

THE TRADITIONAL IMAGE OF THE GEORGIAN PHALLIC MOTHER AND HER CRISIS IN CONTEMPORARY WOMEN'S FICTION

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Abstract

In my thesis I will try illustrate that the Georgian unconsciousness as such is leaded by the image of powerful mother on the level of representations, and lacks the image of father. Consequently my argument is that if we discuss it in psychoanalytic terms, the Georgian unconsciousness remains in dyadic Imaginary and subsists under the power of the Phallic Mother.

In my thesis, first I will expose the basics of the psychoanalytical theory, then according to it I will examine the representations of the Phallic mother in the traditional narrative and at last, I will discuss e several short stories of contemporary Georgian women writers. In my analysis of these stories I will reveal the crisis of the ancient phallic mother who has lost her traditionally assumed functions and the internal conflict in mother – daughter relationships which were silenced in Georgian literature up to this point.

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Introduction

The Georgian culture is characterized by cult of the mother. This is not, of course, an exclusive case or something rare in patriarchal societies, but its exceptionality is expressed in the frequent symbolic representation of very powerful and dominating images of the mother in mythology and literature. From the psychoanalytical perspective it is a real phallic mother, with whom the offspring's relationship is not broken up; hence the child remains in her realm. This connection is traditionally represented as an idealized and perfect one, but in the contemporary narratives it already poses certain problems as I will reveal in my thesis later.

In my thesis I will support the argument about the frequent presence of the dominating and the powerful mother by examining some mythological symbols and the traditional fictional representation of mothers. For example the planet of the sun, is represented as a mother in the Georgian mythos, whereas the moon, is always the male. Apart from the mythos, the image of the traditional powerful mother remains also in the visual representations. For example the statue titled the Mother of Georgia, which is the symbol of the capital, pictures a huge figure of a woman, holding a sword in one hand and a bowl of wine in another. This figure metaphorically in traditional discourse is translated into the message that the Georgia always meets its enemies with a sword, thus it is impossible to conquer it without battle, and on the other hand, emphasizes its hospitality towards friends and visitors.¹ In my thesis I will focus more upon its signification and explanation in psychoanalytical terms, as the phallic mother, dedicated to the analysis of the phenomenon of the Mother of Georgia.

In traditional Georgian literature, there are numerous stories, which show the impact and power of the mother over the lives of her children. There are also many poems, which have a didactic character and either appreciate mothers of heroes, fixing them as examples for contemporary women, or preach what kind of person a real mother must be and how she must raise a really worthy son for the

¹ Giorgi Maisuradze, *Mother of Georgia or the Complex of the Mother*, in *Aphra*, October-November 1997 p. 179

nation. Whereas such kind of literature which focuses on the enlightenment and teaching of fathers, is does not exist.

What I will do in my thesis, is to analyze and contrast with each other, several pieces of literature work, dated from the end of the late nineteenth century, concerning exactly the mother-son relationship and images of the mother, which were strongly inscribed in the national discourse and were adopted as ideals, with the short stories of contemporary Georgian women writers, who propose a different vision and challenge in their works the traditional representation and bring new issues for discussions, issues which were silenced and taboo until this point. I am focusing on this concrete period because this is the time when modern Georgian national discourse and values were created, which were revived and extremely influential during the national-liberating movement in the end of 80s and early 90s. In the traditional narratives, as I have already mentioned above, the dyadic relationship between mother and child is idealized and appreciated, the contemporary narratives, on the contrary reveal the internal conflicts which may arise in this case. Moreover, unlike the traditional narratives where the figure of the mother, as I have already said, is powerful and has phallic features, in the contemporary narratives the characters of mothers are decreased and castrated.

I would like to note here that in the literature of the nineteenth century, thus of the period from where I take a narrative, there are also several works, which represent a “negative” image of the phallic mother, but I will not go into it, for several reasons: first, these stories are not part of the traditional discourse and were not inscribed in the grand narrative, hence they were not influential; and second, these stories do not challenge the power of the mother, and do not question her power over her children, but just point at her wickedness. Unfortunately I can not contrast stories from these different periods to show the difference between mother-son and mother daughter relationships, because in the Georgian literature of the late nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth centuries (from

where I chose my pieces) a work, which focuses on or discusses mother –daughter relationship physically does not exist.

As a tool I have chosen to use psychoanalytical theory for my analysis. In the theoretical chapter I will make a brief overview of its beginnings from Sigmund Freud to Jaques Lacan's and Julia Kristeva's theories. I chose this particular tool for two reasons; first, it seemed to investigate the phenomena of the powerful , dominating mother, and second, this approach is not used very often in the Georgian academic field and especially very rarely when it comes up to the analysis of the Georgian literature. Furthermore, those who have used this approach argue about the impossibility of the realization of the Oedipal scenario in the Georgian consciousness, and they are basing this argument on the symbolical absence of the father. I agree to this statement at some extent, but I argue that the Oedipal drama takes place, more concretely in is a pre-Oedipal drama, as the conflict evaluates not against the father, but against the mother again. Although this conflict is silenced up in the traditional grand narrative, the strong attachment between mother and child is appreciated, it is unquestionable, whereas pieces of several contemporary women writers challenge this strong connection and address it as a problem.

I will conduct my analysis on the basis of several long-established writings, including a traditional poem and a story, and three short stories written during the last ten years which belong to different authors. The choice of the literature pieces for this particular research were determined by following factors: in the case of the traditional literature, the reason is that the data belongs to the work of the most important figure of the time in the realm of the literature and of the political and social movements as well, Ilia Chavchavadze. I chose for my analysis exactly his pieces of work because he is the creator of the modern national discourse, which, as I mentioned above, was revived in the end of the twentieth century, and also creator of the model of an ideal mother and mother-son relationship in the field of literature, which is highly appreciated and perceived as a perfect model on the level of the

social discourse. He is also the first who introduced the notion of the Mother of Georgia, and in some terms gave its definition in his writings and ideology that he created.² What concerns to the contemporary pieces of literature, in this case I chose the three stories, from which one belongs to Naira Gelashvili and the other two to Magda Kalandadze. I chose exactly these particular pieces because as these writings are the first works which speak about the degradation of the traditional image of the mother, challenge the traditional values are internal mother-daughter's conflict and lesbian relationship is first addressed and shown up. After conducting the analysis I will show the crisis of the mother, who is no longer able to fulfill her traditional function, the anxiety of the children, their unsuccessful rebellion towards the mother, because this rebellion as I will illustrate in the stories always leads to the self destruction as well.

² Akaki Bakradze *Ilia*, Nakaduli, Tbilisi 1987

Guram Sharadze *Ilia Chavchavadze* Tbilisi 1990

Dodona Kiziria Otaraankt *Kvrivi as the moral ideal of a Georgian woman*, Literary Georgia, 27 November, 1992 p. 11

Chapter One: A Brief Overview of the Psychoanalytical Theory

In this section I will give a brief overview of the psychoanalytical theory, a tool which I am going to use to conduct my analysis. Although I am going to use mostly Lacanian psychoanalysis and that of Julia Kristeva, I will start from its very beginnings, with Freud, in order to give it a clear image.

According to Freudian psychoanalytical theory, there are three phases in the child's development: pre-oedipal, oedipal and post-oedipal. The pre oedipal phase is characterised by the image of phallic mother, when a child has not yet discovered her 'castration' and feels an incestuous desire towards her. During this period the infant develops an object/cathexis (the investment of libido in an instinctual object) for his mother, which is connected with the mother's breast from the beginning, and is "the prototype of an object-choice on the analytic model"³. At the same time, in the case of a boy, the identification with the father takes place.

According to Freud, these two processes are developing side by side until the boy's sexual desire that he feels for his mother does not come more and more powerful and consequently he sees his father as the rival for gaining the love of the mother. This is also the time when a little boy discovers the difference between the sexual organs, and as far as he perceives girl's genitalia as a part of body which is *missing something*, thus it is castrated, he begins to be obsessed with the fear of castration: that he will be punished, hence castrated, for his incestuous desire and sexual activity and will become castrated like a girl. So the pre-Oedipal phase ends by discovering sexual organs and the intervention of the father, thus the prohibition of incest. According Freud "along with the demolition of the Oedipus complex, the boy's object-cathexis of his mother must be given up." There are two alternative

³ Sigmund Freud, *The Ego and the ID* in *The Freud reader*, edited by Peter Gay New York, Norton, 1989 p. 641

scenarios which may result: the first is the identification with his mother, or “an intensification of his identification with his father”.⁴ In the case of this first version, thus when the identification with the father takes place, he switches his feelings from mother to another woman. From this identification emerges Super Ego, which is the ego ideal, *heir of the Oedipus complex*, as Freud names it.⁵ That is what is called entering in the post-oedipal-phase.

However, in the case of a girl, the story goes in a little bit different way: in the pre- oedipal stage she also feels incestual desire for her mother, just like a small boy. When she reveals also the difference between sexual organs, she privileges little boy’s penis over her clitoris, and perceives herself as castrated. At first, she does not recognise this state of being castrated as a characteristic of her sex, but as individual misfortune and develops a penis envy. As Freud puts it “she has seen it and knows that she is without it and wants to have it”⁶. Subsequently, she discovers that the mother is castrated like her as well. Since she can not give her a penis, her homosexual desire for the mother turns into a hate (as she blames her that she herself does not possess the penis) and orients her desires towards the father, from whom she hopes to receive a penis, substituted by a baby. Hence from homosexual feelings a little girl switches on the heterosexual desire. Now the figure of mother becomes “an object of her jealousy”⁷, the little girl has turned into a little woman⁸. Accordingly the Oedipus complex develops in her as well. After Freud the main difference between little boys’ and girls’ cases is that “the girl accepts the castration as an accomplished fact, whereas the boy fears the possibility of its occurrence... [and] whereas in boys the Oedipus complex is destroyed by the castration complex, in girls it is made possible and led up by the castration complex.”⁹

⁴ Sigmund Freud, *Ego and the ID* p. 640

⁵ Ibid. p.643

⁶ Sigmund Freud *Some Psychological Consequences* in *The Freud Reader*. p.674

⁷ Ibid. p.676

⁸ Ibid. p.676

⁹ Sigmund Freud, *Some Psychological Consequences* p.676

There is a difference between the super egos of both sexes. If in the case of a boy the Oedipus complex is not just repressed but “literally smashed to pieces by the shock of threatened castration, its libidinal cathexes are abandoned, desexualized and in part sublimated: its objects are incorporated into the ego, where they form the nucleus of the super-ego and give that new structure its characteristic qualities ”.¹⁰ In the ideal scenario of dissolution of the conflict, the Oedipus complex does not exist even in the unconsciousness¹¹, and the super-ego becomes its inheritor. In the case of girls, the Oedipus complex is destroyed by the “lack”, hence by the impact of castration. It may be either “slowly abandoned or dealt with by repression, or its effects may persist far into women’s normal mental life... Their super-ego is never so inexorable, so impersonal, so independent of its emotional origins as we require it to be in men”.¹²

That is how the Oedipal story goes according to Freudian scenario in both sexes, but it should be said that the female version of is less convincing and more confusing and complex as well as Freud notes it himself¹³. In both cases however, “the human subject who emerges from the oedipal process is a split subject, torn precariously between conscious and unconscious”.¹⁴ The unconsciousness reaches to the consciousness by dreams, where unconscious desires are often expressed in a metaphoric and metonymic way and they need to be interpreted unless to reveal their real meaning and signification.

Jaques Lacan, while rewriting Freud, instead of pre-oedipal, oedipal and post oedipal stages, introduces the Imaginary, Mirror and Symbolic stages, which consequently correspond to the Freudian terms. In the Imaginary stage the infant does not have the centre of the self defined yet, it can not differentiate the border between its and maternal body and perceives itself as united with her, hence it can not yet distinguish between ‘I’ and ‘Other’. The perception of the body is fragmented; the child

¹⁰ Ibid. p.677

¹¹ Ibid. p.677

¹² Ibid. p.677

¹³ In The Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex he says: “It must be admitted however, that in general our insight into these developmental processes in girls is unsatisfactory, incomplete and vague” (in *The Freud Reader* p. 665)

¹⁴ Terry Eagleton, *Literary theory: An Introduction* Oxford, Blackwell 1994 p. 157

perceives its body as a whole, together with maternal body. In the Mirror stage, the process of differentiation and the formation of the self take place. The child can see in the mirror the reflection of itself with which at the same time it identifies itself and does not. It appears to “go through seeing an initial stage of confusing the image with reality, and may try to grasp hold of the image behind the mirror, or seize hold of the supporting adult. Then comes the discovery of the existence of an image with its own properties. Finally, there is the realisation that the image is its own-when it moves, its image moves, and so on”.¹⁵ This is the child’s first discovery of itself as something separate and united identity in the mirror reflection, from where it learns it is detached from the maternal body but at the same time this image contradicts to its insight of reality.

Thus the mirror image becomes something which is separated from the mother and is *whole*, at the same time, but never accessible, the ideal self. As Lacan argues: “We have to understand the mirror stage as an identification, in the full sense that analysis gives to the term, namely the transformation that takes place in the subject when he assumes an image-whose predestination to this phase-effect is sufficiently indicated by the use, in analytic theory, of the ancient term *imago*. This jubilant assumption of his specular image by the child at the infants stage, still sunk in his motor incapacity and nursling dependence, would seem to exhibit in an exemplary situation the symbolic matrix in which the *I* is precipitated in a primordial form, before it is objectified in the dialectic of identification with the other, and before language restores to it, in the universal, its function as subject”¹⁶. The mirror stage is a phase when the formation of the *estranged self* as such takes place. It derives from the reflection of the infant in the mirror and stains a person’s further relationship in the regards with it. As Lacan puts it himself: “The mirror stage is a drama whose internal thrust is precipitated from insufficiency to anticipation-and which manufactures for the subject, caught up in the lure of special identification, the succession of phantasies that extends from a orthopaedic-and lastly to the assumption of the armour of

¹⁵ Madan Sarup, *Jaques Lacan* Oxford, Harvester Wheatsheaf 1992 p.82

¹⁶ Jaques Lacan, *The mirror stage as formative of the function of the I as revealed in Psychoanalytic experience*, in *Ecrits, A Selection*, New York, Norton 1989 p.2

an alienating identity, which will mark with its rigid structure the subject's entire mental development".¹⁷.

The creation of the other and the Other also occurs in this stage. The other, *objet petit a*, is a reflection of the ego, the extension of the *I* that infant sees in the mirror, whereas the Other is what, according to Eagleton's interpretation, unites the language, the unconsciousness, the parents, the symbolic order, "as that which like language is always anterior to us and will always escape us, that which brought us into being as subjects in the first place but which always outturns our grasp... for Lacan our unconscious desire is directed towards the Other, in the shape of some ultimately gratifying reality which we can never have: but it is also true for Lacan that our desire is in some way always received from the Other too."¹⁸

In order to summarise the argument so far, it could be said in short that the mirror phase designates the moment when a child establishes a connection with its image in the mirror and from this connection it learns that its wholeness or ones with the mother is illusive and becomes conscious of the fact that the mother is a separate object from itself. This acknowledgment of the mother as the Other is a common experience and "one that is essential for the human-to-be to become human."¹⁹

According to Lacan, a child wants to discover what is the desire of the (m)Other, in order to fulfil her wish and to become her full love-object. What is desired by (m)Other, is the phallus, which with Lacan is no longer Freudian sexual organ, but a transcendental signifier, that obviously presupposes the fact that mother is castrated, she does not possess the phallus, as long as the desire only emerges from the lack: "If the desire of the mother is phallus, the child wishes to be the phallus so as to satisfy this desire. Thus the division immanent to desire already makes itself felt in the desire of the other, since it stops the subject from being satisfied with presenting to the Other anything real it might have which corresponds to the phallus-what he has being worth no more than what he does not have as

¹⁷ Jaques Lacan, *The mirror stage as formative of the function of the I as revealed in Psychoanalytic experience*, p.4

¹⁸ Terry Eagleton, *Literary theory: An Introduction*, p.174

¹⁹ Madan Sarup, *Jaques Lacan*, p.140

far as his demand for love is concerned, which requires that he *be* the phallus”.²⁰ As Lacan notes, in this “test of desire”²¹ the crucial factor, according to the clinical experiences is not the fact that the child does not have the phallus, but the discovery that the mother does not possess it either: “this is the moment of experience without which no symptomatic or structural consequence ... referring to the castration complex can take effect. It is here that the conjunction is signed between desire, in so far as the phallic signifier is its mark; and the threat of the nostalgia of lack-in-having. It is of course the law introduced into this sequence by the father which will decide its futureur”²².

Hence the mother-child dyad is broken up by the Law of the Father and the child moves ahead of Imaginary and towards Symbolic, where it already occupies its place as a “sexed” being, which means that it acquires the understanding of gender. As Rosalind Minsky puts it, “The desire for the Other, which from the beginning is always mother for the infant, is repressed again with the intervention of the Father, in the dyadic of mother-child which imposes the Law of the Father, which is the threat of castration and the taboo on incest. By repressing the incestual desire, the child enters in the Symbolic order, which is the entry into the language and the society as well. According to Lacan “even in the absence of an actual father, the child experiences the place of the father and the Oedipal crisis through cultural substitutions, that is primarily language and other systems or representation. These symbolically represent an intrusion by culture into the fused, bodily world of the mother and child and, crucially, a severing of the child from the object of the desire. The law of the “name of the father” of what meanings are permitted in language, takes up the space left empty by the loss of the mother”²³.

Due to the fact that after Lacanian theory the signifying systems are putted in order around the phallus as the “prime signifier” the woman has to take “the place of lack or absence”²⁴. Hence the girl, who identifies with her mother, has to desire what she desires-the phallus. As Madan Sarup remarks “

²⁰ Jaques Lacan, *The Signification of the phallus*, in *Ecrits, a Selection* p.289

²¹ Ibid. p.289

²² Ibid. p.290

²³ Rosalind Minsky, *Lacan : the meaning of the phallu*,. In *Psychoanalysis and Gender* , London, Routledge, 1996

²⁴ Madan Sarup, *Jaques Lacan*, p. 140

this desire has nothing to do with anything essential or biological but everything to do with the way that the Symbolic is organized". Consequently Lacanian system, especially the way it is used by Kristeva, "frees us from the tyranny of the biological"²⁵.

The feminist philosopher Julia Kristeva, was strongly influenced by Lacanian theory which, as Eagleton remarks "for any feminist ... clearly poses a problem"²⁶. Instead of Lacanian notions of Imaginary and Symbolic Kristeva uses the terms of semiotic and symbolic. In her theory she opposes to the symbolic order the "semiotic", which means "a pattern of play of forces which we can detect inside language, and which represents a sort of residue of the pre-Oedipal phase"²⁷. As J. Kristeva claims herself in one of her interviews, the semiotic "takes us back to the pre-linguistic states of childhood where the child babbles the sounds s/he hears, or where s/he articulates rhythms, alliterations, or stresses, trying to imitate her/his surroundings. In this state the child does not yet possess the necessary linguistic signs and thus there is no meaning in the strict sense of the term... this archaic semiotic modality that I have referred to as infantile babblings... is a modality which bears the most archaic memories of our link with the maternal body-of the dependence that all of us have vis-à-vis the maternal body, and where a sort of self-eroticism is indissociable from the experience of the (m)other."²⁸ Hence the semiotic is related to the pre-Oedipality. The realm of the semiotic is near the dominion of the unconsciousness: in babies it is their cry, sounds that they make and their gesticulations, in adults the semiotic is putted in an appearance in "rhythm, prosody, word game, the no-sense, laughter"²⁹. The communication between the semiotic and the symbolic forms the signifying process. Therefore the significance, a term which Kristeva develops to designate this interrelation, envelops both: "the symbolic order of rational language and the marginal, repressed feminine

²⁵ Ibid. p. 140

²⁶ Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: an introduction* p. 187

²⁷ Ibid. p.188

²⁸ Julia Kristeva, *A Question of Subjectivity-an interview Women's Review* p. 20-21

²⁹ Madan Sarup, *Jaques Lacan*, p. 141

discourses of poetry, irrationality, art and so on”³⁰, which brings into play the repressed, unconscious thought, and which obviously belongs to the realm of the semiotic. Both aspects of significance, hence the semiotic and symbolic are engaged in all signifying process, but, which one of them will preponderate depends on the category of discourse. As Sarup notes, the “rational discourse is governed by the semiotic side of language and draws on repressed signifiers, which, under patriarchy, are predominantly feminine in character”³¹.

What I would like also to note from Kristeva’s contributions it is the introduction of the term “chora” which is translated by her as the mother-child’s physical closeness and interdependence, that is the realm of the mother, or “a nonexpressive totality formed by the drives and their stases in a motility that is as full of movement as it is regulated”³² These drives absorb pre-Oedipal semiotic occupations and energy discharges that “connect and orient the body to the mother.”³³ The semiotic chora, therefore, is the “unconscious basis of language”, which outcomes “from the organization of the drives prior to the acquisition of language”³⁴. Kristeva, like Lacan, conceives the mirror phase as a stage from where “the constitution of all objects ... will be detached from the semiotic chora,”³⁵ and the Oedipal phase with its threat of castration “as the moment in which the process of separation or splitting is fully achieved”³⁶. After the entrance into the Symbolic order, the repression of the chora will be accomplished with more or less success. By that time it can be only observed only as “pulsional pressure on symbolic language”, which includes the use of contradictive, purposeless words, interruption, pauses and absences in the discourse. As Sarup argues, “the chora is a rhythmic pulsion

³⁰ Ibid, p. 141

³¹ Ibid. 141

³² Julia Kristeva *Revolution in Poetic Language* in *The portable Kristeva*, editor Kelly Oliver, New York, Columbia University Press, 1997 p.35

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Madab Sarup, *Jaques Lacan*, p.141

³⁵ Ibid 141

³⁶ Ibid. 141

rather than a new language. It constitutes, in other words, the heterogenous, disruptive dimension of language, that which can never be caught up in the closure of traditional linguistics theory”³⁷.

Semiotic should not be associated with femininity, as it belongs to the pre-Oedipal, and pre-Oedipal is the stage where the antagonism between masculinity and femininity does not exist as such. Pre-Oedipal is the realm of the phallic mother, “fantasmatic figure”³⁸ which embodies both masculine and feminine characteristics. The question of difference becomes related to the moment of entrance into the Symbolic order. Kristeva notes that as far as semiotic chora is connected with the mother, the Symbolic order is the place, where the Law of the Father dominates. According her a little girl either makes her identification with the mother, which consequently strengthens the pre-Oedipal elements of the woman’s psyche, or makes the identification with the father. In the case of the identification with the father the identity of the woman will be originated from the same symbolic order.

³⁷ Sarup, Madan, *Jaques Lacan* p. 141

³⁸ Ibidp. 142

Chapter Two: Traditional Representation of women in Georgia

2.1 The Traditional Phallic Mother

On the level of representation the Georgian unconsciousness is very rich and dominated by the numerous images and representations of the powerful mother, whereas the figure of father is totally excluded and absent. There is an exaggerated cult of Mother and special worship of female saints and the Virgin Mary, and women saints are mostly more worshipped than men. The fact, that Georgia was chrisitanized by a woman, Saint Nino, also plays a part in this. The mythology, fairy tales and literature which present the material of the analysis of the unconsciousness of every nation, are also dominated by powerful female images. In the mythos a special figure, Mother of Milieu, is strongly appreciated, which is considered to be the protective power of a certain place and of people, who inhabit this place³⁹.

What I will argue in my thesis is first to show on the traditional representations that the state of Georgian unconsciousness is in the per-Oedipal stage, hence in the realm of the Phallic mother. And second, to observe how conflict is constructed around the figure of the mother in contemporary Georgian women's writings. First of all I am going to concentrate on the traditional representation of mother/women.

The Georgian culture is characterised by an asexual representation of women, depriving them of any trait of sexuality. As Dodona Kiziria points out how paradoxical it might not seem, in the Georgian culture the evidence of respect towards a woman often requires the total exclusion of her eroticism⁴⁰. The perfect example of this is the King Tamara. She is one of the most appreciated Georgian monarchs and can only be compared to the David the Builder.⁴¹ Despite the fact that she

³⁹ *Encyclopedia of Mythologies* volume 3. *Georgian mythology*, Tbilisi, Bondo Macaberidze 2004 p.7

⁴⁰ Dodona Kiziria *Otaraant Kvrivi, the moral ideal of the Georgian woman*, p.12

⁴¹ Davit the Builder liberated Georgia from Arabians and Turks in the eleventh century and made many very progressive reforms, whereas reign of the King Tamara is characterized by annulations of his very important achievements, but it was

was a historical figure, a woman and a mother, in the dominant discourse she is referred as saint⁴², angel. She was referred not as a “queen” but as a “king”, which of course masculinised her, and not only emphasized her privilege and authority over her husband’s, David Soslan,⁴³ but also deprived her from all kind of “earthly” femininity, supported her asexual and gender neuter representation and sustained her appreciation as only half human and half divine⁴⁴.

Concerning to the literature, there are many pieces which represent a strong single mother or focus on the role of the mother, more precisely what kind of person a “real” mother should be. For instance there are many poems dedicated to the mother who has given birth and raised a hero, or gives long advices to a woman how to raise a real honouree son for the native land. (Of course it does not need to be mentioned that these poetries are largely written by men) and there is not, at least as far as I am concerned, even a single poem which would discuss the same for fathers.

I would also like to mention here Georgian fairy tales, another important source for analysing the unconsciousness of the nation. Most typically, in fairy tales the father is absent. Generally there are two basic plots: either the hero is raised by the mother only⁴⁵, who is a widow, or the story starts with the death of the father⁴⁶. Although it is remarkable that the authority of the father is protected, maintained and taken into consideration, although it is accompanied by a little bit of ambiguity. In order to make it clear what I mean with this last statement, I will draw a short and typical example characteristic to most plots of Georgian fairy tales. Usually there are two types of scenarios: the narrator tells a story of a little boy raised by his mother alone, as his father died before his birth, or

ultimately the most prosperous time of Georgian history. But after her death begun the decadence, which was prepared while she was alive.

⁴² She is regarded as an official saint by the Georgian orthodox church. Nevertheless, I think it is worthy to note that even in historical fiction, Giorgi Rusi, written by Shalva ... in 19.. she is presented as a half saint and there is a lot of emphasize on her divine and un earthy character.

⁴³ I think that in this context the fact that David Soslan was not Gerogian, but Ausetian, eventually also played a role. (I do not know whether some any researchers have also claimed this idea or not, so I can not provide a reference, but I do not argue its originality)

⁴⁴ Dodona Kiziria, *Otaraant Kyrivi, moral ideal of a Georgian woman* p. 13

⁴⁵ For example. *The son of the widow* *The king-hunter* .3*The smartest is the best*, 4 *The son of the old lady* . *The hunter* in *Georgian popular fairy tales*, Tbilisi 1984

⁴⁶ For example: *The youngest son* *The King’s son* *The woman of fields* Ibid.

when he was very little. When he grows up usually his traditional question which he addresses to his mother is: 'what was my father's profession' and after getting the answer continues his way, most often he is the hunter, a "job" which ultimately affirms high masculinity, as it is always connected with risk, danger and adventure . It is remarkable that in this series of fairy tales which are united by this plot, the young hunter usually gets into trouble with the wicked senior, king, etc. Who in order to liquidate him (they have different reasons for it, but it is not important at this point) give him very difficult tasks to fulfil, which consists usually in sending him to meet the ultimate death. Every hero, in this case, first visits his mother, tells her about his task, get advice from her and following this advice he accomplishes everything and in the end, of course, revenges the wicked king or senior, and inherits their fortune and belle, which is usually part of the tasks. In the second kind of scenario, the plot usually opens with the death scene of the father; the father gives testament to his son, who is obliged to fulfil it. It is by following the father's way, (profession or advices given by him before the death) that the hero overcomes the troubles and finally becomes the possessor either of the treasure, or the belle, or sometimes both of them.

It is not quite easy to draw the conclusion from these two different scenarios, as I think it needs deeper analysis, but at least one thing is clear: the fairy tales offer a representation of the strong and powerful mother, the hero always addresses his mother, thus indicating that she has the greatest authority in his eyes and she actually appears as the most clever person in the tale. The fact, that the father is died or dying whereas the mother is always alive and actually takes part in the development of the plot, proves in my opinion that between the clash of mother/father authorities victory is always on the mother's side. This is evidence for the fact that the Georgian unconsciousness as such is more attached to the realm of the mother than to the father's, which means that the separation of mother-child is not accomplished, as the father's authority according to psychoanalytical theory is expressed in the split of this dyadic union and supposes the acquiring of independence by the child.

The frequency of this constant father-absence, in the case of fairy tales, could probably have historical basis. Throughout constant wars, the death of men was not a surprise. It could also be caused by the historical past of the country itself⁴⁷: after claiming Christianity as the official religion in 335 A. C. during the most part of its history it has been searching for a Christian protector against Muslim political forces, which first the Empire of the Byzant, (only 11-12 centuries are exception which is Georgian golden ages when it was one of the most powerful state) and later the Russia. Nevertheless the relationship with these Christian states was not smooth and always beneficial for Georgia of course. The Georgia as a country represented in the popular unconsciousness is mother, the nation itself as a child, and the foreign political forces/countries as the father towards which the child (nation) has ambivalent relationship. I draw this argument on the basis of a very popular and extremely known Georgian folk poem, and its visual representation, a sculpture realized by Merab Berdzenishvili. The poem could be translated as follows:

The cubs of wolf will be raised again in Algeti

They will not die with out taken revenge over their enemies⁴⁸

Even if the poetry itself is very short and laconic, it contains the implications, which need to be reflected on. In its analysis, I would like to mention also the statue, which was dedicated to and inspired by this poetry. The sculpture represents a woman with two little boys, which symbolize themselves as the “cubs” mentioned in the poem, who are holding a huge sword in their hands. (photo 1.)

⁴⁷ Hence once again this absence of father also has the implication as presenting the construction of the unconsciousness from the psychoanalytical perspective of the Georgian nation in a way which shows the presence of the power of the phallic mother and lacks the Father. G. Maisuradze’s article *The Mother Of Georgia or the Complex of the mother*, which will be discussed later, evaluates this hypothesis to explain the absence of father from the representations.

⁴⁸ *Georgian folk poetries* Tbilisi, Nakaduli 1989 p. 15



Photo 1. Sons of wolf

The woman represents the mother, Georgia, reduced in the poem to a concrete part of it, arising alone the revenging sons; (Algeti, the place mentioned in the poem stands as a metaphor for the whole country. Maybe it was not intended to be by the time of the creation of the poem, when Georgia was separated into little parts, but eventually, with unification, it gained a wider connotation). Even if in this very short poem the mother is not explicitly and independently mentioned, it is said that the generation will be “the cubs of wolf”; the wolf here stands for the mother, this metaphor could be only attributed to the very strong, powerful, and in psychoanalytic terms, phallic mother. As the sculpture shows it is from her that the sons will inherit the sword-phallus. The author of this sculpture chose this image of mother-sons to illustrate the poetry; hence the sculpture is a visually translated signified of what the poetry appears to be the signifier of: the future generation of “heroes” rose by the strong mother. This representation is not something unique that appears in this folk poetry only, I will provide with more examples later in my paper. I would like to note that this representation, (together with the poetry of course) is the part of the grand narrative which constitutes the national identity of Georgian, as such. Once again there is the absence of the father from this dyadic (mother-country and children-nation relationship) which also has the implication of presenting the construction of the unconsciousness from

the psychoanalytical perspective of the Georgian nation in a way which illustrates the presence of the power of the phallic mother and the absence of the Father.

Due to this ever-absence of the father, several contemporary Georgian scholars (Giorgi Maisuradze, Emzar Jgerenaia) argue that the Oedipal drama is unfamiliar for the Georgian unconsciousness. One of the first examples is the article of Giorgi Maisuradze, *The Mother of Georgia*⁴⁹ or *the Complex of the Mother*, published in 1997.⁵⁰ In this piece of work he analyses the huge sculpture placed under the communist regime on the top of the hill in the capital, Tbilisi and which is named The Mother of Georgia. The statue represents a figure of a woman, in national Georgian dress with a traditional glass of wine in one hand and with a sword in the other. (photo 2)



Photo 2. Mother of Georgia

These attributes suggest symbolically the idea that she is able to defend herself from the enemy and always welcomes friends. During his analysis G. Maisuradze argues that from a psychoanalytical

⁴⁹ The Mother of Georgia is a very famous representation introduced by 19th century writer, Ilia Chavchavadze, whose poem which bears the same name belongs to that category of didactic poetries that I have mentioned above.

⁵⁰ In the Journal *Aphra 1* Tbilisi, October-November, 1997 pp 179-188

perspective the figure represents a hermaphrodite creature, a woman, who possesses the phallus, hence a phallic mother. One of his arguments is that even if we disregard the psychoanalytical significance of the sword, which is the phallus, it is impossible to deny that the statue's character remains androgynous anyway. The attribute of the sword suggests that she has adopted traits of masculinity, as the sword belongs to the domain of masculinity. Fighting and battle, where the sword is used, is a man's business traditionally as such. He argues that the Mother of Georgia is closed towards the outer world and is unable to reproduce: "The Mother of Georgia is a complex of paradoxes. She is not a virgin, but a mother, who creates a closed position with her phallic attributes, which means that she does not let to the one,⁵¹ meeting with whom is her function. Consequently she is more likely an androgynous creature ...⁵² By this she indicates her sterility and generally the fact of not having any perspective of reproduction at all... In this situation the psychoanalytical mechanism of dynamism-Oedipality is totally excluded, as far as Laois, father of the Georgian Oedipus is simply absent, and his functions are transmitted to Jocast, (the mother of Oedipus). The playing of the Oedipal scenario becomes almost impossible as his both parents; objects of love and hate, are unified into one persona: which is the mother".⁵³

Although he does not say it, apart from the self castration, the sword could also be used for the castration of her children, and actually according to psychoanalysis in the pre-Oedipal stage little boys are afraid to be castrated by their phallic mothers, whereas little girls are blaming her for their castration. So the mother is the castrator. Nevertheless at the end of the article he claims that this kind of image of the mother of the nation or country can not impact well on the unconsciousness of the nation and that the "cultural-psychological basics of this statue have oppressive and phobic impacts"⁵⁴.

⁵¹ Probably he means here the ever absent Father

⁵² Giorgi Maisuradze, *Mother of Georgia or the Complex of the Mother* p. 179

⁵³ The Journal *Aphra 1* October-November, Tbilisi 1997 p.182-3

⁵⁴ The Journal *Aphra 1* October-November, Tbilisi 1997 p.188

In the end of the review of his article I would like to note one more argument that he makes, and which I think is really important. He states that what Mother of Georgia illustrates is characteristic to the whole of Georgian culture and shows up in different forms in Georgian everyday life. I hope that I have already illustrated it so far, and I will show it again in my subsequent analysis. Although in my opinion he is missing the main point: even if he emphasizes the endogenous character of the statue and analyses it from the psychoanalytical perspective he does not state that the Mother of Georgia is the phallic mother, and does not speak about the pre-Oedipal state of the Georgian unconsciousness, which might be a logical conclusion after this type of analysis.

In a different frame work, the same idea, of ‘almost impossibility of playing Oedipal drama on Georgian stage’ is articulated by the sociologist Emzar Jgerenaia, when he argues that “In the Georgian culture, the motivation of “patricide” (if something like this exists at all in Georgian unconsciousness) is different from other cultures. If in the psychoanalytical paradigm sons kill fathers in order to owe the mother, here the similar thing might only happen because of meal which is the synonym of power”⁵⁵.

Hence because of the absence of the father, the case of a traditional Oedipal Scenario is under a question mark or it is even argued as something impossible. Or at least it is assumed that if it happens, it might not be a typical Oedipal drama, but rather a certain variation which is mostly concentrated on conflicts with the phallic mother.

⁵⁵ *Discussions in the Caucasian Institute: The Georgian Feast (Sufi) and the Civic Society* ed. G. Nodia. Caucasus Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development, Tbilisi, 2000

2.2 Mother of Georgia

The notion of Mother of Georgia appears from the mid nineteenth century. It was introduced by the most important figure on the political, literal and social scene of the period, Ilia Chavchavadze, to whom Georgian culture owes a lot. Although the notion of the Mother of Georgia as such, appeared quite late, it would not be correct to think that her ideal, the way it is constructed in Ilia Chavchavadze's writings, did not exist before. The figure of the mother, illustrated by him, is an accumulation of the idyllic image of the mother, which was progressing through out the centuries. That explains the fact of its extreme popularity and doubtless acceptance of this ideal by Georgian society and who adopted this model and inscribing it into the national discourse. The reason why I chose exactly his writings to contrast with contemporary women's writings is because his personality and his work has played a huge role in the construction of modern Georgian ideology, values and ideals which are not outdated even today on the discursive level.

I am going to give a brief overview of two poems: *To the Mother of Georgia*, and *Mother of Georgia*, and of a story which bears the name of the protagonist: *Otaaraant Kvrivi*. I would like to note that in the story the notion of mother of Georgia does not figure, but it is accepted as the perfect model of the mother and there is no doubt that it represents the extension of the model of woman which is given in the two poems mentioned above.

In the selection I will follow a chronological order. First comes a poem titled *To the Mother of Georgia*. It represents one of the most powerful and influential from the cycle of the poems dedicated to the raising of a son. To summarise its content very shortly and understand its goal it would be enough to say that it opens with the image of enslaved and demolished Georgia, who is waiting for the worthy son which must be raised by the mother of Georgia and who will bring light into the darkness of the present. The function of the Mother according to the poem is to educate him about the past of

his country and teach him its love. He must be the one whose trail will be followed by the generation. To say in short it is clear that the poetry is about the future potential hero. Of course the father is not mentioned, because the country/nation is “orphaned”.

The second poem illustrates the scene between a sick mother (apparently old) and her son. First the mother is alone in her room, lying in the bed. From the window she hears the noise of the people who are going to battle to free the country. She utters a long monologue first, where she expresses her happiness to be alive until this day and speaks out loud about her decision to send her only son to the battle too, because it is for the country and for that “glorious day” that she has raised him. Later the son intervenes, all happy because of the movement which is going on and announcing it to the mother. When the mother tells him about her permission (or decision) to let him go to the battle, the son’s happiness goes to its apogee, and he confesses that he has never ever loved her so much as at that moment, as she is so devoted that she is ready to let her only son go and sacrifice him to the country. Although there is a clash between the mother’s egoistic desire, to keep her son next to her; she proposes him to stay with her if he really loves her. The son just asks: “and then what about the country?” this question brings the mother to overcome her selfish desire and lets him go. Once he is gone she is dying, trying to reach the window and her last words are: “oh the son, the country”.⁵⁶

In the story, “Otaraant Kvrivi” there is no nationalistic-patriotic discourse. It focuses on social problems and its intentional goal was to challenge and stress social hierarchy and illustrate the virtue and morality of peasants. The protagonist of the story, the widow, lives in the village. She is a peasant and has an only son. The son falls in love with the sister of the baron, and decides to go to their place to serve them, which impacts on his mother pride, because they are independent and quite rich, but does not resist to the wish of his son. The sister of the baron does not notice his feelings of course, even though she and her brother as well are very friendly with him. By the end of the story the son dies,

⁵⁶ *The Mother of Georgia Works of Ilia Chavchavadze* volume 1. 1985

falling down accidentally from the roof of the palace. A year later the mother also dies because of the sorrow at the grave of her son.

What I would like to stress the attention on, is the image of the mother herself and mother-son relation. I hope that from the content of the poems (I will extend the way the mother is represented in the story later) which I have provided we can see what kind of an ideal mother must be. Of course there is no alternative role for woman rather than mother, and the ideal mother means the same as the ideal woman. She is deprived of all signs of sexuality or femininity, is strong, (or must be strong) enough to refuse her egoism and be ready to sacrifice her child, she has suffered a lot, and is devoted to her son, who must lead him to the right way which is no other than serving the nation and country. With all those qualities the ideal mother clearly embodies masculine features, therefore in psychoanalytical terms she is a real phallic mother. She has the power over the son, it's according to her wish or whether the order that he behaves and acts in this or that way. In short, he is passive, consequently it is he, who adapts feminine features, who needs to be directed. He is not independent in this sense. It is clear in the example of the poem *Mother of Georgia*: he would like to go to the battle, but he does not without mother's permission, moreover, he can not even dare to claim his wish to his mother (he says he could not even dream about it) because of the responsibility that he is the only child, and can not leave the old parent alone. When suddenly the mother changes her mind and asks him to stay, he can not resist, he just passively addresses her utterance, which by its tone could hardly be perceived as a reproach. He is not able to act on his own. This relationship is even more stressed and well illustrated in the "Otaraant Kvirivi", where the bond between mother and son is idealized in the story itself, (their relationship is admired by everyone in the village, by peasants and by barons as well) and by the social discourse it is regarded as the example of the perfect mother-son relationship, and the protagonist herself, Otaraant Kvirivi is adopted as an ideal of the perfect personality and

woman⁵⁷. As Donora Kiziria remarks in her article *Otaraant Kviriv as the Moral Ideal of the Georgian woman* for Georgians the comparison with this character is the highest complement to emphasize her moral quality,⁵⁸ “Nevertheless it does not mean that in the second half of the twentieth century the vision and social role is determined after the nineteenth century models... but as the researches show the social practice and the social moral do not always necessarily coincide with each other”⁵⁹

As I have already mentioned the widow in the story has explicit features of the phallic mother: she is very strict with everyone. The whole village, even men and the head of the village are afraid of her. It is interesting that in literature it is the only example where a woman’s force and work is equated with that of man’s: when she is criticized by the villagers because she works as a man, the protagonist responds: “what is the difference between the man and a woman? If I am a woman, don’t I have two hands and two legs, cannot I work? By what dignity is Gogia better than me? Just because he is a man?”.⁶⁰ She controls everything in the household, and her son, even thou he is old enough, does not try to change her in this, and the narrator himself remarks that there was no need for it as she could run after it better than any man. She does not even cry in the presence of others when her son is dying and only lets herself do it after she believes she is alone with his dead body. But when she finds out that she is not alone, but in the presence of a peasant, who had been in love with her for his whole life, she is extremely rude and strict with him. The only time, when she shows her sentiments, is when, once a week, she cleans the gun of her dead husband (an ultimate phallic symbol) as the narrator describes it “she touched it with such a kind of worship, as if she was praying”, and it is the only time when she cries, hence expresses some human features, and of course she is all alone the house. Even thou it is mentioned in the story that her husband died when she was young and pretty (she never ever had even

⁵⁷ Dodona Kiziria, *Otaraant kviriv as the moral ideal of a Georgian woman*
Akaki Bakradze *Ilia Chavchavadze* Nakaduli, 1987

⁵⁸ Dodona Kiziria, *Otaraant kviriv as the moral ideal of a Georgian woman* p.10

⁵⁹ Ibid. p. 10

⁶⁰ *Otaraant Kvirivi in Works of Ilia Chavchavadze* vol. 2. p. 40

in her mind to get married once again) her attractiveness does not speak about her femininity, which is repressed and excluded with highly expressed masculine, powerful and dominating features⁶¹.

The son is the docile son, under the power of his mother: as the narrator states he is the “slave of his mother”, he would listen every time to her and would not act without her permission. He can not even dare to claim his wish that he wants to serve to baron, because he is afraid of her in a certain sense. It is the mother again who makes him to speak up, once she notices his unusual state of melancholia, which lasts for a long time and guesses that her son has is worried about something, which he can not admit. He is feminized in this sense just like the son of the poem mentioned above. The sister of the baron even makes a joke with him once that he is *shy as a newly brought bride*. Hence Keso (the sister) who could be considered as the embodiment of the femininity, (I would say “could” as there is no much emphasis on her, or whether her appearance) is more courageous than him. The shyness of the son could not be attributed to the social scale, but only to his attitude towards women in general, he is quite brave to give some remarks to the brother when it comes up to this, can not say a word to the sister, who he is in love with. His mother for example speaks with barons and treats them as her equals, and they do not seem to have problem with it, as deep in the heart everyone was afraid of her. So the same act for her son would not have another consequence as well.

This shyness of the son could be explained by the type of his relationship with his mother, where she has the leading and controlling one. He consequently projects the same vision on the woman he chooses as his love object; his attitude towards Keso of course becomes even stronger together with the social hierarchy. (actually stressing and challenging the social scale is the main purpose of the story, the main traditional reproach to Keso, from critics and expressed in the story from her brother as well, is that she was blind and could not notice the son’s devoted love because of the social hierarchical difference) .Of course his love choice is determined exactly by this factor,

⁶¹ Dodona Kiziria, *Otaraankt Kvirivi as an moral ideal of a Georgian Woman* p.14

because a son like him, who is under the control of the phallic mother, would chose as his love object an “un -attainable” woman.

Hence as I have illustrated hopefully the traditional idealized vision and representations of the Mother of Georgia and the dominance of the phallic mother, now I will go on now on examining the psychoanalytical theory and later I will show to reveal the contemporary versions.

Chapter Three: Contemporary stories

3.1.Crisis of the Mother of Georgia/Phallic Mother Analysis of the *Spasms*,⁶² A Short Story by Naira Gelashvili

The first story that I am going to discuss in my paper is called *Spasms* and was published first with the male pseudonym Zura Mesxi. The story challenges and speaks about the crisis of the traditional values, and more precisely about the crisis of the traditional Mother of Georgia, who due to the social changes, can no longer fulfil the function ascribed to her by the national discourse. The story illustrates the anxiety and the weakness of the son, who does not accept the world of the Mother, but is nevertheless unable to get away and break up the chains which connect him to her chora.

The action of the story takes place in post-soviet Georgia, after the civil war. The narrator is a 16 year old boy who lives with his mother and is abandoned by the father, who has migrated to “the third or fourth world”. The only thing that he has left is his gun, which is destined for hunting. The protagonist is suffering from convulsions and spasms that started when he was five years old, the age when he started to notice the garbage around. As the narrator puts it: “Before then I was happy, I was in heaven, and I thought that rats were rabbits and I wanted to play with them, but they never let me to.” When he was twelve years old, as he was looking one day through the window, a paper bag full of garbage fell on his head: “the paper bag fell on my head and I recognized: rotten aubergines, putrid sauce, meat, bones, woman’s hair and so on”. Afterwards, he masturbated for the first time, while having shower in the bathroom. He recalls that his mother used to be a teacher of Georgian literature,

⁶² First of all I would like to mention that this story contains many aspects criticizing the social life and society, the politics and nationalism, problems of the early ninetieth’s Georgia, (and not only the early ninetieths) but I will only focus on the extracts which respond to my scope on interests in this concrete case. This story was first published in 1998 in a literary journal *Arile*, (25 March 1998 vol.7) but I was using its online version, which you can check at

and as she lost her job, she had to find another source of income in order to survive. At first, she was selling books, but as “no one was buying none of her favourite writers, the pride of the Georgian nation”, she began to sell pornographic magazines, wearing dark glasses and artificial hair to disguise herself.

The life of the protagonist consists of hanging out with his friends in an abandoned school building. These meetings often end up in orgies. Later, one of his friends is arrested, being suspected in a robbery. At the same time, his ‘girlfriend’ turns out to be pregnant. Although the protagonist is less likely to be the father of her child (since he was always “protecting himself”), he nevertheless takes this role for granted, and accompanies her in a hospital for abortion. After the abortion, because of the girl’s insistence, they have an intercourse (“It is too cold here”-she says) after which she starts bleeding. The protagonist goes out to search for a doctor in the empty hospital, with no electricity. Finally, he finds him, and both of them head off to see her. This is where the story ends.

At this point, after giving a short summary of the story, I will proceed with the analysis. First, there is the ever absent father. Second, there is the mother, who symbolizes the worshipped and praised Mother of Georgia. The mother used to be a teacher of Georgian literature, a profession that in the Georgian discourse entails that she must raise and educate the worthy sons of the nation, to imbue them with the traditional values and “teach them the love of the motherland’. Thus, she is no more the traditional powerful phallic mother, but becomes somewhat castrated: due to the social events (the war) she has lost her job and now can only support herself and her son by selling pornographic magazines. As the protagonist says:

“And my mother was the teacher of the Georgian literature. Just imagine... and she was proud as every Georgian, who is even proud of the own pride. Now she is selling pornographic magazines and is ashamed and suffers, because she betrays ‘the idea’ or something like that... She has a neurosis because of shame, because of neurosis colitis, because of colitis- arrhythmia and so on.

I stood up on the chair and solely claimed to her with my arms opened: "Georgian woman! Mother of Georgia! Do not suffer! I do not have spasms because of the hunger, stay at home. Or if you go, be there, and give courageously to your people what they are longing for. And be proud! Now you have more reasons for that than before! In that your school, because now you are no more lying nor preaching some bullshit and you are really in service of your nation by freeing them from sexual Palaeolithic. O my mother, O-O-O and stuff like that".

Later, he adds: "It's true her colitis is more serious now, but she is not that proud anymore and does not look down on people, and she does not know how much this means, even from a Christian perspective, and she must be thankful that this life undermined her high self appreciation, that is, the mother or father of all sins"

Moreover, as the protagonist learns from his neighbour, who is selling condoms, his mother has a secret sexual relationship with someone, because she "bought yesterday ten condoms from me". The son shows indifference: "I did not have spasms. I just said: 'the only thing that hurts me now is the fact that a former pedagogue has encountered a man, who does not even buy condoms and she has to do it for him. Otherwise, I only appreciate this. And all I wish for is that they did not have sex at that market, in a certain smelling storage house among boxes, refrigerators and toilets, where rats are running everywhere". Her secret relationship emphasizes the fact that she has lost all her dignity and values and can no longer assume the role of the respectful mother and provide an example for the others.

As I have already mentioned, the protagonist is suffering from spasms, which started when he was 5 years old, when he started to notice the enormous amount of garbage. The presence of garbage is an important feature of the story. Its description is so powerful and explicit that it creates the impression of exaggeration, and due to that, it has a grotesque impact. Nevertheless, it lacks any of the positive or joyful connotations which are characteristic to the grotesque. The garbage ultimately appears to be not only the 'real' garbage (although during this specific time this problem was really present) but it also serves as a metaphor of the life-style and 'old' values, a metaphor of the whole outer world. The garbage dominates everything: it is thrown off from the windows of the blocks, it fills the

streets, the whole city delves in garbage and everyone is a part of the garbage, as long as they are living in it: “imagine, this country named Georgia has writers, poets, musicians, painters, bees of art... and there are a lot of them, and everyone is proud of it, most of all the artists themselves. It’s them that I hate most of all... the one who is sitting in the garbage must shout and become a dustman. When one sings, dances, plays and writes poems in the garbage, it is nothing more than a singing, dancing and playing garbage!”

The mother of the protagonist also throws garbage from the window, but at first she is attempting to hide it from the son, as “she was instinctively feeling my sensitive, therefore traumatic attitude to the garbage being thrown out the window... I could tell her not to do it, and she would not do it. In this case I would not see it anymore, but it’s worthy for me to observe my mother throwing garbage. Especially after the event when the thrown garbage almost killed her only son. I do not throw the garbage from the window, but I also do not take it out either. Hence, I am a sadist”.

This extract illustrates once more the decadence of the traditional phallic mother, the Mother of Georgia. Through her behaviour, she is far from being an ideal example and a respectful authority for her son. The son himself has three possibilities; the first is to take his father’s fusil, the phallus, and shoot everyone in the block. The second one is to commit suicide. The third, as he claims, is a way of surviving: to dress as a Gypsy woman⁶³, to put a scarf on his head and sweep off all the garbage that is thrown out from windows. But this is the way of a martyr, and therefore it is unrealisable: “I know, they will catch me, by screaming and damning me: “homosexual!” “gay”! Well, I will be wearing a dress, a plissé festival of a Gypsy woman... they will drag me to the square of Liberty and will burn me alive with my sweep, -me a speechless bird, who was trying to sweep away and burn their garbage... and after all I will wear a dress to make this splendid experiment and prove that they can not live without this garbage at all”.

⁶³ Under Soviet period, it was mostly Gypsies who were sweeping the garbage from the streets.

All these three possibilities express rebellion against the garbage, the society, and also against the mother, as she is a part of it. Hence, these options assume that he must break the chains which bind him to the mother, and consequently to the rest social world. The first two options require that the protagonist might use his father's fusil, hence become the possessor of phallus, achieve the separation from the mother and cut himself off from her realm. But these two ways are just the expression of protest, whereas the third way requires him to become the "the worthy son" that is articulated in the traditional discourse, the one who will sweep away the garbage and "bring the light". But he can not assume this role, perhaps because he is raised by the castrated mother, who can not fulfil her role either. Finally, he decides just to express his protest and to claim that he is not part of this total garbage. His final decision is to shoot all the windows and to commit suicide afterwards.

I would argue that this story of a sixteen-year old, who is suffering from spasms, represents the anxiety of a child who is caught in the realm of the phallic mother. As opposed to the traditional mother, this phallic mother no longer has her power. She can no longer fulfil the role that is prescribed by the discourse, because she has lost her phallus - her pride, and thus she is castrated. The spasms and convulsions of the son, in this sense, correspond to what J. Kristeva calls the 'Chora', the Semitic, and which Eagleton describes as the '(child's) body as criss-crossed by a flow of 'pulsions' or drives which are at this point relatively unorganised."⁶⁴.

He is also different from the "traditional" image of the son. He does not worship and admire his mother. The son is not able to inherit the father's phallus and can not get out from the chora. First, he does not use his father's fusil; his decision remains as a decision and as a future plan in the story. Second, he can not assume his role, which is to become himself a father (even if he tries in a sense), and to enter into the post Oedipal stage: when his girlfriend turns out to be pregnant, although the father of the child is unknown, he is ready to fulfil the role of the father. But he does not really resist

⁶⁴ Eagleton, *Literary theory*, Oxford 1994s p. 188

her will of the abortion and does not persuade her that he really wants to take the responsibility of the child.

After the elimination of the foetus, he has an intercourse with her in the hospital, and as a result of that, she is bleeding. The ambiguous end of the story, where it is not clear if the girl survives or not, gives the possibility to suggest that he actually demolishes the future Mother of Georgia, represented by his girlfriend. The refusal of motherhood by the girlfriend illustrates and proves again her inability to adopt the traditional and ideal function ascribed to the Mother of Georgia. She does not want and can not reproduce, and logically there is no question of upbringing the next generation. Hence, according to the story, there is no perspective of solving and continuing the conflict, expressed in the physical anxiety of the protagonist. The projection the ideal of the mother on her fails, and this leads to the trapped and closed state of the relationship with the ancient and outdated mother of Georgia, and this blocked and fixed connection leads to the probable self-destruction.

3.2. Father as the Other (?)

Analysis of *Everything about someone else's father*

A short story by Magda Kalandadze

The next text that I have chosen for my analysis is written by Magda Kalandadze, a young female writer. The short story is called *Everything about someone else's father*. This story has an explicit Oedipal plot: it describes a father-daughter's incestual relationship. Nevertheless, this traditional Oedipal stratagem, as I will argue and show in my analysis, is only a mask, which hides the real conflict which is related to the daughter's mother. The liaison with the father is nothing more than revenge over the mother, because she did not give her enough love, and has betrayed her. This betrayal is expressed by her having another husband and a daughter. Hence the mother has privileged a "successful" triad over the dyad with her first daughter.

The reason why I have chosen this story in particular is that it could be considered as being revolutionary, in that its plot deals with the taboo question of traditional Georgian narratives, which usually describe mother-child relationship in idealized colours. As I will show in the following paragraphs, the story represents this relationship from another perspective.

The story is narrated by three narrative voices, one of which belongs to the daughter, another to a young boy, the daughter's boyfriend, and the last one is that of an non-identified narrator, who nevertheless cannot be claimed to be omniscient. The *narration* times are confused as well, as the text is divided into small chapters called *before* or *after*. These chapters are separating sequences pre- and post- a certain event.

To sum up, it is a story about a young woman (her age is ambiguous), who was abandoned by her father at the age of seven, and lives with her mother, her stepfather and stepsister. She has a boyfriend, who, as it turns out from the diffused narration, is her student. She suffers from the fear of losing virginity, which becomes the reason of their split. The father, who has left the country and has

been working in Russia in mass media, returns to Georgia as the director of a TV channel, and organizes a conference for journalists. Here is where the daughter first meets him. They are starting a relationship, which ends up with the incestual intercourse, which causes the panic of the daughter, obsessed with esodophobia. The father, terrified with her reaction, ends up committing suicide. The narrative of the *after* chapters describes the state of the daughter after this event. She is sick and spends the entire day lying in the bed. The daughter's boyfriend's narrative serves to illustrate his attitude, which is full of disgust towards her. From his narrative we also learn about the daughter's death.

What I would like to stress at this point is the relationship between daughter and mother, daughter and father and son and mother. The reason for this is because, as I have already mentioned above, it offers different scenarios, which are unusual to Georgian fiction. The daughter describes the maternal environment, including her stepfather and sister, with the following terms: "Tamuna (her stepsister) enters my room three times a day, Nino (mother) enters twice, and Sandro (step-father) tries not to enter at all. But he preserves the norms of politeness. It is Tamuna who irritates me most of all, she is my sister and brings me meal. ... I throw her out from my room, sometimes I am even embracing her, she is just 14 years old, and me, I don't have a cat. Nino does not irritate me, I just hate her. She is my mother. She only comes to me when I call her, and me, I call her only in two cases: when I miss her and when I hate her. In the first case I am kissing and embracing her, with the hope that maybe she might caress me as well – I am her first daughter and she does not have a dog either. In the second case I am explaining her with all my heart and soul how and why I hate her so much. Those times I am unbearably subjective".⁶⁵

Throughout the story, the daughter never mentions the reasons for her tense relationships with the mother. I would argue that this fact could be regarded as the nervous patient's attitude of silencing and to taboo in his/her discourse the real reason of the internal conflict, as I will reveal later.

⁶⁵ *Everything about someone else's father. In Kviris Palitra* 2003 26 November p. 18.

Nevertheless, one might suggest that it is the hate of the abandoned child from the mother, (even if she is formally present) and jealousy for her younger sister, who she also blames for losing maternal love. The sister and the stepfather are attributes of the mother, although this triad creates a symbol of the happily resolved family romances: “SandroNinoTamuna is one organism. Maybe a healthy organism, unlike me, but I still prefer mine: sick, mutilated, ill with incurable disease, rotten, bad, disgusting, nauseating, sordid”⁶⁶. The description is ultimately exaggerated and overstated by the stressed use of synonymous adjectives and it resembles to the notion of grotesque body (as in the description of the garbage in the previous short story), only without any positive or joyful connotation. And it most probably describes not the way the narrator’s body is in *reality*, but the way the narrator sees her own body from her inner perspective.

The grotesque image of her body also appears in the narrative of the daughter’s boyfriend, when he visits her at his mother’s insisting demands: “when I entered in that stinking room I felt desire to kill and erase without traces, burry this misshaped body, which was lying in the sheets covered with traces of ashes and meal. She had a pillow on her stomach, a bowl of cream in one hand and another in her mouth, hairs in her eyes and those eyes closed and diminished, the whole face lost in fatness, hands plumped as well, all red, breathing heavily”⁶⁷. The result of this image is that he runs out from the room and from the apartment as well and rushes to his friend’s place where he ends up vomiting. This sordid and disgusting organism is the part that is separated and excluded from the maternal realm.

The son-mother relationship appears in the narrative sequence of the daughter’s boyfriend and his mother. Although the son’s discourse is aggressive and disrespectful towards the mother he is still under her power. This is how the episode of her insistence to go and visit his ex-girlfriend is described: “She did her way anyway, she spoiled and poisoned and destroyed me after all. Recently, she was sick and when I bought her medicines she said, please, son, don’t exasperate me, please, go and visit her,

⁶⁶ *Everything about Someone else’s Father* p. 18

⁶⁷ *Ibid* p. 20

what will Nino think, I go to her so often because of my sickness, I can not even dare and ask her about Lena's health. Please, there is money on the shelf, buy her flowers, go and see her. I am standing here, all shocked, thinking: take a pillow now and throttle her"⁶⁸. In the last sequence, where he announces the daughter's death, he says: " Oh, my mother just got on my nerves!!! She just fucked my mind: go and go, it is not proper, it is not proper... so what, if I won't throw a rotten flower on the coffin the native land won't receive Lena Paichadze's rotten and torn body, or what? And this tie is killing me after all!" Therefore, even if there is no representation of the respectful son, who most of all worships his mother, he is still under her power, unlike in the earlier story. Moreover, even if his attitude is aggressive and insulting, he still remains docile and obedient, fulfilling her wishes.

I have already mentioned that the age of the daughter remains ambiguous in the story. Her narrative leaves the impression that she is a young girl, around twenty years old, whereas in the narrative of her boyfriend, she is always referred to as a woman. From her boyfriend's context she is his teacher. This doubling suggests the attitude to/of women: she is always a little girl with regard to her father, and always mature with regard to the boy, who unconsciously seeks and tries to project onto her the image of his mother.

At a first glance, the story is about the father. The title intertextually refers to Pedro Almadovari's film "Everything about my mother", and in a certain way turns to be its alternative version. This is also suggested in the text, when to the physician's question: "tell me everything about your father" the daughter replies "Are you fond of Spanish movies?" The father – daughter relationship is described by the daughter in erotic tones. The father himself does not speak, he only exists from the daughter's perspective. He is a stranger, an alien, arrived from the outer social world, from another country. In Lacanian terms, he is the desired Other, with whom the incest taboo does not work (they are having sexual relationship without penetration because of the daughter's esodophobia.).

⁶⁸ *Everything about someone else's father* p.21

This relationship hides something behind it, which is connected not to the father, but leads to the mother and daughter's hate towards the mother. The fear of losing the virginity and of penetration, her privilege for the clitoral orgasm over the vaginal one appears ultimately as the sign of the daughter's homosexual choice, in love with her mother, whom she was unable to give the desired phallus. The phallus in this case may be regarded as the traditional triadic family of the patriarchal order, (because of the unsuccessfully chosen father, who left her) and hence all her love is turned into hate and anxiety. (Her love towards the mother is compared to the attitude of a dog towards its patron, as it is shown in the quote at the beginning of the chapter.

There is one more detail in the story on which I would like to insist, as it provides a clue and proves my argument: the daughter is eating sour cream all the time. The sour cream, as a product of milk, associated with the maternal milk, which by itself indicates the fact that the daughter suffers from a lack of maternal milk, which in psychoanalytical theory stands for the maternal love⁶⁹. Consequently, the incest with the father is not the achievement and realisation of the repressed Freudian oedipal complex, but just the revenge over the mother, because by giving the daughter a few amount of milk, her maternal love was not enough.

⁶⁹ Melanie Klein (1956) *A Study of Envy and Gratitude*, in Rosalind Minsky (1996), *Psychoanalysis and Gender*, p. 238

3.3. How to forget the German Language

A short story by Magda Kalandadze

The third story that I am going to analyse also belongs to Magda Kalandaze. Its title is *How to forget the German language*. The main focus of the story is the daughter's anxiety, which is frustrated by her mother. From the glorious representation, she has been reduced to a ridicule figure, totally unacceptable for her. The daughter's attempt to fill the gap with the mother by having a lesbian relationship with another woman fails as well. Her partner, as long as the story shows, privileges her ex husband over the main character, in the phallic order. The anxiety and double frustration of the daughter drives her to the desire of castrating a certain woman, who she sees in the bus, which consists in killing her child. But this decision leads her to the self-destruction, as the unknown woman turns to be her own mother.

The story is a narrative of a young girl. This narrative represents a reconstruction of memories on her way home in the bus. From her fragmented memories, we learn about her relationship with a woman, who is older than her and in her mid forties. She is a specialist in the German language. She is deserted by her husband and suffers from tuberculosis. The woman has a little mouse, which she keeps in a box and she never lets out. This absolute isolation of this mouse was the realisation of the woman's ideals, her "achievement" to create a perfect happiness even for one existing thing in the world, as according to her conception of happiness, only the one who has never ever experienced it, can be really happy. In the beginning of their relationship, the narrator promises that she would never ever touch it. One day, she just gets curious and lets the mouse out, while her partner was in the bathroom. This becomes a reason of clash between them, after which the angry narrator claims not to see her at all during one week, "as, I knew, she would blame me later for not keeping my promises, and I chose the

maximal coefficient of my strong will”⁷⁰. But exactly the day before the expiring date, the woman calls her and asks her to bring her some medicines, for at that time she was ill from pneumonia.

Parallel to their conversation on the phone a family drama in the girl’s house takes place. The father calls her to help him, because the mother decided to dye her hair in yellow. The mother is protesting against his will, and is screaming out: “ Oh, Guram, but I also have my personality after all!” The girl explicitly takes the side of the father: “the crying “personality” (the mother) took a bag and rushed out from the house. Perhaps now she will go to one of her friends and tell her about the family tragedy, then both of them will have a discussion on the topic of “oppressed woman”. The girl takes the side of the father, as she generally hates the yellow colour, and asks him for money to buy a present for her friend.

After buying the necessary medicaments, she goes to her partner’s house. The woman meets her in the entrance of the apartment, and does not want to let her in and after thanking, she asks her to leave. The reason of the refusal is that her ex-husband came to visit her, and if he sees the girl “he will immediately guess everything”. The girl protests, insists, she says that she will pretend that she is a student, but the woman gently refuses again, saying that they both know it is not so, and according to the girl’s character she is sure that she will show up anyway. The girl promises her that she will not say a word, she wants to stay with her so much, but the woman says that she does not believe in her promises and sends her out.

That is where the memories end. Now the narration goes into prolepsis, and the girl thinks about the future, when she will get rid of these clothes, as she knows that the illness of the woman is actually a disease. She drinks hot tea with lemon, smokes intensively without any regret, as she does not need to keep this promise to the woman (on their first meeting she had promised her to give it up). She pledges to forget all the things she has to forget, and she starts with the German language.

⁷⁰ *How to Forget the German language* in Kviris Palitra 2006 14 February p. 15

Occupied with these thoughts the girl notices a woman, sitting in front whose hair is dyed into bright yellow. This reminds her about the morning quarrel in her family.

“ I am getting irritated. I wonder how many hours has she spent in the beauty salon? Suddenly I imagined, when these kind of women’s children are dying, and they are rushing to the beauty salons, saying how can I meet like this people who will come to the funerals. I would kill with great pleasure the child of this woman, and I will, if I ever meet it. Well, here is the promise, accomplished from the beginning, I wish she could see me now. It’s over, I have a victory...

Csssssss. Here it is. I am going to the driver, playing with coins in my hand.

-Hey, you are here mom, when did you came into?

-...

-Go down, I will pay. Hey, be careful, don’t step on my feet⁷¹,”

I would argue that this story represents a search of the “ideal” other mother, since the daughter is frustrated in her own one. The relationship between the lovers has an explicit maternal character. Apart from the considerable age difference, the attitude of the woman towards the girl is really maternal and she treats her as a child: she asks her to promise that she will give up smoking, because of concerns about her health, (explicit maternal gesture) and kisses her on the forehead. She blames her for not keeping her promises, and for the lack of strong will, which could be translated as the reproach of not being enough grown up and not having a stabilised personality. The episode of the mouse could be translated as metaphor for exaggerated maternal love and care, the wish of parent to isolate her offspring from the outer world and problems and make everything for it. The girl’s aim is also to prove to her lover and to herself as well that she can have enough strength. Having good strength supposes that the person is grown up and mature enough, but her attempt to prove it fails every time in the story.

I would also argue that the daughter’s engagement in a lesbian relationship with an older woman has the connotation of finding the mother in another woman. This, however, also leaves her frustrated, as she cannot provide her with the desired phallus, because of her lack of the strong will, and

⁷¹ *How to forget the German language* p.18

she again privileges her husband in this context. The fact that the woman is a specialist of the German language, (she is a translator in the Embassy of Germany), connotes her otherness again: she speaks the other language, which became trait of their unification.

Similarly to the previous story, there is not much said about the mother again. But from what she mentions, one could guess that the relationship is far from being perfect. The daughter is clearly frustrated in her mother. The mother does not have an authority, she is presented as a ridicule figure from the daughter's perspective. The family drama about the fact of dying hair in yellow is regarded from the daughter's standpoint as something not respectful and disgusting, which comes up by the end of the story, when she sees her mother in the bus, as a stranger, as the other. The yellow hair brings her the association of the most unworthy of all mothers, who even in case of their children's death care more about their appearance, having the excuse that "they can not show up *like this* (hence not in a good form) to the people coming to the funeral. The other in this case is not anymore the desired other, in Lacanian terms, but the other who is regarded as someone irritating, alien, towards whom the daughter has no desire of reunification. She dreams about killing a child of "a woman like that", therefore to castrate her, to take away from her the phallus, traditionally embodied in an offspring in psychoanalytical theory. Nevertheless, this decision stands for the self-liquidation. In the logic of the story, the only way to find the way, the final victory can only be achieved by self-destruction.

Therefore, the mother in this story has nothing to do with the image of the phallic mother, the Mother of Georgia. From the time-honoured glorious representations, she is reduced to a ridicule figure, turned into an object of hate and disgust for the daughter. There is no question that she is not able to assume the role assigned for her by the traditional discourse. As the daughter's attempt of finding her ideal in another woman is failed as well, her anxiety drives her to the idea of castrating her from the only phallus she possess, when she sees her as the other. This phallus is her child, the

extension of her body, but in this case the daughter has to liquidate herself. So once more, the only way of solving the conflict leads to the self-destruction again.

Conclusion

In this thesis, I have argued that the Georgian unconsciousness is dominated by the image of the powerful and strong mother. The traditional Oedipal drama is alien to it, as the father, on the level of symbolic, does not exist, or his existence is insignificant. The analyses within this paper confirm that the Georgian unconsciousness rests in the pre-Oedipal phase, in the realm of the mother. This pre-Oedipality, thus the strong attachment with the mother, is not challenged in the grand narrative, but quite the opposite. In a sense, due to her authority, it is the mother who becomes responsible for the acts of her child, and not the child itself. Thus, the child never grows up, and remains immature in the realm of the mother.

The several pieces of contemporary Georgian women writers show and stress the attention on the conflicts, which may arise in this situation. Although the stories which I have analysed show its different aspects, the results are similar. The image of the traditional phallic mother fails to fulfil its role, and this causes anxiety and dissatisfaction in the children. Despite this, however, this liaison rests unbreakable, and any attempt to overcome it leads to the self-destruction, because of the absence of the strong symbolic figure of the father, who is supposed to intervene in this dyadic and separate them.

These conflicts and anxieties are caused by social changes. In the contemporary narratives, there is no place for the traditional representation of the Mother of Georgia, as she is decreased to a mother who dislikes her own daughter because of an unsuccessful marriage with her husband, to a mother who has family conflicts because of the colour of her hair. Finally she is the mother, a former teacher of the Georgian language, selling porno magazines in the market. Neither of these castrated figures is able to fulfil the assumed functions of the Mother of Georgia, which therefore leads to her

crisis and to the crisis of the contemporary Georgian unconsciousness as well, expressed in the stories by the self-destruction.

To conclude, there is a contrast with Freudian, and especially Lacanian psychoanalysis, which supposes that the person's tragedy, lies in the split with the mother, in the loss of the maternal body. For the Georgian unconsciousness, on the contrary, as I have illustrated, this not-accomplished split represents a catastrophe, embodied in the symbolical self liquidation.

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