

## **The Democratic System of Upbringing and the Defeated Ego of Parents**

(Based on “The Otaraant widow” by Ilia Chavchavadze)

**Abstract:** ‘The Otaraant widow by Ilia Chavchavadze is a multifaceted work. Many researchers have paid attention. It is said that Otaraant’s widow is a special mother. Her son, Giorgi is a decent person. We focused on the parenting system, parent’s psychotype and its role in the formation of such a personality.

We conclude that Otaraant’s widow is an authoritative parent, while the parenting system is democratic. For Giorgi, mother is a model of justice, unity of word and deed, selfless kindness. Apparent raises her son in a safe emotional environment of sharing and sympathy. It is significant that the widow’s stoicism is emphasized in the title of the work itself. She is a woman (დედაკაცი), not only a woman. According to Ilia Chavchavadze ‘Dedakatsi’(woman) is a woman with a shield and sword and woman is a ‘Dedakatsi’(woman) without shield and sword. ‘A woman is a butterfly, a ‘Dedakatsi’(woman) is a bee.’

Otaraant’s widow is a generic artistic face of womanhood, that’s why she doesn’t have her own name. We consider the most important confirmation of stoicism’s fragile spiritual structure, the mother’s giving up of Giorgi’s custody. It is not only the ego of the parent, the mother capable of being a victim, that has to be overcome here (‘he leaves me and the little gall doesn’t look back’) Giorgi’s future is also unclear. The widow makes a decision from her son’s point of view. She follows his will with a fervor of her soul and a broken heart.’ Let it be on its own, I won’t stop it, because it doesn’t stop itself.’

There are many studies and the theoretical materials on parenting systems and parents’ psychotype. Obviously, Otaraant’s widow as a model of a parent is not the result of knowledge (as she could not read and write). This is her natural state. Along with the artistic value, Ilia Chavchavadze sculpted Otaraant’s widow- a sword-wielding woman and a perky mother with inner access-with psychological resources.

We also focused on the progressive nature of pedagogical thinking in Georgia, which was conquered by the Russia Empire in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which was actually ahead of time.

The work of Jacob Gogebashvili, Ilia Chavchavadze, Gabriel Bishop (Kikodze) and their associates.

**Tags:** Pedagogy, Parental Psychotype, Stoicism.

„Ilia Chavchavadze was the oak in the desert”

Mikheil Javakhishvili

„We cannot imagine our intellectual life without Ilia, it can not be imagined and impossible”

*Otar Chkheidze*

“The Otaraant widow“ by Ilia Chavchavadze is a multifaceted work starting from the title esthetics and completed by the phrases!

"It's really a sin!

But who else is not sinful?"

This is an evil and cursed question in this endless and unjust world” (Georgian Prose 1985: 318), highlighting the pain of the human world. The memory of Jakob Mansvetashvili about the creation of this work, its "Christening" and the first discussion among his peers is well known. As Gr. Volsky said I would call the story "Only Pearl". Ilia was criticized: The reason of indifference of Keso is not its status, filling of the gap between them could be through education, people did not like completion of the story by the depth of Giorgi, etc.

When discussing the main idea of „Otaraant widow”, we pay special attention to the memory of Arthur Leist, which was printed on the pages of "Bakhtrion" (1922, N 10). He remembers the writer's words, "In this story I would like to influence their (peasants') moral freedom." The main character of Ilya's creativity and work is man. In the country that lost statehood, the main concern was education, conscious struggle for freedom, because "where the spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom" (St. Siluan, Gsme 2007: 188.)

According to Ilia, the process of forming moral freedom involves a cause-and-effect chain of faith and knowledge, connecting the past and present. He believed in understanding the Georgian peasant, not only as a result of merit or defect, but also recognized that “there boils the blood in his veins.” Arthur Leist further emphasizes this perspective by stating, "Many times he has placed Georgian morals above those of the so-called educated nations" ("Bakhtrion" 1922, N 10 - ambebi.ge).

The main character of "Otarant widow" does not have her own name in the work. The author himself assists in elucidating this artistic-psychological concept by defining the essence of womanhood: "A woman, whether married or single, with children or childless, can only attain womanhood through spiritual maturity... ." A woman is like a butterfly, not a bee; to a woman, this world is a path to traverse, and her home is a place for honest labor" (Letters 2010: 19). Otaraant widow, in essence, represents a broader aspect of motherhood, rather than a singular circumstance. She became a widow at the age of 24 and made an unwavering decision: "May the day grow dim for Otaraant widow until she brings a stepfather for Giorgi" (Georgian Prose 1985: 295). Despite having numerous suitors, She was destined to stay faithful to her spouse, honor her commitments, and if not increase nor diminish the family's livelihood. "A mother is a shielded woman" (Ilia) - through her way of life, purity of words and actions, and her indifference to injustice, Otaraant widow embodies the qualities of a woman characterized by stoicism, which serves as an invisible shield for her.

The 'Otarant widow' has been a subject of discussion and interpretation on numerous occasions. We are familiar with her loyalty, selfless kindness, commitment to justice, unique relationship with words, strong work ethic, and generosity. The writer also provides us with a vivid portrait of Giorgi, Otaraant widow's son. Giorgi is, in appearance, a 21-year-old boy (at the beginning of the story), described as 'He was very trusting and had a somewhat weathered appearance... He rarely smiled, but when he did, his gaze was unwavering' (Georgian Prose 1985: 300). This rare smile, highlighted in such a manner, is a significant aspect of Giorgi's character. Born on Christmas Day, it is not a mere coincidence; it serves as a hint of "a shade of perfection" (A.K. Bakradze). As Nikoloz Serbi aptly remarks about such a smile: "What does this smile signify, if not that earthly joy will soon give way to sorrow, and sorrow will, in turn, be succeeded by joy" (St. Nicholas Serbi 2003: 18). In George's world, a subconscious connection with ordained spiritual health reveals a profound sense of the macrocosm. Externally, the internal order is emphasized, to the extent that even his shoes confirm that "the shoes of our peasants also possess their own beauty and refinement."

As a character, "he was not particularly skilled at maintaining equal partnerships, and if he got involved in any way, he was given leadership in every situation." This is evident in various episodes within the narrative, such as conflicts with Kupraant Tedo, Omaraant laborer, and Archili's stableman. He challenged Kupraant Tedo when he witnessed the oppression of the weak, while in the other two instances, conflicts arose when "labor and the laborer were at odds," and he couldn't tolerate such injustice.

Hard work - "takes the work to the heart takes it to the end" (according to the mother's description, "hands-on" and "hard working")

A summary of Giorgi's morality, as characterized by Archili, is that his conscience is driven by a desire for the well-being of the entire community and the integrity of the whole. He values not only his own interests but also those of others.

Otarant widow and her son Giorgi are familiar figures to the readers. As the story unfolds, the widow's stoic demeanor, her embodiment of motherhood, and her parenting system become evident, allowing her to nurture her fatherless son into an honorable man. Even though the mother is introduced as a widow at the beginning of the story, the writer acquaints us with her husband, Tevdore, through her memories. These recollections offer insights into his character, values,

worldview, his approach to raising their child, and the development of his personality. "Take care of my little Giorgi, don't let anyone make him destitute, protect him from oppression, and never allow his gaze to be fixated on anyone else! Let him grow up, and then he will decide for himself whether he wishes to be independent, becoming a man through his own courage" (Georgian Prose 1985: 302). This will signify that Giorgi should not endure a troubled childhood. The genetic code, referred to by society as "another sign" ("Either a great trouble or a great grace. Here is another sign"), serves as a means to establish unity and justice, transcending the avaricious laws of the world. Tevdore's son is expected to follow in his father's footsteps in the journey of life. As he matures, he already bears the responsibility - "becoming a man through his own courage."

It is a widely accepted perspective that the role of a parent as a role model is paramount in the process of shaping one's personality. Providing support and encouragement, along with a balanced combination of tolerance and psychologically measured discipline, while recognizing their interests, efforts, and offering positive feedback, plays a significant role in this process. This approach doesn't pertain to the contemporary era; we can trace it back to a parent in the Gospel, namely, the father in the parable of "The Prodigal Son." It's evident that the parable is constructed around a system of symbolic representations. In our discussion of this matter, we will focus on a couple of key symbols: Father's house - the divine kingdom, going to a foreign country - a bold life, ring - the gift of the Holy Spirit, shoes - the Holy Bishop Gabriel will also see a sign of reconciliation and honor in the ring. It is significant that according to the thought of the Holy Fathers, the ring and the shoes are both signs of a free person, since slaves walked barefoot. The essence of the parable is as follows: the father gave freedom to erring son. Burdened by sin, after a painful experience, he took responsibility for his own life's path. (The son returned, because he realized that his place was in the bosom of the "father". The father greeted him with a celebration and entrusted his future to his own wish.)

We've discussed Giorgi's genetic code, which signifies his health and high morality, characterized as being "extraordinary." In "Basics of Experimental Psychology," Gabriel Bishop (Kikodze) concisely highlights that a person's genetic character is inherited from one generation to the next over centuries.

I As Gabriel Bishop (Kikodze) points out, "We should not think that the born baby already has a character, it has the possibility to acquire one character more than the other, it has conditions that develop the ability of a person" (Kikodze 2007: 245). This underscores the significance of the three main factors that intersect in the formation of personality: genetics, upbringing, and the environment, with the parent serving as a model—a living example—forming the cornerstone of education. Ioane Okropiri expressed, "The best method of teaching is through one's behavior and way of life" (Gsme 2007: 54). It reinforces the notion that the primary guiding forces in genetics and education are the parents.

When discussing the parenting system, it's crucial to consider the categories of parents according to psychological studies. The works of Baumrind, Edler, and Levin delineate the following categories: authoritarian, authoritative, permissive (patient), and indifferent (careless) parents, each with their distinctive approaches to upbringing.

Since the 1930s, Kurt Lewin has distinguished between authoritarian, democratic, and liberal education systems.

In an autocratic upbringing, a child tends to be passive in the process.

Democratic parenting is a child-centered style that encourages the child's active participation and motivation. As the child grows, they are expected to become more independent and responsible. In this approach, the educator fosters an environment of trust and mutual understanding.

The liberal parenting system involves parents displaying excessive tolerance. As a consequence, children may struggle to control their impulses and develop a lower sense of responsibility.

Naturally, discussing these systems implies the presence of relevant theories that are accessible to parents if they desire to explore them. The process of education involves not only parents but also school teachers and psychologists. In contemporary times, the science of parenting is multifaceted. If we pose the question of what type of parent an orphaned widow is, someone who may not even know how to read and write, and on what basis she parents, we find an unequivocal answer: Her upbringing system is oriented towards fostering moral perfection from within.

Applying modern research, the Otarant widow can be characterized as an authoritative parent with a democratic approach to upbringing. This is substantiated by the general narrative content. Such a system places significant importance on the child's self-determination, autonomy, and responsibility. It is through this lens that Giorgi's confrontation with Kupraant Tedo over Manasaant Gola becomes particularly interesting.

Upon witnessing Giorgi with a bloody nose and a broken heart, his mother was undoubtedly shocked. However, she remained composed and inquired about the incident, understanding the reasons behind it. In the end, she discovered that her son had intervened to protect the weak. This episode also reveals the mother's careful and measured approach to offering praise. It is noteworthy that Haim J. is a clinical psychologist, pediatrician, and a leader of seminars for parents. As per Ginotti, "our words should serve as a magical canvas on which the child can create their own positive self-portrait" (Ginotti 2021: 48). "He is his father's son," the widow finds joy in the manifestation of strong genetics in her son, thinking, She keeps these thoughts within, never explicitly sharing them with her son. However, the child himself deduces that cheering for Gola was the right thing to do, inquiring, "Was Gola crying?"; in other words, was he happy? "Immediately, he fell silent, not stirring any longer!"

In this episode, the mother's praise was condensed into a single phrase: "You are even more beautiful now!" This served as a symbol of self-determination and responsibility for young George, offering him the support needed to paint his own positive self-portrait on the "magic canvas." His conviction that confronting Kupraant Tedo was the right thing to do proved to be justified, resulting in a gracious outcome - the oppressed were rescued from the insults of the oppressor. The degree of responsibility is important here - it is related to positive value. In the discussed episode, the parent emphasizes true responsibility as a value in such a way that the child feels himself in charge of the situation. Otarant widow's authority in the eyes of his son becomes evident from a few phrases of the author: "He who is accustomed to being truthful (Giorgi - N.F.) loves the just"... "she is correct, and that's why," Giorgi would respond to his mother's rebuke. With her righteous nature, Otarant widow enjoyed a harmonious period in his relationship with his son: "She knew how to speak kindly to her son. She never used harsh words with him, even though she would occasionally discipline him" (Georgian Prose 1985: 308).

The work contains particularly profound and intense passages in chapters VII ("mother's cross"), VIII ("Will break the hardest stone"), and IX ("Strange knot"). These chapters explore

Giorgi's separation, willingness to be around Keso and not being able to share it with the mother, mother's inner anxieties and assumptions. In this context, we witness a widow with surprisingly strong motherly intuition, yet she remains unable to decipher her son's concerns. Giorgi appears to be withholding something, as if "there's a matter he cannot express".

In her thoughts, the mother allows herself to think, 'If his heart is inclined towards someone, why should he hide it?' However, recalling Giorgi's return from the hunt filled her with fear, and she exclaimed, 'What a man... God, spare me such thoughts!' The son's inability to express his emotions raises worrisome questions: is he falling in love or committing a sudden sin? here too the worry about the son is taking the whole: "What a burden to entertain such thoughts... it feels as heavy as a massive stone on the heart." (Georgian Prose 1985: 322). The mother speaks to her child in a measured manner, carefully considering each word. She attempts to understand her son's pain without prying or pushing. Step by step, she approaches the point where Giorgi finally snapped:

„- i know you won't like to approve it! ...

I need to work as a laborer, my heart can't stay home"

He is determined to work in just one place: either there or nowhere, at Archili's place.

The mother couldn't help but suspect that the reason for working was undoubtedly Archil's sister, Keso. The lack of surprise on the mother's part, as well as the absence of a surprising effect on the reader, is in line with how the author has prepared it. George's apparent heartlessness in this episode is not solely a result of his parent's authoritarianism. It is influenced by a psychological factor of alienation, as explained by Akaki Bakradze, while he simultaneously bears a sense of responsibility towards his mother. Otaraant widow communicates with his son based on the principles of sympathy and shared understanding. To the mother, her son working as a laborer, after she had devoted her childhood and young womanhood to raising him with unwavering commitment, feels like the sky falling on her head.

Giorgi's decision received the support of his mother. Once again, the primary concern is the child's future. If she did not introduce a stepfather into Giorgi's life, she would continue to bear the burden of motherhood, and her determination remained unyielding: "I am a mother, and my time is passing; he is a son, representing the future. I am departing, he is arriving... I am at the end, he is at the beginning. I cannot shield him from the front" (Georgian Prose 1985: 331). Changing one's mind through submission and fear is akin to personal destruction. Otaraant's widow understands this, which is why she allows her son to depart with a heavy heart and a burning spirit, saying, "Let him do things his way. I won't force it, because it won't work". Such a decision can only be made by a mother who is truly worthy, spiritually strong, and virtuous. In this moment, the parent's ego is unequivocally surrendered.

No amount of theoretical knowledge about parenting systems or a correct psychological understanding of a parent's obligations could have empowered Otaraant widow to make the decision she did. With this final choice, she demonstrates a deep sense of self-awareness, as defined by Gabriel Bishop, along with a profound trust in the Lord. This trust is reinforced in many episodes throughout the work, including discussions on sin, grace, prayer, and her attitude towards death. Such morality, stoicism, captures the spirit of alienation, builds relationships, sacrifices the personal for soulful love (in this case, for a child).

In Ilia Chavchavadze's mentioned story, we discuss the education system in one specific case, but it was a widespread phenomenon in a country under the dominion of the Russian Empire,

shaped by the efforts of Iakob Gogebashvili, Gabriel Bishop (Kikodze), Ilia Chavchavadze, and their collaborators. The fight for humane and progressive pedagogical ideas was in fact a confrontation with the empire of Iakob Gogebashvili (Rostom Chkheidze's biographical novel "pillar of nationality - Chronicle of the Life of Iakob Gogebashvili" gives us a clear idea of these processes), to which he devoted his whole life. It was Iakob Gogebashvili who forbade the authoritative attitude towards the child, based the principle of teaching on the principle of "from simple to difficult", teaching with examples (relation to reality).

Conclusion :

The main character of Ilia Chavchavadze's 'O taraant widow,' O taraant widow (portrayed by Akaki Bakradze), is a person ordained by a spirit that communicates through actions. A mother is a 'guardian woman.' The most compelling evidence of her inner wisdom, innate intelligence, and foresight is her upbringing of Giorgi, who is portrayed as a 'living icon of dignity.' O taraant widow a single mother, is the creator of this 'dignity' as a parent, and her role as a parental model is vividly depicted in the work. As we conclude our discussion

O taraant widow is an authoritative parent, her upbringing system is democratic.

The widow's authority and the fundamental principles of democratic education, characterized by trust and mutual understanding, are innate to her rather than acquired. This is particularly noteworthy given that she, like another widow who couldn't even read or write, possesses these qualities naturally.

This marks a convergence of O taraant widow's stoicism and her selflessness in relinquishing Giorgi's courtship. In this moment, the mother not only abandons her own interests, firmly believing that a young man from a respectable family shouldn't engage in fights, but she also leaves Giorgi's future in uncertainty. This decision underscores her exceptional dedication to her son's well-being: "But the cover will not close to an uncooked young wine". O taraant widow leaves this "only one, precious" to undergo life's challenge, because this is his path to take (she decides from her son's perspective)

The portrayal of O taraant widow as an educator aligns with the view that this character is a noteworthy artistic figure within the gallery of common archetypes. She represents a unique blend of feminine tenderness and unwavering masculine will, adorning the global pantheon of mythology. O taraant widow stands as a revered national archetype, as acknowledged by Vakhtang Kotetishvili.

This issue of pedagogical thinking in the second half of the 19th century in Georgia offers a wealth of research material, making it both significant and worthy of consideration. As we have pointed out earlier, the alignment between the ideas of Iakob Gogebashvili, Gabriel Kikodze, and Ilia Chavchavadze with Kurt Levin's 20th-century perspective on the psychological foundations of education is quite evident, demonstrating their forward-thinking approach, which predates Levin's work by several decades.

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