

### Poetic comments in Levan Laghidze's art

***Abstract:** The center of Levan Laghidze's space paradigm is a person with his subjective perception. The viewer/reader is involved into the game of assembling space. To make the space more precise Laghidze uses a tool of commenting. Elimination of opposition parts, constant widening and reducing of boundaries creates best conditions for revealing reader's own inner space. Similar to postmodern commenting Laghidze's poetic comments are autonomous texts and exist independently from main text (painting). In vast space of inner experience Laghidze marks personal ethical coordinates. The center of his space is a self – a place where all roads and labyrinths return to after each journey.*

***Key words:** Space, comment, text, postmodern paradigm*

Modern paradigm of space construction is diversely represented in Levan Lagidze's poetic and pictorial spatial models. Author offers two types of texts: painting and poetic comments created under a pseudonym of Felontin. The complex space model offered by L.Laghidze is derived from deep reflexion and personal experience.

Lagidze's visual structure is comparable to text: it is installed in front of the reader similar to a flat screen surface. A book-like arrangement of imagery components and specific lineal rhythms provoke a viewer to switch from observing to reading and decoding mode. Frontally aligned flat structure of picture fabric is based on intersection of vertical and horizontal lines. It reminds a cell-like carcass carefully built with small squares. Visual image of this „construction” is close to book graphic where one can detect newspaper column distribution or spaces similar to page margins etc. Painting surface is often perceived as a script that inspires to get closer to the picture, distinguish letters and literary read a text. Ludic approach offered by the author makes possible creation of independent, highly personal interpretations. The dimensional volumetric forms are not common for Laghidze's painting. On the one hand this particularity is connected with modern paradigm of constantly fading space and on the other hand it can be an attempt to overcome mentioned crisis by stimulating production of significances consequently pushing the viewer to discover new realities.

For Levan Laghidze pictorial image is well planned rational and sturcurally organized independent text. Poetic comments attached to the paintings create related but still autonomous semantic field. By the means of imposition of these two fields author creates polyvalent communicative space where reader is able to assimilate the maximum potential of space and experience it with maximum quality.

Comment to a main text is a tool widely practiced in postmodern literature. It allows reader to be closely involved in creative process and overcome cultural distance between author and reader. For Levan Laghidze commenting is abandoning text in order to return again, this time on deeper level. The tool of commenting permits reader to reduce individual-cognitive vacuum produced while reading (perceiving). In postmodern text commenting is pheno-text, pheno-type

therefore it is understood not as an addition to the main text but as a part of a whole (Kristeva 2000:458). Which an instrument of commenting literature adopts self reflection and auto representation. In this regard Lagidze's poetic comments are classic postmodern texts and together with main text (painting) form one common interpretation field.

Poetics of ludic communication gives major importance to elimination of boundaries between opposition parts. It is considered as an important component for text realization. This very principle is present in L. Lagidze's art as an essential condition for producing spontaneous significances: „When we erase these shadows, traces, roads and distance,/far and close, early and late/- then these views, these fields and valleys/I shall read to you and tell you as a story (Felontin, „Without Shadow”).

Together with reducing distance between opposition parts, elimination of boundaries and increasing spatial abstraction major importance is given to defining exact position of subject both in material and nonmaterial dimensions. In his book about cognitive transformation of human being Frederick Jameson speaks about special skill of modern citizen immediately finding his body in the space, rapidly adjusting spatial perception and as a result cognitively identifying his own coordinates on the environmental map. (Jameson 1990:73 ). The same way L. Lagidze tries to find his own exact spatial coordinates and reach self identification therefore disclosing deeper connection between subjective and objective spaces. In the epilogue of a small but highly impressive collection of poetic comments „Without me” (Lagidze 2015:1) we read: „with cautious step I am specifying the space”. In these words author declares his personal strategy for advancing through enigmatic texts. His comments and paintings are united and bound by „cautious steps” of subtle self awareness, self identification and of accurately examined personal experience

Impulse of precisely defining space as a central discourse is accomplished during the working process as well: The main textual fabric is woven as a net around previously prepared structural carcass. This structural skeleton as an unchangeable constituent is repeated in majority of Lagidze's artworks and is perceived as visual representation of universal rules and its constant substance. Next step in working process is detailed elaboration of the image. Special attention is given to attribution of depth dimension to a flat surface by interposing transparent layers over each other. Problem of specifying space is one of the main problems in modern theories. Along with environmental changes human consciousness also has changed. The possibility of interpreting and decoding significances within the built environment transforms city dweller into a reader. (Bergum 1990: 113-132).

Poetic comments of Felontin demonstrate permanent widening of space, aspiration for horizon, for ultimate point and infinity. Such dynamics stimulates creation of new spaces. Author together with a reader is involved in the process of space assimilation: „He was standing on his tiptoes, facing horizon, he was focused as if he was going to fly.” (Felontin „Specified space”); or: „As a faithful dog I would follow my own eyes until horizon” (Felontin. „Horizon”). Along with constant broadening of space we observe limitation and compression of space as well: „Then suddenly it will stop to rain/ and you will set the boundaries in a rained field. /Desires grown in winter will be left off-screen./ There will be dew green as always and as never,/ but not yet”. („April”)

In this binary model author is constantly losing and finding himself. Actual feelings are disappearing, dissolving and then again obtaining clarity. The figure of author himself is not solid. He is rather fading while communicating with a reader. In this context special focus is placed on

the concepts of „being” and „not being” („...I have been there”). The title of the brochure „Without me” states a problem of relation between subject and space, between „me” and „you”. In Levan Laghidze’s poetry and paintings spatial coordinates of author stay within the postmodern boundaries: the text is independent from author. Author is distanced. He is „in a shadow”. („What we can do with this contre-jour if everything that happens happens on the side of sun. „The angle”). The centre of such spatial model is a person with his subjective perception „Unfortunately, I don’t see a space without me” (Felontin „Imereti”).

The postmodern concept of space is based on subjective construction of space. Present-day citizen has to arrange, group and reconstruct fragments of space as a means to organize multiple layers of constantly dispersing particles (Harvey 1989: 57). The picture called „Macondo” and its poetic comment is „built” with purpose of finding, collecting and arranging spatial fragments into one personal space: „... So, you know Toscana, on the way to new-York, where vineyards and field are like ours, with sharper sky and trees, and also the white city Macondo that looks like imaginary city. There is a square in the middle of that city with stairs and narrow streets leading to the mountain - it is Sololaki. There you will find a house with balcony and a view on the sea-Mediterranean sea, you know - Piero della Francesca, Giotto, Kakabadze, Matisse and so on...” (Felontin. „Before removing boundaries”).

Mixed spatial fragments destroy the concept of physical location drafting a new map of author’s emotions. Personal experience neglects real links and constructs space based on subjective emotional logic. Informal communication language used by Laghidze once again indicates purely personal, intimate character of his experience. He offers kaleidoscope of real and imaginary spaces that are mixed together: contrasting, not related landscapes like New York, Toscana and invented city of Macondo are coexisting in one space. Horizontal dynamics of alternation is stopped on the square and then continued again in upper direction. This movement is finalized by ephemeral childhood space –lost space of Sololaki and the sea view. The view from the balcony of Sololaki house is the ultimate dimension bordering with infinity. Yet the journey is not accomplished. Author makes material space even more spacious: finally the horizon integrates with an unlimited space of imagination (art). This same idea is expressed also in a title „Until the boarder disappears”.

In „Macondo’s” text author refers problem of subjective and national identity and its cultural genesis. Among twinkling space fragments he is trying to find solid point for his own inner space. „Macondo’s spatial model reveals author’s typical spatial concepts : Macondo is „Promised Land”, the dream land that everybody is searching for and that exists only in mythic time (in „one time”) The primary sign of the city is harmony and purity. (Raggio 2009: 3). Living in Macondo is a chance for accomplishing one’s best abilities and potential. But on the other hand it’ utopic space impossible to find.

Exploration of space for L.Laghidze implies constant return to the self and permanent assimilation of new spaces. The metaphors of the road are loaded with semantic of labyrinth (labyrinth in a desert). None of his roads aim at final destination or any concrete point. Nevertheless, unlike the postmodern „aimless strolling” Laghidze’s wandering has its destination - constant renewal of self after each return. „...He looked tired but happy./ I will make labyrinth in the desert and return back-he said./ I will return before sunrise.../ Before each sunrise !...he said. (Felontin „Blue desert”).

In poetic comment „One Time” author changes the pole to the concept of *returning*: Instead of its fragmented or linear understanding *returning* is positioned in a semantic field of cyclic time and placed in strong metaphoric and synesthetic images. Constantly vibrant surface characteristic to Laghidze’s painting style grows into generalized and all implying view from above - visual metaphor of „one time”: „This scent after raining,/ green and white - incurable wish violently distant./There will always be one time./ Always one/before coming back/- between two edges (Felontin. From the poem „One time”).

On the background of polyvalent and abstract spatial image ethic category of regret is outlined. Levan Laghidze gives special place to repentance in the hierarchy of his personal values: „He turned to me and said: you will be able to wipe away everything, everything but the regret, the regret will stay there.” (Felontin „Apprentice”). The semantic of *regret* is close to semantic of *returning to self*. In both cases we have spaces grouped around one center. This way a constant point is fixed amid the fragments of broken spaces. Similarity between these two concepts is found also in reconciliation between past and present, the change of future vector and stimulation of its new potential. Repentance is the crossing point where inner and outer spaces meet each other. It is an important landmark of spatial orientation. However, it becomes a final destination point as well: „It’s still far from regret./From sky to sky./From road to road. From word to word./ In lost café you ask a bill. /Again, they don’t bring it. (Felontin. „Blue time”).

The trivial story about café is another demonstration of inner existential disappointment. Artist shows the image of self-absorbed, isolated traveler whose effort to get answer again ends up with refusal. Also in this case we encounter the same postmodern principle: text is not intended to give a definite answer. Reading is a journey, it’s a puzzle and not the answer to the puzzle. As Roland Barthes states text does not give name to anything. Instead it offers a problem to solve, its heroes are alive only thanks to situation in which they exist. (Barthes 1989: 413-423).

Levan Laghidze offers his reader/viewer two types of texts: Painting and poetic comments which share same space construction principles. The structure of these texts that are designed as complementing parts is an opportunity for the reader/viewer to create his own text according to subjective spatial experience. By thoroughly organized process author creates best conditions to disclose reader’s maximum time-space potential and to convert a journey on the crossing of poetic and painting images into a unique metaphysical experience.

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