

Individual Memory by the Stream of Consciousness Technique in the Novels

(On the example of the prose of Otar chiladze)

(Abstract)

In the article is discussed the role of the individual memory in the prose created by the stream of consciousness technique. Also are considered the meanings of the stream of the consciousness and the individual memory in the context of the psychological, literary and cultural studies and is represented on the example of the prose of Otar Chiladze. The novels “Godori” and “A Cock of March” by Otar Chiladze are created by the stream of consciousness technique or the elements of the same technique, the action mostly takes place in the minds of the characters, in the past and therefore, during the narration his characters are active only to recollect the past memories. The function of the present is to unite all these.

Keywords: Individual memory - The Stream of Consciousness Technique - Past – Emotion – Reception

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The past defines memory; no matter it is individual or cultural memory. What happens a moment ago becomes the part of memory. However, it is interesting if anybody returns to that “moment” or remembers it further, these depend on the subjective attitude towards “the moment” and is defined by the emotional connection. Memory coexists that way with emotion and individual perception. Approximately, in the same way memory functions in the 20th century literature. Wherein it plays an important role, as the literature of that period is based on the myths, fairy-tales, biblical stories (which represent the parts of it) and what is the most important, on the memories of the characters. The characters feel the world through the recollections connected to the facts of the past, but they are subjective than of their predecessor literary personages, they analyze the past deeply and then, try to define the future. Certainly, this activates the function of memory. Existence of the mankind without the experience of the past is inconceivable; the function of memory is to acquire experience, to preserve the perceptions of the past and to take them into the consideration for the future behavior. We may say that no other psychological function can compare to the function of memory with its volume and complexity (Nurkova 2006:35).

In the research of philosophy, psychology or culture the phenomenon of memory is very interesting from many sides - to who refers memory, to an individual or to collective? what do “the individual memory” and “the collective memory” mean? Aristotle says that memory is an individual phenomenon as it expresses what we felt, experienced and thought in the past (*François-Xavier Lavenne...* 1-3). In

philosophy and psychology is generally admitted fact that memory is a subjective experience when recollection is a personal concept and helps establishing of identity. A French philosopher Paul Ricoeur, says that memory belongs to the inner world of an individual, as the recollections are our possessions. Nevertheless, memory in itself also includes “the others” (the individuals, who participate in our recollections) (Ricoeur 2004:96-120). Realization of memory in theory begins from the concept of individual memory. Later the concepts of collective and cultural memories appear. Thus, theories emerge at the end of the XIX-XX centuries and are based on the studies of the memory psychology techniques and functions. Memory is considered as an individual phenomenon. The intuition philosophy founder, Henry Bergson, understands memory this way, when an American psychologist, William James sees in memory the stream of consciousness and the classical psychoanalysis founder Sigmund Freud develops his theory in fact on the ground of the associative thinking (later on the ground of above-mentioned theories and studies of three famous scientists James Joyce creates literary theories and conceptions of “the associative thinking”– T.G.) (Perekhodtseva 2012:157).

In regard to, the literary critics, here they understand memory in different ways. Some researchers underline the lack of theoretical understanding when in practice this issue functions actively. Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nunning are interested in whether exists the conception of memory or any type of connection to memory means entering into the other disciplines: in psychology, cultural studies or in sociology. In the result, the bond between memory and literature is reflected in three conceptions: memory of literary, memory in literature and literature in cultural memory (Erll A...2005:261–294). Now our object of interest is the memory technique representation in the literary texts. From this point very interesting is the novel “In Search of Lost Time” by a French author, Marcel Proust after its appearance in literature raises an independent issue – the problem of memory and starts the research on it. The novels of Marcel Proust are created by the stream of consciousness technique but despite of the method here has its traditional function – attempt of expression of unconscious (is understandable as Proust works on his novels during 1913-1927, “the stream of consciousness appears in the complete form after James Joyce publishes his “Ulysses” in 1922).

In the novels created by the stream of consciousness technique especially the meanings and forms of individual memory are well reflected. In such kind of novels, as a rule, the specific characters depend on the specific memories. Consequently, in the minds and understandings of the characters constantly takes place the reproduction of the past events through the associations and seemingly logically unconnected thoughts. This issue can be observed in the prose of a Georgian writer, Otar Chiladze, wherein he masterly uses the stream of consciousness technique in order to put in the foreground the issues of his prose and give it diversity.

The stream of consciousness in the form of method takes its shape in the 20s of XX century, when James Joyce appears in literature. As we have already mentioned the base of his works represents the intuition philosophy of Henry Bergson, Freud psychological studies and James’ writing conception. Bergson considers the mind of a human being as a main force of life. He brings in cohesion, stream expressing term - “Duration” and creates the work on the spirituality of memory, as a mean of peeping into the past. Meanwhile Freud brings in light the conscious and unconscious of an individual and starts researching it. Literary method of the stream of consciousness has a goal to express the cohesion, constantly leakage unconscious thoughts (speech) and which should result in the revealing of a problem of an individual and its resolve, exactly as it is done during the psychoanalysis treatment method.

However, the most significant is that the function of the stream of consciousness is reached by understanding of both, the conscious and subconscious of a character.

For the stream of consciousness is important not only to show the activities of the consciousness, but also to represent the idea creation process “through such literary means thanks to which in the foreground is put the level of before speech of the consciousness” (kiasashvili 1983:26). This level does not mean the communicational grounds of speech and writing. Thus, a writer suggests his or her characters unconscious thoughts in the maximum raw form (but on some level, they are still refined as there is no form of expressing unconscious directly).

Although, the classical example of such literature represents “Ulysses” by James Joyce, his complex philosophical views and techniques manage to enchant a reader. Later the works of William Faulkner appear and clearly, change the classical understanding of the stream of consciousness function (expresses subconscious) as William actively uses Joyce’s technique but only as a literary mean. It becomes obvious that he puts the stream of consciousness technique on a new level.

The prose of the stream of consciousness exists at expense of the past, retrospections, early experiences or myths. This method demonstrates that the provoked facts in the conscious are recreated through the emotions and are transferred to the present by memory. Thus, memory and specifically individual memory that includes the past of a separate character is as significant in understanding of the mood of a character and function as the “the present” activity of the novel. An opportunity of steeping in the past as well as in the conscious or unconscious of a character is given by the literature of the stream of consciousness. Also, the novels wherein we meet of the stream of consciousness technique e.g. in the novels of Otar Chiladze.

Otar Chiladze in the classical meaning of the word represents a writer of the stream of consciousness, especially if we take into the consideration that he writes in the second half of XX century and for that period, such style of writing is not popular any more. Moreover, in the prosaic works of Chiladze as far as it possible, he preserves the traditional prose norms, the tendencies of XX century such as e.g. the stream of consciousness technique, which is periodically used only to give the artistic hue to the novel. In the novels, he uses expressional forms of the stream of consciousness technique as a literary mean and in some cases gives them particular interpretation (in the “traditional” interior monologue he puts interior monologues of the stream of consciousness). The goal of the writer is to show the obsessive doubts and pathetic emotions of the solitary characters discovered in the crisis of XX century. The most effective way to represent it is through the associations, scattered and unformed thoughts that are given by the stream of consciousness technique. According to this periodical using of this technique by Otar Chiladze is approved logically. He uses above-mentioned technique when a necessity arises, when his heroes are in the extremely dramatic situations. In those moments, they can think only in the chaotic and constantly interrupted way as well as analyzing takes place in the associate way. The attention of the writer is turned towards providing an explanation on the character’s mood or on the main idea of the novel through the spiritual movement.

As a rule, in these types of novels, action takes place in the mind of a character, on the background of the past events. The facts of the past caused by the associations and the present emotions of the characters transfer us in the field of memory. “Solely an author gives the right to the event to exist only when it passes, in order to be imprinted into the conscious, which it stays and later becomes an object of

recollection”- writes a Georgian researcher of William Faulkner, Eter Topuridze on the ground of the writers’ conception (Topuridze 1984:123). Coming out from this we understand why the role of the past is so important. In fact, in the literature of the stream of consciousness the past imprinted in the minds of the characters defines their present and current lives e.g. the characters of Faulkner cannot put up with the defeat of the North in the Civil War and connect their own spiritual crises to this historic event. For the reason of the past and present incompatibility one of the main characters, Quentin commits suicide in the “The Sound and The Fury”. Stephen Dedalus, a character from “Ulysses” by James Joyce, does not cry for the past, though his thoughts are occupied with the past events – his own past, the myths and the biblical stories. However, in the novels of Otar Chiladze besides the past, the present is comparatively functional, though the author as well as the characters feel relatively comfortable themselves when the narration in the conscious of the dead characters (sometimes in subconscious) and the facts of the past events are reproduced. The narration from distance in the novels by Otar Chiladze is much more dynamic. Therefore, in some novels the past clearly is dominant e.g. “*Godori*”* and “*A Cock of March*”.

In fact, in “*A Cock of March*” the action is ruled from the memory. The main character, Niko, does not get up from his bed during a month after he witnesses the murder of his acquaintance by the burglars. He recollects his entire life, from his early childhood days, when he lives happily in Batumi with his parents until its last minutes, when he lives with his grandparents and waits for his mother arrival. His recollections chronological are mixed, in some episodes he is in Batumi and stands in the endless line all day long to buy a loaf of bread in order to help his mother or is going by train with his aunt to Signagi or listens to the wanted robber sheltered in the woods as he reminds him his father. The character is lost in his own memories, dreams and ideas, he cares less about the present and thus, action in the present is very limited. The entire novel goes around the past events, wherein the present exists only to connect these events to one another. We may say that here the past sways the present and only function of the latter is to find a place for an each memory.

In “*A Cock of March*”, the stream of consciousness technique is less seen. Nevertheless, in this case the stress falls on the pithiness side of the novel – through the interior monologue is reflected the inner world of the character, his conscious or unconscious desires as well as subjective experiences. Chronology is in the mess and the plot is to the minimum. “When Niko came out from the toilet, the blind was sitting on the sack in the tambour and was helping himself to the bread with onion. The black sunglasses was put up on his forehead and probably, that is way he looked more like a captive pilot fallen from the sky than a blind. “Elenisa, Elenisa I bury in you the entire unprecedented happiness.” with his closed mouth he shouts at usually surprised and confused face of Niko now floating in the gray space, but from here, from Signagi, from his bed, lying like a dead man with his hands folded on his chest and along with their goodness, with the crap of the bats on him... as though he came back from somewhere, from a very far away, from a very dangerous journey –though he was on the bus- exhausted from the senseless and unaddressed fear. However, he does not remember, he just feels but does not know why he feels and what he feels, and how much these feelings trustworthy and fair are.” (Chiladze 1987:37).

In the last novel of the author “*Godori*”, the past is much functional, as the novel is entirely reproduced from the facts of the memory and as it usually happens in the literature of the stream of

*“*Godori*” (გოდორი) - A large basket (has cylindrical form)

consciousness – in the interior monologue of an character rapidly interchanges the currency of the present events with facts called from the past, the thoughts associatively connect with each other and thus, cause

the new associations and complicate the understanding of the present, however this is done in order to better understand the moods of the characters.

Certainly, the characters do not remember many things, though during their lives they collect much information and experiences, but in the novels by Chiladze, like in the novels of other the stream of consciousness technique writers, they recollect only present event, through the “present emotions”. An emotion has an important role here. An emotion (Latin. mental state – despair, agitation, anger.) is psychophysiological process, which is caused by the conscious or unconscious realization and interpretation of an object or a situation. It is connected to the readiness for the changes of physiological alternations, specific cognitions, subjective feelings and behavior (or positions). In the large scale of understanding, it is a word defining a feeling and an attitude towards the sentimental aspect of the position. (Pethas 2001:129). As it is tightly connected to the memory, an emotion is extremely important.

From the very beginning, the characters remember not a fact but an emotion, which was caused by the very fact and only after that, they remember this or that story. Coming out from this, during the recollecting characters are devoured by the same strong emotion, as it is in the past, when the story happens in reality. Certainly, the emotion is strong. Otherwise, during the associative thinking it will not emerge on memory surface. In order to establish the associative bond to the emotion, it is necessary to insert a feeling (Natadze 1963:26-54).

In general, an emotion and memory practically do not exist without one another. The connection of an emotion to the event defines its place in the memory of an individual. According to the sequence and intensity of the facts emerging on the surface of memory we understand what about considering a character most of the time and what is his or hers main concern (Natadze 1963:30). E.g., Stephen Dedalus associatively often recollects the scene of his mother death, the fact emerges rather often during his subconscious thinking and in the result, and we realize how it worries Stephen that he does not fulfill the request of his dying mother, as he does not pray for her soul and thus, hastens her death. In the novel, “*A Cock of March*” by Otar Chiladze in the sick conscious or subconscious mind of Niko most of the time we observe the icon of his father, in some memories he is healthy but in others, due to illness is chained to the bed or he sees the reflection of his father in the others. Understanding of Niko is the most significant fact in the novel. It seems, that an emotion helps the characters to activate their memories.

Thus, a reader can make a reception of the emotions through their actualization, that usually is done by the character. It is possible, because a character often recollects not only the specific emotions and event caused by it but even physical sensations e.g. smell, voice, the weather, pain. In the novel “*Godori*” a character of Elizbar, who fights in the war against the Abkhazians, recollects feeling, which results in reanimating the past events. A reader for a moment forgets that he is in the war and follows his recollection: “Elizbar is standing like a punished schoolboy on the other side of the door... it was a trouble, he will not leave it. He will always remember and tell the others; people will laugh, as if Elizbar is not a writer but a teacher of geography. But, he cannot calm down, cannot calm down because of the emotions. Probably rain has washed down the entire orchestra of untried and noisy crickets from the lime-trees. The polish of summer, for Elizbar there is no more peace, as it seems, not even in the grave. ... His brother-in-law killed his own father not for his son's sake but for the sake of Elizba's son. And he worries about that the alley of the lime-trees will be covered with the drowned and wing-torn cricket! Dishonest, hypocrite. A moment ago, he was in the war fighting the Abkhazians, and now he is in Kvishkheti. (Chiladze 2006:325). In these cases, a reader establishes the pseudo-direct contact to the given world, and in the result he/she can remember e.g. the smell of the rain, the color of

the lime-tree, hears the sound of a cricket in other words the situation concretization (imagination) is done. A character's memory influences memory of a reader. More the information given by a character is emotional much it "irritates" memory of a reader (Jauss 1979:126-162).

It is remarkable, that in the first novels of Otar Chiladze the stream of consciousness technique is less used, it is practically unnoticeable, but gradually becomes stronger, acquires the different functions and finally reaches its pinnacle in the novel "*Godori*". As the result, in the novel, we see the various sides of the past reproduction– the past event, emotion, sensation restoration, but the most important thing is that in the novels of Chiladze and especially in "*Gogori*", the present plays a key role.

Memory mostly contains the past, but at the same time it is always represented as the present (recollects something but only at this very moment). The event of the past and future exist only now, in the memory. Even the future is the present, as in the minds of the characters from the present events are created the future notions. The recollections what must be remembered in the future, first are analyzed in the present, and later are preserved and finally the knowledge acquired in the past becomes necessity in the future. Thus, memory not only means to preserve the past but also the opportunity to use it in the future. Conditionally memory can be understood as the tree-staged process, the stages differ from one other by the psychological structure and specific tasks. These are the following stages: information imprinting (coding), preservation and restoration (Panjikdze 2008:4).

Chiladze's novels are subjected to this conception. During the narration his heroes are not active, but recollect the past events (the past is always stressed as they are chained to it), or define the future events (or completely ignore the future), the responsibility of the present is to unite all above-mentioned (the present is passive). However, it happens because the past defines the thinking and existence of the characters meanwhile the present is uninteresting and always avoided as it is left without a function. The "Eternal Now" which includes the past and possibly the future space, in truth, shows the tragic faith of the characters and is the indicator of the crisis-ridden situation.

It can be said that the stream of consciousness as a literary method, or an effective literary mean, in literature exists at the expense of the activation of the individual memory, because memory together with the inner world of a character, is interested specifically in his/her memories and in the associative thinking, which gives a writes an opportunity to show the unconscious desires and problems of a character. Moreover, this is the main goal of the stream of consciousness. The orientation on the individual memory represents a literary mean for this kind of writers, through which in the foreground they bring the literary method or conception of the stream of consciousness technique. The activity of the individual memory is better seen in the novels created by the stream of consciousness technique, from the works of James Joyce to Virginia Wolf. The end is represented by the novels of William Faulkner and much later of Silvia Plath wherein memory plays a defying role during the texts analyzing. The same can be said about the works of Otar Chiladze. The writer often uses the past reproduction method, therefore some texts of the novel in fact are reconstructed by the recollections. Evidently, the past takes advantage of the present and thus supports the creation of an emotional bond of the character to the past event.

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