

Nunu Balavadze

Iliia State University

Tbilisi, Georgia

Free Verse and Freedom of Expression in Soviet and Post-Soviet Georgian Poetry

The paper will discuss the role of the free verse in diversifying the poetic process in Georgian literature of Soviet/Cold War period and after. The intensification of this role in Georgian poetry of the period of the Thaw is related with works by Lia Sturua and Besik Kharanauli. These poets state to oppose the mainstream of Georgian poetry which was based on realist aestheticism and conventional poetic principles; thus, their poetic choice can be seen as an alternative to dominant literary tendencies.

We can assess the appearance of the free verse in Georgian poetry of the period of the Thaw as a revolt against the conventional verse and dominant literary principles cultivated by the majority of Georgian poets. In this period, on the one hand, the Socialist Realism aestheticism is still strongly imposed from the Soviet centre, on the other – Georgian poets create nationally minded poetry with meter. The free verses developed by the smaller group of Georgian poets oppose to both poetic tendencies, while suggesting the forms and themes which are more comparable to the texts appearing in the Western literatures beyond the Iron Curtain.

When carrying the mission of altering and opposing to the existing reality, their poetry becomes a scene in which everyone has own role to play - the poet can be anti-poet, and poetry - an anti-poetry (Kharanauli); the process of writing is compared to the surgery and the writing desk - to the surgical table (Sturua); the poet is suggested to be a performer, expressing own fear and pain playfully.

Post-Soviet Georgian poetry inherited the aestheticism of alternative poetry, and follows the principles developed in Georgian and Western poetry on the basis of freedom of expression.