

Myth in the Novel *Khazarula* by Nodar Dumbadze

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Abstract

Nodar Dumbadze's novel entitled „*Khazarula*“ presents readers a fascinating story of an apple tree and of a wine pitcher. The story mentioned is full with seemingly unnoticed, yet transparent paradigms and is fit to the simplistic style of narration of the author.

The readers of Nodar Dumbadze's writings know quite well the fact that the writer frequently uses mythic models in his novels as well as in stories however, there is always a touch of contemporaneity and especially the notion of humanity is being emphasized in the human characters.

Keywords: *Khazarula*, Myth, Nodar Dumbadze

Introduction

Nodar Dumbadze has expressed a very interesting thought regarding the application of the mythic theme in the literary writings. „...Applying mythic and Biblical themes in literature is not a new idea. We have quite a long and profound tradition of this type of approach in our great literature. I regard both – Myth as well as the Bible the most profound literary themes of all. One should not try to explain the modernization of mythological and Biblical themes, plots and stylistics based on their thematic and plot attractiveness, but by considering the stable and unchangeable nature of the human character from the very moment of his creation“ (Novels by Nodar Dumbadze, 2017, p. 3).

Meaning of *Khazarula*

The novel entitled „*Khazarula*“ presents the readers a fascinating story of an apple tree and of a wine pitcher. The story mentioned is full with seemingly unnoticed, yet transparent paradigms and is fit to the simplistic style of narration of the author. The death of an apple tree (*Khazarula*) is expressed by the author in the following manner: „She felt a thump in her side in the morning... afterwards she felt yet another hit in another side... At last, *Khazarula* felt a push from her left side to the right... First she slowly laid back, than she fell down to the ground... closed her eyes and gently fell asleep forever“ (Dumbadze, 2014, p. 3).

The death of a personified *Khazarula* (an apple tree) is the unique technique of Nodar Dumbadze, which is deeply profound, extremely impressive, and represents an original paradigm in the internal structure of the novel that reveals the initial intention of an author in a powerful way.

Nodar Dumbadze's technique of nature's personification is adapted to the spiritual realm of a modern day man. Old Animistic – Totem and mythical notions of tree worshipping

are still existent nowadays in various regions of Georgia as the remains of those primordial thinking patterns. Human consciousness and action features were assigned to trees and, in addition to that, according to the mythical model, longevity of particular individuals was dependent on the life cycle of concrete trees.

Nodar Dumbadze's *Khazarula* and his grandmother Darejan are of the same age: „When I first spoke to the tree I was fourteen. My grandmother was already of an old age at that moment. The tree was 55-60 years old, approximately of the same age as my grandma was... I remember, grandmother used to bring its fruits to us to Tbilisi during her visits“...

Here, the same age of a grandmother and of a tree is not accidentally emphasized. It is like the existence of a *Khazarula* tree is closely linked with the life of the grandmother herself. This very pretext is being revealed in the answer of the grandmother to her grandson's question: „Let us wait for another year grandma and then we cut it down, just I will try to scare her one more time again – I said to her (grandmother). She shook her head and said to me – That's it, kid, you can't scare her just like you cannot scare me after this age of mine“ (Dumbadze, 2016, p. 4).

Nodar Dumbadze has revived the mythic conception of scaring a tree and the personified spirit embodied within it with a great mastery fitting the plot to his basic ideological consideration.

On one early morning of the year 1942, grandmother Darejan woke her grandson up while holding a blazing axe in her hand and ordered: „You better stand up right now and do the job if you don't want me to pull you down from that couch by your ears...“ (Dumbadze, 2014, p. 6).

- What job do you want me to do this early, woman?

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- If she does not get a man's hand, she is not afraid of me anymore as I am a woman, she just disdains me...

- Do you say that regarding Hitler, or our village overman, grandma?

- I am talking about *Khazarula*, you silly boy! Oh, such a nasty, smutty tree it is. How can she betray us like that in these hard times of a famine and difficulty?

- And what am I supposed to do, should I cut her down, or what?

- First you have to scare her, if she does not get scared, then you cut her down, of course! So grandma showed me how to scare *Khazarula* tree" (Dumbadze, 2014, p. 6).

The grandson did everything like his grandma told him to do. One day „the spring has done its job and reached our yard from down the Gubazouli river grove. Everything started to flower from that very moment, every tree and every bush had exploded in colors...*Khazarula* tree also started to flower giving plenty of its sweet fruits. What a magnificent sight it was to look at it – laden with tasty and juicy apples filling out and our neighbors' baskets with them" (Dumbadze, 2014, p. 7).

That was the last Spring *Khazarula* gave her fruits. It was the last time she gifted the family of an orphan boy and the whole village during the famine of a wartime. Grandma had realized it fully, that was it: „you can't scare her just like you cannot scare me after this age of mine" – she said and told her grandson: „This night the snow will fall, undoubtedly, we don't have any firewood and if we do not cut *Khazarula* tree down we are going to freeze tonight". Here one obstacle occurred. Neither grandmother, nor the neighbor Anania could persuade seventeen year old grandson to take an axe in his hands and cut the tree down. He truly believes, that boys of his age can destroy tanks in the battlefield however, they may still refuse to cut down the *Khazarula* tree..." (Dumbadze, 2016, p. 8).

Nodar Dumbadze tries to portray a great hearted, sublime personality of the main character who is compassionate towards all living beings.

- "What do you want from me, uncle Anania? – I asked my neighbor.

- Why don't you cut the tree down, boy? – Asked Anania.

- I feel sorry for her.

- What do you feel sorry for, a tree? Boys off your age throw themselves under tanks in the battlefields of Russia!

- Poor our country if it hopes to overcome Germany with spineless youngsters like you, - this time grandma spoke her mind" (Dumbadze, 2016, p. 6).

Uncle Anania, drunk with Adesa Wine, promised grandma Darejan that *Kazarula* tree would be laying on the ground by the next morning.

The boy turned out to be right. The tree could see and hear everything that was going on. *Khazarula's* roots were

spread all over the wine pitch that was buried in the basement of their house thus protecting the pure red wine associated with the life of grandmother Darejan. The next day uncle Anania was to cut down the tree. Together with the *Khazarula* tree (of life), grandma Darejan must also leave this life. As *Khazarula* felt what was going to happen to her, she tightened her roots over the wine pitch so hard that the first crack has opened and the red liquid started to leak slowly from it... *Khazarula* cautiously tasted the liquid and begin to drink it slowly... This time she tightened her roots all over the wine pitch even harder. The wine pitch got cracks in several places and the red liquid started to flow from it pouring onto the roots of *Khazarula* tree... and *Khazarula*... was drinking the strange red liquid like a thirsty one in the desert filling her body with sweet warmth...excitement and self-oblivion...*Khazarula* got drunk and suddenly the world got enlightened (Dumbadze, 2016).

Before that moment *Khazarula* used to wonder about how humans lived without having the roots deeply grounded into the earth, just like she did. After emptying the wine pitch, *Khazarula* understood the secret of a man and of a magic red liquid... *Khazarula* had a strong need for singing as she drank the red liquid from the pitch... She was heaving and buzzing till the morning light... early in the morning she felt the thump in the back but as it did not hurt, she did not pay any attention to it (Dumbadze, 2016).

Conclusion

In the morning, the grandson saw the blood-red liquid flowing out from the cut stalk. He immediately called his grandmother and showed the strange thing... Grandmother took the liquid to her face, smelled it and said to the boy with fear in her eyes, - open up the pitch, now! As the grandmother saw an empty wine pitch she „raised her hands to the sky and slowly got on her knees. At that very moment *Khazarula*, who opened her eyes for the last time, saw an old woman in black dress holding her hands up to the sky kneeled by the open wine pitch" (Dumbadze, 2016, p. 10).

Nodar Dumbadze has expressed the traditional aspects of the Tree of Life and Fertility in an extremely powerful manner that serves the purpose of sublimation of humanity, its ennoblement and exaltation.

References

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