

Nikoloz Baratashvili's Poetry in the Context of Philosophy

Abstract: Baratashvili's poetry in each epoch provides possibility of its diverse reading, comprehension and interpretation. Baratashvili equally facilitates both past and future with his mindful philosophic digressions or spiritual poetical considerations as his work reflects cultural experience of mankind and shows the most general regularities of entity. His poetry is the attempt of ascertaining human subsistence, existence and essence of individualism and thus discernment of world secret creating multidimensional space providing the best conditions of free interpretation to reader. Depth and multifacetedness of Baratashvili's poetry enables us to consider philosophic standpoints of Dane philosopher, Kierkegaard as analyzing context of his verses.

Key words: Romanticism, Nikoloz Baratashvili, Georgian Literature, Philosophy

Nikoloz Baratashvili's work typologically is considered in the context of romanticism, though as an art of any genius its poetry also is beyond the competence of specific course. As if it breaks boundaries of time and space and moves to metaphysical dimension, where the time is uninterrupted integrity. Baratashvili's poetry in each epoch provides possibility of its diverse reading, comprehension and interpretation. Baratashvili equally facilitates both past and future with his mindful philosophic digressions or spiritual poetical considerations as his work reflects cultural experience of mankind and shows the most general regularities of entity. His poetry is the attempt of ascertaining human subsistence, existence and essence of individualism and thus discernment of world secret creating multidimensional space providing the best conditions of free interpretation to reader. Depth and multifacetedness of Baratashvili's poetry enables us to consider philosophic standpoints of Dane philosopher, Kierkegaard as analyzing context of his verses.

Georgian romanticists were aware about European philosophy and literature. They used to translate and diversify Georgian literature. Baratashvili in his one letter writes to Grigol Orbeliani: "Our literature got two good translations: Kipiani translated "Romeo and Juliet" tragedy written by Shakespeare and I translated "Julius Tarantelli" tragedy written by Leizevits (Baratashvili 2012; 70). It is regrettable that this translation was not preserved to present and the reader had no chance to look through and observe his stylistics of translation that presumable would even reflect and show his lingual originality. "By the help of God, our literature day by day finds new relatives. Many guys free from their work in cosiness and solitude give help to native language as much as possible. Thus, common spirit fond of natural language find out among guys that Georgians have a sober mind!" (Baratashvili 2012; 71). As Baratashvili used to say, such "revival" of Georgians time by time used to break cosiness of "Tbilisi useless for the mind and heart" and gave hope of future to the compassionates of homeland.

He had the most distinguished "active mind" perfectly guessing the role and function of culture imposed in the case of development of national self-consciousness for the maintenance of continuous relation to tradition and united aspiration. He used to especially feel distinguished mission of literature in this case and according to his standpoint it was the best way for material and spiritual survival of nation. He was providing its remarkable example by "The Knight in the Panther's Skin" as cultural monument defining essence of Georgian nation, preserving and developing Georgian language, the book that mainly determined its relation with language, artistic world and ideals common to all mankind. Ilia Chavchavadze was the first who paid attention Nikoloz Baratashvili's relation to tradition. What was the difference between his work and preceding works, first of all between Aleksandre Orbeliani and Grigol Orbeliani? Ilia Chavchavadze exactly noted and emphasized some signs of his poetry's distinctiveness, originality and stipulating significance under European scale. Ilia Chavchavadze considered "spiritual experience of mankind" and first of all European literature as analyzing context of Baratashvili's space intended for the mentality, that is why he easily coupled his name with Byron, who expressed aspiration

of European culture and with the Hamlet, whose name symbolically showed tragic element of human life: "Is not suffering of mankind the reason of search, seeks and can not find? Here is the very head of human despair, self-sacrifice, confusion, refusal of everything, that sometimes thus seizes entire thinker mankind and fills with anxiety human life. Indeed, is not Byron and entire his captured era of European spiritual life a clear example of it? Hamlet's "To be or not to be" is not indeed expressed from the homelessness of spirit? (Chavchavadze 1987:71). Pursuant to Kita Abashidze's mind, Nikoloz Baratashvili's preceding poets "used to sing to rose as nightingales and only this satisfied them if the rose was taking near. And Baratashvili desired to feel the secret of feeling of his beloved. He wanted to comprehend substantial part of this feeling. His nightingale, at midnight is saddened set on this rose, barks and whistling asks to rose, let me be worth of you (slow, quiet)" (Abashidze 2012:122). Kita Abashidze used to think that in order to comprehend Baratashvili's work it is essential to consider context of European literature. That is why he was considering Baratashvili together with the Byron, Shelley, Alfred de Musset, Victor Hugo, Lamartine and other romanticists. Ivane Gomarteli used to agree to this universal opinion, though he greatly differed Baratashvili and Byron: "when Baratashvili's poetry is universal lamentation of lone spirit, except universal lamentation Byron's poetry is sharp accent. Baratashvili shows the same type with his talent, temperament and wish for activity alike Byron, though around Byron the life was vivid and the society was moving. Though, around Baratashvili the life was not moving and the society was rather monotonous and dormant. Itself time and life supported to Byron in order to make his poetry as a sharp item. Time and life supported only to Baratashvili's spiritual orphanage and as much as the poet used to think about his life, he was more deepened in pessimism" (Gomarteli 2012: 162). According to Iona Meunargia's opinion: in order to have well translated Baratashvili's verses "Merani", "Evil Spirit" and include them in Byron's "Don Juan" or "Child Harold" I do not think that the unity of creation of great poet will be broken as the rebuke against the evil fate of mankind is so acutely and clearly expressed in this creation (Meunargia 2010: 367). Valerian Baratashvili called Nikoloz Baratashvili as "Hamlet of Georgian poetry" discovered by Ilia Chavchavadze, "the Rodin of Georgian poetry". Valerian Gaprindashvili wrote: "his verses are monologues of the prince of Denmark and himself sings his verses masked in Hamlet by uttering outstanding words "to be or not to be" (Gaprindashvili 1990: 596). Baratashvili created poetry of dandyism and shadows of Verlaine in the verse "Game Kabakhze". "Drunk Ship" written by Artur Rembo and "Merani" written by Baratashvili are the same category verses. Here Dionysus celebrates his victory to "sober mind" and uninterruptedly moves towards nirvana (Gaprindashvili 1990: 598). "If French poet Laforgue entrusted his complaints of heart and rebukes to provincial moon, Baratashvili shared his experience to one somber star that to present shines for us and burns with its frozen rays". "There is no other dialogue more amazing with its intimacy than symbolic dialogue of "Hyacinth and a bit". This is a duet of two Chianuri, who are weeping in the darkness and answer to each other with more tender entreaty than the words of Maeterlinck's sisters (Gaprindashvili 1990: 597).

Thus, Gaprindashvili expanded that intellectual space, where the reader may consider Baratashvili's writings. He drew close borders of poet's artistic works not only to world poetry, but also to painting, for example: to his mind: "alike Albrecht Durer's knight he is the first and only knight of sorrow, who will not betray to dream and recollection" (Gaprindashvili 1990: 596). Or else: "poet stands alike Vrubel's seraphim on Mtatsminda and from there looks over his life. One more moment and he as a demon of Vrubel will fall to the gap and suffocate in dazzling flame of sunset" (Gaprindashvili 1990: 597). Guram Asatiani became famous with such distinctive parallels, who noticed spiritual kinship between Baratashvili and Giacomo Leopardi: "epistolary heritage of Italian poet as Baratashvili's personal letters are full of deserted and lonely spiritual complaint, wishing broad space for action and glorification that does not only express youthful ambition, but according to his standpoint the native environment is "useless city for the mind and heart", but in the action of compatriots he mainly sees abjection of intention and spiritual defencelessness. Spiritual odyssey of Baratashvili and Leopardi was led almost under the same way. One wind was moving the sails of their ship... And still finally they came to completely different shores" (Asatiani 1988: 124).

Baratashvili's vector of thought always fluctuates between two extremely differed ones and urges to these lyrical characters to break the space of locked world. His thoughts always relate to differed values with equal significance creating "or-or" opposition formulated in philosophic context. In this case he responds to the opinion of Danish philosopher Soren Kierkegaard that philosophic and aesthetic standpoints are considered in Nikoloz Baratashvili's writings. Here we especially mention one letter included in the book "or-or" written by Kierkegaard, named: "balance of aesthetic and ethic on the way of personality development". The main problem of book is a choice - or-or. Kierkegaard states that each person has to choose the lifestyle with more values. "Aesthetic" is a lifestyle determined by sensitivity, but "ethic" is determined by the feeling of duty. These two orders and world view are mentioned in "or-or". In other writings written by Kierkegaard are mentioned the highest order of life – religious determined by faith" – wrote Tamaz Buachidze (Buachidze 7: 1991).

It is to be noted that Soren Kierkegaard and Baratashvili were living in the same epoch, Baratashvili was born in 1817, but Kierkegaard in 1818. In 1843 he published his well-known writing "or-or" that part is "balance of aesthetic and ethic on the way of personality development". Piama Gidenko famous researcher of Kierkegaard's philosophy called this book a novel of philosophic ideas. According to his opinion "here the struggle of ideas becomes more sacred than in the novels written by Dostoevski" (Gidenko 2010: 83). We may say that the life of both persons was "existential drama". Neither Kierkegaard lived for a long time, he died in 1855 at the age of 42. In 1843 was published "or-or" in Copenhagen. In the book was mentioned only publisher: Victor Eremita". Danish philosopher liked pennames: Victor Eremita that should mean "winner in seclusion" is one of the penname of the author of "or-or" (Buachidze 7: 1991). In adolescence Kierkegaard attended Schelling's lectures. And Schelling's philosophy had a great influence on the development of the ideology of romanticists. In Georgia Solomon Dodashvili was adherent of Schelling. In their work Kakha Katsitadze and Kakha Jamburia emphasize ideas of Schelling's philosophy in Dodashvili's "logic", According to their opinion the influence of Solomon Dodashvili's philosophical opinions is shown in Baratashvili's poetry. "Positions of Nikoloz Baratashvili and Solomon Dodashvili relate each other in following issues: 1. division of world according to the worlds of facts and beyond standing; 2. radical opposition of these two worlds; 3. emphasizing the person; 4. understanding aspiration as a principle of existence; 5. understanding person as a being especially, namely striving to consciousness; 6. understanding person as a being striving to hypersensitive beyond standing reality; 7. romantic understanding of the genesis of conscious aspiration (itself mentioned by Zichte)" (Katsitadze, Jamburia 2012: 34, 37, 48).

Kierkegaard is also considered as one of the founders of existentialism. His writings had a great influence on the ideology of Camus, Sartre and other existentialists. Danish philosopher Soren Kierkegaard used to pay attention to certain individuals, fate of some persons, decisions, feelings, his thoughts about death and immortality, sin and repentance, second and infinity, fear and nonentity. That is why Kierkegaard's doctrine is considered as one of the source of our time's existential philosophy. – wrote Tamar Buachidze (Buachidze 1991: 7). Baratashvili also paid attention to the person, who tries to clear up his/her way and choice in this life. According to Kierkegaard's opinion "or-or" that we want to know by this expression, is full of meaning. There are vital conditions, where would be funny or peculiar recklessness to apply "or-or", you will meet persons, whose souls are so weakened that you will not be able to make them comprehend the meaning of this dilemma. Personality of such persons have no power and that is why they can not pronounce "or-or" with enthusiasm. These words always greatly impress me. Even no they have influence on me, especially when I say these words with such a clean and bald expression that it becomes possible to have awful oppositions on a day light. The words "or-or" effect on me as sorcery words. When I utter them I become very serious, sometimes I am even assured. I think about my adolescence, when the meaning of choice was unclear for me, listened to elders' words with a childish desire, when taking choice I followed only to others instructions, I recall the seconds of late life, when I was standing at the crossroad, when my soul was already mature for making decision, I recall many less important, though not so petty cases of my life, when it was necessary to make decision", - wrote Kierkegaard (Kierkegaard 1991: 8).

These sorcery words “or-or” permanently were also mentioned in Nikoloz Baratashvili’s life. As if he was standing at the crossroad alike fairy-tale character and on all four directions were written: “if you go here you will feel sorry”. Though he comprehended statistical condition and immobility as destruction. Life was instructing him to immobility that indeed made thinker person to suicide. Present and past showed him only those examples stating that life had no point. This is well expressed in the verse “Pikrni Mtkvris Piras” (Thought on the Riverside of Mtkvari), where the poet tried to clear up essence of life and looked for the significance of life. Semantic development of verse leads lyrical character to impasse, though despite of expected regret he still continues his way. According to his opinion living being should not be like dead and should care for the “life”. Was it acceptance with fate, or on the contrary struggle with it. As it becomes clear pursuant to his verses, it was comprehension of life, understanding that misery is a good fortune, if such misery develops personal development. Later Vazha-Pshavela responded to Baratashvili, who wrote: “When I feel bothered, only that time I feel happy” (“My Plea”).

“Who is a poet? - asks Kierkegaard and personally replies as follows: “spiritually worn out unfortunate creature, whose moaning and groaning is fantastically sounded. His fate may be compared with those fates, who were alive burnt on a slow fire of brazen bull of Phalaris. Tyrant would not be harassed by terrible lamentation of victims – this sound was heard like a sweet music. People also are around the poet and repeat: “sing, once more sing!” As if they say – let your spirit be tortured, only your uttered words again make us be risen and enjoy us with its perfect harmony” (Kierkegaard 1992: 37). As a thinker, Baratashvili was Faust person striving for the cognition his nature and the world. As a leader voluntarily or involuntarily he chooses evil spirit Mephistopheles, who leads him to despair, as he feels that personally he does not rely on him and that is why he annuls “agreement” concluded with him (“Evil Spirit”). One thing is common to many masked lyrical character of Baratashvili’s poetry –he is insurgent with his aspiration. For him life is also multidimensional phenomenon. In the poetry, his most important expression the poet opposes substance and souls, beauty and prettiness, transient and eternal and chooses for the benefit of prettiness, exalted and imperishable. This is clearly shown in the verse, for example “Rad Hkvedri Katsa , Banovano” where is perfectly shown the limit between fading corporal love and unfading divine feeling. According to Baratashvili’s opinion the person always can make a right choice, if he has not lost or forgotten that “Human is the image of God! And the body “made of clay“, fragile and perishable has breathed immortal soul. Baratashvili is ready to sacrifice his heart ashed from love to the altar of love (“Will Dry My Tears”). Love for him is a holy temple visioned in the desert of life that illusiveness admires and drives to despair (“I Found a Church”). Love will also make a person to feel human weakness of expression: “Mortal tongue can not express immortal persons’ feelings” (“Ar Ukizhino Satrfo”). Through searches he again finds out that as Apostle Paul says: the paradise is in the clean heart.

Baratashvili also considered that “something was in each person hampering him in complete comprehension of his personality” (Kierkegaard), that is why he constantly used to have dialogue with “himself” in order to show that only mask reflecting his image and aspiration. This search of self-knowledge is shown in the verse “Mysterious Voice”. Angelic or demonic? In the verse is well expressed struggle “or-or”. His torturing mysterious voice is either angelic or satanic. Angelic voice made him feel relation with the heaven, but demonic to the ground. Poet expresses continuity with the relation to divine in his verse “Color of the sky”. In this case other color may be expressive of terrestrial diversity of colors, that diversity of colors absorbing light blue by transforming and changing. Though of divine made the poet to feel essence of his creation and the excuse (“Dusk on Mtatsminda”). He needed this versatile and complex process of search not only for the cognition of world, but first of all for the transformation and perfection of personal being. He applied his adolescence and creative vital powers in order to oppose everything restricting his personal freedom through the word and power of logos. He had overcome the emptiness of his nonentity by discovering ideal and self-sacrifice. It is clearly shown in “Merani” (“Pegasus”).

This choice led him to the opinion that the truth was not somewhere outside but in his personality and his relation to world was determining justification of his existence. He was himself

creating his personality and new men was creating in the poetry, disobeyed to fate, free, fond of borderless spaces. Revealed in his personal letters as only his desire, was taking place and made in the world of poetry: "I obeyed to my severe fate, though sometimes I am going to relate with it by sorrow. My fate or making my desire come true". In the verse "Chinari" he tried to look for one more way to become happy – this is the feeling of sociability with nature. He believed that the nature had its language clear for him ("Chinari"). Kierkegaard used to consider together the art (created by human being) and nature (created by God). Poetry for him was such a kind of divine service "world of poetry – it is special, magic world that according to the standpoint of Novalis it makes a human feel happy and agreement with your personality. Those who are unhappy in this life and can not find what they search, let them go to the world of books and art, to the world of nature – this is eternal relation between past and present. In this world he will have a friend, lover, homeland and the God" (Gidenko 2010:115). Silent nature became such a friend. It is clearly shown in the verse "Dusk on Mtatsminda". Nature is reflected in this verse not only as revealing his thought and sorrow, but intellectual speaking in secret language leading the way to mystic depth of world, emphasizing feeling, intuition in order to comprehend main and essential convincing his intention, suggesting the faith for the future.

In the verse "Babies" he desires to have back this harmonious and paradisiac time, when being yet a child may calmly and freely breathe under the care of parents and relatives in the environment full of their love. This calmness is not threatened by any outer danger. Divine is so close and accessible that the child sees angels and smiles to them, hears their heavenly voices and full of happiness does not see anywhere some dangers lurked together with the transiency of time, those immediately appearing after the exit from the space of childhood. Baby talks in "heavenly language" unclear for adults. "There is only one relation, where this word (or-or) has absolute meaning. This is when on the one side is truth, verity and purity and on the other side – pleasure and inclinations, dark passions and viciousness. And still right choice, examination of yourself has great importance even in such condition, where the choice relates to something harmless. Such a choice is necessary in order not to be anytime forced to return something and be grateful to God for the reason that we only have to express rebuke ourselves for the experience of time" writes Kierkegaard (Kierkegaard 1991:9).

In "My Pray" is seen such a choice – at a glance unsuspecting and unhesitating. "When a man makes a choice, in it as in individuality there is no any change, all features of his state of mind, temperament, individual features remain the same, at the same time himself becomes another person, from natural individuality is transformed to person. It is aesthetic "Me" chosen ethically – writes Kierkegaard (Gidenko 157: 2010).

"Though its "or-or" my life considers to be in past, still I clearly understand that I many times may undergo conditions, where these words have their complete meaning. I hope that when meeting me on the road these words will always see me in good spirit that I will be able to make a right choice, yes I will always win in order to choose something under true seriousness. In any case I can offer consolation to my personality stating that I will quickly change the wrong way" – writes Kierkegaard (Kierkegaard 1991: 10). Nikoloz Baratashvili was also well aware that if he himself does not make a choice then circumstances will determine his way and his personality will be cracked, however exactly this personal freedom is important, not to allow any circumstances to prevent your spiritual aspirations. According to Kierkegaard's opinion if the life makes decision instead of him, then he will lose his personality (Gidenko 154: 2010). As Kierkegaard stated the choice is the act of will and not of mind. By making this choice the person comprehends his relation with the eternity. It is well expressed in Baratashvili's words that after his death his experience should be useful for his fellow "Merani" ("Pegasus"). In this case this choice, self-sacrifice for the idea of freedom will have such a result that will pass from one generation to another. Baratashvili was feeling this internal unbounded power. This is we;; expressed in the verse "Napoleon", where we read following: "time is mine and I am hope of time" ("Napoleon"). By making choice a man himself determines himself and thus, if we state imaginatively he "changes his fate": "bear me far beyond the bounds of fate. If up to now is not its slave, neither now be your rider its slave ("Merani"). "Alike a woman in delivery, a human by torture gives birth to his/her personality" – writes Kierkegaard. Thus, born by him/her establishes direct aesthetic relation with the world.

“I wish your life to once make you be forced to unmask everything concealed in your personality. To make you pass a complex examination that will not be satisfied by chatter and joke. You say that the life is like a masquerade and this opinion is inexhaustible material of your pleasure. Nobody could perceive you as your sociability is always ostentatious, only thus you can breathe, thus you make persons restricting you and hampering to breathe, to go away from you. The aim of your action is to maintain your mask. You achieve this goal, as your mask is more secret one than all the others, you yourself are nothing and represent something only in relation to other” – writes Kierkegaard (Kierkegaard 1991: 11). If we review memories about Nikoloz Baratashvili, we will see that in the society he was like a cheerful, fond of gatherings, witty person, though in his verses he was showing his deep melancholy and reasonless deep sorrow. His unmasked face is revealed in the letters written to Maiko Orbeliani: “I am orphan for long time. You will not believe, Maiko! After so much loneliness I hate my life. Maiko, imagine bitterness of that man’s condition, who even a father, mother, sisters, many relatives and still can not come close to anybody and still feels himself as an orphan in this full and broad life! Those whom I considered to have great feelings, I revealed them without heart; seems that those have developed soul, appeared that they have no at all a soul; those whom I considered to have mind with a talent, they had no sense of judgement; whose tears I considered as tears of pity, expressing perfect soul, it appeared that they were signs of astuteness, drops of horrible poison! Where should the soul rest, where to be placed?” “Homelessness of soul” was the main point of Baratashvili’s spiritual search. “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head” (Mathew 6, 20). Thus he noted about Gospel and tortured, as otherwise he could not make his oppressive thoughts reach the heaven without moaning and tears. If not such a distressful loneliness, possibly he would not be able to write such masterpieces. Only under the basis of great and deep spiritual pain may have arisen such real experiences that equally cover and show dark and clear roots of human spirit.

“Do not you know that at midnight everybody should be unmasked?” - writes Kierkegaard (Kierkegaard 1991:11). This midnight metaphorically indicates meeting with God and mentions parable written in the Gospel about “ten virgins”. Human mind will be arisen exactly at this time, as how prepared it meets this time about that arising nobody is aware. Depth and comprehension of relation with God is clearly shown in the verse “My Pray”, where poet exposes his soul. He considers that faith is the only way of salvation. “Father have mercy on me as a prodigal son”. Parable of prodigal son is written by Luke the Evangelist (Gospel of Luke: 5,11-32). Lyric character of the verse is Adam, driven out from paradise, who lost image of God, became away from Father, he faced material trouble, came to grief, though did not lose hope alike prodigal son and remembered the “image of Father”. “Father”, “Comely”, “Source of Life”, “Perspicacious” such epithets are taken from theological literature. At the same time it is also written in the writing of Rustaveli and Guramishvili. Lyric character of verse is suffered by feeling personal sins and mournful asks absolution from his Father. Last line of verse stating that even his silence to be prayer to God, reveals thirst of entire creature, to join the heaven, become integral part of it and thus have spiritual harmony and peace of mind.

“The main is not to be mentally developed, but to have perfected personality” (Kierkegaard 1991:14). Baratashvili by his poetry was perfecting the soul in order to be able to relate with divine and this provided him with creative urge. “Human has enough power to oppose to the world” writes (Kierkegaard 1991:14). Baratashvili opposed to world as multidimensional phenomenon by his verse “Merani”, where is clearly revealed his choice, to overcome vital obstacles by spiritual contradictions. Though often it seems impossible to solve them, especially when this choice relates to the most important moral values or responsibilities and obligations. Here is meant love, care for parents, devotion to homeland and such circumstances related to specific family, surname and nation of private individual (“Merani”).

These are the words of person directed to self-knowledge of world and personality. He is a person with the aspiration of Avtandil realizing that his way relates to self-sacrifice. Otherwise he will lose his faith. Those who consider the world as their true eternal homeland will be able to rapidly move towards the goal and cross the border of fate. This way goes out Baratashvili alike Odysseus in order to

identify his personality and the world by having a trip throughout the dimension of poetry and in transformed and clean condition go back to eternal place of soul “divine dome”.

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