

MADONA NIZHARADZE

FUNCTIONS OF EPISODIC CHARACTERS IN "THE KNIGHT IN THE PANTHER'S SKIN"

The imagery of the episodic characters of Sh. Rustaveli's epic poem "The Knight in the Panther's Skin" can be classified in two groups. 1. Passive and 2. Active episodic characters.

Passive episodic characters are: viceroys, foster parents, slaves, serfs, ushers etc. Their role is sometimes so negligible that they even do not participate in dialogues. The author often mentions them without description of their personalities; they even do not have their first names and are referred to according their trade or social labels. In spite of all these their existence is indispensable for the plot.

Active episodic characters are more interesting and they are more vividly represented than the first group of the secondary characters. These are: brothers from Khataeti, son of Khvarazmshah, negro slaves, a wine-taster, Kajevis(s), Patman's wizard slaves etc. The fabric of the story is woven with participation of these active episodic heroes and heroines. They tear down the "castle of Kajeti" the symbol of evil and achieve victory of the good.

Active and passive episodic characters have their particular roles in the story. They either assist or prevent the protagonists from their struggle to achieve their objectives. Episodic characters appear spontaneously in the plot and often fulfilling their minor roles vanish from the theatre immediately. They take active or passive parts in the dénouement and leave more or less important traces.