

Reflection of Bolshevism in Zaira Arsenishvili's Postmodernist Novel "Requiem"

Manana Grigolava

Sokhumi State University, PhD Student

Received date: 17.02.2025; Accepted date: 11.03.2025; Publication date: 15.04.2025
doi: 10.56334/sei/8.2.77

Abstract

Bolshevism was the defining political doctrine of the Soviet Empire for decades. Its essence has been reflected and analyzed in many literary texts, including in the postmodern era. The fable of Zaira Arsenishvili's novel "Requiem" resembles the tragic plot(s) of works written in the 1920s and 1930s, for example, Boris Pasternak's "Doctor Zhivago", Grigol Robakidze's "The Slaughter of the Soul", Konstantin Gamsakhurdia's "The Abduction of the Moon", Mikheil Javakhishvili's "Jakos Khiznebi", Otari Chkheidze's "Boriaki" - defined by the terrifying excesses of Bolshevism. 1921, 1924, 1930s are the time-space/temporal space when blood flowed in Georgia. The national tragedy of the interrupted project (Bela Tsipuria) - the meters of modernism - Mikheil Javakhishvili, Konstantine Gamsakhurdia, Grigol Robakidze, the poetic talents of modernism (Galaktioni, Graneli, Tsisperkantseli) recorded without temporal distances in the aforementioned "Migrants of Jako" or "Givi Shaduri", "Dionysus' Smile" or "The Abduction of the Moon", "The Slaughter of the Soul" or "Guardians of the Graali", in the verse-poems "Mzeo Tibatvis" or "Conversation about Lyricism", "Peacocks in the City" or "Horse with Angel"... The named texts (specifically), and the chronotope of Bolshevism (in general) have been studied by generations of authoritative Georgian scholars, but the analysis of the tragic era will require the efforts of many other generations. It is from this perspective that we delved into one of the essential layers of Zaira Arsenishvili's "Requiem" - the reception of Bolshevism in the text.

Keywords: novel, postmodernism, Bolshevism, reception.

¹ **CC BY 4.0.** © The Author(s). Publisher: IMCRA. Authors expressly acknowledge the authorship rights of their works and grant the journal the first publication right under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License International CC-BY, which allows the published work to be freely distributed to others, provided that the original authors are cited and the work is published in this journal.

Citation. Grigolava M. (2025). Reflection of Bolshevism in Zaira Arsenishvili's Postmodernist Novel "Requiem". *Science, Education and Innovations in the Context of Modern Problems*, 8(2), 1103-1115. doi: 10.56334/sei/8.2.77. <https://imcra-az.org/archive/358-science-education-and-innovations-in-the-context-of-modern-problems-issue-2-volvi-2025.html>



Introduction

The actual ideality of the architectonics of Zaira Arsenishvili's novel was probably determined by the writer's/narrator's musical education, musicianship, and work in the opera and ballet theater. While reading, the reader gets the feeling that the novelist resembles her own character - a beautiful Gano, whom her most talented lover, Ezhy Khadarovsky, another victim of the Red Terror, entrusted with writing out individual parts from the score, disassembling the puzzle, so that when playing, the musicians could put the puzzle back together, to create the new world....

The nightmare of Bolshevism is reflected in the literary text not in a linear way, with the objective cause-and-effect pattern prescribed for history textbooks, but simultaneously - with the drama, lyricism, and tragedy natural to the subjective perception of stories and events. Parallel or intersecting, nonlinear stories and histories are focused in the spiritual gaze of the young writer and a novel-score, a novel-counterpoint are created.

The aforementioned studies (on socialist realism and the art of the Stalinist era) analyze in detail the mechanisms of action of the directors (executioners) and victims of Bolshevism and the Red Terror. Georgian postmodernism is deeply interested in Stalin's portrait.

We would mention a couple of examples - the portrait of the Red Emperor in Rostom Chkheidze's novel "The Guest of the Giants", in Aka Morchiladze's latest novels - "Cupid at the Kremlin Wall", "Rodzina", in Rezo Cheishvili's fiction-essay narrative "In the Medvedev Forest", and from foreigners - in Milan Kundera's novel "The Celebration of Insignificance".

Main text

In Rostom Chkheidze's novel, Stalin is referred to as the Red Emperor, and in Aka Morchiladze's novel (following in the footsteps of Belad's contemporaries) as an instance. A portrait of Stalin is also presented in Zaira Arsenishvili's conceptual story "When Fear and Trembling Rages."

As research methods, we used historical-comparative, hermeneutic, and the first – for textual analysis, in order to understand the era precisely in a historical context, to identify the historical essence of Bolshevism, the hermeneutic perspective determined the identification of some paradigms (vineyard, field...), while the textual analysis method, on the other hand, emphasizes the conceptual significance of specific passages.

There are many characters in the chronotope of the discussion novel "Requiem", but a special function is played by the characters of Joseph Stalin, Lavrentiy Beria - as the highest political authorities, on the one hand, and Evgeni Mikeladze - as a spiritual ideal (the name of the author of "Requiem" of Ezhy Khadarovsky is directly connected with the name of Mikeladze - the work, which

is included in the title of the text, is dedicated to him, and the term "Requiem" is also generalized to understand the temporality of an era).

The phrase - the logic of a musical work and the logic of totalitarianism [Arsenishvili Z., 2021: 112] - an oxymoron in Zaira Arsenishvili's style - on the one hand, music - power without violence (as we mentioned above, the classic definition of a field of art distinguished by its special spirituality), and on the other hand - totalitarianism - anti-music, anti-spirituality. The parallelism of music and the Red Terror is an oxymoron in the novel, just like the notes and posters in the passage "Judgment Day" (just like the book and the Mauser in "The Abduction of the Moon" or "Migrants of Jako").

While reflecting on the era, the characters' dialogue states: "-How terrible this twentieth century was because of the fascists and Bolsheviks!...

It's terrible, but the fascists held out for twelve years, and these...

"Horror is not measured in years" [Arsenishvili Z., 2021: 513].

In a laconic dialogue, parallels are drawn between fascism and Bolshevism, two cannibalistic doctrines, a terrifying concept of violent, violent transformation of the world and a social experiment. It is worth emphasizing the fact that fascism lasted only twelve years, and the Bolshevik dominance did not end even in the sixties. The above-mentioned conceptual quotation from the prose of Otar Chkheidze comes to mind – "Nastiness cannot be given time"...

The writer (character) talks about the aberration of thinking [Arsenishvili Z., 2021: 113], compares a certain period of history with a meat mincer [Arsenishvili Z., 2021: 454], epidemics [Arsenishvili Z., 2021: 522], the country itself (the Soviet Union) - with a shaky tower of Chimeras [Arsenishvili Z., 2021: 16].

One of the characters, a talented musician from Russia who emigrated to Georgia, Makedon, recalls that his father had large estates near Yaroslavl and opened a school and an agronomic institute for the peasants. It was these peasants who killed him as recall this passage: the "enemy of the people" of Grigol being cursed in Georgian... Mikeladze had a Georgian disposition, first of all, because he did not mix fat, potatoes, and Brahms, provincial servility was alien to him, he invited the best musicians, first-class Russian and German conductors from all sides, so that he himself could study and increase the potential of the orchestra... The deceased maestro considered the orchestra to be a divine invention - one world and many voices, combined and united in the highest harmony... [Arsenishvili Z., 2021: 149-150].

The quote apparently reflects Rustaveli's chrestomatic construction: "We, people, have been given the earth, we have it in countless colors."

Another character (Samuel) mentions Mikeladze when describing Stalin - what Stalin did to the whole country, what he did to our Georgia, what he did to our orchestra - he destroyed the leader [Arsenishvili Z., 2021: 32].

The regime not only killed the leader of the Opera and Ballet Theater, and not only in Georgia.

The author's mother compares the Bolsheviks to Gogol's characters - the same projects (grotesque transliteration - M.G.), the same absurdity, the same fantasy, to say nothing of such qualities and phenomena as laziness and unpreparedness universally introduced by the Bolsheviks [Arsenishvili Z., 2021: 400].

The girl herself, who in a few years becomes a young writer in order to delve deeper into the essence of the era, draws a parallel with Shakespeare's character, Claudius. Although Stalin is not Claudius, he is a king who turned Denmark into a prison, cunningly killed Hamlet's father, and has dark intentions.

An important passage in the novel's conceptual chapter - "Dies Ire" (Judgment Day) - is also dedicated to the reflection and reception of the era through the portraits of the powerful people of this country - the passage mentions Stalin and Beria, on the one hand, and the personification of spirituality - Evgeni Mikeladze.

A class enemy (the reader will The author's reflections once again reveal an understanding of the era - I always try to avoid looking at the young, smiling man in a tailcoat (Evgeni Mikeladze - M.G.) captured in this last photo, as if he was doomed by a cruel fate and the expectation of a martyr's end [Arsenishvili Z., 2021: 6].

In the reflections of the young writer (whose name/definition is included in the title of the novel - "Requiem for a Banjo, Soprano and Seven Instruments, or a Portrait of the Young M T K H Z V E L I S"), when understanding the era, the idea constantly emerges that one of the main "commandments" of Soviet life, the driving lever, the notorious immorality - listening, as every normal person does, inspires deep and insurmountable disgust, but he does not know where the boundaries of courage and morality were for a person who was crushed like a worm under the pressure of the dictatorship... I was one of these people too! [Arsenishvili Z., 2021: 114].

It was precisely to the listening (we repeat - according to the writer's definition, one of the main M C N E B A, the driving lever, the notorious immorality of Soviet existence) that both Evgeni Mikeladze and Ezhi Khadarovsky were sacrificed...

It is significant to pedal the word M C N E B A in the presented context - Nana Gaprindashvili, Mariam Miresashvili, Nino Tsereteli note in their conceptual monograph that the Bolsheviks were

creating a new cosmogony, a new mythology, which, of course, had to have its own supreme being (like every mythological system) and its own commandments.

When analyzing the essence of the Bolshevik party, the character of the novel "Requiem", the author's grandmother, with naive astonishment (the syntagm is the author's), says: "If only I knew whose children these communists were born and raised by, that they don't understand anything about motherhood! They will lose your child, they will kill you and they will not tell you, they will not make you cry, they will not congratulate you. Is it possible to cut the forehead vein like that?! How can these scoundrels not fear the power of fate?!" [Arsenishvili Z., 2021: 356].

The exposition of the novel (in fact, in the very first lines) emphasizes that almost nothing has changed politically in the parallel temporal layers of the text - the ruthless Red Terror, as it were, has ended, but "justice has become a shambles (this word is conceptual - M.G.) and human dignity has become worthless" [Arsenishvili Z., 2021: 5]. The memorial to the repressed, as far as the orchestrators can hear, is being built near Soganlughu (allegedly, it was here that the Chekists were shooting at those who thought differently).

The silent cry of one of the characters is a heavy reflection of the era - he will still know where to go, where to bring flowers, where to kneel, although, as we read in another passage of the novel, everyone knows that the stela cannot contain the names of the repressed [Arsenishvili Z., 2021: 70], the mood of the novel's conceptual character, Gano, is pessimistic - our hearts are narrow and our memory is doubtful....

Stalin appears in the text exactly as (as we mentioned above) Beria advised Alio Chivadze at one time - in the memories and thoughts of others.

The portrait of the leader is revealed in the words of one of the orchestra members, the dying Samuel, who, at one time, invited Evgeni Mikeladze to Tbilisi, and for Mikeladze's association with him, he was given many blows on the hands, his wrists were specially twisted, needles were inserted into his nails, and the Chekists stood on his joints with shoes studded with iron [Arsenishvili Z., 2021: 24] (cf. Otar Chkheidze's concept of "Paganini's fingers" - M.G.).

If, according to musician Samuel, Stalin was a clinical dictator, a destroyer of the country, a destroyer of freedom, who castrated all those who survived, turning them into eunuchs [Arsenishvili Z., 2021: 32], then from the point of view of orchestra inspector Gena, Stalin's name would be written in golden letters in history as a genius thinker, a great political figure, and an unrivaled military genius [Arsenishvili Z., 2021: 31]. The first leader is compared to Kronos, the murderer of his own children, who for thirty years deafened us with applause and shouts of "Vasha" - the high command of that executioner did this, that during the war he slaughtered and slaughtered millions, and after the war, as the spirit and organizer of victory, he directly hit his

head in the sky and the sun finally darkened us, leaving behind 37 years like an onion, whose cruelty and merciless slaughter, the rape and corruption of truth and dignity are not remembered in history - the groans of children dying of hunger, like an onion, remained, all the bloody years and bloody events remained, the blood of a person was spilt all his life and not a hair fell off his head. Caesar was assassinated at the age of 46, Napoleon was exiled to Saint Helena at the age of 46 - they didn't care about the dust of his feet! Agha-Mahmud Khan was killed at the age of 55, Hitler committed suicide at the age of 46, Nero and Caligula were children compared to him, no one's revenge reached him - neither domestic, nor foreign, nor nation, nor monk, no one's sin reached him - neither God's, nor the people's, Ibogina in 73, he led millions of suffering, tortured, shot and brainwashed people, he covered the oppressed and enslaved country with a blanket, free from suffering, crying for it with cries and sacrifices, while he himself, as if nothing had happened, was tying the broken flower petals with the boots of a generalissimo and escorting Mozart, Grieg, Chopin, Tchaikovsky to the Champs Elysees [Arsenishvili Z., 2021: 37]. The final passage of the quote once again reveals the logic of the musical work and the logic of totalitarianism [Arsenishvili Z., 2021: 172] - Zaira Arsenishvili's oxymoron.

The author's grandmother was so terrified of Beladi that she never even mentioned him by name, as if the name were taboo, she said, "He is cursed." It is especially interesting that during the prayer, the old woman prayed to the Lord for Beladi's sinful soul, begging Him to have mercy on her too, to give her tears of repentance, to water and soften her soul, consumed by sin, so that the moment of death would not come when not a single ray of light could penetrate her soul, enveloped in darkness [Arsenishvili Z., 2021: 37]. This is the high register of faith when a believer prays to God for the souls of his persecutors and haters (according to the Lord's commandment, bless those who curse you). difficult memories in the author's memory - as if it were a graphic embodiment and symbol of their path, vineyard, meadow, spring, garden, the heart-felt, most beloved grandmother herself - "in a word, our humble and soul-stirring homeland" [Arsenishvili Z., 2021: 39].

The quote sounds like an extremely important concept of the text - the character (Samuil) has thought so much about revenge that, as he himself says, the pathos of revenge has completely faded - it seems that everything must eventually eat itself up, even revenge.

Equally oppressed [Arsenishvili Z., 2021: 78] Society constantly feels the terrible gaze of the leader's constantly observant, all-seeing, vigilant eye.

In the era of universal fear and terror, Ezhi, angered by the Dark Ages, selects seven poems each by M a n d e l s h t a m i s and G a l a c t i o n s for the libretto, which speaks of the young composer's high spirituality. In one passage of the "Requiem" ("Lacrimosa"), the composer wrote the soprano's aria in memory of his mother.

The ball of the earth is floating in tears, and my mother is crying to heaven [Arsenishvili Z., 2021: 91].

Stalin-Beria's Chekists took the score of "Requiem", in which, while explaining the essence of the essential aria, the male and female voices – the banjo and the soprano – Ezhis Gano said, "These are the voices of all those men and women who have experienced the apocalypse, starting with Adam and Eve and ending with us" – indirectly referring to another – the most difficult definition of the era – apocalypse/apocalyptic – "This is our cry and our escape from the dark pit towards the azure" [Arsenishvili Z., 2021: 92] (Ezhis'/Zaira Arsenishvili's definition will certainly remind Georgian readers of the famous essay "On the Thorny Road – Towards Stardom" by another great Georgian who was sacrificed to the Red Terror – Erekle Tatishvili).

The terror of 1937 is characterized in the novel as a comprehensive plague that oppressed the Soviet people (wretched and absurd - according to the author's explanation [Arsenishvili Z., 2021: 79]), in the fear and trembling of the dark times [2021: 85], when the aristocracy of blood and soul were christened as agents of the bourgeoisie, spies of Japan, rabid dogs [Arsenishvili Z., 2021: 85], only a few dared to raise their voices against the universal terror, including a young composer who (to repeat the passage described above) was publicly demanded to denounce his father at a party meeting of the Leningrad Conservatory(!) and he broke the window with a thrown chair and demonstratively He left the hall. In the text, in the puzzle of the characters' personal stories, a kind of passage-summary is often inserted, a reminder or pedaling of the era, so that the reader constantly remembers "the great terror of 37, which raged like a dragon on a pole, devouring half of the cozy opera audience, loyal music lovers, and staring at the other half with its terrible eyes... a time of retribution, disorder, the eruption of dark forces, unbridled violence... fear - the destroyer, the destroyer - that turns a person into a shriveled rabbit [Arsenishvili Z., 2021: 303-304].

If only the thought that no one (not even the leaders - M.G.) would escape, he would lose his mind [Arsenishvili Z., 2021: 306].

The young writer listens with particular interest to the story of Ezhi's life from Gano, in order to piece together a puzzle from the fragments and reconstruct the complete picture of the era. The quote, "We were drawn into the same arc of fate" (the phrase is important, because the writer imagines the events that happened to Ezhi in 1937 in 1960, based on Gano's story - M.G.) reminds us of Boris Pasternak's conceptual line, which Doctor Zhivago dedicates to the beautiful

The author is reminded of the letters written to the cursed woman by her grandmother in her cursive handwriting, in which the virtuous old woman assured the chieftain of her son's innocence and asked for his release, but this handwriting does not only evoke these most

Lara - We in the book of rock on one line (Пастернак В., 2000: 268). We find interesting thoughts about the era's attitude towards Pasternak himself in Zaira Arsenishvili's third novel - "Collage in the Moonlight", and the line of another victim of the Red Terror, Gumilyov - "Brodyat beshenye volki po dorogam skripachey" - is used as an epigraph to the novel "Requiem". The author also recalls his childhood, when during the "exposition" of his parents (and many other "agents"), there was no one in the hall who would protect innocent people, and he admires, and even envies, Yezh's courage. The child himself, after leaving that terrible hall, could only imagine his own death and enjoy the self-sacrifice of the terrified people - we killed this child by sacrificing precious innocent people [Arsenishvili Z., 2021: 87] (The above, of course, is the pure desire of the child himself, and not reality, because the sacrificer is incapable of remorse, much less repentance).

The author's above-mentioned thoughts are perceived as a more lyrical diversion in the novel, a kind of interlude (obviously, to emphasize the timeliness of the era, but still parallel and not the main story of the text. The main story of the novel is the personal tragedies of Evgeni Mikeladze and Jerzy Khadarovsky).

The writer returns the reader to the hellish paradise established by the leader when, at the request of the young author, Gano restores the text of one of the main parts of the musical text, the several times mentioned "Lacrimosa": Oh, why did you sacrifice us?! Why did you send us a flood and a deluge?! Tears have washed away, oh, Lord, tears have washed away! Our eyes are filled, our hearing is dull, our day is darkened, our faith is gone... We lament, we lament, our tears are pouring down, pouring down, like a flood, our fields, our vineyards are flooded, our fields, our forests and our tears have covered the earth, oh, woe to us! Why, why have you sacrificed us?! Oh, Lord... We are consumed by tears!

It is important that the narrator refrains from quoting the text without musical accompaniment (the notes are lost - M.G.) - what meaning does the text have without music, without that doomed utterance, the deepening cadence of the cello? [Arsenishvili Z., 2021: 93] - Once again (for the first time!) we hear the line between the novel's conceptual oxymoron - the logic of a musical work (on the one hand) and the logic of totalitarianism (on the other) (if totalitarianism can have logic at all). We think it is no coincidence that the paradigms of the field and the vineyard are also voiced in the final passages of the textual fabric of Lacrimosa - tears falling like a deluge flood the field and the vineyard - the field is P U R I A, the vineyard - G V I N O. The age of atheism cannot partake of the grace of communion, because it is the age of "that cursed one"/the leader, and not of the Lord (we will repeat the phrase from Galaktion, which has been stated many times - "A hellish paradise is being built!").

When understanding the essence of the recent past (the thirties of the twentieth century), the character Samuel, seven years after Stalin's death, characterizes it as a perpetual motion machine - with the creaking of wheels and the grinding of teeth - the devil's engine, which, although we know when it started, but when it stops, the devil himself knows [Arsenishvili Z., 2021: 97] (the character adds with a tragic-grotesque intonation, if I can't be there, of course).

The era of unification fought against any manifestation of individualism. The text specifically describes Ezh's violin - a magnificent creation of master Majini, which allowed the musician to achieve an unusual individualization of sound. Ezh's violin had a clear and pure sound, and also achieved true tragic pathos [Arsenishvili Z., 2021: 100] (the enigma of the violin, an elite instrument, once again reminds us of Gumilyov's quote, used as the epigraph of the novel - "Rabid wolves are wandering along the roads with the violin"). Beethoven's great name is used in the novel to represent the spirit of the era - after the "Ninth Symphony" is played, the musicians leaving the Opera and Ballet Theater go to the Alexander Garden at night, and Ezhi, with a peculiar youthful, Georgian-Polish exaltation (as they say, "hanging on the feet" of the powerful of these countries), says that he cannot stand this work of Beethoven, he despises any slogan that is imposed on him, millions do not deserve to be forced around their throats, and this symphony calls out the most false and destructive slogan of Marx (the line is ours - M.G.) - "Proletarians of all countries, unite!" [Arsenishvili Z., 2021: 106].

The text of Ezh is also the logic of music as a counterbalance to the logic/illogicality of totalitarianism. With its character characterization, the "Requiem", imprinted with great moral responsibility in a dark time, was supposed to shine like a beacon in the falling darkness, as an emanation of the soul, free from despotism [Arsenishvili Z., 2021: 112] (the pathos of the phrase, especially the syntagm "invincible soul", redirects the reader to the conceptual title of Grigol Robakidze's novel, which has been mentioned more than once - "The Slaughtered Soul"). The problem, according to one of the characters (Macedon), is created by an aberration of thinking, the indiscriminate distinction between black and white, and nothing will change by condemning Stalin alone. His own thinking reflects the country that has become a gulag - not only Georgia, but the entire Soviet Union. In 1960, he briefly tells the story of the years 1917-1937 to a young writer. Having fled the tentacles of Bolshevism from Russia to Georgia, and having arrived in Tbilisi at the invitation of Yevgeni Mikeladze, Svetitskhoveli apparently reminded him of his native church, that of St. Ilia the Prophet. Mikeladze was arrested, and the theater director committed suicide. A brother who had come from Russia told stories of the Yaroslavl prison, where those who could not be imprisoned were shot, and the Siberian camps could not contain the millions of repressed. When our main conductor was the Georgian Zhenya Mikeladze, to which the narrator replies with a grin,

Hitler did not come to destroy Zhenya Mikeladze, and at that meeting they cursed the “enemy of the people” in Georgian... Mikeladze had a Georgian disposition, first of all, because he mixed fat, potatoes, and Brahms together. He did not interfere, provincial confinement was alien to him, he invited the best musicians, first-class Russian and German conductors from all sides, so that he himself could study and increase the potential of the orchestra... The deceased maestro considered the orchestra to be like E. B. Chan - the earth and the sky, combined and united by the highest harmony... [Arsenishvili Z., 2021: 149-150]. The quote seems to reflect Rustaveli's chrestomathy construction: "We, men, have been given a life, we have a life without a life".

Another character (Samuel) in describing Stalin reminds Mikeladze - what Stalin did to the whole country, what he did to our Georgia, what he did to our orchestra - he killed the leader [Arsenishvili Z., 2021: 32].

The regime killed not only the leader of the Opera and Ballet Theater, and not only in Georgia.

The author's mother compares the Bolsheviks to Gogol's characters - the same projects (grotesque transliteration - M.G.), the same absurdity, the same fantasy, not to mention such qualities and events as laziness and unpreparedness that were universally introduced by the Bolsheviks [Arsenishvili Z., 2021: 400]. The girl herself, who in a few years becomes a young writer in order to delve into the essence of the era, draws a parallel with Shakespeare's character, Claudius. True, Stalin is not Claudius, but he is a king who turned Denmark into a prison, cunningly killed Hamlet's father, and has dark intentions. An important passage in the novel's conceptual chapter - "Dies Ire" (Judgment Day) - is also dedicated to the reflection and reception of the era through the portraits of the powerful people of this country - the passage mentions Stalin and Beria, on the one hand, and the personification of spirituality - Evgeni Mikeladze.

The poison of cynicism (the character uses this very word combination - M.G.) settled in the bones and flesh of the newly-arranged people, they organized anniversaries after anniversaries (in 1937, the 20th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution was celebrated - M.G.), the hall and the orchestra (this context adds a special tragedy to the narrative discourse) were filled with Chekists, and after rehearsals, meetings were held with condemnation of the repressed, curses and curses!

How the musicians he had trained condemned Evgeni Mikeladze [Arsenishvili Z., 2021: 127], the narrator sadly recalls, everyone, including the jazz-dreaming Jeriko-Deyran, a bookworm pirate [2021: 129], who, while on tour in St. Petersburg, tells the narrator how proud we were

Conclusion



Zaira Arsenishvili's postmodernist novel emphasizes the leader's and the Chekists' (of course, unkind) complicity with the invisible forces, as well as the hypnotic gaze of the eyes (the passage reminds us of Zaira Arsenishvili's own description of Stalin's statue in the story "When Fear and Trembling Rages", as well as Grigol Robakidze's description of Stalin's portrait in "Stalin's Horoscope", in the conceptual passage of "The Slaughter of the Soul", which is included as a separate essay in Grigol Robakidze's collection of essays "Demon and Myth").

The parallel presented in the "Requiem" emphasizes that both this hypnotic gaze and oppressive power are fleeting - Verdi (the emphasis is ours - M.G.) is illuminated like a bright day, entering completely simple and unadorned, both magic and talisman are in his music. At the sight of Verdi, [the Chekist] will stand up, his stern face will soften, he will smile, and with him, the hall will also make deafening roar [Arsenishvili Z., 2021: 315].

It is no coincidence that on the day of the chief Chekist's visit to the Opera and Ballet Theater, Ezhy Khadarovsky, along with his associates, is rehearsing "Dies Ire" ("Judgment Day").

When describing the tour in St. Petersburg, when the counterpoint connects the main layers of the novel - the personal feelings of the young author himself (the shooting of his father, the family tragedy) or Gano Karalashvili's description-memories of sublime love sacrificed to bloody terror, the reader will read another conceptual passage of the text: To my surprise, despite the family's tenderness and the pathos of revenge, hatred did not roar in my heart, I did not hate the leader, I did not hate the enemy of human - the foremost enemy of my country, my homeland - neither a Tatar nor a Russian has raised his sword with such supreme ferocity, has not kicked with such fury and savagely!

Can hatred be called an unforgettable feeling, which I could not compare with anything in its power of enthralling and degree of enchantment, when, at the age of thirteen, I watched his grand march with the Kremlin gongs in a darkened, dim hall to participate in the grand spectacle of victory.... No one is safe from the glory-loving aggressors who appear from time to time among the human race in order to throw a hook at the immature youth immersed in us, with immature thoughts and unquenchable passions, and to set him on his trail, to subdue him and turn him into a slave [Arsenishvili Z., 2021:475].

The presented passage highlights the historical-comparative methodological layer of the text.

In addition to Stalyan-Beria, Zaira Arsenishvili's text-score often features small "bossmen", whose cruelty and ruthlessness are in no way inferior to that of the "great" rulers. The passage describing the events that occurred when the Chekist Alyosha Gavasheli, the risen to eminence stableman, and his right-hand man, the dribbling Zhora, appear is unforgettable - it seems as if even the wind stops, even the air no longer moves, the large lindens no longer rustle, the redstart is

hidden in the leaves, in the garden, on the rose branch, the nightingale no longer whistles [Arsenishvili Z., 2021: 146].

While analyzing into the essence of the era, the reader constantly feels the guiding will of the omniscient author transformed into a narrator/character, so that in the most complex, polyphonic fabric of the text, not only the main line does not fade, but also the main motive does not fade - what will save a specific person or an entire nation in the universal mincer? The answers are intertwined in various episodes of the novel. We will verify one of them - the preservation of the main commandment (an important word-enigma of Zaira Arsenishvili's prose) is underpinned by the deepest feeling of roots. A Georgian musician, who is on tour with an orchestra in the old capital of the empire, explains to a St. Petersburg pastor and artist (brothers): We had a beautiful vineyard in Ikalto. I don't think there's anything more picturesque and heart-warming than a vineyard, and our vineyard seemed beautiful to me! Behind, in the distance, beautiful vineyards stretched, in front, at the entrance, there was a well-grown haystack, with haystacks and tall grass, and above the vineyard, there was Grandpa's hut... My grandmother used to tell me that God's eye was hovering over our vineyard, and I always felt the gaze of the Most High, coming with kindness and grace, and I wouldn't be original if I said that I have loved Christ since childhood" [Arsenishvili Z., 2021: 485].

This not-so-long excerpt reflects the main concepts of the novel - no time can defeat a person who believes in the vineyard and the eye of God. This eye is nothing like the longing, wandering gaze of the Chekists. The hermeneutic layer of the text is pedaled by these paradigms.

References:

1. Arsenishvili Z., 2021, Requiem for Bass, Soprano and Seven Instruments, or
2. Bakuradze, L., Beridze, M., & Pourtskhvanidze, Z. (2020). A Georgian Language Island in Iran: Fereydani Georgian. *Iranian Studies*, 53(3-4), 489-550.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00210862.2020.1723407>
3. Brisku, A. (2015). Renegotiating the empire, forging the nation-state: the Georgian case through the political economic thought of Niko Nikoladze and Noe Zhordania, c. 1870-1920. *Nationalities Papers*, 44(2), 299-318.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00905992.2015.1102214>
4. Gamkrelidze, T. (2019). The project of Europe: a robust attempt to redefine Georgian identity. *East European Politics*, 35(3), 351-371.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/21599165.2019.1613645>
5. Gaprindashvili N., Miresashvili M., Tsereteli N., 2010,

6. Graffy, J. (2007). History, memory, water: the reclamation of Georgian identity in Irakli Kvirikadze's *The Swimmer*. *Studies in Russian and Soviet Cinema*, 1(3), 299–327. https://doi.org/10.1386/srsc.1.3.299_1
7. Groys B., 2011, *The Total Art of Stalinism*, 2011;
8. Hatcheon L., 1988, *Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction*. New-York;
9. Kurqanov E., 1989, *Vozvrashenie mifa («Ubiennaya dusha » Gr. Robakidze)*, *journal of «Drujba narodov» № 4*;
10. Paternak B., 2002; *Doktor Jivavo*, C.-П., 2002;
11. *Portrait of a Young Composer*, Tbilisi;
12. Prangishvili, A. S. (1968). The Concept of Set In Soviet Psychology in the Light of Research By The Georgian Psychological School. *Soviet Psychology*, 7(2), 21–32. <https://doi.org/10.2753/RP01061-0405070221>
13. Razor, S. (2021). Emotions and the representation of funeral rites in Sergei Tretiakov's Georgian screenplays, 1928–1931. *Russian Journal of Communication*, 13(1), 77–96. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19409419.2021.1889890>
14. Storm, K. J. T. (2018). Unpacking the Georgian Nation: Examining the Symbolic Boundaries of Group Membership through National Iconography. *Identity*, 18(3), 195–217. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15283488.2018.1487300>
15. *Theoretical History of Socialist Realism*, Vol. 1, Tbilisi;
16. *Theory of Literature. Main Methodological Concepts and Trends of the Twentieth Century*, 2008, Shota Rustaveli Institute of Literature, Tbilisi; Robakidze Gr., 2012, *Demon and Myth*, Tbilisi;