

WOMEN'S CONSTRUCTED WORLD IN LITERATURE

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Abstract

As literary texts are considered as a free area of imagination, which often reflect women's reactionary or progressive perceptions, their analysis is one of the best opportunities for the construction of cultural, social, psychological, historical images. Until the 1930-ies the traditional role of women was determined by the male construction: the woman is a mother and wife and is associated to domestic work and taking care of household. The main success of the woman was considered to get marriage and have children. However, the economic crisis caused by the Second World War and the need for women's resources changed the discourse and made the identity of the women of the time of war more complex: the woman undertook multiple role: feminine, working like man, spouse, ideal housewife. Poetic texts by two German female authors – Ingeborg Bachmann, Ilse Aichinger and by two Georgian female authors – Lia Sturua and Iza Orjonikidze were chosen as the objects of this study. As the historical contexts of Georgian and Austrian literature of the twentieth century reveal some similarities, such as the annexation, the Anschluss, a small country with a glorious past, a small county with a large neighbour etc., these similarities outlined the object of this study. The analysis of poetic texts by Georgian and Austrian female authors revealing on the one hand, contemporary and historical peculiarities of feminine narrative, and on the other hand, contrasts in cultural contexts, allow us to demonstrate and establish their national, individual and historical characteristics. The comparative analysis of the feminine narrative of the twentieth-century may also reveal sub-alternate status and marginalized role of women in the totalitarian regime.

Keywords: totalitarian regime, women's constructed world, marginalization

1. INTRODUCTION

Modern feminist theories focus not only on the discrimination against women and emotional and psychological deficit in their lives, but on discovering, analysing and interpreting positive potential in women's thought and individual, new concepts of perception of the universe and reality. As the historical contexts of Georgian and Austrian literature of the twentieth century reveal some similarities such as: the annexation, the Anschluss, marginalization of women in totalitarian regime, it would be interesting to interpret lyrical texts

of Georgian and Austrian female poets serving to analyse their contemporary epoch and create a new, free space.

Until the 1930-ies the traditional role of women was determined by the male construction: the woman is a mother and wife and is associated to domestic work and taking care of household. The main success of the woman was considered to get marriage and have children. However, the economic crisis caused by the Second World War and the need for women's resources changed the discourse and made the identity of the women of the time of war more complex: the woman undertook multiple role: feminine, working like man, spouse, ideal housewife. As Margaret Higonnet mentioned, propaganda reminded women that they were not natural, but behaving temporarily like men. Not only men could participate in political events, drive and observe world change. This is clearly exemplified by the fact that the events of the 1930-ies - Hitler's rise to power and Spanish Civil War - led Virginia Woolf, Storm, Naomi Mitchison write their novels and essays on political and internal conflicts in Fascism. *Three Guineas* by Virginia Woolf is probably the most famous intervention text claiming that Fascism and Patriarchate were the seeds of dictatorship that would root through tyranny. There would no longer be line between public and identity. While the patriarchal society made women devoid of their fundamental right – citizenship over the centuries, fascism and socialism created a new image of a brother who had to be honoured. While, over the centuries, mothers and daughters were to be silent because they were women, totalitarian regimes started persecuting women with political, religious and racist marks. Therefore, new discourse emerges in feminist thought – the woman is no longer associated to a pretty body, but is related to the mind that feels irrationality of war and the destructive power of totalitarian regimes.

2. LYRIC POETRY AND FEMALE POETS OF WESTERN EUROPE AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR

Western European lyrical poetry of the 1950-60-ies clearly shows marks of suffering from the Nazi Auschwitz and slaughterhouse. It reveals the same tendencies in Western European countries with similar themes and an acute sense of post-war reality. Post-war Western European and German lyric poetry use the same themes: night, anxiety, stone, fire, dissentience, resistance, disagreement, non-existence; Bright colours gradually disappear from the lyric poetry and it is replaced with the colourless, dim world showing through closed, hermetic lyrical forms or free verses by means of which poets run from existing reality and create new models of thinking. When speaking of new thinking models, forms and language of the verse, we should note Austrian poets - Ingeborg Bachmann and Ilse Aichinger from the German-language poetry, and Lia Sturua and Iza Orjonikidze from the Georgian poetry.

These poets are characterized by the love of free verse poems frequently based on “roaring and marching”, with diversity of poetry, irrepressible thirst for sovereignty, diversity of poems, rhetoric linking achieved by repetition.

Ingeborg Bachmann and Ilse Aichinger felt the destructive power of National Socialism: Ingeborg Bachmann saw Hitler's troops marching into her hometown of Klagenfurt when she twelve and it was when her "playing" and childhood was finished. Ilse Aichinger, suffered because of her Jewish mother, so that her dreams and dreams were replaced with cold, dull reality.

Ingeborg Bachmann does not cry for the past, but expresses complicated relation of the past to the present. The bitter feeling of impossibility of utopia with Bachman is accompanied by helplessness that makes her poems convincing and impressive. In her famous poem "Borrowed Time", the author warns us: "Harder days are coming." The human being is totally astounded in the midst of the present which does not have meaningful expression. But despite failure (no way out - typical for modernist poetry), it is necessary to start a new life, not to cry for the glorious past, but to create new present. One must lace up boots and go ahead. One may be ordered to be silent, may be considered to be mortal, but despite many obstacles, preparation for the coming days should go on. With the use of the frame phrase: “Harder days are coming”, the author refers to the closed circle and the life, in which each time we fight for the construction of a better world (Bachmann 2003, 47).

People live during the Cold War, the struggle for power is not yet completed and, on this background, the re-opening of a political and social life intensifies the feeling that the liberation from National Socialism was temporary: "The loan of borrowed time was due on the horizon" (20th century Austrian Literature, 2010: 63). Ingeborg Bakhmann revives this abstraction with her skilful writing style, and this image is quite bold, as it refers to existing problems in the same way as the lyrical posters that no longer appear in the literature after Bertolt Brecht.

In the short narrative "Among Murderers and Madmen" Bachmann says that new life has begun after the Second World War (Bachmann, Selected Works 2008:78). She transfers this motive to her lyrical poetry as well. In the poem "On a little Afternoon" she complains that seven years later yesterday's executioners are still in power, while the reader – the society is asleep and cannot adequately perceive the reality. Of course, the seven years mentioned in the poem mean the date the poem was written itself, in 1952 (seven years after the end of World War II) and not seven years of annexation of Austria by Nazi Germany. The poem describes the period when the old political figures begin to regain power and reputation in West Germany and Austria (Bartsch 1997:53). Pictures of nature described in the poem are loaded with radically different meanings. *On a little Afternoon* is nothing but warning, reprimand, and sobering words that are necessary to prevent torturers return to power and endanger the post-war world, the loss of vigilance can lead to the slaughterhouse of individuals. Here, the poet directly refers to the fate of Germany and the cause of its historical demolition should be sought in human beings, God, nature (Bachmann 2003, 54).

Ilse Aichinger, in her poem "Game of Cards" ("Kartenspiel") discusses the understanding of the past and its importance to build present, how the contemporaries forgot the black shelter and faces of people in the walls, iron men left in the past, but these examples and experiences have demonstrated the dull and ugly world, hence the author says: "Die Muster, die uns blind machten" (The examples that blinded us) (Aichinger 1996, 36). By this phrase the author refers to the danger of not considering experience. Indeed, it is hard for the blind to realize the reality, so they should follow their senses and memories in a new world where a rhinoceros under the kitchen bench is warming by the light. I think, the author uses the symbol of "rhinoceros" on purpose, as it is the only animal which is not threatened by other animal predators and humans are its only enemies. The author emphasizes the new model of the world where only rhinos can live peacefully. If you are satisfied with the sun's rays and your corner is you repress predator inside you, then you can also learn how to get warm up in the light.

The poem "Winter Answer" ("Winterantwort") represents a dialogue between the self and grandmother. The self is worried about having lost the ability to sense the diversity and beauty of the world, as there are no eyes to observe the white meadows, there are no ears to appreciate the fluttering of the birds in the branches (Aichinger 1996, 14). So the speaker turns to the grandmother with the question: "Who made us lose the heaven" but the grandmother answers with a question: "Is not the world we live in a dark forest?" But the self recognizes it is not a gloomy forest that we have happened upon, it is not even a forest at all. She is able to appreciate these things because she has lived a long time with the children at the fingers. This could be a reference to the author's belief that if you remain to be a child and thirst for life, hope, dream, strive towards the light, love humans, you cannot be morally destroyed and obey order of others, and that is why it is possible to see this world not a gloomy forest but as an open world.

3. GEORGIAN FEMALE POETS AND THE PROBLEM OF PRESERVATION OF IDENTITY

Preservation of identity was a real challenge for Georgia first in the period of being a part of the Russian Empire, and then that of the Soviet Union. In Georgia of the nineteenth century the main mission of preservation of identity was attached to the woman who raised children for her homeland and protected her mother tongue. Therefore, it is characteristic of the nineteenth century Georgia to idealize the image of the woman of the past and criticize contemporary women who only thought about their appearance, getting married and having fun. Generally, in Georgia the question of women is closely tied to nationality, even when the role of women in family was considered: "Mother must turn a family into a school, inspire the Georgian spirit into her child, teach him freedom and responsibility of a citizen and thus save the homeland (poet Dominia Eristavi-Anchoret) (Khomeriki, Javakhishvili, 9-11).

After Georgia became a member of the Soviet Union, a whole set of restrictions were made for women and expressing emotions became a crime. What was good and acceptable for Russia became acceptable for Georgia as well and thus Georgia turned into the province of Russia. Before, and especially after, World War II, Russia sought to be the ideological, cultural, political and military leader of the world, while Georgia dreamed of preserving its national identity and existence. But the Soviet government controlled all the layers of society and even individual opinion with terror.

The poems of Iza Orjonikidze express sadness and calling over co-citizens for gradually giving up the most important idea of freedom and identity and live in comfort where "even the wind is a hypocrite"(Orjonikidze 2009,24). The self finds it difficult to integrate into the society because she cannot understand them. The life in the totalitarian regime is only proved by non-existence and in the poem "the City" the author describes smiling people who live in deformed houses that do not belong to them, but they are still satisfied because that is what the system requires. With the anaphoric repetition the author introduces hysterical tone

expressing alarm, and with the stylistic devices of refrain and repetition emphasizes contrastive situation and how new images changed her thoughts and desires. The self has nothing but to hope that her brothers will learn to fight and they will return their homes. The only way to end the suffering is resistance. In the poem "Meeting" a vigilant woman is described who carries the love for her homeland in her heart and because of this others take her for a fool, as they got used to the new life "like to a new small-size slipper" (Orjonikidze 2009,22). The self feels that she is homeless like a Gipsy and carries her identity on her back. This emphasizes the idea that the fighter self does not give up the identity and confronts the pseudo-organization of the Soviet Union.

Poetic texts of Lia Sturua often contain mythological characters, antique authors helping the poet to discover and understand reality. A new world of Lia Sturua is completely different from the visible one, it is full of light, voices, flavors and colors. The poem "To my children, big and little" clearly expresses the protest against ugly, gloomy existence and the poet dyes her hair red and writes poems during war (Sturua 008, 20) suggesting that the poet is a rebel and bold and does not comply to established rules and tries to change the world serving to a greater mission: maybe her children can live in their hometown, where they will be able to express their emotions, enjoy bright colors of the world and thus prolong their childhood. The end of the poem is logically felt by the statement that the mother was born in a sad, gloomy world and is threatened to be left disoriented. In the poem "Plato's Motives" the author asks a question: "Why is not a diversity of styles permitted in the state?" An answer to this question alludes to Plato's Republic and suggests that the ideal state needs neither poets, not diversity of opinion, that is why a heroine of the poem keeps "her red dress and ironed revolution in a wardrobe", individual emotions are buried with the motif of creation of a state. The same emotions are intensified by desperate anaphoric and interrogative expressions in the poem "Snowing body". If the state does not need you as a thinker (Plato's idea of a philosopher king is considered to be utopic here), than your existence is useless, such citizen is just an empty place - suggests the author.

4. CONCLUSION

The article analyzes female poets' texts which implicitly involve images and subtexts of a new world. The poets attempt to analyze past and contemporary events and systems and demonstrate existing images with new meanings from the female perspective. The female perspective is manifested by various specific images in poetic texts of the 20th century: escaping, avoidance, the search for individuality, the importance of identity and diversity, destructive power of Totalitarianism. New specific images show a new world with a new mythic woman - lyrical self who, with the change of history, gets the feel of a new reality and reveals its imperfections and desired images of the world.

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