

Prospects of Using a Narratological Approach and Possible-Worlds Theory to the Study of Poetic Texts Based on the Example of Poems of Ingeborg Bachmann and Lia Sturua

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Abstract—Since poems are short and describe an action (story) in an abstract form, various contexts or motives in them are indicated unclearly with unfinished sentences and half-spoken words. Therefore, the analysis of lyric texts requires skills of reconstruction. In order for a text to be narrative, a concept of story is significant. A story in lyric is conveyed in a different way as it tells the memories, beliefs, desires and thoughts of the protagonist, narrator in the form of monologue and, thus, time dimensions unite in one moment. In the history of literature, texts of women authors were often mentioned as plotless texts due to their lack of the classical narrative structure. The article analyzes three poems of Austrian Ingeborg Bachmann and Georgian Lia Sturua in the context of the Possible World Theory, and *écriture féminine*, and Woman as “Other” by Simone de Beauvoir, whereas the interpretation of the two poems enabled to highlight aspirations, desires and fantasies of Lyric I in a patriarchal/symbolic world.

Index Terms—Actual world, femininity, narration in lyrics, possible worlds, symbolic order.

I. INTRODUCTION

For many years, researchers strictly distinguished lyrics from drama and epic, arguing that lyrics are mainly focused on the poetic self and, accordingly, a lyric text was conceived as a poet’s “private conversation”. According to Käte Hamburger, when we read a lyric poem, we experience it, as we know that the poem is the statement of a subject - an author, while when we read a novel or drama, we understand that it is a fictional statement [1]. However, like drama and epic, lyric texts are fictional, as an author creates an event or story in them as well. Similar to lyrics, drama and epic convey an author’s attempt to express personal pain or sorrows of an epoch by means of characters, whereas the same is achieved by means of lyric I in poetry.

Contextual narratology is especially fruitful to analyze feminine narratives as since the origin and development of contextual narratology, the paradigm of the plot analysis has also changed, which was greatly influenced by feminist literary criticism and gender studies. The following aspects of the plot are of major importance for gender studies:

Paradigmatic meaning of the plot as a referential (directed at surrounding reality) and trans literature concept.

The relationship between the plot (story-line) and a gender identity of a character.

The reception of virtual actions and events which increases the logical complexity of the text [2].

In the history of literature, female authors’ female-oriented texts are often assessed as plotless and, thus, deficient texts, as they lack the classical narrative structure: coherence of events, events conveyed in external actions, an extension of time in text, etc. However, as it is often noted in gender-oriented narratology, narrative texts cannot be plotless and the difference between the plot-stressed and plotless texts is only graded (Gutenberg 2000, 80-88) [3]. In feminist studies, the subject of analysis is not only the non-existence of some female characters (mother, an older, unmarried woman) but also subtexts, underlying/hidden stories, which appear only as contours on the surface of the text, analysis/interpretation.

For studying and analyzing virtual, hidden phenomena, along with psychoanalytic and reception oriented models, Possible World Theory-PWT has acquired special significance in postclassical narratology since the 1990ies. Initially, PWT was formed in analytical philosophy independently from narratology. The concept was adapted to narrative theory and literature by Umberto Eco, Thomas Pavel, Lubomir Dolezel, who discovered that it was possible to describe the fictional worlds of the narrative by means of the concept.

The above-mentioned theory is especially fruitful for studying a gender-marked story, as the story is assessed as a dynamic principle in the context of possible worlds theory. The concept of the possible world introduced by Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz is adapted to fictional texts, the subject of interest is focused is the concept of the sequence of unrealized events (possible worlds) and plurality and possibility of worlds in fictional texts. Fictional texts are conceived as the semiotic mechanism of the structure of alternative worlds creating reality not mimetically, but: „ Fictional worlds are not imitations or representations of the actual world but sovereign realms of possibility, they establish diverse relationships to the actual world, situate themselves at a closer or further distance from reality” [4].

In philosophy, the theory of possible worlds is based on the suggestion that things might have gone differently than they actually went, meaning that, reality can be conceived as a modal system consisting of a number of worlds, such as:

- The actual world is the world we live in.
- Non-realized, virtual worlds (possible words), surrounding the actual world in the form of possible alternatives.

Based on this suggestion, in the early 1960ies, the

American logician Saul Kripke created P-Model in order to study the relationship between language and the world. P-Model suggests what might have happened in reality if things went differently [5].

The possibility/impossibility of worlds is determined by the “accessibility” concept, which considers the compatibility of laws of logic. The possible world is accessible from the actual world if the possible world does not contain contradictions in itself. According to Kripke, the actual world, with its ontological status differs from possible worlds and it is the only world with an autonomous existence, while all other worlds are the product of various mental activities, such as dreams, desires, hypothesis, fictions etc. If with Leibnitz, possible worlds are “transcendental” and they are discovered by means of human imagination and intellectual effort, for Kripke possible worlds are constructed by the creative activities of human minds: “Possible worlds are stipulated, not discovered by powerful telescopes” [5].

Marie-Laure Ryan attaches major importance to the possible world theory for studying a story. She defines text universum as the combination of the actual world and accompanying worlds (mental construction of figures) and singles out two meanings of possible worlds within the gender-marked context:

1. The dimension of external actions (physical, verbal) filled with internal mental actions. Internal actions may be analyzed/ studied by means of the forms of representation of characters: knowledge, values, desires, dreams, fantasy and hallucination.

2. The concept of recentering of world origin, according to which, any subject, whether they are actual-human or human-anthropomorphic, build their private world-system according to what they (he/she) perceive/think real. Accordingly, as soon as we assume ourselves as recipients of fictional text, characters uptake pseudo-reality and the world in which the characters live, becomes transitive of our world [6].

The researcher notes that some actions are realized in narrative texts, while some of them remain as possible alternatives, virtual. Unrealized possibilities are significant for the plot structure and reader expectations to anticipate actions.

According to the cognitive operation an alternative world forms in characters, Ryan distinguishes the following types of worlds:

- K (knowledge) - knowledge of the character, possibility
- I (intention)- Intentions of the character
- W (wish) - wishes, needs of the character
- O (obligation) - moral and ethical representations, systems of norms and values, obligations taken by the character and conventions
- F –universes – universum of fantasy.

Ryan describes different types of conflicts that may arise between each world of narrative text: a) “primary level of conflict”- the conflict between the TAW and the world of one of the characters. This is one of the most common conflicts and it is caused by the lack of realization of W-world of the character; b) the conflict between the worlds formed as a result of cognitive processes; c) the K-world of the character conflicts with the actual world due to the deficit of

information. The conflict is revealed through madness and frustration in the story.

As the action takes place only in some lyric texts and the action is mainly internal (due to the shortness of lyric texts), Possible World Theory-PWT allows for the reconstruction, and, accordingly, revealing, of views, sub-alternative state and hidden desires of lyric I.

II. THE ANALYSIS OF “CURRICULUM VITAE” BY INGEBOG BACHMANN AND, FROM THERE”, “UNANSWERED” BY LIA STURUA

Space and time are always important for understanding the message of a lyric poem. It is often the title of a poem that refers to space and time described in the poem, as it is the case with one of Ingeborg Bachmann’s Curriculum vitae – an interesting poem of fairly complex structure.

The action space is apparent in the very title and, presumably, it is the existence of a poetic subject, which, in spite of attempts, does not change and is always “long and dark”. The lyric text consists of 9 passages. The number of lines in each passage is different. The whole text is unrhymed, though alliteration and assonance are often met in it.

Alliterations: schneeweisse Schwester –sister white as snow (2 passages), Rachen des Lachens (3)- throat of laughter, Luft troft vom Saft (7) - juice dripped from the air. Assonance: Lang Nacht-long night, lang – Mann long-man, Aug-Aug- Geruch (1)- eye-eye-smell. The last, ninth passage of the poem has the following anaphoric repetitions: immer- immer (9) (always- always) l äg- l äg (8) (lie-lie), h ät- h ät (8) (would have-would have), by means of which the author introduces a hysterical tone in the poem and highlights the tragic state of lyric I.

The lyric poem opens with the third person marker indicating that the events taking place in the fictional world described in the text are not only subjective (internal feelings of lyric I), whereas the so called “frame phrase” - “long is the night” (lang ist die Nacht) [7] - shows the graveness of the actual world. In the actual world of the fictional text, the destiny of the lyric I is predetermined. This demonstrated by some kind of prophecy which, at the same time, represents an event (deviation from a norm) in the poem: “My hair will never be white” (mein Haar wird nicht wieß) [7]. In the actual world of the text, where people “are born from dark wombs of machines” (knoch aus dem Schoß von Maschinen) [7] people try to obey conventions, rules and norms existing in it (the actual world), honor holidays, traditions and everything that makes the actual world cultural/symbolic:

I honored the holidays
And only when,
The time of promise was over,
I took a bite of bread¹. [7]

The actual world described in the poem contains signs of the symbolic/patriarchal world. According to Lacan, the transfer to this world from the pre-oedipal phase does not happen with one’s own free will, but this transfer is forced

¹ Ich hielt die hohen Freiertage,
und erst wenn es gelobt war
brach ich das Brot.

and connected to father. With Lacan, femininity is associated with maternity, which was sacrificed to paternal/symbolic culture. However, for Lacan women's physical pleasure (jouissance) endangers men's order, since it is bounded only theoretically, while in reality it is in the unconscious and thence enters the symbolic discourse and enchants the male awakening the memory of imaginative passion [8].

W-wish and f-universes exist in lyric I, where it wishes "hunting grounds" (Jagdgründe) and in "Shameful dreams" (in den beschämenden Traum): "I will start playing with the tassels / Where snakes slither" (mit Troddeln spiel / aus denen Schlangen fransen) [7].

By the transition to dreams, unconscious desires and fantasies reveal, which the protagonist hysterically tries to suppress "and my feet stepped on the sowbugs of my soul" (und mein Fuß trat auf die Seelenasseln unterm Lederhimmel) [6] by using the anaphoric repetition "tentimesahundredthousand-tentimesahundredthousand" (zehnmahlhunderttausend-zehnmahlhunderttausend). Despite these attempts universes of its wishes and fantasies and the actual world cannot find peace: "The sharp desire to reconcile hung cold" (Friedenspfeifen hingen kalt) [7].

According to Julia Kristeva, women have two ways to find identity in the symbolic order: 1. to join in to symbolic order to make their voices hearable in political and historical processes or 2. to swim against the order and act as: "the most radical atheist, the most committed anarchist [9]. In Bachmann's text, the protagonist attempts to follow both of the paths, however, it understands the danger, that "life dreamed with power, full of pages of fake history" (actual world) leaves little chance for survival (finding identity).

From the actual world of the text parallel/possible world is visible:

From the mountain peaks
Lakes can be seen,
And in the lakes – mountains. Swing in the clouds
Unknown bells of different world² [7].

The alternative world remains unrealized in the text since conflicts (between its worlds i.e. W-O conflict) related to the dualistic understanding of femininity exist in the protagonist: femininity as the re-activation of imagination and femininity as biological/historical and real:

If I have had no fear of death,
Then I would have found the words
(And then I would not have missed the target ;)
I have had no fern in my heart
(Then I would have knocked down the sun)³ [7].

A new, possible world realized in the text is revealed as well in the Lyric I of the poem of Georgian women poet Lia Sturua, "From there". The world is a result of the mental activity of the protagonist.

² Von den Bergen
Sieht man Seen, in den Seen
Berge, und im Wolkengestühl
Schaukeln die Glocken
Der einen Welt.

³ O hätte ich nicht Todesfurcht!
Hätte ich das Wort,
(vielfeilt ich's nicht)
Hätte ich nicht Disteln im Herz,
(schlug ich die Sonne aus).

The other actualized world enables the lyric I to overcome the language system it lived before. Unlike the protagonist of Ingeborg Bachmann's "Curriculum vitae", it does not try to reconcile with established rules and norms, as it doubts the truth of the reality (language): "Feet has doubted the existence of soil for so long" (ramdeni khania, pekhebs ech'vi ep'arebat niadagis arsebobashi) [10]. Helene Cixous suggests that mother's imagination, order, instead of father's (symbolic) order, creates such a subject, which can consider it possible to realize the utopia of a free society. Poststructuralists thought that a language/text is a place where the social reality and individual consciousness reveal, while from feministic viewpoint, women should listen to feminine language in pre-Oedipal imagination, which Lacan considered as pre-linguistic and the enemy of culture, and give it (feminine language) cultural revolutionary power [8].

In the poem by Lia Sturua, the Lyric I breaks link with the actual world which is demonstrated by the loss of memory by the Lyric I: "I do not have the memory, / To call the house a house / Or the chair turned over at your sight – joy". (me is mekhiereba ar makvs, / sakhls rom sakhli davarkva, / an shens danakhvaze gadabrunebul sk'ams-sikharuli) [10].

Having left the symbolic world, the Lyric I enters the possible (semiotic) world, although it calls upon the addressee to join it in the new world: "Ask my address to the dead and come!" (akhal mk'vdrebs hk'itkhe chemi misamarti da modi!) [7]. Julia Kristeva uses Lacan's concept of a Split subject and discusses that two components may co-exist in a language: semiotic and symbolic, out of which semiotic is mainly related to feminine for Kristeva, and symbolic – masculine. According to Kristeva, before a child enters a symbolic order, it has an experience of voice, sound, colour, rhythm and body [9]. However these elements are not structured and, after entering the symbolic order (oedipal phase) they connect to each other by means of rules of grammar, syntax and society and utterances become meaningful [11]. In the poem, the lyric I tell the addressee to join its world because: "We will match the world. Tiny reforms, or poets" (kveq'anas movukhdebit. p'at'ar-p'at'ara repormebi, anu p'oet'ebi) [10].

In the poem, Unanswered ("up'asukhoba") , it is difficult for the lyric I to join the patriarchal/symbolic world, as it understands that the woman-individual does not belong to the "oppressive generality" (48) which operates with teamwork principles in the name of culture:

Plural number
Consists of singular
But not of clarity,
To divide its parts, tangle its nerves,
I - such a braid – walk on the walls –
Scarlet solo!⁴

According to Simone de Beauvoir, "Woman as Other" is a myth of the male. She serves to the man and, at the same time, projects his hopes and fears. Simone de Beauvoir uses

⁴ mravlobiti ritskhvi
mkholobitisagan k'i shedgeba
magram ara mk'apiobisagan,
rom daanats'evro, nervebi gadaukhlarto,
aseti nats'navi davdivar k'edzelze-
alisperi solo!

Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit to explain the mythologisation of woman (Hegel describes the relation between the subject and object, conscious and thing. First, the object appears to the idea as a strange and different thing. The process of dialectic development of consciousness is overcoming of this estrangement).

Hypothetic consciousness exists in parallel with other human consciousness. A battle for recognitions starts between them. First, consciousness stands in front of "The Other" (without consciousness). The relation of the subject to both of the instances is problematic: "The Other"/object may either remain completely strange to the subject, or the subject may be completely conquered by it. Parallel consciousness, which in contrast to the object, resists to the subject, forces the subject to acknowledge its essence. Given this background, the man/subject dreams of an intermediate creature, which he finds in a woman and he tries to make his dream come true. The man sees the woman as an intermediary between the nature and himself and defines it as "immanent": natural, cozy existence, whole. Whereas the man is defined as distanced from reality, defective existence, which creates its existence in confrontation with "The Other". At the same time, the "deficiency" of the man's human existence means individualization and freedom, overcoming the interconnection of the nature and body, transience and death [12]: "...The man knows that he exists as long as he is lives. However, with the coming of Patriarchate, life acquires double aspect in his eyes: awareness, will, transcendence, intellect, but it is also matter, passivity, immanence, it is flesh ("...Der Mensch weiss wohl, dass er nur existiert, solange er lebt. Aber seit dem Aufkommen des Patriarchats hat das Leben in seinen Augen einen zweifachen Aspekt bekommen: es ist Bewusstsein, Wille, Transzendenz, ist Geist, aber es ist auch Stoff, Passivität, Immanenz, ist Fleisch) [13]. Out of which, awareness, will, transcendence, intellect is ascribed to the male, whereas the female shall undertake transient and natural side of being: unconscious, passiveness, body.

In the poem, "Unanswered", a woman is a protagonist subject in an alternative, mental world of the lyric I, shown in her dream. A playbill seen in her dream points to her leading role in the action: "Although a playbill / Confirmed my distinctness with a leading role" (tumtsa apisha chems mk'apiobas / adast'urebda mtavari rolit) [10].

In the alternative world of the character, a split occurs between the K world (knowledge of the character) and the W world of wishes. Although the lyric I wants to have a role of a subject in a patriarchal order, knowledge of the actual world tells the protagonist in the third stanza that the woman has long received "the other" appointed role in a collective society: "But the team, chorus, people? / Black-and-white classics! / One-hundredths of / My colorful nuances, at least? "(magram gundi, koro, khalkhi? / shav-tetri k'lasik'a! / chemistana peradi niuansebis / maints, measedoba?) [10].

In order to make a woman-individual join the "Black-and-white classics" (shav-tetri k'lasik'a) in the patriarchal world, "colorful-hysterical women" are forced by psychiatrists to settle into "the Other's" role: "Mobilization of doctors for the purpose / That nerves can, finally, be combed". (ekimebis mobilizatsia im miznit, / rom nervebi, bolod da bolos, ivartskhneba) [10].

Luce Irigaray says that the only way out women have in the patriarchal world is to start deconstruction of patriarchal discourse by means of mimesis and masquerade. Masquerade, mimesis, hysteria are defense mechanisms for women, though these mechanisms will not help women find their place. Irony and parody making dominant logic ridiculous, is parasitic in the end, since it lives you tied to the thing you try to break [8].

The protagonist attempts to deconstruct the patriarchal discourse and reconstruct other possible reality, by means of which, it clearly demonstrates the result of woman's mythologization. This takes protagonist to hysteria and unanswered running in circles: "I came out of the week but / I do not recognize the face of Monday" (k'viridan gamovedi, magram / orshabatis sakhe ar metsnoba) [10].

III. CONCLUSION

The analysis of lyric texts of Ingeborg Bachmann and Lia Sturua by means of possible world theory and ecriture feminine, enabled the reception of virtually remained actions and events. Through the analysis of the two poems, by constructing feminine mental worlds, we discovered the relation between feminine language/worlds and actual worlds described in the texts: the lyric I of the poems is in search of identity which is a difficult task in a patriarchal/symbolic world which leads to strict rules and constructs. The Austrian and Georgian authors suggest possible/mental worlds in their poems as an alternative to the symbolic order and the opportunity of obtaining identity.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares no conflict of interest

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Thus, from the research sources it is obvious that Ansgar and Vera Nünning consider that contextual narratology has moved transliterary concept into the focus, also gender identity of character and fictional actions, for the analysis of which the approach of Marie-Laure Ryan is applied in the article. The researcher uses possible worlds theory to analyze the story. The possible worlds theory entered literature from philosophy through the works of Umberto Eco, Thomas Pavel, Lubomir Dolezel and Saul Kripke. In order to identify an intention of alternative worlds, the author uses French feminists Helen Cixous, Julia Kristeva, Luce Irigaray, who criticize beliefs of Freud and Jacques Lacan about a woman and consider the possibility of feminine language. Lyric texts are analyzed based on Simone de Beauvoir's "The other Sex" in which the feminist author discusses the place and dominated position of women in the patriarchal world. The author focuses on the possibility to analyze poems on the basis of narratologic approach and feminist theories and shows that despite the shortness and incoherence of narration, they narrate events and, therefore the article reveals messages of poetesses and identifies characteristics of feminine writing. In my opinion, by adjusting contextual narratologic categories to poetic texts, it is possible to read the story in the poems and consequently to analyze / interpret them.

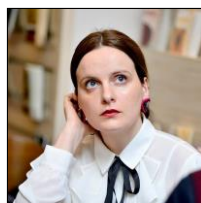
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