

# **Autofictional Narrative to rewrite the past**

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

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#### **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. The 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 ὀβολῶτες - 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 Doubovskian Borrowings*". *The Modern Language Review*, Vol. 97, No. 3 (Jul., 2002), pp. 566-576; *Modern Humanities Research Association* 2002.

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