

The Lyrical Poem “Circus” by Otar Chiladze (Semantics and Structure)

Abstract: The article examines the lyrical poem "Circus" by Otar Chiladze, gives its ideological and artistic, structural and semantic analysis and draws parallels with his prose, also several similarities are found between them.

Key words: Composition, retrospective, self-analysis

In the second half of 20th century, Otar Chiladze is at the top of the lyric poem genre. This genre is gaining more popularity and developing in the 21st century. The Circus by Otar Chiladze is a large poetic work. There are no epic elements (plot, characters, dialogues, etc.). It is mostly the emotions, feeling, judgment and mood enabling to call it a lyric poem. The impression received by the Circus by Otar Chiladze is so strong and lasting, as if you read a novel full of stormy dramas. Tamaz Chiladze writes, “Nothing is so helpful to understand the depth of his poems, as his prose, in general it is very conditional to look at them as separate works, or to put them in the cage of separate genres”. (T. Chiladze 2019: 338).

Emzar Kvitaishvili refers the work as a proem and writes about it: Remember circus as the unique world knitted with the fantastic, illusive produce, feeding the immortal works of the genius filmmakers, such as Charles Chaplin and Federico Fellini. Otar Chiladze gave a deep generalization to what was only an entertainment, fireworks spectacle for many, created an unforgettable work depicting human existence and inner nature with unforgettable truth. (Kvitaishvili, 2010: 54).

The work is started by the creation of the artistic space for circus magic arena. The poet is attending circus performance. The circus with its elements, stalls, dark wings, is the small micromodel of the reality. It has the center, the arena, the place with the round form. The cycle includes the blocked and closed spaces which is so characterized for the structural model of the prose by Chiladze, highlighted by many researchers for many times. Like other novels, there is the round composition in the mentioned work, the round arena, closed cycle, repetition, limits, indicating that it is impossible to

leave this space. Different closed spaces are met in the novels, which needs to be broken, overcome, not physically, but mentally, to gain the freedom and let the good win. Some character is able, some is not and it becomes the reason for the happiness and tragedy. M. Jaliashvili notes that the writer makes the models of the closed space by „Godori” (basket) which gives us impression about changed nature of Georgian. Closed space excludes freedom, the first gift from the God, i.e. belief” (Jaliashvili 2019: 206). Inga Milorava, a researcher mentioned during discussing of the artistic space, “the space of the town is closed, it is given within the cycle, it is locked, “the time is returned” regularly, as there is no other way to leave the closed space”. Only Nato and Gela, the people, who can love fairly and be strong, are able to break such space, both spiritually and physically, though they can get different results. (Milorava, 2010, 5: 89).

However, the observations of Inga Milorava and Maia Jaliashvili refer to the composition of the novels, but it also describes the structural and composition model of the “Circus”. From the closed, circle-shaped artistic space, which is embraced by the smell and warmth of animals, the lyrical hero moves beyond it by “climbing” and “flying”, to a free, unlimited space, to fresh air, the place where, unlike the circus, there is no fear, falsehood and noise. The poet applies the techniques of opposing with the circus to demonstrate high quality special hierarchy, it means, that it construes the artistic space of the circus in a poetic way and then applied contrasting characters:

“And what is good for the circus arena, it makes our life ridiculous”

In the works of O. Chiladze, the Topos is a more solid structure than Chronos. The author changes time more frequently and freely. The poem is starting with the artistic present time, it goes back after the fifth line and the present is fully substituted by the past without changing of the space. The retrospection is applied in the poem like in the novels, when the times return for understanding of the reasons of the present condition, and love is an incentive for it, the reason for movement into the time. The result of the retrospection is self-analysis, what is accompanied by regret and it gradually transforms into understanding of the hidden regularity of the reality. Searching for the survival ways is starting after movement. This is how the life walls are destroyed and a poet analysis the phenomena by referring the analogues. The prose by Chiladze is “Psychological Prose” and analytics, this is its main characteristic found in his poetry as well.

In the novels by Chiladze, the empiric environment is seen and described from the prospective of the internal world of the specific character. The prose often demonstrates the same phenomenon from different prospective, from the prospective of different characters. In the novels, the internal world of the character is more interesting, their subjective problems, different attitude towards the facts, relationship of a person and reality, than the fact or reality itself. A reader shall follow it and see the characters from “inside”. There is on “correct” and “incorrect” action. Any action has its psychological ground, therefore, the skills of a writer defines not a plot, but the consistence of the action development, critical vision of the developments, what is considered as the greatest and actual reality. Artistic Psychologism means showing the distorted reality in the character's inner world, and this makes it difficult to find out the objective reality. The Psychologism in the prose is not only the inner world and emotions of the character, but also the plot and structure of the text. The literature borrowed this tendency from the psychological theories of Freud and Jung,

Otar Chiladze uses the technique of "Stream of Consciousness" as an artistic means to present the spiritual state of the characters or heroes of the lyrical poem. This technique was emerged and developed in English and American literature. The key point here is to reach unconscious. It is noted that in the prose by Chiladze the plot and its development is not the key factor, but the thing how the empiric phenomena influence the thinking of the characters, how it changes their emotions and attitudes. The same in poetry, when certain fact or phenomenon is reflected, it happens for expressing the attitude of a lyrical character to those things. The poet needs the circus arena as the artistic construction for the daily life model, in order to analyze its attitude and emotions in the lines against them, to make parallels, find similarities and contrasts.

Psychologism defines the prose by Chiladze, but it is similarly characterized for the poetry as well. A circus is considered as funny, amusing, place full of firework and illusions objectively, in general and typically. However, in the poem, it is seen from the prospective of an individual subject, lyrical character and it is not given as it is perceived by the society collectively, but as only the author sees it. A lyrical hero cannot entertain and it is not funny for him. It cannot become the organic part of it. The objective and subjective perception of the space do not coincide each other. The circus is only background. The associations, what is born by the show in the poet are more important. These are the sign of the “Subjective reality” if we use the term of the Jean Paul Sartre.

The artistic image of the arena is very impressive and full when it is construed by such elements, like Animals, lions and little dogs, who are throwing the colorful balls upward.... The dangerous tricks of clowns, colorfulness, airlessness, acoustic and visual effects: noise, chilling music, whistling, screeching, ringing of bells... fake tears coming out of clowns' ears, or smiles painted on their faces. All above mentioned determines the attractiveness of the arena, the love of masses for everything that does not require straining the mind and thinking. Everything is light and easily accessible here: *"Everything is explained easily in the circus."*

One of the characterizing element for the artistic model of the arena, without which it is impossible to exist, are the scene servants, whose similar dresses is refusal to the individualism, lack of free will and the pillows on their back is the metaphor for forced routine:

(“The clown is putting the pillows on the back of servants who are wearing the similar dresses”)

The servants are the part of the mass, who are plain and unnoticed creatures. They do everything with the obedient face what the visitors of the circus are asking by whistling and uproar, at the end of the performance, they clean the arena and remove the remains. A lyrical character is a guest; it is strange and is not the organic part of this magic performance, the part of a daily life, as it cannot act according to the order of the crowd. It became clear when his thoughts, consciousness stops looking at the spectacle, becomes detached and rises above it. In this way, the alienation between him and reality is emphasized. This is how the mind demarches against clarity:

(“And let them believe that you also endured, And don't do it in an obedient way

The things was are demanded by the people who came to the circus, by hiss and uproar.”)

Why do the arena look like the life? By the gradual change of the artistic images, it becomes clear what is behind the funny faces. It shows that the reality of clown and the circus is under the permanent threat; there is fear, cold (the same as being without love), noise, different colors and fake. There are different types of fear behind the painted smile of a clown, like breaking a neck or losing a salary.

(Something makes a clown frightened; he will lose the salary again, if he do not do now again”)

The clown should hide an actual feeling of fear; otherwise, the circus arena has no value. A person is called a clown, because he has to perform, amuse people and make them laugh. Nobody is interested in his actual feelings and life. The mask and play is important in the circus. O. Chiladze indicates that the people need the professions of each other and not each other. The same idea is read in the novels, for instance in "the Iron Theater", where the actor from Tbilisi says, "'Long live the lawyer's wig and the actor's mask, it's the same thing, you know, nobody needs us without a mask and without a wig, a mask and a wig feed us.'"(Chiladze: 1981: 83). The main thing should be hidden and the fake should be zoomed. Noteworthy that not only clowns, but the animals are frightened in the space of arena as well:

("My thrashing has ceased with the beasts and clowns frightened by fear.")

The false splendor and coldness of the circus arena is expressed this way:

"The music transmitted the frost to the hall. And the woman lay down next to the tiger's paws
And all the glitter of fake diamonds was discovered by the searchlights."
One more parallel what reminds him the circus is the duration of the circus performance, what is short and ends quite fast, and after completion only remains and garbage are left.

The characters of Chiladze's novels mostly have tragic fates caused by the internal battles, conflicts with themselves, crises, searching for something better in the conflict between the conscious and the unconscious. That is why "inner monologues" are common. In poetry, the main thing is to search for own-self, delve into consciousness, internal battles and judgement, which takes place not in narrative way, but through alternation of the poetic images in poetry

("And like a big circus poster
I will say clearly who I am and what I am!")

The unforgettable artistic comparisons express the best the deep self-analysis of a poet. All the abstract notions and phenomena, doubt, pain and truth... is compared to the material items, sometimes,

the concrete subject is compared to the abstract idea. In both cases, the poetic comparisons reflect best his internal struggles. Few examples of the comparisons are given from the poem:

1. When a doubt is nested in the body, **like a random grain in the soil.**
2. And **I take the helmet** of my pain in my hand **as it is done after a battle** and kiss it.
3. You sit up high... almost against the wall... **like the accepted truth.**
4. **Today I am like a tree**, which has already been overrun by clouds.
5. And in the mountains, **like a row of refugees**, entered slowly into the suburbs
6. And the smell of animals and the warmth of the circus arena touched my mouth **like a heavy hand.**

There are many contrasts together with the analogues in the poem. The heavy flat place full of the fear to be hidden, freezing noise, silence and hesitation opposes to the sky, the place of free flight and careering, with no fear and caution:

("I was carrying the sky, I was singing like a child by the campfire"

"I had wings, and fascinated me that I was flying towards him without thinking.")

Following the own heart and free thinking contrasts with the service of the circus arena by unfree people; Excitement and flight opposes to fear; A song paired with the image of the sky, a fire and warmth with frost and the glitter of fake diamonds.

The sky, as an icon of the transcendental and paradisiacal world, is a common paradigm, but the poet puts it in a completely new context, it becomes the first component of the artistic comparison, the object of comparison, and the second component that it compares, a notebook full of unclear signs, creates another unique artistic comparison:

("And I had the sky like a notebook,
yet full of unclear signs.")

The way he perceives and writes about love says a lot about the worldview and beliefs of the poet, because love includes all other emotions. From the traditions of ancient Georgian literature, love is a way of spiritual growth and elevation of a person. The image of a woman appeared in the very first line of the poem is completely dematerialized, there is no any sign of her physicality. The only thing what looks as if material thing is her earring.

(“My heart recognized your earring and it gives me the sign”)

Here the earring also contrasts with the glitter of the fake diamonds of the arena, but at the end of the poem it also becomes a part of the inaccessible heaven:

(I have lost you and that earring, became a star for me”...)

The prose by Chiladze is characterized by the elaboration of the myth. It is used for solution of the specific artistic objective in both prose and poetry. The esthetics of expressing image of woman is mythical. Poet creates a new myth, where mystic woman is a main character with all kind of assets. The mythical world contrasts the real one. It is characterized for Georgia historicism, that as much the phenomenon is important, as much it is given in a legendary and fantastic way. It is applied for solution of the specific artistic problem in prose and poetry. The mythological characters are introduced in the poem by Chiladze, when the controversy between the reality should become stronger

There are two artistic comparisons, which created an extremely exalted image of a woman. Both comparisons makes clear, that is not a physical woman. This is a new power, word and music. Its image is raising in general from love to proclaimed concept of truth. All his epithets show to his divinity. Perhaps, that is why it does not follow to any laws and stereotypes of existence. This love cannot be realized and finite. The universe, with a woman, the symbol of the supreme idea, is not aware what fear is. There is no room for fear, where such a strong self-awareness exist. Nevertheless, the poem is full of regret and boundless sadness, loneliness: “I am fed up with being without you”, “I am alone”, he travels on the worn out chair of a bus alone... “I am a cloud but the wind will not take me towards you since today”, “Who you are with... who is ... who is making your sky and warm his own”... Everything shows that their ways will never cros, all the attempts and affords are useless, only God is able to do it, but he is far, as nobody remembers him... (Perhaps this phrase is a reference to the atheistic totalitarian

world in which the writer had to live). Though loneliness has one advantage, gives possibility to think. Inevitability of pain and ability of bearing is read in

"I couldn't stand on that rope, And I lost you.

And I don't want to do that again to hit my head on the iron floor."

The poet, a master of artistic comparisons, compares a visible object (the rope on which the clown walks) and an intangible, abstract feeling (the rope that connected the lovers), drawing a parallel between them and a rhetorical question:

"The rope that held us together reminds me of this rope,
on which the clown is now passing."

"Who cut the rope that connected us"...

The ten-syllable line, with cross **two-syllable rhythm** is applied in the poem written in 1963. It is noted, that Otar Chiladze mainly uses symmetric **ten-syllable (5/5) line**, which expresses the mood of the poet in the best manner. So called "Semantic Crown" is created by the symmetric **ten-syllable (5/5) meter** and it makes the poem by Otar Chiladze the unique in the meter-rhythmic and intonation history of Georgian poetry of the II half of the XX century (Barbakadze 2010: 5). "The ten-syllable measure particularly fit inner nature, temperament, and speech of Otar Chiladze, what had been tried since the first decade of the twenty century by Galaktion Tabidze, Alexadnre Abasheli, Ioseb Grishashvili, Paolo Iashvili, Titsian Tabidze, Valerian Gaprindashvili, Kolau Nadiradze, Giorgi Leonidze, etc. Improvement of the meter, identification of the rhythmic and intonation diversity is still going on. This process will not be completed in future. Otar Chiladze gave the uniqueness to this meter. He was able to express the dramatic and nervous rhythm what is mainly demonstrated in excessive short, neat two-syllable rhythm, though it is substituted by three-syllable rhythm as well quite often. Such condition is learnt especially (Kvitaishvili 2010: 29). In the work reviewed by us there are no classic symmetric ten-syllable rhythm, in some lines the fifth syllable is added, or the line is divided into two pentameter parts.

The Circus by Otar Chiladze is the lyrics, but it has many common features with his prose, for instance, Psychologism, subjunctive realism, analytics, reaching and opening up the human deep

internal layers, mythological or structural and composition patterns... Love is the topic of “the Circus” by Chiladze, In its most exalted sense, as a dispeller of darkness, a cause of escape from reality, as a declared truth, indeed, standing against the wall, but fearlessly:

("And the sun will rise, which I was waiting so much, and now
It will rise to the invisible sky and it will laugh at my darkness."

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