

Idealization of the Sky in Lyrical Works of Georgian and European Writers

Eka Vardoshvili

Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, No. 1, A. Chavchavadze Ave., 0179 Tbilisi, Georgia

E-mail author: eka.vardoshvili@tsu.ge

Abstract: *One of the most important tasks of literary studies is taking into account the forms of parallel motives and images. Common tendencies are noticed in discussion of the works of Georgian as well as European Romanticists, also realist writers. The image of the sky is characteristic for poetry of N. Baratashvili, Al. Chavchavadze, Goethe, Byron, G. Leopardi, H. Heine, I. Chavchavadze, Vazha-Pshavela, Béranger, Sh. Petofi. The visible sky has its contents, as everything around us, its contents is invisible, eternal sky, as divine essence. Thus, in the lyrical works of these writers, invisible or divine, as well as visible or material sky is shown. However, discussing works of Georgian and European writers we should take into account their national-literary traditions, the social condition in XIX century and biblical philosophical foundations. Idealization of the sky is characteristic for world lyric poetry.*

Keywords: sky, visible, invisible, lyrical works

1. Introduction

Georgian and European literature of the XIX century have common theoretical foundations. In conversations with Eckermann Goethe was the first to acknowledge existence of the world literature. Herewith Goethe laid the foundation to the issue of globalization and cultural integration into literary processes. In conversations with Eckermann, Goethe also mentioned that “Classic and romantic poetry, spreading all over the world and causing so much disputes and controversies originated in Schiller’s and my viewpoint” [8, 213]. Common tendencies are observed in discussions about works of the Romanticist and Realist writers. We would like to note that “common tendencies can be reflected in the literary process of different peoples independently or under influence which have common values.” [14, 68] Idealization of the sky is characteristic for world lyric poetry. Our goal is to show how the image of the sky is revealed in the lyric works of Georgian and European writers of the XIX century, whether they prefer the divine sky or the visible, material sky. This issue has not been discussed and studied by the researchers.

2. Materials and methods

We use the method of comparative literature to study and to discuss the issue based on thoughts of Georgian and European writers.

3. Result of the Research and their discussion

Generally, it is well-known, that two kinds of skies exist – visible and invisible, divine (spiritual) and material sky, which we look at ad the sky, where the God reigns. We would like to mention that “in the Bible, two kinds of the sky are not given in the Bible, one of which would be material and the other one – spiritual, but it explains the action and the secret of the God through the visible sky.” [5, 659]

“In this case, the dictionary does not explain that this refers to spiritual beginning of the sky. At the very beginning of

the book “Genesis”, regarding the first day of creation, it is about division of the sky and the earth. In this case, the divine sky and the spiritual beginning of the earth is implied, the sky and the earth became material only after fall of Adam. At this time, the visible sky lost its spirituality and became material essence. Surely, the spiritual realm remained in the divine realm, the higher sky invisible for the eyes and cognizable with mind.” [15, 65] The issue of the essence of the spiritual realm is explained in the psalm: “The heaven of heaven is the Lord’s: but the earth he has given to the children of men.” (Psalm 113:24). Thus, the contents of the visible sky is the invisible heaven. Unlike the Old Testament and Hymns of King David, we find divine and spiritual, as well as visible and material sky in the New Testament. For example, speaking of the visible sky, when it is said: “and the birds came and devoured it.” (Matthew, 13:4), “the sky is red.” (Matthew, 13:4) The divine heaven is meant in the following case: “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Matthew, 5:48), “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name” (Matthew, 6:9). It should be noted that with modern approaches Christianity is regarded as intertext for engagement in the dialogue of civilizations. In researches we should pay attention that the Hymns of King David are the first source of the lyric poetry, the poetic content of the image creates poetry and not the principles of versification. The hymn-hymnographic stream is based on liturgical consciousness, when we repeat, what someone had already said, as our thought and join the deity. The issue of the lyric person is also raised here. It is noteworthy that when reading this kind of works the lyric person coincides with the poet’s personality and is not imagined.

The research showed that in those poems that contain or approach religious theme, the lyrical person coincides with the reader’s person. This is also the case, when the authors speak of spiritual sky in their lyrics, for from the beginning of the XIX century, the hymn-hymnographic poetry transformed into lyric poetry.

In 1919, the translation by K. Abashidze of the work of the French Critic V. Brunetiere “Evolution of Lyric Poetry in

France in the Nineteenth Century". Brunetiere was important for the society, because after Goethe he was the one, who raised the question of existence of unified "European Literature" in his works.

In the introduction of the work K. Abashidze writes: "in the work, the contents of which we will now tell the readers, the author expresses evolution of the lyrical poetry. He shows us the example of the event, how one form (ecclesiastical eloquence) changes into another related form (lyrical poetry); explains, which conditions prevented development of lyrical poetry in the XVII and XVIII centuries and then which circumstances contributed to its flourishing in the XIX century." [1; 5]

Naturally, Romanticism established new ideals in public life as well as in the literature, as the origin of Romanticist is related to socio-political changes, which resulted in creation of new bourgeois structure society in Europe.

It is widely acknowledged that the work of Rousseau "Julie; or, The New Heloise" revolutionized the consciousness of mankind, he involved the harsh and wild nature in the human feelings. "Rousseau describes the nature with special love and feelings, makes it alive and in this regard introduces completely new element into the literature." [1,15]

It is also noteworthy that in Georgian and European poetry of the XIX century, the Romanticists relate the sense of nature with philosophical observation, the Realists – patriotic ideas.

The image of the sky is shown in the poem of N. Baratashvili "Dusk on Mtatsminda", in this case the poet speaks of the divine sky, the desire to know the heavens overwhelms him:

Nowadays, too regarding up the azure, my thoughts yearn to thee
But unable to reach they dome, they scatter in the ether sea
Beholding thee, I do forget this mundane world,

Beyond three, somewhere, my heart-thought seekth for a hav'n
The spirits' hold-to leave down here all of the vain...
Alas, the mortal e'er ignore the will of God! [3, 25]

The poem also reveals Faustian paradigm of cognition of the world, "Like Goethe to Faust, the lyrical person of the poem wishes to fully cognize the world, comprehend its regularities, which is impossible for the human mind." [16, 77] However, in the same poem, the poet speaks of the visible sky and depicts the picture of the dusk, when he says: "Deep silence quivered in delight as twilight dimmed the heaven's dome." [3, 25]

N. Baratashvili speaks of the colour of the sky with special subtlety in his untitled poem. He calls it first created and not earthly. Here we certainly see biblical concept.

"The azure blue, the heavenly hue,
The first created realm of blue;
And over its radiance divine

My soul does pour its love sublime." [3, 63]

Byron speaks of the spiritual sky in 1812 in his poem "To time". In the poem, the poet is himself a lyrical person, he refers to time, that it "could spare" the one he had loved, to let her soul fly to heaven. Time spared her from bitterness and ruthlessness of the world. Byronic perception of the world is shown in the poem, variability of the time and poet's mood:

"I would not one fond heart should share
The bitter moments thou hast given
And pardon thee, since thou could'st spare
All that loved, to peace or Heaven.
To them be joy or rest, on me
Thy future ills shall press in vain". [2; 12]

Speaking of the visible sky in Byron's poem "Sun of the sleepless"), the poet calls the moon melancholy star, whose tearful beam glows tremulously far, but cannot dispel the darkness, but evokes great feelings in the poet, reminds him of joy of the past days, and the night light full of sorrow shines over the poet.

"Which shines, but warms not with its powerless rays:
A night-beam sorrow watcheth to behold,
Distinct, but distant – clear – but, oh how cold." [2, 16]

In the lyrical poetry of the Italian poet G. Leopardi the visible sky is mostly shown. The poem of G. Leopardi "The evening of the holiday" has pure romantic character. It is a confession of a person in love wandering aimlessly under the sky, when personal feelings merge with universal sorrow and glorification of the past; the sky in this poem is a part of the nature.

"You are asleep: And I have come abroad now to salute
This sky whose aspect seems to be so gentle,
And ancient Nature powerful over all,
Who has fashioned me for trouble." [12, 33]

The integrity of the nature is also notable in the poem of Leopardi "Spring", where the poet draws the picture of the spring. The sky is used in the poem for drawing the picture of the nature.

"Of heaven again restores,
And gentle zephyr the sick air revives,
And the dark shadows of the clouds." [12, 57]

Description of the pictures of the nature in the poem and sad mood of the poet interchange. The poet asks the nature to spare and to have mercy on him.

In lyric poems of H. Heine, we meet the image of the spiritual sky. In one of his untitled poems he writes:

"Yeah, lad, I am a God,
Ruler of earth and heaven." [10, 31]

In this case cosmic integrity of the world is discernible, the poet calls himself God, God, almighty – pantocrator, which

rules the heaven and the earth. The face is iconic, the meaning should be searched beyond the words.

The first Georgian Romanticist Al. Chavchavadze speaks of the visible sky in his poem "Gogcha", where he describes the eternal picturesqueness of the adjacent areas of the lake Gogcha. The issue of perception of the nature and the vanity of the world merge with each other in the poem. "Gogcha" of Al. Chavchavadze is often compared with Lamartine's "Lake". In "Gogcha" it is seen that everything is perishable, only the nature is eternal. If anything is close to the eternity, it is only the art.

Around Gogcha, where beautiful cities were built and life flourished there, but now only the ruins are left. Today Lake Gogcha, that imitates the sound of the sea "Within itself he paints the sky blue and the green of the mountains." [6, 176]

Especially noteworthy is the image of the sky in the works of the Georgian Realist I. Chavchavadze. Let us recall the poem "Poet."

"I am appointed by the sky and I'm growing up by the nation

I am talk to the God, in order to lead to the nation." [7, 61]

Here the sky is human, the poet is appointed by God to lead the nation. In this case the privilege is the will of God and involves service for the motherland.

God is the ruler of the sky and the earth. The words "the sky appoints me and the nation brings me up" may be understood in another way, in astrological sense, the visible skies govern the destiny of the human and in biblical sense, the destiny of the humans is governed not by the lower skies, but the higher sky, sky of skies." [15, 74-76]. Here is the biblical understanding of the sky.

French poet Bérangier speaks of the divine or spiritual sky in his poems "Vano", "I am a slave of love", "Heavenly parcel", "Death of a madman". In the poem "I am a slave of love", the poet expresses his wish to "be a poet with heavenly language". His dream is that:

"The sky makes him ruler of
All different communities and folks." [4, 59]
Here, the sky equals to God.

In lyric works of S. Petofi, the sky is a part of the nature and it has no symbolic load. The poet mostly uses the sky for describing the landscapes in the poems, such as: "My dream", "Wolves' song", "Clouds", "Hungary's nation", "The lark cried above my head again."

In the poem "My dream" he writes, that his dream crossed the edge of the sky. Land, stream, crushed against the waves of the raging sea, walked over the mountains and forests and stopped nowhere. The poet wishes his dream never to stop, mother of which is lightning and father – thunder.

"Crossed the edge of the sky,
The land, the streams as well,
Crushed against
The raging sea." [13, 32]

The poet looks for haven in the nature.

The nature has a special value in the works of Vazha-Pshavela. In his thoughts, Vazha-Pshavela synthesized understanding of the pre-existing nature and, at the same time, established new ideals in the issues of relation to the nature. His works show regularity and harmony, a human as a violator of this regularity, original beauty of the nature, philosophical and romantic understanding of the nature, the nature as a mystic and sympathizer of a human being. The events take place with the nature in the background. The nature is also shown as an instigator of patriotic feelings.

Thus, it is natural that, in his works, we meet visible as well as invisible sky. The biblical understanding of the sky, as of the Realist writer in his works is related to patriotic feelings and the issue of a poet's purpose. We read in the poem "Expectation":

"That is why I thought and
Ask the heaven:
Grow me up, give me strength,
To cure the sorrow of the world." [17, 65]

The poem of Goethe "God and Bayadere" (Indian legend) comprises almost the same idea, where Goethe writes:

"Mahadeva, Lord of earth
For the sixth time comes below,
As a man of mortal birth,--
Like him, feeling joy and woe." [9, 102]

The heaven, as a symbol of equality is in the poem of Goethe "Mignon":

"Among the celestial creatures, there is total
Uniformity of men and women." [9, 85]

Therefore, the purpose of human life was to become like God in order to find peace. In the song "Song of the Pshavian", Vazha says that he doesn't wish to lose his place because of treachery of the world.

"Anathematized from the world
I lose my place in heaven." [17, 10]

Like Goethe, Vazha-Pshavela prefers the spiritual sky.

However, the poets speak of visible, material sky. The visible sky is noticeable in one of the untitled poem of by Goethe ("Pale morning dawned").

"Pale morning dawned,
No sun is on the sky, the fog has covered
The vast area of the mountain and the plain." [9, 9]

Vazha-Pshavela writes in his poem "Walk on the sky, moon":

"Walk on the sky, moon,
Go up and down as the sun." [17, 106]
Researcher M. Kveselava notes, "Goethe and Vazha are truly poets of light and warmth, they discuss diversity of the universe and the nature in human aspect." [11, 68]

Anciently, the sky/heaven had many symbols. The dreams and sublime feelings were always connected to the sky. In

their imagination the sky was idealized, as exalted than the earthly.

4. Conclusion

Thus, idealization of the sky is characteristic for the lyric works of the Georgian and European writers of the XIX century. Idealization of the sky is characteristic for the lyric poetry of Georgian and European writers of the XIX century. In their works we find the invisible or divine (spiritual) sky, as well as visible or material sky.

The basis for the image of the divine sky is the Books of Bible and Psalms of King David. Perception of the visible sky, as an integral part of the nature, comes from "Julie; or, The New Heloise" by Jean-Jacque Rousseau.

It would be reasonable to study the next periods in this regard, how the forms of paradigmatic images of the sky are revealed in the lyric poetry of the XX and XXI centuries.

References

- [1] K. Abashidze, Evolution of Lyrical poetry in France in XIX century, Kutaisi: Publishing House "Ak-Sim-Koli", 1919.
- [2] L. Byron, Poems, Tbilisi" 2013.
- [3] N. Baratashvili, Works, Tbilisi Publishing House "Soviet Georgia", 1972.
- [4] P. Bérangier Lyric poetry, Tbilisi: Publishing House "Newsletter", 1898.
- [5] Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament, Belgium, Brussels, 1974.
- [6] A. Chavchavadze, Written Works, Tbilisi: Publishing House. "Merani", 1986.
- [7] I. Chavchavadze, Lyrics, poems, Tbilisi, "State Publishing House", 1951, v. I
- [8] J. Goethe, Conversations with Eckermann, Batumi Publishing House "Soviet Adjara", 1988.
- [9] J. Goethe, Lyrics, Tbilisi: Publishing House "Soviet Writer", 1946
- [10] H. Heine, Selected lyrical poetry, Tbilisi: Publishing House. "State Publishing House", 1955.
- [11] M. Kveselava, Faust's paradigms, Tbilisi: Publishing House "Soviet Georgia", 1961, v. 1
- [12] G. Leopardi, Lyrics, Tbilisi, Publishing House "Ganatileba", 1985
- [13] S. Petöfi, Lyrics, Poems, Tbilisi Publishing House "Soviet Georgia", 1978
- [14] E. Vardoshvili, Leadership and poetry: Common tendencies in works of Georgian and European Leader poets, in proceeding of the 4th International Conference of Social, Business and Academic Leadership (ICSBAL2019), pp. 65-69, ISBN 978-94-6252-821-5, ISSN 2352-5398. Doi <https://doi.org/10-2991/icsbal-19.2019.13> ATLANTIS PRESS.
- [15] E. Vardoshvili, Religious stream in the Ilia Chavchavadze's lyrics. Tbilisi State University Press, 2003.
- [16] E. Vardoshvili, New Georgian literature and European writings. Tbilisi, Publishing House "Universal", 2018
- [17] Vazha-Pshavela, Lyrics, poems. Tbilisi: Publishing House "Soviet Writer", 1930.

Author Profile



Eka Vardoshvili, 2012 – till today, Associated Professor, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Faculty of Humanities, Department of History of Georgian literature, Chair of History of New Georgian Literature