



### The Term “Art” as a New Aesthetic Discourse in European and Georgian Philosophical Thinking of the Early 19<sup>th</sup> Century

#### ABSTRACT

*In Georgian reality, the term “art”, can be found in a new, purely aesthetic sense, in terms of “artistic creation” – in the translation (1815) of Jean-Pierre Frédéric Ansillion’s (1767-1837) work “Aesthetic Judgments”, a French philosopher, member of the Prussian Academy, by David Bagrationi (1767-1819). As we know, the term “art” (Greek “techne”) has been historically interpreted in various ways. The term referred to practices established in the society, nature, individual creativity or crafts, as well as religious and mystical rituals. It shows a resemblance to the concepts such as “art – scientio – uccycmeo – art”. This term is especially noteworthy for the history of Georgian theoretical-literary and aesthetic thinking; however, a kind of substitute existed in our writing. It was “Facial expression”. As for the term “aesthetics” (the etymology of which is related to sensitivity, sensual perception of events), this term was introduced since 1750 by the German scientist Baumgarten in the meaning of the doctrine about “beauty” and the Georgian society got familiar with it through the translation of Ansillion’s work “Aesthetic Judgments” translated by David Bagrationi. It should also be noted that this work was the first aesthetic work to be translated into Georgian. This fact, in turn, is of the utmost importance. According to Georgian translation of Ansillion’s work “Aesthetic Judgments” proves once again that development of Georgian philosophical-aesthetic thinking in the 18th and 19th century proceeds with a creative approach to the philosophical heritage of the past, on the one hand, and on the other hand, it has its equivalent in European philosophy.*

**Keywords:** Aesthetic, Art, Philosophy, Translation.

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#### I. Introduction

From the point of view of the analysis of the typological concurrences of the European and Georgian philosophical-aesthetic thought, it is important to study the translated works that establish certain trends in Georgia and contribute to the formation of a new worldview paradigm. Among them, they enrich the established knowledge with a new terminology or a new understanding-definition of this terminology. Thus, it is important to analyze the literary nature of the monuments translated at the turn of the 18th-19th centuries, the motivation for their translation, the stylistic features of the translations, the translations of theoretical works, and their problems, in order to understand how much all this contributed to the formation of the new Georgian literature.

Starting from the 18th century, a large amount of translated literature entered Georgia. Among them were the works of Russian and foreign (mainly Western European) philosophers. These translations are noteworthy not only from the aspect of literary relations, but also from the point of view of how these relations influenced the origin of new Georgian writing.

The beginning of the new Georgian writing, which was marked by the origin of romanticism, is marked by the tendency to overcome the oriental poetic thought. Eastern poetic thinking was

overcome by a powerful return to the classical Christian past. Considering this context, the choice according to which this or that work was translated into Georgian is interesting.

Among the samples of philosophical-aesthetic nature translated in this period, the translation of "Aesthetic Judgments" by French philosopher, member of the Prussian Academy Jean-Pierre Frederic Ansillion (1767-1837) by David Bagrationi (1767-1819) is important. David Bagrationi translated this work from Russian in 1815 in St. Petersburg and dedicated it to David Meskhishvili. The Georgian translation is preserved in the form of several manuscripts. For David Bagrationi, it was a way to spread the ideas against religion that he supported.

David Bagrationi was the grandson of the Georgian king, Erekle II, and the son of George XII. In 1803, he was exiled to St. Petersburg along with other members of the Bagrationi's family. His scientific and literary work developed here. David Bagrationi was the first representative of the Georgian Voltarians. He translated Volterian's work into Georgian. The work written in the form of correspondence "New Sheikh" („სხვლი ბიბი“) belongs to him, in which the ideas of the French educators were reflected. David Bagrationi's satirical poems criticize the king's officials. The main theme of his lyrics is rural charm and love. David Bagrationi was engaged in lexicographic work. He added individual words to Sulkhan-Saba Orbelian's dictionary, added definitions, wrote Armenian, Turkish and Russian equivalents. He paid a lot of attention to filling and adding to the illustrative material.

Since 1803, David Bagrationi in St. Petersburg began to compile articles for the encyclopedic dictionary, which was an echo of the general encyclopedic lexicographical work at that time (the material is available in fragments). His historical work, published in 1814 in Georgian, is written according to the life scheme of Eastern Georgia, covers the period up to 1744 and is a continuation of the history of Georgia. His works, written in Russian, cover the history of Georgia from ancient times to the beginning of the 19th century.

David Bagrationi's work in the field of law is very important. In 1800, he codified Georgian law, compiled a collection known as "David Bagrationi's Law" (published by Davit Purtseladze in 1964); After settling in Russia, David Bagrationi was appointed a member of the ruling Senate of Russia, in addition, he chaired the committee responsible for reviewing and editing the Russian translations of Vakhtang VI law. "Review of Georgian Law and Jurisprudence" written in Russian belongs to him (1811-1816; 1959 published by A. Rogava).

David Bagrationi studied natural sciences. 1818 he finished "Abridged Physics" and sent it to Georgia for reproduction. The author discusses each physics phenomenon in motion. According to him, as a result of the mutual movement of the constituent particles of different substances, their disintegration and creation of a new substance takes place. David Bagrationi also added descriptions of notable experiments to the theoretical material. He mainly shared the ideas of the kinetic theory of heat; He was influenced by Mikhail Lomonosov and advanced European physicists.

As we mentioned earlier, David Bagrationi translated Ansillion's "Aesthetic Judgments" from Russian in 1815 in St. Petersburg. The Russian version of this book was banned in Russia immediately after its publication in 1813 due to its atheistic content and Voltairean ideas.

David Bagrationi sent several copies of his own translations of "Aesthetics Judgments" with his notes and comments to Georgia. The fact of translating the controversy surrounding Ansillion's book into Georgian shows that it was a way for David Bagrationi to spread the anti-religious ideas he supported. The Georgian translation of this text by David Bagrationi is preserved in the form of several manuscripts in the Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts.

David Bagrationi's notes are attached to the mentioned translation, which are presented in the form of numerous footnotes. These notes give a clear idea of the level of development of literary studies or the history of philosophy of that period. In the comments, a number of concepts from the literary-aesthetic field are explained, which were not known to Georgian thinking before.

Among them, it is worth noting the definition of several terms, of which the terms related to poetry and poetics, aesthetics and art are particularly noteworthy. In Georgian reality, the term "art" in a new, purely aesthetic sense, from the point of view of "artistic creativity" - it is found in David Bagrationi's translation of the works of Jean-Pierre Féderic Ansillion "Aesthetic Judgments". As is known, the term "art" (Greek: *techne*) was historically interpreted in different ways. In some cases,

the term referred to public practice and the whole of nature, and sometimes to individual creativity and craftsmanship. Even religious and magical acts. This term is also different and related to such concepts as "nature", "craftsmanship", "inner" creativity of the artist. The same is said about the corresponding terms - art - scientio - *искусство* - art.

In David Bagrationi's translation of Ansillion's works, the term "art" is used for the first time in a new, specifically, aesthetic sense, from the point of view of "artistic creativity". According to R. Siradze: "For the history of Georgian theoretical-literary and aesthetic thought, this term is particularly noteworthy, although a kind of substitute for it existed in our writing. It was "სახისმეტყველება" (,,Facial expression ").

As for the actual term "aesthetics" (originally derived from the word - sensitivity, perception of events by feeling, this term was established by the German scientist Baumagarten in 1750 in the sense of "Doctrine about beauty"), the Georgian public got to know it through David Bagrationi's translation of Ansillion's "Aesthetic Judgments". It should be noted here that this work was the first work of an aesthetic nature that was translated into Georgian. This fact, in turn, is of great importance.

First of all, it is worth noting that, according to Ansillion, art is a product of the mind, the human mind is capable of unlimited development (which is a necessary condition for its moral and social growth), and all these ("surprising properties") are endowed to it by nature.

It is interesting to put the question in Ansillion: "Isn't every simple thing beautiful, but every beautiful thing simple?" From this point of view, "simplicity" does not "constitute the beautiful". According to Ansillion, the main function and great secret of art is to act on the sense of infinity in the human soul through finite objects. Music and poetry evoke a sense of infinity. Therefore, they are always closely related to religion and worship.

It is noteworthy that Ansillion's poetry is presented as one of the genres of art, artistic creativity. This is news. As is known, until the 18th century, there was no conceptual definition of art as an artistic creation. According to Ansillion, "poetry is a celebration of the spirit of freedom..." Ansillion approaches the Aristotelian definition of poetry: "The business of the poet is to tell not what happened, but what would happen and what is possible according to probability and necessity... The historian and the poet differ from each other in that the former speaks about what happened, and the other speaks about what could have happened".

Ansillion's definition of art is interesting: "Art separates objects and sensitivities into single and distinct ones; it produces the two most important sensibilities among us, the beautiful and the high". (The mark is ours - T.V.).

This kind of understanding is close to the Platonic aesthetic approach to philosophy. Here, first of all, it is meant that the philosopher will be able to access beauty. By discovering the beauty in the mundane world, he explores the path to the supernatural beauty of the heavenly world. For philosophy, not only the mind is necessary, but also the eros, the love of every beautiful thing. This is indicated by the unforgettable prose of "Symposium" and "Phaedrus". It is clear that Platonism is a philosophy of two worlds, and according to Plato, whose thought could not go beyond the limits of this world, should not hope to ever understand it. It is also inaccessible to the person who does not see earthly beauty, because for the philosopher this beauty (in accordance with the words of Diotima to Socrates in "Symposium") constitutes the first step of the ladder, which starts with physical beauty and then shares other types of beauty with it: First, he will show the beauty of science, and finally, he will surprise you with the contemplation of the beauty itself. This beauty is forever unchanging, neither increasing nor decreasing. Moreover, it is not beautiful in some separate part, but beauty itself, free from all traces of corporeality and transience. "He rests in immortal space, where beauty and truth are one".

Ansillion's discussion of art is an attempt to analyze such philosophical-aesthetic categories as beautiful, sublime, true, etc. The classification of different branches of art according to "styles" is given here, hedonistic categories, some details of the human psyche are discussed.

It is very noteworthy that Ansillion divides the "styles" into two groups: "Low style -The style of the poor" and "The Noble style". In addition, he adds that "simplicity is the eternal beauty of nobility, one of whom separates nobility from simplicity, and often simplicity gives birth to nobility." Here, the aesthetic function of art is an elite phenomenon. According to Ansillion, artists of this style

were Homer and Virgil, Horace, Herodotus and Xenophon.

Ansillion is a supporter of sublime, pompous art: it is worth noting that Ansillion's discussion of the sublime and beauty derives from Kant's special treatise. On the other hand, Kant in his interpretation of the inspirational function of art from Neoplatonist-Christian aesthetics. Ansillion develops the idea that the sublime creates an aesthetic phenomenon in art. However, with the sublime Ansillion, a sense of beauty is achieved.

Ansillion advocates the primacy of beauty in art, thus approaching the ancient understanding of this category. It is known that already in the middle ages, the sublime became the main category of aesthetic expression. But sublime not in the sense of Ansillion, which the feeling of beauty gives rise to, but as something attained by the negation of beauty. Such a trend existed for a long time. It is known that in Eastern-Christian renaissance art, there was a specific feeling for knowing God - the understanding of the "exalted". Thus, obviously, it cannot be said that the aesthetics of that time denies the artistic nature of art, its aesthetics. In art, the aesthetic phenomenon is essentially created not by beauty, but precisely by sublimity.

It is noteworthy that with Ansillion, poetry is presented as one of the genres of art, as well as artistic creativity. This is news. As is known, until the 18th century, there was no conceptual definition of art as an artistic creation. To the extent that there was no unified concept of art, there was no aesthetics as a science of the common regularities of different branches of art, and if generalizing opinions were expressed in this field, it would primarily concern the nature of beauty. But, even in this case, we often have not an aesthetic theory of beauty, but a more philosophical opinion about beauty, i.e., Consideration of beauty from a general philosophical, philosophical- religious point of view. Accordingly, the philosophical opinion of the time about the beautiful does not consider the establishment of the aesthetic nature of beauty, but mainly its consideration in relation to the religious-mystical concept, which is very far from the aesthetic understanding.

Ansillion develops a dialectical theory of art from the standpoint of knowing the beautiful through feeling, expression and punishment. He considers art to be the primary function of purification, catharsis. And purification with it, as in Neoplatonism, is a condition of human elevation, which has not only epistemological, but also ethical and aesthetic significance. "Greatness of character" is determined by "exaltation" and "strength". But the quality of the human soul is also imperfection (naivete) and simplicity (simplicity).

Ansillion chooses the following types of imperfection: "imperfection of sensitivity", "imperfection of mind", "imperfection of character". In addition, here "sensitivity" corresponds to the physical beginning (flesh), and "character" - psyche (душа), as for the mind, it is an adequate concept of the highest moral judge (дух).

According to Ansillion's reasoning, complete harmony, spiritual comfort, and happiness of both individuals and the entire society are possible only at the lowest stage of development. But Ansillion believes that the source of trouble is not the further development of civilization, not the progress of mankind, but greed, the degree of which increases with the growth of development. It should be noted that here the Ansillion-Bagrationian reasoning comes close to the Petritsian understanding of the subject of cognition.

According to Proclus and Petrus, knowledge begins at the level of the soul: it moves upwards and passes through every stage between the soul and the first beginning. Every "heard" is higher in relation to the hearer, and therefore "everything heard is better than heard". Here the steps between the soul and the first principle represent both the knower and the known as "Hear me" and "Audible". The mind, as an essence higher than the soul, is the object of knowledge in relation to the soul and is knowable in relation to the real being. The real being is the knower of the Henades (Divine numbers) and so on - from the simple to the complex to the first beginning, which Petritsi characterizes as the one and goodness located above all, to which he took the honor and called him father". Ansillion gives a very peculiar definition of beauty: "Sincerity is more common in females than in males; grace belongs to them, because nature is eternally perfect". Here Ansillion's reasoning is devoted to questions of aesthetics. It is interesting to put the question in Ansillion: "Isn't every simple thing beautiful, but every beautiful thing simple?"

In this sense, simplicity does not "constitute beauty". According to Ansillion, "the creation of

arts first produces among us the excitement of beauty, and later we will be created sensitive to the dignity of its simplicity, when artistic action produces expression and feeling in our desired action, then this action will awaken us all the more astonishingly and wonderfully, if art takes simple measures for it".

And then Ansillion gives a definition: "Simplicity is a natural companion of beauty, it accompanies it like a ghost of a body. Personality is the simplicity of its composition, and simplicity is one of the evils in the morphing of Excellencies, by this it is clear that the eternal simple existence of beauty is beautiful, although the simple often does not create the beautiful".

Ansillion distinguishes the following types of simplicity in art: "simplicities of the genus (sujet - suzhe), "simplicities of planes" (that is, the Gina of decrees of majesty) and "children of simplicity" (that is, the gina of arrangements). "Simplicity" is expressed in the main idea of gender, which the artist sets as the starting point for his creations.

The "simplicity of the decrees" "is suitable for representations, with the idea of the main idea of the disposal of the borders and its division, if the divisions are not numerous, but with many meanings, then the decrees are also simple for the creation of creation".

As for the "calm simplicity", according to Ansillion, it is "the subject of eternal correspondence, which is created in the neighborhood and their memories, which are the expression of the appropriate creations and in the presence of the voice of the heart, the nature of creation, calm simple, like nature". The Ansillonian understanding of beauty is very interesting. Here it has the function of universality and in a way approaches the medieval theoretical representation of the "word" (the hypostasis of the deity "Logos" can be understood by its analogy).

This kind of reasoning also includes elements of the doctrine of two kinds of wisdom, insofar as here "beauty" and "logos" are reduced to the same meaning. The concept of "Logos", as is known, expresses rational and irrational, esoteric and exoteric.

Knowing the truth is possible as a result of moral and mental perfection of a person. And beauty is the main factor of a person's elevation, which later becomes a stimulator of his moral or mental perfection - this is Ansillion's opinion. However, this reasoning is not original. It is represented in the teachings of the famous triad in ancient philosophy - Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato. A wise man cannot but care for the perfection of knowledge and morality, because as soon as he feels the lack of it by self-awareness, and knows that God has it in full, the man who has become a lover of wisdom (philosopher) begins to strive for perfection, and this perfection is at the same time moral and mental perfection, such the path to perfection was defined by Socrates as a living act of unwritten thinking.

At the same time, it should be noted that in Ansillion's worldview, the place of deity among the objects of study of philosophical fields is not defined. We think that this also caused D. Bagration's interest in his works. Ansillion discusses the triadic principle of the mind's drive to access and analyze truth. His reasoning reminds us of the judgment of the famous Georgian philosopher, Solomon Dodashvili. According to Ansillion, three moments serve to know and convey the truth: theory, hypothesis and system is cited here. A footnote added by D. Bagrationi where all three terms are explained.

According to the Georgian translation of Ansillion's works "Aesthetic Judgments" it is once again proven that the development of the Georgian philosophical-aesthetic thought of the 18th and 19th centuries takes place with a creative approach to the past philosophical heritage - on the one hand, and on the other hand, it has its own match in European philosophy.

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