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### ANTIQUITY IN MODERN GEORGIAN LITERATURE

“Homo homini lupus est” – says Latin proverb. “Man is a bridge for another man” – responds Georgian. If we transfer those two proverbs into an interrogative form we’ll get two philosophical questions and almost as many answers as much people live in this world, people who are separated from each other by time, centuries and space and humans of different nationality, age and intellectual potential accept worse as a tool of achievement in a search and rush of better tomorrow.

Antique world for modern human besides some delighted epithets first of all is a world of myth and legend. World, where divine passion rages on the verge of impossible and wakes up modern consumers sleeping soul, and unbelievable diversity of irrational colors effortlessly conquers ones mind and when it happens, he or she doesn’t even want to return in real world. May be that’s the reason what made K. Gamsakhurdia to say, that losing the hero is not just a crises for a writer, but nonexistence. “Myth was the utmost intension of human-god and art” – he says. His three best novels are based on mythology: *Tabu*, *Bold Gakhu* and *Khogais Mindia*.

Search for mythological topic serves to reveal irrational world at one hand, and helps to describe reality at another. Thing is, myths had been created in certain environment, under certain conditions, been influenced by various religious or everyday life’s circumstances, describing and explaining those reasons creates base for realism in writer’s work. Comparison of those three novels highlights and explains the mission which writer defines for myth during the period of his philosophical and creative maturity.

*Tabu* is an expressional novel and most vividly brings out a trail of fantasy and mirage in form and in content. Family feud between

Karbedia's and Biskaia's ends when, Akumi Khvaramze gives a birth to scorpion. That's the plot of the novel, but in this plot there is hidden idea mixed with mythology - human's cruelty, destiny's inevitability, helplessness of man's will. Modernism in whole and expressionism in particular case often uses myth and legend in literature to develop the theme. The depth of emotional experience in this novel, highlighted naked reality is very typical for expressionism. Khvaramze's dream about reddish man and the scene of birth of the scorpion is so vivid and horrific, that it could be compared to Kafka's novels horrifying expression.

*Bold Gakhu* is built on mythological plot although in this novel there are some imaginary scenes, it is most realistic picture of 'had been mans' tragic comedy.

Tagu Samugia and bold Gakhu - ugly break offs of Manuchar Dadiani remained in new reality as an unattractive shadows of the past. Tagu is a cruel sign of feudal class, bold Gash is a symbol of degradation of same society. Deep inside of their soul settled strict irreconcilability, unbroken stubborn spirit, huge internal pain and revenge directed against their own self. In some of Gamsakhurdia's novels we wouldn't find defined character, because the writer needs particular character just to bring up an issue or to illustrate his ideas. Those characters are not active; they are not engage in conflict with events and therefore are not reveal their nature.

In *Bold Gakhu* we have two marvelously defined characters. Tagu Samugia - adventurer from romantic days stuck in "our time" is flexible, crook, predator with fine manners. "Long, aristocratic hands" - are Dadian's heritage. "Scar from knife on his longish, prince like face"-remainder of his unknown, violent past. Despite duality of this character his personality is strictly monolithic: full of hate toward modern life and silenced because of fear.

Not less interesting is Gakhu's character, he is called village's moron and nobody suspects that stupidity is just a tool, mask to save Temra. Very moving the scene of Temra's death, where Gakhu mourns, cries quietly, tears ran down on his face, this huge man becomes tiny and repeats tender words ... After that day he doesn't care any more about anything, he reaps off the mask of moron, life becomes senseless and he hangs himself.

In novel *Khogais Mindia* mythological plot carries highest ideas of humanism. The novel is based on adventure of snake eater Mindia, which earlier became the foundation of Vaja-Pshavela's famous poem, but in difference in Vaja's poem Mindia's wisdom became reason and defining factor of his loneliness and tragedy, in this poem we see whole severity of estranging low, deep pain as a result of isolation from society. In

Gamsakhurdia's novel *Mindia* deliberately isolates himself from humans, they couldn't understand the necessity of kindness, love, compassion and unity. Gamsakhurdia's character is a lone fighter for the highest human kindness and ideals and as every loner doomed for defeat. But I have to note, the existence of this type of people defines progress of humanity. Unfortunately, their life and effort becomes appreciated only after they pass away and like most geniuses usually never end with natural death. May be because, that life resilience of mankind hugely depends on existence of myth and legend, which are fed by misfortune and personal tragedy of "different" people. That's how was created myth about Medea, who killed her own kids, Mozart and Salieri, Tsvetaeva and Rilke, Jana and Modigliani, Galaktion and Olga and etc.

Galaktion Tabidze wrote beautiful prayer in verse to save his love one. Sadly, this prayer couldn't protect her, the addressee of this poem – Galaktion's only love and friend, candid supporter of his poetry, lifeline and connection to outside world. Olga Okujava as many other singled out person from grey crowd, fell victim of ugly punishing machine, but remained myth about Soviet reality and it would take long time for researchers to separate lies of that period from truth.

In my opinion, Galaktion fell there, when only connection to the world was cut off and began exhausting, mechanical wander in the desert, where blade of grass wouldn't grow ... And don't forget, even his dreams were "not like ours"...

In different periods of human history mankind was loosing, regaining and loosing again antique world, it's myths and legends, values which were main force and feeding source for philosophy, psychology, art and literature, values which already had become so organic for civilization that it is impossible to erase it from human memory and mind.

That's why it is little bit naïve to ask or discuss if it still up to date, do we still need to keep alive myths and legends? Would modernized forms, steps or streams of literature recognize and join what existed before? The answer is simple: what existed before is still exists and there is no way to get rid off it, and some conventions, which we, humans created, keep creating and often becoming victims of our creation – will pass by, like so many others past by.

In the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century antique themes and mythology in general once again became topical in Georgia. Modernism for a while grew more popular than realism and some of its trail and representatives could be found in today's literature.

When Gamsakhurdia pointed out that “being without a myth means nonexistence” modernistic literature directions and streams were already widely using antique world’s symbols and outlooks as in poetry, as well in prose. Often, of course, usage of those themes and ideas were mechanical and wouldn’t add any value or importance to literature.

It wasn’t rare when modernistic tendencies would mix and tangle with different creative methods sometimes even with same authors (for example: symbolism – impressionism – expressionism – naturalism – realism).

That’s natural if we consider that to search and establish new forms of expression at certain stage of development was kind of risky, especially in literature where flexibility of word is inferior to resources of color or musical sound. But still, different writers would search and find the word or fraise, which would come in conformity with musical sound or with bright or pale color.

One of directions of modernistic literature was impressionism and relationship with beauty of its followers reminds us antique world’s admiring stare at revelation of beautiful in art and in nature. Understanding the beauty with impressionists is very unique and doesn’t require searching for reasons of its creation.

“I don’t know how to take care of flower and don’t like that kind of activity, I just admire color of flower, the smell, especially velvet of leaves” (*Coffee Shop of Artists*, N. Lortkipanidze, Federation, 1934, 257).

Characters of miniatures of Jaju Jorjikia are antique Creek mythological heroes migrated in modern days.

Venera noticed that her beloved one, powerful Marce stood near the lake, overwhelmed by a beauty of unknown woman, kept motionless and stared at her.

“Don’t you have any shame?” – asked Venera, “Why? I was staring from far ... far”, Marce stumbled and looked down. “That’s exactly the point you really were enjoying the beauty of her – nervously said Venera, grabbed his hand and forever took him away from those places” (Jorjikia J., *Staring from Far*, Etudes, Kutaisi 1919, 85).

The beauty for impressionists is goddess, real and unreal both deserve to be admired, it’s unique, and “everything compare to it is nothing” (*Portrait of Dorian Grey*).

Cult of beauty is so big with impressionist writers that even biblical plot and themes get different realization in their work. In his novel *Judas* Aristo Chumbadze explained Judas hater ness toward Christ with judas admiration to Maria from Magdalene (same motivation gave little earlier

Shio Aragvispireli in his novel *Judas*). The desire to conquer the beauty made Judas to commit a crime. Even in final minutes of his life only thing he regrets about is beautiful woman, who became the reason of his horrible sin and instead of enjoying life he ended up dead.

“Swinging traitor’s beautiful body and beyond tender music of leaves, a grey world left somewhere far behind seems to him pink” and still: “Oh, so sweet, sweet her love” (Chumbadze A., *Judas*, Novels, Tbilisi 1960, 29).

Omnipotent of beauty is main idea of Jaju Jorjikias miniature *Beautiful Woman*. In this miniature is described how change and become alive tired and exhausted crowd when they see beautiful woman walking down the street.

Same theme is developed in miniature *Beauty of Wife*, written with light humor. Woman of striking beauty approached crowded and congested trolley, her beauty and smile made crowd to move away, create some space, somebody even offered his seat and she set down, then pulled head out of window and called little boy to get on the board, the boy apparently was her son, he was followed by a large man, who appeared to be her husband and the “owner of the beauty”.

“Have a seat somewhere, please” – asked somebody to him and the husband got a seat next to her. After they brought up a goat with them and still, nobody protested. All those men in the trolley who appreciated her beauty ended up traveling with goat.

Same kind of approach impressionists had to love, art and we could bring lots of examples, but I’d like to bring to your attention the main theme, what unites best representatives of antique world with Georgian writers: attitude, common feeling toward motherland and human being.

Because European modernism mostly cosmopolite by its nature, national feelings regarded as backwardness. Knut Hamsun’s characters wander around the world and the place, where they feel good becomes their home. Alitenberg never had home but never been bothered because of it. When asked where his home was, to set up an interview, he named certain café and his motherland was bohemia.

The Love of family, homeland, national pride, personal honor those are traits which makes common ground for Antique-Georgian space. May be because, that intelligent man understands simple truth – each of our life and story reflected in countries history, and explanation of word “nostalgia” in dictionaries defined as following: “Serious deacease caused by inability to return to homeland”.

Infamous Marcus Aurelia wrote: “I call perfect man one, who during his life recognized fakeness and vanity of all sins and turned his back to

them. Intoxicated air kills cattle, intoxicated soul threatens human" (Aurelia, *Thoughts*, 24).

He had every possibility, condition and temptation to satisfy his passions and desires instead he is thankful to gods for giving him kind ancestors, parents, friends, relatives and teachers. He is thankful for father – emperor, who pulled out vice from his soul and planted simplicity and humbleness instead. He taught that even the ruler in the palace doesn't need guards, rich cloth and fireworks, he could lead simple life only under condition, that his simplicity wouldn't hurt obligations people and state assigned to him. For Marcus Aurelius the most important things were state interests and person's individual traits.

Plutarch wrote about Hercules, who has been known as "Olympus of Athens", "Despite of his great power and influence he stayed very dignified, humble and unsoiled person, which was reflected on countries interests too".

Mostly, main motive of Hellenistic space is history of individuals or fictional characters, who dedicated their lives to motherland and state. That's what defines great respect toward this diverse and unique world.

20<sup>th</sup> century is an era of masses, philosophers say, so called non heroic time, where heroism loses its value. But heroism is spiritual condition, way of life, and when it disappears something very important and valuable vanishes too. Human being grows and influenced by examples and ones spiritual, intellectual and moral development heavily depends on time, heroes, society and family values.

21<sup>st</sup> Century the heir of 20<sup>th</sup> century, which was full of global cataclysms, social, political and economical changes continues downgrading an individual and this process even more obvious throughout post soviet space, and already painful process of birth of something new from histories depth became so complicated that it threatens to completely destroy national identity and person's individuality.

Literature always brings out and establishes epoch's moral and ethical norms. That's why literature's main concern is to take inner conflicts to a new light and to search for solutions for rebuilding.

There is one novel *Unnamed Marathoner*, the theme and idea of this novel fits content of our lecture and in particular general feeling of motherland. T. Chkuaseli describes a parallel between two equally exciting and moving events. One had happen centuries ago in Athens, another some thirty plus years ago in Tbilisi.

Greek troops won the battle on Marathon field and sent a runner to Athens to deliver the news of victory. He ran forty two kilometers,

reached his destination, fulfill the mission and fell dead. The Joy for free motherland had killed him, not exhausting distance he covered, explains writer and tells us second story to prove his point.

One participant of 1924 rising escaped abroad to avoid harsh punishment from Bolsheviks, and returned back only in 1970s, already aged man had lay down and stayed in bed for 10 years, nobody saw him walking. In 1981 soccer team from *Dinamo Tbilisi* won European club's cup. Ocean of people rushed out on Tbilisi streets to celebrate, crowd was chanting "Georgia! Georgia!"

Nobody knows what has happened, what kind of strength an old man had gotten, but he got up, brought out his old suitcase, took out old Georgian national cloth and dressed up, put on silver belt and dagger and came out on balcony, smiled at chanting crowd, raised right hand and fell down. That's how he was found: all dressed up, with smile on his face and raised arm.

The greatness of feeling killed both marathoners, concludes writer.

"Georgia is for sale" – complained N. Lortkipanidze in the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century – it is selling everywhere, sells everyone who wants to, and only mourner is helpless, sees everything what's happening to his country and unable to do anything for help, but write about it.

"You'll become refugee in your own country", professed Javakhishvili, but nobody heard him. For sure, Marathoners has extinct. And Soviet ideology destroyed every intelligent patriot and there was nobody who would come for their help, the world was blind and deaf. Ironically, around the same time Lortkipanidze wrote that one human being values as much as whole humanity.

Character of Grishashvili fills up a cup with wine and before drinks it makes a speech: "Let's drink for the moon, which brightens the road in the dark for a man who got lost and tells him: hey, move here, don't go there, there is a ravine, don't fall!"

So, at the end which is right? Man for man is a wolf, or man is a bridge for another man? Which of this proverb would suit human history – first or second? May be both.