

## Lost Person Problem in Nino Kharatishvili's Novel *My Gentle Twin*

**Abstract:** Present border-less world has imposed all the products of globalization to the humankind without leaving any choice. Characters of Nino Kharatishvili's novel *My Gentle Twin* live in the same border-less world in which the search for the Me is the main problem for self-esteem and harmonic communication with the outer world. In the given novel having extremely interesting structure the author reveals the narrative line in two different chronotype planes (the present and the past) and by means of permanent rewinds and returns to the present manages to transform the current accelerated pace to the creative world. It is a story of the 21st century human, who has been left without love by the ruthless time giving instead the neurotic psychic as a "present". Stella and Ivo are the people lost in the world, thrown away and doomed for loneliness, who have the only chance to survive – to find their own selves at any cost, in order to define the essence of their existence. The main story of the novel is an attempt of solving the given task by going through the most complicated psycho-social paths.

**Key words:** Lost person, structure, Georgia

Nino Kharatishvili's name is already well known not just in the German literary society. She started with dramaturgy, although her novels, her dramaturgy of eternal thematic, have differently reflected the worldview and lingual world of the writer, which is nourished not only by German, but also by Georgian cultural traditions.

*My Gentle Twin* is the second novel written by the author. It is of circular structure, i.e. it starts with what it ends with. "You are so beautiful. You are still as beautiful as before. I smile. I look at you and feel how grateful I am to you. For this tender closeness. For this ruthless farness. This closeness is doomed; I cannot share it with anyone else; I must say farewell to you.

And still, I cannot take my eyes off of you" (Kharatishvili 2015: 9) – the thrilling drama of the humans of the 21<sup>st</sup> century develops between those slightly changed start and ending, which tells the story of love and hatred, betrayal and giving up for adoption, feeling guilty and forgiveness with amazing emotion.

The novel has specific architectonics. "I have a feeling that I don't know who I am any more. It is impossible to live like this, as if the fast forward is on. Everything was fine until now, but now I want to rewind. And this cannot happen without Frank and Tulia. Even without Lenny. But you are the main – I need you. I need to be here again; at least for a little bit of time." (Kharatishvili 2015: 27). These words by Ivo tie the knot, which is quite tense and intriguing; he attempts to open up some story, to clear something. It can be said that this happens at the very first pages of the novel. Nino Kharatishvili's novels (we mean only the Georgian-language, already published *Zhuzha* and *My Gentle Twin*) have an original structure in general. The knot is tied soon after the story starts. Exposition part is represented in the text part by part; i.e. the writer often uses rewinding, the so called analepsis; thus, it is scattered throughout the whole text. Past continuously intrudes with the present, as the basis and reason for events taking place in the present – troubles or happiness, pain or joy, love or hatred. In fact, the plot develops in two parallel layers: the upper layer is the present and the lower layer is the past. Each of the new and sudden stories, which takes place in the lower layer and are marked with emotionality and suddenness are

necessary and needed everywhere; they are connected with the cause-effect principle; all the aforementioned points to the masterfully performed composition. Nino Kharatishvili is a professional director; thus, her writing is marked not only with the handwriting of a playwright, but also of a director and script writer: unexpected passages, quick change of frames, short and concise, but amazingly complex dialogues... It can be said that the main narration technique of the author is dialogue or to be more precise its different types: monologue (dialogue with own self); dialogue (between two characters); and polylogue (between characters). The author herself draws attention to that: "I love dialogues very much. Let alone theatre, I am more fond of characters' dialogues when reading a book and not a narration by an all-knowing author. I like it when characters are able to express themselves; and this can be done best through a dialogue." (Kharatishvili 2012: 12).

Let us get back to the tying of the knot: Ivo, lost in the chaotic world arrives in Hamburg and appears in front of Stella he has not seen for a long time, in order to find his own self and to finally understand what his right is and what is not. For the cause he needs help from everyone, all the close people, especially Stella. In general, Ivo's pace of life in the novel is very rapid; that is another peculiarity of the novel. Time, which is one of the most important markers in the text, does not flow the same way for all the characters. If it is smooth in case of Tulia, Frank and Lenny, in the case of Ivo and Stella it is amazingly dynamic. Such impression is created by multiple stories developed in a short period of time; Ivo's tense life; it seems that he is permanently running away from something; he is trying to forget or erase something in parallel with the hard job – reporting; that is why he needs such a special rhythm of life. But time comes when this unconscious permanent movement must be ended; when the character realizes that it is unthinkable to gain peace by escaping and impossible to recreate harmonic relation with the world without finding own self and place. That is why he returns to Hamburg and to Stella's life at one misty and rainy day. Reader who does not know anything about their relationships yet feels that the writer will soon unveil an important story soon. Searching for the "I" is one of the main and painful problems in modern life. By the tense plot, past of the characters, permanent rewinding (which show the childhood time cleanness and intense passions of the youth time), inner and unbearable pains of the present, the author manages to involve a reader and to keep them interested until the last page of the novel.

The chronotopic structure of the novel is very interesting. Time, by astronomic measurement, in the first part of the novel "here" is only one month and approximately the same in the second part. Still, by permanent pausing of these small periods of time the writer activates and time brought up from the depths, which finally is the whole life. Right by recalling the past we understand the reasons of Stella's neurotic psychic, of her instability, impossibility to control her thoughts and behavior and actions. We can say that the main character of the novel, the main driving impulse of the plot is love, the painful feeling that appeared in childhood, which permanently creates the feeling of guilt in both characters, but, despite that, it has the great power: "My love was like wine; the rarest and the most precious. When you try to prolong the pleasure and do not hurry to open the bottle – when you keep it for the special occasion, which just does not want to come. It is because there is nothing as precious as that wine. And you keep it and keep it. But one day, because of some silly reason the bottle breaks and the wine spills on the floor. That's when you are left only with regret and painful longing; and also with hope that someday you will again find such wine and drink it to the bottom." (Kharatishvili 2015: 66). Time and space are powerless here. Right upon seeing Ivo Stella realizes that nothing has changed during 7 years. There still is no reason and power in the world that can make Stella to refuse loving Ivo. It is interesting that this feeling cannot be defeated neither by her family nor her child. The unfading passion, which is still as strong as years ago, is also very interesting. The writer draws the psychological portrait of the character so masterly that we are not left with the feeling of falseness.

There are few writers in modern world who would avoid the sex and erotic thematic. On the other hand, this is the topic that needs to be described with jeweler's precision and sensitivity; that is why reader immediately feels when a writer overdoes or when there is something artificial; or when erotic turns into pornography. Peculiar, in a way poetic, aesthetic description of love scenes is interesting in Nino Kharatishvili's novels. The physical impulse of getting pleasure is fully transformed into psychic

sphere and is turned into the pain of the soul and suffering. With such permanently painful feeling is triggered the importances of finding own place on the road to achieving happiness and one more thing: if you cause pain to others by your own life or relationships with someone, you can never be happy. This means that in order to achieve peace and happiness it is necessary not to disturb the harmony of the world. Such painful love continues in the second part of the novel (in Georgia), when Stella leaves her family, child and follows Ivo to some foreign country for investigating some unknown story. However strange it may seem, she finds the long-awaited calmness after permanently losing her beloved man. We believe that the main aim here is to find own place and purpose. In Stella's consciousness she and her family are carrying a heavy burden; it is their and specifically her fault that Ivo became an orphan (it is only that she solves this puzzle only after Ivo's death) – she believes that allegedly the given tragedy has caused her losing her right to happiness. It is known in psychology that childhood traumas have insurmountable influence on the formation of an individual. Stella gets the feeling of guilt right at that time, as father secretly takes her to his mistress's house; secretly from mother and family. For the child's mind it is understandable why father does that or why he is hiding those relationships. She is kind of happy with communicating with the peer boy, but this relationship is not healthy, as she permanently feels some unconscious threat, which finally comes true – when Ivo's father returns. Already adult Stella is unable to cope with this feeling of guilt, which transforms into overwhelming psychological complex and does not let her to be happy. That is why she permanently attempts to achieve redemption of this sin and in Georgia, after Ivo's death she realizes that she now has a chance. After calm judgment and thinking Stella makes the decision – to find the redemption for the ancestral sin by raising an orphan boy. Love given to Buba will become the compensation for the crime that her family has committed against Ivo. This is one of the main ideas of the novel. The right for happiness gained in suffering.

“Maybe love really looks like anarchy?

Maybe I have never lived the way I should have?

Maybe Ivo was forced to borrow his life from each one of us?

Maybe I really do not know who I am?

Maybe only now I will be able to find the answers, now, when I have parted for countless light years from what I have always believed to be my life? (Kharatishvili 2015: 106) – From here starts the complicated and painful process of delving into oneself. That is why she made such a decision. With the given decision Stella gains her own self back and gains the right to continue living. This is the greatest human mission in the world which creates the great literature. On the way to savior Ivo showed her that a person must solve only one task for gaining happiness – to say with OtarChiladze's words – “Who am I and why am I?”

Nino Kharatishvili's novel once more convinces us that humane problems are the same everywhere; be it the organized and orderly Europe or chaotic Caucasus involved in wars. As difficult as it is to draw parallels between these two different worlds, as easy it is to make one conclusion: human happiness depends neither on comfort nor on quality of civilization or technology boom. Lonesome person is unhappy everywhere. The main point of the writer is not only expressed verbally at the end of the novel, but also appears almost visually in front of our eyes: one must fight for happiness and overcome any barrier for achieving it – the complex roads of inner world and real world kilometers too. It does not matter where you gain your happiness; at home, in the yard, in the city or faraway part of the earth; the main thing is to find it. After you must hold on to it tight and never let go. This is what it is worth living for! This is the main idea of the novel too.

## **Bibliography:**

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