

Multicultural world in the poetry of Shota Rustaveli and the issue of paradigm shift in the multicultural world context

Nino Pirtskhalava

Ilia Chavchavadze State University, Tbilisi, Georgia

When we speak about multicultural world in the poetry of Shota Rustaveli, we have to take into consideration two key aspects: 1) importance of this work in the context of the Georgian culture and 2) the multicultural world context around this work that means picking out the alteration dynamic of the idea of love and freedom in the cultures of Orient and Occident in different epochs as a central theme. Every epoch has its own love-ideal, that is canonized or in terms of Niklas Luhmann has its own “symbolic code” (symbolischer Code), which encourages one to have appropriate feelings (entsprechende Gefühle)¹ and which mirrors the sequence of transition from traditional to modern forms of society. Since the love as central motive has become the object of art, the history of evolution of the “semantics of love” knows various stages of development. This phenomenon becomes the content and topic of art once the object of the love or romantic interest, the so-called love interest. Hence it becomes not only an object of romantic admiration and attraction but the destiny as main plot element. The natural and organic basis of sexuality is concealed and refined by feeling, emotion and passion. And these feelings are described, reflected and suffered in the works according to the changeable artistic tradition and canon of literature of different ages.

In words of Max Weber, the medieval „Ritterminne “as an „erotischer Vasallendienst”,² as sublimation of sexuality "to eroticism" in contrast to the „nüchternen Naturalismus der Bauern “(sober naturalism of peasants) is elevated to the “bewußt gepflegten und dabei außeralltäglichen Sphäre” (to the conscious cultivated and nontrivial sphere)³. Eroticism as “größte irrationale Lebensmacht” (as greatest irrational power of life) appears thereby as a gateway to the most irrational and coevally the most real quintessence of the life (eine Pforte zum irrationalsten und dabei realsten Lebenskern)⁴.The final result of this exceeding elevation of the

¹ Niklas Luhmann, *Liebe als Passion, Zur Codierung von Intimität* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1994), 9

² Max Weber, *Die Wirtschaftsethik der Weltreligionen*, in: *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, {Paul Siebeck} 1988) 559

³ *Ibid.*, 556

⁴ *Ibid.*, 558

sexuality as love into the domain of the irrationality has become the central theme in medieval, noble, aristocratical Minnekult. Europe transformed the oriental ideal of the furious and raging love-obsessed knight in its own way and made it to an "erotic vassal servant" in the Ritterminne or courtly love. In accordance with the norms of the knightly concept of honor and the casuistic duty code, the servant of love, who does his service without reflection, cannot even ask for the rational reason of the irrational wishes of the mistress. But what happens with the medieval slave-of-the love knight, who according to the rules of love was supposed to lose his mind long ago, suddenly appears an emancipated citizen of the Enlightenment epoch? Of the epoch when the carnal desire as Aestheticism of love got incorporated into the universal connections of the rationalization and intellectualization of culture?

The answer is findable in the poetry of Friedrich Schiller.

"Before his lion-court, / Impatient for the sport, / King Francis sat one day; / The peers of his realm sat around, / And in balcony high from the ground / Sat the ladies in beauteous array."

With these lines, Friedrich Schiller, the German poet and Kantian representative of the Weimar Classicism, begins the description of the horrifying scene in his famous ballad "Der Handschuh" (*The Glove*), where the "furchtbare Zwinger" is filled with loud roaring wild "fierce beasts". Associatively, these images are reminiscent of the cruel and bloody tragedies organized in ancient Rome. The participants of which were professional gladiators, the slaves schooled under harsh conditions and mainly constituted under strict discipline, who were compelled to fight either life or death, either against each other or against wild animals. In Schiller's ballad, as well, the medieval times slave, the knight Delorges, is forced by the beautiful lady "in tone of jest" (spottenderweis) to descend to the terrible "Zwinger" and perform a heroic act when she asks to retrieve her glove which she let down from the balcony as a proof of his proclaimed love:

"To the knight, Sir Delorges, then speaks young Cunigund fair;
"Sir Knight, if the love that thou feel'st in thy breast
Is as warm as thou'rt wont at each moment to swear,
Pick up, I pray thee, the glove that lies there!"

And the knight accepts the challenge, enters the circle and recovers the glove that has been thrown by his capricious mistress Fräulein Kunigunde.

He "Jumps into the lists, nor seeks to linger,
And, from out the midst of those monsters' dread,
Picks up the glove with a daring finger."

The court is impressed by his bravery and cranky mistress who looks at him with a promise in her eyes but Delorges throws the glove in her face and declares: “Den Dank, Dame, begehre ich nicht!”⁵ (The thanks, lady, I do not desire)

That is Schiller’s version of Answering the Kantian Question: “What is Enlightenment?” For whom Enlightenment is man's emergence from his self-incurred, self-inflicted immaturity. And as Immanuel Kant, one of the most famous teachers of his epoch, taught: „Aufklärung ist der Ausgang des Menschen aus seiner selbst verschuldeten Unmündigkeit. Unmündigkeit ist das Unvermögen, sich seines Verstandes ohne Leitung eines anderen zu bedienen ... *Sapere aude!* Habe Muth dich deines eigenen Verstandes zu bedienen!”⁶ In the light of this Kantian appeal perhaps could be more comprehensible the words "The thanks, lady, I do not desire" of Schiller's rebelling slave of love. It could be regarded as the reason of his refusal to serve the lady. By the rejection of the irrationality of love Schiller will achieve the true ideal of the Enlightenment that is the idea of love and freedom, because everything that is unreasonable is alien to freedom. It means that the great model of the raging, weeping, and love-obsessed Oriental "Medshnun" or "Midshnur" is from now on absent.

Not the lack of physical fearlessness or bravery but the lack of fortitude and courage to use one’s reason is the main point in this case - mental audacity signifies genuine freedom from fear. To dare to be wise or to react reasonably to unreasonable chicanery of the fastidious mistress means for the “servant” of love the exoneration from the slavery of the love enchantment. This disenchantment of love or the restoring of the “medjnun” – madman to sanity (such as the love itself is for Ariosto a form of insanity) is the preliminary stage of the disenchantment of the world which is ideal of the European Enlightenment. It has its own history and as mentioned above it starts in 18th century. It shaped a specific bourgeois-enlightened form that was characterized with keyword like rationality. This rationality collided – sometimes abruptly – with existing aesthetic traditions.

As Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer argued the disenchantment of the world was the program of the Enlightenment (Das Programm der Aufklärung war die Entzauberung der Welt. Sie wollte Mythen auflösen und Einbildung durch Wissen stürzen)⁷. Schiller’s ballad “Handschuh” is to a certain extent the realization of this personality emancipation program as the rationalization of the irrational passion of love.

⁵ Friedrich Schiller, *Der Handschuh*, in: *Der deutsche Balladenschatz*, (München: Wilhelm Heyne Verlag, 1978) 81.

⁶ Immanuel Kant, *Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?* In: Kant’s gesammelte Schriften, (hrsg. von der (Königlich) Preussischen, später Deutschen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berlin 1910–1968, Bd. VIII), 35.

⁷ Max Horkheimer, Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialektik der Aufklärung*, (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 2006), 9

However, Schiller's Ritter Delorges is not a socially marginalized pupil of the fencing school for gladiators, but the noble knight of times Middle Ages. He is a voluntary slave of the love and the medieval knightly code or chivalric code, which is the code of conduct associated with the medieval institution of knighthood developed in Europe. That means the moral system involving a warrior ethos of military bravery and knightly piety combined with gallantry and the devotion of a knight to his Lady. This voluntary obedience of the faithful servant of the courtly love – Domnei or donnoi also Minnekult, as the "tender look of love" (zärtlicher Liebesblick) of his Fräulein Kunigunde, promises to him, would be rewarded by happiness and "coming joys" (nahes Glück); Only the unusually harsh reaction of this rebelling slave of the love destroys the whole traditional ethical value system, which for centuries shaped the entire culture of the Occident and was refined to emphasize social and moral virtues more generally. The words of the courtier who "threw the glove point-blank" in the face of his high mistress: "Lady, no thanks from thee I'll receive!" (Den Dank, Dame, begehre ich nicht!) sound like a magical formula, disenchanting the world and hurting the courtly etiquette, busting the high ring wall of the medieval Zwinger - dungeon, of the "gentlemen" school of the "grandmother of Europe", Eleanor of Aquitaine, where her creations, the first gentlemen were forced into the performance of the hard, stylized "Minnedienst" (homage rendered by a knight to his lady). This intelligent and independent woman, whose name is directly linked to the development of the splendid idea of courtesy and gentleness, was one of the first who through the participation in the crusades conducted by her first husband Louis VII, experienced in person the close contact of Western Europeans with the highly developed culture of the Orient that considerably influenced Occident's spiritual life during centuries.

Through this first touch, Europe was flooded by one of those three streams, which according to Schiller's coeval thinker Herder (cf. *Journal meiner Reise im Jahr 1769* – *Journal of my Voyage in the Year 1769*) gently descends from the Orient to Greece and Italy to southern Europe bringing along an equal gentle mild southern religion, a poetry of imagination, music, art, good manners, science of the Eastern South (aus dem Orient, über Griechenland und Italien sich ins südliche Europa sanft senkt, und auch eine sanfte, südliche Religion, eine Poesie der Einbildungskraft, eine Musik, Kunst, Sittsamkeit, Wissenschaft des östlichen Südens erfunden hat)⁸. The Orient, Morgenland, the homeland of the most ancient poetry, art, science and mysticism, played a decisive role in shaping the taste and the way of thinking of the Southern Europeans. The Western European form of the culture of the Occident (Abendland) is the end result of the contact between the South and the Orient: it is the Spanish-Italian-French world. Here we have the crossing of the elements of Oriental mysticism being the relicts of the Saracen and Moorish conquests with the stern, majestic and sublime solemnity of Catholicism. By touching the fairytale

⁸ Johann Gottfried Herder, *Journal meiner Reise im Jahre 1769*, in: *Werke in 5 Bänden*, hrsg. von den Nationalen Forschungs- und Gedenkstätten der Klassischen Deutschen Literatur in Weimar, (Berlin/Weimar, 1978), Bd. 1, 17f.

world of ancient Persian-Arab poetry, the deafening clamor of the heroic, saber-rattling battle and murder stories of the songs of heroes (such as the one over Hildebrand and Hadubrand, or that of the God and crusade striker Roland) is subdued by the harmony of the highly stylized homage and the price to the Minnedame (lady) is increasingly culturally refined.

In order to present the transformation processes and ways of the love as a generalized symbolic medium of communication within different cultures, it might be useful to list a number of works which on the one hand, characterize the peculiarity of the particular culture, but on the other hand are evidence of the contact between the cultures. Of course, the following scheme cannot claim for completeness or absolute exactness. As an example of the beginning and the end of this series, formed more or less by chronological sequence, could be named "*The Song of Roland*" or "*La Chanson de Roland*" and Ariosto's "*Orlando Furioso*" or "*The Frenzy of Orlando*" more literally *Raging Roland*; Among them are the examples of the "*Shah name*" of Firdoussi, "*Vis and Ramin*" of Gurgani, "*Chosrov and Shirin*" and "*Leil and Medshnun*" of Nisami, as well as work on Arthurian subjects of Chretien de Troyes, and the "*Tristan und Isolde*" by Gottfried von Strassburg, *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* - ვეფხისტყაოსანი by Shota Rustaveli or "*Farhad and Shirin*" and "*Leil and Medshnun*" by Navoi or "*Parzival*" written by Wolfram von Eschenbach and finally "*Orlando Innamorato*" or "*Orlando in Love*" more literally "Roland In love" by Boiardo as precursor of Ariosto's "*Orlando Furioso*".

Apart from an astonishing similarity between genre and structure, it is to be noted that the series of all these poems are held together by the most important strong element of extraordinary binding power. It is the principal theme of love relationships and the madness caused by them which often have socially destructive consequences and can create a social chaos. The reasons for the obvious similarity of the different versions of these medieval masterpieces could not be seen in a more or less purely "accidental" or "outward-structural" and "typological" kinship (as it is proclaimed in the exposition by the Russian researcher Meletinski⁹, which is an obvious simplification of the problem) but in the borrowing of the fables of the Persian original texts, mediated by Arabic and Provençal sources. In this context it becomes much clearer and more distinct how, according to the Oriental model and ideal, the lovers become slaves to their passionate love. Because for the general type of the hero of this epoch, whether it be in the East, or in the West, the consistent characteristic trait is the suffering and weeping "Medshnun" (Arabic) or "Mijnur"- მთჯნური (Georgian), which is, the love-obsessed insane, who has lost his reason for love. Rustaveli tries to give an exact definition of this phenomenon:

"In the Arabic tongue a lover is called a madman.

⁹ Е. М. Мелетинский, *Введение в историческую поэтику эпоса и романа*, (Москва: Наука, 1976) 154.

Because of non-fulfilment and futile longing for her. " (V. Urushadze)¹⁰

or

“To describe a lover, the Arabs use a word that means insane,

Because when a lover’s beloved leaves, his reason starts to wane” (Lyn Coffin)¹¹

Liebender heißt auf arabisch ein vom Wahnsinn Befallener;

Wahnsinn befällt ihn, falls man ihn hindert, den Liebesdurst stillen “(Hermann Buddensieg)¹²

„Le mot arabe de "midjnour" désigne le “fou”, “le dément”,

Il se démène de dépit: amour entendement dément. “(Gaston Bouatchidzé)¹³

or

“Называется миджнуром у арабов тот влюбленный,

Кто стремится к совершенству, как безумец иступленный” (Н.Заболоцкий)¹⁴

“По-арабски однозвучны и "безумен" и "влюблен":

Кто влюблен и кто безумен – тщетной грезой омрачен” (П.А.Петренко)¹⁵

მიჯნური (midjnouri) შმაგსაგვიქვიანარაბულითაენითა,

მით რომე შმაგობს მისისა ვერ-მიხვდომისა წყენითა¹⁶

The national peculiarity of the respective culture and literature expresses itself in the way in which the type of "Medshnun", madman, the love-obsessed one, is modified. Under permanent reference to pretended, for example pseudo-Persian original texts,

¹⁰ Shota Rustaveli, *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*, (Tbilisi: “Sabcjta Sakartvelo”, 1986. Translated by Venera Urushadze), 17

¹¹ Shota Rustaveli, *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*, (Tbilisi 2015, Printed in Turkey by: MEDCEZIR MEDYA MATBAACILIK SAN: VE DIS TIC: LTD: STI. Translated by Lyn Coffin), 14

¹² Schota Rustaweli, *Der Mann im Pantherfell*, (Tbilisi: “Sabcjta Sakartvelo”, 1976. Nachgedichtet von Hermann Buddensieg) 17

¹³ Chota Rustaveli, *Le Chevalier à la peau de panthère*, (Moscou: Radouga, 1989. Traduit par Gaston Buatchidzé) 14

¹⁴ Шота Руставели, *Витязь в тигровой шкуре*, (<http://www.lib.ru/POEEAST/RUSTAWELI/rustave1.txt>. Перевод Н.Заболоцкого)

¹⁵ Шота Руставели, *Витязь в тигровой шкуре*, (<http://www.russianplanet.ru/filolog/epos/vityaz/text.htm> Перевод П.А.Петренко)

¹⁶ შოთა რუსთაველი, *ვეფხისტყაოსანი* (თბილისი: მერანი, 1992) 12

the great model of oriental "Midshnur" appears including the image of the Orient as a paradigmatic category in the poetry of the Eastern Christianity which seems to have remained alien to the Western crusades, as a kind of unrealized (or perhaps even unrealizable) project.

"I have found this Persian tale, and have set it in Georgian verse

Until now like a peerless pearl it was rolled on the palm of the hand. "(V. Urushadze)¹⁷

"An ancient Persian tale I took, and in the Georgian tongue retold

Until that time, it was an unset pearl; from hand to hand it rolled" (Lyn Coffin)¹⁸

"La présente histoire persane en géorgien fut transposée,

Perle solitaire, avec soins de mains en mains redéposée" (Gaston Bouatchidzé)¹⁹

"Diese Geschichte aus Persien, wiedergeboren georgisch:

Wie eine kostbare Perle rollte sie mir durch die Hände" (Hermann Buddensieg)²⁰

Эта повесть, из Ирана занесенная давно,

По рукам людей катилась, как жемчужное зерно. (Н.Заболоцкий)²¹

Сказка персов по-грузински мною песенно дана, Перешла из рук на руки, как жемчужина, она; (П.А.Петренко)²²

ესე ამბავი სპარსული, ქართულად ნათარგმანები,

ვით მარგალიტი ობოლი, ხელის-ხელ საგოგმანები²³

This paradigmatic level as a certain facade or oriental disguise is almost like a fidelity confession to the Persian-Arabic-Oriental narrative tradition and is opposed to the syntagmatic level prevailing in Western culture. Wherein the world and cultural image of the Orient becomes syntagma, in other words, quite often differently sized

¹⁷ Shota Rustaveli, *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*, (Translated by Venera Urushadze), 16

¹⁸ Shota Rustaveli, *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*, (Translated by Lyn Coffin), 12

¹⁹ Chota Rustaveli, *Le Chevalier à la peau de panthère*, 12

²⁰ Schota Rustaveli, *Der Mann im Pantherfell*, 16

²¹ Шота Руставели, *Витязь в тигровой шкуре*, (Перевод Н.Заболоцкого)

²² Шота Руставели, *Витязь в тигровой шкуре*, (Перевод П.А.Петренко)

²³ შოთა რუსთაველი, *ვეფხისტყაოსანი*, 8

elements of Oriental culture are woven rather opaque in the language netting of the Occidental poetry.

For example, in the form of a certain utopian synthesis of the Orient and the Occident in Wolfram von Eschenbach's "Parzival". Here, as in Rustaveli's poem the allegedly oriental source of an imaginary author is reproduced. Wolfram who largely adapted the Grail romance, *Perceval*, by Chretien de Troys claimed that a certain Kyot supplied additional material drawn from Arabic sources. This Provençal author was supposed to have found the first version of this narrative in Toledo "in an Arabic manuscript" (pagan writings). But most scholars now consider Kyot to be Wolfram's invention and part of the fictional narrative. And despite the fact that the oriental image interpreted by Wolfram von Eschenbach in his own way becomes an indispensable fundamental element and a component of the "Parzival", one cannot speak of its paradigmatic function.

Once again, a medieval Christian poet refers to a supposed oriental original text, but this vocation is no longer a paradigm. In Rustaveli's epic poem, the original text is compared with a "precious pearl," the pathos of this discourse is not comparable with the subtle irony of the German poet. Wolfram doesn't need in his derisive game of artistic hide-and-seek this paradigmatic level of loyalty to the Arabic-Persian-Oriental narrative tradition, because it is not an organic inherent matter, but only recently discovered model and semiskilled discourse. That is the crucial difference between Wolfram and Rustaveli. But the image, the idea of the Orient, is undoubtedly present in the masterpieces of poetry of both Eastern and Western Christianity.

Hence through the first experiences, gained in numerous crusades, the Western Europeans, primarily convinced by their own intellectual and spiritual superiority, discovered the splendor and magnificence of noble life and flowering of the cultural achievements of the Orient which could be regarded rather as a model for the Occident. In this period started an absolutely unique tradition of the incessant perception of Orient. This could be considered as epochal threshold then distinct shifts in emphasis within the field of the semantics of love as central element of culture become discernible.

The smell of the sensual-fragrant beauty of the woman for whom Kais of Nisami, Tariel of Rustaveli, or Roland of Ariosto lost their mind and reason in a more or less similar manner came in harmony with the odors of foreign civilization. But entire cultural worlds separate these love-obsessed "Medshnuns" from each other. In contrast to Rustaveli, who is most enthusiastically enchanted by the love-madness and the exuberance of his bitterly weeping hero, Tariel, Ariosto in his poem continually discerns the slight smirk and shows the ironic side glance. However, Ariosto has an ironic tone for Orlando's madness, rarely present in Rustaveli, who treated the ideals of chivalry love much more seriously. Between them lie not only centuries, but also entire cultural worlds, and the giggling sound of Ariosto's timid

smile a short time later is drowned by the din of the carnivalesque Rabelaisian laughter. Through laughing, the entire culture has been raised to skepticism, self-irony, and self-discipline since the Renaissance era.

It was just the ritual laughter with which Europe had endeavored, in the early Middle Ages, to overcome fear and death during the Carnival (Fasching) period with unbridled cheerfulness and deafening noise, in contrast to the ritual weeping or public mourning rituals of Ashura, which is an indispensable part of the month of Muharram and commemorates the death of Huseyn. Then according to a popular Shi'a saying, "a single tear shed for Husayn washes away a hundred sins". This is the singular "feast", celebrating the martyrdom of the sons of Fatima (Mohammed's daughter).

Every year, Hussein is buried in tears and crying, this is a farewell until the next year, until the next commemoration. Consciousness is entirely concerned with the idea of death that alone is celebrated. It is characteristic that in contrast to this unique doctrine of suffering, Christian Europe confronts the passion, crucifixion, and the death of the Savior with the unbridled joyous laughs of the carnival, with the exhilarated hope for an early resurrection.

The antonymic pair of ritual weeping and ritual laughter is not just two different masks of the different cult drama but produces an absolute inversion of the social hierarchy. For both the "strictly organized" act of ritual weeping (from the lowest strata to the spiritual leader of the nation) or the ritual laughter of the carnival as well occurs the unique unity, freedom and community experience of all strata of society.

The Orient has transformed the cult of suffering into the celebration, a kind of anti-carnival. The Occident, on the other hand, has half-reflectively ritualized the anxiety suppressing and death transcending power of laughter. However, in the end, we are concerned with the essentially one, namely, the various forms of manifestation and modes of presentation of the world's conception of the festivity in different cultures. The gap between carnival and anti-carnival, which at first glance cannot be bridged, is abolished in the collective act of eating. If, on the eve of the fasting season, the European carnival is almost turned into a gigantic feast, Ashura is crowned with a meal organized by the rich people for the poor (Sham e ghariban = the main night in Muharram).

It is characteristic that, in several cultures bread and wine acquire a special inner logic in the act of collective eating and drinking and thanks to their inner nature, dispel fear and free the word. And perhaps just the word of the banquet as pronounced toast, is precisely the phenomenon which makes an appearance of Georgian culture that is not coined by the tradition neither of the western carnival nor of the Eastern anti-carnival with its sacred play and data, with firmly established ritual components such as mysteries or processions. The activity of festively weeping or laughing processions is replaced here by the perpetual dynamic statics or static

dynamics of the company at table. In the word, in the speeches of the toastmaster (tamada) leader of the table the always bad, hopeless present, the dream of the idealized splendid and glorious past and the equally idealized future, almost overwhelmed with utopian hopes are intertwined. For this pathetic earnestness of rhetoric, the admiration for Tariel instilled into Georgians collective memory at the school desk and from the schoolbook means admiration for the tearful “midjnr” a lover who is called a madman. Tariel of Rustaveli, is declared as an eternal, inviolable symbol and exemplary ideal. This pathetic seriousness has not yet accepted the ironic, skeptical smile of Ariosto, with which the Western culture bowed out gradually of the idealized medieval knightly minne cult and the exalted suffering of love-obsession which was praised in all above-mentioned masterpieces of poetry.

At the same time the glorification of the love-madness by Rustaveli thanks to the certain interior logic will be legitimized. By the medium of huge amount of different metaphorical elements with evident oriental coloring and tonality: “rose unfaded”, “face as bright as the sun”, “eyes lakes of ink”, “the rose-cheeked crystal”, “ruby-and-jet one entered”, “slim as a poplar” and “face...like the moon” the love and even the love-madness will be justified and motivated by all this attributes of idealization. This ideal of love comes forward with the unique rationality of a cultivated irrationality. As long as in this case love is thought of as an ideal, a knowledge of the characteristics of object’s beauty is crucial. Through hypertrophic superlative description of the beauty the love is not only idealized but even the love-madness will be sanctified. On the other hand, several centuries later in the other time and other cultural space we have an example of absolute inversion of the entire set of all this metaphorical element in William Shakespeare’s famous sonnet 130 who is paradoxically reversing and abnegating all these well-known allegorical depictions:

“My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;
Coral is far more red than her lips' red;
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;
If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.
I have seen roses damask'd, red and white,
But no such roses see I in her cheeks;
And in some perfumes is there more delight
Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.
I love to hear her speak, yet well I know
That music hath a far more pleasing sound;
I grant I never saw a goddess go;
My mistress, when she walks, treads on the ground:
And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare
As any she belied with false compare.”²⁴

²⁴ William Shakespeare, *Sonnet 130*, (<http://www.shakespeare-online.com/sonnets/130.html>)

This is a remarkable exemplification which illustrates how the form of symbolic code changes from idealization to paradoxalization during the centuries in different cultures. The beauty of the beloved ceased to be imperative reason for love. This is the long way from the 12th century to the 17th of the self-justification of the love. Thanks to this paradoxical codification occurs a certain self-reference of love and the object's characteristics like "coral...red" of lips and "snow... white" of breasts or "roses damask'd, red and white" of the cheeks are not essential and required anymore. Due to these transformations in the semantics of medium the love reached autonomy and became self-sufficient energy. It is inner-directed and self-motivated autotelic phenomenon, complete in itself a kind of l'amour pour l'amour – love for love's sake. At the same time thanks to the negative dialectics of these transformations love semantic lost its power to make mad, it ceased to be reason of madness. Therefore, Shakespearean Hamlet couldn't be the love-obsessed "Medshnun" Furioso and love couldn't be "The very cause of Hamlet's lunacy"²⁵. Hence it is definitely dubious and absurd his presentation as the victim of love-madness by Polonius:

"This is the very ecstasy of love,
Whose violent property fordoes itself
And leads the will to desperate undertakings
As oft as any passion under heaven

.....

That hath made him mad"²⁶

Hamlet or in terms of Paul Valéry, "Hamlet européen ... un Hamlet intellectuel" has totally different concerns and nagging doubts than lovesickness: «Il médite sur la vie et la mort des vérités. ...Il songe à l'ennui de recommencer le passé, à la folie de vouloir innover toujours. Il chancelle entre les deux abîmes, car deux dangers ne cessent de menacer le monde: l'ordre et le désordre».²⁷

Hamlet as one of the distant ancestors of European intellectuals is more tormented by his famous question: "To be, or not to be"²⁸ than by lover's grief. But Hamlet on his part has also a legendary precursor. He is descendant of Wolfram's Parzival who as one of the first in the western medieval world veered away from the ideal of the frenzied, weeping, love-obsessed Oriental "Medshnun" or "Midshnur", and who lacks utterly the most substantial features of this great Oriental model.

In case of Wolfram von Eschenbach's Parzival as an exemplary hero of Occidental culture crucial is his individual-spiritual self-perfection as the maturation process. It

²⁵ William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, (Tbilisi: Free University Press, 2011), 86

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 82

²⁷ Paul Valéry, *La Crise de l'esprit*,
(https://fr.wikisource.org/wiki/La_Crise_de_l%27esprit)

²⁸ William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, 130

is distinguishing that the emergence from his immaturity begins by the separation from the feminine force as the motherly love of the "noble woman" (edle Frau) Herzloyde, the personification of "a right mother, ... a root of true goodness, a tree trunk of female humility" (einerrechten Mutter...einer Wurzel wahrer Güte, eines Baumstammes weiblicher Demut).²⁹ From now on, not the Minne or slavery of love (Liebesknechtschaft) and the highly stylized humility of devoted service to the lady no longer formed the inspiration for his heroic struggles, but the pursuit of development, the maturity of personality, and absolute perfection. The iconic image of the beloved beautiful lady moves thereby into the background, in a similar vein as Anfortas who after his healing, as "Knight of the Grail" (Gralssitter) was fighting only "for the Grail and no longer for the service of women"³⁰. Political and religious utopian harmonic synthesis of the Orient and the Occident is precisely achievable after the overcoming of the Minnekult or the servitude of the love at the end of the poem in the fraternal union of Parzival and Feirefiz.

With the ruthless destruction of the feminine-maternal principle Wolfram's Parzival becomes the forbear of a new generation heroes who seek the true light and are fully oriented towards the idea of self-perfection. And the quite large genealogical table of this ancestral portrait gallery plausible is represented by Goethe's Faust as key figure. In this world of the systematic transition from ignorance and mental blindness to knowledge, intelligent awareness and cognition based on being, Plato's παιδεία concept becomes pivotal.

In this context one should note that for Rustaveli the highest idea of light and goodness is directly connected with Plato's use of the Analogy of the Sun. The "Good" in Plato's doctrine is compared with the sun which is on his part a metaphor of goodness. Through emulation this platonic analogy of the Sun Rustaveli comes to the realization that the Goodness=sun is of inestimable value, being both the source of defeating of evil and eternal light.

Ultimately, the Good itself is the whole point. The Good (the sun) provides the very foundation on which all other truth rests. Rustaveli uses the image of the sun to help define the true meaning of the Good:

Now that the sun is approaching there exists no darkness for us.

Evil is vanquished by good for the essence of good is enduring. (V. Urushadze)³¹

Or

²⁹Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Parzival*, (Hrsg. von Karl Lachmann, Bd. 1, Stuttgart: Sammlung Metzler 1998), 221

³⁰ Ibid., 665

³¹Shota Rustaveli, *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*, (Translated by Venera Urushadze), 180

Darkness is no more dark for us; the sun has come and is displayed.

Evil is defeated by Good. Good will forever be our aid. (Lyn Coffin)³²

მზე მოგვეახლა, უკუნი ჩვენთვის აღარა ბნელია,

ბოროტსა სძლია კეთილმან, არსება მისი გრძელია!"³³

Plato's *παίδεια* notion which German analogy "Bildung", according to Heidegger, as quite inadequate and inexact equivalence, is connected with the names of Goethe and Klopstock.³⁴ The idea of education comes to the fore in the greatest works of German literature, from Wolfram to Goethe and to Thomas Mann. The Minnekult (love cult) is replaced by the Bildungskult (education cult). The love motif becomes a second-rank binding element of the fable, to the pretext, but not to the true collision ground. And that is the very crossroad at which the parting of the ways for Georgian poetry starts. The love as front-ranking central theme remains in this poetry essential and constitutive. In *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* the Minnekult (love cult) can't be substituted for any other phenomenon.

It seems enlightening the continuation of the reviewing of Rustaveli's poetry against the cultural world background. The analysis of the correlation with different tendencies in the world literature depicts the complicated transition process of symbolic code of love semantic and serves as certain construction of the reference and reasoning framework. In this context it appears almost as a curious paradox when the figures of Faust and Don Juan are juxtaposed as coequal "Seducer" in reference books on literary history. However, this paradoxical neighborhood of both unressembling seducers is to be found already in the 19th century in the study of the Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard - "Either / Or". To speak of a paradox here is probably justified for several reasons. Don Juan, the symbol of the irresistible lover, succumbs to the disastrous passion of seducing women. After each won battle, this fateful passion makes his victim uninteresting to him, but simultaneously due to the permanent insatiableness it turns himself into the real doomed victim of this fatality which finally leads Don Juan to his bitter end. Ultimately, he becomes genuine victim of alleged victim=woman. How entitled is the question of Kierkegaard who is "stronger", Don Juan, the man "who is self-sufficient,"³⁵ or Elvira, the woman whose "dialectic is ... strange",³⁶ and how revealing is Kierkegaard's skeptical remark in this case: "Is he stronger?"³⁷ But here the question may perhaps be asked

³²Shota Rustaveli, *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*, (Translated by Lyn Coffin), 290

³³შოთარუსთაველი, ვეფხისტყაოსანი, 292

³⁴Martin Heidegger, *Wegmarken*, (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1967), 122-123

³⁵Søren Kierkegaard, *Entweder-Oder*, in: *Gesammelte Werke*, Bd.1, (Jena: Verlegt bei Eugen Diederichs, 1922), 185.

³⁶Ibid., 182

³⁷Ibid., 179

whether Don Juan, the man, is or can be indeed “self-sufficient”. The character substance of this Spaniard, whose prototype Tirso de Molina has probably discovered in an Arabian source, is contested without the woman of any existential or aesthetic validity. And in this case, it is indifferent whether his passion for seduction is reflected or unreflected, outside or amid the love-affection. Ultimately the “Don Juanism” of Don Juan is directly conditioned by the woman; without her his Don Juanism is annihilated. Hence the substance of this character is determined solely by the love affair. It loses all relevance and validity without the feminine phenomenon or in terms of Goethe, without the “Eternal-Womanly” (das Ewig-Weibliche). But the content of this illustrious magical formula with which Goethe ends a long history of the Faust’s self-perfecting, can in no case make sense and substance for the Faustian world. Than Gretchen’s tragedy, one of the most beautiful and sorrowful love stories in the world literature, is doubtless graceful and admirable but it is only a single episode in the huge micro- and macrocosmic experiment of the purely male, self-sufficient striving after self-perfection of Faust. The sensual experience is one of the stations on this long journey. According to Kierkegaard, Faust is a “reproduction of Don Juan”; He is “a demon like Don Juan, but a demon of higher order” who is searching in the sensuality “not as much a pleasure as a distraction.”³⁸ Perhaps the higher order of Faust’s demonic nature could be explained additionally also by the fact that the Goethean hero, in contrast to Don Juan, is actually really self-sufficient. The love experience with a young woman is one of the possibilities of the dazzling variety and the colored reflection of the diversity of the world affairs which allows his doubtful substance to dwell, to “stay awhile”. Gretchen thus becomes part of the experiment without any evil intent. Even without her and without any further love story this experiment would be continued as the whole plot of “Faust II” shows later. For the entire tragic event the story of Gretchen’s misfortune is almost the decoration and the ornament scented with the sensual-feminine flavor; it is interwoven in the absolute masculine adventure of the search for the highest idea of the true light. With her story to the terrific pact with the devil which was experienced in very German way, was given international elegance and fascination, that to paraphrase in the terms of Thomas Mann makes “selbst einem Esel von Ausländer das Deutschtum interessant” (even for a donkey as foreigner the Germanness interesting)³⁹.

Faust as Albert Camus argues - “réclamait les biens de ce monde: le malheureux n’avait qu’à tendre la main. C’était déjà vendre son âme que de ne pas savoir la réjouir. La satiété, Don Juan l’ordonne au contraire. S’il quitte une femme, ce n’est pas absolument parce qu’il ne la désire plus. Une femme belle est toujours désirable. Mais c’est qu’il en désire une autre et, non, ce n’est pas la même chose”⁴⁰

³⁸ Ibid., 188

³⁹ Cf. Thomas Mann, *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*, in: Politische Schriften und Reden, hrsg. von Hans Bürger, Bd. 1, (Frankfurt am Main/Hamburg: Fischer, 1968), 57.

⁴⁰ Albert Camus, *Le mythe de Sisyphe*, (Paris: Gallimard, 1985), 101

Faustian grave intention to search for the true light is linked to the German tradition of development and education. According to the judgment of Nietzsche, the Germans, who escape any definition and are "damit schon die Verzweiflung der Franzosen"(already the despair of the French), are mentally at home everywhere where is "das Ungewisse, Unausgestaltete, Sich-Verschiebende, Wachsende jeder Art"(the uncertain, the unpredictable, the shifting, Growing of every kind); Due to that "Der Deutsche selbst *ist* nicht, er *wird*" he "*entwickelt sich*"(The German is not, he becomes, he is developing). "Entwicklung" (Development) is, therefore, the "real German find and insertion in the great realm of philosophical formulas."⁴¹

But as Nietzsche argues the modern Europe needs more to wit "prickelnde und beizende Speise" (prickling and caustic food), which is flavored "mit dem Gewürze des ganzen Orients und Occidents" (with the spices of the entire Orient and Occident)⁴², and smells very interesting of the "ganzen Orient und Occident"(whole Orient and Occident)⁴³. Only such exotic dishes could correspond to the cultivated and refined taste of the spoiled European. In this respect according to Nietzsche "die berühmtesten Küchenmeister dieser modernen Menschen ... bekanntlich bei den Franzosen, die schlechtesten bei den Deutschen" (the most famous chefs cuisinier of these modern men ... as well known among the French, the worst among the Germans)⁴⁴ due to the genuine "bäurischen Gleichgültigkeit" (peasant indifference) of the "deutsche Seele" (German soul)⁴⁵ regarding the taste.

It was one of the most famous "chefs cuisinier" of Europe - the French writer Alexandre Dumas- who discovered a unique meeting place of different oriental and occidental phenomena. The mediating function of this liminal region attracted his attention and he experienced this in an inimitable spiritual ambiance of Tbilisi, capital of Georgia which had crucial importance within the Caucasus as the model of a multiethnic and multiconfessional city, characterized by an active exchange between the cultures.

We can affirm that it was Alexandre Dumas who started an absolutely unique tradition of the perception of Georgia. During the next two centuries, this perception has become determinative not only for all Europeans, but also for the Georgians' auto-identification of their own existence as a culture situated at the hinge of Occident and Orient. It is distinguishing that Dumas' perception of the Tbilisian boundaries between East and West is explicitly musical. The polyphonic palette of

⁴¹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Jenseits von Gut und Böse / Zur Genealogie der Moral*, in: Werke, Kritische Gesamtausgabe, Bd. VI/2, hrsg. Von Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1968), S. 192.

⁴² Friedrich Nietzsche, *Unzeitgemäße Betrachtungen*, in Sämtliche Werke in 15 Bänden, Bd. 1, hrsg. Von Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, (Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1980) 389.

⁴³ Ibid., 390

⁴⁴ Ibid

⁴⁵ Nietzsche, *Jenseits von Gut und Böse / Zur Genealogie der Moral*, 194.

its tonal colors becomes even more patent against the background of the Persian poems of Saadi sung in the district of the sulfur baths as well as of the execution of Verdi's "Lombards" at the opera house. Thus, it was between the belcanto of Italian opera and the Ghazal sung Persian poetry that the 19th century French writer perceived the multinational Tbilisi resounding in the context of the Tsarist Empire. In Dumas Travel Impressions Russia as a "dark ruler" (sombre souverain) stands to such an extent morose before Georgia, this "festive slave" (joyeus eesclave)⁴⁶ with almost indispensable Georgian stereotypical attributes that Dumas had listed "adornment, war, wine, dancing, music," (la parure, la guerre, le vin, la danse, la musique)⁴⁷ which later became, thanks to the strong stagnation, eternal clichés in game rules of Georgian - Russian alliance or political misalliance of years.

At the same time Dumas feminine image of Georgia is totally different from the Russian 19th century imperial canon contributed to symbolization of Georgia as an oriental woman and to legitimation of its feminization. It deals with a cultural mythology that justifies the domination of Georgia by the Russian Empire. In contrast to the Russian tradition (its establishment is related to the names of Pushkin and Lermontov) for Alexandre Dumas Georgia is not an oriental "woman" which raises the need for a Russian man dominant, a fiancé or a sovereign but it is adorned with a Greek refinement profile or rather a Georgian refinement profile which for French artist means much more, because it is "life added refinement to the Greek." *Greece is still the marble Galatea, Georgia is already animated, is lively Galatea and become an animated woman (La Grèce, c'est Galatée encore marbre, la Géorgie, c'est Galatée animée et devenue femme).*⁴⁸

Thus, Dumas found the embodiment of Georgia in Pygmalion's creation a symbol of femininity and beauty since antiquity. Hence it is no coincidence either that he begins the description of his journey named "Voyage to the Caucasus" by a very significant subtitle - "From Prometheus to Christ," (De Prométhée au Christ). According to him, it is precisely in this ambience related to the antique-Christian culture on the horizon of the emerging world, the man discerned the gallows of the first benefactor of mankind (à l'horizon du monde naissant, l'homme aperçoit le gibet du premier bienfaiteur de l'humanité)⁴⁹. Consequently, Georgia as an integral part of antique Christian world is a singular meeting place of different cultures with strong mediating function.

Precisely this was Dumas work which gave birth to the European tradition of Georgia's perception as an intersection between East and West, as a borderline and a passage. This space is more eligible for the pathos of Goethe's words from "West-

⁴⁶ Alexandre Dumas, Impressions de voyage. {3}, *Le Caucase*, ([http:// gallica. Bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k9935c/f432.image](http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k9935c/f432.image)), 347

⁴⁷ Ibid., 414

⁴⁸ Alexandre Dumas, Impressions de voyage. {3}, *Le Caucase*, 378

⁴⁹ Ibid., 12

Eastern Divan" (West-Östlicher Divan) "Gottes ist der Orient! / Gottes ist der Okzident! / Nord- und südliches Gelände/ Ruht im Frieden seiner Hände"⁵⁰ (God's very own the Orient! God's very own the Occident!) then for the words Rudyard Kipling's: "Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet."⁵¹ For his Divan Goethe borrowed this words from the second surah (ayah N115) of the Qur'an: "To Allah belong the East and the West".⁵² In this verses an universal unity of spatial perception of the world and the knowledge of God has already been achieved where all opposites are abolished, all contradictions have already been overcome. This is Enlightenment Universalism, almost conterminous to the modern globalization idea, with perception of all-embracing unity of the space and the experience of God in Goethe's "West-Eastern Divan" which presupposes that all the directions of heaven belong to the divine sphere, to the kingdom of God: "Denn vor Gott ist alles herrlich"⁵³ (As for God is all glorious). They are ideally homogeneous and unreachable for the typical mechanism of the splitting of the world into qualitatively and valuedly heterogeneous „good" and "evil" categories. This is the esthetically comprehended miraculously successful synthesis of ethics and astronomy.

The esthetical comprehension of Astronomy, this indispensable constituent of the early civilization takes central stage in Rustaveli's poetry. Poetic talent and imagination refers to this oldest of the natural sciences dealing with celestial objects as planets, moon, stars and galaxies:

"Behold, the stars bear witness; yes, all seven confirm what I say:

The sun, Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, pity me as I go my way.

And Venus, Mercury, and the Moon, bear me witness as they may.

All seven of these will let her know what fires consume me today." (transl. by Lyn Coffin)⁵⁴

” აჰა, მმოწმობენ ვარსკვლავნი, შვიდნივე მემოწმებან:

მზე, ოტარიდი, მუშთარი და ზუალ ჩემთვის ბნდებან,

მთვარე, ასპიროზ, მარიხი მოვლენ და მოწმედ მყვებან.

⁵⁰ Johann Wolfgang Goethe, *West-östlicher Divan*, Werke in 6 Bd-n, (Frankfurt am Main: Insel, 1977), 239

⁵¹ Rudyard Kipling, *The Ballad of East and West*, (<http://www.bartleby.com/246/1129.html>)

⁵² The Holy Qur'an, *The Cow*, (<http://www.wright-house.com/religions/islam/Quran.html>)N115

⁵³ Goethe, *West-östlicher Divan*, 321

⁵⁴ Shota Rustaveli, *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*, (Translated by Lyn Coffin), 208

მას გააგონენ, რანიცა ცეცხლნი უშრეტნი მდებიან”.⁵⁵

All astronomical phenomena are within the purview of Rustaveli’s poetical cosmology that is concerned with the presentation of the Universe as a whole, as harmonious unity of spatial perception of cardinal points and multicultural diversity of the multiethnic “colorful earth”.⁵⁶ Inside this absolute untroubled harmony of the multicultural world model from Maghreb (West) to Mashrek (East) there is no room for ethical valuation and judgment by dint of ethical opposition between principal directions of heaven:

All the world’s creatures came to praise him. From far and near, they drew nigh.

Bears came from the woods; fish, crocodiles from the sea, birds from the sky.

Indians, Arabs, Greeks, Slavs, from East and West, of low birth and high,

From Persia, Europe, Egypt’s kingdoms, no one did the chance deny. (transl. by Lyn Coffin)⁵⁷

მოვიდიან შესამკობლად ქვეყნით ყოვლნი სულიერნი:

კლდით ნადირნი, წყალშიგ თევზნი, ზღვით ნიანგნი, ცით მფრინველნი,

ინდო-არაბ-საბერძნეთით, მაშრიყით (Mashrek) და მალრიბელნი (Maghreb),

რუსნი, სპარსნი, მოფრანგენი და მისრეთით მეგვიპტელნი.⁵⁸

Placing his poem in the fictional settings of exotic India and Arabia Rustaveli, a medieval Christian poet, uses this replacement for his unique way of Modeling the world and simulation of dynamic events of “The Knight in the Panther’s skin”. However, besides the paradigmatic reference to a pretended oriental original text this could be considered once again as a quasi-confirmation of the congenital cultural-historical loyalty to the Arabic-Persian-Oriental narrative tradition in Georgian medieval epic poem. This is a recognition of a quite familiar and well-known but alien phenomenon. The acknowledgement of the alienness. Though this mode of operation remains determinant and trend-setting tendency during the centuries in Georgian culture.

Rustaveli’s poem that is deemed to be an embodiment of the traditional romantic ideal of chivalry is about war, friendship, and love. Many themes are interwoven in its complicated episodic structure, but the most important are the stories of love of

⁵⁵ შოთა რუსთაველი, *ვეფხისტყაოსანი*, 214

⁵⁶ Shota Rustaveli, *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*, (Translated by Lyn Coffin), 11

⁵⁷ Ibid., 208

⁵⁸ შოთა რუსთაველი, *ვეფხისტყაოსანი*, 215

two couples: Tinatin and Avtandil from Arabia on the one hand and of Nestan-Darejan and Tariel, the titular "Knight in the panther's skin", from India on the other. This both stories are heterogeneous as diverse are the countries themselves they represent. The national peculiarity of the respective culture expresses itself in the way in which the type of the lover is modified. Is that literally a madman, love-obsessed "Medshnur" similar to Tariel or well-adjusted like Avtandil who while reasoning the lovers "great torment" demands from Tariel to be "wise":

If you are wise forget not the wisdom taught by the sages:

Firmness of mind and spirit sinks not beneath afflictions

But like a rock stands firm amidst all misfortunes and troubles. (transl. by V. Urushadze)⁵⁹

Or

If you are wise, with this teaching of the sages, you will agree:

To be a manly man, it is better to weep infrequently.

One should strengthen himself like a rock when he meets adversity. (transl. by Lyn Coffin)⁶⁰

As some scholars argue the Arabs are portrayed as more rational, as the king Rostevan and his knight Avtandil. Conversely, the Indians appear to be more emotional and impulsive and cause unintended disasters, as of the image of Tariel and Nestan.⁶¹ According to Avtandil's rationalism the love couldn't be vindication or excuse for insanity acting rationally is the safest way: "Through his reason, a man comes to trouble, whoever he may be"⁶². Because lack of reason even due to love means self-inflicted trouble and "sink down in a sea of disaster".⁶³

Two worlds confront each other: Arabia represents the principle of order, strictness and stability, of consistent form of existence in contrast to India which exemplifies the principle of disorder, instability and chaos. In this context it is particularly characteristic, that the image of India in Rustaveli's poem is connected with the world of delirium and disorder of the terrifying element of sea. With the sea this

⁵⁹ Shota Rustaveli, *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*, (Translated by Venera Urushadze), 123

⁶⁰ Shota Rustaveli, *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*, (Translated by Lyn Coffin), 189

⁶¹ Gijs Koolemans Beynen, *Adultery and Death in Shota Rustaveli's The Man in the Panther Skin*, in: *Courtly Arts and the Arts of Courtliness*, Edit. by Keith Busby, Christopher Kleinhenz (Selected Papers from the Eleventh Triennial Congress of the International Courtly Literature Society, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2004) 219

⁶² Shota Rustaveli, *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*, (Translated by Lyn Coffin), 189

⁶³ Shota Rustaveli, *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*, (Translated by Venera Urushadze), 123

dangerous, insecure, powerful element is the idea of disastrous damage connected because Nestan-Darejan was placed on a boat and adrift on the seas.

In the context of the traumatizing sea adventure we could say that this plotline may mirror the way how Georgian cultural mythology archetypically structured itself by means of the dichotomy of Sea and Mountain as a model of the vernacular retelling or concealing of Occidental legends. This rather unreflecting Georgian cultural perception between Sea and Land or to be more precise, mountain, enables also to determine which conditions require the historical success or the failure of the respective mythologem in Transformation of Georgian cultural self-perception in context of collective memory. This leads to several questions and for this reason it is decisive to identify: Which images dominant paradigm has most strong impact as cultural construction? How is this collective image depicted in memory, cultural perception and in art? And primarily who constructed this image: is that a portrait, a picture of another culture created from foreign authors to define the unknown Other or is it a self-portraiture as self-representation of the Georgian culture itself?

In this regard one should note that the nations of the Caucasus found their way from the faraway periphery into the sight and memory of the Old World in two directions: firstly, over the mountains and secondly, over the sea. According to the myth, Prometheus, a hero of Greek culture, was chained to a rock. But Greek mythology tells us about another myth, which is connected not with mountains but with the sea. It tells the myth of Medea from Colchis. While in Georgia the originally Greek subject of Prometheus found its reflection and materialization in numerous mythological and poetic versions, since antiquity is rather in Western culture than in Georgia that the fate of Medea has been a popular subject of the fine and dramatic arts. If the figure of Georgian folklore called Amirani became the Caucasian Prometheus. Georgian culture does not know a similar *interpretatio graeca* (at least until the pre-modern era) of the Argonauts subject which connected with sea and navigation served as source of inspiration for many European artists of the most diverse epochs. In Georgian cultural memory the Medea subject is tabooed, and the narrative is blocked for a very long time. This culture does not dare an ironical-skeptical glance towards the sea, the waves of which transport Medea into foreign myths and masterpieces. The crossing of the sea means merely separation and abolition of memory, merely the negative.

To that effect not Medea but Prometheus mythologem could be considered as an archetypal portrait, a verbal picture or description of Georgian culture's searching for its identity. For a dominant position of Promethean mythological image especially since the Romantic nationalism it is essential that exactly identifying its tragic fate with distinctly masculine mythological character the Georgian culture seeks in a courageous act of eternal stubborn resistance its absolute identity. This culture uses it for depicting itself in Titans's own likeness who became a sort of patriarch of the search and acquisition of the historical identity. So Georgian culture likes to portray this hero and the fatalistic melancholic imbued story as the

embodiment of its own tragic historical fate. This culture is self-complacent delighted in the role of a chief character and the principal performer in an eternal spectacle of struggle and suffering, of permanent revolt and constantly failed tireless effort, of permanent victimization and self-victimization what was thought throughout the decades, the realization of the tragic historical destiny Georgia's.

Archetypically manifestation of the fact that unlike Medea, Prometheus gained numerous admirers and versions throughout Georgia could be associated with the fundamental importance for Georgian cultural self-perception of the idea of the rock rooted to the ground and to its consistency. The root age of men in the patriarchal steadiness of the valley was decisive. The sea remained for a long time an unrealized, unused potency. One was inclined to turn his back on this terrifying element in order to gaze with respectful fascination at the mountains. This fascination produced an ethos completely alien to the world of delirium and disorder of the sea.

In this context it is particularly characteristic, that in his "Philosophy of History" Hegel speaks about the coalescing, unifying nature of the waters in the form of seas. According to Hegel's conviction, nothing can unify so powerfully as water can. Unlike this dangerous, insecure element, which invites man to conquest and robbery, encouraging him to victory and gain, land, upland and valley "fixes" man to the ground. As Hegel asserts, the Asiatic states lack this "Hinaus" ("beyond")⁶⁴ of the sea out of the limitedness of the soil, even though they are adjoined to the sea and they do not have any positive relation to it. In dependence on Hegel's conception philosophy of geography always sees in the water a dominant and structuring factor of different political-geographical cultures.

Correspondingly Georgia as a typical Near Eastern land - the mountain range of the highland and the stream valleys are what is physically and spiritually characteristic for country. Not the sea but the river is crucial as its territorial waters. In this context it is very symbolic how in Ilia Chavchavadze's *Letters of a Traveller* (1861) for example the "space" consciousness of Georgia is subordinated to great historical changes. In this case the opposition of Mount Kazbek/Mkinvari and of the Terek River appears as a national artistic perception model generally of the universe on the one hand and of the own geographical space pattern on the other.

Rustaveli's *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* could be supposedly considered as poetical rediscovery of geography. Placing his poem in the locations (Arabia, India, Khataeti probably as China) far away from his homeland, in geographically distanced areas, the poet of the Georgian Golden Age depicts the miscellaneousness of his multicultural world from a particular international perspective. This perspective presumes as advanced step, the constant necessity of translating between

⁶⁴ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*, Werke 12, (neu editierte Ausgabe, hrsg. von E. Moldenhauer u. K.M. Michel, Frankfurt am Main, 4.Aufl, Suhrkamp-Verl, 1995), 118

one's own and foreign cultures the meaning of which can be expressed by the formula of sociocultural proximity, despite spatial geographic distance. Mentioned proximity is real but not a creation of the illusion. This fact is also valid regarding to undoubtedly important role of mediation which Georgian culture played during the centuries in the dialogue of different cultures as the mediating function of this country is evident.

According to Hegel Asia Minor (and Georgia is a typical Asia Minor country) "has never kept to itself what is exceptional in it but has sent it to Europe. It represents the beginning of all religions and all state principals, but their development only took place in Europe" (denn was darin hervorragend ist, hat dieses Land nicht bei sich behalten, sondern nach Europa entsendet. Den Anfang aller religiösen und aller staatlichen Prinzipien stellt es dar, aber in Europa ist erst die Entwicklung derselben geschehen).⁶⁵

Georgia situated at the hinge of Occident and Orient or "At the frontier of Asia and Europe"⁶⁶ (An der Grenze Asiens und Europas) as Egon Erwin Kisch marked, called "Wonderland" by Knut Hamsun, as integral part of the ambience related to the antique-biblical world provokes a felicitous question of a young German author: "what kind of a country where the women are so called, Medea and Salome" (Was ist das fürein Land, in dem die Frauen so heißen, Medea und Salome). And the answer is found quickly: "Just seems to be there, a fairyland". (Genau das scheint es zu sein, ein Märchenland).¹

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⁶⁵ Ibid., 132

⁶⁶ Egon Erwin Kisch, *Zaren, Popen, Bolschewiken*. In: *Zaren, Popen, Bolschewiken; Asien gründlich verändert*. China geheim. Bd.4; (Berlin: Aufbau-Verl., 1993), 201

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Summary

Multicultural world in the poetry of Shota Rustaveli and the issue of paradigm shift in the multicultural world context

Nino Pirtskhalava

Ilia Chavchavadze State University, Tbilisi, Georgia

The paper scrutinizes the thematic diversity of the seminal piece of the medieval Georgian poetry by Shota Rustaveli. The rich set of spiritual some emotional values of the poetry is placed within the broadest context of the Oriental and Occidental traditions of classical poetry and world outlooks. The important point is made about moving themes and poetic instruments from Orient to West. Linkages of the epical poems of Western poetry and the Orient are argued to demonstrate the thematic convergences in creativity of Western and Oriental genius poets of the classical period. Representation of richest variety of values and eternal thematic diversity in the poetry by Shota Rustaveli are explained in highlights of cultural diversity of the medieval Georgian society.

Keywords: Rustaveli, Oriental poetry, Schiller, Love and Freedom, Madness and Love