

The Markers of Nikoloz Baratashvili's Romanticism

Abstract: It is discussed N. Baratashvili's romanticism in close connection with the worldview of one of the most prominent creators and thinkers, "foremost" romanticist Novalis; on the basis of Novalis' perception of the life romanticizing, using the technical means of polarization and potentiation it is studied how in the Nikoloz Baratashvili's creative works the relationship with the universe, people, everyday occurrences is romanticized, the goal of which is to make the life intensive, full-blooded, to open its way towards infinity.

Key words: Baratashvili, Novalis, romanticism, polarization, potentiation.

Most of the writer-romanticists lived short lives: Edgar Allan Poe lived 40 years on this earth, Giacomo Leopardi and Juliusz Słowacki died at their 39th years of age, Charlotte Brontë passed away at the age of 38, Robert Burns and Alexander Pushkin died at 37, George Gordon Byron – 36, José María Heredia – 35, Heinrich von Kleist, José de Espronceda and Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer – 34, Wilhelm Müller – 33, Percy Bysshe Shelley and Emily Brontë -30, Novalis, Anne Brontë and Branko Radičević – 29, Nikoloz Baratashvili – 27, Mikhail Lermontov, Sándor Petőfi, Karel Hynek Mácha and Karoline von Günderode – 26, John Keats, Wilhelm Hauff and Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder – 25... and yet, in the short time of their lives, they created the literature of such a quality that they will remain in the memory of mankind forever; some of them marked the history of literature so profoundly that they still influence and will continue to influence in future the spiritual formation of people. How did they manage that? What explanation can be found?

The answer to this conundrum has to be found in their philosophy of life, in the philosophy of romantic life. The romanticists knew something that made their lives and creative work full-blooded and intensive. They managed to sharpen the feelings, or so to say, to create a sharper perception of reality by means of **polarization** and **potentiation**. Where the polarity or contradiction was weakly felt, they used to strengthen (potentiate) them artificially using the **technique of polarization**, which they mastered perfectly. Between the opposite poles, where reigns a harmony full of tension, they managed to find for themselves a space for romantic existence. And even if on their way full of danger, evil fates overtook them too early, they did not deserve pity for that – that was their choice.

Generally, if we want to understand to some extent the essence of this complex phenomenon – romanticism, we have to address the arch-romanticist Novalis. In his texts, in his views on the life and creative work, we can find, so to say, the essence of romanticism, which we cannot find in so primary form, so palpable with the other romanticists.

That is even more necessary for us today, because Novalis was viewed by the Soviet literary science as a representative of the so called reactionary or pessimistic romanticism; for that reason he could be mentioned only in a negative context, while N. Baratashvili was declared as a progressive romanticist.

As the contemporary German philosopher Wilhelm Schmid, the re-establisher of the philosophy of art of living, decided to research the principals of the philosophy of romantic life, he addressed Novalis. W. Schmid's article "The art of romantic living", his lecture delivered in 2000 in Tbilisi, which we translated into Georgian at the author's request and published in the 2nd volume of the journal "Sjani" in 2001, serves as the foundation of this our work. Let us see in what extent the philosophies of life of Baratashvili and of Novalis were the same and let us try to "measure" in this way the grade of the romanticism of Baratashvili.

W. Schmid writes:

“For the theory of romanticism and for the art of living it is fundamental that an individual and the world, the life and the history need apolarity between the poles of which, so to say, a current is flowing. In this context “the current” was not a metaphor at that time, but the real electricity was meant: referring to Galvan and Volta, Novalis calls those poles plus and minus. [...] We should recognize the negative sides of the existence – illness, insanity, and death – as the second pole. It is not the art of living to avoid them. The history vibrates between the positive pole of the ideal and the negative pole of the reality, always lagging behind the ideal: An attempt of rapprochement of the real and the ideal does never end up with their merging” (Schmid 2001: 40).

Nikoloz Baratashvili is well aware of the possibilities of potentiation of life by means of polarization and of romanticizing it in this way. This is visible from the phrase of his letter to Grigol Orbeliani, in which he writes about the capture of his uncle (his mother's brother) Ilia Orbeliani by Shamil:

“Imagine, even Golovin's wife said that she always expected a Georgian would give such an answer as they say Ilia had given [to Shamil]: I prefer death to your captivity. Bravo, Iliko behaved himself bravely. [...] **Sometimes even such an incident is good in one's life**” (Baratashvili 1972: 116. Underlining is ours. – L. B.).

Baratashvili himself, as a real romantic, was living and creating between polarities.

His most important and conspicuous polarity was created, on the one hand, by the very miserable environment, in which he was living as an ordinary clerk, and, on the other hand, by his great talent and high spiritual interests. Those poles had determined mostly his luck, as well as his unluckiness, which is so evident that we won't dwell on this any longer and will go on to other polarities that are not so easy to notice with the naked eye.

Science and religion

There exists an opinion in the people that a romanticist is “a dreamy, sensually driven person” (Dictionary... 1960: 454-455), and they define **romantics (romance)** as follows: “A disposition in which the sense prevails over the mind, a tendency to dreaming” (Dictionary... 1960: 454). But for Novalis “The sense is only the second, complementary pole of the science” (Schmid 2001: 41).

Here is a fragment from Wilhelm Schmid's article:

Novalis “himself is talking [...] about his ‘love towards some sciences’. He, a romanticist, is driven by the thirst of knowledge, and is analyzing, measuring, and explaining with the help of mathematical rules (...)”. He was fascinated above all by mathematics, he is literally excited as he speaks about it: “The highest life is the mathematics”, (...) “a real mathematician is an enthusiast per se. Mathematics does not exist without enthusiasm”; “the pure mathematics is a religion”, “if someone does not take the book of mathematics with respect and does not read it as the word of God, then he will not understand it”. [...] It is certainly a little difficult to see a mathematician in the true romanticist, but if we get accustomed to it, then it will be no longer a great surprise to us when we see Novalis, a man with romantic senses, engaged in the exploration works of brown coal mines, as a worker of mine industry, who loves Geology as well besides of his senses” (Schmid 2001: 41).

Fortunately, we can imagine thanks to a few memories about N. Baratashvili, passed down to us by the poet's friends, the attitude the poet used to have towards science.

“Baratashvili learned every subject well. The teacher of physics, Shestakov, who went away for some time, trusted him and Levan Melikishvili to continue the meteorological observation he started. Baratashvili was fulfilling well the trusted task, until, on some unfortunate day, the thermometer broke. He wanted to buy another thermometer, but he had no money and thus, he felt unhappy and very guilty before his teacher, - told us Levan Melikishvili” (Meunargia 1968: 13).

In the 1940s Professor Mikheil Chikovani found in Leningrad, in the Central Archive of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, documentation that tells about Nikoloz Baratashvili's attitude towards science (Chikovani 1968: 22-33). Pavle Ingorokva writes with reference to those documents, as follows:

“As it turns out [...], N. Baratashvili cooperated with the Academy of Science of Petersburg, to where at that time, at the initiative of the famous Georgian public figure and scientist Teimuraz Batonishvili, was invited academician Marie Brosset, who started to lead the research of the historical past of Georgia [...]. In 1842, an employee of the Academy of Sciences, a colleague of Marie Brosset, adjunct Julie Fritsche came to Tbilisi. He was instructed by Marie Brosset to buy Georgian books and old Georgian manuscripts.

In the report presented at the historical-literary department of the Academy of Sciences of Petersburg on the 13th of January 1843, Fritsche writes:

“One Georgian poet, [...] the prince Baratashvili, declared his willingness, should it interest the academy, firstly to prepare the list of the Georgian manuscripts known to him, and then to rewrite the manuscripts the academy would choose. I am rushing to inform the academy about that”.

It has to be noted that, for such a particular matter they contact not a person who worked especially on the research of the works of Georgian history and old Georgian writing, but they contact **the poet** N. Baratashvili who apparently counted as the greatest authority in the field” (Ingorokva 1968: 45. The underlining is ours. – L. B.).

There we read:

“... A famous researcher Mikheil Barataev, the author of the monumental work “The numismatic facts of the Georgian kingdom (Нумизматические факты Грузинского царства)” writes in a letter dated September 20, 1846 (Mikheil Barataev did not know at that time about the death of the poet) to Meliton, the father of N. Baratashvili: “I would be very glad, if our beloved Nikoloz Melitonovich [...], would complete **with his rich knowledge and talent** the first work of his old grandfather (i.e. Mikheil Barataev himself)” (it refers to the above mentioned work)” (Ingorokva 1968: 44-45. The underlining is ours. – L. B.)

Nikoloz Baratashvili dedicated his poem “The grave of the King Irakli” to Mikheil Barataev, the famous researcher who worked in Russia. It is just in this poem he speaks of the greatest significance of education. It is clear from the poem that the first one from the two positive results of the attachment of Georgia to Russia, in the author's opinion, is **the education** (he puts it in the first place) and the second one is **the peace**: the Georgians bring from Russia “to their homeland the education with them [...], they bring from there the precious seeds to their homeland” (Baratashvili 1972: 54).

“But, as W. Schmid remarks, a romanticist, while doing a research work, is conscious of the fact that the reality is so all-embracing it cannot be fully researched even by all sciences taken jointly. It (the reality) remains marvelous, unreachable, and mysterious forever (...). The science is not thus denied, but its optimism, positivism, objectivism is regarded as relative. A romanticist keeps a proper distance from the pretentiousness of knowledge and guards the opinion that beyond of the space of science still exists “something” else, and even if it had not been existing, we should have invented it. What matters here is that science and rationalism are not *supplemented*, but *complemented* with something else. Otherwise the world would be naked and cold, extremely boring” (Schmid 2001: 41-42).

What is this “something” that exists beyond the science? Or, in other words: where does the competence of science end? The competence of science ends there, where the infinity starts – science is helpless in front of the infinity. Infinity is also called transcendence, which is principally unreachable with experimental cognition, with rational methods, and which can only be approached by the religious faith. In the opinion of Wilhelm Schmid, “the full movement of modernism, which started on the verge of eighteenth-nineteenth centuries, is related to getting free from any kind of religion. Since then, more and more people try to live without religion. [...]

But it can be presumed that this kind of living will not be possible anymore in the course of time and this experiment will end unsuccessfully in the near future” (Schmid 2001: 43).

Briefly, “the life that encloses itself in its own finiteness, will never reach the wanted dimension of fullness” (Schmid 2001: 43-44). This is obvious to all romanticists including Baratashvili:

“Hey, heaven, heaven, your face is still imprinted on my heart!
Now, as I see your sky-blue, my thoughts are rushing towards you,
But they cannot reach you and disperse still in the air!
I forget this earthly world, as I see you,
My desire seeks a resting place beyond than you,
Safe heaven, so it can prevail the vanity here, on this earth...
But, unfortunately, the mortal humans cannot recognize God in heaven”

(Interlinear translation)

(Baratashvili 1972: 24-25. The underlining is ours. L. B.)

Here with unusual artistry is expressed the unreachability of transcendence with the help of rationalistic methods.

For a romanticist religious faith represents an opening into the infinity, the contra pole to science. The deep religiousness of N. Baratashvili is clearly visible in his poem “My prayer”.

“My prayer” is an antipode of “Merani”, its contra pole. If in “Merani” the irreconcilability with the fate and the pursuit of stormy winds are thematized (“Cut the wind, cut the water, pass rocks and rocky-terrains, / Go forward, take to your heels and lessen for me, the impatient, the walking days / Don’t cover yourself, my flying horse, neither for heat, nor for rain, / Don’t have pity with me, the selfless exhausted rider!” – Baratashvili 1972:51), in “My prayer” on the contrary, the poet is asking God for rest and peace (“And let me rest from evil passions”. – Baratashvili 1972: 40), he seeks a safe haven (“Don’t let the evil winds blow my boat, / But give me a safe haven”. – Baratashvili 1972: 40)

This poem (“My prayer”) created much inconvenience to the literary critics in the Soviet era, not only for its ardent religious pathos, but also since N. Baratashvili had been assigned to “progressive”, “fighting” flank of romanticists, it was inappropriate for the author of “Merani” to ask for rest and peace and they tried to “justify” him in this way: “What can we do, if the lyrical character of Baratashvili seeks sometimes a peaceful place?! Which fighter does not want, after a long effort, to rest for a second and restore his strength?!” (Jibladze 1968: 232).

In other words, it is considered as an irrelevant (unessential) motive to seek a peaceful place, but the pursuit of a turbulent life - as a relevant one, which is unjustified. For a true romanticist activity as well as rest are equal constructing states of romantic life, they are the poles, where, in the field of tension between them, a kind of life is possible, which is valuable for them. (For analogy compare “Sail” [“Папус”] by Mikhail Lermontov to also his poem “I come out alone on the street” [“Выхожу один на дорогу”].)

As for an active, full-blooded life, it is viewed by romanticists as follows:

“The life should not be given to us, but we must create it ourselves as a novel” (Schmid 2001: 38), - read we at Novalis.

From that stems the great interest and enthusiasm with the person of Napoleon Bonaparte and also a latent envy of the man, who created his action-novel full of adventures not on the paper, but he “wrote” it with his own life, with his own biography. (Even those, whose homelands were conquered by Napoleon, recognize his greatness).

The poem “Napoleon” of Nikoloz Baratashvili, as observed by our literature scientists since long ago, is distinguished by the fact that the author presents the Emperor of France as an “always unsatisfied human being, who is painfully torn by inner and outer contradictions” (Jibladze 1968: 224); the poet realizes the person of Napoleon “in the aspect of “non-fillable vessel” of desires of a human being in general” (Abzianidze 1969: 172), which is connected with the spiritual unrest of the great supreme commander (“But my soul cannot fit in my body anymore!” – Baratashvili 1972: 34) and with the suspicion of the lucky Emperor towards his

own luck e (“But may be, my luck will leave me / And crones someone else in my name”. – Baratashvili 1972: 34). Exactly for this inner dynamic “the poem of Baratashvili with its original conception has a particular place among other poems about Napoleon” (Abzianidze 1969: 173).

The following phrase, which N. Baratashvili lets Napoleon say, is important in the aspect of romantic maximalism:

“Let even the grave be narrow for me, if someone is equal of me!” (Baratashvili 1972: 34) that means: I will do such great deeds that nobody can repeat them even in future.

Spiritual and physical love

“His (of Novalis, – L. B.) understanding of love dwells between the poles of sensuality and spirituality”, - writes W. Schmid (Schmid 2001: 45).

In 1839 Nikoloz Baratashvili dedicated two poems to Ekaterine Chavchavadze, whom he loved hopelessly. The two poems are printed side by side in various editions. The first poem is a demonstration of the spiritual side of love:

“With Your beautiful voice,
With Your sweet singing,
You, aerial, are a joy for my soul!
You drag the eyes from place to place,
You wound the heart
And then caress it with Your smile!”

(Interlinear translation)

(Baratashvili 1972: 35)

But the second poem is a sensual expression of love, the expression of physical sense:

“Hoy, You ear-ring,
You confuse with feelings,
Who kisses sweetly the place beneath You?
Who drinks the sweet drink
of eternal life?
Who embraces You with his soul?”

(Interlinear translation)

(Baratashvili 1972: 36).

The patriarch of the Georgian professional criticism, Kita Abashidze (1870-1917) judges these lines very negatively.

“Kisses sweetly, dear friends, it is said very roughly. It may be a nice wording, but it is not a right wording for a delicate feeling” (Abashidze 1962: 71).

Kita Abashidze gives importance in the creative work of Baratashvili only to one pole of love – its spiritual side. He thinks it as a great achievement of Baratashvili that the poet makes the love “aerial, turns it into a strange and invisible metaphysical, holly ideal thing, and we must confess that in this aspect too, hardly can anyone be compared with Baratashvili” (Abashidze 1962: 70). But he regards the lines, expressing sensual, physical feelings, as an irrelevant, accidental and deniable appearance.

But for N. Baratashvili, as well as for Novalis, spiritual and physical loves are the poles strengthening each other and are, most importantly, so to say, the main precondition of romantic life. “It could be that the art of love is the main art of romantics, because it means to turn the whole life into a novel (The German word for *novel* is *Roman* – L. B.), because just the art of love is connected mostly to a novel and, in this sense, it is romantic per se” (Schmid 2001: 45).

Health and illness

“One of the technical means of romantic life is its relation to illness, which is the opposite pole of health. The romanticism expects from both health and illness the possibility of using both of them for the purpose of constructing individuum and life”, - writes Wilhelm Schmid (Schmid 2001: 46) and refers to the following fragment from Novalis:

“Illnesses, especially chronic illnesses, play the role of the years of education in the formation of the art of living and the character. We must try to extract from them advantages by the way of everyday observation” (Schmid 2001: 47).

The letter of Nikoloz Baratashvili, written to his uncle (to the brother of his mother) Zakaria Orbeliani (1806-1847) in 1844, preserves the feelings of N. Baratashvili which overtook him as he was having a dangerous illness (he does not mention the illness by name):

“Your letter, full of sadness and fatigue from the stormy stream of life, found a deep response in my soul, but we have different reasons for our sadness. I was very ill; I nearly left this life. I had known no illness until then, because of this, it has had a strange impact on my whole life, maybe. The unachievable purpose of our life, the infiniteness of human desires and the vanity of everything in this world, filled my soul with terrible emptiness. If I had a little possibility of independence, I would leave the world and the people with their greed and would live a peaceful and quiet patriarchal life in a simple nature, which is so very great and beautiful in our home country” (Baratashvili 1972: 125).

This fragment is a very good proof that as the consequence of illness a human being realizes his whole life, makes reevaluation of values; he learns what was worth of doing and what was not in the past life; an illness strengthens the ability of a human being to distinguish between true and false values.

He writes after the illness one of his last poems, “Poplar”, in which exactly the solitude “in a simple nature” and keeping a distance from the society of “greedy people” is praised:

“On a solitary rock stands a young poplar,
With many branches, cooling, aerial, beautiful and tall.
It is very pleasant to dream in its shadow, and to listen to the rustling of its leaves
and to listen to the muttering of water and to endure the bad luck of this adverse
world!”
(Interlinear translation)
(Baratashvili 1972: 59).

In the same poem we read following lines:

“I believe that there exists a secret language between inanimate things,
And the importance of their talk is greater than the knowledge of other
languages!”
(Interlinear translation)
(Baratashvili 1972: 59).

Baratashvili “conveyed the philosophy of nature most clearly in the poem “Poplar”. In this poem the poet gives a tongue to the nature and lets it speak” (Abzianidze 1969: 169).

I think we would not be wrong to say that this poem too is a very good outcome of the illness Baratashvili speaks of in the letter to Zakaria Orbeliani.

Life and death

“It is extremely romantic *to strengthen life with help of death*. The ultimate possibility of life is death – death as the opposite pole of life: only thanks to death acquires life its tension (“Death is a minus – life is a plus”), and only bypassing through the death’s gate, the life merges with something else (...). “Owing to death, life gains strength”. “Death is a romanticizing principle of our life” (Novalis, III, 559)” (Schmid 2001: 47).

Nikoloz Baratashvili's attitude to death as a romanticizing principle of life has come down to us by means of his letter written to his friend and writer Mikheil Tumanishvili (1815-1975) in 1838:

“Dear friend! Don't reproach me for my silence. To tell the truth, there is nothing important in our town, dull of heats and stifling of dust. I only get to life in the moony evenings that are so beautiful in Tbilisi. Yesterday, in such an evening, I went for walk to the Moscow Outpost {Московская застава – a place in the suburb of Tbilisi at that time. L. B.} and, suddenly, I found myself on a cemetery. I have to admit that I got anxious a little, as I glanced over the silence around me. It was 11 p.m., no single soul! There was eternal emptiness around; the moon was illuminating the graves weakly, as a twinkling lantern of deceased. The river Kura was flowing silently and slowly, as if it was afraid to destroy the coziness of the sad world... You are in a joy now and I do not want to disturb you with my sad contemplations that were awoken in me by that heavenly-earthly scene! I want only to tell you that a **cemetery is a very good invention; it is necessary, because a mortal man can read in it his life!**” (Baratashvili 1972: 110. The underlining is ours. – L. B.).

Professor Iuza Evgenidze remarks correctly that here “death is not viewed as a relief from the earthly torments and woes, but the contemplation about it in the middle of a cemetery is considered as an equalizing factor of the moral existence of a human being. What is the purpose of our living and what makes it meaningful? What is the purpose of existence of humans in this world and where is the destination of their pursuit? Those are the questions N. Baratashvili is trying to handle” (Evgenidze 1982: 210).

Dream/daydream and reality

For Novalis “the evaluation of a *dream* is also romantic one, of a dream as the opposite pole of ordinariness, as an opening for penetration into the unknown, X-world. While the dream is banned from the Cartesian thought, the poetry of romantic thought legitimizes it, because the dream is of great importance for the art of living: It is ‘a defensive measure against the monotony and ordinariness of life’” (Novalis, I, 199) (Schmid 2001: 46)

Nikoloz Baratashvili wrote to his relative and friend Maiko Orbeliani in 1842:

“I heard about your illness, what happened to you? If you are thinking, what can you think of that does not end, what can you get that you will not lose? Show me a human being who is grateful to this world. [...] Regard the luck of others in this world with indifference, pride and believe that they are temporary! Although I am not a doctor, but I have learned about this remedy in a **dream** and, if you believe me, I hope, it will do you good” (Baratashvili 1972: 119. The underlining is ours. – L. B.)

We can see from this that N. Baratashvili is serious about the **dream** [a series of images, events and feelings that happen in your mind while you are asleep] (The subject he is talking about is so serious that, in our opinion, it is impossible to see irony in the following words – “I have learned about this remedy in a dream”.) And yet, the cited passage is not so important for our point of interest, as his abovementioned view about the cemetery. So, we will also get help from another meaning of **dream**: a wish to have or be something, especially one that seems difficult to achieve (in contrast to German or English those different meanings of the word are expressed with different words in Georgian, like in Russian – сон, мечта).

About the possibility of potentiating (romanticizing) the miserable reality with the help of dream is expressed in the following lines of “Poplar”:

“It is a pleasure to **dream** in its (of poplar. L. B.) shadow, and to listen
to the rustling of its leaves
and to listen to the muttering of water and to endure the bad luck of this adverse
world!

The river (Mtkvari) is roaring, the wind is blowing and it makes the poplar rustle,
And they express the tune that let us sleep with sweet **dreams!**”

(Interlinear translation)
(Baratashvili 1972: 59).

Here the dream (mentioned two times in four lines) opposes obviously the reality as its opposite pole, by means of which the romanticizing of reality is achieved and it becomes possible “to endure the adversities of this world”.

Romantic irony

The recognition of the role and meaning of mutually conditioning, mutually balancing poles, brings about so called romantic irony, which differs essentially from the irony of everyday life.

For that reason, we should not consider the thought expressed in the last four lines of the poem “Thought on the Riverside of Mtkvari” as a propagandistic appeal for the necessity of care for this world, but just as an expression of romantic irony. At the beginning of this poem the motif of the biblical “Song of Songs” about the “vanity of all things” is thematized (it is not possible to doubt in this, because, firstly, a human being is “a never filled up vessel”, and secondly, because this world is going to end at some time, as religion and science assure us). This pessimistic motive is balanced in the end of the poem with the motive of “the care for this world”. This balancing happens independently of our will, simply because we are humans and we can do nothing about this! (“But as we are humans – children of the world / We must follow it, and listen to our parent. / It is not good for a human to be alive but to look like a dead, / To be in this world, but do not care for it”, - Baratashvili 1972: 31). Between those two poles – on the one hand, everything is vane, but on the other hand, we should nevertheless care for the world – the livings of people take place, which is a paradox as well as an inevitable reality at the same time. In contrast with the irony of everyday life, in which the subjective element prevails, the romantic irony is profound, an objective irony, the roots of which are to be found in the objective controversy of the world itself.

The polarities of “Fate of Georgia”

In the long poem “Fate of Georgia” the last days of the independent Georgian kingdom are described: The king Erekle II decided, in order to protect from the Persian aggression, to put Georgia under the protection of Russia. Strongly against this decision is king’s advisor Solomon Lionidze, whose opinion is fully shared by his wife Sofio. Both sides have the arguments for defending the rightness of their opinions.

There is a difference of opinions among researchers, as to which side is taking the author himself.

We regard as worthy of sharing the opinion of Kita Abashidze that it is impossible to guess from the discussion between the king Erekle and his advisor Solomon which side the author is taking, but the researcher connects that with the realistic features of the poem – according to his words, the author of this poem “is the initiator of realism in our poetry” (Abashidze 1962: 86). We think, it is a just very romantic fact that N. Baratashvili polarizes the opinions of the protagonists of the poem in such a way that both sides have their truths. According to the poem (and, also, in the reality!) the political life of Georgia was taking its course in the field of tension, which had developed between two poles, between the two radically different political points of view: 1. “Now its time, Solomon, / That Georgia finds its peace... / it can only overcome Persia / Under the protection of Russia” – this is the position of the king Erekle (Baratashvili 1972: 75) and 2. “But, You the king, who allows You / to determine the lives of your people, / To follow your own desire / And to suppress the freedom of your people?” (Baratashvili 1972: 79) – This is the opinion of the advisor Solomon and his wife Sofio.

Besides this poem, each one of both those positions is strengthened by one more poems of N. Baratashvili: the position of the king Erekle in “Tomb of King Irakli”, and that of Solomon Lionidze and his wife in “Hyacinth and a pilgrim”. There is a complete symmetry!

In our opinion, it would be “unromantic” to pose the question in such manner: Whose side is taking Nikoloz Baratashvili, of the king Erekle or of the adviser Solomon? It would be also “unromantic” to ask: of the two positions thematized in his poem “Thought on the Riverside of Mtkvari”: 1. All things are short-lived and vain, the human is a never filled vessel, neither a good or a bad man (including kings) is and can never be without a trouble, and 2. “It is not good for a human to be alive but to look like a dead, / To be in this world, but do not care for it” (Baratashvili 1972: 32) – which one expresses the position of the author? Or when is N. Baratashvili more sincere, as he in his “Merani” is striving for a turbulent life, or as he in his poem “My prayer” is dreaming of peace and rest?

Polarities are necessary to construct a romantic life and to create romantic literary texts. Romanticists are not interested in other kinds of life and other kinds of creative work, because they believe that “polarity is a condition of life and we should not see in it the enemy of life; moreover: where polarity is less than necessary, there we must strengthen it by means of polarization technique. If one wants to know what does it mean to be romantic, then she or he should refer to this point and she or he will thus make wonderful discoveries” (Schmid 2001: 40).

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