

Fiction form and existential motives of novel “Guest” by Guram Gegeshidze

Abstract: As widely-known, existentialism establishes the view saying that human as a subject represents an existential philosophical axle of individual thinking, action, feeling and existence. In accordance with the following studies starting point of the individual is related to “existential condition” when human loses the orientation ability in the world, whereas he perceives everything to be pointless and absurd. Considering the following one our attraction was paid to the novel “Guest” by Guram Gegeshidze, who is a protagonist – Tarkhuji is obsessed with the existential problems and the so called one refers to the types of alienated protagonists. The aim of exploration is to analyze and point out the philosophical aspect of the story (in particular – existential). Attention is also paid to the attempt of the author who “avoids” real style and provide the works with cognitive stream of elements by the fictional means of expression. In the course of doing the research we rely on the works of Martin Heidegger, Soren Kierkegaard, Sigmund Freud. We also depend on the letter of Natia Svanadze from Literary Studies referring to Guram Gegeshidze’s novel “Guest”.

Key words: existentialism, stream of consciousness, Martin Hydeger, Soren Kierkegaard, Guram Gegeshidze, novel “Guest”

The novel “Guest” created in 1970 by Guram Gegeshidze stands out with its form and stylistic characteristics. Tarkhuji is seen to be a protagonist, a young man being involved in search of himself and trying to establish his place in society. Pain caused by losing the beloved people and memories of the old time accompany and give no peace to him.

At the start of the work Tarkhuji is a new arrival in Tbilisi from the village, where he was working as a teacher, but he abandoned a job. At the same time, he is infatuated by being a mountaineer, however, he hardly brings his mind to bear on the work as though, he can’t get into his stride.

Tarkhuji is thought to be a protagonist having existential problems. The so-called type of alienated characters.

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One of the founders of Existentialism and German Philosophy considers that principal action must be aspiration towards freedom in order to become cognized about our existence: “Truth should represent the absolute essence of human or in return.”

As far as one of the first follow-up of Existentialism Daniel and psychologist and philosopher Soren Kierkegaard are concerned truth is essential to find which has a particular aim for the individual being. In his work “Balance of Ethicality and Aestheticism on the way to the personality development he mentions that ability of making a choice is the most significant aspect to form and develop the individual.

If the above-given provisions fit the story, that is going to be discussed by us, turns out that for the greater part the existential motives define the nature of the story. “The first-rate is a title of the novel “Guest” implying attitude of the main character toward the world. Tarkhuji feels like being a foreigner and guest on the face of the earth. Despite his attempt to become a part of the objective reality, idea and essence of being on the earth becomes unreachable and farther. “Words are not capable of expressing the one, that is implied by life. The one we overpower, what we gained how insignificant it is in comparison with that, what are unsayable, unexplainable, untouchable in the hearts of hearts” (Gegeshidze 2017:283) – it is difficult to say whether it is an echo of author’s or protagonist’s thoughts. The fact that one of the protagonist of the novel, the tragically perished Vazha is prototype of Guram Rcheulishvili and writer’s friend Nodar Chkheidze, maybe, Tarkhuji and works are considered to be an image of the author and autobiographical novel respectively.

Loneliness of Protagonist of the novel is intensified by the trauma gained in childhood: Memory and death of mother in which the shadow of the father does not shudder pallidly, life in the family of the aunt, where he is an alien and the only frater is a grandfather who Tarkhuji loses at an early age. “Aunt loved me, I did her too, but I still could not get used to her, because of being aware of the fact that I was an orphan missing the breast of the mom, neither the spouse of the aunt I felt fond of. I was alone, haunted by the feeling of being orphan, incurred my loneliness painfully in adolescence years”. (Gegeshidze 2017:228)

In accordance with the Freudian doctrine, life of individual is defined by the trauma gained in childhood, who loses the parents at an early age, later the one hardly trusts the people, is constantly concerned about getting abandoned and the event particularly encumbers the one to establish the loving relationships. In the similar events also low self-assessment can be seen, having no desire to communicate with society, excessive sensitivity towards the following events, isolation and loneliness is defined.

Protagonist of “Guest” Tarkhuji is exposed to possess all the characteristics.

Especially, painful episode is his arrival from the expedition when in the state of being exhausted was dying to reach home and relax. At this time the door turns out to be locked. His aunt did not remember the date of his arrival and went to the birthday of her relative. “Such absent-mindedness was unexpected for me, but that night I terribly felt heart-broken. I felt to be orphan, I felt redundant and became jealous of the people having hope of the relatives.” (Gegeshidze, 2017, 289)

Tarkhuji as a alienated protagonist for the world, is in a permanent search of an orient, main value, which is well worth a life. Frequently, he thinks about the notion, aim and role of the individual, however, the conclusion is the following: everything is vain. “I suffered from an unusual dismissal, however, I did not err myself, but human, sooner or later his name shall perish, hopeless of victory desperately clinging on life” (Gegeshidze 2017: 295). These and other thoughts haunt the fellow. Fiction form of the work is to explore the idea. The philosophical questions are raised by the writer which are answered by the entire works of the author. What is a distance between the humans and the unreachable one. Is there a conditional limit which can be overstepped by means of our efforts.

For the fellow thinking about the notion of human's essence is especially painful when two closest friend died in succession. After that state of being human becomes more unbearable for him.

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At the stage of tough life Tarkhuji grabs sleeping-bag and backpack and goes to the mountains in order to set himself free from the thoughts. The following process, as if, is an attempt to escape the filthiness of essence, an allegory of getting closer to sanctity and maybe, the fellow is considered as a symbol of future that will be spoken about below in a broad way.

Tarkhuji is constantly suffering from the state of being incapable. He follows the rhythm of life, however, he is not satisfied by his own essence. As though, in a crucial moment someone is ahead of him to make a choice and he stays without function. He gets acquainted with Mary at the mourning of the best friend, a woman who is loved, but it develops that she dated with Vazha in the past. Digesting the last one was so difficult for Tarkhuji that he broke up with Mary. Another history of loving relationship is connected to Sopho – a girl who is loved in an amorous way, however, before confessing in love to her, Vakhtang is ahead of him and soon he gets married with her.

It confirms the assumption to the protagonist of the following novel, place in this world does not exist for him. Feelings of the protagonist of the novel are related to the protagonists' spiritual mood of Hamsun's "Mysteries", Gegeshidze's "Sinful" and "Persecuted". All the tragic events around Tarkhuji threaten the fellow to absorb. As though, the writer prepares the ending as he is liable. The reader makes understanding that protagonist is on the edge of using up last efforts and committing the suicide, however, Gegeshidze suggest the unusual ending.

On night while walking, the fellow meets a drunken acquaintance, who remembers anger of an old time, he attacks him together with the friends and wounds him with knife. “It was black as hell, white brightly shining line appeared in the dark. The line writhed, became stretched and unexpectedly snapped. It became dark again”. (Gegeshidze 2017: 472).

To be on the brink of death, Tarkhuji survived thanks to the power of miracle. In the state of being semi-somnolent he heard the worries of his friends, crying of Sopo, the one who was loved almighty and unexpectedly he was exposed to have a drive of life, fight and survival. The following tragic accident turned out to be crucial in his consciousness after that the color of his life changed. Tarkhuji was on the way of rebirthing and self-exploring and made a decision to return to the village. “I felt how I loved this enigmatic waning world that I could see from the window of train. I was fond of the weary land, irrigated with blood of my ancestors, manured with the bones of my ancestors and my heart used to be getting slashed with endless despairing love like a pain” (Gegeshidze 2017: 558).

It is thought that researcher in Literary Studies, Natia Svanadze notices advisably that “Last escape of Tarkhuji from the city is an aspiration to a spiritual hunger and moral perfection. Tarkhuji must survive and return to society who is aware of the necessity of such people” (Svanidze 2002: 94)

The author is able to bring the reader out in the novel by means of minimalist, simple style of story-telling. At the same time, he describes the multi-colored palette, like a naturalistic writer, he represents the human with faults and honors, which is thought to be achieved successfully by means of story-telling in the first person. He touches the tabooed issues which are often avoided by the realist writers. For example, in the course of accident in appearance unusual and inappropriate behavior of the characters which are considered to be introgenic. It is “independent” from the outer objects, events and self-sufficient.

Considering the above-mentioned a death episode of protagonist’s friend is noteworthy, whereas Tarkhuji keeps an entire vigil beside the coffin with other fellows: “I was so encouraged to get involved by Vazha that I burst out laughing in the family of Vakhtang when talking about silliness. He was roaring with laughter staring at me, as though, he made me roar with laughter, gave me his passion with invisible, magnetic power and I surrendered.” (Gegeshidze 2017: 312)

“Guest” is thought to be exposed to have magic characteristics of realism, because in the work limit among real and fictitious, existing and non-existing world is not seen. Like Marquez and Borges, the flow of protagonist’s thoughts travels in the labyrinth from one millennium to the second one, in his consciousness thoughts move as a flow. It seems that as though, Tarkhuji is an unbalanced individual in terms of time and space. “The world seems to him not in the form that is perceived by an individual with its own feelings, but as it would be seen in the upset mirror. At this time every detail is relevant to reality, however, so many realities are indiscriminate mixture that it gains a fantastic image and as Borges would have said, it is a labyrinth of labyrinth, when every fact is present, but the way should be found“. (Kakitashvili 2013)

The novel mainly consists of the internal monologues of Tarkhuji. Exactly, by means of this, we become familiar with rest of the characters. Traditional composition from Literary Studies: Introduction, revealing the plot and culmination, revealing the plot and conclusion are deliberately destroyed in the novel. For example, the emotion of the protagonist who is induced with the impressions of Mtatsminda’s views of Tbilisi who follows upon the memory related to the grandfather and mother.

When meeting an old acquaintance Abro, Tarkhuji is taken to home and is invited to drink, in his tiny, closed filthy room, inappropriate memory is born. “Finally, I calmed down by means of the smell of incense and flash shimmering of the candle. Then a fellow and burd entered the church. They stopped at the door. Bashfully, they looked over the nans, had a look at me too, I was sitting on the bench with my legs crossed, firstly Sioni was visited by them, they don’t look like Tbilisians. Self-consciously, they entered the temple and were looking through the almost erased inscriptions on the paving tile”. (Gegeshidze 2017: 232)

The given memory is followed illogically by the history of Leila and Zhana. It seems obvious that the author deliberately attempts to destroy the chain of consecutive story-telling.

As far as we are concerned, term “stream of consciousness” should be mentioned which was firstly used in the published work “Fundamentals of Psychology” by William James in 1880. Admittedly, it is not connected to Literature, however, the issue about the constant stream of the human’s inconscience raised. “Stream of consciousness” as technique was firstly used by

Dujardin, but the last one came up in the 20th century. Let's remember three greatest authors of this period with their works: Marcel Proust "In search of lost time", James Joyce "Portrait of Artist as a young man" and Dorothy Richardson "Journey" which are allotted to establish new Literary tendency, create new psychological object. It's worth mentioning that Dorothy Richardson's prose has a limit to the diversity of literary devices, Proust's merit is to bring new complicate associations into Literature, James's main honor is to establish the stream of consciousness which is represented at highest level in "Julius"

Undoubtedly, the tendency was started by the Freudian and psychoanalytical conception referring to unconsciousness.

As widely-known, in the stream of consciousness associative nature happens to be two kinds: in the first event associations are based on existential facts of the consciousness of the story-teller or protagonist (frequently disconnected from each other), which directs conscious to new associations.

Another kind of association entirely depends on the fiction understanding of the author. In this event association does not refer to the author's thoughts or spiritual life, it is an entire fiction organization of the writer in order to direct first type of association to the second one and integrate them in a harmonic way.

Internal monologue is one of the literary devices so that the stream of conscientiousness effectiveness is achieved. The author is thought to achieve the effect by means of the composition of the work.

With a view of fictional form the function of dream in the novel seems interesting to us. "The environment turned blue-greenish. It was midday, but the sun did not shine. The light seemed to be unworldly light-blue." (Gegeshidze 2017: 554).

The image, as though, reminds us of the celestial mansion and we are not in default since the man unexpectedly appears, who is supported by the huge sword. Tarkhuji travels in the mystic world with his deceased friends and Tsothe. "The city kept silence and laid out on the mountainside. People were moving in a silent way and for some reason everyone was dressed in strange old summer garments: white trousers, white shoes, white hat, collars of white shirts". (Gegeshidze 2017: 555) It is obvious that Tarkhuji travels among the deceases. Abundance of white and blue colors, quietness and harmony encourage us to think that writer describes the heaven.

Protagonist follows the deceased friends, hardly, they entered the cave and at this time a white horse unexpectedly appears biting the fellow on the hand and makes him feel unbearable pain, as though, it sobers him up and Tarkhuji stops. Horse is thought to be analyzed as a symbol of life. It is homogenous allegory of Tarkhuji's future. It represents the proof that the fellow gained victory over the death.

Summoning the twenty fourth chapter from "Gospel of Matthew" in the episode of the dream. "I discerned a marvelous quiet voice:

— And ye shall hear of wars, and rumors of wars; see that ye be not troubled, for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet". (Gegeshidze 2017: 557)

The Saviour foresees the second coming, Tarkhuji stands in form of him, listens and analyzes that life goes on. Famine, pestilence and earthquakes that have to be endured in order to obtain salvation. His journey to village is a start of a restless, emotional, but interesting life.

As it is seen, novel “Guest” stands out in the interesting and works of similar nature by Guram Gegeshidze with its fiction form and unusual ending whereas protagonist with the existential problems choose the life and not the suicide so as to survive and finds the supporting in melancholic objective reality.

In the introduction it was mentioned, because of number of the reasons “Guest” may be considered as an autobiographic novel. If the discussion is followed, Tarkhuji’s choice may be perceived as a crisis occurred in the worldview of the author. Furthermore, in the novel “Sinful” created in 1966 and in the story “Hounded” written in 1968 protagonists with the existential problems choose to commit suicide the novel written in 1970 “Guest” a protagonist Tarkhuji stays alive.

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