reader in his novel and all of this, as we already noted, is very characteristic for autofiction. Addressing the reader is a powerful way for an author, who is at the same time the main character, to establish a strong link with the reader and make him feel like he is a direct witness and judge of the events. Author-character chooses normal, everyday speech to make the reader feel like a part of his story.

Let us move to the question of the identity of the writer, the narrator and the main character. We know who the writer is. The author-character does not conceal his identity so we do not need to dig deep into the details to find similarities between the stories told in the book and the biographical moments and other personal signs of the writer. However, as it is typical for autofiction, the biographical reality does not always exactly meet the reality of the novel so the reader still needs to explore and travel between the reality and the illusions, conscious and subconscious in order to connect them together and use this for a kind of psychoanalysis that will lead him to better understanding the whole picture of the novel.

As for the narrator, the autobiographical storyline of the novel is written in the first person and accordingly, the narrator is Irakli Charkviani, whereas the autofictional storyline is a third person narrative and, again, Charkviani is the narrator. Rumi here is the main character like Irakli is one in the autobiographical part, however, writing about Rumi in the third person does not serve the purpose of separating him from the narrator and the author. In other words, first person and third person narratives are both auto narratives and correspond to the same story of the same figures and characters fictional or not. In the third person narrative, Charkviani is merely creating a kind of anti-utopia, an alternative to the reality he lives in (The Soviet Union was known to try to create a utopia, an ideal place to live). The fact that Charkviani is creating an anti-utopia already indicates his opposition toward the system.

Before we go further on the subject and start discussing the analogies between the narrator and the main characters, it is important to review the historical and political background which, one can freely argue, created the conditions that then induced the young generation to rebel against the system and finally, lead to the events experienced and described in the book of Irakli Charkviani.

Georgia was part of The Soviet Union from 1921 to 1990. A number of movements for freedom and conspiracy against The Soviet Government took place during this period. Rebellions started from the very first years of occupation and progressed into a fight for national identity. After the death of Stalin (1953), rallies and demonstrations became even more frequent. The youth was showing intense activity when it came to claims such as Georgian language and national liberation. Such anti-Soviet movements, despite their nonviolent form, were seen as a serious danger by the Soviet government and were dealt with violence. March 9, 1956, and April 9, 1989, are remembered for the blood and death of young Georgians who merely wanted their national language to be accepted as a state language and to maintain the unity of Georgia as a country.

The tragic bloodshed of April 9 was the last straw. Development of national movements and organisations (with the leadership and participation of Zviad Gamsakhurdia, Merab Kostava, Tamar Chkheidze, Irakli TsereTeli, Giorgi Chanturia and others could no longer be stopped.

This time moral support from the rest of the world was obvious too. After the referendum of March 31, 1991, showed that the majority of Georgians were supporting the idea of Georgia becoming independent again, the Soviet regime was ended using pacific means and on May 26, 1991, Zviad Gamsakhurdia was selected as a first president of Georgia.

This historical and political discourse is important as the names such as Zviad Gamsakhurdia and Merab Kostava often come up in Charkviani's auto novel and they are equally important as political figures as well as personal connections of the author. In his memory, these figures appear more as young forward thinkers and rebels looking for a way to break free from existing suffocating regime rather than political figures. They stand side by side with other less known figures who experienced the same pressure and found far tragic ends than some others including the writer himself.

Irakli Charkviani's autobiographical narrative is based on the events and persons from the abovementioned historical period. However, what deserves noticing is that the auto novel starts not with the autobiographical but autofictional narrative which, in my opinion, underlines its particular importance in the storyline.

This obvious importance of autofictional narrative emphasises the crucial role of the autofictional character in the novel. In the autobiographical narrative Charkviani denotes his identity with Rumi:

„საქმე იმაშია, რომ ჩემი და რუმის ანუ ქაბულელი ახალგაზრდა კაცის ცხოვრება, ჩვენი აზრები, მეტისმეტად გვანან ერთმანეთს, მართალი ვითხრათ, ხანდახან მავიწყდება, რომ მეფე ირაკლი ვარ, თავი რუმი მგონია, რომელმაც თვითმფრინავი უნდა ააფეთქოს... პირდაპირ გეტყვით, მე და რუმი ტყუპისცალებივით ვგავართ ერთმანეთს.“  
(Charkviani. 2006: 64)

The fact is that my life and the life of young man from Kabul, Rumi and our thoughts are too much alike, to tell you the truth, sometimes I forget that I am Irakli and it seems to me that I am Rumi who has to blow up the plane... I'll tell you directly, Rumi and I are alike like twins. (our translation)

Based on the text we find a number of obvious similarities between the author and Rumi. Both were born the same way – dragged out of mother's uterus with midwifery forceps because none of them wanted to be born. Both have a creative nature and are well educated. Both have wives and baby girls and both their lives are marked with tragic touch.

One of the most important characteristics that identify these two characters is an addiction to drugs. Drugs have quite a symbolic meaning in the novel. First of all, it is a way of expressing protest to the reality and the Soviet system where drugs were forbidden and almost impossible to get hold of. Charkviani says that the type and amount of drugs his friends and himself used could make each day their last. For the writer, drugs are linked to his friends and the huge pain he experienced from losing them.

„მოკლედ, მეგობრების მხრივ ოცდაოთხი წლის ასაკში აბსოლუტურად დავობლდი და აი ამ ყველაზე უფრო ობოლ ზაფხულს გაგრამი გავემგზავრე დასასვენებლად. მაშინ ნარკოტიკებს იმ დოზებით ვიღებდი, რომ ყოველი დღე, წესით, უკანასკნელი უნდა აღმოჩენილიყო ჩემს ცხოვრებაში და რამდენჯერმე ღვთისა და რამდენიმე ჯერ კიდევ მეგობრულად განწყობილი აფხაზის მეშვეობით სიკვდილს გადავურჩი, თუმცა აბსოლუტურად დარწმუნებული ვიყავი, რომ სიკვდილი გადამირჩა მე და არა პირიქით...” (Charkviani. 2006: 112).

In short, I was completely deprived of friends by the age of 24 and that loneliest summer I went to spend my vacation in Gagra. At that time I was using drugs in such quantities that each day could have been the last day of my life. Several times I survived death thanks to god and few still amicable Abkhaz people although I was absolutely sure that it was death that had survived me and not the other way around. (our translation)

He no longer finds pleasure in them and says that he is tired of drugs like he is tired of his own name. Like Charkviani, Rumi, too, is bored of everything, including drugs and unlike the author, he actually quits using them. Using autofictional narrative Charkviani manages to overcome his addiction and gives himself the chance of facing the life with a sober mind. Which by the way he never succeeded to do in real life.

Symbolic meaning of Charkviani's alter ego is worth noticing. The fact that the autofictional ego of Charkviani is named after the great philosopher and poet Rumi is no coincidence. As Rumi's philosophy is also known as the philosophy of ecstasy, we can easily link it with the drug addiction issue of the author, narrator and character.

We already mentioned the trauma caused from losing friends. This painful event is the main impulse for writing this novel and for searching a way of rewriting the past. Many symbols in the novel are related to the following event. In 1983 a group of seven young Georgians (Gega Kobakhidze, David Mikaberidze, Soso Tsereteli, Kakha Iverieli, Paata Iverieli, Gia Tabodze and Tina Petviashvili) tried to hijack a plane to escape from the Soviet Union. They were planning to first fly to Turkey and from there reach Europe which was a symbol of freedom in Soviet Georgia. The collusion was divulged and it all ended in tragedy, several people were killed and all the survived hijackers were sentenced to death except for Tina Petviashvili. They aborted her baby to avoid the mitigation of punishment and she was sent to prison for 14 years. These young people were of exemplary intelligence, potential and came from high-class families. Their punishment is a classic example of how the Soviet system was dealing with persons who were thinking out of the frame that this system had set for people. The abovementioned event, also known as "The Airplain Boys Case" inspired a number of writers and cinema and theater directors.

Gega Kobakhidze was Irakli Charkviani's best friend. His death marked him forever. We consider that it is important to explore traumatic memories that autofiction writers are so

focused on in order to truly understand their writing. Charkviani is no exception. Writing fiction together with other forms of art is often seen as a way of freeing oneself from past traumas. Megg Jensen stresses this point in the article - "Post-traumatic memory projects: autobiographical fiction and counter-monuments":

"The post-traumatic writer, therefore, may be attracted to autobiographical fiction as a form of life story telling that allows them to express feelings without being forced to attribute meaning to them and also engages the 'dilemma of representation' that mimics their psychic state." [M. Jensen. 2014: 705]

Although autofiction writers do not tend to avoid taking the responsibility for the actions and events they describe in their writing, we can still apply Jensen's statement to autofiction.

Charkviani writes that he never truly recovered from this trauma and never understood why his best friend kept his plan a secret from him. Creating this autofictional narrative serves the search for justice in the first place search for a different ending of his friend's failed attempt to break free. As the author himself explains, symbol of the plane is directly linked to Gega Kobakhidze:

"თვითმფრინავის თემაც ალბათ სწორედ ამიტომ გახდა აქტუალური ამ წიგნში, რადგან ჩემი საუკეთესო მეგობარი სწორედ თვითმფრინავის გატაცებას ცდილობდა და თავისი სასიცოცხლო ენერჯის უდიდესი ნაწილი ალბათ სწორედ იმ ... სალონში დახარჯა..." (Charkviani. 2006: 110)

Perhaps the plane theme became so essential in this book because my best friend was trying to hijack the plane and he probably used the biggest part of his life energy exactly in that airplane salon. (our translation)

Here comes in the concept of space. As we already mentioned before, in the novel there is the space where Irakli Charkviani lives - Georgia, and then there is the fictional space of Rumi. The biggest part of this fictional space is the airplane, which Rumi intends to blow up and which, as the author explains, is a symbolic image of Georgia.

"...თვითმფრინავი, რა თქმა უნდა, სიმბოლოა და ყველაზე უფრო იმ ქვეყანას წააგავს, რომელშიც ჩვენ ყველა ერთად ვცხოვრობთ. ...ეს საუკუნეებით ნახმარი... არსება ღრუბლებს მიაპობს და ჯერ კიდევ არ ეცემა ძირს. ეს თვითმფრინავი არა მხოლოდ რუმის სამშობლოა, არამედ მე თვითონ გახლავართ: ვადაგასული...ხმარებიდან ამოსაღები საჰაერო ხომალდი." (Charkviani. 2006: 25)

The airplane, of course, is a symbol and it resembles the most the country we all live in. ... This creature, centuries and centuries old, is fighting its way through the clouds and still does not crush. This airplane is not only Rumi's motherland but it also is me: an outdated, out of use aircraft. (our translation)

In the autobiographical narrative the author suffers from the fact that in real life he never got a chance to understand his best friend's plans and to get his revenge over the system that destroyed so many people's lives. In the autofictional narrative he becomes Rumi who makes it possible for him to live the past differently. As the story develops, these two characters become more and more alike, their speeches are more and more difficult to distinguish and the reader can hardly tell the line between autobiography and autofiction. This is one more obvious signs of autofiction. As Phillippe Vilain argues (Vilain, 2009; 17), dragging the reader into the story is essential for an autofiction writer.

We saw earlier in the article that Gasparini places author-protagonist on the top of the list of the criteria he selects from Doubrovsky's theory as most significant for autofiction novel. As much as it is important to identify the protagonist with the author, the role of an antagonist, an antihero becomes no less serious when we study the autofictions of Serge Doubrovsky (father is often presented as an antagonist in his works). Having antagonist in the story can be examined as one more characteristics of an autofictional novel considering that the same tendency is present in Annie Ernaux's (writer's mother, ex-lover's new woman), Catherine Millet's (writer's mother), Herve Guibert's (writer's father) and other autofiction writers works.

In "Tranquil Swim" we have Lenin as an antihero. Charkviani makes Rumi meet Lenin in the autofictional narrative. Rumi's conversations with Lenin is a kind of fight against ideological pressure and also an attempt to destroy the concept of the order, in this case, a terrorist attack is better than the illusion of peace. The interesting nuance is that Lenin always appears in Rumi's dreams and although he is already dead, almost rotting (like the Soviet regime in 80s), he still tries to influence Rumi's thoughts and life decisions. In particular, Lenin is the one who inspires Rumi to blow up the plane Lenin who inspires him to blow up the plane. This might seem confusing considering the explanation of the terrorist attack as a way of shaking the Soviet system. However, we must remember that the Soviet leader has tricky nature and by making Rumi blow up the plane he removes any way out of the Soviet Union and kills the possibility of flying, breaking free. Lenin is trying to convince Rumi that death is much more pleasant than he knows and that only death can bring the spiritual victory over the flesh that is just a burden. This way he is trying to continue his bloody deeds even after his death. By letting Rumi resist Lenin's ideological influence Charkviani gives his friends a chance of flying, of being free and above all, of staying alive. In the end the plane is still exploded but not by Rumi. This can be understood as a symbol of putting an end to the decayed system on one hand and as a way for Irakli Charkviani to join his friends who became the victims of failed plane hijack on the other hand. If in the autobiographical narrative Charkviani does not see the way out of the mistakes and shadows from the past, in autofictional narrative he is reborn after death and in this new life his birth has a meaning.

To conclude, we can say that Irakli Charkviani's auto-novel carries obvious signs of autofiction and that his way of using narratives serve the reinvention of the self and of his life. He creates two different types of narratives in one novel in order to juxtapose the autobiographical truth with the autofictional, possible truth and to use it to recover from the past, to find justice and to start his life anew. Ending the Soviet Regime and being years away from the pain experienced in past is not enough to recover from the trauma and since the

objective truth and real facts are not sufficient when it comes to expressing personal truth and personal reality, Charkviani creates a space out of his thoughts, memories and experiences where the strictest truth can be altered and where reinventing, recreating oneself is possible. This new self can find a way to a new future. Charkviani's two narratives tell the same story of the same person only with two different endings.

## Notes:

<sup>1</sup> See - Sadoux Marion, "*Christine Angot's autofictions: Literature and/or reality?*", *Women's Writing in Contemporary France*, ed Gill Ray and Michael Worton, Manchester 2002.

<sup>2</sup> See - Jones Elisabeth H., *Spaces of belonging*, Amsterdam, New York, 2007.

<sup>3</sup> See - Beaudoin Catherine, *La Reception de La Vie Sexuelle de Catherine M. de Catherine Millet*. Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, 2009.

Jordan Shirley, *Autofiction in the feminine*, *French Studies*, Vol. 67, No. 1, 76–84, Queen Mary University of London, January 2013.

<sup>4</sup> See - Raymond-Dufour Marie France, *Prolégomènes à l'autofiction au féminin : une lecture transpersonnelle de Putain de Nelly Arcan et La brèche de Marie-Sissi Labrèche*. Mémoire. Trois-Rivières, Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, 93, 2005.

<sup>5</sup> See - Laurent Thierry, *L'Autofiction dans les romans de Patrick Modiano*, Thèse de doctorat, Université de Paris 4, 1995.

<sup>6</sup> See ὀβολογγῶ - Tsiakmaki Foteini, *Du roman d'éducation à l'autofiction : 'Éducation européenne', Romain Gary, 'L'amant', Marguerite Duras, 'Eroïca', Kosmas Politis*, Mémoire de Maîtrise, Université de Dijon, 2004.

<sup>7</sup> See - Dufrenoy Alexandre, "*Une forme de vie : l'autofiction épistolaire d'Amélie Nothomb*", <http://www.autofiction.org/index.php?post/2015/11/06/Une-forme-de-vie-%3A-lautofiction-epistolaire-dAmelie-Nothomb>.

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<sup>8</sup> See - Hughes Alex, "*Recycling and Repetition in Recent French 'Autofiction': Marc Weitzmann's Doubrovskian Borrowings*". *The Modern Language Review*, Vol. 97, No. 3 (Jul., 2002), pp. 566-576; *Modern Humanities Research Association* 2002.

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# The Theme of Encounter between East and West in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Arabic Literature

(1935-1966)

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Professional Biography

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## Abstract

The present article aims to discuss the theme of encounter between East and West and the issue of cultural confrontation in the works of the outstanding writers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (1935-1966) Arabic Literature, such as Taha Hussein, Yahya Haqqi, Suhayl Idris and Tayeb Salih.

**Keywords:** *Arabic Literature, Encounter between East and West.*

East and West are considered by culture, literature and philosophy as the two essentially different types of worldviews and social structures. The history of the interest towards the East-west issue counts a few centuries of the polemics among the intellectual. This interest particularly increased during the last few decades. The East-west problematic has been studied by many academic centres during which important social and cultural theories have been formulated.

Against the background of globalization and increased migration the dialogue between civilizations and sharing between cultures as much as their synthesis become more and more significant. A chance for a dialogue, finding a common language between these two radically different eastern and western, Muslim and Christian regions is first of all dictated by political urgency. Yet, it has also moved from social sciences into the Humanities and found a fertile soil in literature. The encounter between East and West, their mutual awareness of each other always enjoyed a special interest on the part of the European as well as eastern thinkers.

The scope of our interest embraces the opposition between the Arabic East and the European West commonly called the clash of civilizations [Huntington, 1997: 1-2]. In the era of colonization, the issues involved in the meeting of the two completely different worlds and their cultural confrontation appear with an extended scope in literary texts. European as well as eastern (Arabic) literary discourse (where the theme of the encounter between East and West is highlighted) is in fact a result of the western colonial politics, which created the whole system of the way Europe looked at the Arab world, how it produced wrong stereotypes, and therefore tried to excuse its imperial policy, to which the eastern side naturally responded adequately, the desire for distinguishing one's own identity also

increased. The East also established certain stereotypes about the western civilization. The self-portrait of the East as a cultural space in modern Arabic literature was shaped against the hostile image. The system of the clearly polarized markers signifying the auto-images and hetero-images of east-west space were shaped within the literary discourse. Moreover, some Arabic literary texts of the 20<sup>th</sup> century turned into a certain kind of revenge weapons in the postcolonial epoch.

The motif of cultural confrontation in most cases is raised by those writers who have experienced themselves the attempt of overcoming the barrier between the two worlds. The Arab intellectuals sent to Europe with different missions dedicated large part of their works to the relationship between East and West. Therefore, they are usually considered as the protagonists of their literary works whether consciously or unconsciously.

Interesting analogies emerge in the novels that focus on the encounter between East and West, which enable the scholars to identify the certain literary universals of the presented Arabic literature. Novels have similar contents: the main character is in the centre of the encounter between East and West. He is raised in a traditional Muslim family. He goes to pursue his studies in Europe, where he goes through a spiritual crisis as a result of cultural shock brought by his encounter with western values. The problem of cultural identity is posed in a rather acute way. He feels split, he transforms and after many years he returns to his home country changed, Yet, after embracing European civilization and its cultural traditions he himself feels alienated and the crisis of his identity increases even further. The main part in the formation of the main character is played by a European woman as well as an Eastern one. The metaphor of a loving relationship is turned into a certain norm in these novels – an eastern man vacillates between the two women, who symbolize the two different cultures. The relationship with a western lady lets him enter her culture, yet, later, when he returns to his homeland, he strives to reintegrate with eastern society by marrying a local woman. Some novels (e.g. *Adib*, or *Season of Migration to the North*) reveal very well the dualism taking place inside the author's mind who cannot see only one way of solving the problem, so he employs a certain artistic method and offers the reader a development of two conceptual lines, one of which is radical, the other one – more moderate. The relationship with the West ends tragically for one character, while the other returns to his homeland without an identity crisis.

The present article discusses the following novels in a chronological order:

1. *Adib* by Taha Hussein (1935)
2. *The Lamp of Umm Hashim* by Yahya Haqqi (1944)
3. *The Latin Quarter* by Suhayl Idris (1953)
4. *Season of Migration to the North* by Tayeb Salih (1966)

The group of Arabic literary works of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the context of east-west interaction also includes two other significant texts: *Sparrow from East* By Tawfiq el-Hakim (1938) and *Doctor Ibrahim* by Zu Al-Nun Ayyub (1939). Since our scholarship has already dedicated a

number of academic publications to the latter works, this article will not spend more time on discussing them.<sup>1</sup>

An Egyptian writer and a thinker **Taha Hussein** (1889–1973) is one of the most influential key figures of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Arabic Modernism. He was one of the pioneers of the first decade of the century who acquired his education first at the University in Cairo and then pursued his studies in France that greatly influenced the further formation of his worldview. Taha Hussein was a supporter of cultural openness towards the West that would allow the Egyptians to learn the secrets of progress. Taha Hussein considered Egypt and Europe in one context as the product of the pan-Mediterranean culture. In his opinion, European civilization derives from the Egyptian as well as ancient Greek-based civilisations and Islam, as did Christianity too, and experienced the influence of Greek Philosophy. The reign of Ottomans however, encouraged the progress in Europe, while Egypt stayed isolated. Taha Hussein is against the European hegemony, yet at the same time he speaks of the need for adopting the model of European education. The author inspired young people by teaching them that it is not that they should transform and change into being European but they should find out who they really are. [El-Enany, 2006: 55-56].

*Adib* ("أديب") by Taha Hussein was published in 1935. The author uses an artistic method for dealing with the theme of east-west encounters only in this work. Two main lines develop in this novel, which is mainly narrated in an epistolary form. The main characters – the protagonist and the narrator follow the same path. They both go to Paris from Egypt funded by scholarship. They share their experience with each other in writing. Encounter with the modern European civilization influences the two main characters. Their problem is to define the cultural identity while facing that foreign civilization, which conditioned the formation of their worldview and made them incompatible with the traditional way of life. Different contradictory views emerge in the novel over the protagonist's journey to the West. In one way it is the mother of Adib, the main character who personalizes the old, traditional attitude and she objects to her son's going to Europe; on the other hand, there is Adib himself who longs to go and study in Europe and does not spare anything for achieving his goal. He even divorces his wife without regret in order to find himself in his dream world.

Arab traditional culture is almost always presented by female origin in Arabic novels regarding the theme of east-west encounter. This is a symbol, which Taha Hussein personified by the image of the mother and Egyptian wife in his *Adib*. The same image is repeated later in different variations in almost all the Arabic novels. It is noteworthy that Taha Hussein presents the mother as the one who is against her son's leaving for Europe. It is exactly the mother who does not want to let her son go from his native land to a foreign country. In the mentioned novel, Taha Hussein emphasizes the cultural isolation of Egypt by implying to the stereotypes about the world abroad that were established within the local

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<sup>1</sup> See in greater length: 1. Academic journal of the Faculty of Humanities of Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University *Studies in the Humanities, Annual*, N5, 2016, pp. 233-266.

2. Proceedings of the International Conference *Modern interdisciplinarity and the way of thinking in the Humanities*, Akaki Tsereteli Kutaisi State University, 2015, pp.43–50.

3. TSU, Shota Rustaveli Institute of Literature, Proceedings of the 8<sup>th</sup> International Symposium *National Literatures and the Process of Cultural Globalization*, Part 2, Tbilisi, 2015, pp. 389-397.

traditional society, which sees the departure of a child abroad as dangerous and undesirable. Adib's demonstrates his attitude to both his own and European cultures in one of his letters, which he sent to the narrator:

“go to the Pyramids... Go down to the depths of the large pyramid... You will feel like you are suffocating, you will be sweating and will think that you carry the weight of this great and glorious building, which is about to squash you. Then go up from the depth of the pyramid and feel some fresh air. Be aware that living in Egypt is like being in the depth of the pyramid, while living in Paris feels like coming out of it” [حسين, 1998:155].

The other main line of the novel, which means the re-adaptation of the main character with his native culture after having lived in the West drops in the case of Adib. The moment arrives when Adib starts feeling alienated in a western environment. In spite of the fact that he adopted European culture, he failed to integrate in it and besides, he also parted with his own roots that eventually led the protagonist to a nervous breakdown. In the case of the narrator though, the crisis of identity is overcome since he does not part with his native roots, tries to adopt virtues from other cultures and thus returns to his own.

Therefore, Taha Hussein develops in his novel the idea that it is not necessary to change and lose one's own identity, to reject things of one's own and blindly follow the others, he is for moderation and modernization with the preservation of identity.

**Yahya Haqqi** (1905-1992) is the famous Egyptian writer of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and one of the founders of the genre of novella in the Egyptian prose. His shorter novel *The Lamp of Umm Hashim* not only a literary presents the traditional tension between East and West but it also stands out by the unique writing technique by which the writer incarnates his vision and constructs the rationale of the work. The writer skilfully presents those images that contradict in terms of East and West, material and spiritual, the lethargic state of people and an irresistible desire for motion and dynamism [Gardavadze, 2007:106-112].

The main character of the novel – Ismail is raised in a traditional Muslim family where religious feasts, superstitions and folk traditions become part of his life. Ismail is sent to study in England. 7 years later he comes back completely changed. After having embraced the European civilization and cultural traditions, the educated and promising ophthalmologist feels alienated in his homeland. For emphasizing Ismail's transformation the writer once again employs the metaphor of loving relationship. The most significant part in describing the main character is played by Mary, the European colleague of Ismail. Mary symbolizes western culture; their relationship is paired up in contrasts. Western civilization here appears as active, initiating, while eastern culture stands as a recipient of action, like someone who obeys and learns. Mary liberates Ismail from traditionalism, sentimentalism, she gives him confidence in himself and in science. As a result, Ismail loses his religious faith that is closely linked with his cultural values. Such a change causes Ismail's spiritual crisis: “His soul would moan and cringe under the blows of her axe. He would feel her words cutting into the living ligaments from which he fed when in contact with those around him. One day he woke up to find that his spirit was in ruins, not a single stone resting on another. Religion became for

him a fable that had been invented in order to keep the masses in control...” [New Translations, 2009:93].

Ismail's second crisis starts after his going back to his homeland. The educated ophthalmologist confronts people's faith and traditions after his return to Egypt. The locals believe that the oil from the lamp of the mosque of Umm Hashim (which is the same as Saida Zeinab) miraculously cures eyesight. When Ismail sees how his mother pours the drops of the oil from the lamp of Umm Hashim into the eyes of Ismail's cousin and his fiancée Phatima Nabavia hoping to cure her eyes, he becomes outraged and breaks the lamp in the mosque. After surviving the rage of the crowd the hero decides to treat his fiancée himself. He tries in vain until he uses the oil in the lamp himself.

Therefore, Ismail fell in spirit when he turned away from his roots, yet, the light of faith rescued him from his confusion in the end: “O light, where have you been all this time? Welcome back! The veil that had descended over my heart and eyes has been lifted” [New Translations, 2009:104]. Ismail will guess that knowledge and science need faith, which in the novel is symbolized by the oil in the lamp. The main character harmonizes eastern and western values. Therefore Yahya Haqqi emphasizes the spiritual side of the confrontation shown in the spiritual crisis of Ismail and ends with the return of the main character to his religious values.

Lebanese writer Suhayl Idris presents the socio-psychological side of cultural clash. His novel *The Latin Quarter* is considered as one of the classical example of presenting cultural clash in Arabic Literature [El-Enany, 2006:82]. Suhayl Idris also employs the traditional metaphor of loving relationship. East is presented by an Arab man, while Europe is symbolized by an European woman. The narrator/protagonist accompanied by two friends is going from Beirut to Paris for his viva in literature. Paris for the protagonist as well as other Arab students living in Paris, is identified with freedom: “As if they got rid of the burden of self-restraint, which overwhelmed them in their own country and felt that they were called to live a life of unrestrained freedom in Paris. They followed this call with the whole of their being and left behind the shackles of the past” [إدریس, 2001:19]. Since the protagonist parts with his cultural environment – the East, his is going through a difficult time. The character is searching his own self after his contact with the West. He is vacillating between the two cultures, is in constant struggle against his inner voice: “Stop gabbling! You forget again that you are in Paris! Tear out your Beirut from your heart, kill it and bury it! Accept Paris the way it is, look at it a bit longer and it will not delay to come inside your heart and settle in there” [إدریس, 2001:22].

The novel shows throughout how the Arab students in Paris are attracted to western women. The protagonist is irritated by this, he wants to run away from all this and find a shelter in the East. He compares the freedom of French ladies to the reserved nature of his eastern beloved Nahida, which both fascinates and restrains him. The protagonist is in an inner conflict with the two incompatible set of moral standards.

After the initial disappointment, the protagonist finds his dream woman – Janine, who plays an important role in the process of his transformation. The author describes his relationship with the French woman as perfect love that permeates his soul and body, yet, even such a

perfect love cannot endure the strain of traditionalism. The mother of the protagonist appears throughout the whole novel as the defender of eastern traditions. It is precisely his mother that becomes the reason for the main character's breaking up with Janine. The mother symbolizes eastern culture, which is so deeply rooted in the consciousness of the protagonist and which he cannot escape. The words of the mother "shook the strings of her son's soul", cultural values made the individual will be governed by the will of the family and society. As a result the protagonist feels polarized. He obeys his mother and writes a letter of rejection to Janine while at the same time he is in an inner conflict with himself.

After going back to Paris, the protagonist liberates from the chains of tradition, he desperately tries to make peace with Janine. He asks her to marry him and he is willing to go to his homeland together with her. Yet, the latter, in spite of her love for him, writes a letter of refusal to her beloved and disappears from his life forever. Janine's letter reveals clearly the end of the main character's searching, he is already transformed and returns to his society with a resumed status:

"I met someone yesterday, who I had never *met before*... I discovered that your world, the one you dream about is broader and greater, in which a person like me can only feel insecure. You are just starting to fight, while I am done ... Yesterday I read in your eyes a great willingness to resist and fight. You are a new person who knows what he wants and goes for it with faith. You found your soul, while I have just lost it... Go ahead, my beloved, do not look back, my love for you will give me strength. This will be enough for me to the end of my life. Leave me on my way and you, my Arab sweetheart, go back to your far east that is expecting you and needs the fighters like you" [إدریس, 2001:281-282].

Suhail Idris does not specify what kind of struggle is expecting the protagonist. Yet, the idea of Arab nationalism, independence and unity dominates in the novel. So does the issue of individualism and the desire of liberation from the influence of tradition. The protagonist discovers that he needs an individual freedom; he goes back to his society and is ready to change social norms. "Everything starts now" – This phrase ends the novel [إدریس, 2001:285].

A Sudanese writer Tayeb Salih presents a political side of cultural clash. He emphasizes more than the others the problem of cultural identity produced as a result of the clash between the eastern and western cultural values. It is obvious that postcolonial epoch is more aggressively charged with politics than it was in the period of colonialism.

Salih belongs to the group of the Arab writers carrying "two cultures". The motif of cultural confrontation is often presented as a gender based conflict. A woman is white and a man is black. The woman is European and the man is of an African origin. There is confrontation between the two world behind these relationships. The problem is dramatized even further in the novel *Season of Migration to the North*, which brought the universal recognition to the author [Grdzeldze, 2009:107-108]. The novel, since the day of its publication (1966) always enjoyed a special interest among the European, as well as eastern critics. The novel shows the results of the British colonial regime in Sudan. This specific historical situation challenged the local intellectuals, who found themselves split between the Afro-Arabic and European cultures [Wielandt, 1981: 487]. The narrator in the novel and Mustafa Sayd are the

main characters of the novel. Here the two almost parallel storylines develop. The narrator goes back to his home village in Sudan after the 7 years he spent in England acquiring his university education. One man among the villagers attracts everybody's attention – he is referred to as “a stranger”, whose name is Mustafa Sayd. In spite of the fact that Mustafa enjoys an enormous respect among the villagers, the narrator starts questioning his personality. Due to the narrator's curiosity the reader gets introduced to his past life in England. One of the key issues of the novel is Mustafa's relationship with English ladies: He tried to seduce them for 30 years and eventually led them to suicides, in the end he spent 7 years in prison for murdering his English wife. Many paragraphs show that the relationship with the English women for Mustafa Sayd is a certain kind of revenge against European violence. Mustafa compares his victim, the British lady to a city that he conquers and takes under his control. It is interesting that the European woman, who symbolizes the West in the novel, is naive and she is a victim, while East is presented by a man, who is a conqueror and a coloniser. Mustafa feels that the voice that seductively invites and entraps the victims is in fact not his, but it is the “disease” of European violence, which Europe gave to Africa earlier or the “poison” injected into the veins of the history by the Europeans. In the end, Mustafa returns to Sudan and marries a local woman, he goes back to his geographic origins, yet, this only increases the gap between his split personality and divides him in two contrasting parts. Mustafa's relationship with the West ends tragically. He failed to find his own self either in the West or in the East, since even in his homeland Mustafa is a stranger to the locals. Eventually he disappears in Nile.

Unlike Mustafa, the narrator is struggling for self-identification. He tries to adopt good things from the other culture while remaining attached to his native roots at the same time. The emotional balance of the narrator breaks throughout this struggle [صالح, 1997: 156-154], as it happened in Mustafa's case. He also gets inside the river, but unlike Mustafa, he leaves the battlefield with victory. The narrator chooses life [Elad-Bouskila, 1998: 77-78]. For him, the process of individualization and “returning to his own cultural roots” ended successfully [Siddiq, 2003: 104].

In spite of the fact that the thematic, structural and stylistic analogies of the two main characters in the novel present Mustafa as the alter-ego of the narrator; the clash of civilizations has totally different impacts on the two. This is partly caused by their different personal attitudes and also by the fact that they represent different generations and therefore, they have different experiences of relating to Great Britain. Mustafa went to Oxford when England exercised full power over Sudan. The narrator completed his studies in England 30 years later, when the British colonialism in Sudan had ended and the attitude to British civilization in his country changed: for the majority of the Sudanese people it turned into a component of their intellectual worldview (Wielandt, 1981:493). Unlike the revenge campaign carried out by Mustafa Sayd, the narrator rejects the principle of violence. It shows from the fact that he did not commit any crime during his stay in England, but also, in the end of the novel he saves the English room in Mustafa's house from burning. This room symbolizes the European side of Mustafa's personality, created by European colonialism.

Burning of the room would symbolically continue the chain of violence of the European colonialists. The narrator however, believes that the chain has to break.

Thus, on the example of the four discussed novels in this article, it is possible to highlight several specific features characteristic to the literary works created in the 20<sup>th</sup> century Arabic prose on the theme of east-west relationships.

1. Eastern and western cultural spaces are strictly separated in the mentioned novels. The standing of the main character on the verge between these spaces is marked with vacillation, spiritual crisis and the hardships that the characters went through between the two spaces. Eventually, the change of cultural mentality “I” is made more tolerant to “the other” and acquires a certain hybrid identity that harmonizes eastern and western values. In spite of the fact that the presented novels are focused on the open confrontation between eastern (Arab-Islamic) and western (European) cultures and on the basis of the comparison the emphasis is made by the authors on the priority of autochthonic culture, the main characters of all the four novels entrapped in the midst of cultural dialogue still become the bearers of hybridised cultural identity on their difficult and twisted ways of life between the two cultural spaces.

2. The storylines of the literary works are inseparably linked with the past, with the own heritage. The crisis of the main character is not to be overcome while he has broken the links with his native space. In this case a writer employs the strategy of building another storyline, which is more moderate compared with the first one and is inclined towards cultural synthesis.

3. All four authors confirm by their own lives being under the influence of European culture: European education, employment career in Europe, frequent travels between East and West naturally puts them under the cultural influence that is subconsciously reflected in their works. Moreover, an academic critique of such literary works sometimes is attributed to the genre of autobiography.

4. All four novels share the similar scenario – the main character goes to study in Europe that enables him to compare the two completely different cultures. Certain markers can be distinguished that spot the eastern and western spaces: East – traditional, spiritual, passive, surrendered to God, the West: free, materialistic, active, source of science and education. Journey from East to the West is necessarily linked with loving relationship. In this relationship a man personifies the East while the woman stands for the West; love is the language of their dialogue. It is true, that the dialogue and its language remains incomprehensible for both sides, but this relationship leaves an ineradicable trace on their personalities, it changes their identities and turns into that past, which defines the future.

Therefore, the theme of the east-west encounter in the 20<sup>th</sup> century Arabic literature poses to be increasingly essential. The discussed texts cover the timeline between 1935-1966 and they raise the issue of the identity of the main character in the light of the encounter of two different cultures. The aim of the main character is to discover his own identity and use his western education for the benefit of his homeland. The main character of the Taha Huseyn’s novel fails to overcome the identity crisis, he breaks his ties with the East and gets “lost” in the West. The second storyline developed in the novel in the case of the narrator is more moderate. Yahya Haqqi in his *The Lamp of Umm Hashim* shows us the hard way of

development that the main character had to pass, which ended with the reconciliation between science and faith. Here the sharp confrontation is shown between eastern and western values and also the spiritual side of it. Suhayl Idris emphasized the socio-psychological aspects of the cultural confrontation. At the end of the hard road between the traditional East and liberated West the main character comes back to his own society transformed and renewed. Tayeb Salih unveils the political side of the cultural confrontation and develops two storylines side by side, from which one is radical and the other, more moderate. In the case of Mustafa, the relationship with Europe is nothing more than the weapon of revenge against the Colonial politics of Europe, but in the case of the narrator – it is the source of education.

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# Euphemisms and their Translation Strategies (On the example of Georgian and English)

Lela Ebralidze

## Biography

Lela Ebralidze started her academic career at the Department of Foreign Languages and Translation at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities of Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University in 1999. At present she is conducting lecture courses for the MA programme “Translation and Intercultural Relations” teaching literary, juridical, academic translations, consecutive interpreting and the History of Translation in Georgia.

Associate Prof. Ebralidze is an author of the Georgian translations of English poetry published as *Lyrical Mosaics: British and American Poets*. Her English translations of Georgian poetry was published in the English version of the almanac *New Century*. She was involved in translating into English the epistles by his Holiness Catholicos Patriarch Ilia II.

Lela Ebralidze is an author of scholarly works on the translation, rhythm and polysemic issues of poetic images. She defended her doctoral dissertation in 2014 on *Poetic Image and its Transformation in Translation*.

## Abstract

*The present work deals with the problems related to translating euphemisms. It discusses the euphemisms of different categories and proposes the strategies for their translations. The emphasis is made on conveying the connotative meaning of the euphemistic expressions into the translation. Examples are recalled from the Georgian translations of English literary works.*

**Keywords:** *Euphemisms, National, Universal, Style, Connotation.*

**Translator’s note:** *The Georgian words used in this article as subjects of discussion are transliterated and italicized.*

The euphemisation of speech has a long history counting many centuries. The name “euphemism” originates from Greek *euphēmismós*, (*eu-* “good, well” and *phēmē* “speech”), we first meet it as early as in Homer and implies to an ancient custom according to which only the good words were supposed to be used in the process of sacrifice and saying the words of prayer.

Euphemisms have long become the subject of study for many areas and scholars worldwide. It is hard to add anything to the existed material. Yet, the present study aims to consider the

linguistic issue from the perspective of translation. However, before we move on to translation, it seems necessary to review briefly the meaning and types of euphemisms.

Hugh Rawson divides euphemisms in two categories – positive and negative [Rawson, 1998:492]. He selects the examples of positive euphemisms from the invented and optimized titles of various professions due to the solidarity to a particular member of society. These euphemisms include the use of environmental engineer instead of garbage collector, or replacing janitor by custodian etc... In Georgian the same applies to the use of the word stylist instead of a hairdresser or a barber; or the use of an office or administrative assistant instead of secretary etc...

The majority of euphemisms have negative connotations. Their goal is to spare the recipient, to provide the negative and unpleasant information about them in a more softened manner. We can see an example of this in Rawson's use of "low-income" instead of poverty. We can detect the similar approach in Georgian when somebody says "does not exist any more" (meaning death), behind the bars (in jail), intoxicated instead of drunken, overweighted instead of fat etc...

L. Samoskaite divides euphemisms into thematic groups in a rather interesting way [Samoskaite, 2011:13], which as a result, gives 6 groups:

1. Professional euphemisms: cleaning operator (referring to road sweeper/dustman), sanitation engineer (garbage man), meat technologist (butcher), beautician (hairdresser), domestic engineer (maid), undertaker/cemetery operator (gravedigger), call girl, sex worker (prostitute) etc... Similar euphemisms appear in Georgian such as burial organizer instead of a grave digger, call girl or sex worker instead of a prostitute etc...
2. The euphemisms related to health issues in English include the ones replacing cancer such as terminal illness, the big C, neoplasia, In Georgian we say long-term and "heavy" illness, incurable disease; Termination of pregnancy has replaced the word abortion. The medical term lethal/fatal outcome refers to the death of a patient. We should also mention mental patient, mentally ill instead of mad (in Georgian it is also spiritually ill instead of "crazy"). Likewise, the term physically challenged („*unarshezugduli*") sounds much gentler than a cripple, disabled, handicapped („*invalidi*", „*kheibari*").
3. Euphemisms referring to death and dying: This category is the most diverse. The euphemisms for the word dying in English include: to pass away, one's last breath, going to a better place, with the angels, join the majority, depart, meet his/her maker, feeling no pain, cross the bridge, resting in peace, go west, kick the bucket, bite the dust etc.. In Georgian we also have the words such as passed away „*gardaitsvala*"; he/she is no longer with us „*chventan aghar aris*"; entrusted his/her soul to the Lord „*suli ufals miabara*"; gave up his soul „*suli dalia*"; said farewell to life „*sicocxles gamoesalma*"; "closed" one's eye

„*tvali dakhucha*“, gone to bring salt „*tsavida marilze*“, fetched a letter „*tserili tsaigho*“ and lots of other expressions. Also some interesting euphemisms referring to death are found in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*. For example: „Va, Satsutro bolod tavsas asudarebs-azetsarebs!” (716),<sup>4</sup> [Bolkvadze, 1997:40].

4. Euphemisms with sexual connotation: Widespread expressions indicating a sexual intercourse are: making love, doing it, sleeping with, knocking boots, burrying the bone, getting busy, making the beast with two backs, the last of which we see in Shakespeare. In the first scene of the first act in Othello Iago addresses Brabantio: “I am one, sir, that comes to tell you your daughter and the Moor are now making the beast with two backs”<sup>1</sup> (Georgian Translation by Ivane Machabeli: „*me aq imis satsnoblad gakhlavart, rom amzhamad tqveni qali da mavri ert-suls da ert-khortss pirutyvs tsarmoadgenen*”) [Shakespeare, 1954:268]. Georgian euphemisms usually say „*ertad tsola*“ (lying down together), „*ertad kofna/tskhovreba*” (Being/Living together), e.g. „*mas ghame fatman iama avtandils tana tsolita*“ (That night Fatman delighted herself by lying down with Avtandil) (1253) [Rustaveli, 1987:236].
5. The euphemisms indicating crime: gentleman of the road referring to a robber and a thief, behind bars („*Gisosebs mighma*” in Georgian), send somebody to glory – murder (in Georgian „*gasagheba*“), candy man – a drug dealer and to go high/ be in high refers to using/abusing drugs. The same in Georgian is „*Narkotikebis momkhmarebeli*” – drug user, „*narkodamokidebuli*” – drug addict, „*opioidebze damokidebuli*” opioid addict etc...
6. Political Euphemisms: this category is also quite diverse and it is more universal comparing with other categories. For example, manifestation instead of mass protest (in Georgian „*manifestatsia*“ (manifestation), instead of „*saprotesto gamosvla*“ (Protest march), collateral damage instead of civilian casualties (in Georgian – „*omis tanmdevi zarali*” or „*adamianuri zarali*“ instead of „*mskhverpli mshvidobian mosakhleobashi*“), departmental restructuring/reorganization replaced a more direct term such as staff reduction (in Georgian they also use „*reorganizatsia*“ instead of „*shemtsireba*“).

While speaking about Euphemisms, it is impossible to avoid mentioning a PhD dissertation by Maka Baladze [Baladze, 2015:33-43] that explores fundamentally the issues related to the use of euphemisms. Maka Baladze in her dissertation adds other three categories to the ones proposed by Samoskaite. To be more precise, she selects medical euphemisms, the euphemisms related to illnesses and physical deficiencies and also polite expressions.

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<sup>1</sup> literarydevices.net/euphemism

The mentioned work does not isolate the euphemisms of the religious nature even though their author talks about this issue in connection with taboo. It is interesting that the Georgian language does not have the euphemisms for God and in order to indicate our astonishment or shock we usually say „*ghmerto chemo!*“ (Oh, My God!) Whereas, in English instead of saying every time Oh, my God! God! or Jesus! They tend to switch between: “Gosh!” “Gee!” “Oh my gosh!” “golly!” “Oh my goodness!” As about the euphemisms referring to Satan, the English word devil is often replaced by the expressions such as: “god of this world”, “black man”, “black lad”, “black Sam”, “black spy”, “black gentleman”, “old Nick”, “old dad”, “old chap”, “old Roger”, “old smoker or old sooty”.<sup>2</sup>

In Georgian not too many words replace „*eshmaki*“ devil or „*satana*“ Satan. For example: „*matsduri*“ (tempter), „*utsminduri*“ (impure one), „*am kveknis ghmerti*“ (The god of this world). Moreover, the Georgian language does not mention the name of the Satan in as humourous and familiar way as does English. This is the case when the difference between the two cultures, the traditions of the two nations and their worldviews materialize. In such a case of translating the expressions which have no cultural equivalents in the target language we allow the principle of a so called “foreignization” or “alienation” and calquing the expression. For example in Georgian the English euphemisms for the Satan would sound like „*shaosani jentlmeni*“ (gentleman dressed in black) or „*shavi agenti*“ (black agent/spy), or even „*bneli semi*“ (dark Sam) or „*bneli rojeri*“ (dark Roger), which a reader could easily understand according to the context or maybe with the help of a footnote or a note.

Regarding the cultural differences we ought to mention that the most complex peculiarities in translation are provided by the lingual entities containing a national flavour. We should quote Prof. Dali Panjikidze who said “whatever is familiar and emotionally responsive for the native speaking translator, conveying it mechanically will produce something completely incomprehensible and emotionally dull” [Panjikidze, 1988:14]. When the original expressions lack the equivalent in the target language, such expressions may easily be considered as untranslatable. For example the commonly accepted euphemism in Georgia „*batonebi*“ (Sirs/masters), which, in Georgian refers to measles, chickenpox, whooping cough and similar infectious diseases. “According to the old religious custom, these diseases were caused by the small anthropomorphic entities, the so called “*batonebi*” (Sirs/masters) and every family they would visit would have a member affected by one of those diseases. People believed that “batonebi” liked music, dance, flowers, and sweets and if they fulfilled their wishes the disease would be cleared”.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> [digilib.k.utb.cz/bitstream/handle/.../jačková\\_2010\\_bp.pdf?](http://digilib.k.utb.cz/bitstream/handle/.../jačková_2010_bp.pdf?)

<sup>3</sup> <https://ka.wikipedia.org/wiki/ბატონები>

In English the above mentioned diseases are referred to as a group by the term viral exanthems (rashes) and all of them have their own names „*chutkvavila*“ – chicken-pox, „*kvavili*“ – smallpox, „*kbakura*“ – mumps etc... However, there is no equivalent to the Georgian euphemism „*batonebi*“ with the same connotation. Therefore, we think that in this case a translator is bound to provide the reader with an explanation in a footnote.

Let's remember the Georgian euphemisms for the word "snake" such as „*ukhsenebeli*“ (non-mentionable), „*mtsuravi*“ (swimmer/crawler), „*usakhelo*“ (unnamed), „*urtsmuno*“ (nonbeliever), „*tskeuli*“ (damned/cursed) etc... According to the Biblical tradition, God cursed the snake as a creature, the image of which was taken up by the devil in order to tempt Eve. [Jorjaneli, 1977:55]. The taboo applied to the snake in Georgian is likely to be originated from the superstition of our ancestors, who believed that pronouncing the name of this creature was calling the evil to them. In English however, there is neither a taboo about the snake, nor there are its euphemisms. The word snake is sometimes applied to a traitor and a liar. The word serpent is used in the Bible [Gen. 3:1–5]<sup>4</sup> and it has an additional meaning of the Satan. There is also another word viper which stands for a spiteful or treacherous person. Viper („*gvelgesla*“), as a slang, also refers to a cannabis smoker. Which one may better be used as an equivalent to the euphemism „*ukhsenebeli*“ (un-mentionable)? We should single out serpent among the three mentioned words for its association of the Satan being cursed by God. Yet, in order to keep the taboo, the best way out is to paraphrase the euphemism and create the variations such as speckled tempter („*chreli*“, „*datsintskluli*“, „*matsduri*“ etc), cursed hisser („*datskevlili mosisine*“), cursed creeper („*datskevlili mtsotsavi*“) etc...

During the translation process lot less complexities are posed by universal euphemisms or the terms, that we meet in many different languages. For example: undocumented immigrant („*binadrobis nebartvis armqonde utskhoeli*“) instead of saying illegal alien („*aralegaluri imigranti*“); beyond poverty limit („*sigharibis zgvars mighma*“); socially vulnerable („*sotsialurad dautsveli*“); Balzac age („*balzakis asaki*“); senior citizen („*ufrosi asakis adamiani*“); autumn of life („*tskhovrebis shemodgoma*“) etc...

Besides the specific national nuance, the differences between the connotative meanings of expressions are also results of the fact that they belong to different stylistic layers. Let's look at the English euphemisms referring to death and dying. Majority of them are stylistically neutral: departed this life, went to a better place, lost one's life, is not with us anymore etc... There are also numerous verbal expressions: buy the farm, go west, kick the bucket, turn up one's toes etc... Some euphemisms are considered as slangs as well. For example: assume room temperature, go home in a box, swimming with concrete shoes. We may also see

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/>

euphemisms of Official bookish and elevated character. For example: pass away (official), one's hour has come (academic), go to one's final place of rest (elevated) etc.<sup>5</sup>

Stylistic differences can be traced among the Georgian euphemisms. Some of them correspond directly to English expressions/euphemisms such as „*sitsotskhles gamosalmeba*“ – saying farewell to life; „*sulis amokhdoma*“ – give up one's soul; „*pekhebis fapsheka*“ – stretch one's legs; „*gardatsvaleba*“ – pass away, transform; „*tsali pekhi samareshi aqvs*“ – to have one foot in a grave; „*aghar aris*“ – is no longer with us; „*misi agsasrulis dge dadga*“ – one's hour [day] has come.

As about other expressions, considering that most of them are idiomatic it is enough to look for the expressions with corresponding meanings during the translation. To quote Prof. Givi Gachechiladze on the idioms which had specifically national character, they as a rule, cannot be translated literally and in this case we must look for analogies, or they should be built in such a way as to be used and spread afterwards“. [Gachechiladze, 2014:238]. Yet, these expressions ought to coincide with the original by connotation as well as stylistically. It is easy to achieve in the case of the expressions related to death and dying since we have the all kinds of expressions in both languages. According to this logic, the expressions of conversational style go to the farm, fall off one's perch, go west, kick the bucket can be translated as „*gavida gaghma marilze*“, „*tserili tsaigho*“, „*fekhebi gafshika*“ etc., while the euphemisms corresponding more to a more elaborate style could be „*suli upals miabara*“ (entrusted one's soul to the Lord), „*aghesrula*“ (ended), „*imkveknad gaemgzavra*“ (left for the other world) etc...

Considering all this it seems slightly odd the choice of words used by the Georgian-English and English-Georgian online dictionary translate.ge that claims the Georgian equivalents to the English expression pass away to be the euphemisms such as „*pekhis gachimva*“ or „*pekhis gapsheka*“ (stretching one's leg), or even „*sulis gapva*“ (letting out one's last breaths). It is true that it also mentions the words such as „*mitsvaleba*“ and „*gardatsvaleba*“, but it is likely that the above mentioned expressions should not be put side by side on the same line.

Unfortunately, translating the connotation precisely often causes mistakes and awkwardness. Frequent complaints have been made against the translations of foreign fictional literature and movies on the grounds of using wrong euphemisms in translations. Let us remember how comical is the sound of the widespread „*eshmakma dalakhvros*“ (damn it!) when it is used as an equivalent to certain English scabrous expressions. Sometimes, the translator himself/herself takes the liberty to offer vulgar expressions or slang as equivalents to some neutral expressions. This is a very sensitive issue since every language has its own unique verbal norms and means of expression; therefore, what does not hurt our ears in one

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<sup>5</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/.../List\\_of\\_expressions\\_related\\_to\\_death](https://en.wikipedia.org/.../List_of_expressions_related_to_death)

language, may seem extremely vulgar in the other. Therefore, it is necessary to neither soften the expressions too much, nor to translate them literally. A translator ought to find a word or an expression, which will provoke the emotions and associations in reader in the target language that produce the closest associations to the word's original meaning.

Let us recall a few examples from the Georgian translations of English literature. We may consider a few sentences from Jerom David Sallinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* „*Tamashi Chvavis Kanashi*“ in the translation by V. Chelidze, and „*kldis pirze chvavis kanashi*“ (By the Edge of the Rock in the Rye) in the translation by G. Chumburidze:

„Anyway, it was December and all, and it was cold as a witch's teat, especially on top of that stupid hill. I only had on my reversible and no gloves or anything. The week before that, somebody'd stolen my camel's-hair coat right out of my room.... Pencey was full of crooks... The more expensive a school is, the more crooks it has – I'm not kidding. Anyway, I kept standing next to that crazy cannon, looking down at the game and freezing my ass off.“<sup>6</sup>

The translation by Vakhtang Chelidze sounds like this in Georgian:

„*erti sitkvit, dekemberi idga, tsioda – dzagli ar gaigdeboda karshi. Tsarmoidginet, ra suskhi iqneboda im idiotur gorakze ... me ki kurtukis amara videqi, arc tatmanebi, arc jandaba da dozana, stsores erti kviris tsin amtsapna vighacam chemi otakhidan aklemis betsvi qurqi ... jibgirebit aris gamotenili pensi... rac ufro dzvirfasiania skola, mit met hibgirs naxa iq... ghmertmani. Erti sitkvit, im dafkhavebuli zarbaznis gverdit videqi, mindors gadavkurebdi da sicivisagan ukanali metsoda*“ [J. Sallinger 1969:8].

Let us look now at the new translation by Gia Chumburidze:

„*akhla, dekemberi iko d aim dedaimasqnebul goraze ise tsioda, rogorc dedabris ubeshi. Me kide marto anoraki mqonda tsamoghebuli da arts kheltatmanebi da arts araferi. Tsina kviras sakutari otakhidan amtsapnes chemi jila aklemis betsviani qurtuki... rame rom ikos, es chveni pensi batsnebitaa savse... rac ufro dzviriania skola, mit meti batsana xvdeba iq, me geubnebit, mokled, vzivar am nashtis dzvelis didebisa tana, tamashs tvals vadevneb da kaklebi metosheba*“ [J. Sallinger 2006:7-8].

Let us start with a comparison. The idiomatic expression “it was cold as a witch's teat” has its own history, which takes us back as far as in the middle ages when people used to be executed for their alleged contact with “evil” spirits. However, its etymology is no longer interesting to us now. The main thing is that we have to deal with idiomatic expressions

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<sup>6</sup> J.D. Salinger *The Catcher in the Rye*, pg 5 [www.readanybook.com/online/2055](http://www.readanybook.com/online/2055)

while it is not necessary to translate them literally, it is rather better to find the expressions with similar connotations in the target language of the final translation.

Since the given idiom refers to cold weather, we find more acceptable the translation by Vakhtang Chelidze that finds a Georgian expression as expressing a similar idea „*dzagli ar gaigdeboda karshi*“ (meaning that a weather was so bad that it would have been pity to let a dog out in the street). As about the other translation by Gia Chumburidze that says „*ise tsioda, rogorts dedabris ubeshi*“ (meaning it was so cold as in an old lady’s bosom) – he obviously tried to translate literally, at the same time he softened it and as a result we got a translation which sounds very unnatural in Georgian. Besides, the translator has used a rather impolite word „*dedaimasqnebuli*“ (form of swearing) where in the original we have a completely neutral word “stupid”. We believe that the words such as „*batsnebi*“, „*amtsapnes*“, „*kaklebi metosheba*“, express very well the manner of talking of an young man and it sounds quite natural in Georgian too. Yet, it is strange that he is using a rather archaic phrase „*Nashtis dzvelis didebisa tana*“ to stand for crazy custom. It is likely that the translator allowed it for having an ironic effect but we do not find anything like it in the original.

We find the Chelidze’s addition of „*Jandaba and dozana*“ unnecessary. To convey the word ass by the euphemism is acceptable yet it can be arguable. Chumburidze in this case gives a more natural expression. We also find the use of the word „*gmertmani*“ out of the context and regard it as incompatible with the speech of the main character of the novel.

We also want to bring another example from the play by Tennessee Williams *A Streetcar Named Desire* (The title translated into Georgian by G. Jabashvili – „*tramvai, romelsats sakhelad “survili” hqvია*“; The translation by L. Inasaridze calls it „*tramvai saxelad survili*“).

One of the main characters of the play, Stanley Kowalski tells about his sister in law: “The trouble with Dame Blanche was that she couldn’t put on her act any more in Laurel! They got wised up after two or three dates with her and then quit, and she goes on to another, the same old line, same old act, same old hooey! But the town was too small for this to go on forever! And as time went by she became a town character. Regarded as not just different but downright loco – nuts.... And for the last year or two she has been washed up like poison.” [Williams, 1986:100].

Let us consider two available translations. The one by G. Jabashvili this episode is conveyed this way:

„am chven turfას მთელი უბედურება ის არის, რომ ლოელში სე ვერ გაშალა ფეხი, როგორც ტვიტონ ნეხავდა. კვლამ მალე გაუგო, რა ჩიტის ბრძანებობა და ert-ორჯერ რომ თსკონდებოდნენ, მერე ჯურგს უბრუნებდნენ. ეს კი გადიოდა კხელიდან კხელში და ისევე არ ერიდებოდა არაფერს და არავის! მაგრამ ამისთანა კოროჩინა ღალატში განა რამე დაიმალე? მალე კვლას პირზე ეკერა

magisi sakheli, radgan mteli qalaqis madly moiskha... am ukanaskneli ori tslis ganmavlobashi ki magari bozad miachnda kvelas, da magari kukuc hkres iqidan“ [Williams, 2006:84].

The translation by L. Inasaridze puts it this way:

*„lorelshi ise hqonia tavi mochrili, rom titit sachvenebeli gamkh dara. Erti-orjer tu chaitsvendnen loginshi da mere kargad mekole. Khelidan khelshi gadadioda da kvelastan erts da imave komedias tamashobda – vitom ar unda, vitom idzulebulia. Loreli patara dabaa, es dagnari didkhans ver gagrdzeldeboda. Tavdapirvelad chkuasusti hgonebiat, soflis gizhi... bolo ori tselia – medzavi“* [Williams, 2013: 78-79].

The original text uses a completely neutral word as a reference to the amorous adventures. G. Jabashvili translated this word with an euphemism *„tskhondebodnen“*, which, considering the context obviously implies to the lifestyle of Blansch. This reference is even more supported by another euphemism – *„mteli kalakis madly moiskha“* (meaning she obliged the whole town). Inasaridze is more straightforward while saying – *„chaitsvendnen loginshi“* (meaning they took her in bed), yet, this expression is also an euphemism. Stanley Kowalski says about Blansch that she became a town character, and afterwards she was considered as downright loco – nuts, in the end though, they got rid of her as immoral and a corrupt influence. Tennessee Williams expresses his opinion about the latter: “And for the last year or two she has been washed up like poison”. Washed up is usually said about a person whose career is over and is going to have no chance.<sup>7</sup> The same verb can be translated as *„chamoretshva“*, *„tavidan moshoreba“*, *„chamotsera“*.

As about an association like poison, this artistic trick is used for emphasizing the fact that during the last few years Blansch was considered to be dangerous and harmful for society – something that destroys, corrupts, etc.<sup>8</sup>

In Georgian translation there are no such comparisons. Gabashvili’s translation even misses out completely the fact that people thought of her as mentally disturbed, he only says so: *„am ukanaskneli ori tslis ganmavlobashi ki magari bozad miachnda kvelas da magari kukuts hkres iqidan“*. Inasaridze’s translation is more accurate: *„tavadpirvelad chkuasusti hgonebiat, soflis gizhi... bolo ori tselia – medzavi“*. Yet, this translation also parts from the original not by the content but by the content.

The problem is that Tennessee Williams allows his characters to say rude words without hesitation when he finds it necessary. Yet, in any case he conveys his message applying a figurative method of literary comparison. Translators, meanwhile decided to make their job easier and they lost “poison” as an image and its components as bitterness, death, perfidy, unseen danger... when they could offer the translation like this: *„da bolo erti-ori tselia*

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<sup>7</sup> [dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/washed-up](http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/washed-up)

<sup>8</sup> [www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/poison](http://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/poison)

*rogorts satsamlavs, ise eridebian*“ (“and during the last couple of years they avoid her as a poison”) or „... *akhlosats aghar ikareben, rom taviis uzneobit qalaqi ar tsabiltso*“ (“and they do not let her near them as a precaution for her defiling the whole town by her immorality”).

Thus, relying on all the above mentioned we may conclude that in the process of translating euphemisms one needs to distinguish whether we are dealing with the lingual entities bearing imprints of national identity or universal expressions, the stylistic layer of which belongs to this or that euphemism. Therefore, that strategy of translation has to be selected, which will have the same emotional impact on the recipient as did the original on its reader.

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