

**Hayate Sotome  
(Japan)**

## **A Perspective of Postcolonial Zoocriticism in 19th-century Georgian Literature**

In the first chapter of “Letters of a Traveler” (1861) written by Ilia Chavchavadze (1837–1907), one of the most famous and canonical writers of 19th-century Georgian literature, there are three characters: “I” or a narrator of the prose work, which can be regarded as Ch’avch’avadze himself; a French traveler, who is a new acquaintance of the narrator; and a Russian coachman, who is represented with an ugly behavior and appearance. When the narrator leaves Vladikavkaz, he and the Russian coachman are on the same Russian coach, but the horses attached to the coach do not move. At this moment, the coachman cries, “чо-о-рт, трогай что-ли” (Ch’avch’avadze 1937: 248). Here this scene becomes more understandable by considering its context with Russian literature; on one hand, the representation of coachman in Russian literature is traditionally a Tsarist Russia’s metaphor, for example, in Gogol’s “Dead Soul” (Randolph 2007: 50–61). On the other hand, coachman in the Caucasian text of Russian literature, for instance, Lermontov’s “A Hero of Our Time,” is sometimes represented as an indigenous person who deceives Russian travelers. In “Letters of a Traveler,” however, the coachman is represented as a Russian who reviles and is depicted with an uncivilized appearance. Thus, Ch’avch’avadze ironically inverted the representation of the Russian coachman as a Tsarist Russian metaphor as well as the representation of the indigenous coachman as an oriental degeneration.

Moreover, the French traveler looks at this scene through a window and laughs: “it [whole Russia] goes with that [coach]!.. Ha, ha, ha!” (Ch’avch’avadze 1937: 248). This scene could be easily construed as a message that France and Europe, in general, are more developed and enlightened than Russia (and Georgia as well) and denies Tsarist Russia’s ideology of imperialism, i.e., enlightening Caucasus. Denying the ideology is also depicted more thoroughly and ironically in the third chapter of the work, where a Russian officer arrogantly but inadequately explains enlightenment to the narrator. As mentioned by the narrator himself, he is returning from Petersburg where he spent four years studying at a university; therefore, he should be more educated than the officer and more clearly understands enlightenment. With these representations of Europe, Russia, and Georgia, Ch’avch’avadze implied that the way to save Georgia from Tsarist Russia’s imperialism is to bring into Georgia European education, enlightenment, science, technology, civilization, or in one word, modernity, because Russia does not have sufficient modernity to colonize Georgia (Sotome 2017).

However, Ch'avch'avadze's strategy of introducing European modernity may be problematic: it is not free from a certain risk. As Said pointed out in *Culture and Imperialism* citing Fanon repeatedly (Said 1993), a resistance movement against imperialism turns into a repetition of imperialism in the form of eurocentrism, ethnocentrism, or chauvinism (of course, this does not mean Ch'avch'avadze himself is a chauvinist).

Then, how can we avoid such problems associated with the postcolonial studies of Ch'avch'avadze's works and Georgian literature (and national literature generally)? Applying critical theories, namely postcolonial zoocriticism<sup>1</sup> and postcolonial ecocriticism, may give us another viewpoint for this question. In this 21st century, for example, *animal turn* and *ecological turn* have been discussed and have become one of the main currents in humanities. When it comes to literary studies, these *turns* concern representations of animals and the environment in a literary text. In these recent decades, however, some scholars have tried to associate these studies with postcolonial theories. This paper especially addresses a series of discussions of postcolonial zoocriticism to propose another perspective.

One of the main topics of the intersection of postcolonialism and zoocriticism is speciesism, which criticizes the abuse of other species by humans. Postcolonial zoocritics overlap speciesism with racism and point out that these ideas support ideologies of imperialism. While speciesism uses the animals' lack of language and rationality to divide into a human/animal dichotomy, racism considers the non-white people as such and divides, in Said's term, into an Orientalist dichotomy (Said 1978). In these dichotomies, non-white indigenous people and animals and their rights can be ignored, their living places are regarded as empty and free to utilize, killing them is not regarded as a violation of the law, and the imperialist ideology to enlighten and Christianize the indigenous and train the animals is justified. (Armstrong 2002; Huggan and Tiffin 2015: 5–11) Thus, thinking of the representation of animals in the postcolonial text means thinking of the representation of the indigenous people, the ideology of imperialism, and colonialism and modernity.

This speciesist tendency can be observed just in the first chapter of "Letters of a Traveler." The Russian coachman is depicted with an "inhumane and bestial gait" (Ch'avch'avadze 1937: 247). As we discussed, Ch'avch'avadze transfigured the Orientalist representation of indigenous Caucasian coachmen in Russian literature into this representation of the Russian coachman in "Letters of a Traveler," which is opposed to the figure of the French traveler and "I." A Georgian scholar K'ank'ava associated this scene with English historian H. Buckle's *History of Civilization in England* (K'ank'ava 2004), connecting the dichotomic scheme between the French traveler and the Russian coachman to social Darwinism (although, as we argued, there is actually "I" in this scene, and the dichotomy is changed into trichotomy).

If the conventional idea of animals, which supports imperialism, considers what divides humans and animals to be language and "responsibility," in Derrida's term, postco-

---

<sup>1</sup> The term "zoocriticisms" is also called as "animal studies." In this paper, the first one is used according to Huggan and Tiffin's usage in their book.

---

lonial zoocriticism has developed discussions about the animals that speak and think. For instance, Clavaron analyzed the dog narrator of Cameroon writer Nganang's novel *Temp de chien* and overlapped its speech with the subaltern's speech: "Portraying an animal is an original and unconventional way of representing the subaltern described at length by G. Spivak, and gives a clear voice to beings who do not have one. Barring his role as protagonist of the novel, the dog could be regarded as a figure of Otherness essentialized in its state of inferiority" (Clavaron 2012: 557). Spivak claimed that subalterns cannot speak; if they seem to speak, it is actually European intellectuals who speak for them, and they themselves never speak. Like Clavaron, some postcolonial zoocritics insist that the animals in the postcolonial text can be regarded as subalterns. According to this apparent scheme, one of the main themes of postcolonial zoocriticism is to analyze postcolonial and animal texts regarding the representation of the animals as subalterns, and Clavaron clearly claimed that making the animals speak in literary works means giving the subalterns a voice. "[T]he novel can be construed as a metaphor of the postcolonial situation, which allows one to readdress this very situation through the philosophical and political fable" (Clavaron 2012: 557). As he argued, animals in postcolonial texts, or the postcolonial texts themselves, can be interpreted as the metaphor and the fable of the postcolonial situation.

On the other hand, there are scholars who focus on comparing the animals with the subalterns to metaphorize and allegorize them. Armstrong claimed that more attention should be paid to the environment and the agency of animals (and environment), and the consideration that animals "cannot speak" denies such agency: "[A]nimal studies have demonstrated that agency in human-animal interactions proves complex and irrepressible and cannot be reduced to the hollow phantasm [...]" (Armstrong 2002: 416). Metaphorizing animals, as Armstrong insisted, stabilizes the representation of animals into "the hollow phantasm." Derrida also cautioned against reading animal texts as just fables: "We know the history of fabulization and how it remains an anthropomorphic taming, a moralizing subjection, a domestication. Always a discourse of man, on man, indeed on the animality of man, but for and in man" (Derrida 2008: 37). From this perspective, the strategy to read animal texts as metaphor and fable is that, just as the European intellectuals speak for the subalterns, the humans speak for the animals. In his article about *animal turn*, Weil discussed the Great Ape Project referring Spivak's *Can the subaltern speak?*: "Her [Spivak's] essay may serve as a warning to some who, for example, would try to teach apes to sign in order to have them tell humans what they want" (Weil 2010: 3). Here, Weil pointed out a certain risk that the metaphorization and allegorization that make the animals speak the human language deprives the animals of the position as the subaltern (if there is) and finally changes into the "discourse of/on human."

According to Weil, posthumanists, when thinking of the theme of the relationship between animals and language, show a possibility that animals as agents recognize the world and humans in different ways from the humans' language, or a possibility to annul the boundary between them, as Agamben and Deleuze and Guattari discussed. The Posthumanists tried to deconstruct the binary concept of human and animals.

However, pointing out that such postmodern philosophical thinking is “indeed, little to say about the actual animals we live with,” Weil claimed that animal studies face the ethical turn that demands care for (trauma of) living animals (Weil 2010: 12–19). While the ethical empathy for animals can lead to excessively anthropomorphizing animals, it has the potential to propose perspectives from which animals see. “On the one hand, as a process of identification, the urge to anthropomorphize the experience of another, like the urge to empathize with that experience, risks becoming a form of narcissistic projection that erases boundaries of difference. On the other hand, as a feat of attention to another and of imagination regarding his or her perspective, it is what brings many of us to act on behalf of the perceived needs and desires of an other/animal” (Weil 15-16). This statement should be applied to postcolonial zoocriticism as well; anthropomorphizing, fabulizing, allegorizing, and metaphorizing animals tend to be trapped in anthropocentrism (or, in the context of postcolonialism, eurocentrism) and to erase the differences between human and animals (or between European intellectuals and subalterns) and between animals species, but it also opens the possibility to acknowledge empathy for animals (subalterns). Weil advocated the use of the term “critical anthropomorphism,” derived from the critical empathy of trauma studies: “[W]e might then want to call an ethical relating to animals (whether in theory or in art) ‘critical anthropomorphism’ in the sense that we open ourselves to touch and be touched by others as fellow subjects and may imagine their pain, pleasure, and need in anthropomorphic terms but must stop short of believing that we can know their experience” (Weil 2010: 16).

Thus, the themes of speaking animals, giving animals language, and anthropomorphizing animals are important for postcolonial zoocriticism. However, because the objects of literary studies are texts, anthropomorphizing, metaphorizing, to some extent, are inevitable. Of course, our attention must be paid to the so-called *material turn* to think of the materiality against poststructuralists regarding all animals and nature as a textual and cultural construction (Heise 2006: 506–508; Marland 2013: 855–857), as well as to a claim to care for actual animals, as mentioned above. What is important here, as Weil insisted when mentioning “critical anthropomorphism,” is to discuss carefully how writers use anthropomorphism and (de)construct the concepts of humans and animals in the text.

From this point of view, the zoocritical interpretation of Vazha-Pshavela’s (1861–1905) works is very interesting. In his poem, “The Snake Eater” (1901), the protagonist Mindia eats snake meat and gets an ability to hear nature’s voice. One interpretation is that Mindia eats snake as a biblical symbol of temptation and the idea that overcoming the temptation is possible. Thus, the world he sees and hears after eating snake meat can be regarded as an ecotopia that has existed before the original sin. In the third chapter of the poem, wheat proposes using itself for food to humans, or concretely to Mindia. Through Mindia’s ability, wheat’s decision to sacrifice its own death within its “responsibility” is acknowledged, and therefore, nature in the poem is represented as the subject. This representation is different from metaphorizing it as the “discourse of/on human,” because this responsibility is given to the wheat according to a variety of attitudes between the kinds

of wheat – some wheat refuses to sacrifice, the other accepts. Thus, giving subjectivity to nature is opposed to the European discourse of philosophy as well as modernity, which support imperialism and colonialism (Sotome 2018).

On the other hand, the wheat's self-sacrifice can be regarded as an allegory of the human's self-sacrifice and can be associated with Christian doctrine. If this scene is interpreted from this point, understanding this episode that advocates human self-sacrifice is more emphasized than the wheat's self-sacrifice and its meaning. In this sense, as posthumanists point out, there is a certain risk that anthropomorphism of nature no longer speaks on nature.

However, this allegory can be understood in another way; even if wheat's self-sacrifice is overt anthropomorphism, the self-sacrifice is represented as dedicating itself to a human (more concretely, for Mindia) in the poem, and an asymmetrical relation between the wheat and the human, or Mindia, becomes apparent. Based on this asymmetrical relation, wheat's self-sacrifice can be an allegory of Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac in the Book of Genesis, and in this case, what is questioned is not nature's agency but the human's or Mindia's agency; a question – what can humans give nature for nature's gift of death – is posed with “critical anthropomorphism,” which, in “The Snake Eater's” case, considers nature as the subject equal to humans, and the allegory demands not only to understand wheat's self-sacrifice as the human's self-sacrifice but also to understand parallelly the asymmetrical relationships between God and Abraham in Genesis and nature and human in the poem. In “The Snake Eater,” Mindia is represented as “God” to the wheat but is actually a limited being as a man. Therefore, he cannot give back to nature as God gives back Isaac to Abraham, and, as a result, he commits suicide. When generalizing this question to the context of postcolonial zoocriticism, inability and vulnerability of human agency and reason get revealed by the question about (ir)responsibility, which is posed when considering nature has an agency equal to humans. More concretely, humans and human reasons are responsible for responding to nature's gift of death, but no adequate and clear answer for how the responsibility should be fulfilled is proposed (at least in the poem). Accordingly, one might argue that Mindia accomplishes the counter-gift by means of suicide; however, the act of suicide itself is as much madness as wheat's self-sacrifice (Sotome 2019). When “critical anthropomorphism” is, as Weil said, on the condition of “stop[ping] short of believing that we can know their experience” (Weil 2010: 16), what distinguishes wheat's sacrifice as “critical anthropomorphism” from normal understanding of anthropomorphism is the (im)possibilities of the gift of death. The question of the (im)possibilities of the gift and the counter-gift deconstruct the human's reason at the point of its inabilities.

Now three points, which are related to each other, can be proposed as the conclusion of this paper:

1. Another perspective of postcolonial zoocriticism

In studies of postcolonial zoocriticism, as observed above, one of the foci for literary text is representations of animals in the text (strategically) overlapping representation

of subalterns. In this case, as with subalterns, animals are treated as subordinate to humans due to speciesism.

In “The Snake Eater,” however, nature is represented not as repressed by speciesism but as the one to which subjectivity and agency equal to humans are given. As the subject, nature speaks, thinks, and sacrifices itself. In this sense, nature is no longer the metaphor for the subaltern. Therefore, a direction that should be taken when discussing “The Snake Eater” according to postcolonial zoocriticism is different from the above-mentioned direction; instead, regarding its depiction of a world where humans and animals live harmoniously, it will be close to pastoral and ecotopia motifs. On the one hand, there is a critique that interprets animals as the repressed group, overlapping speciesism with racism and sexism; on the other hand, there is a criticism that points out the critical anthropomorphism to elevate the animals’ agency to the humans’ and to represent them as subjects. Vazha-Pshavela’s use of critical anthropomorphism in “The Snake Eater,” and in his other works in general, includes nature within the humans’ category, erasing the boundary between human and nature; this is a pan-humanistic view that widely applies the sphere of humanism to nature and animals. This pan-humanism is different from posthumanism, which deconstructs the boundary between humans and animals; however, it has the same aim: to criticize the conception of human(ism) as well as speciesism, racism, and sexism, which are based on this conception (Huggan and Tiffin 2015: 229). It is no doubt that pan-humanist writers and their works hold an important position in postcolonial zoocriticism, but at this time, as easy anthropomorphism is criticized for the allegorization of/on humans, what is questioned is to read how tactically and critically anthropomorphism is used in postcolonial and animal texts.

## 2. *International turn* on ecocriticism and zoocriticism, and its application to Georgian literature

Ecocriticism is a theory developed mainly in the field of English literature. However, its limit is recently elucidated—the environment is in every work of literature, exists in the real world, and is beyond borders. Heise, in her article in 2006, pointed out: “[M]onolingualism is currently one of ecocriticism’s most serious intellectual limitations. The environmentalist ambition is to think globally, but doing so in terms of a single language is inconceivable—even and especially when that language is hegemonic one” (Heise 2006: 513). Of course, it should be mentioned that academic associations that address ecocriticism are established in non-English countries, among them, Japan, China, Korea, Taiwan, Turkey, German, Italy, and France, and its studies are continuing.

In literary studies on Eastern European literature, the application of ecocriticism and zoocriticism is not well developed; however, Gould, a comparatist on Islam and Caucasus literature, published an article in which she compared Tolstoy’s works and Chechen poet Mamakaev’s poem from the perspective of postcolonial ecocriticism, echoing Heise’s above-cited statement (Gould 2013). When discussing postcolonial studies on Russian literature, the theme of the Caucasus holds the main position; however, Russian–

Caucasian postcolonial studies to which ecocriticism or zoocriticism are applied have not been developed in such fields, except for Gould's study, and studies on Georgian literature are not exceptional.

Although these literary theories are part of a comparatively recent movement, the themes on humans and the environment, nature, and animals have been widely discussed, of course, as well as in studies of Georgian literature. It is doubtless important to pay sufficient attention to the tradition of the studies on Georgian literature and to refer to them appropriately.

As Heise claimed, *international turn* obviously plays a very important role in postcolonialism, postcolonial ecocriticism, and postcolonial zoocriticism, which criticize eurocentrism and modernity, two concepts connected with imperialism (Heise 2013). In this point, this paper explains an example of what perspectives the *international turn* can show in the field of ecocriticism and animal studies: Vazha-Pshavela created many works, among them "The Snake Eater," using motifs from Georgian folk tales and mythology and, as mentioned, the theme that nature speaks and therefore, nature is considered as the subject and/or agency in the poem indicates certain differences from European philosophical traditions. *International turn* gives us other perspectives besides the European one to discuss relationships between humans and the environment. It makes postcolonial zoocriticism and postcolonial ecocriticism more productive to consider cultural, religious, environmental, and animal contexts in each country or region's literary works and to associate them with the arrival of modernity brought by imperialistic expansion.

### 3. Rethinking the history of Georgian literature

The main part of (postcolonial) criticism on Georgian literature and Russian imperialism is discussions about how the canonical poets and writers represent Georgia and the Russian empire. Although these studies are, of course, important in terms of analyzing how the poets, writers, and intellectuals have fought against imperialism, our attention should be paid to certain risks to satisfy Georgian national identity with opposing a series of representations in Georgian literature against Russian imperialism in a binary scheme and, in a result, to trivialize Georgian literature as a national or ethnic literature. Scholars, taking these problems into consideration, should put their own studies in a broader context and try to discuss them in more comparative ways.

In postcolonial studies, one of the main streams is to emphasize hybridity and to deconstruct the dichotomy of "colonizer/colonized." However, this paper concerning Ilia Ch'avch'avadze and Vazha-Pshavela does not discuss their works by referring to the hybridity theory. Rather, it rethinks the positions of these two poets in the history of Georgian literature by referring to the theories of postcolonial zoocriticism. Ch'avch'avadze resisted Russian imperialism by utilizing modernity, which may bring certain problems—eurocentrism, ethnocentrism, and speciesism. These problems, associated with postcolonial criticism on Georgian literature, can be discussed critically, relatively, and comparatively to read the animal motifs in Vazha-Pshavela's works. This paper especially concentrates

only upon “The Snake Eater,” but the same thing can be said about Vazha-Pshavela’s other works, for example, the poem “Host and Guest” (1893), in the sense that the boundary between enemy and ally is erased. In other words, through analysis of these canonical poets’ works, it may become possible to deconstruct “the history of Georgian literature” itself as a national/ethnic literature to which the canonical works like “The Snake Eater” belong.

**Work Cited:**

- Armstrong, Philip. “The Postcolonial Animal.” *Society & Animal* 10, 4 (2002): 413–419.
- Clavaron, Yves. “Writing the Postcolonial Animal: Patrice Nganang’s *Temps de Chien*.” *Contemporary French and Francophone Studies* 16, 4 (2012): 553–551.
- Ch’avch’avadze, Ilia. *Tkhzulebani. Sruli K’rebuli Khut T’omad: T’. 1. Leksebi; P’oemebi; Motkhroebi*. Tbilisi: sakhelmts’ipo gamomtsemloba, 1937 (ჭავჭავაძე, ილია. *თხზულებანი. სრული კრებული ხუთ ტომად. ტ. 1. ლექსები; პოემები; მოთხრობები*. თბილისი: სახელმწიფო გამომცემლობა, 1937).
- Derrida, Jacques. *The Animal That Therefore I Am*. Trans. David Wills. New York: Fordham UP, 2008.
- Gould, Rebecca. “Topographies of Anticolonialism: The Eco-poetical Sublime in the Caucasus from Tolstoy to Mamakaev.” *Comparative Literature Studies* 50, 1 (2013): 87–107.
- Heise, Ursula. “The hitchhiker’s Guide to Ecocriticism.” *PMLA* 121, 2 (2006): 503–516.
- . “Globality, Difference, and the International Turn in Ecocriticism.” *PLMA* 128, 3 (2013): 636–643.
- Huggan, Graham and Tiffin, Helen. *Postcolonial Ecocriticism: Literature, Animals, Environment*. 2nd ed. London and New York: Routledge, 2015.
- K’ank’ava, Giorgi. “Ilias ‘Mgzavris Ts’erilebi’ da Bok’lis ‘Tsvilizatsiis Ist’oria Inglishi.” *Sjani* 4 (2003): 125–134 (კანკავა, გიორგი. „ილიას „მგზავრის წერილები“ და ბოკლის „ცივილიზაციის ისტორია ინგლისში“. *სჯანი* 4 (2003): 125–134).
- Marland, Pippa. “Ecocriticism.” *Literature Compass* 10, 11 (2013): 546–568.
- Randolph, John W. “The Singing Coachman or, the Road and Russia’s Ethnographic Invention in Early Modern Times.” *Journal of Early Modern History* 11, 1–2 (2007): 33–61.
- Said, Edward W. *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1978.
- . *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1993.
- Sotome, Hayate. “‘Mgzavris Ts’erilebis’ P’arodia da Ironia P’ost’k’olonialuri Tvalsazrisit.” *Sjani* 18 (2017): 197–208 (სოტომე, ჰაიატე. „მგზავრის წერილების“ პაროდია და ირონია პოსტკოლონიალური თვალსაზრისით“. *სჯანი* 18 (2017): 197–208).
- . “‘Everything Had Language’: Vazha-Pshavela’s ‘Snake Eather’ from the Perspective of Animal Studies.” *Sjani* 19 (2018): 186–206.
- . “The Gift of the Death in Vazha-Pshavela’s ‘The Snake Eater.’” *Bungaku to Kankyo* 22 (2019) (in press).
- Weil, Kari. “A Report on the Animal Turn.” *Differences* 21, 2 (2010), 1–23.

**ჰაიატე სოტომე**  
**(იაპონია)**

**პოსტკოლონიური ზოოკრიტიციზმის პერსპექტივა**  
**მე-19 საუკუნის ქართულ ლიტერატურაში**

**რეზიუმე**

**საკვანძო სიტყვები:** პოსტკოლონიალიზმი, ზოოკრიტიციზმი, პოსტკოლონიური ზოოკრიტიციზმი, ილია ჭავჭავაძე, ვაჟა-ფშაველა

მე-20 საუკუნის ბოლოს, ლიტერატურათმცოდნეობაში გამოჩნდა ახალი ლიტერატურული თეორიები – ეკოკრიტიციზმი და ზოოკრიტიციზმი. ეკოკრიტიციზმის შესწავლის საგანი ლიტერატურულ ტექსტში გარემოს ასახვა და აღქმაა, ზოოკრიტიციზმის კი – ცხოველ(ებ)ისა. უკანასკნელი ათწლეულების განმავლობაში, გამოიკვეთა ამ ორი ახალი თეორიის შედარებით ძველ თეორიასთან, პოსტკოლონიალიზმთან შეთავსების ტენდენცია. „პოსტკოლონიური ზოოკრიტიციზმის“ ერთ-ერთი მთავარი თემაა რასიზმისა და სპეცისიზმის ერთმანეთის იდენტური თვალთახედვა; სპეცისიზმის მიხედვით, ცხოველი ადამიანს ექვემდებარება, ადამიანი კი ცხოველს ტანჯავს, ჩაგრავს და კლავს, ისევე როგორც კოლონიზატორი კოლონიზებულ ხალხს. დაისმის კითხვა: შეიძლება, თუ არა, ცხოველი ლიტერატურულ ტექსტში წარმოდგენილი იყოს როგორც „სუბალტერნი“.

ამ შემთხვევაში, საკითხავია, შეიძლება თუ არა ავტორებმა წარმოადგინონ ცხოველი, როგორც „სუბალტერნი“, რომელიც ვერ საუბრობს. ერთი მხრივ – შეიძლება, მაგრამ, მეორე მხრივ — არა, რადგან ცხოველის ამგვარი ასახვა გადაჭარბებულ ანთროპომორფიზმად ჩაითვლება. ამის მიზეზი ისაა, რომ ანთროპომორფიზმი ნიშანდობლივია ისეთი იგავისთვის, რომლის მთავარი ასახვის საგანია არა ცხოველი, არამედ ადამიანი. ამიტომაც ყურადღება უნდა გამახვილდეს ავტორის მიერ „კრიტიკული ანთროპომორფიზმის“, ანუ ანთროპომორფიზმის კრიტიკულად და სტრატეგიულად გამოყენების მაგალითებზე, რომელშიც ადამიანისა და ცხოველის შესახებ არსებული კონცეფციების (დე)კონსტრუირება ხდება.

სტატიაში გაანალიზებულია აღნიშნული თვალსაზრისის ქართულ ლიტერატურაში ადაპტაციის მაგალითები, ილია ჭავჭავაძისა და ვაჟა-ფშაველას ნაწარმოებების მიხედვით. ილიას „მგზავრის წერილების“ პირველ თავში სამი პერსონაჟია: პირველი პირი – „მე“, ანუ ნარატორი: რუსი მეეტლე, რომელიც ცუდი გარეგნობითა და ქცევით გამოირჩევა და ფრანგი მგზავრი. როდესაც „მე“ (ნარატორი) ვლადიკავკასს ტოვებს, რუსი მეეტლე ცხენებს ლანძღავს იმის გამო, რომ იგი ეტლს ადგილიდან ვერ ძრავს, ფრანგი კი ამ სცენას უყურებს და იცინის. ამ სქემატურ დიქოტომიაში, ვფიქობთ, ჩანს ილიას მი-

ზანდასახულობა, რომ იმდროინდელი საქართველოსთვის მისაბაძი ქვეყანა არა რუსეთი, არამედ საფრანგეთი, ან ზოგადად დასავლეთ ევროპა, რადგან რუსეთის იმპერიაში არ არის სათანადოდ განვითარებული განათლება, მეცნიერება, ტექნოლოგია და, ზოგადად, აკლია მოდერნულობა საიმისოდ, რომ თავისი იმპერიალისტური იდეოლოგიის შესაბამისად გაანათლოს საქართველო და ზოგადად, კავკასია.

ევროპისა და რუსეთისადმი ასეთი მიდგომა იწვევს გარკვეულ პრობლემებს, კერძოდ, როგორებიცაა – ევროპოცენტრიზმი, ეთნოცენტრიზმი, შოვინიზმი. როგორც პოსტკოლონიალიზმის თეორეტიკოსი ე. საიდი წერს, ნიგნში – „კულტურა და იმპერიალიზმი“, იმპერიალიზმის წინააღმდეგ ბრძოლა, საბოლოოდ, მის განმეორებას იწვევს (რასაკვირველია, ეს არ გულისხმობს იმას, რომ ილია შოვინისტი იყო). ამგვარი დამოკიდებულება „მგზავრის წერილებშიც“ ჩანს; რუსი მეეტლე დახატულია „უადამიანო და პირუტყველი მიხვრამოხვრის“ მქონედ.

ზემოთწარმოდგენილი მსჯელობის გათვალისწინებით, ძალზე საინტერესო იქნება ვაჟა-ფშაველას ის ნაწარმოებები, რომლებშიც ბუნება ლაპარაკობს. „გველის მჭამელის“ მესამე თავში პურის თავთავები თავიანთ თავს ადამიანს სწირავენ და, როგორც ტექსტიდან ჩანს, ეს თვითშენირვა ნებაყოფლობითი აქტია. ამიტომაც შეიძლება ითქვას, რომ პოემაში ბუნებას სუბიექტურობა აქვს მინიჭებული, რითაც ვაჟას შემოქმედება რადიკალურად ემიჯნება სპეცისისტურ ხედვებს. მეორე მხრივ, შეიძლება თავთავების ეპიზოდი გავი-აზროთ ალეგორიულად და ისააკის მსხვერპლად შეწირვის ძველ აღთქმისეულ ეპიზოდს დავუკავშიროთ. ბიბლიაში ღმერთი აბრაამს ისააკს უბრუნებს, პოემაშიც მინდიათ ბუნებას სამაგიერო უნდა დაუბრუნოს, – მაგრამ რა? ეს შეკითხვა „კრიტიკული ანთროპომორფიზმის“ მაგალითია, რომელიც მკითხველს ყურადღებას ამახვილებინებს ადამიანისა და ბუნების ურთიერთმიმართებასა და ადამიანის „პასუხისმგებლობაზე“.

დასკვნა შეიძლება ჩამოვაყალიბოთ რამდენიმე პუნქტად:

ა) პოსტკოლონიური ზოოკრიტიციზმის სხვა პერსპექტივა;

პოსტკოლონიური ზოოკრიტიციზმის ერთ-ერთი მთავარი თემაა რასიზმისა და სპეცისიზმის შეთავსება. აღნიშნული თვალსაზრისის თანახმად, ცხოველი ექვემდებარება ადამიანს. მაგრამ ვაჟას ნაწარმოებებში, კერძოდ, „გველის მჭამელში“, ბუნებასა და ადამიანს თანაბარი სუბიექტურობა აქვთ. ასეთი დამოკიდებულება, შეიძლება ითქვას, რომ პანჰუმანისტურია და განსხვავდება პოსტჰუმანიზმისგან.

ბ) ეკოკრიტიციზმისა და ზოოკრიტიციზმის კონცეფციების „გასაერთაშორისოება“ და მათი ადაპტაცია ქართულ ლიტერატურაში;

ეკოკრიტიციზმი ინგლისურენოვან ლიტერატურულ სივრცეში განვითარდა, თუმცა ლიტერატურის კრიტიკოსები შეეცადნენ იგი შეეტანათ და მოერგოთ სხვადასხვა ქვეყნის თუ ენის ლიტერატურისთვის. პოსტკოლონიალიზმი, პოსტკოლონიური ეკოკრიტიციზმი და პოსტკოლონიური ზოოკრი-

ტიციზმი აკრიტიკებს ევროპულ მოდერნულობას, რომელიც იმპერიალიზმის წამყვანი იდეოლოგიაა. წინამდებარე სტატია კი გვიჩვენებს, რომ ევროპული ფილოსოფიური ტრადიციისგან განსხვავებული თვალსაზრისები იკვეთება მცირერიცხოვანი ერებისა თუ ენების ლიტერატურებში, უფრო მეტიც, „გველის მჭამელის“ წყაროა ხალხური გადმოცემა „ხოგაის მინდი“.

რასაკვირველია, ამ თეორიების გაფორმებამდე, ბევრი ნაშრომი გამოცემული, რომლებიც ადამიანისა და ბუნების ურთიერთმიმართების საკითხს ეხება. მნიშვნელოვანია, აღნიშნული თეორიების ქართულ ლიტერატურათმცოდნეობაში დამკვიდრება (ან პირიქით, ეკოკრიტიციზმისა და ზოოკრიტიციზმის ჭრილში ქართული ლიტერატურის განხილვა), ბუნებრივია, საკითხის კვლევის ევროპული, არაევროპული და ქართული ტრადიციის გათვალისწინებით.

გ) ქართული ლიტერატურის ისტორიის ხელახალი გააზრება;

მკვლევრები ხშირად ამახვილებენ ყურადღებას ლიტერატურულ ტექსტში საქართველოსა და რუსეთის იმპერიის ასახვის თავისებურებებზე. რასაკვირველია, ასეთი კვლევები ძალიან მნიშვნელოვანია, მაგრამ მაინც არსებობს ნაციონალური იდენტობის გადაჭარბებული აღქმის საშიშროება ბინარულ და დიქტომიურ – კოლონიზატორი/კოლონიზებულის – სქემაში. ამგვარ აღქმას, საბოლოოდ, მივყავართ ქართული ლიტერატურის ვინრო, მხოლოდ ეროვნული ან ეთნიკური ლიტერატურის ჩარჩოში მოთავსებამდე.

ამ პრობლემის თავიდან ასაცილებლად, სტატიაში ვიმომენტ ვაჟაფშაველას, – ქართული ლიტერატურის კანონიკურ პოეტს. ზემოხსენებული მოსაზრების გათვალისწინებით, შესაძლებელია, ვაჟას ნაწარმოებების საფუძველზე, „ქართული ლიტერატურის ისტორიის“ დეკონსტრუქცია.