

Totalitarianism and Literary Discourse

Totalitarianism and Literary Discourse:
20th Century Experience

Edited by

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P U B L I S H I N G

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FOREWORD

IRMA RATIANI

The collection “Totalitarianism and Literary Discourse” represents selected proceedings from the conference, “Totalitarianism and Literary Discourse. 20th Century Experience”, held in Tbilisi (Georgia) in October 2009. The Tbilisi conference pioneered scholarly inquiry in post-Soviet space which evaluated political and cultural realia, emphasizing the challenges facing literature and culture in totalitarian strangleholds, various kinds of ideological diktat, their possible forms and consequences.

The reign of the Soviet totalitarian regime in Georgia, as well as in other Soviet countries, lasted for nearly 80 years and disturbed the development of culture and literature. It was a repellent system of quasi-religious thinking that demanded unanimity, a single faith based on violence and lies that deprived human beings not only of life, but also of spirituality, individuality, pride and freedom (ჯახაძე 2010: 13). The vast majority of Georgians were affected by soviet Totalitarianism, both physically and spiritually; and numerous human, intellectual and creative lives were damaged. The principle of compulsory alienation of spiritual values formed the basis for Soviet art and literature. Correspondingly, the creative process was turned into an industry of limited ideology (ფორალოშვილი 2010: 14). If we bear in mind the inherent aspiration of literature to embrace intellectual and representational freedom, we may form a clear idea of the contradiction that arises in a totalitarian regime between the artistic text and the actual context. The primary feature of totalitarianism is the creation of an ideological dictatorship, which forms clichés and implements them. Obviously, this considerably restricts the frame of literary freedom. This was clearly exemplified by the 1920s, when in most of the countries marked by the red flag of the “Soviets”, including Georgia, the modernist trends established in literature found themselves conceptually at odds with the ideological principles of the Soviet dictatorship. By destroying spiritual values, the Soviet dictatorship was hostile towards the literary process informed by an inner spiritual quest which, for its part reflected precisely the crisis of the times – the common skepticism and nihilism that existed in a society oppressed by

intellectual terror. The opposition between the totalitarian regime and artistic-literary thought resulted in decades of painful experience, which formed a major stage of the history of Georgian culture.

For decades the Soviet Union was the essence of historical and cultural eclecticism, though its inconsistencies were successfully masked by the smooth work of the hypertrophied state mechanism and the principle of centralized power: what is needed by one person is needed by all, what is a rule for one is a rule for all, as one lives so must all others live. The centre took over individual decisions; nationality, history, tradition, thinking, aspiration were unimportant details against the backdrop of the large-scale Soviet marker.

Is the interior of this artificial system as naïve as the façade? Clearly, it is not.

The brave revolutionaries have long since turned into cynics and fanatics, while the notion of a leader has assumed an ambivalent and equivocal character. In the first place, the leader is not someone who merits being a leader (at least by any token), but he who desires leadership more than others and strives for it by all means. Under normal circumstances becoming a leader depends on definite characteristics – a person’s wit, competence, merit or heredity, for that matter – in the Soviet structure, however, it was subject to one principle alone: aggressive desire. A kind of governing ideology takes shape – an irrational structure that by its own will assumes a demiurgic or constructive function, implying the “creation” of a new social model and “remaking” of human beings according to the corresponding pattern. The process of “creating” and “remaking” takes the course of definite regression: the leader creates a new social model or implements a utopian concept, but in his quest for organized good and happiness, relying on force, he alters human life, which gradually develops into chaos and war and finally assumes the form of organized evil (რატოსიძე 2005: 59 – 130). Transformation of the leader is inevitable: his constructive function changes into a punitive and destructive function. C. Z. Frank notes: “Utopian movements are always launched by dedicated persons, filled with love for the people, ready to give their lives for their neighbor. Such persons not only resemble saints but from a definite point of view, have something of holiness. However, gradually – because of the approach of the practical implementation of the goal set – they themselves either transform into persons possessed of the power of satanic evil, or yield the authority of their successors as corrupt

and heartless seekers of power. Such is the paradoxical development of all revolutions, the attempt to transform all utopian conceptions into a way of life” (Франк 1991: 54). The leader turns into a personified embodiment of evil, a monster that is the object of the artificial-pathetic admiration of the people or the subdued masses.

What is the effect of such a political system on culture and art, and in particular, on literature?

Barring a small group of enthusiasts excited (or intoxicated – I.R.) by the idea of “saving the masses”, the establishment of Soviet ideology in social thought and life was brought about through various emotional-psychological influences. In the first place, writers were turned into ideological zombies, and by means of terror were coerced into serving the dictatorship, where fear performed the function of a kind of Hermes between the machinery of the state and art. This resulted in the creation of ideological texts devoid of genuine artistic value, but which were used as the literary models of **Soviet Discourse**. By classical definition, “Soviet discourse is a socio-cultural phenomenon of linguo-rhetorical nature” (Ворожбитова 2000: 1). The anthem of course is the socio-psychological key to its mentality. On the one hand, it is a discourse of “new democracy” and leftist intelligentsia, where the word-fiction dominates over the word-object. On the other hand, it is a “superficial discourse” that has no depth and is devoid of the experience of national individuality. It is impossible to understand anything in the framework of this discourse, as it is only simulation, and radical manifestation of simulation in literature is ideologized nonsense. The best example of this is **Proletarian Discourse**. Proletarian discourse is both a classic and exaggerated model of Soviet discourse that “normalizes the proletarian psychology” through merging thought with objectification” (Гасцев 1919: 10); its source should be sought in the agitation-leaflet (anti) culture of the second half of the 19th century. Proletarian discourse, armed with the slogan, “We shall build our own new world” (on what? the ruins of the old? – I. R.), in order to implement its core idea, supports radical, and often violent, means of social innovation – torture, murder, destruction. In general, it uses terror as the shortest way to the cultivation of mass character. “In this case, there are no millions of heads, there is only one common head. Subsequently, such a tendency leads to the elimination of individual thought, turning into objective psychology as the whole class, manifested in the system of psychological switching on, off and over (Гасцев 1919: 10). The conceptual and moral stance of relatively radical authors, who were voluntarily or forcibly united under the sign of Soviet discourse embodied extremely well the principles of Soviet rhetoric devoid of individuality or

nationality: (“My address is neither street, nor house, but the Soviet Union”), as one of the popular songs of Soviet period declared.

Discourse had its opposite side, marked by the struggle of disobedient, fearless nonconformists, writers who opposed the superficial illusion of forced happiness and chose an appealing form of literary protest, which resulted in the shaping of an **Anti-Soviet Discourse**. We can take **Modernist Writing**, with its diverse forms and tributaries, as the initial model of anti-Soviet discourse, for it was high modernism, characterized by a striving for representational freedom, and by the quest for truth and establishing individuality, that constituted the main threat to Soviet demagogues. Modernism is an organic part of the overall development of Georgian, as well as of European literature. Accordingly, opposing it was a matter not only of ideological, but also of anti-historical and anti-national struggle. Hence, it was not surprising that there were no authorities in this struggle: the notion of “writer” was replaced with “ours” and “enemy”, the former being the marker of Soviet discourse, and the latter of anti-Soviet discourse. **Avant-garde Art and Literature** provided no less of a threat. Although the avant-garde rejected “the whole system of spiritual problems, existential relations” (წიფურია 2008: 262), it was actively implemented in experimental models of representational forms: “The essence lies in expressiveness itself...The idea of the permanent quest of modernism is here preserved in the quest for artistic expression, turning into the quest for an ever new artistic form opposed to the accepted form” (წიფურია 2008: 262). What is non-standard opposes “common sense”, and what opposes “common sense” is anti-Soviet. Let us declare “social disgust” against it”.

Summing up the above, we can conclude that the oppositional model of literary discourse, **Soviet Discourse / Anti-Soviet Discourse** constitutes different responses to one and the same process, which may be compared only to shock therapy: both forms of literary discourse became quite widespread in the 1920s-30s – precisely when communism began to transform from a utopian dream to an implemented project.

The young Soviet system was gaining ground on a broad front in the territories of forcibly united countries. In the space of a specific Soviet narrative, side by side with other politicized terms, a place of honour was accorded to the concepts: “Soviet literature”, “socialist realism”, “the Soviet critical school”, which expressed extremely well the priority nature of literature marked under the token of ideology, promising special privileges and honour to the servants of the muse. On the one hand, fear, and on the other, the guarantee of stable well-being proved a strong stimulus for those who gave little thought to eternal glory. Poems and odes

appeared, eulogizing the helmsmen of the Soviet country. Lengthy novels were written about the collective work and heroism of Soviet people; about the life of people fighting for unity and equality, and their relentless fight against any surviving bourgeois and aristocrats. A considerable number of belles-lettres were written, “masterpieces”, by troubadours of the state system, which were, unfortunately, significant only from the chronological and quantitative standpoints: so many works were written at this time, and yet their themes are almost identical. But belles-lettres cannot be assessed only from either a chronological or a quantitative viewpoint. One of the main criteria for estimation, along with conceptual and artistic innovations, is the degree of intellectual freedom, and Soviet society suffered unequivocally from its deficit. Soviet criticism praised cheap literary experiments, and also relentlessly distorted the interpretation of then rare high-quality literature. Quite a few texts of Georgian writers of landmark significance fell victim to such wrong, unacceptable interpretations. Authors of mediocre talent and capacity understood well the process under which they were working, and even some of the best writers developed cracks. It is hard to feel sincere trust of the Soviet ideological course, even less, enthusiasm for it. Predominantly there was fear – ordinary human fear that caused obedience to the leader and state structure. But fear did not have a single significance: for a certain number of writers, fear made them feel the absurdity of the empirical reality, strengthened the experience of protest and played a significant role in developing an alternative discourse.

How did the authorities react to the alternative literary discourse?

The writer was simply declared an “enemy”, his work, anti-state activity, and he invariably was punished. We can draw up a rather long list of writers punished for this reason. But in this case, the tragedy of the situation involved not only the ruined fate of individual persons, but also the destruction of the whole paradigm of the literary process, which as a rule needs a long time for rebuilding. “Anti-Soviet writers” endured sacrifice, for they believed that all other ways involved compromise, which they could not allow, or a wrong mechanism of prolonging one’s existence. Accordingly, quite a few writers revolting against the “ideal type” of slavish society consciously faced execution, exile or even suicide. These three forms of “settling” the problem were identical in content, the difference lying only in their implementation. The writer himself was a tragic personality who fell victim to his own principles.

Writers learned to use indirect means of expressing protest later, when society began to emerge from the state of shock, or was forced to adapt to its new context; totalitarian political rule was believed to be an inevitable

historical reality, and getting out of it a long-term political process. This model of anti-Soviet literary discourse worked under a mask and conceptually may be thought of as a strategy of “indirectly casting stones”. However, it resembles rather a guerrilla fighting, marked by the principle of *festina lente*. Writers fight with all weapons available to them: satire, allegory, irony, the absurd; they fight on their own territory and beyond it – in emigration – openly and underground. All roads are a means to attain one’s end, though in this case the writer himself is not the character of the tragedy, but is only a tragedian who tries to replace the reality with a process of intense mythopoeia.

One circumstance is particularly interesting. The anti-Soviet literary discourse, stemming from the constant quest for representative models, emerges as a generator of the diversity of genres in the Soviet period. For example, such important literary genres as *literary anti-utopia*, *mythological-realistic novel* or *satirical novella* may be considered to have been ideal genres of anti-Soviet discourse. Of course, I do not contend that the origin of these genres is linked to Soviet ideology. However, at this stage of my research, in individual cases, I do not rule out such a conclusion.

How stable or flexible was the literary discourse of the Soviet period?

Obviously, the stability and flexibility of a literary discourse is determined by its context. When the process is long, or the totalitarian rule lasts almost a century, it of course involves different periods: more or less radical, relatively radical, inert, or on the contrary, active and other types of period. However, each of them does serious damage to the idea of literary freedom, and the variety of literary discourse in the Soviet period is beyond doubt. For example, consider first the literature of the period of the “*Patriotic War*”, and later that of the “*Period of Thaw*” in the 50s-60s.

During the Patriotic War **Soviet Publicist Discourse** proved to be the most successful functional and stylistic discourse. However, in a discourse of this type we can distinguish different layers: the **Official Press**, as a manifestation of the position of Soviet ideologues (radio-reportages, recall for that matter, Levitan’s well-known timbre and dramatic texts); the refined Patriotic Texts of authoritative writers, expressing sincere support for the overall ethnic problem; finally, the Epistolary Texts – personal records or correspondence, in which a split was felt between the official stand and the real situation. However, owing to the experience of general physical threats, this was probably the underground period of anti-Soviet discourse, when it acquired relatively fragmentary character, and the generalized Soviet mentality of **Homo Sovieticus** had been successfully formed.

The period of the so-called “thaw” of the ‘50s-’60s yields quite a different picture. Whereas in the ‘50s, the authors, having turned grey in the service of Soviet ideology, felt the need for a re-evaluation of their own texts, in the ‘60s – after an interval of almost thirty years – the influence of Western literary trends grew more overt. Compared to the doomed generation of modernists of the ‘20s-’30s, the writers of the sixties appear to be in a much more privileged position. This pro-Western model of anti-Soviet discourse was obviously the result of political liberalization: whereas the world seen beyond the iron curtain found its way into the homes of the Soviet leaders in the shape of Marlboros and other “imported” (a soviet term) wares, literature was given the chance of “taking a glance” at Western trends and ideas. The **Anti-Soviet Liberal Discourse** invaded the Soviet territories with themes from Hemingway and bold neo-realistic experiments, accompanied by romantic dreams of friendship, sincerity, refined relations, and even freedom! As soon as the thaw took a dangerous shape, the instinct of banning the unfamiliar awakened in the Soviet leaders. The aggression of Soviet authorities to everything new intensified. On the one hand, this aggression assumed an extremely artificial character, on the other, it disrupted basic norms of communication. As a result, the writer, as one of the most qualified users of information, suffered from its deficit. The entire paradox of this situation is that in the process of creating an artificial structure anew it was not Soviet discourse that acquired radical character but anti-Soviet discourse, **Dissident Discourse** becoming its textual manifestation. Or perhaps this is not a paradox at all but a cultural manifestation of logical movement towards the end of the regime?

In the given situation the literary system became inordinately fragmented. The following basic models took shape: **Subjectivist Discourse** (“**differently minded**”) thinkers, as an in-depth model of anti-Soviet discourse; **Radical Discourse (dissidents)**, as an exaggerated model of anti-Soviet discourse; **Adapted Discourse (conformists)**, as an attempt at an intellectual reconciliation of anti-Soviet and Soviet discourses; **Neutral Discourse (uninvolved)**, as a passive model of anti-Soviet discourse, internally related to subjectivist discourse, though differing from it from the viewpoint of position activity[?]; and of course **Modernized Soviet Discourse (foresighted apologists)**, as a new prop of Soviet power. The basis of such differentiation is determined not only by the ideological antagonism between the discourses, or the qualitative indicators of literary production, for that matter, but by the stance writers took as a manifestation of social identification and communication.

The coexistence of the discourse models as outlined above, lasted until the end of the '80s and clearly reflected reality: it was obvious, that the intellectual destruction caused by the Soviet regime had already started. Since the '90s, as a result of the break-up of the Soviet system, literary discourse, as well as the political situation itself, has continued to exist under a new, post-colonial status. However, this is a topic of a different essay.

In all epochs, a writer may choose slavery, but the main thing is that it must be a voluntary rather than a forced choice. Only nonconformists find a way out of totalitarianism. History guarantees that the survival of genuine literary images, even under extreme tyrannical circumstances, is not threatened, for it is time that saves what is valuable rather than the volition of individual persons, no matter how successful dictators they might be.

Decades after the collapse of the Soviet union, full comprehension of the process of Sovietization has become possible, and in the field of literary studies scholars have worked on a number of issues: assessing conceptual and motivational models of Soviet-period Texts; demonstrating the reaction of literary discourse to intellectual terror and systematizing alternative models offered by anti-soviet discourse; exhibiting the myths and stereotypes of totalitarian epoch; and classifying literary genres. At the same time, it is important to ascertain the relation between the conceptual-motivational models and structural models of literary discourse – conceptualization of how close or, on the contrary, how fragile this relationship is. The more so that the process is symptomatic, involving a fairly broad cultural area.

The collection “Totalitarianism and Literary Discourse” has gathered papers by scholars from almost all of the post-soviet, as well as of some other countries, and is a first attempt to solve the above mentioned issues and offer a wide array of questions. The collection has been divided into parts to facilitate the reader’s better understanding of the articles. We do hope that the works of post-Soviet scholars will provide our colleagues around the world with concise information and will deepen interest in the problems presented.

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PART I:

**THE MYTHS AND STEREOTYPES
OF TOTALITARIAN EPOCH**

CHAPTER ONE

AXIOLOGY AND ANTI-UTOPIA OF ANDREI PLATONOV

LUDMILA ANTONOVA

With the literary language of A. Platonov's works has been created a version of a society abandoned by the ancient traditions and the centuries – old culture, its historical mentality which had pre-determined the outset of the totalitarian times and the tragedies of the destinies of several generations. The determination of the valuable quality of the past means understanding the modern problems. In the Russian Religious Philosophy of the beginning of the 20th century was heard a warning motive: the philosopher N. Berdyaev, appealing to the writings of the Russian writers, seen the light of the metaphysical nature of the revolution. In Platonov's literary characters come into view the similar metaphysical features and the nihilistic characters preceding the totalitarianism. Other accents were made in the real picture of the time being by the well-known ideological symbols. Axiological approach opens, in our opinion, a different level of the literary critical and philosophical understanding of the works of the writer. Some axiological interpretations of the artistic world of Platonov's works are the subject matter of our paper.

The axiological look on literature is not new for the philosophical practice. The mutual usefulness of the values of literature and philosophy, axiology is obvious. Literature is interesting for philosophy as the source of the nature of values, and the classical literary criticism has always had in view the reversibility of the transcendent and the symbolic plan of the valuable facts. In the evaluation of the artistic phenomena axiology has been defined by their aesthetic nature and the dominating principles of art. The value as such, from the point of view of axiology, is not only a social phenomenon; it has historical, cultural, psychological nature and, moreover, the intuition and the phenomena of the unconscious. The phenomenon of the value was considered to be the substance of the other

world. The artistic value has much more complex nature of origin. Let's give several general arguments in favor of the axiological approach on the basis of the theory of values.

The principle of the axiological approach should be considered the "anthropomeasurement" (Антонова 2004) amalgamating in itself the absolute values of the verity, the good, the beauty, they for any time and epoch have the significance of the necessity, being the criteria and the standard, the starting point for all relative possibilities to be and remain a historical man. The image of the historical man preserved the characteristics of culture, time in regard to the good, the individual sense and the measure of beauty. The axiological portrait of the historical man is being created by the generalization of the individual values. By means of the language of its characters the writer actually, is constructing the reality of the complete axiological picture of the being the attitude towards life and death, love and God, family and children, society and state, socialism and revolution.

The absolute values determine the vector of motion of the society towards the development. They have their integral and hierarchic structure. The extent of agreement (disagreement) of the values with the definite norms and ideas characterizes the social maturity and the cultural development or backwardness and degradation of the society. Ultimately, in the valuable condition of the society we must look for the causes of selflessness, creative work or destructiveness of the people and the society acting according to the individual talent of making an effort.

Platonov's artistic texts stated the hyperbolic significance of the politics in a society, which against the over – all background of the social and cultural poverty appears to be the symptom of the deformity of the consciousness and the ominous prophecy for the future. The hypertrophy of the politics broke the balance between the values that are making the normal life. Formerly, the classical images of the vice were leaving hope to a reader. And the main thing is that there always was something reconciling us with the human's passions, a kind of indispensable broadness and the necessary scope of imagination about such a diverse human nature. N. Gogol could so artistically depict the feasts of Sobakevich, so precisely portray the characteristic details, that the very text of gluttony, the image of the insatiability and the exult of the flesh gave you a comical pleasure of the fun. Isn't it "the worship of life" according to Sobakevich? And F. Dostoevsky so skillfully conveyed the anticipation of the horror of the crime and Raskolnikov's victim, the old woman with a thin neck that you can, involuntarily, get cold and dumb from fear and as in a terrible dream lose your voice and the ability to speak. The pleasure here is doubtful, the interest for the mastery is

undoubtedly. The classical Russian literature artistically conveyed the diversity of the existential states of a man and the archetypal earliest images. In Platonov's case we come across a new genre in literature – social utopia. The writer, being a worthy follower of the traditions of the classical literature, described the reality of the consciousness of the antisocial type. But not of a particular but of a general character, the function of this reality is in the simulation of the values, annihilation of mentality. That's why Platonov's images don't reconcile with the reality of a possible diversity, but give rise to a protest.

The texts, thesaurus of the literary language of the writer gives freedom for investigation of the annihilated forms of consciousness. In his works is living the spirit of the popular speech, original traditions and the language expressiveness. The novel "Chevengur" leaves an impression of a description of the wandering lost people who had cut all actual human bonds, existing on instincts and motivations of not always clear consciousness. People meet only to depart again without laying any foundation of life. Being unable to express the doubt, to say anything about criticizing the ideals of the society A. Platonov through the valuable content creates the anthropoid images of utopic reality causing the sensation of horrible dream. The human bonds are gone even in kinship. The birth of children becomes like punishment. No harmony in anything or anywhere. Some individual characters haven't yet been deprived of common sense, though very naive. The writer saw and knew such people around him, they don't fit into the norms of the modern notions, but they are the types of the past, the witnesses of the disrupted history. Their metaphysical descendants can be recognized in some films of the soviet period.

The axiological look on a man implies a social matrix of the indispensable valuable states according to which different kinds of characters should be estimated. The man from Chevengur as well as the man from Kotlovan are similarly archetypal and are treated by their time to the quality of a socially indispensable function. Let's elicit from the text several interesting and peculiar figures meeting the matrix requirements at least by one but very important parameter. Votchev ("Kotlovan") a thoughtful naively judicious man was dismissed because of his "thoughtfulness in the general tempo of labour". He was near breaking point "when his soul was remembering that it no more knew the verity". In A. Platonov's "Chevengur" there is a ghost of primitive technocracy in the consciousness of a driver, the locomotive's steersman, he adores the locomotive and worships it. "The machine, brother, is a young miss; a woman is of no good any more". According to him the machine is an

unprotected creature...near the locomotive they were trembling and now they all think that they are cleverer. His warm – hearted thoughts: “The father of the machine is the lever, and the mother – the inclined plane”. For the new doers of life socialism should be built as a house beginning with the foundation pit. The feral society and the ideological aims of a new perfect world ate two mutually excluding things; or another character, Zakhhar Pavlovich. His main talent is to make different things, items; he can fit up everything, except his own life. We can say that he is “a longing soul” (Plato), it realizes itself in handicraft. Another life is of no interest for him. He has nothing to tell anybody. He is fascinated by the magic of fire, and is from the first Russian technocrats, a messenger into a new century, who had removed the pagan idols into the furnace of the locomotive, idolizing the power of the iron progress. A. Platonov is quite exactly conveying the valuable existential of a ministrant of a technological cult. The opposite is the character by nickname “Bachelor” not obsessed by life. Not ever doing anything, only looking around. A kind of spectator, but there is nothing going on in his consciousness, “instead of intellect he lives with the sense of a confidential respect”.

The character Carpenter is depicted by the writer as a “forever upset man”, but speaking about children he can’t understand “how he managed to reproduce such riff-raff”. The most curious character, Fisherman, because of his contact with nature shows a particular interest in death, it is for him like “another province”. He even drowned himself to get to know the mystery of death, - “what is it like there?” died from his curiosity. The attitude towards death for Chevengur dwellers exceeds the limits of the reasonable. The value of life is not realized, more exactly, doesn’t have quality of value. The readiness to accept death is everywhere; it has nothing to do with the philosophical attitude to death. The child died from hunger: “got rid of suffering, dear”, “lies better than alive”, “In Paradise is listening to silver winds”, -crying a womanwrinkles”. A kind of sorrow left from the past traditions, but absolutely without any understanding of its generic necessity. Over all this with the amazing diversity of a human nature hangs the ennui and melancholy, the unsteadiness of life itself, which passing from generation to generation never made strong any positive moves, any shoots of interest for a different existence. Neither the great reformer Peter 1, nor the apologist of himself “insane” P. Chaadaev saved the man from the inertness of a spacious spirit not fixed in any place. The comparative analysis of the real vital situations and the naïve consciousness of the participants show how the desirable turns into utopia. The aim is unattainable unrealizable for one main reason. In the

axiological composition is gone the integral world view which is being formed in the creative culture.

Where does the melancholy of life come from? The writer speaks about it by words of his heroes, Prokhor Dvanov quails from need and children, who are propagating every year. He neither feels the cordial disposition towards the God, nor the affection towards his ugly wife and children. How to be a beautiful wife with the every year child – birth! And the food is dull; it is eaten from necessity, swallowed to appease hunger. Bad harvests caused the migration of people to town for sustenance, that's for begging, often are children sent there – to ask alms. Very peculiar is the world vision of some characters. “Unrealized music”, “spare your strength from work exhaustion”, “it is dull to live due to one birth”, “at the tail of the masses”, “to the girls – pioneers the joy is in the place of beauty and domestic plumpness”, “the monster of imperialism will never get socialist children”, “a man without a war is like a woman without a child”, “the weakness of the body without the verity”, and others no less bright, the examples of the aphoristical texts give freedom for valuable comparisons.

The attitude to love and erotica is quite in the spirit of the time. The nakedness of a man is not associated with the body, and it is not the object of passion. Naked children sit down at table so that their “mean clothes” wouldn't wear out. The naked people are sitting, mending their rags without embarrassment. The older preceptor is teaching young Sasha to pay no attention if “there is something pulling, as if you want something. Each man has in its lower part the whole “imperialism”. As we say: “De tempore, de moribus!” The philosopher S. Kierkegaard called it the physiology of “the sting into the flesh”, and G. Bataille—“the tiger in a jump”, and here—“imperialism” in one's body. And still, the most reflective hero is Sasha Dvanov, who had the most natural, by Freud, experience. The wounded Sasha sees the world through the fantasy of his imagination and is squeezing the leg of the horse, feeling “the sweet-smelling body of the one who he had never known and will not know...” Life and death joined in a single state of passion, he had forgotten about the death and anarchists.

Socialism was an obscure hope and a complex of a dangerous joy. In one episode Dvanov is getting on a hypothetical locomotive of history and is desperately going along his unknown way into the mystery. These scenes symbolically create the image of a man who found himself in a revolution due to some unknown for him forces and circumstances. Life was supposed to be an anxiety for all, now it has changed into a new quality of motion of the inertial consciousness. A. Platonov gives a social-

psychological portrait of the masses, crowd, where the leader is supposed to appear, because of the very fact of his appearance. "The masses, by means of the leader are insuring their vain hopes and the leader is eliciting from the masses what is required" (Платонов 1988: 115). Here lies the tragedy of the leaders: if the hopes of the masses don't come true they reject the leader and throw him under the wheels of history.

Communism and the life of a child are inseparable, if the child dies, that communism hadn't come true, because they die only from capitalism, thus was judging the commander with "the international face" Kopenkin. He, like his comrades, naively thought, that in a singly taken Chevengur communism can be organized. And for Rose Luxembour, the bride of the revolution, people can be mowed like weeds. But nevertheless, the communist "value" – collective wives – was realized. In the head of these activities was Prokofi, in childhood Proshka, who was fiercely bullying Sasha and was the most ingenious scoundrel, which had promoted him to a leading position. Quick wit and dexterity help such people to become quite at home everywhere. Only the most sincere and seeking character Alexander Dvanov was not striving for the welfare of life, he was seeking the sense of life, going through his own way of a watcher of the revolution, "communism" in Chevengur. Not finding the sense of life he repeated the fate of his father, fisherman, who was seeking the mystery of death in the lake. The values of a hero have become the rejection of the possibility of socialism without the progress of the spirituality and culture.

The axiological attitudes of the writer himself determine the perception of the given phenomena. Platonov expressed his attitude to socialism, showing, that the obsession with the goal and the enthusiasm of those "marching" without cultural valuable grounds, bear in itself the danger of blind submission to the objective will. Ideologically Society, strange places and circumstances, topos and chronos of anti values show the author's non acceptance of the anthropoid society and it is the essence of the social anti utopism of Platonov. The author denies the possibility of the full valued existence in the artificial world not co – natural for a man. The society, brought to a standstill in natural evolution, is degrading socially and culturally, turning the values into their opposites. The ugly society isn't capable of development.

The western understanding of anti utopia and dystopia, in particular, the denial of the priority of the value of the good over the verity makes the valuable state of the society extremely hopeless. Should be noted, History proved, that the verity of science exists independently until it comes across the right for life. The verity and the good can exist only in harmony with its wonderful form.

The works of the writer gives answers to many questions put by the present day; the answer to them is in the past of the society. Thus, the valuable modalities, having not become the object of the full perception, are the reasons of the social infantility. The utopism of the goal and the spiritual tragedy of the nation are rendered in a famous episode with the collectivization. Each peasant was trying to slaughter his cattle and poultry on his farmyard, so as not to give them away. Deprived of everything, people gathered together and holding onto each other begin an awkward dance. From the dynamic was breaking out, thundering the liberation bravura music declaring the happy way to socialism. The symbol of utopism of all that was going on is the rooster, he is crowing somewhere, left the only one and alone without his hens. The bitter happiness of the rooster symbolizes the outset of the times of violence and the human “abandonment” the conditions of the totalitarian power.

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CHAPTER TWO

STEREOTYPES OF TOTALITARIAN AGE

NINO BALANCHIVADZE

“Man is neither angel nor beast; and the misfortune is that he who would act the angel acts the beast.”

Pliny the Younger wrote that human nature is adulterated, because it combines extreme spiritual poverty with boundless arrogance.

Pascal regarded humans as “thinking canes” (i.e. internally fluctuating) and as grains of sand dispersed in the space, whose strength lies in spirituality and thinking, and if this virtue is lost, the grains will also be squandered. Unfortunately, not only individuals, but a number of countries fell victim to the neglect of this simple truth (პატრიარქის ქადაგება 1992).

It is well known that Louis XIV said: “I am the state”. This is the main sign of totalitarianism making a state the same as its authorities. In democratic countries the two are sharply divided. State institutions (the army, state funds, the education system, and so forth) are separated from the state, i.e. the personalities, who govern these institutions in accordance with the people’s will. This situation is supported by public servants, who remain unchanged when the governments are replaced. Several representatives in the upper circles are replaced, but other employees remain in their posts.

The situation is different under totalitarian systems. The state and government (as well as top government representatives) are regarded as the same. In such situations, representatives of the government effectively privatise the state and, no matter who may try to protect state interests, will deliberately or accidentally oppose the narrow interests of the people within the government.

Totalitarianism aims at fully transforming human beings in line with its ideology. People are transformed through the establishment of strict control over their actions and, what is most important, thinking.

Totalitarianism dictates everyone how to think, demanding absolute obedience, which implies the disappearance of individualism and personal features. This has had quite a deep impact on our inner world.

Of course, the description of reality in a manner contrary to real life and in line with desires was also visible in oral folklore. Myths were created on excellent life (paradise) on Earth, bright Communist future, proletariat's great leader Comrade Stalin, collectivisation, industrialisation, "Stakhanovites", tea and vine growers, and so forth.

Not so long ago, people used to sing:

moon is shining in the sky,
Which is a sign of good weather.
Our collective farm has become stronger.
Long live Stalin!

It is now difficult to be sure how sincere the attitude of the happy people towards the great leader was. However, there were those, who said:
A steam locomotive was departing,

Taking away salt.
Why can't Lenin take
Our Stalin with him.

The young man, who said this, lived in Ozurgeti.¹ He was executed in the rancorous year of 1937 (ქესპედციას 2009).

The words of the following song can probably explained only by the odd nature of the Georgians:

Zestaponi² Cheka has come to Chiatura.³
I wonder where they will stop and whom they will arrest tonight.
(ქესპედციას 2009).

And this was said at the time, when Beria organised terrible bloodshed in Georgia in 1923-1924.

People's isolation from information is nothing strange for the totalitarian Soviet regime. We know the following joke: Hannibal, Napoleon, and Hitler meet in the next world. Hannibal complains: "Had I had artillery like Napoleon's, Rome would have been unable to

¹ Settlement in west Georgia.

² Town in west Georgian Imereti region.

³ Town in west Georgian Imereti region.