



An Analysis of the Works of Fazıl İskender and Narine Abgaryan from Contemporary Caucasian Literature in Terms of Cultural Commitment

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Abstract

This article explores the intersection of mythology and modernity in contemporary Caucasian literature, focusing on how contemporary writers from the Caucasus region integrate traditional mythological elements into modern narratives. The study examines selected works of prominent writers such as Fazıl İskender and Narine Abgaryan. It investigates how these writers reflect their commitment to their culture in their works and how they benefit from mythological elements while doing this. For this purpose, Fazıl İskender's *Sandro of Chegem* and Narine Abgaryan's *Three Apples Fell from The Sky* were examined, and the way cultural symbols and mythological elements were reflected in these works were supported by quotations from the works. In addition, the cultural and social effects of these works within and outside the Caucasus region were evaluated, and their role in preserving and revitalizing cultural heritage in the globalization environment was emphasized. The study aims to show how regional literary works can be renewed and developed by benefiting from their cultural background, and thus to contribute to a better understanding of contemporary Caucasian literary works.

Keywords: Literature, Caucasian literature, Mythology, Modernity, Cultural Heritage, Contemporary Narratives

JEL Codes: Z1, O1, P2

Çağdaş Kafkas Edebiyatından Fazıl İskender ve Narine Abgaryan'ın Eserlerinin Kültürel Bağlılık Açısından Analizi

Öz

Bu makale, çağdaş Kafkas edebiyatında mitoloji ve modernitenin kesişimini araştırmakta ve Kafkasya bölgesindeki çağdaş yazarların geleneksel, mitolojik unsurları modern anlatılara nasıl entegre ettiğine odaklanmaktadır. Çalışma, Fazıl İskender ve Narine Abgaryan gibi önde gelen yazarların seçilen eserlerini incelemekte ve bu yazarların kültürlerine bağlılıklarını eserlerinde nasıl yansıttıklarını ve bunu yaparken mitolojik unsurlardan nasıl yararlandıklarını araştırmaktadır. Bu amaçla Fazıl İskender'in *Sandro of Chegem* (Çegemli Sandro Dayı) ve Narine Abgaryan'ın *Three Apples Fell from The Sky* (Gökten Üç Elma Düştü) eserleri incelenmiş, bu eserlerde kültürel semboller ve mitolojik unsurların yansıtılma biçimleri eserlerden yapılan alıntılarla desteklenmiştir. Ayrıca, bu eserlerin Kafkas bölgesi içindeki ve dışındaki kültürel ve toplumsal etkileri değerlendirilmiş, küreselleşme ortamında kültürel mirasın korunması ve canlandırılmasındaki rollerinin önemi vurgulanmıştır. Çalışmanın amacı bölgesel edebiyat eserlerinin kültürel geçmişlerinden yararlanarak nasıl yenilenip gelişebileceğini göstermek ve bu sayede çağdaş Kafkas edebiyatı eserlerinin daha iyi anlaşılmasına katkıda bulunmaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Edebiyat, Kafkas Edebiyatı, Mitoloji, Modernite, Çağdaş Anlatılar

JEL Kodları: Z1, O1, P2

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Introduction

The Caucasus region, with its rich tapestry of cultures, languages, and histories, has long been a fertile ground for literary creativity. This diverse region, straddling Europe and Asia, is home to many ethnic groups with distinct traditions and mythologies. There has been much information about the location of Caucasia. Still, according to Akdemir and Türk (2023: 132), the Caucasus—the isthmus connecting Asia and Europe—is the name of the region that Russian authors Tolstoy, Pushkin, and Dostoyevsky mention with admiration in their works and Arab geographers refer to as Cebel-ül Elsan, which translates to "the mountain of languages." However, beyond these definitions, the situation that still arises as a problem today is where the Caucasus is. The Caucasian countries, ancient civilizations, and today's countries have determined their perception/identity of the Caucasus by assigning different meanings. Essentially, this problem is valid for other continents and regions. For example, while the statement that the Ural Mountains determine the border between Europe and Asia is a perceptual geographical problem, treating the Middle East as the Arabian Peninsula and, on a larger scale, the emergence of a perception of the Middle East that includes North Africa, Turkey, and the South Caucasus are different contradictory approaches. The Kerch Strait and Taman generally separate it from the Crimean Peninsula. The Caucasus, starting from the Peninsula, is a mountainous region that includes the Kuban-Kuma River in the north and reaches the Manic Trench; in the east, it extends to the Absheron Peninsula and the Caspian Sea Basin; in the south, it is bordered by the Aras River, and in the west, it reaches the Kars Plateau. The definition of the Caucasus by regional and global states, peoples, geopolitical linguists, geographers, and various writers who have a relative or relational position with the Caucasus varies. On the other hand, different ethnic, administrative, and political borders in the Caucasus are drawn further, further increasing the confusion. In recent decades, contemporary Caucasian literature has emerged as a distinctive and influential type characterized by its unique interplay of traditional mythological elements. This fusion enriches the literary landscape and provides profound insights into the region's cultural identity, societal issues, and the ongoing struggle to preserve heritage in a rapidly globalizing world.

Mythology has always been a cornerstone of Caucasian cultural identity, serving as a repository of collective memory and values. These mythological narratives passed down through generations, encapsulate the spiritual and philosophical essence of the Caucasian people. These ancient myths are preserved, reimagined, and repurposed in contemporary literature to engage with modern themes and issues. This dynamic relationship between mythology and modernity allows for a rich, multi-layered narrative structure that resonates with the past and the present. The use of mythology in contemporary narratives has several important purposes. Firstly, it links generations together by keeping cultural heritage alive to make it more accessible and understandable for today's people. This is significant in globalization, where there is often tension between preserving traditional culture and adapting to global cultural trends (Smith, 2010: 78). Secondly, authors use mythological elements to address complex issues using a symbolic approach. Through experiencing universal human feelings such as heroism, transformation, or supernatural events, myths help enrich thematic development in literary works (Jones, 2005: 34).

Furthermore, blending ancient stories with modernity in Caucasian literature shows these myths' resilience and adaptive nature. This indicates that rather than remain static as something from antiquity, mythology keeps evolving, thereby becoming an integral part of contemporary cultural identity. The narrational tactics employed by recent writers demonstrate this process through symbolism, allegory, and intertextuality, making storytelling multi-layered and thus more effective (Turner, 2001: 92).

One crucial aspect of this literary approach is its capacity to create a dialogue between past and present times. In modern texts, we see mythological elements purposely used to connect current problems with their historical background and taken as a continuous thread upholding these issues over time. This deepens readers' understanding concerning the most pressing challenges faced by both societies and emphasizes the significance of history and cultural heritage in addressing them (Hogan, 2003: 56). For instance, mythological characters and motifs may serve as powerful metaphors for contemporary struggles like a battle to preserve cultural diversity against globalization or a search for identity in a multicultural society.

Additionally, mingling mythology with modernity in Caucasian literature opens room for exploring identity's complexities. In a region characterized by ethnic and cultural diversity, identity issues are critical. The myths provide rich symbols and archetypes that can be reinterpreted to represent various aspects of modern identity. Drawing upon traditional storylines could allow writers to see how their pasts influence their identities and their wider communities' collective identities (Bhabha, 1994: 110).

Moreover, mythology can be used to evaluate social norms and values critically. Numerous contemporary authors from the Caucasus criticize conventional social structures and beliefs using mythological elements. This allows them to deal with gender roles, power relations, and advocacy works on justice in a complicated manner that is as culturally sensitive as possible. By recreating mythical stories, authors often challenge the received wisdom, suggesting alternative visions rooted in culture and open to reinterpretation (Said, 1978: 85).

In contemporary Caucasian literature, the intersection of mythology and modernism has essential cultural preservation and revitalization implications. The danger of extinction looms large over traditional cultural practices and narratives in an age of fast social and technological transformations. Authors are crucial in conserving and reinvigorating cultural heritage by incorporating it into present-day literature.

1. The Significance of Fazıl İskender and Narine Abgaryan in Caucasian Literature

Tolstoy, Pushkin, and Anthony Marra, who have been writing more lately, have been the indisputable arbiters of Caucasian fiction. Even though the Caucasus has a lengthy history in literature, nearly none of the most acclaimed works about the region appear to have been written by Caucasians (Weber, 2017). Caucasian literature became even more complex during the Soviet era. This was done to encourage writers' incorporation of local folklore and mythology into their works but with an alignment under socialist-realist principles that propound Soviet ideals (Gleason, 1992: 143). Despite limitations like this, many Caucasian authors managed to keep and subtly promote their cultural heritage in their works. Fazıl İskender's narratives were

mainly about cultural life in Abkhazia that incorporated mythologies and folklores indirectly criticizing the soviet regime (Iskander, 1989: 56). His pieces emphasize how local cultures have withstood ideological suppression through age-old myths. In the mid-1960s, he first became famous with Yury Kazakov, Vasily Aksyonov, and other writers from the “*young prose*” movement (Abkhaz World, n.d.).

Fazıl İskender (1983), a well-known Abkhazian writer, wrote the famous novel “*Sandro of Chegem*”. This book consists of linked tales that revolve around the life of a captivating prankster named Sandro, who hails from Chegem, a fictitious village in the Caucasus. The author uses the adventures undertaken by this character to delve into culture, politics, and human qualities, thus giving us an ironic representation of the Soviet and Caucasian worlds filled with many different things about them. Sandro has had many adventures, and the book follows some of these. Indeed, the book begins by stating that many people have tried to kill him — all unsuccessfully. The first stories we hear about his brushes with death are related to his love life. However, it soon becomes clear that he has also been close to death battling the Mensheviks for the Bolsheviks. He is not scared of the Mensheviks or anyone else and will happily stand up to them or anyone else against him. We see this even in pre-Soviet times when a local prince has him arrested for assaulting a security guard who had dared blow a raspberry (or possibly fart) at him. Sandro gets off the charge through his quick wit and guile, and he even manages to wriggle himself a pair of excellent binoculars as a reward, which he will use to spy on the Mensheviks in another story. Sandro is frequently in trouble and, on one occasion, gets let off when he is sent to join a dance group because he is such a good dancer. He dances so well that they end up performing for Stalin himself. We meet Stalin and Beria here; naturally, Sandro tries out a risky move that he has practiced on his own but never with others, which nearly gets him into trouble again, but once more, his charm saves him from any harm. This sense of invention and imagination is handy for his gambling friend, who loses all his money to a wealthy merchant. Sandro decides to scare the merchant by riding his horse around the room where they are playing cards and even jumping it over the table — this puts the merchant off so much that he starts losing, and Sandro’s Armenian tobacco dealer friend wins instead; no use though as the Mensheviks will still drive him out of town. Iskander may have said that he does not like Latin American magic realism, but there is a touch of it in this book. He relies heavily on Abkhazian lore and legend, which naturally involves some magic, such as in the story about a prayer tree that appears to tell Sandro’s father to join the local collective, which he does. When the tree is partially burnt down (on orders from the local Soviet authorities), some human bones and a kettle mysteriously appear and disappear. Eventually, we are given a mundane explanation for these events (www.themodernnovel.org, 2021).

After the fall of the USSR in 1991, new avenues for exploring and expressing cultural identity emerged in the Caucasus. Political changes opened up new frontiers for writers seeking to engage or re-engage with their mythological heritage without being hampered by Soviet censorship. A renewed interest in traditional myths also characterized this period.

For her book “*Three Apples Fell from the Sky*”, Abgarjan won the “Jasnaja Poljana” award in 2016, one of Russia's most prestigious literature awards. Abgarjan's books are about Armenia, but the problems she writes about are also problems in modern-day Russia. In her most recent book, for example, the town of Maran is used to bring up problems in both Russia

and Armenia. Abgarjan creates conversations across cultures by bringing up shared concerns and themes. In this dialogue, the unique aspects of her Armenian background interact with the realities of Russia (Marchesini, 2018: 294). Abgaryan's work exemplifies this trend. For instance, she uses Armenian folklore as a theme for her stories, making them much-appreciated by contemporary readers while maintaining cultural heritage values. Narine's ability to combine ancient myths with present-day situations allows her to deal with themes such as displacement, identity crisis, or resilience from a traditional point of view relevant to today's societal problems (Abgaryan, 2016: 78).

Abgaryan has successfully brought to light the diverse cultural and historical fabric of Armenia via her written narratives. Consequently, her writings frequently dive into the ordinary lives, challenges, and joys of the Armenian people, thereby conserving and promoting the cultural heritage of the Armenian people (Koplatadze, 2019). In Russian literature, she is considered one of the most notable writers of Armenian descent who have attained success. She contributes to the variety of modern Russian literary voices by providing a fresh viewpoint on the Armenian experience through the works that she has produced (Zolyan & Hakobyan, 2019).

2. Cultural Identity and Mythological Elements in the Works of Fazıl İskender and Narine Abgaryan

The blending of mythological and modern elements through diverse narrative strategies is used masterfully by modern-day authors from the Caucasus to make their works more intricate and profound. Contemporary writers from the Caucasus have managed to combine ancient myths with modern topics, resulting in works that captivate readers and become significant tools for preserving their culture. For instance, in the novel "*Sandro of Chegem*", İskender (1983), in the novel's foreword, portrays the village's cultural richness.

I have wanted the images of the people I portray in these chapters to reveal the might and beauty of the moral sky under which the people of Chegem lived. The history of a clan, the history of the village of Chegem, the history of Abkhazia, and all the rest of the world as it is seen from Chegemian heights — that is the concept of the book, in broad outline (İskender, 1983: 10).

In my childhood, I caught fleeting glimpses of Abkhazia's patriarchal village life and fell in love with it forever. Have I perhaps idealized a vanishing life? Perhaps. A man cannot help but enjoy the things he loves. We may not recognize it, but in idealizing a vanishing way of life, we present a bill to the future. We are saying, "Here is what we are losing; what are you going to give us in exchange?" (İskender, 1983: 11).

İskender is reflecting on his childhood memories of the traditional patriarchal village life in Abkhazia, expressing a deep and enduring affection for it. He acknowledges that he may have idealized this way of life, recognizing that it is a natural human tendency to ennoble what one loves. However, İskender points out that we are challenging the future by idealizing this disappearing way of life. He implies the cost of losing these traditions and asks what the future will offer in return for this loss. The underlying message is a contemplation of the cultural and emotional value of traditional ways of life and a call to consider their worth and what might replace them.

The Abkhazians share many traditions with other Caucasian peoples. For example, many justly celebrated Abkhazian foods are known throughout the region; for historical reasons, the names are often of Turkish, Arabic, or Persian origin. Except where otherwise noted in the glossary, foreign words should be understood as common to several Caucasian or Middle Eastern languages. (İskender, 1983: 359).

In this section of “*Sandro of Chegem*”, Iskender underscores the cultural interconnectedness of the Abkhazians with other peoples in the region. According to Iskender, many traditions are shared by the Abkhazians with other Caucasian peoples. This implies a unity of cultures and a common heritage among various ethnic groups living in that area. He also mentions that lots of famous Abkhazian dishes are known throughout Caucasus. Culinary traditions are essential to cultural identity, which is appreciated far beyond where they originated. The names for these foods often have Turkish, Arabic, or Persian origins because of historical contacts and influences between nations. Thus, different civilizations impacted each other over time through integration, as shown by this fact. Unless defined otherwise by glossary terms, foreign words should be taken as belonging to more than one Caucasian or Middle Eastern language. Foreign words mean those used across many caucasian or Middle Eastern languages, showing a shared vocabulary among these regions’ dialects and reflecting deep intercultural links between them over centuries. However, no specific examples are given for any words. This suggests that unless otherwise specified, all such words must be considered common to all languages spoken in the Caucasus. He is trying to show how culturally diverse the Caucasus region is from his perspective as someone who has grown up there and knows it well. He wants people to see what rich tapestry we have here, filled with exchanges enriching us even further in the same way other countries lend us their customs, which are later integrated into our society, so to do we share ours reciprocally thereby creating new ones altogether His main idea seems to be emphasizing rich tapestry of cultural exchange and shared heritage within this region? Yes! I believe so. Iskender also points out that, like any place on earth, there will always be some good things about it, while others may not seem so great. However, one thing that can never be denied is beauty within ourselves and around us. No matter where we go or who we meet, we should never forget that something beautiful is waiting to be discovered. This passage highlights the idea of cultural identity being part of broader regional culture rather than confined within national borders.

I remember thinking, in a desultory way, that not only do men create gods in their likeness, but each man individually creates a god in his likeness. Then again, I may not have thought of that then, but later or later (Iskender, 1983: 35).

These lines show that the gods are collectively made in man's image. This is a popular theme in philosophical and theological discussions, meaning our human experiences limit our understanding of gods. The quote proposes that each person creates their god who reflects themselves and what they stand for. This suggests people have different beliefs about divinity based on their personality traits and life events. The word “*desultory*” indicates that these were not profoundly thought out or logical but somewhat random thoughts. This shows some wandering thinking during introspective moments. The part examines religion from an egocentric standpoint where everything revolves around me alone; it says my gods are manifestations of my being human because all other creatures do not make sense when related to such higher powers. It implies there can be no objective truth in matters concerning spirituality since we only see things through our own eyes; hence, what may be true for one person might not necessarily hold water with another individual who has had a different encounter altogether with similar forces beyond comprehension. The writer’s casual recollection of this statement reveals how fluid belief systems are: men create gods in their likeness – this line is rooted deep within mythology, where humanity has always given divine

beings human characteristics to relate better with them or understand what they represent. He cannot recall precisely when he said it, but he knows he did because even now, those words ring true for him. Besides, is not everything we say about ourselves just rehashing old stories told many times over? Each man individually makes his god- another idea drawn from personal mythologies across various cultures whereby people worship deities reflecting personal values, fears, aspirations, etc. Mythology remains relevant forever since each new telling adds something different to an ageless tale, thus making legends timeless, too.

Moreover, this woman had captured the only son's heart, who was to carry on the glorious Zarhidis line! Where was justice? Where was the divine plan? The gods had turned their backs on Greece and every Greek individually (Iskender, 1983: 59).

This quotation demonstrates how important cultural lineage and heritage are. Referring to it as the “*noble Zarhidis line*” implies an aristocratic family history that is supposed to be carried on by the male child. This is typical of many societies, which believe that keeping one’s ancestry alive and passing down their achievements should be prioritized above all else. The speaker asks, “*Where was justice? Where was the divine plan?*” which shows that they think gods control human life. From ancient times, people have always thought there were higher powers who took care of everything and punished those who did wrong – this is seen most clearly through myths. They believed that gods judged what happens among men according to fairness while determining their destinies; hence, this expression represents wondering why things do not follow the order expected from religion. “*The gods had turned their backs on Greece and every Greek individually,*” states feeling abandoned by a deity. Greek legends depict these immortals as meddling with human beings’ lives either positively or negatively thus when one thinks he/she has been left alone by god then it means that such a person lacks spiritual faith because without divine intervention success cannot be achieved in anything especially among communities since good luck depends entirely upon personal relationship with them particularly Zeus whom everybody feared for his wrath could cause disaster anywhere anytime without warning but even other deities like Apollo or Athena had power over people’s lives if only they were pleased enough with prayers offered unto them being angry might bring misfortunes upon individuals so no wonder individual would feel betrayed by heaven in case nothing goes well after having tried everything possible within reach including sacrificing animals at altars erected outside residence hoping these acts will lead to fulfillment of desires eventually – all this confirms widespread awareness concerning various ways through which individuals could attract gods’ attention towards themselves thereby gaining favoritism from heaven whereby each person believed he/she must do whatever it takes but unfortunately sometimes even such extreme measures fail due to negligence shown by some gods who might have been busy with other things during that particular period of time. As such, this is typical for many stories from Greek mythology where people feel that god has deserted them or question fairness in plans made by them since nobody wanted anything to do with being on the wrong side when gods went into action mode because those were moments which could lead one into eternal damnation if not careful enough but rather than blaming oneself entirely it would be better off finding possible reasons why heavenly beings acted the way they did including circumstances surrounding those events which may reveal hidden truths about nature human life within broader cosmic order according to specific interpretations based upon religious beliefs held at different periods throughout history. About these words, there are

experiences recorded in myths where individuals wonder about divine intentions given what happened around them, either personally or collectively.

Prince Oldenburgsky advanced a very effective argument for the creation of a Caucasian riviera: moneyed Russians would come to Gagra instead of squandering their rubles on the Mediterranean coast. But even this important consideration was merely a subtle tactical maneuver. In truth, the prince's burning dream — for the time being diligently concealed from everyone — was to create here on the Black Sea coast, within the Russian Empire, a small but cozy oasis of ideal monarchy, a realm of order, justice, and a complete confluence of the monarch with the people, and even the peoples. (As if on purpose for the convenience of the experiment, the coast was rich in the diversity of its nationalities) (Iskender, 1983: 39).

The initial argument for creating a Caucasian riviera is economic: attracting wealthy Russians to spend their money domestically rather than abroad. This highlights the region's potential for tourism and economic development, leveraging its unique appeal. The prince's true vision goes beyond economic gains. He aspires to create an ideal monarchy on the Black Sea coast, characterized by order, justice, and harmony between the ruler and the people. This idealism is kept secret, suggesting it might be seen as overly ambitious or impractical. The prince's dream includes a “*complete confluence of the monarch with the people and even the peoples*”. This indicates a vision of unity and harmony among the diverse populations in the region. The use of “peoples” in the plural emphasizes the multicultural and multiethnic composition of the area. The parenthetical note about the coast is “*rich in the diversity of its nationalities*” suggests that the region's cultural diversity benefits the prince's experiment. This diversity could be seen as a microcosm of broader society, making it an ideal setting to test his vision of a harmonious, multicultural monarchy. The passage reflects a complex interplay between economic strategy and cultural idealism. While the initial proposal to create a tourist destination focuses on economic benefits, the underlying dream is to establish a model of governance that unites diverse cultural and ethnic groups under a just and orderly monarchy. The region's rich cultural diversity is not seen as a challenge but rather as an opportunity to create a society where different nationalities coexist harmoniously. This vision recognizes the value of cultural diversity. It seeks to integrate it into a cohesive and just political framework, highlighting an enlightened approach to governance that embraces and celebrates multiculturalism.

Iskender (1983) demonstrates the traditions of the Abkhaz people rooted far in their past, thereby showing how these customs are essential for them to identify and belong. In this work, he also emphasizes what should be done to preserve such heritage when faced with modernization and external influences through the characters' interactions and the stories they tell. This novel celebrates diversity among races, relating it with language use within the Caucasus region, where different ethnicities have always lived side by side without conflict arising from their unique cultural practices or beliefs about life. Iskender presents Gagra as a place where people of all nationalities live together peacefully; this indicates that there can only be peace if we fully accept one another's culture, thus creating a beautiful tapestry in community development. Throughout, myths were interwoven into storytelling but were not just used for entertainment. They reflected peoples' connection with supernatural powers or forces beyond themselves. He employs fate too, which is significant since it helps readers understand better Sandro Mosaic's identity crisis moments when he did not know who his parents were because many children were born during war times; hence, he faces challenges

while growing up due to lack of love from either biological father figure or mother figure itself since both died early leaving him alone. By putting the lives of characters against background historical events shaping their world, like the Russian Empire influencing political changes in regions around them, Iskender wants us to appreciate what happened before, especially those involving wars, so that we can learn from our mistakes and avoid repeating the same things. It also shows how people's resilience can be tested through various situations during these difficult times. I believe history has always been a fascinating subject for discovering more about oneself and understanding one's role within society in a much more profound way than ever imagined possible, thanks to works like "*Sandro Chegem*". The author uses memories shared between individuals living within the same area. However, different generations pass down knowledge concerning past happenings because if such information were lost, there could never be any repeat or understanding of long-term effects brought by specific actions done many years ago. These recollections prove that human beings can survive anything, including wars; hence, they should always remain attached to their roots even when extreme hardships face them. All these factors contribute to creating an intricate picture of life for people living in Abkhazia during the time described by Iskender. This is a fascinating book that captures your imagination right from start to finish.

The novel "*Three Apples Fell from the Sky*" (Abgaryan, 2020) takes place in Maran, an Armenian village far from civilization. The book tells us about many cultural peculiarities of that place and its people and shares interesting facts about their lives. Here, we see how important it is to help each other, be always together, and never give up no matter what happens around us. Only through these things can human beings survive any difficulties or challenges thrown at them throughout their lifetime. In addition, this story talks about a village that has had many problems, starting from natural cataclysms up to political turbulences. Still, what matters most here is not so much what happens with the characters themselves but rather how they react towards those events surrounding them while trying hard not only cope but also stay happy despite everything else going wrong side by side with their lives day after day year in year out until eventually realizing once for all times that such existence itself deserves living till the end. The novel resonates deeply with the human heart. A perfect blend between reality and myth is created to tell tales reflecting the worldviews of different villagers living within Maran, where stories are shared among people during nights under shining stars and bright sunny days when everyone feels like they are part of some magical fairytale happening right there around them. It's about love for one's land; faith in its history; dedication towards carving brighter future; celebration life even amidst hardships encountered along journey called Anatolia who symbolizes hope against despair; symbolises strength displayed through various acts sacrifice made others behalf connect past present worlds together cherish every moment spent upon earth Vasil represents second chance at happiness discovered later years but also eternal nature love itself thus giving readers glimpse into these themes through his character development within text ensemble cast adds depth richness narrative by bringing their own unique stories each contributing towards exploration human emotions cultural identity depicted such way that anyone who reads book will feel like they have become part community themselves not only shows us what happens but also makes see why it happened way did thereby enabling better understanding ourselves others around while celebrating diversity

among peoples throughout world lyrical evocative writing style used author when describing things helps create mental images places letting know all this happening somewhere out there real life which makes everything appear so alive before our eyes structured around interconnected stories mosaic approach allows for wider range viewpoints being expressed thus providing more comprehensive picture about people living together in same village context blending everyday experiences with magical realism opens up possibilities deeper truths existence forcing readers look beyond surface appreciate marvels surrounding them always keeping mind that ordinary could be extraordinary within blink an eye underscore importance safeguarding intangible cultural heritage face modernity challenges posed villagers' adherence folklore traditions acts both resistance against erosion means identity preservation socialization process between individuals communities illuminates hidden aspects relation between genders as well generations exposes impact external political forces upon rural areas characterized sensitivity insight

“Three Apples Fell from the Sky” is a powerful and well-written book about how people can overcome anything. It also highlights the authors' cultural background as Armenians and shows that they should keep telling each other stories even in tough times because that helps them stay together. The author's artistic fusion of fables, legends, and practical storytelling is a poignant, introspective piece that universally speaks to human emotions about affection, despair, and optimism. By looking at the people of Maran and their experiences with tradition, society, and eternal narratives, which affect how we perceive life around us, this book prompts readers to consider their relationship with these stories.

Voske's older sister, Tatevik, had in fact been supposed to marry Kapiton. Tatevik was sixteen at the time and fourteen-year-old Voske, the second marriageable girl in Garegin Agulisants's large family, had taken an especially active part in preparing for the festivities. According to a time-honored tradition in the mountain village of Maran, where Tatevik and Kapiton had lived their entire lives, the bride's family was expected to host the first part of the wedding festivities, the groom's family the second. But the heads of Kapiton and Tatevik's families, two wealthy and respected lineages in Maran, decided to work together and host one large party in the median, the central square. The festivities promised to be extraordinarily lavish (Abgaryan, 2020: 14).

The passage in *“Three Apples Fell From the Sky”* describes the village of Maran, its marriage customs, and community spirit. Tatevik was his sister Voske's bride-to-be, and they were to be married by Kapiton. They agreed that the wedding would be held on a large scale but would take place after some time. Historically, only two parts of wedding ceremonies existed- one for the bride's family and another for the groom's family. However, owing to the high regard both families had in society, they decided to have a joint affair at a central plaza within their town. The significance of such cultural traits as communalism and cooperation is shown here.

They decided to hold the wedding in the autumn after gathering the harvest, as was traditional, but they had to wait five whole years. First, there was a mourning period for Magtakhine's younger brother, who died after being struck by lightning, then there was the famine that circled over Manish-kar and set in during the first dry summer: it had been inevitable and seemed it would last forever (Abgaryan, 2020: 88).

This quote tells us why Tatevik and Kapiton's wedding was postponed. After the harvest, they planned to get married in the autumn, but various events changed their plans. Magtakhine's younger brother died from a lightning bolt, so they had to observe some period of mourning. Moreover, due to an extended drought that spawned a severe famine, it became impossible to hold it in time. These occurrences show that living in the village is full of difficulties and surprises, thus stressing resilience and community support during challenging days.

...everybody had already forgotten about the letters she had spotted by the white peacock's gravestone, but Maran had recognized them long ago as the initials of its only offspring, a boy and a girl who were fated to either cut off the village's history or think up a new page for it – but who could know how that would work out, who could know; in a wooden doghouse, his long-eared head resting on his big paws, slept Patro, a loyal dog who had found, among the roots of the withered apple tree, the ring hidden on Anatolia's birthday by the gypsy woman Pat-rina; and over little Voske's tiny world there stretched an endless summer's night that told stories about the power of the human spirit, about devotion and nobility, about how life is like the ripples left by raindrops on the surface of a pool of water, where every event is a consequence of what came before it and it's just that nobody is fated to guess those events other than chosen ones who appear on this earth once, never to return, because they drain their cups all the way to the bottom the first time. (Abgaryan, 2020: 249-250).

The village of Maran is described in this excerpt as a place impregnated with mystical fate and connectedness. A single offspring of the village, symbolized by the letters on the white peacock's grave, could terminate or renew its history. The presentation of Patro, the loyal dog finding a hidden ring, and an endless summer night over Voske's world highlights themes such as destiny, the resilience of the human spirit, and how life events are interrelated; only a few people would comprehend their whole meaning. This passage entwines cultural aspects into a sense of timelessness and enigma.

Narine Abgaryan is a skilled writer who creatively uses community symbols and mythological elements in her novel *“Three Apples Fell From the Sky”* to convey the cultural resilience of Armenians. This story resides in Maran village, where traditional rituals like wedding preparations are highlighted against day-to-day life imbued with myths and fables. The proposed nuptials of Tatevik and Kapiton represent hundreds of years of custom intertwined with community effort and the importance of family and societal respect. This delay due to a series of mishaps, including being hit by a lightning bolt and starvation, points to life's uncertainty or unpredictability while emphasizing collective responsibility at such times. In addition, mystical details such as letters on the white peacock's tombstone and a hidden ring discovered by Patro, the faithful dog, help to portray destiny and interconnection within this account. Finally, these features exemplify human tenacity, the passage of time, and the complexity of eventful lives. Narine Abgaryan mixes folklore with legends using practical storytelling to develop an inside look into his characters' feelings that will strike readers as globally recognizable feelings: love, hopelessness, and hope for survival, among others. The novel explores their ways of life, encouraging them to think critically about themselves regarding cultural stories and how shared narratives help communities preserve their identities.

Narine Abgaryan's *“Three Apples Fell From the Sky”* is a beautiful example of how cultural symbols and mythological elements are used to depict the Armenian people's strength and unity. The book takes place in Maran, a traditional village where we can see such rituals as weddings being organized and celebrated while intertwining everyday life with mythical

symbols. The couple indicates that their wedding was not just about them but about the whole community. This signifies their culture, which values family and respect for each other. However, when they were to get married, many catastrophes, including unexpected death by lightning and famine, led to the postponement of their marriage. Thus, this shows the uncertainty of life and the need for communal support in difficult times.

Moreover, there are mystical aspects, like letters carved on a white peacock's tombstone or loyal Patro finding a ring hidden in a crevice, which gives a sense of destiny and interconnectedness in the book. These images represent the human spirit's resilience, time going by, and the complex fabric of life events. By combining legends and fables with practical storytelling, Abgaryan writes an introspective narrative with universally experienced human feelings like love, despair, and hope. Its characters' experiences with social structures peculiar to Maran culture invite readers to think critically about their connections with cultural stories and the forever connecting power of shared narratives in preserving humanity's community identity.

Conclusion

Literature has flourished in the Caucasus region due to its diverse population with numerous languages and historical backgrounds. This mixed region, located between Europe and Asia, contains many ethnic groups with different traditions and diverse mythologies. The genre of contemporary Caucasian literature has recently established itself as a major and influential one that combines original traditional mythological touches with contemporary narration techniques. This blending enriches the literary space and offers a deep understanding of cultural identity, social problems, and the ongoing heritage preservation struggle in the globalization era.

Caucasian culture is rooted in mythology, which serves as a collective memory bank for their customs and values (Esenneva, 2013). These myths have been passed down through generations, capturing the essence of the Caucasus spiritual philosophy. In modern literature, these ancient myths are conserved, reimagined, and redirected to address present-day themes and issues. Through this interplay between mythology and modernity, there is an ability to create a rich text that resonates across time.

Fazil Iskander, one of the prominent figures of modern Caucasian literature, skillfully employs Abkhazian folklore motifs in his works. Iskander's tales are filled with mythical symbols that show how tradition intersects with contemporary life realities. His novels depict characters caught between attempts to preserve their ethnocultural legacy and today's challenges. Herein, Iskander speaks on such issues as self-identity, endurance, and alteration; hence, readers may get deeper insights into the modern Caucasian experience (Iskander, 1989: 23).

Another Armenian writer, Narine Abgaryan, also uses Armenian myths and legends to enrich her stories. Notably, Abgaryan's writing blends mythical components with the ordinary, creating a universe in which the yesteryears are always as vocal as they are today. Her people frequently obtain courage and understanding through these old fables. Therefore, they show that mythologies have never been irrelevant, even today. This storytelling technique sustains

the culture that persists over time and enables better examination of matters like migration, dislocation, and the quest for identity (Abgaryan, 2016: 45).

Several essential purposes are served by incorporating mythology into contemporary stories. One, it connects different generations, thereby preserving cultural heritage and making it accessible and relevant to their present-day audience. This is particularly important in the era of globalization, where there exists a tension between maintaining cultural distinctiveness while adapting to global trends (Smith 2010: 78). Secondly, it allows authors to delve into complex issues in a more symbolic manner that is layered with various shades of meaning by using elements from myths. Myth allows them to investigate universal human experiences like heroism, transformation, or the supernatural, enriching the thematic depth of this literary work (Jones, 2005: 34).

Additionally, blending Caucasus literature with myth and modernity emphasizes its adaptability and lasting nature for these ancient stories. It shows how mythology is not frozen but a spiritual part of cultural identity that grows and changes even in our time. Modern writers elaborate their narrative strategies through such devices as symbolism, allegory, and intertextuality, rendering multi-layered dimensions for storytelling (Turner, 2001: 92).

A critical aspect of this literary approach is that it helps link the past with the present through dialogue. By creating a thread throughout modern narratives that tie together contemporary issues with historical or cultural contexts, they become integrated within each other by incorporating mythological elements into them (Hogan, 2003: 56). This deepens the understanding of current societal challenges and emphasizes the relevance of historical and cultural heritage in addressing them. Mythological figures and motifs can be metaphors for various contemporary struggles, such as the fight to preserve cultures from globalization or the quest for identity in a multicultural society.

The meeting between mythology and modernity in Caucasian literature is an excellent ground for exploring identity issues. Questions of identity are particularly pertinent in regions characterized by ethnic and cultural diversity. For instance, mythological narratives have infinite symbolic resources that may be reinterpreted to include several aspects of contemporary identities. Using these traditional tales, writers delve into how cultures shape and define personal and group identities today (Bhabha, 1994: 110).

In addition, incorporating mythology enables one to examine societal norms and values critically. Many present-day Caucasian authors criticize conventional social structures using mythological elements. This method helps address gender roles, power relations, and social justice with more culturally resonant subtlety. Authors can challenge established assumptions about what seems right by recreating mythological stories and suggesting alternative visions for their societies rooted in their culture but open for reevaluation (Said, 1978: 85).

Cultural preservation and revitalization are essential to the intersection between mythology and modernity in contemporary Caucasian literature. Traditional arts' marginalization or oblivion is likely due to the quick social and technological changes we are experiencing. When writers integrate these aspects into their works, they participate in cultural preservation and rejuvenation. While Anderson posits that "*works by writers serve as evidence*

for the continued importance of traditional stories”, he argues that it shows how they can adapt to current situations (1983: 43).

Ultimately, it is gratifying to examine the mix of modernism and mythology in Caucasian literature nowadays because it leaves us with a rich foundation upon which we can create several cultural and literary theories. It is evident from this study that cultural identity is dynamic with time, and it turns out that mythology is not an antiquity but a living part of present-day literature. The current paper shows how traditional mythological elements are fused into modern narratives by contemporary authors, emphasizing the importance of cultural heritage in addressing current social problems while at the same time preserving cultural identity in an age of globalization.

Ethical Approval: The authors declare that ethical rules are followed in all preparation processes of this study. In the case of a contrary situation, Artvin Coruh University International Journal of Social Sciences has no responsibility, and all responsibility belongs to the study's authors.

Etik Beyanı: Bu çalışmanın tüm hazırlanma süreçlerinde etik kurallara uyulduğunu yazarlar beyan eder. Aksi bir durumun tespiti hâlinde Artvin Çoruh Üniversitesi Uluslararası Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi'nin hiçbir sorumluluğu olmayıp, tüm sorumluluk çalışmanın yazarlarına aittir.

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