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## FATHER'S ARCHETYPE IN THE ART OF GRIGOL ROBAKIDZE<sup>1</sup>

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### ABSTRACT

In the 20s of twentieth century, in Georgia, after taking power by the Soviet totalitarian government, for the purpose of unification of the public consciousness, the Soviet government launched the mechanism of ideological dictatorship. Modernist ideological-esthetic principles accepted in Georgian literature from the European modernist trends contradicted to the soviet ideology. Socialist realism became the dominating discourse model. Some writers bowed to the ideological dictatorship while the others ardently resisted the totalitarian government.

Grigol Robakidze, recognized ideologist of modernism in Georgia, chose to leave the country and live in Berlin, Germany, in political emigration, rather than share the Bolshevik ideas. Soviet critics declared the writer as the "enemy of the people" and his art became tabooed.

Within the scopes of this report we shall discuss Georgian emigrant writer's landmark novel "The Snake's Skin". It should be noted that the novel was first published in German language (1927) and only in 1989, after rehabilitation of the writer's name it was published in Georgian. Author of the foreword of German publication was outstanding Austrian writer, Stefan Zweig. In Germany this publication was widely discussed. Numerous reviews were published.

It should be noted that seeking of the origins, idea of returning to the father (native land) is the central motif of "The Snake's Skin" and generally, of the entire art of Georgian emigrant writer. Grigol Robakidze, regarding himself as the part

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of German thinking world, has dedicated his novel to Johann Wolfgang Goethe. Georgian writer offers his own interpretation of Goethe's Urphanomen conception and Friedrich Nietzsche's idea of eternal return.

Our goal is to analyze, how Grigol Robakidze understands father's archetype and reveal relationship of this universal image-symbol to the philosophical paradigms of the text on one hand and to the models of father's archetype in world mythological traditions.

**Keywords:** Father's Archetype, emigrant, eternal returning

### **FATHER'S ARCHETYPE IN THE ART OF GRIGOL ROBAKIDZE**

In 20s of 20<sup>th</sup> century, after setting of the soviet totalitarian rule in Georgia, for the purpose of unification of public conscience, soviet government has launched the mechanism of ideological dictate. Modernist ideological-esthetic principles established in Georgian literature with European modernist trends contradicted to the soviet ideology. Socialist realism became the dominating discourse model. Some writers have subdued to the ideological dictate while some of them started to fight with the totalitarian government.

Grigol Robakidze, recognized ideologist of modernism in Georgia preferred to migrate to leave the country to Berlin, Germany, as a political migrant instead of sharing of the Bolshevik ideas. Soviet critics declared the writer "people's enemy" and tabooed his art. Georgian thinker had to leave the country for Berlin, Germany, as a political exile. Up to 1946, the writer lived and worked in Germany and from 1946 – in Switzerland.

It should be noted that fifteen-century Georgian literature, irrespective of significant sociopolitical challenges, was involved in the processes ongoing in the European literary space. In 20s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Georgian modernism has shared all conceptual and esthetic innovations of the European modernism

In 20s of 20<sup>th</sup> century, in the world, as well as Georgia modernist discourse appeared the novels with strong mythological orientation, so called mythographical texts. the artistic structure, poetic world, sense and emotional load of which were based on the archetypal models of the primal mythical thinking and the mythical-symbolic narration manner acquired the form of creative method.

Introduction of the moral-cultural values and conceptual paradigms of the European modernism into Georgian literary space is associated with the name of Grigol Robakidze (Including the mythological novel) Georgian thinker, with his course of lectures, creative art, culturological, cultural-philosophical, literary-critical letters (Gr. Robakidze „Georgian Modernism“), unusual philosophical-esthetic ideas became the first prophet of „modernism gospel“ (T. Tabidze) in Georgia. Outstanding representatives of Georgian intellectuals listened to his lectures and commented them. Grigol Robakidze’s art and activities have significantly influenced the creative method of the young wing of Georgian modernists – „Blue Horns“. New generation has recognized Grigol Robakidze as the reformer of Georgian literature and the first ideologist of Georgian modernism. It should be noted that after occupation and actual annexing of Democratic Republic of Georgia by Bolshevik Russia (February-March 1921) Grigol Robakidze actively participated in the national-liberation movement and for this he was permanently chased by the representatives of Bolshevik-Communist ideology and in 1930, by the reason of ideological contradiction with the ideological principles of the soviet totalitarian government, Georgian thinker had to leave the country for Berlin, Germany, as a political exile. At various times his art was commented and greatly praised by Stefan Zweig<sup>3</sup>, Romain Rolland, Nikos Ka-

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<sup>3</sup> Stefan Zweig was the author of the foreword to Grigol Robakidze’s “The Snake’s Skin” published by Diederich Verlag in 1928, in Jena, Germany. Correspondence about translation and publication of the novel between the writers created basis for the friendship between them. According to Natia Purtseladze, translator of Grigol Robakidze’s letters to Stefan Zweig, the epistolary heritage – correspondence between Grigol Robakidze and Stefan Zweig is preserved in Daniel Reed Library of New York University in Fredonia, USA, in Stefan Zweig’s archive. Copies of Grigol Robakidze’s letters to Stefan Zweig are kept in George Leonidze Museum of Literature. Correspondence commenced after translation and publication of the novel resulted in friendship between the writers. As stated Natia Purtseladze, translator of Grigol Robakidze’s letters to Stefan Zweig into Georgian, epistolary heritage reflecting correspondence between Grigol Robakidze and Stefan Zweig is kept in Stefan Zweig archive at Daniel Reed Library, Fredonia University, New York, USA. Copies of Robakidze’s letters to Stefan Zweig are kept at George Leonidze Georgian Literature Museum (Robakidze, 2016: 9-14). Fragment from Stefan Zweig’s foreword: “This novel by Grigol Robakidze, in think for the first time, has introduced to us unknown nation – the Georgians. This is the ancient nation, seen by Alexander the Great in his campaigns. Fortunately, it has not subdued to

zantzakis and other outstanding representatives of world literature. Grigol Robakidze's novels „The Snake's Skin“, „Demon and Mythos“, „Megi-Georgian Girl“, „Caucasian Stories“ were internationally recognized. It should be noted that in early 1960s, there was planned to nominate Georgian thinker for Nobel Prize, but this was not done because of the writer's decease.

Within the scopes of this presentation we shall discuss most significant mythographical novel of Georgian emigrant writer „Snake's Skin“. It should be mentioned that the novel was first published in German language (1927) and in Georgian it was published in 1989 only, after rehabilitation of the writer's name. Author of the foreword of German edition was famous Austrian writer Stefan Zweig. Publication of the novel in Germany was followed by wide response, numerous reviews were published.

It should be noted that seeking of the mythical origin, idea of returning to the father is the central motif of the „Snake's Skin“ and generally, central motif in the art of Georgian emigrant writers. Grigol Robakidze, regarding himself as part of the German language thinking space, dedicated this novel to Johann Wolfgang Goethe. Georgian writer regards Friedrich Nietzsche's idea of eternal returning from the point of view of Goethe's ur-phenomena conception and offers mythic-sacral interpretation of German philosopher's ideas.

Idea of eternal returning introduced into the modernist discourse under Friedrich Nietzsche's influence is especially active in the mythographical texts. It is significant to emphasize that Grogol Robakidze does recognized influence of Nietzsche's philosophical views on his art: „Dionysian phenomenon has charmed me – and even more – the idea of eternal returning“ (Bakradze 1999: 100) and mentions here the principal difference between the German philosopher's conception and the writer's interpretation of the idea of eternal returning: „not re-

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the Turkish and Persian influence while different peoples have effectively mixed in them. This nation is embedded in one of the most beautiful environment, it is famous with its songs and legends. And yet, it is shamefully unknown to us, the Europeans. This book made my worldview wider“ (Robakidze 1928: 1-2).

turning of one to his own self but returning of the eternity in the one to itself“ (Bakradze 1999: 101).<sup>4</sup>

Robakidze’s idea of eternal returning implies repeating of the mythical archetypes (origins) as universal image symbols in being or human substance and inevitable is associated with Goethe’s conception of ur-phenomena. Grigol Robakidze, while deeply sharing Goethe’s doctrine, in his letter „Vazha’s Engadi“ concludes: „it turned out that the head plant is the mythos for the plant – as the past that have never been seen but always implied“ (Robakidze 1996: 167). Georgian researcher, Konstantine Bregardze has reasonably noted: „Unlike Nietzsche, in Robakidze’s works eternal returning means not eternal repetition in the being of one and the same but rather eternal emanation and acting of the mythical origins [Goethe’s ur-phenomena]“ (Bregadze, 2016: 217)

Thus, according to the writer’s interpretation of the idea of eternal returning, material being of the things is based on their metaphysical mythos existence. Mythos eliminates the past and the future, it is formed as absolute present. „This has never being but this always is. This implies: this has never being – historically but this is – above-historically“ (Robaqidze: 1996: 166). Famous Romanian thinker, Mircea Eliade formulates the same idea in his work „Myth of Eternal Return – Archetypes and Repeatability“: „nothing new happens in the world as

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<sup>4</sup> About Nietzsche’s understanding of the eternal return Robakidze noted: “idea of eternal return has rushed to Friedrich Nietzsche as avalanche in Sils Maria. We know how he described this: what would be, of one day or night, when you are alone, the demon comes and says: this life you live and you have lived, will repeat one and many times more and this will be nothing new, rather each pain and each joy, each sense and each vain breath and will have to experience everything the smallest and the biggest in your life in the same sequence – the same spider and this night picture among the trees and the same second and me. The eternal hourglass always turns and you, together with it, a small dust particle in the dust! Would you knell down and damn with gnashing of teeth” Dostoevsky has perceived this idea similarly (devil at Ivan). For already mad Nietzsche this was the last vision. Dostoevsky saw such eternity as boredom of the “bath with the spiders in the corners” (Svidrigailov). Generally, it is notable that in both visions there are the spiders. Such interpretation of eternal return seems quite wrong. Not the individual returns to the eternal but rather the eternal, i.e. the main principle returns to the individual. This is the main myth of all that has occurred on the Earth. (Robakidze, 2012: 32-34)

everything is repetition of one and the same main archetype activating the mythical time (in illo tempore) when the archetypal gesture takes place, it leaves the world and moves to the time of the universal origin. Time allows any revelation of the things and existence but it has no any decisive influence on their existence as the time, itself, is subject to perpetual regeneration“ (Eliade, 2017: 121-122). Idea of eternal returning determines the conceptual sense of Grigol Robakidze’s novel „The Snake’s Skin“, as well as its structural paradigm. The main character – Archibald Mekesh is a modernist character attempting to recognize himself. Existential search returns Archibald to his father’s depths, to his metaphysical origin: „in the novel the motif of intended father’s seeking motif expresses symbolically seeking of the original, striving to and gaining of Goethe’s ur-phenomena existence“ (Bregadze, 2016: 233). After long wandering in the western and eastern countries Archibald settles in Georgia, gets married with Georgian girl (Matas) and restores the ruins of his forefathers’ house. By returning to the sacral land, to the origins the transition takes place in the character’s mind, the symbolic act of mystical birth takes place, with the regained vital energy he manages to overcome the metaphysical barrier, get free and create „new cosmos“, the subject becomes the cognizance of the new kind of being, mythical reality and destruction of the profaning time borders takes him to the above-time transcendent existence „mythical time of the origins is a powerful time ... through reviving of the myths“ one leaves the profaning chronological time and enters into the qualitatively different time that is both, the beginning and infinitely reversible“ (Eliade, 2009, 21). Title of the novel „The Snake’s Skin“ is associated with the idea of renovation, it is well known that the snakes have amazing ability to change their skins and thus, this is the symbol of transformation and metamorphose to step renovated into the new world.

In Grigol Robankidze’s novel tradition (paternal depths) opposes the history (rebel child), empiric reality – the mythos, metaphysical existence. Writer’s worldview and esthetic position in the novel is demonstrated in the dialogue of Archibald Mekesh and his eastern friend Taba-Tabai: „Father is the family line: remote call... child is deviation: runs away... as though he attempts to escape something... father is the orientation of the world... here each of the elements

return to the while... child's way is misleading – collapsing... blessed is the son returning to the paternal depths... here is a great joy...“ (Robakidze, 1997: 43-44) Thus, Grigol Robakidze manages to deal with the existential crisis in the modernist discourse through liberating from the „terror of the History“ (Mircea Eliade) and returning of the main character of the novel to the “paradise of the archetypes” (Mircea Eliade), traditional life, paternal depths.

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