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XX Century Georgian and Oriental Literature on Woman's Burden (Based on the Analysis of the Fiction by Rabindranath Tagore and Giorgi Leonidze)

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Abstract:

A constant fight for identification and strengthening of the woman and man equality in family, society and politics has been continuing since the time immemorial. A woman had different status in terms of right and property. All these depended on the social, political and cultural development levels, religious believes, word perception and other factors of the concrete society.

One of the main problems of the modern society is the problem of gender issue which is believed to be started openly in 20s and 70s and which has not still lost its actuality. It is particularly interesting to investigate the problem in relation of the Eastern World where the local rules forced out the woman from the society and made her find a shelter in Harem. The issue of attitude towards the woman used to vary in different periods that appeared to be expressed in the literature of every country at least to some extent. It is true that the issue was mainly addressed by women writers, but men writers did not show less support and sensitivity too amongst who Rabindranath Tagore, the classic of Bengali Literature, public man, Nobel Prize laureate took the most important place. Based on the investigation of the selected works by Rabindranath Tagore we stated it to be the objective of our research to reveal the issue of the woman's fortune and other related problems. We also analyze the prose works by Georgian writers that appears to be the novelty of the presented research. Although, Georgia, like India, tends to be the country of traditions and the cult of the woman is one of the leading cults in Georgian culture, still some problems related to the woman right appear.

Keywords: woman's fortune, the problem of woman and society, woman load, violence, lack of rights.

Introduction

Writer and public man R. Tagore played a crucial role in shaping the future of free India. The charm of his poetry was so powerful, that his contemporaries referred to their time as "Rabindranath's Era" (1987: 6).

Tagore's entire life and work can be assessed as overcoming the ancient Indian religious doctrine and its belief in the denial of life. Tagore's perception of the world, his humanist ideals emerged in his autobiographical writings. His main intention was to highlight the problems, the hard life and the hopes of the ordinary people.

The deep psychological and poetic edge of Tagor's short stories are worth of special emphasis, because his talent turns into an arm in the author's hands to exposes the outdated customs and habits as well as the distress it causes to his compatriots.

Reading the works by Tagore, a person can sense the invincibility of the spiritual purity; That is why Tagore is called as "the conscience of India" (1987: 10). Presenting the horrors of the colonial reality, depicting the outrageous violence of the outlanders in different stories, novels and dramatic works, Tagore focuses on the fate of the Indian women, who are often depicted as tragic heroes, victims of the orthodox Hindu customs.

The present work aims to study the above mentioned problem, based on the survey of the characters: Mohammadia and Subha. The "Four Lives" (in Bengali *Chaturanga*) is an extensive psychological novel, in which the author exposes the limitations of the caste system, religious fanaticism and discrimination against women's rights, which destroys the freedom of the human spirit. Tagore's best prose to the female problems is perhaps "The Broken Ties." In the first chapter, "Uncle," the narrator tells us about a poor vulnerable girl, Nonibala and her tragic life: her mean and dishonest brothers forcibly marry her to their friend Purandar, who shamelessly accused her of cheating, making her live wretched with insult and jealousy. Eventually Purandar even evicted the pregnant woman.

It is a known fact that people under constant exploitation suffer spiritual and mental degradation.

The attitude of constant injustice and derogation shaped Nonibala's inferiority complexes and the fears, which made her distrust people.

Even her own mother, didn't look at her as her child, but looked at her as a young woman, who should stay under constant supervision. Purandar finds the dwelling of the evicted woman and shows up there. Nonibala falls unconscious at his sight (1987: 172).

When she came to her senses she started quivering in fear, as a cane in the wind. A few days later she gave birth to a dead child (1987: 172).

All these distressing feelings she suffered and the attitude of the society prompted Nonibala to commit suicide. Nonibala had to carry the burden of her shame all alone and sacrificed her life to the villain Purandar's love. The author exposes lawlessness and religious fanaticism on the example of his characters: Damini and Sachish. Damini, who, at a first glance seems rebellious by her nature, endures humbly and silently all the trials of the fate. Her father, made her marry a person who was interested neither in life, nor in the wealth. He demanded blind obedience from Damini. Before his death, he avenged his wife's "blasphemy" and left

her to the Guru. Thus, Damini became property of the Guru. Damini was not destined to enjoy happiness and love.

Her youth and beauty was decaying without enjoyment. She emphasized on her destitution of rights when the Guru asked her why she was with him unless she was his worshiper. "Why? Do I live here on my own will?" (1987: 200) „...You, the Guru worshipers confined me in prison, put chains on my feet! Did you leave my other choice?" (1987: 201). And when Sachish informed her on their decision, to support her life if she would live with relatives, Damini replied: "You decided? ... I have not decided! ... Am I your toy? I'm not with you on my will. I did not come to this because I wanted to "(1987: 201).

Tagore condemns the injustice towards women and religious fanaticism, by exposing in his stories the problems which the women faced in the society. He preaches love and joyful relationships.

Tagore fervently defended the woman, who was not allowed to marry for love, unless her beloved did not belong to the same caste. "Mohammadia," another character by Tagore introduces a woman with the horrible fate, who after the death of her husband, should be burnt along with the late husband's corpse.

As soon as Mohammadia's brother, Bhoanichoron saw her sister with Rajib (the man who Mohammadia chose to love, but whose family was not as noble as Mohammadia's), he pushed Mohammadia into marriage to a dying old Brahman. After his death Mohammadia too, was prepared for incineration: "handcuffed, Mohammadia was placed on a wood and lighted the bonfire. The flame lifted up above, but all of a sudden strong wind blew and rain started... it quenched the bonfire"(1987: 273). Although Mohammadia survived miraculously, her life still ended tragically: when Rajib saw Mohammadia sleeping, he stood stiffened with shock: her face "the raging flames took the beauty of her face and left only it insatiable hunger traces"(1987: 275). Mohammadia left her house without ever returning back. Rajib could not trace her down ever since.

No less important is the problem, which is unveiled in Tagore's one more character, Subha. Here a woman is deceitfully married by her parents, in order not to lose their caste, as an unmarried daughter's parents. Poor Subha felt since very early age, that "her birth was the wrath of God to her family" (1987: 252), as she was dumb from birth, and her mother was ashamed of her and despised her. Once Subha heard about her marriage, she fell at the feet of her father and began to weep loudly. However, her pleas were ignored. Soon the dumb girl was put under the patronage of a young man and Subha's parents returned home. "Now the caste and their future life was out of danger!" (1987: 257). The dumb girl's heart tried to utter

lamentations of bitterness, but no one could hear and understand her. Her husband “more carefully examined another bride-to-be, referring not only to his eyes but to his ears too this time, and took a second wife, who could talk“ (1987: 258). To sum up, the surveyed and studied texts show women living a limited and degrading life, against which Tagore rebelled. Tagore attached high importance to women’s rights and social status in his contemporary society, and exposing the problems in many of his writings, he tried to wake up the public. The writer calls on them to tackle this disease.

Giorgi Leonidze, a XX century Georgian writer also describes the psychological, social and material reasons and traditions of violence against women. His volume of short stories, „The Wishing Tree“, introduces the reader to a new artistic universe. Its characters are real people stuck in the memory of the writer, who poetically materialized in his stories.

George Leonidze, prominent Georgian writer and public figure, dedicated one of his outstanding short stories, “Marita,“ to the brutal unfairness against women. The storyline presents tragic love of Marita and Gedia. With his traditional mastery, the author tells us a tragic story of one girl, which rather seems to be a tragedy of the whole village.

The writer looks back to the angry mob with the eyes of a psychologist, and conveys their emotions and feelings towards Marita, the best offspring and scrupulously honest young girl. Marita represents the hero and the victim of the short story. We can trace subtle resemblance between the fates of Damini, Mohammadia and Subha’s with Marita’s short life: she too, was denied to marry the young man who she loved. Since that day, her life turned into a torturous horror story: they took away her dream and she was accused of adultery. The brutal verdict of the head of the village was public humiliation of the young lady.

No one stood up against the sentence. Because Tsitsikore’s - the chief of the village’s - words had always had decisive power. Thus it happened again. – “Do you think that the village is blind, do you think it’s not enough to break the heart of the village? - Tsitsikore outraged with anger. Even a fence and even a rock, have eyes and even your kitchen pans! Do not tell me a woman is not an eye of the devil! - No one dared utter a word against Tsitsikore“(2008: 405). Tsitsikore insisted and the crowd obediently mounted Marita on the donkey, her face backwards, thus traveling all the way through the shame corridor and the mob throwing mud at her. The woman "was cold and was in pain ... she probably longed for death, but the death was hardly on her way, and her suffering was even worse than the death! She perhaps died ten times and was brought back to life ten times forcefully..."(2008:406).

Nobody pitied the martyr of the village. All treated her with inhuman cruelty: “trembling angelic shoulders of the woman in her white shirt, who was being thrown mud and droppings,

and which gradually was turning black. Not a single voice ... not a single a shout ... It was surprising“ (2008: 406). Marita died soon after, depressed with inexpressible sorrow (2008: 407). It was the will of the anxious crowd, against which even the Lord was powerless (2008: 407).

Thus, Marita, as well as the female characters of Tagore's stories silently puts up with her fate; Giorgi Leonidze, much like Tagore, condemns women's vulnerability and the unfair treatment against them.

Another literary symbol of the victimized females is depicted by Mikheil Javakhishvili, XX century greatest Georgian writer, prominent public and political figure. In his short story "Eka," he introduces a pretty and honest young housemaid in a rich family. She was the object of admiration of her young master, “his first sweet passion and a reason of suffering“ (1958: 56). One fateful night, drunk and violent, he captured the weak creature and took her innocence: the dignity of a Georgian woman. Eka begged and cried, asking for pity, but as the narrator says: “I could not hear her pleadings and pleas. At that time I was a beast, and behaved beastly. Half alive and ashamed Eka fell on the dewy grass for about ten minutes crying silently” (1958: 58). She preferred to die rather than stay alive, but still nurtured hope that the family would receive her as their member. However, the family decided that it would infringe their respect in the society. Eka shared the bitter life and shame of the females in Tagore's short stories, although, in difference with Nonibala, Eka's fate had something else in store. Thus, Mikheil Javakhishvili describes the humiliation and desperate life of underprivileged women, exposing those who commit violence against women, reminding the community about the centuries-old unresolved problem.

Conclusion

The research and the analysis of the literary works led us to the following conclusions:

The examples analyzed in the research show the interest of all three writers in creating images of young women with the controversial social status. The description of these young women and expression of their feelings are illuminated through their eyes (Sachish, Subha, Marita, Eka): a dominant trait in their depiction, as the way of expressing the inner protest, unable to voice it otherwise.

Since the authors mainly focus on young women, their marriage problem also comes into light. Their stories uncover the marriage-related customs and traditions that were the source

of the misfortune for these women, limited their freedom of choice, and eventually turned into the drama of their lives.

Although the female characters reject their 'submissive' position, being powerless they leave their protests unuttered. The protest against their intolerable existence often forces its way out in the form of a suicide, as the liberation or the only way to escape the abuse and 'wash away' the disgrace.

The writers paint the social and political picture of their time with the honest and truthful colours; their stories depict the religious storms and expose the reality in which women meet the worst fate of bearing the bitter existence. It has to be noted that these stories feel topical after long years and the appeal to readers remains uniform and unwavering: a women shall be accepted as one of the full-fledged members of the society, rightful to the freedom of choice and happiness, as equal before God.

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