

Nana Gaprindashvili, Nino Aptsiauri, Mari Simonishvili

Nana Gaprindashvili

Nana Gaprindashvili was born in 1958. She studied at Belarus State and Tbilisi State Universities. In 1980 she graduated from Tbilisi State University, majoring in Philology. In 1985 she defended her candidate dissertation and obtained a scientific degree of Candidate of Philology; in 1993 she defended her doctoral dissertation and became Doctor of Philology.

In 2000 Nana Gaprindashvili became a Professor. She is the author of five monographs, five course books and up to 85 scientific articles; Nana Gaprindashvili is a Professor at the Faculty of Humanities at Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University.

The spheres of her interest are: Translation Studies, Comparative Literature, Rhetoric, Literary Theory, and Issues of Georgian spelling.

***Mutsali* by Givi Margvelashvili: The Aesthetics of Post-modernism and the Problem of Deconstruction of the Classical Texts**

Abstract: *Mutsali* by Givi Margvelashvili one of the most interesting works in European post-modernism is a great example of how Georgian sources (*Aluda Ketelauro* by Vazha-Pshavela and *Merani* by Nikoloz Baratashvili) become interwoven in the western discourse. Hence, the deconstruction of the classical literary text, one of the most important characteristics of post-modern aesthetics, becomes apparent in *Mutsali*.

Keywords: *Mutsali* by Givi Margvelashvili, *Aluda Ketelauro* by Vazha-Pshavela, *Merani* by Nikoloz Baratashvili, *Deconstruction of Texts*, *Postmodernism*

Post-modernism, which has become a natural phenomenon for the developed society, enables the modern society to be seen or understood within the framework of post-modern philosophy. Thus, post-modernism has become a universal category of the XX century, expressing the “spirit of the era”. Hence, the world’s “cultural landscape” without post-modernism has become unimaginable in modernity. It can be argued that the world in the recent decades has been living along with the post-modern culture; Therefore, postmodernism is a chain or the link between the various cultural epochs, bringing together different cultural eras.

Post-modernism, like any other trend, has its defining characteristics, such as: the destruction of not only the unified system, but at the same time of coherency, perceptions and all aesthetic categories, which before were perceived as stable; moreover, post-modernism opposes taboos as well as borders. Despite, many arguments about the essence of post-modernism, no scholarly work can provide the readers with the general “rules” of post-modernism, which makes it at the same time difficult, as well as diverse and open to interpretations.

The Georgian-German writer Givi Margvelashvili has played a crucial role in the development of Georgian post-modernism; the case of Givi Margvelashvili is rather a noteworthy one as he was born in Berlin in an emigrant family. However, the writer's biography is so unusual and intriguing, that it is absolutely impossible to pair him along with other emigrant writers or while writing about him to follow a classical pattern of emigrant writers. There are a few things that make Givi Margvelashvili unique and outstanding from others, such as:

- According to the classical understanding of Emigrant literature, it should be created on the native language of the emigrant. For Givi Margvelashvili in this case German was a native language;
- Emigrant literature in most cases was created after emigration, due to the loneliness and melancholic feelings of the writer towards his homeland; As Givi Margvelashvili was born in Germany, such a feeling would not have been familiar for him;

- Emigrated writers could openly criticize the unacceptable system in their homeland, whereas Givi Margvelashvili could not openly and publicly criticise the Soviet system. The reason for this was that he and his father, Tite Margvelashvili, were not executed in 1946, which was some kind of “humanism” from the Soviet Regime;
- Emigrant writers in varying degrees always have nostalgia. For Givi Margvelashvili it occurs in a different way: while being in his historic homeland, he misses Berlin and the free life there.
- Emigrant writers were cut off from their motherland and the lives of their beloved, whereas Givi Margvelashvili, lived in Georgia [Gaprindashvili, Miresashvili 2014: 263].

Therefore, according to the above mentioned, Givi Margvelashvili is not a typical representor of emigrant literature, but rather his works create a symbiosis of biculturalism and bilingualism.

Among the postmodern works by Givi Margvelashvili *Mutsali* definitely is an outstanding novel. It was published in Germany in 1991 and its Georgian translation appeared in 2001. The two classical texts (*Aluda Ketelauri* by Vazha-Pshavela and *Merani* by Nikoloz Baratashvili) serve as a literary basis for the novel *Mutsali*. Henceforth, the text is multi-layered and the crucial aspects of the novel are:

- philosophical;
- sociological;
- political;
- autobiographical;
- purely literary [Gaprindashvili, Miresashvili 2014: 264].

The essential characteristics of postmodernism should not be sought in the form of *Mutsali* but in the contents and ideology of the era. One should take into account, that the fragmentation of the narrative, eclecticism, radical pluralism, intertextuality, a total twist, reference technique, dual encoding, collage-effect, quotation thinking and other features of postmodernism, may not always be reflected in the style and form of the post-modern novel, but is clearly outlined in the ideology of the text and backed up by the plot.

The novel *Mutsali* has all the major characteristics of post-modern aesthetics: plurality, deconstruction, quotations from diverse sources disappearance of reality, irony, intertextuality, and multiculturalism. For example the principle of palimpsest plays an important role in *Mutsali*, as Givi Margvelashvili ignores writing on an "empty paper"; as a true postmodern writer, he understands the text as a Palimpsest, the old text serving as a basis for the new one, and the new one preserving the fragments of the older. *Mutsali* in its essence is an clear expression of the palimpsest principle, because by using *Merani* and *Aluda Ketelauri* consequently *Mutsali* was created, which became a bearer of the new aesthetics and as well preserver of the old one. Along the palimpsest principle, Givi Margvelashvili successfully incorporates the literary method used in post-modernism: Pastiche - a deliberately deformed copy. The aesthetic goal of using Pastiche is rather vivid and easily noticeable for an educated reader. Post-modernism shows various deformation, because nothing is or can be perfect in the modern world: thus, the emotionally neutral, full with negative energy, and satirical beginning, Pastiche deprived of laughter takes the place of parody; In other words, *Mutsali* by its non-linearity and multi-layer, as well as usage of various literary devices and techniques becomes a truly post-modern text.

The French philosopher Gilles Deleuze had an immense influence on the shaping post-modernism, therefore the Georgian post-modernist writer was inspired by Deleuze's concept of a text without an end; in other words the literary characters do not “remain” in their texts, but are capable of running away. Thus, escape is not always a synonymous of cowardice! [Margvelashvili, 1991:5]

Hence, Margvelashvili's characters seek to continue their lives. In the preface the author outlines:

“Killing the Kist *Mutsali* becomes a starting point for a new way of thinking for Ketelauri. Consequently, urging him to escape from the society - from his own community incapable of understanding the reverence and the regret of Ketelauri towards *Mutsali* [Margvelashvili, 1991:5]”

Givi Margvelashvili's *Mutsali* built on a conjunctive method is a combination of the past and present, a kind of bond between them. The text is enriched with symbols making it difficult for the reader to orientate in such entanglement. Given that the life drama of the author is expressed secretly throughout the novel, it becomes clear that the scene, when the Kist Mustali is kidnapped by a black horse parallels to the human hostage by the KGB.

The present article researches *Mutsali* from the point of view of de-constructivism and hermeneutics; In fact, its aesthetic, as a postmodern text aims at detecting and authenticating the truth; The reader should be able to decode the text and release it from any kind of obstacles, which impede the perception of reality. Therefore, as Jean-Francois Lyotard - one of the key authors of postmodern philosophy wrote: "Modern art is the destruction of art in its traditional essence, where the creation of art is no longer created in the traditional frame..." [Lyotard 1999: 39], adding that the reader is forced to absorb the creative product through the individual elements, fragments, a common phenomenon which is deprived of integral parts" [Lyotard 1999: 39]. Lyotard meant that the whole text should be understood through the different elements and nuances, which create the text. Givi Margvelashvili being familiar with the philosophical concepts of Foucault and Derrida, creates Aluda's character as the guiding light of the blindfold society, hence reminding the Georgian reader the famous lines from *Merani* by Nikoloz Baratashvili:

"The yearnings of my restless soul will no in vain have glowed,
For, dashing on, my steel has paved a new untrodden road."

Thus, Givi Margvelashvili creates a complex text, which on the one hand is the interpretation of the classical texts and on the other the philosophy of Derrida.

The post-modern work being written by stream of consciousness, henceforth enabling Vazha-Pshavela (the author of *Aluda Ketelauro*) riding a horse to come across Aluda Ketelauro (the main character of the poem *Aluda Ketelauro*); *Mutsali* by Givi Margvelashvili is one of those texts, where if we paraphrase Hans-George Gadamer (Kulidzhanashvili, 2006:312) the reader should seek deep meanings, get closer to the hidden truth, in order to decode a rather interesting information.

Noteworthy is that the main character of the novel becomes a narrator, instead of an actor; thus, he truthfully tells all the events occurring behind the scenes; to put it in other words, the narrator opens up a totally different, original world to the readers.

The reader gets acquainted with the new cosmogony of heaven and earth, which is certainly a curious example: the post-modern earth is inhabited by the characters of the book; they are occupied with their daily activities as long as the reader does not interact with them. As soon as the book is opened, the reader sees that he/she is a sky for the character, look upon them and seek salvation through them. In our case the narrator is Mutsali from Vazha-Pshavela's *Aluda Ketelauro*, who plays domino in front of us and by using additional stones, is trying to "cheat" us, as well as other characters. The game aesthetics and its post-modern understanding brings antipodes of Georgian romantic thinking: As far as in N. Baratashvili the call of the "sinister black raven" is followed by the rampant and improvident ride of the horse, in dominoes the interpretation is of a fantastic nature - the Kist Mutsali avoids the drunken Khevsurians by the appearance of the white horse and white dove, but this is temporary, because the success lies in the readers' hands and given that the most reasonable reader will not try to change the world order, Mutsali falls off from the white horse.

The Kist Mutsali which we come across in the novel by Givi Margvelashvili is not the Mutsali from the poem by Vazha-Pshavela anymore; firstly, being rather talkative makes him radically opposed to his prototype. "If Mutsali had lived" and "if the world was not so harsh" worries the character. His sorrows and pains cannot leave the reader emotionless. This is Deluze's philosophy - the refusal of ending and *philosophy of drawing lines* (this line belongs to the author - N.G.); moreover, the composition of *Mutsali* cyclically turns round and round making the problem actual for the modern world as well; the reader faces a dilemma - should one overcome the tabooed borders, or be entrapped by one's own existence and join the circle created by Deluze.

The metaphorical images of the white dove and the white horse play a crucial role in the novel *Mutsali*.

It is widely accepted that while creating his post-modernist text Givi Margvelashvili heavily depended on two main sources: *Merani* by Nikoloz Baratashvili and *Aluda Ketelauri* by Vazha-Pshavela.

Baratashvili as a source	Margvelashvili's Interpretation
Black Crow	White Dove
Merani (horse)	White Merani (horse)

Thus, when the colour is present (black raven), Givi Margvelashvili through the post-modern processing turns it into the opposite colour (white dove), therefore transforming a clearly negative symbolic image into a positive one. As for Merani (horse), in Nikoloz Baratashvili's verse Merani is either colourless, or at least its colour is unknown for the reader. The emotional affection is caused by the inevitably tragic ending of the Merani (horse) and its horseman. The reference to the impending death of the lyrical hero can frequently be found, although in Baratashvili's case the horseman sacrifices himself for the sake of ideals. Nikoloz Baratashvili wrote:

“The yearnings of my restless soul will no in vain have glowed,
For, dashing on, my steel has paved a new untrodden road.”
(Georgian Poetry 1975: 280-281);

As mentioned above, the post-modern text on the one hand, nears the newly created text and the original source and on the other hand, drives them apart from one another. The post-modernist writer becomes an interpreter, who takes the original text and gives the readers back a radically changed one. Presumably, the same occurs in the image of "white Merani" and "white dove" by Margvelashvili. Thus, "X" sign in an ordinary text is presented as "-X" in a post-modernist one, outlining the contrast between the two. Likewise, the black raven is being transformed into a white dove in *Mutsali*.

It should be mentioned, that one of the core characteristics of the post-modernist novel is that it is deeply rooted in theological texts; hence, the goatherds play an important role in *Mutsali*. The Shepherd in theological understanding has a symbolic apprehension. The epithets connected with shepherds usually have a kind and good connotation. In contrast a new symbol is created in *Mutsali*:

Source: Testament	Margvelashvili's Interpretation
“Kind Shephard”	“Goatherds”

In the Testament goats and sheep represent saved and condemned people. Matthew's Gospel suggests: “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. (Matthew 25:31-33).

Of course, for the post-modern text bringing in the goat herders as characters is not accidental. Interestingly it quite well characterizes the society, the community. At the same time, or, more accurately, one should turn to another quote from the Gospel which also describe the community: “Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch” (Matthew 15:14).

Thus, Givi Margvelashvili's postmodern symbolism suggests a very interesting model: he takes the primary source and the artistic image and through its opposite equivalent creates a new artistic-aesthetic world, which, as the text outlines, is waiting for the real readers.

Presumably this problem is highlighted in the chapter called "Alus' Heavy Melancholy". Aluda's dream, bearing an important psychological aspect, plays a crucial role in the poem by Vazha-Pshavela. In this episode the character faces his own subconscious, listening to his inner voice, which accuses him and his fellow men of brutal crime – cannibalism. In post-modernism a typical reader or, in general, the recipient would be the one, not the actor, but the one observing the characters, who are no longer the product of the author's mind - the soul of the modern era gives them sovereignty; alienating them and allowing to act themselves. The main character of the novel by Givi Margvelashvili is standing on a post-modern pedestal overlooking his dream: he is afraid and the only one with whom he can share his fear is his enemy - the Kist Mutsali; Aluda's such world view is far from Vazha-Pshavela's Aluda, making the intentions of the text obvious. Aluda does not want the reader to imagine the inner world of a dream presented as an adequate double. That is why the "expedition" is being organized and along with Mutsali, Aluda travels to the centre of the reader's consciousness. The purpose of the trip is understandable from the very beginning - to identify the reader's perception of the homily friends and if necessary provide them with the correct version. The reader should constantly bear in mind not forget that the sky for the district residents (as the author calls them) is the reader's head that stretches above them, and travelling in the reader's mind therefore, means the restoration of the connection between the real and unreal worlds. That is why G. Margvelashvili's post-modern text cannot have a one-sided reception: It becomes a model for bilateral world view and is rather complex, as the fall of the real for the characters of the book becomes a touch of eternity.

Consequently, the plot, which at a glance seems easy reminding the reader of a childish play, becomes an exemplary bearer of post-modern aesthetics.

Thus, Givi Margvelashvili's *Mutsali* represents a kind of mirror in which post-modern aesthetics including the deconstruction of the classic texts and the unusual subtlety reflection of the era create interesting layers. Understanding of the Georgian sources within the European framework is a very interesting as well as topical literary task. *Mutsali* by Givi Margvelashvili one of the most interesting works in European post-modernism is a great example of how Georgian sources (Aluda Ketelauri by Vazha-Pshavela and Merani by Nikoloz Baratashvili) become interwoven in the western discourse.

Georgian post-modernism having an important place in modern cultural space did not arise on an "empty" spot. Its establishment was influenced by the existing rich literary traditions of Georgia, XX and XXI century, the social-political situation in Georgia, as well as Russian and Western post-modernism and the cultural-aesthetic world, including the introduction of the works by Givi Margvelashvili.

References:

1. Gaprindashvili N., Miresashvili M., Foundations of Literary Studies, Tbilisi, *Meridiani*, 2014
2. Lyotard Jean-François, The Postmodern Condition; Tbilisi, 1999.
3. Margvelashvili G. *Mutsali*, Tbilisi 1991.
4. Georgian Poetry, Volume 6, Tbilisi, 1975.
5. Kulijanashvili A. "Aesthetics", Tbilisi 2006.