

Leadership and poetry: common tendencies in works of Georgian and European leader poets

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Abstract Leadership can be viewed as one of the aspects of poetry. Many poets inspire wide masses with their works and become the source of inspiration of institutional changes and national reawakening. This paper analysis leadership through poetry using an example of Georgian and European poets.

First attempts for establishing Georgian-European relations date back several centuries. It is noteworthy that Georgia always attracted attention of Europe with its culture and traditions. In the 17th-19th centuries, many European authors wrote about Georgia. A number of works on the Georgian topic and theme as well as describing Georgian traditions and culture were created in Europe. In the 19th century, Georgian classic authors translated and presented to the society the works of European writers. European literary-thinking traditions and forms of facial images were described in their creations. The democratic values were brought in from Europe which was associated with national thinking. Poetry of N. Baratashvili is a new stage in development of Georgian romanticism. With his poetic view and the essence of his creative works he stands next to European writers. The poem of the Hungarian poet Sándor Petőfi “Merani” and the poem of the Georgian poet N. Baratashvili with the same title – “Merani” reveal great resemblance. It can be shown that they are leader poets of their countries that met with admiration and became a source of inspiration for millions. The face of “Merani” became a symbol of struggle for personal and national freedom in the world literature.

1 Introduction

Poetry is a form or art and expression know since the beginning of times. It is admired by the masses and used a source of inspiration. In addition, it might be used as a tool for national rebirth, raising of the national spirit and other similar events. In this, poetry is a form of leadership and poets represents leaders who can influence the thinking of the masses and help to achieve higher and noble goals (see e.g. Firchow 1999; or Yuksel 2019).

The main goal of this paper is to reveal new traits of Georgian-European literary relations via the prism of leadership theories and approaches. In this case we will review the poem “Merani” (Horse) of the most famous Hungarian poet of the 19th century Sándor Petőfi and the poem of Georgian poet Nikoloz Baratashvili with the same title “Merani”. We discuss the issues of interrelations between these two poems.

The society of Europe did not seem to know Georgian literature of the 19th century well enough. That is why, in this paper we will touch on European tendencies in works of Baratashvili as a leading Georgian poet and spiritual leader (Tsiklauri 2016). We can show that Georgian writers were involved in the world literary processes and make their contributions to its development.

Despite the fact that there are many researches on Georgian-European literary relations of the 19th century, the mentioned issue in the scientific literature has not been raised and studied. Thence, this paper attempts to fill in these gaps and to bring a new insight on the issue of leadership and poetry through the works of Georgian and European poets who worked around the same time and produced great pieces of literature.

2 Europe and Georgia

Historically, Georgia always was a carrier of European orientation. Georgian state and its main figures were oriented towards European values and norms. First attempts for Georgian-European relations date back centuries ago (Vekua and Lominadze 2017). It is noteworthy that “Georgian printing press set up in Rome in 1629 by missionaries made a great contribution in strengthening of these relations. In the same period cathedra of Georgian Language was established in Rome. A serious attempt to establish a relationship with Europe was that Teimuraz I send Nikephoros

Irbakidze (Irubakidze-Cholokashvili) with a special mission, who travelled in Spain, Germany and Italy; he has been in Bohemia, Hungary, Poland, Sweden and France. Vakhtang V, who had communications with the Polish King John Casimir, tried to establish relationship with the West. Vakhtang VI made a practical step. He sent Sul Khan-Saba Orbeliani with diplomatic mission (Lashkaradze 1988). It is noteworthy that Georgia always attracted attention of Europeans with its culture and traditions.

In the 17th-19th centuries Georgia represented a mysterious, yet a very interesting country for many European authors who abundantly wrote about Georgia. The examples of such works were, for instance: "Information about Georgia" by an Italian missionary Don Pietro Avitabile, "Travels in Georgia" by Jean Chardin, "About Georgia" by Degrelli de Foi, Book "Traveling in Transcaucasia" by Consul of France in Georgia Jacques François Gamba, "Caucasus" by Alexander Dumas, "Travels in the Caucasus and Georgia" by Julius von Klaproth.

A number of works on the Georgian topic have been created in Europe, the most significant of which is the tragedy of Andreas Gryphius "Catharina von Georgien oder Bewehrete Bestandigkeit", tragedy of Claude Prosper Jolyot de Crébillon "Rhadamistes and Zenobia", tragicomedy of Carlo Goldoni "The Georgian Beauty", tragedy of Maximilian Klinger "Medea auf dem Kaukasos", operetta by Jacques Offenbach "The Women of Georgia", or "Minna von Barnhelm" by Lessing. It is also noteworthy that in 1821 Société Asiatique was established in Paris, studying the East and scientific study of Georgian culture is connected with this society.

In the 19th century, Georgian classic authors translated and presented to the society the works of Voltaire, Russo, Cornell, Racine, Lafontaine, Hugo, Mickiewicz, Schiller, Scott, Heine, Moore, Daudet, Byron and Shakespeare. European literary-thinking traditions and forms of facial images were described in their creations. The democratic values were brought in from Europe, which was associated with national thinking, it was a very important issue for Georgia that became a province of Russia from the beginning of the 19th century. Thus, the essence of Georgian literature was defined by three things: the national-literary tradition, the socio-political situation of the 19th century and the European literary and philosophical idea.

3 Nikoloz Baratashvili and world poetry

One can see that that poetry of N. Baratashvili is a new stage in development of Georgian romanticism. He is a leader poet of the 19th Georgian literature. With his poetic view and the essence of his creative works he stands next to European writers. The famous writer and the public figure of the 19th century wrote in his "Letters on Georgian Literature": "N. Baratashvili often thought about global issue, the answer of which he was looking for not only in his heart, but in the heart of the whole universe" (Chavchavadze 1991). In the mentioned letter I. Chavchavadze was the first, who related the poetic genius of Baratashvili to Byron.

Baratashvili's poem "Orphaned soul" reminds us of the first verses in the seventeenth song in Byron's Don Juan, and the horse described in "Mazeppa" – of "Merani". "The famous verses from Byron's poem dedicated to Mary Chaworth "The Dream" (Kuchukhidze 1992) are called related lines to Baratashvili's poem "Merani" in Georgian Literary Studies, which are considered as a prelude of "Manfred" in the literary works of the English poet" (Asatiani 1974).

The face of Napoleon is characteristic for creations of Baratashvili as well as of Byron. In 1815-1816 Byron writes the poems of "Napoleonic poems". In this regard "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage" is also very notable. His poem "Napoleon's Farewell" has a form of monolog. In 1838 Baratashvili writes a poem "Napoleon" in the form of a lyric monolog. The poem is psychological and describes Napoleon's internal spiritual world. The face of Napoleon became a face-idea in the world literature. Vardoshvili (2018) writes with regard to the above: "N. Baratashvili with his poem "Napoleon" joins the European literary tradition and makes the poems of Napoleonic cycle more impressive" (Vardoshvili 2018).

In the poetry of N. Baratashvili the influence of "Faust" by Goethe can be also noticed. The paradigm of understanding of the universe in the manner of Faust is conspicuous in his poem "Dusk on Mtatsminda", as Goethe's Faust, the hero of the lyric poem, wishes to completely understand the universe, to realize its regularities. In scientific literature, a parallel line was drawn between the first appeal of "Faust" and the poem of N. Baratashvili "Sun rise" (Vardoshvili 2017).

As for the forms of facial images, in the poetries of Georgian and European authors they are close to each other. For example, the moon image is characteristic for the poetry of Baratashvili, as well as of the European poets. In this regard "Dusk on Mtatsminda" and "Night on Kabakh" by N. Baratashvili, "To the Moon" and "The setting of the moon" by Giacomo Leopardi, "Mountain Idyl" by Heinrich Heine, "To the Moon", "Beautiful Night" and "At midnight hour" by Johann Wolfgang Goethe, "Sun of the sleepless", "Dream", "Darkness" and "So, we'll go no more a roving" by Byron. There is an idea and fiction between the poetry of N. Baratashvili and world romanticists" (Vardoshvili 2018).

4 Nikoloz Baratashvili and Sándor Petőfi: poetic works of the leaders

All in all, the works of Georgian and European poets who were considered the national leaders and brought inspiration for the national rebirth, are very similar in nature. In this case we will compare the poem of the Hungarian poet Sándor Petőfi “Merani” and the poem of the Georgian poet N. Baratashvili with the same title – “Merani”. We should also mention that they with their viewpoints, bringing new ideas into the literature, fight for justice they are leader poets of their countries.

Despite the fact that N. Baratashvili is romanticist and Sándor Petőfi – a realist, we find a number of resemblances in these two poems. It is also noteworthy that they lived and created their works in the same period of the 19th century. N. Baratashvili was born in 1817 and died in 1845. He wrote his poem “Merani” in 1842, which is considered as the peak of his creative works. Sándor Petőfi was born in 1826. He is ideologist of the national liberation movement. In 1842, the first poem of Petőfi was published in the journal “Athenaeum”. The main part of his works was created in 1844-1859. National with its form, his poetry is based on folkloric sources. Sometimes he applies to the history of middle Ages. He brought literature and life closer to each other. In his creations he does everything, what European Romanticism brings into literature. Sándor Petőfi died in 1849. The dates of these two poems are really very close to each other.

We must pay attention to similar social and economic situation between Hungary and Georgia. Georgian Romanticism originated on national grounds. Sadness caused by heavy condition of the homeland is notable in the works of Georgian Romanticists. The 1832 Georgian plot which was suppressed by Russian Empire, was an important event in Georgian social-political life.

The 1830 Polish uprising was also important among the events in Europe in the first half of the 19th century which was directed against tsarism and which was connected with 1832 Georgian Plot to some extent. Polish poet Adam Mickiewicz writes his “Faris”, which was very well-known in Georgia. “Faris” is a poem with the same idea as “Merani” by N. Baratashvili or “Merani” by Sándor Petőfi. It is also noteworthy that Mickiewicz is a leader poet of Poland. That N. Baratashvili knew “Faris” by Mickiewicz very well, is scientifically justified in Georgian literary studies, but if he knew the poetry of Sándor Petőfi, nobody can say that. Georgian researcher Jibladze notices, “*René François Armand created his famous “The gallop” in two decades after “Merani”, which is very close to genius poem of Baratashvili. We know nothing, if French poet knew the poem of Georgian genius; we assume that the poem of Sully Prudhomme is written on the same ordinary subject as Baratashvili*” (Jibladze 1968).

Generally, the face of “Merani” became a symbol of struggle for personal and national freedom in the world literature. We may think that similar social and political situation is one of the bases for creation of similar literary faces.

In “Merani”, a well-known work written by Baratashvili: “*the rider worn by self-immolation gallops his horse, his goal is to make a smoother path for those, who follows in their wake. The poet knows that he might sacrifice everything for his goal, he bid farewell to parents, kin, to friends and sweetheart dear*”. The poem is musical not only with the alliteration, but there are thoughts given, which cannot be put into words. The black raven is a symbol of the evil soul, which chases his good intentions. The poet with black soul has chosen the black colour, but the horse has no colour, for it is impossible to imagine it as an essential subject. Its colour is always the colour of the soul, ethereal, transparent” (Vardoshvili 2018).

The horse of Sándor Petőfi gallops its rider towards boundless beautiful valleys. Its speed is faster than of the speed the lightning, for it rushes towards “Pushta” (a Hungarian grassland) , where his homeland is. The horse gallops and the lyric hero notices that even one sign is enough, “to come to the edge of the world”, to be swallowed up in endlessness, to move to the unreality, which is called bearing far beyond the bounds of fate in the poem by Baratashvili. The horse of Petőfi is not tired of galloping, because it has a long way to run, for the poet’s dream “is moving forward”. The poet urges his horse:

*„Go, bring me over the gap,
So that no one can catch you
and if on the way
an enemy of yours
blocks your way,
do not leave the enemy
undefeated” (Petőfi 1973)*

The ending of the poem contains realistic tendencies. The ending of “Merani” by Baratashvili is universal:

“The yearnings of my restless soul will no in vain have glowed,

For, dashing on, my steel has paved a new untrodden road” (Baratashvili 1972).

In the mentioned poems we meet a number of coincidences, for example:

„It runs, it flies as an arrow“ (Petöfi 1973)

Baratashvili: *“It runs; it flies; it bears me on; it heeds no trail nor spoor” (Baratashvili 1972)*

Or another comparison that can be used here:

„Go, bring me over the gap” (Petöfi 1973)
Bear me far beyond the bounds of fate, my Merani” (Baratashvili 1972)

The face of the horse is a poetic icon for both poets, which is related to the idea of freedom. They create their masterpieces with similar artistic feelings. “Artistic feeling is the direct driving force for realization of the poetic image” (Vasadze 1979). One can clearly see that both poems express aspiration of a human mind towards boundlessness.

5 Conclusions

In conclusion we would like to say that poetry might be a universal tool that does not know borders or boundaries. Generally, the word “poetry” was first mentioned in the works of Romanticists, the concept “world literature” was introduced by Johann Wolfgang Goethe. Moreover, Ferdinand Brunetieri is the first who speaks of unified European Literature in his scientific works. In Georgian reality, the term “Europeanism” was first introduced by Ilia Chavchavadze (Vardoshvili 2016).

Our analysis reveals lots of similarities and figure of speech that can be found in the works of Georgian and European poets that were writing during the period of national rebirth and national uprisings against the tyrants and powers in Europe and in the Caucasus. Thence, one can conclude that poetry has always served as an upwelling of leadership ideas and as a mean of inspiring the national leaders.

Consequently, common tendencies can be reflected in the literary process of different peoples independently or under influence which have common values. All of the above makes us think that common tendencies occur in the works of the leader poets and poetry is becoming a source of leadership across nations and countries.

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