


## Psychosemiotics of the dream in Georgian artistic discourse (From realism to modernism)

*Psicossemiótica do sonho no discurso artístico georgiano (Do realismo ao modernismo)*

**Anna Dolidze** 

Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University – TSU – Tbilíssi - Georgia

**Tamar Sharabidze** 

Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University – TSU – Tbilíssi - Georgia

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**Abstract:** The study of the dream phenomenon in Georgian artistic discourse is important because dreaming represents typological universality, although with ethno-national specificity in its performance, enabling us to understand Georgian mentality peculiarity in relation with Western tradition and also because a dream semantics (in its broadest sense), as a cultural concept, encompasses typologically similar events (prophecies, visions, dreams, prognoses, etc.), the function of which in Georgian texts demands special study, as it represents a provoking element of narrative structure. The research goal is to understand various perspectives: exploring the dream phenomenon through uniting psychological and literary aspects; typological dreams classification and its variations in the creation by Georgian realist and modernist writers. The research main line involves three types of scientific methodology: The sociological-psychological research method of dream phenomenon; feature-based analysis of dreams and structural-contextual analysis of dreams, which presents paradigmatic variants of diverse literary processes during the 19th and 20th centuries. The Georgian realism considered that dreams adhered to their basic principles. Vazha-Pshavela, in contrast, has a dreamlike vision that is not only related to sleep but it is one of the ways of accessing the irrational world through the dreamer's mystical-allegorical perception and myths. Vazha-Pshavela's next generation of Georgian writers, who are fond of European culture began to master and develop the themes typical to modernism, and also to its theoretical principles.

**Keywords:** Dreams; psychosemiotics; Georgian artistic discourse; Modernism

**Resumo:** O estudo do fenômeno do sonho no discurso artístico georgiano é importante porque sonhar representa uma universalidade tipológica, embora com especificidade etnonacional em sua atuação, permitindo compreender a peculiaridade da mentalidade georgiana em relação à tradição ocidental e também porque uma semântica onírica (em seu sentido mais amplo), como conceito cultural, abrange eventos tipologicamente semelhantes (profecias, visões, sonhos, prognósticos etc.), cuja função nos textos georgianos exige estudo especial, pois representa um elemento provocador da estrutura narrativa. O objetivo da pesquisa é, sob várias perspectivas: explorar o fenômeno do sonho por meio da união de aspectos psicológicos e literários; realizar a classificação tipológica dos sonhos e suas variações na criação de escritores realistas e modernistas georgianos. A linha principal de pesquisa envolve três tipos de metodologia científica: O método de pesquisa sociológico-psicológico do fenômeno do sonho; análise dos sonhos baseada em características e análise estrutural-contextual dos sonhos, que apresenta variantes paradigmáticas de diversos processos literários durante os séculos XIX e XX. O realismo georgiano considerava que os sonhos seguiam seus princípios básicos. Vazha-Pshavela, ao contrário, tem uma visão onírica que não está apenas relacionada ao sono, mas é uma das maneiras de acessar o mundo irracional através da percepção místico-alegórica do sonhador e mitos. A próxima geração de escritores georgianos de Vazha-Pshavela, apaixonados pela cultura europeia, começou a dominar e desenvolver os temas típicos do modernismo, e também seus princípios teóricos.

**Palavras-chave:** Sonhos; psicossemiótica; discurso artístico georgiano; Modernismo

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## Introduction

Research on the dream phenomenon in Georgian fiction discourse is essential due to several aspects: a) Dream visions are typological universals, although with ethno-national specificity in its performance, allowing us to understand Georgian mentality peculiarities in relation with Western traditions; b) the dream semantics, as a cultural concept, includes typologically similar events (prophecies, visions, dreaming, forecasting and etc.), a quite important function for fiction texts, the provokers of the narration structure.

Our research provides for the social-psychological, literary-functional, structural-functional analysis of dream visions in Georgian fiction texts and presents the paradigm versions of the diverse literary processes during the XIX and XX centuries. We will discuss in this paper the Georgian Realism attitude, as a literary movement, towards the dream phenomenon being in some way peculiar, since it fell under control of the main principles of the given movement.

### 1. Theoretical framework

The pronounced trend in the European thinking during the 19<sup>th</sup> century preaches the intellect devaluation, the mind role and the unconscious cognition advantage, which is the basis for Modernism. The generation after Vazha-Pshavela (1964), the Georgian writers who got acquainted with the European culture, started learning and processing the topics typical to Modernism; they learn its theoretical principles too.

Writer belonging to the 80s literary movement, Vazha-Pshavela (1964), who also shares the Realism principles, nevertheless, does not agree with the 60iers opinion about what dreams reflect. Vazha-Pshavela considers dream as represented by two forms: a realistic and non-realistic text. Through realistic texts, dream is described as relevant to the specifics of the true dream. Under the realistic text about a dream, we mean a plot, exclusively seen during it, being the result of everyday life events and of thinking about them. Dreams of the second type are of mystical-allegorical

content: Primarily the writer's goal comes and secondarily comes the dream specifics.

Despite the specificity of the Dream phenomenon, expressed in its connection with unreal world and mystics, and the opportunity to understand it diversely, the Dream function, belonging to the 60s Georgian literature is firmly tied to the Realism principles.

### 2. Methodology and data analysis

The methodology is bibliographic. Texts were extracted from the most notorious Georgian writers whose subject dealt with dreams, during the XIX and XX centuries.

Dream texts analysis of Vazha-Pshavela's poetry revealed a novelty, based on the Realistic vision: He distances himself from the 60iers. He shows interest in the human spiritual depths processes, which are best reflected in dreams; since his literary works are based in the principle that the world is not just our reality, also consisting of a dreamed world, the conclusion is why we cannot understand it, using only the logic tool.

Dream is also reality for Vazha-Pshavela, through using the fiction genre, with its aesthetic function: it is illogical and being perceived only through intuitive perception. With its creative structure, the Dream is already similar to the functional structure of a myth. Such a similarity is further backed in Vazha-Pshavela's literary works by the mythical characters appearance.

Among the 60s writers, Ilia Chavchavadze (1987) and Akaki Tsereteli (2010, 2011, 2012, 2014, 2015) consider the Dream, as well as literature in general, one of the means for influencing society. It is the event to be described by the mind and precisely defines the situation developed after it.

In Ilia Chavchavadze's works, the creative function of the Dream is to create the main contrast between reality and dreaming (in text citations). His dream is the wish that it will never come true in real life. Such attitude towards the Dream is characteristic for the 60iers epoch, an example of Realism principles. The given viewpoint is signaled through the expression "Sleepless Dream" used by Chavchavadze, meaning

something imagined by the mind. The latter is very close to dreaming.

Markers of the Dream appear in Chavchavadze's fiction text, unreal thinking and actions, expressed through sentences like: "He wants, but he cannot do it, as he is dead"; "He can hear, feel, but knows that he is dead"; "He wakes up and he is in the different reality". Chavchavadze's dream does not come without fully solved interpretation: Its purposefulness is clear and obvious. The typical example of the Dream function in Iliia Chavchavadze's prose is Luarsab's dream from the story "Is a Human a Man?!"

In Akaki Tsereteli's (2010) fiction text structure, the Dream is represented as a system of certain signs, reflecting dreaming, life after death understanding, imagination based on traditions, hope, prophecy, advice etc. Each of the dreams expresses specific ethnic-national events, being the reflection of a Georgian mentality peculiarity; some of them provoke a reality change, functioning as a creative expression of the literary work main idea.

It must be emphasized that the literary organization of Vazha-Pshavela's works, unlike the Realists, creates dreams not only related to sleeping, but also thinking awake, namely in his poetry, for example, Aluda's so called thoughts after the killing of Mutsali and his brother: The bloody wedding; the bed covered in blood. Therefore, it is impossible not to relate Vazha-Pshavela's literary works to Modernism, as one of the means for understanding the writer's world, namely, the mystical-allegorical perception of the irrational world and the myth reconsidering. In dream texts, K. Gamsakhurdia (1958, 1959, 1961, 1963a, b) focuses on the process of transferring to the unreal world, which he calls "mystical silence moment" or "the doublesleep" (two sleeps). The writer uses myths elements in a dream and offers us his fiction interpretation.

Dreams are of special importance in all Konstantine Gamsakhurdia's novels, but their role changes as time passes, because, at the beginning of his literary carrier, the writer was Modernist; during his later period, he followed the principles of Realism and even later, he also shares the so-called Socialist

Realism ideas. Therefore, in his novels, in chronological order, the actual changes and dream texts confirm the mentioned assertions.

In the *Smile of Dionysus* (Gamsakhurdia, 1925), the dream has both semantic and functional load, since it is the connector of two, unrelated events with certain marks as, for example, the start of author writing the novel and the Zeppelin flying to New York. Being a marker, the Dream has its own, forecasting function in the fiction text structure and is directly connected to the author's intention. Dream is also the object of trope, a creative defining of an event. For this purpose, the writer creates types of trope by using dream features: Epithet, comparison and metaphor. In addition, Dream is the means for the pagan philosophical world perception, the function of which is the reflection of an event with its unique individuality and it mirrors the character's possible ideal life. It reflects the best choices in life, the road that was not chosen in real life. Finally, Dream has the function of bringing the unreal narrative into a literary work, guiding the readers' imagination towards identifying the symbol and its marker.

In later novels, Gamsakhurdia (1963a) attempted to protect Realism principles, revealing the peculiarities of dream creative reflection, nevertheless exceeding the given limits and expressing certain Modernist nature, which is most apparent in the novel *Abduction of the Moon* (Gamsakhurdia, 1963b).

In K. Gamsakhurdia's novels, *Right Hand of the Grandmaster* (1939) and *Flourishing of the Vine* (1956), all the dreams are realistic texts with their symbolic-allegorical hints and provoking attitudes. Such dreams can really be seen by a character. We can see how the writer's creative method transfers from Modernism, back to Realism.

If in Konstantine Gamsakhurdia's works the literary movement transfers from Modernism to Realism, which is reasoned by the social and political situation, in Grigol Robakidse's literary works, no changes take place in this aspect. The writer fled from the totalitarian regime and found shelter in Europe. His creative method is Modernism and, therefore, the dream function text also differs from the traditional. Robakidse, just like Vazha-Pshavela and K. Gamsakhurdia (1925)

in the *Smile of Dionysus*, creates the dream conducting its literary organization. "Dream creation" is the new function of dream in Modernism epoch, which becomes similar to the myth function, as already examined. This function can be called the freedom of creative thinking.

In Robakidse's (1988, 1991, 2013) works, dream creation is also not the process related only to sleeping. It is the open-eyed being in a dream or half-sleep, which is very similar to Konstantine Gamsakhurdia's "double-sleep" and Vazha-Pshavela's dream in thoughts. The goal of such a dream is the perception of the world divided in two: the real and the outer, the latter more valuable, but the harder to perceive.

What is characteristic for the dream creation? Primarily, the **dream is created in mind**. It is the thought or memory, or maybe the result of that undefined condition, when **it is impossible to set the boundary between the unreal and reality**, and when the unreal becomes part of reality. It is impossible to present all this without the mythical model. In Robakidse's works cognition takes place on the verge of reality-dreams; the given process is complex and starts with a person duality; the darkness of a dream activates cognition (one part of a person understands the second part) transferring the self-forgetting; during self-forgetting a person denies his own self, leaves the "past" life behind: he is reborn and the split personality reunites.

In many Robakidse's novels, *Falestra* (1928b), *Megi, a Georgian Girl* (1932), *The call of the Goddess* (1934), *The Keepers of the Grail* (1937), the boundary between the sleeping and being awake is erased. What was seen in a dream is perceived as the reality and the reality becomes similar to a dream. In special occasions the dream becomes active and the reality is inactive people met in a dream really existing and after being seen in a dream, they meet the character in reality also. The dream seen activates twice: in a short period of time, on the very next day and with more extensive understanding at the next stage of life. Robakidse's "sleeping-awakening" has more literary load than psychological and philosophical. It expresses the

condition of a modernist novel character, it is the "ú dream creation" and lacks the real functions of a dream.

In the novel *The Killed Soul* (1991[1933]), the writer showed the totalitarian reality, the "dark, degrading, Bolshevism reality image", which he compared to dream and vision by its lack of logic. The dream process described by Robakidse is the unrealistic narration; reality transforms into a dream the way that readers do not even feel it. Only after waking up, it is possible to differentiate what was a dream and what was reality. Process of going from reality to a dream is like a certain transfer, during which all the boundaries are erased, therefore, it is similar to the process of passing away, during which boundaries are also erased and personality is lost. If a person has the ability to raise up or to fall down in real life, these skills activate in Robakidse's dreams, as during that time the emotions become highly sensitive.

The clear example of the Modernist cognition of a dream is Demna Shengelaia's (1924) novel *Sanavardo*. The complex structure of the literary work with different layers, perspectives, images, interchange of the material and of the imaginary, double-layer representation of a myth in the text, creates the complete image by means of the connecting text – dream. The latter organizes layers between other ones, having different features and characteristics and becoming the connecting tissue. Right by means of the dream, it takes place absolutely practically and naturally: action is transferred and emotions flow from one reality to a completely different reality. The Dream glues and connects to each other the totally incompatible and unrelated categories; it clarifies the idea hidden behind the event. The real mythical, emotional, problematic, diverse fiction world described in the novel is represented as a whole, living organism, right by means of the Dream.

## Conclusions

Analysis of Konstantine Gamsakhurdia's, Demna Shengelaia's (1983) and Grigol Robakidse's literary works shows that in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Georgian writers followed the European literary

processes, putting Georgian culture beside the European. They used the dream for expressing Modernist tendencies, as one of the most essential techniques for creative expression and by means of it, they manage to idealistically understand the idea.

The interpretation of dreams and their symbolic forms was also inspired by Ernest Cassirer ideas (Andersch & Cutting, 2014). Recent research on the role dreams play on the subject's emotions asserts that "Neuroscience and psychology agree that dreaming helps people to cope with negative emotions and to learn from experience, but can dreaming effectively reveal mental suffering and changes in social behavior?" (Mota et al., 2020). New technologies open new avenues for dream interpretation, such as that "Computer-based dreams content analysis relies on word frequencies within predefined categories in order to identify different elements in text", as well as comparing [...] "Skip-gram and Latent Semantic Analysis (LSA) capabilities to extract semantic associations" (Altszylera et al., 2017).

In addition, "recent research has provided compelling evidence demonstrating a link between dream content and new learning, suggesting that dreams reflect memory processing during sleep" (Fogel et al, 2018). More recent studies on the different people mentalities, namely among slavic cultures, have been done (Noskova & Akhidzhakova, 2016), as well as the relationship among language, consciousness and culture (Pax, Ufimtseva & Markovina, I. J. 2019).

For better analyzing dreamy visions in Georgian artistic texts, it is necessary, in further research on the subject, applying the promising contributions of associative studies (Dmitryuk & Abramova, 2021; Ufimtseva, 2020; Ufimtseva & Balyasnikova, 2019).

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