

## Georgian Identity and Political Culture

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*There are two sides of the questions of national identity. On the one hand identity is a subject of reflection, i.e. the question is put consciously as to what is personality of Georgians, but if this subject belongs to a metaphysical sphere or demands an answer to the question as to what Georgians are deeply in the light of essence of history, there may exist no definite answer at all. If we take the subject into an empirical reality, it will be subject, on the one part, to historical research, i.e. research of its ethno genesis, on the other hand, it will be decided in the philosophical-ethnical and culturological cut, i.e. what am I as a historical being, what place I held in the past or hold today or may hold, or want to hold in mankind. A unity of the Georgian national identity determinants fails "to hold" uniqueness, because these features are generally human. The identity is expressed in our being itself, live self-experience, objectification of which will be equal to leveling. It's not a matter of determinants themselves, which are characteristic to other identities as well, but of the chaplet, which they form on mutual unity. The uniqueness is in the chaplet and not in individual determinants, in whatever peculiarity each of them may seem.*

*In order to define Georgian identity - one of the most important issue for political culture - we interview the following personalities:*

1. Akaki Kulijanashvili – Anthropologist, The Head of Department of Cultural Studies of Tbilisi State University
2. Lela Pataridze – Historian, the Senior Scientist of the Institute of History and Ethnology of Georgian Academy of Science
3. Zurab Kiknadze – Professor of Literature, Tbilisi State University professor
4. Lela Yakobishvili – Media Journalist, Culturologist, professor, The Head of Department of Media Technologies of University of Culture
5. Khatuna Maisashvili Press journalist, the founder and editor of the newspaper "The New 7 Days", lecturer of the faculty of journalism of the State University of Language and Culture I. Chavchavadze

- Questions: Basic features of Georgian national identity. History of the construction of Georgian national identity- Existence and content of mythologies, tales and narrations, which Georgian national identity bases upon- Self-representation of Georgian national identity in literature and mass-media. Structure and condition of Georgian mass-media.

- 1.1 Basic determinants of the Georgian national identity.
- 1.2 Priority determinants from the Georgian national identity basic determinants

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*Anthropologist, Prof. Akaki Kulijanashvili divides the national identity into several levels: an anthropological character proceeding from geography, a religious factor, a historical factor, language, culture and an economic factor. From these a priority is given to language and rule of life, i.e. everyday life culture.*

*Namely, he mentions that – “anthropologically different types of Turkish and Slavonic origin directly border Georgia, which on their part differ from Georgian and in general from Caucasian ethnos. Georgians consider that Caucasians are anthropologically identical. By the way, an expression is established in modern Russian language “a person of Caucasian nationality”, which witnesses that not only Caucasians apprehend Russians as men with different structure; Russians themselves fix the same consideration. Anthropological identity is based on the experience of blood unity,” he concludes. We should mention that in this explanation the author makes one mistake, namely, Azerbaijanis, who are also called Caucasians in Russia, are anthropologically related to Turks, while for Georgians, Armenians and Azerbaijanis are apprehended as Caucasians beyond the Caucasus and not in the Caucasus, because according to the theory of the so-called “Iberian-Caucasian” languages group, Caucasian is only the languages united in that group of languages and, correspondingly, autochthonic ethnoses; bearers of these languages are a group of Kartvelian languages (Georgians, Megrels, Svans), Vainah group (Ingushs, Chechens and some ethnoses living in Dagestan), Adighei group (Circassians and kindred to them ethnoses, among them Abkhazs) and other small North-Caucasian groups (T.K).*

*According to the religious factor, in the opinion of Prof. A. Kulijanashvili, the Georgian national identity is based on orthodox Christianity. He explains the importance of this factor thus – “Georgian and Christian are apprehended nearly as synonyms in the consciousness of average statistical Georgian. This outlook is determined by history. Georgians and Georgia, an extreme eastern outpost of Christianity, had been permanently surrounded by non-Christian religions and after generations of Islam the history of Georgia has been the history of isolation from Islam”.*

*To prove vitality of history as the factor of apprehending the national identity, the author cites a myth, preserved as a tradition in contemporary Georgians, on continuing the ancestors’ deeds, immortality of these deeds. He observes that – “Average statistical Georgians experience historical heroes as their direct ancestors and each historical fact determines their contemporaneity or, in other words, as the ancestors take part in determining the destiny of the contemporaries.”*

*In A. Kulijanashvili’s opinion, language is a major determinant of identity in the consciousness of Georgians – “it’s difficult to attribute the Georgian language to any group of languages, it’s difficult to find any other language, to which the Georgian language has any likeness. It was clear for ordinary Georgians, who had everyday relations with different ethnoses. The group of Kartvelian languages involves Megrelian, Swan and Laz languages. Despite this, the Georgian literary and written language has performed a major function of the Georgian identity”.*

*A second place, according to its significance, is occupied by culture, as a rule of life. In the respondent's opinion – “a rule of Georgian life realized in everyday life is characterized by its specificity, the roots of which should be found in the Georgian interpretation of the synthesis of Greek-Judean cultures. For example, Georgian hospitality is nearly identical to Greek proxenia and paganized Christian rules involve pagan elements. Georgians are more aesthetes in everyday life than pragmatists or fanatics. Continuity of traditions is experienced as a major determinant of the Georgian identity”.*

*The author considers that the cult of vineyard, vine and wine make up an economic factor of identity for Georgians – “Wine plays such a role in everyday life of Georgians that without any exaggeration we can consider it an axis of Georgian everyday life. An impression is formed for an alien eye that Georgians work not only for their self-satisfaction, but also for further performing the ritual with wine, which is specifically characteristic for the Georgian feast. Probably this causes Georgians to be chained to their earth, home country and any attempt of separating from it causes sharp nostalgia.”*

*Historian Lela Pataridze names, as she says, generally recognized basic parameters of people's or national identity, namely: name of the nation, territory, cultural aspect (language, traditions, mode of life, common values, religion, etc), state and civil aspect – single economic space and single legal space. She considers language and territory to be of special importance for the Georgian identity. She explains their significance thus – “The Georgian people have no historical experience of living in the Diaspora such as, for example, Jews or Armenians have. That's why they have not elaborated such a specific religious and custom system, which will preserve the Georgian identity to them and their further generations in any spot of the globe. The Georgians possess the experience of protecting their own territory and of fighting for it. Georgians separate from the surrounding world by the territory. That's why the Georgian culture is not isolated in itself; it has involved many oriental and western streams”. – And this is, probably, an important aspect of the Georgian identity as well. I consider the Georgian language to be also a basic determinant. Georgian is a specific language because it is spread in a narrow geographic area and in fact, coincides with the borders of the Georgian state. A language, cognate to Georgian, is not spoken anywhere, in any part of the world (Georgian, Megrelian, Swan – all these three cognate Kartvelian languages are spread on the territory of Georgia). Thus the language is also a natural border between Georgians and non-Georgians”].*

*To specify, L. Pataridze mentions about perceptible difference in the words “eri (people)” and “nation”. Namely, the term “eri”, modern (within new Georgian language) meaning of which was established still in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, does not mean (or very slightly expresses) the state aspects of identity, such as loyalty to the constitution and legislation, common rights-obligations for all members of a unity. In the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, when Georgia was still incorporated as a state first within the Russian Empire, then the Soviet Union, just the moment of identity was though most accentuated in the concept of “eri” than from more natural concept, such as “people”, but this accent was made on the moments of ethnic, language, historical experience. And because of this any efforts of the present authorities to imply in “the Georgian people”]*

to ethnically non-Georgian population living in Georgia are unsuccessful, as the civil identity is not so kept in the consciousness of either ethnic minorities themselves or of basic ethnos for the term "eri" to involve all the aspects implied in the concept "nation" (in the western understanding of this word).

*In L. Pataridze's opinion, it's of great importance at present – to turn "people's identity" into "national identity", i.e. to strengthen civil consciousness in both ethnically Georgian and non-Georgian part of the citizens of Georgia. It's natural, as no stable state and multicultural unity can be reached otherwise".*

*Professor of literature Zurab Kiknadze makes an extensive introduction to the national identity problem. He mentions about two sides of the questions put on the national identity. On the one part, in his opinion, identity is a subject of reflection, i.e. the question is put consciously as to what is personality of Georgians, but if this subject belongs to a metaphysical sphere or demands an answer to the question as to what Georgians are deeply in the light of essence of history, there may exist no definite answer at all. If we take the subject into an empirical reality, it will be subject, on the one part, to historical research, i.e. research of its ethnogenesis, on the other part, it will be decided in the philosophical-ethnic and culturological cut, i.e. what am I as a historical being, what place I held in the past or hold today or may hold, or want to hold in the mankind. Later he expands the thought and points that a unity of the Georgian national identity determinants fails "to hold" uniqueness, because these features are generally human. The identity is expressed in our being itself, live self-experience, objectification of which, in the author's opinion, will equal to leveling. He concludes that – "it's not a matter of determinants themselves, which are characteristic to other identities as well, but of the chaplet, which they form on mutual unity. The uniqueness is in the chaplet and not in individual determinants, however peculiar each of them may seem".*

*In Z. Kiknadze's opinion there are still separated three basic determinants of the national identity, territory, religion and language. – "There exists inner assurance that the cultural personality of Georgians is on the verge of west-east. A cultural type of Georgians is neither fully oriental nor fully western. Between Europe and Asia there is Byzantium, which is west for Georgia and east for Europe. Georgians are within this intermediate encirclement of the Byzantine civilization, though neither Byzantine mentality is fully characteristic to them."*

*A second determinant is Christianity, i.e. Orthodoxy. Z. Kiknadze cites an example of King Vakhtang Gorgasali (King of Iberia in the 5<sup>th</sup> century, founder of Tbilisi), who writes in his will to his heir and nobles: "Don't forget love to Greeks". Here Greek, evidently, does not mean ethnic Greeks. Greek here is a Christian, opposing to irreligious (non-Christian), analogous to Hellene - Barbarian opposition. With his words the King determined a priority".*

*In his opinion, priority of Christianity reached the point, when Christianity, namely, Calcedonian belief, the first expression of Georgian personality, has become its synonym. However, he adds, this is not such a priority that is characteristic only for Georgians, it lacks uniqueness, but – "it's not important for formation of self-*

consciousness. King Vakhtang left such a will, though he was known to be a sworn enemy to the policy of Greeks”, concludes the respondent.

*Z. Kiknadze introduces into his discussion one more determinant of the national identity – openness of the Georgian mentality (or nature) and substantiates it thus. As well as in the period of Greeks – “in the late Middle Ages also the Georgian poet-kings, whose life was sacrificed to the wars against Persians, were great worshippers and adepts of the Persian poetry and, generally, culture. Christianity was not for them a barrier in their love for the Persian culture, namely, poetry. It was the same in the period of tsarist Russia, when the Russian tsarism’s official policy was directed at disparaging the Georgian culture, the answer of the Georgian community was not a denial of the Russian culture. How can this be explained? It can, probably, be explained by openness of the Georgian mentality (or nature), which can be considered to be a priority determinant of Georgians, as some think”.*

*But, Prof. Z. Kiknadze considers language the most important among the national identity determinants. – “And there were heard six languages in Kartli”, informs the chronicle about the situation in the 4<sup>th</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> cc BC... According to the chronicler’s conception, from these six languages one language (Georgian) has become a differentiating sign for Georgians. Just the language was the sign, which not only differentiated the Georgians from others, but was a basic determinant of self-identification. It was so, when King Mirian, of Persian origin, “fell in love with Georgians, forgot the Persian language and learned the language of Georgians”, is said in the chronicle. The respondent explains and concludes that to conduct proper policy the most efficient instrument is used, which is most significant. To win the Georgians’ heart, their confidence, the king of alien origin learns their language. Still by now Georgians welcome anyone, even speaking a little Georgian, with great respect and admiration, considering this fact to be a sign of their deep and great reverence”.*

*In Z. Kiknadze’s opinion, the language as the identity determinant, was especially seen in the environment, where it would face a prevailing language. He cites, as an example, translation of the Gospel from Greek into Georgian at Athos Mountain by Athos Greeks, also the legend (myth) connected with it, according to which Ekvtime Atoneli (one of the most renowned church figures), recovered from fatal disease, the Virgin was revealed and appealed to him – “You are saved, get up and easily speak Georgian”. Z. Kiknadze concludes, that – “There could not have existed any other marker of identification in the Christian environment than the language, for Georgian Christian monks, who were cut off their native country. Greeks looked with doubt at the Georgian translation of the Holy Script, which was an essence of life for the Georgian monks of letters. It is said about one renowned figure at Athos Mountain, Ekvtime, that he “enlightened the language of Georgians and the country of Georgians”.*

*Another example cited by Z. Kiknadze concerns the period of Georgia’s colonization by Russia, when the Russifying policy of the Russian Empire put the language on them to be or not to be verge. He points that – “this period – the entire 19<sup>th</sup> century was ongoing under the sign of new literary Georgian formation and with the motto “the language deteriorates, the nation falls”. In this period the language was presented in the first place from the past heritage. At that time the word-concept*

*“mother-tongue” acquires conceptual meaning and becomes a symbol of national self-survival, self-determination and self-expression. The author of Georgian “Dedaena” (“mother-tongue”) wrote that in the previous centuries Georgians fought for belief and got experience in this fight, but they did not know how to fight for the language as alien tribes didn’t threaten the language. After joining Russia their belief was guaranteed, but the language faced great problems”. In the author’s opinion just this very factor caused the unusual development of literature – “Literature shouldered the burden of the nation’s leader. The 19<sup>th</sup> century Georgian writers were recognized as national leaders. The urgency of jeopardy was inherited by the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Despite the fact that the Georgian language had a status of the state language attached to it by the Constitution, it did not feel easy at all before such a strong rival as the Russian language. “Speak only Georgian”, these words of the poet, along with a challenge to a rival, involve a whole array of emotions, starting from fear and ending in care”.*

*Z. Kiknadze represents the language as not only a basic determinant of the Georgians’ national identity, but as a proof of uniqueness. He substantiates his consideration thus: “Language priority in determining the Georgian identity is additionally strengthened by the condition that the Georgian language is an orphan language, it doesn’t unite in any known family of languages: the Georgian language belongs neither to Indo-European, nor Semitic, nor Turkish, nor Ugro-Finnish, neither to any other group of languages. Georgians, as people speaking orphan language, are themselves an orphan generation using orphan alphabet, which is their inseparable property. If we seek for uniqueness in the nation’s personality, we can’t imagine a better determinant of identity as this. Orphanage is a direct expression of its uniqueness”.*

*The efforts of the Soviet Union authorities to abolish the item in the Constitution of the Georgian SSR, according to which the Georgian language along with Russian functioned as the state language, was apprehended by Georgians as an insult to their dignity, thinks Z. Kiknadze. He evaluates the events of April 14, 1978, which followed the plan mentioned above thus – “That the language is a basic determinant of the national personality as a priority one among other determinants was proved before the dissolution of the Soviet regime twelve years before, namely, on April 1978, when not only intellectuals and students, but all the layers of the Georgian population, at a risk of their lives, it may be said, went out into street to protect a constitutional right of the Georgian language. The Kremlin efforts to withdraw from the Constitution of the Georgian SSR the item on the state status of the Georgian language, was considered by Georgians as an insult to their dignity. It is the case when a sign of identity determinant is turned to a dignity category. A monument was erected to “Dedaena” (mother-tongue) as to persons of high merits”.*

*Z. Kiknadze discusses the national identity, along with the cultural unity conception, from the viewpoint of the political unity as well. Namely, he opposes two approaches existing in the Georgian community. On the one part “I am Georgian, therefore, I am European (the statement by the late Zurab Zhvania, prime-minister of Georgia, made at the session of Council of Europe several years ago) – voices a traditional idea of Georgians on Europe, as its cultural symbol. On the other part – “I am Georgian, therefore, I am Orthodox”. In Z. Kiknadze’s opinion, these two oppose each other. He observes that there were many in Georgia who doubted the*

*abovementioned words of Zurab Zhvania – “what did he mean – that we are already Europeans, as we joined Council of Europe, or these were programmed words, which should be realized in the future? Are we Europeans or do we strive for being Europeans?”* “Then he mentions that it would have been difficult to fully realize this program in Georgia – “individually many Georgians may share the European cultural values, the values of European mentality and everyday life, but their full realization would have been difficult, as Georgians are at the border of Asia and the other, not only European, West. This West for us is Byzantium, which though does no longer exist physically, keeps latent existence in the mental form. The processes, which formed modern Europe in the West, were not passed by Georgia. We look through the history of Georgia; we’ll see how far we were from Europe, despite many common signs. We often hear that in Georgia, Georgians kept always striving for the West, where they thought their cultural home was, but these strivings were impeded first by Asia (Muslim world), then Russia, which blocked us from Europe, though our first experience with Europe was through Russia. It should also be said that what we shared was Europe kneaded by Peter the Great and not authentic Europe”.

*Z. Kiknadze supposes that the prime minister’s words – “I am Georgian, therefore, I am European”, express Georgians’ latent aspiration and, thus, has the right to exist. – “Another formula co-exists beside it, which fundamentally opposes the one expressed in Council of Europe, which can be formulated thus: “I am Georgian, therefore, I am Orthodox”. Besides that this formula is anachronism in the new century, determination of identity by the religious sign considerably narrows the limits of the identity of Georgians, as among the ethnic Georgians there long exist the representatives of not only Roman Catholic Church and other Protestant unities, but Muslims both within Georgia and beyond its borders (Turkey, Iran). This formula blocks the way towards Georgians not only to believers of different confessions, but to agnostics and also to those, who recognize Orthodoxy not through church belief, but only formally, as a traditional cultural orientation. Their number is not small”, he concludes. Here Z. Kiknadze presents contradictions existing within the Georgian community between the conceptions of cultural unity and political unity, only in the background of ethnic Georgians. His considerations are interesting, as they express current contradictions existing, within the Georgian community, though they are not sufficient for thorough analysis of the processes.*

*Media-journalist Lela Iakobishvili quite laconically answers the questions of this block, namely, her answer to the question – on the basic characteristic signs of the national identity, starts with categorical negation – “The Georgian identity has never been brought to and mostly today is not brought to the genetic “purity” of blood. This is, probably, the most important thing we take into consideration while talking about the Georgian identity”. Then she explains the nature of the Georgian identity – “The identity of Georgians, as well as of others, took place and takes place around those values, which are immanent to Georgians. This is a certain “list” of existential experiences, towards which the nation has high sensitivity and which belongs to the rank of these single ethnic existential experiences”.*

*She distinguishes the following signs characteristic to the national identity. They are:*

1. History of the country. We should stress here that it is not identical to the experience of the country's past. A number of historical happenings was and is a sacral experience of authentic existence in the world and its determination as a subject.
2. Christian belief. Ethnic mobilization around the religious ideas having fundamental values formed and forms even at present an experience of unity. Liberal ideologists have partially managed break this identity.
3. Language, which made and makes not only a historical narrative, but also writing down of the text, both historical and also fiction and technical.
4. The Georgian alphabet, as a single "techne" for creative realization.

*Press-journalist Khatuna Maiashvili divides the issue into two parts. At the first level she discusses general determinants, namely, culture – "in the broadest meaning of this concept – language, belief, traditions, customs and habits, norms of morals, behavior, clothing, feast table, art, ideals; historical memory (long and brief), myth, legends". At the other, the type carrying this identity, its collective image, within its psycho-emotional and socio-cultural context. In Kh. Maiashvili's opinion, it is characterized by: "conservative considerations on the social role and social status, conservative, suppressed approach to gender functions. Disposition to a dialogue, dispute, free exchange of thoughts; complication in option-making or passive, superficial attitude to it; it is irrational and perfunctory in work, in collective work it is characterized by the complex "how can you sing without me". In its wishes it is an idealist and romantic, generous and charitable, in practical life this type cannot or doesn't realize his wishes".*

*In the issue of the national identity Kh. Maiashvili attaches priority to language, culture and historical memory. In her opinion: "It is of great importance today to identify the Georgian national identity with the Georgian state identity. In other words, putting of pragmatic identity ahead of intimate identity".*

*Both historian Lela Pataridze and media-journalist Khatuna Maiashvili point to the priority of the nation, as a political unity conception, over the cultural unity conception at the present stage. This issue is partially tackled as important by Zurab Kiknadze as well.*

## Part II

### 2. What is the history of the Georgian national identity formation?

*Anthropologis Akaki Kulijanashvili considers the Georgian national identity has the most ancient history. To prove this he mentions: "This time let's be satisfied with the quotation by the author of the 8<sup>th</sup> century hagiographic work – Georgia is the country in which the church services are performed in Georgian. This is a fixed source and there are numerous such sources of earlier period as well. For example, discussion of the Georgian orators by Ayety and Partadze in the 5<sup>th</sup> century, which deals with the issues of Georgia's orientation in regard to Persia and Greece, also myths and legends, dealing with this issue. In my opinion, the Georgian identity originates from the 4<sup>th</sup> century, from spreading of Christianity in Georgia. Translation of the Bible into Georgian enabled formation of the literary language, which performed a function of*



uniting Georgian ethnic groups. It should be mentioned here about the efforts of the 19<sup>th</sup> century renowned figure I. Chavchavadze in restoring the national identity, in whose opinion “Georgians preserved from their ancestors three things: language, home country, religion”.

*Historian Lela Pataridze suggests an extensive survey on this topic. In her opinion, formation of the Georgian national identity has a long history. “It’s known that the national identity has quite a flexible nature, which is a guarantee of its stability and vitality”, she adds.*

*L. Pataridze differentiates several main historical stages in the process of Georgian identity formation: “The first stage starts in the pre-Christian epoch. More exactly, in the period when at the dawn of Hellenistic epoch in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC the Georgian state was founded. Since that time through the early-Christian epoch, a main object of identity, to be more exact, of loyalty, there has been a monarch – a king and a royal dynasty. Traditional Georgian historiography, which seems to be based on the royal chronicles and royal lists and continues in the further Christian period, stresses its attention on three fundamental markers of identity, they are: a royal crown, the Georgian language and religion (first heathen, then the Christian.)”*

*A second stage, in L. Pataridze’s opinion, is advance of the Christian church in the foreground. She adds: “the 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> centuries AD are the period of political dissolution. This is the period, when a single Kartli Kingdom is separated into feudal kingdoms and principalities. Just in that very period there takes place a significant shift of accents in the Georgian identity and the Christian church appears in the foreground, and the Georgian liturgical language inseparably with it.*

*A third stage, in the respondent’s opinion, starts in the 11<sup>th</sup> century and is connected with the development of the Georgian culture, national character. She explains the advance of this marker of the national identity thus – “A single kingdom of Georgia of the 11<sup>th</sup> century is strongly influenced, both in statehood and culture, by Byzantium. In the then Georgian sources there appears a discussion on the Georgian character, the nature of a Georgian... Along with the tendency of mastering the Byzantine culture (intensification of the process of translating the Christian literature, care for expressive functions of the Georgian theological language, etc) there appears a new borderline sign – historically and culturally formed Georgian national character. In this case a space of Byzantine culture, which also involved Georgia, causes the need for intensifying the national identity”.*

*A fourth stage, she considers, starts from the 15<sup>th</sup> century, when Georgia once more loses its political unity and appears encircled with the Mohammedan environment. A major determinant of the national identity, in this period, is Orthodoxy. She explains her consideration as follows – “In that period the confessional unity of the Christian world itself is split (a schism, generated by the Catholic and Orthodox churches, was topical for Georgia). Since that time till the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Orthodoxy becomes a major determinant of the national identity. “Georgian by belief” was a synonym to a member of the Georgian Orthodox church and, in fact, a concept expressing national belonging of a Georgian”.*

*A next stage, in the author's opinion, starts in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the ideas of ethnic and cultural nationalism keep spreading extensively. She considers – “Facing the Russian state and the Russian Orthodox Church, a wave of Georgian ethno-cultural revival turned accents mostly on cultural and historical values. Herewith an important place in this process was occupied by the liberal-democratic values of the new time, which the Georgian intellectual community (intellectuals) mastered mostly from Russia.”*

A type established in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries is characterized by the author, as an actuality of rapprochement of the “national” identity (on the one part, in the narrow understanding of nationalism and, on the other, understanding of nationalism, as the conceptions of cultural and political unity). At present, she thinks, the national identity formation process is still underway along with the processes of accommodating with modern new realities, in which the issue of “eri” (in the meaning of nation), as a political unity, remains most urgent.

*Professor of literature Zurab Kiknadze links a historical formation of the Georgian national identity with the defensive, repelling battles, which, in his opinion, have added some properties to its mentality.*

*He comes to the conclusion that the wars, experienced throughout the entire history, have formed psychological “fear” in Georgians, influence of which has been preserved until now: “It can be noticed that they, (Georgians) up to the present day, keep resisting the enemy, both real and imaginary, its image or phantom. Soros, Mason, KGB (state security committee), the Kremlin, World Bank, globalization, cosmopolitanism and other idols – they separately or sometimes jointly threaten them. They permanently fear that a plot is being arranged against the nation in general and the Georgian nation, in particular, somewhere in the virtual space. Georgia, in the Georgians' eye, is a permanent target of enemies, an innocent victim. In the past, Arabs, Mongols, Turks and others called for demolishing Georgia and its inhabitants... Georgia was unjustly oppressed and is oppressed now... Being a hero in the past, at present it is in chains, enslaved... Such a vision of the history of Georgia has penetrated into the historical consciousness of Georgians since the 19<sup>th</sup> century when it was really jeopardized heavily and was in difficult position, more difficult than it was in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when “it was a master of its own self” – these words belong to the 19<sup>th</sup> century writer and keep being topical now. Georgians are not satisfied with that degree of independence they possess now, as an independent state. As if there were any period in the history of Georgians, when they mastered themselves with absolute independence”.*

*In the opinion of media-journalist Lela Iakobishvili, the history of the identity formation follows the biography and history of Georgians, which is substantially strengthened by a religious factor within last centuries. “It's too difficult to specify in which moment of history these identities were formed, though reflection on them takes place already in the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD in the hagiographic work of Ioane Sabanisdze “Martyrdom of Habo”. Descriptions of kings' lives are also important from this viewpoint, in the titles of which Kartli (the same Georgia) is identified with a king. In the work of the 12<sup>th</sup> century thinker and poet Shota Rustaveli, this identity is connected with an earthly embodiment of the single state idea – a king. “Let the soul of those, who*

die for the king, go up to the heaven". A king was apprehended as an earthly image of metaphysical existence of ethnos, therefore, description of the history of Georgians as well as of the histories of kings, peoples of the world and the efforts of their establishment in the universe. Here Georgia, certainly, is no exception" – *she concludes*.

*After history, L. Iakobishvili considers the period after Georgia's joining Russia (1801) to be of great importance. She mentions about break of the identity connected with the king. Therefore, ethnic mobilization around the new ideas from this epoch has become very important. She says – "These efforts were followed by an exaggerated evaluation of the traditional values and numerous social experiments, which we are facing till today and which we fail to avoid. We experienced the latter most painfully not only in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but in our epoch as well, since the day of gaining independence".*

*Press-journalist Khatuna Maisashvili deviates from the question with the reason of its complexity and suggests the history of the Georgian national identity, in her words "formation of experience": - "This identity, as a system of phenomena, stereotypes, values, as a model of behavior and relations, has been inherited by me. Maybe it started thus: "I am a small Georgian, a child of the Caucasian mountains..."*

In 1978, when in adopting a new wording of the Soviet Union constitution, a constitutional status of the Georgian language as a state language, faced jeopardy, I was 12 years old. I clearly remember a feeling of alarm, acquired from elders and developed in me in my own way. What does it mean to take away the language (elders used to say thus)? What language should I speak then? What will happen with the books, written in Georgian, which I love so much – will no one read them after me? Maybe, this emotion was radical and naïve, but it played an important role in formation of my personality.

April 9 of 1989 was for me a lesson that my generation may shed blood for national ideals.

The war in Abkhazia was a lesson that my generation may shed blood for its native land, native country, which is one of the determinants of the national identity.

A reflection of these events in the world was also most significant and painful – We were defending our national identity or we were worried with the ambitions of a small empire.

Three or four years ago disturbances caused by removing of the item designating nationality from the passport of the Georgian citizens, distrustful attitude to the reforms ongoing at present in the system of education was and is identified with fear and jeopardy for the Georgian national identity not to be violated".

*As we see all the respondents point to the historicism of the national identity in different combinations, which finds an analogy with a classical interpretation of nation by Johann Gottfried Herder. However, Z. Kiknadze considers this approach, as he says, "the fears against enemy", which is expressed in jeopardy of losing identity in the opinion of Georgians, points to negative aspects of cultural nationalism.*

### Part III

3.1 What caused formation of the Georgian national identity?

3.2 What was a fundamental factor in the process of the Georgian national identity formation?

*Anthropologist, Prof. Akaki Kulijanashvili observes that the fundamental factors of the national identity formation are connected with spreading of Christianity, formation of the literary language and spreading of written language and the 19<sup>th</sup> century national-liberation movement (see Part I).*

*In the opinion of historian Lela Pataridze, a principal thing was formation of a state – Kingdom of Kartli. – “Traditional historiography ascribes to the first King of Kartli, King Parnavaz (the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC) both foundation of the Georgian state and attaching a leading role to the Georgian language and the written language in the state”, he concludes and mentions that a postulate on state unification of West and East Georgia, declared in description of Parnavaz’s life, was of great importance for the Georgian state. – “A ruler of West Georgia Kuji tells to Parnavaz that Parnavaz is a decendent of the Kartli rulers and a royal throne belongs to him, while Kuji occupies a place of his subject on his own will. Thus, the first unification of the kingdom of Kartli is traditionally shown not as a conquest, but as a voluntary union. And, indeed, despite the fact that due to interference of various geopolitical forces the kingdom was divided into two (when, for example, one part was subject to Rome and the other – to Iran), this was always followed by the epoch of a reunion and consolidation”.*

*An instinct of self-survival is also considered by L. Pataridze as a basic factor of the Georgian national identity formation. She mentions that – the instinct of self-survival and self-preservation becomes stronger when external defensive factors (e.g. a state) start weakening and the function of uniting “our group” is sometimes shouldered by different symbols. In the period of difficulties the nation will use what is available in this concrete situation, what will most efficiently fulfill the shouldered obligations”.*

*Professor of literature Zurab Kiknadze makes main stress on the duration of battles of defensive, repelling character, which added definite features to the mentality of Georgians. This factor, in his opinion, had positive results, but also developed negative features as well. Namely, he points to generation of some phobias and “fears” (see Part I).*

*In the opinion of Lela Iakobishvili, the most important factors of the national identity were mythology, language, religion, and alphabet.*

*In the opinion of press-journalist Khatuna Maisashvili, an organizing force of the national identity was caused by formation of a state and aspirations for preservation. She observes that – “The determinants defining the Georgian national identity appeared to have strong organizing force. It was caused by the aim – to form the Georgian state. The national identity kept being preserved by aspirations to state identity”.*

Approaches of Kh. Maisashvili and Z. Kiknadze coincide on the influence of the factor of long defensive battles on the processes of the national identity formation. Kh. Maisashvili points that – “Georgia permanently stood on the verge of losing and preserving statehood. Permanent walking and living on “the red line” attached strong organizing force to the Georgian national identity, i.e. it was a peculiar instinct of survival”, when the national identity would be preserved through a state machine.

#### Part IV

Which myths and historical legends caused formation of the Georgian, national identity?

What is the content of these historical myths and legends?

*Anthropologist Prof. Akaki Kulijanashvili names the myths and legends, which, in his opinion, influenced formation of the Georgian national identity. They are: a myth of the common origin of the Caucasian people. In his words – “There are seven (six according to the chronicler) peoples in all born by the same partners according to this myth”. Also a myth of Georgia being the Virgin’s share, a myth of Georgia being a distinguished land given to Georgians by God, a myth of the Second Coming, when the Georgian language will be used by God (a 10<sup>th</sup> century manuscript), a myth of introducing a single Georgian state and the written language by King Parnavaz before Christ (a written historical source – “Kartlis Tskhovreba” (“The Live of Kartli”), a myth of the Argonauts.*

*Historian Lela Pataridze explains that historical memory performs a function of the myth in the national identity. She considers an important fact the specificity (tradition) existing in the Middle Ages, which concerns “Kartlis Tskhovreba”. Namely, she explains – “Kartlis Tskhovreba” has not one author, neither was it written in any concrete period of time. In the Middle Ages it was an official historiographical tradition, which was permanently elaborated, renewed, filled and edited. In this case my interest is caused by the idea of existence of such a book itself. No “other” history could have been written, because “Kartlis Tskhovreba” preserved “the only legitimate version” on the origin of the Georgian ethnos and state”.*

*In her opinion the national identity makes sacralization by the history and the epoch of nationalization is sure to form a new “sacral history” of the nation. – “By the way, we come across remains of the sacralized historical thought in Georgia even now; unfortunately, the history of Georgia still has many dogmas, taboos and stock phrases in the educational and scientific sphere” – she concludes.*

*In L. Pataridze’s opinion, it’s not easy now to separate one or several myths. – “At present the folk historical legends and the medieval historical literature have been, nearly fully, replaced by stock phrases of school history. However in the highlands of Georgia there still exist the legends of Queen Tamar (reigned in Georgia in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, in “Gold Era”) – she explains.*

*But she concentrates on one of the modern myths, which concerns historical tolerance of Georgian. It basic postulates are: “David Aghmashenebeli (King of*

Georgia in the 12<sup>th</sup> century) used to go to mosque...”; “Jews were never persecuted in Georgia”, etc. *L. Pataridze stresses that she doesn't doubt these historical facts, but this is a vivid example of the history sacralization on the part of the national identity, which is characterized to the epoch of nationalism – “the national consciousness sees its national feature in these historical facts” – she concludes.*

*Professor of literature Zurab Kiknadze's considerations in regard to this issue were discussed by us in Part I, now we'll deal with three myths distinguished by him.*

### *1. The myth of uniqueness of the Georgian language.*

*“And there were heard six languages within Kartli”, informs the chronicle (“Kartlis Tskhovreba” – a collection of the Georgian nation's history) about the situation in the 4<sup>th</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> centuries BC. According to the chronicler's conception the population is divided according to the languages, in these six languages one (Georgian) became a differentiating sign of Georgians. “Just the language was the sign, which not only differentiated Georgians from others, but was a major differentiator of self-identification”, concludes Z. Kiknadze.*

*The 10<sup>th</sup> century manuscript grants a special status to the Georgian language as it supposes some secret is concealed in it. (According to this written monument, “Praise and Glory to the Georgian Language”, Jesus Christ will announce the Second Coming to the mankind in Georgian) – “Quite clearly the language in this text is in the role of a powerful determinant of the nation” – concludes Prof. Z. Kiknadze.*

*2. The myth Amirani. In the respondent's opinion – “Georgians do really deserve a metaphor of oppressed, tortured, martyr in the Russian Empire. So, however exaggerated should have been the call for the myth on a chained hero to express their condition, this surely had a real ground. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a Georgian poet, one of the ideologists of the national-independence fight, compared the fate of the Georgian people to Amirani, chained to the Caucasian ridge and identified it with him”. A content of this verse in brief is as follows: “Amirani, chained to a high ridge of Caucasus, is entire Georgia and ravens – enemies. Time will come and the chain will be split by this great hero and Georgia's long distress will be replaced with joy!”*

The verse was first published in 1884, and since then the Georgian national ideology recognizes only such Amirani. After that Z. Kiknadze explains that – “Georgians proudly acknowledged an image of Amirani as a symbol of their everlasting being, though Amirani is a classic example of hubris. As the folk records witness he answers for challenging his godfather, God, to a duel and not for bringing fire, which is ascribed to him by ideologists, identifying him with Prometheus without any grounds. People do not remove responsibility from him (here is meant the period of myth formation – T.K.) and consider this punishment quite just for him. But in the secular period the values are mixed: hubris is considered to be a heroic behavior and to be chained for hubris – an, unjust punishment. No one tried to review the dogma, a fact of hubris has been concealed by now. This is a national dogma of the secular century and it fully meets the national self-consciousness”.

3. *“The Knight in the Panther’s Skin” (a famous medieval Georgian epic) – a philologist Zurab Kiknadze considers Georgians connect their personality, in a certain extent, with the epic “The Knight in the Panther’s Skin” of the feudal period (the 12<sup>th</sup> century). Georgians recognize and consider priority the values expressed in it (friendship, love, devotion, self-sacrifice), which they consider to be their, as Georgians’, obligation to realize in life. – “The universe, presented in it, is the ideal, towards which Georgians are morally oriented. It’s chrestomatic to present nations with epochal works from the very school period: Greece with Homer’s epics, Italy – “Divine comedy”, Germany – “Nibelungs” or “Faust”, Georgia – “Amirani” and “The Knight in the Panther’s Skin”. “We have talked about Amirani” – continues the respondent and puts a question – “it should be asked in relation to “The Knight in the Panther’s Skin” – whether this epic formed such a mentality of Georgians or, on the contrary, a world of values of this epic has formed it? Which is primary? Is this question like an unsolved paradox of a chicken and an egg?” and concludes that – “Georgians want to see their image just in “The Knight in the Panther’s Skin”. This world is a firm authority for Georgians even today, in cardinally changed terms. There are many who think that Georgians should oppose the speeded up approach of globalization with these values”.*

*Media-journalist Lela Iakobishvili, as the previous respondents, attaches great importance to the written works or folklore collected in “Kartlis Tskhovreba”. It is easy to understand, because this work was being filled by many authors within centuries and it represents basic material on the history of the Georgian nation. She mentions that – “the “Book on Life of Kartli” was the most important along with numerous historical written works or folklore, which are alive in the highlands of Georgia even today”.*

*Lela Iakobishvili stresses the myths on “Dali” or “Amirani” in the pre-Christian epoch, which, in her words – “actually preserves a function of Georgians in the universe in our population till the present day”.*

*The respondent also stresses the greatest role of Ilia Chavchavadze (canonized as St. Ilia the Righteous) in the beginning of the national movement (a second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century) in forming new, relevant to the period fundamentals of the Georgian national identity. She mentions that – “in the new period the most important role belongs to Ilia Chavchavadze and the Sixtians. Ilia Chavchavadze has given us a formula of identity – “Language, Home Country, Religion”. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Ivane Javakhishvili worked hard on describing the history of Georgia laying the basis for the new Georgian historiography. The literary processes of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were mostly satiated with these topics”.*

*In the opinion of press-journalist Khatuna Maisashvili there should be distributed two, mythical and fairy-tale personages, Amirani and Natsarkeia. “Amirani – the son of goddess Dali, – is strong and ambitious. He is so strong and ambitious that, inspired by the whim of fight and victory, accustomed to being unconquerable, he dares to fight with God. That is why he is punished. Being chained to the Caucasian mountains, a damned eagle pinches his liver; a little dog licks the chain, making it thinner and the very moment the chain should break and Amirani should be free, the blacksmiths come and restore the chain. Amirani has become a symbol of Georgia in the Georgian*

consciousness, culture (remember: "Time will come and the great hero will break the chain and will free himself").

*Natsarkekia, in her opinion, another characteristic personage, is most popular. But, personally for her, – "he lacks sympathy, is lazy, idle, of small stature, doing nothing for his brothers( in another version, for his sister-in-law) except poking ashes and is only a heavy burden for them. He is ousted from home and goes to seek his fortune. On the way he comes across a giant. Natsarkekia hides his fear (though he is most afraid) and manages to cheat the giant with different tricks and, finally, appropriates his property."*

*In the respondent's opinion, generally, in the Georgian myths, legends, fairy-tales, – "a giant has many heads, as usual, he is of nine heads, nine lives, strong, merciless, but lacks mind. In the Georgian consciousness a giant is an image of enemy, i.e. a big, powerful, merciless, but silly enemy for Georgians, who can be defeated even by a small, short and weak, but adroit person. A moral of a fairy-tale on Natsarkekia can be seen in the Georgian saying: "A trick is better than strength, if a man can manage it."*

*In her opinion, in other samples of the Georgian epics, such as : "A Story of Rostom", "Kopala", "Iahsari", a main hero also fights against giants, but is straightforward, just and devoted... – "it is of special mention that the narrator also stresses fight without betrayal, cheat, with use of trick only" – she concludes.*

## Part V

- 5.1. How is the Georgian national identity expressed in literature?
- 5.2. How is the Georgian national identity expressed in mass media?
- 5.3. What is the condition and structure of the Georgian mass media?

*In the opinion of anthropologist Akaki Kulijanashvili within the entire history in the Georgian literature there prevails the theme of the national identity as a topical problem and propaganda. He mentions that – "the first Georgian literary monument has been fixed since the 5<sup>th</sup> century in hagiographic texts however surprising it may seem, and in diversified Georgian literature one of the main topics is patriotic motives of the identity".*

*In regard to mass media the respondent negatively evaluates the efforts of authorities to control it. He points that – "mass media in the present-day Georgia is under the terror of the authorities, mentality of the authorities is fashionably cosmopolitanism, and so the national identity issues are not topical and are replaced with the political identity." He also adds that – "printed media and electronic media preserve relative independence, while TV, except one or two channels, is fully controlled by the authorities."*

*In the opinion of historian Lela Pataridze the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Georgia was a period of flourishing of nationalism, as a cultural and public movement. She observes that – "in that period the ideas of nationalism were generated in literature – poetry and prose.*



By that time such artistic images were popular, as mother, who sacrifices her sons for the home country; a cradle on the bottom of the lake, from where in the eschatological future there should be born a hero to save the country; history – a holy cathedral of the nation and images of national hero – holy icons of this cathedral, etc.

*She thinks that since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the Georgian poetry has expressed the national feeling in much more subjective and intimate images: “you can’t feel your home country unless you walk on the dewy grass barefooted” – she cites an excerpt from the verse by a famous poet.*

*In respondent’s opinion, in present-day period the Georgian literature experiences crisis, it is in the process of search, its role is distributed in other branches of art and professions – “The post-Soviet literary efforts point more to the crisis of such ideology. The literature in its best samples does no longer set the ideological task of nationalism. Just this very phenomenon points most vividly that the national identity enters the stage of the civil nationalism, that the sphere of identity moves from the sphere of feelings and emotions into that of responsibility and this, I think, is the most positive tendency and witnesses vitality of the national identity” – she concludes.*

*It’s clear that L. Pataridze considers the mass media condition as prevailing. She observes its growing potential and considers that full replacement of the Russian language with the Georgian language is a step forward to development of the Georgian national identity. She says – “Mass media in principle, probably, expresses the Georgian community as it is today. It’s most evident that the Georgian language has fully replaced Russian, and it happened quite fast. In total I consider this as an inevitable and positive fact. At present the Russian TV channels have a smaller audience, the same with the Russian press, which keeps losing readers. However, some 15 years ago it was impossible to exist without the Russian press and TV. When the first independent government most rudely attacked the Russian language and media, it was considered to be a barbarous act (I think, quite justly), but now it is an already established fact. It seems it was not necessary to break open doors”.*

*The condition of mass media is characterized by L. Pataridze in a contradictory way, considering the importance of its role in fitting the national identity to new realities, she negatively evaluates a growing role of church considering mass media participates in strengthening of the civil responsibility on its will or unintentionally.*

*The respondent mentions that – “the situation is not beneficial probably. Let’s turn to the problems of identity again: today the process of boiling, i.e. forming, is ongoing in the society from this viewpoint and it has not acquired any definite form as of yet. The thing is that in the post-Soviet period the Georgian Orthodox church became most active. This echoed strongly in the hearts of people. The popularity of church is promoted by the image of its being oppressed and persecuted in the Soviet period. This is intermixed not only with the religious feelings, but also with the idea of national revival. The church, feeling that national emotions and aspirations are now more efficient in the people’s consciousness than purely religious feelings, tries its best to present Georgians as one inseparable whole. There is a tendency in some part of the society to make Orthodoxy a basic sign (marker) of the national identity. To this is*

added an effort to introduce anti-Western xenophobia by individuals or some public organizations. Though this process is most evident, fortunately it's not the only one and global throughout Georgia”.

*Then she says that* – “another tendency, as I have earlier told, is (conventionally let's call it a state policy) to lead the national identity towards strengthening of the civil consciousness and responsibilities. I don't know to what extent the Georgian mass media apprehended all this. In principle, probably partially at the expense of the fact that the people engaged in mass media are mostly young (*many young people are in the church and politics as well – T.K.*), it's also important that these people are socially and materially provided for, that the western culture is still leading in TV, that the elements shown are important here, which require more openness and freedom of the society. Due to all this and also to the fact that it carries an official line as well, mass media introduces a tendency of civil society formation into the national consciousness. We really cannot blame it for xenophobic chauvinism, unless publications supported by some organizations or church.”

In our opinion, there is clearly expressed re-evaluation of democratic values to harm the traditional, i.e. the issue is presented in the confrontational form between two conceptions, on the one part, nation as a vision of cultural unity and, on the other, nation as a political unity. In this case, the respondent thinks, the resurgence of the Orthodox Church opposes the conception of the political identity and the ideas of liberal democracy. Finally, readers may think that unfavorable condition of mass media is caused by the church.

*Professor of literature Zurab Kiknadze considers strengthening of the Georgian language in the 19th century to be caused by the Georgian literature.* – “The entire 19<sup>th</sup> century was ongoing under the sign of forming a new literary Georgian and the motto “the language deteriorates, the nation falls”. In this epoch from the heritage of the past the language is firstly presented. In this time the word-concept “deda-ena” (mother-tongue) acquires conceptual meaning and becomes a symbol of national self-survival, self-determination and self-expression.”

“It's clear why such importance is attached to literature, which occupied the place of other branches of culture. Literature shouldered the obligation of a nation's leader. The 19<sup>th</sup> century Georgian writers were apprehended as national leaders. The 20<sup>th</sup> century inherited the topicality of jeopardy. Though the Georgian language was granted a status of state language by the Constitution, it did not feel easy before such a strong rival as the Russian language. “Speak only Georgian”- these words of a poet, in addition to a challenge to the rival language, involve a whole array of emotions, starting from fear and ending in care. There was no priority for self-identification, which could have better expressed the personality of Georgians. Religion was not topical, neither territory, which had guaranteed defense in the form of the Soviet “sacral” border, nor economy, as for culture, just the language was its first and essential expression” – *he states.*

*The respondent expresses indirect, but evident, worry on belittled role of the modern Georgian literature and is also indirectly dissatisfied with the Georgian mass media* – “I don't know whether the mass media tries to express the national identity in any form.

Maybe it doesn't want or cannot. Or it wants, but finds no adequate language for this. Who has analyzed the Georgian mass media activities and produce, as to what extent it expresses the Georgian personality signs? What our mass media lacks, especially video media, are cultural programs. Personality should be presented in culture now, shouldn't it?"

*In our opinion, in the colonial and Soviet periods, the role of the Georgian literature was really the greatest for preserving and developing the Georgian national identity. but after gaining independence restoration of the state, naturally, caused weakening of this role and its redistribution over different directions of the public and political life, among them just mass media appears on the first place. Modern Georgian literature is in the process of search and occupies its natural place in new realities.*

*Media- journalist Lela Iakobishvili points that since the Georgian hagiography (the 5<sup>th</sup> century) a topic of the Georgian identity has been inseparable from the topic of written literary monuments – “As we have said above, the first “formula” of identity is with Ioane Sabanisdze in the 7<sup>th</sup> century. Since then this topic has become inseparable from the 7<sup>th</sup> century literary processes.”*

*In her opinion, it finds dramatic expression in the 19<sup>th</sup> century entire literary and media processes – “For the Sixtians of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the problem was of vital importance. – “Still a leader of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Sixtians Ilia Chavchavadze put the Georgian identity into the formula – “We have preserved three treasures from our ancestors – language, home country, religion.” For Ilia Chavchavadze all this was built in the past times by the Georgians’ efforts, remaining as high-rank value, but he understood just then the need for different efforts to be built on already existing fundamental identity – “language, home country, religion” – she concludes.*

She thinks that in the present period – “consciousness being hardly accustomed to industrialization, faced a new dilemma. In the background of world globalization, state building revealed one more new socio-political and cultural conflict. Economic crisis, suspension of production and heavy social climate caused serious alarm in the traditional values and provoked deconstruction in the structure of traditional roles and inner values.”

*After that the respondent discusses the real jeopardy of globalization in the virtual informational space. – “High degree of the Georgian culture conservation gave no opportunity to Georgia either in the 90s or 2000s to filter the informational stream, to which it was not adapted. But the regime of defending culture, which started work in recent years, gives basis to think there is ongoing a speedy process of mastering informational globalization. There are 12 TV channels operating in Tbilisi alone, to say nothing about regional TV and press. Ideals of democracy are replaced by telecracy. Now informational conflict is evident. Globalization put serious accents on Georgia not only from economic, but also from a political viewpoint, a true example of which was transpolitical virtual revolution along with transnational economic projects. It was quite a keen challenge to a country of such morphological variety as Georgia is”, she concludes.*

*In L.Iakobishvili's opinion, just very culture is a special universality for Georgia, through which adaptation in a new myth, globalization, is possible. She points that – “the socio-cultural environment, which is not uniform in our country, can hardly rely on the resources, preserved in our culture in a museumified form. That's why it will put accents, as we have said, on new means of globalistic information, this time first on teleinformation. Georgians used this resource intensively within last 10-12 years – first during the I revolution or coup by the “ I channel”, then during the II coup (this should be qualified by the politologists) – by the Rustavi 2 channel”. In case of such tendency the III revolt of masses may be arranged by way of TV marginalization and television, more marginal (here talk is on the degree of cultural capital) than “Rustavi 2”, may appear as an impulse and institute of management for further processes.”*

*Press-journalist Khatuna Maisashvili thinks the Georgian literature has always expressed the Georgian national identity and has been its one of the most important determinants, starting from the 5<sup>th</sup> century hagiographic works, ending in the works by the 20<sup>th</sup> century writers, already classics: Konstantine Gamsakhurdia, Mikheil Javakhishvili, Grigol Robakidze. In her words – “These works present an image of Georgian, who despite his artistic generalization, is often more vivid argument of Georgian national identity than many other historical sources.*

*The respondent's ideas on the modern Georgian literature are of great interest. She considers the latest Georgian literature experienced and experiences now a crisis of both topic and idea, to which is added a crisis in publishing activities. This caused a break in the relation and back relation between the literature and the community. – “It seems a paradoxical situation was formed. There was ongoing within the society an establishment of new consciousness, a break from old ideals and generation of new ones in torment, a conflict between the generations acquired a sharp form, the most productive generation for that period, those born in 1955-1965, has been sealed with a sign of a sacrificed, lost generation. The literature took long time to generalize these processes artistically, even to partially express them. The most renowned representatives of that period are Aka Morchiladze, Zurab Karumidze, Rezo Tabukashvili Jr., Zura Samadashvili and Irakli Javakhadze. What Georgian do we see in their literature? – A Georgian, whose ideals were destroyed, insulted, a Georgian – poor, cynical, aggressive, being in a critical situation, not needed in the society, ousted, lacking perspective” – this is how she describes the modern Georgian literature.*

*In regard to mass media, the respondent mentions that – “mass media is one of the most interesting paradigms of the modern Georgian culture, one of the most dynamic, circulating channels. Complex evaluation of mass media, in my opinion, itself is one of the indexes of forming consciousness of the society.”*