

## Romanticism in Literature.

### On the Cross-road of Époques and Cultures

(Dedicated to the 200<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of prominent Georgian romantic poet Nikoloz Baratashvili)

From the 19<sup>th</sup> c. a totally new, different period begins in the history of Georgian literature, as well as in the political life: Georgia finds itself in the area of interests of the Russian imperialism and its political and social reality fully reflects the controversial character of the “New Colonialism”. The literary process is also controversial: on the one hand, it is open to the Western literary tendencies, various European schools and trends, and on the other one, it bears an imprint of constant struggle against the Russian imperialistic ideology. The formation and development of European literary schools in Georgia occurred specifically, against the background of political expectations and frustrations, accompanied by the search for independence and national identity.

Despite the complicated and ambiguous political processes, already at the early stage of its existence Georgian Romanticism shares the traditional themes and motifs, characteristic of European Romanticism.

*Sensitive intellect* is a truly defining metaphor of Romantic period: subjective cognition of the world (Kant), rich imagination (Hegel, Schelling), synthesis of feeling and thought, inner search for cause-and-effect relation (Kant, Coleridge) – these are the principles by means of declaration of which Romanticism demarcates its aesthetic boundaries. However, the common-aesthetic boundaries, characteristic of Romanticism, were always considerably corrected by the real historical boundaries (Herder), which, above all implied the peculiarities of the national space, specific historical, cultural and linguistic manifestations. One of the central ideas of Romanticism was development of national consciousness – evaluation of local problems, traditions and customs, which facilitated not only expansion of Romanticism in Europe and worldwide, but also drawing anew the map of Europe against the background of national self-determination and self-assertion, as well as against the background of the cultural process of searching for new identities. On the basis of these aspirations, the Romanticism period: a) initiated literary processes in many European and non-European countries; b) united the European cultural processes under the common-aesthetic banner of Romanticism; c) identified the differences existing from the viewpoint of functioning of national models.

The similarity of the characteristic concepts of Romanticism (freedom of “Self”, aspiration to unrealizable ideals, estrangement from the reality, rejection of the present, Luciferianism, mysticism, eschatological perception of the world), themes (love, solitude, sadness, communion with nature) and genres (minor lyric genres, poem), as well as strange similarity between the lives of the main Romantic figures should be regarded as an anthropological-culturological result of sharing of the common-aesthetic principles. Romantic poets during

their lifetime create their own myth, resembling a literary analogy of their work. The role and function of a poet as a person are extremely exalted; he seems to be the epicenter of the microcosm, in which he exists and which is so narrow for him.

But authors of the epoch of Romanticism are related not only by the lifestyle or death motivation and form, but also by common-aesthetic principles directed towards transnational dialogue, shared cultural objectives and missions, transplanted onto various national soils, which not only accentuates similarities but also substantiates differences. Differences are to be sought within the national models: genealogy, social position, feeling of nationality, environment – streets, houses and literary salons, where the feelings and passions necessary for their imagination and fantasy were in full swing. Romanticism synthesized criteria of national identity and literary identity and, therefore, lifted the literary canon to a new stage of development.

The poetry of Georgian Romantic poet Nikoloz Baratashvili is in fact based on the best traditions of European Romanticism. In addition to the main themes, characteristic of the world Romanticism at the summit of its development, which are manifested in the poetry of great Romanticists - Shelley, Byron, Mickiewicz, Lermontov, and others, the Georgian poet returns to one of the key ideas of Romanticism – revival of the national self-awareness, which is a leitmotif in his poetry and world outlook. The essential aesthetic principles characteristic of European Romanticism - prevalence of individualism, myth, religious depth, folklore archetypes, communion with nature – in the poetry of Baratashvili are purposefully combined with the idea of national self-awareness, national purpose and traditions, which not only reflect major cultural tendencies of European Romanticism, but also expands the geographic map of Romanticism in the direction of the Georgian national model: as a result, the Georgian world outlook, mythological archetypes, religious feelings and landscapes are included in a valuable way in the common Romantic poetics. Baratashvili's poetry confirms that even when the cultural tendencies are common, their influence on the paradigm of development of individual literatures is not manifested only in similarities, but also in differences, which are due to a particular national context, public goals, personal involvement degree and role in this context, etc. From the viewpoint of these similarities and differences Baratashvili's poetry is significant for European and world Romanticism.

Romanticism has penetrated into each sphere of European culture. It was like a phoenix revived from the revolutionary ashes that gave revolutionary spirit to culture and literature. Romanticism sparkled like a comet in the sky of the world culture. It was always escorted by the complexity and variety of the outer context; feeling of a protest, pain, frustration; aspiration to rebellion, radicalism; searching, self-sacrificing, fast burning, striving towards death as a prerequisite to the other world. . . And all these were the proof of its uniqueness and strength.

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