

The Problem of Europeanism in Georgian Literature of the 1910s and 1920s

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ABSTRACT

Georgia's relationship with the outside world has always been of particular importance for Georgian writers. This reality was shaped not only by the country's geographical position but also by the fact that, throughout much of its history, Georgia found itself surrounded by dominant imperial powers and became the target of their persistent aggression. Under these circumstances, Georgian rulers were repeatedly compelled to seek external support to preserve their statehood. Over the centuries, however, the accompanying hope of preserving national identity and political independence was interpreted differently by the leaders of various Georgian kingdoms and principalities on the one hand, and by Georgian patriots on the other. Specifically, most of these figures, including writers, directed their hopes primarily toward Europe. This orientation of Georgian writers was essentially determined by the fact that the historical development of Georgian literature was virtually inseparable from the significant events unfolding among European writers. Thus, the European creative world had become a powerful source of inner impulse for the leading Georgian writers, enriching Georgian literature with numerous innovations. In particular, the significant events in Georgia during the 1910s and 1920s further strengthened the pro-European outlook of most Georgian writers.

Keywords: Georgia, Europe, Asia, literature, history, Russia, orientation, independence

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INTRODUCTION

In examining the issue outlined in the abstract of this study, the paper analyzes texts produced by Georgian writers of the 1910s and 1920s that primarily address Georgia's relationship with Europe. This relationship was generally interpreted in two main dimensions: the aspiration to establish stable political and state relations, and the effort to reinforce cultural and literary affinity. The perspectives expressed in these works were profoundly shaped by the significant historical developments of the time, Georgia's active struggle for independence, the recognition of the impracticality of sustained relations with the Russian Empire, the formation of the Soviet Union, and the subsequent occupation of Georgia by the renewed Russian imperial power. These political circumstances strongly influenced the literary output of Georgian writers of the period.

Georgian writers of this period approached the country's relationship with the outside world from several essential perspectives. One of the key factors shaping the development of modern Georgian literature was the growing influence of European literary movements of the time, most notably Symbolism (evident in the works of the Tsiskarantselebi [Blue Horns] and other contemporary authors), as well as Impressionism, Expressionism, Futurism, and others. The study of these influences later became a significant focus of Georgian literary criticism in the post-Soviet period. Since the primary aim of this essay is to analyze the pro-European perspectives of Georgian writers, our focus will be limited to texts from the 1910s and 1920s in which this issue becomes the central subject of reflection and imagination. Artistic and journalistic writings of the period demonstrate that Georgian authors articulated a range of perspectives regarding Georgia's political relations with the outside world and the literary innovations emerging in contemporary Europe. Despite these differences, the creative and journalistic discourse of most writers reveals a distinctly pro-European orientation, with European values occupying a prominent and often explicitly articulated place in their worldview. The assessment and understanding of this problem have reached such a scale in Georgian writing of the mentioned period that a comprehensive analysis of the material cannot be accommodated within a single journal article¹. As is evident from the artistic and journalistic texts of the period, Georgian writers did not view the country's relationship with the outside world from a single, unified perspective. For the majority, Georgia's political future was closely tied to rapprochement and integration with Europe. A second group of writers argued that, because Georgia geographically lies at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, the nation should continue to embrace this intermediary role. A third group maintained that, given its location, Georgia's future should be aligned primarily with the broader Asian regional space. In the aftermath of Russia's reconquest of Georgia and its incorporation into the Soviet Union, a fourth, forcefully articulated position emerged, one that regarded Georgia as an inseparable part of the Soviet (that is, Russian) political sphere. Regarding the research problem, several texts published by Georgian writers were reprinted in collected volumes such as *96 Essays, 1920s* (Khelaia, 1986) and *Europe or Asia?* (Khoperia, 1997).

¹ A more extensive discussion of this topic appears in the essay "Georgia and the Outside World through the Eyes of Georgian Writers (1910–1920s)", published in volume four of *Kartvelological studies* (Nikoleishvili, 2018, pp. 15–125).

METHODS

The research employs a multifaceted methodological approach integrating critical textual analysis, historicist principles, and interpretive analytical methods.

RESULTS

Analysis of the literary and journalistic texts produced by Georgian writers in the 1910s–1920s demonstrates that the authors evaluated Georgia's future in relation to significant international developments of the period and reflected on both the prospects for restoring state independence and the country's potential paths of development. While the writers of that period held different views on Georgia's future statehood, most regarded Georgia as an integral part of Europe and linked its political future and developmental trajectory to its continued, inseparable association with this part of the world. In the literary domain, a tendency to align with the modernist and avant-garde movements flourishing in European literature at the time was discernible in the works of several Georgian writers, albeit in forms adapted and transformed through the lens of national literary traditions.

DISCUSSION

As Georgia's long history of statehood demonstrates, the country's relationship with the outside world has always been of particular significance. This reality was shaped not only by Georgia's geographical position but also by the fact that, at nearly every stage of its history, the nation found itself encircled by dominant regional powers and subjected to their continual aggression. Under such circumstances, Georgian rulers were repeatedly compelled to seek external support to safeguard state independence.

Throughout this centuries-long search, the hope of preserving national identity and protecting state independence was understood differently by Georgia's political leaders and by its patriots. Although individual representatives of both groups attempted to secure national salvation through various strategies of political maneuvering with neighboring imperial powers, these efforts rarely produced the desired results. Support from abroad seldom extended beyond verbal sympathy, and Georgia's relationship with Europe, for the most part, remained confined to the reception and assimilation of its cultural, intellectual, and artistic achievements.

The aspiration toward rapprochement with the European literary world was particularly pronounced among Georgian writers in the 19th century. However, this should not be understood as an abandonment of their national roots. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the European literary world served as a powerful creative stimulus for leading Georgian writers of the period, enriching Georgian literature with numerous significant innovations.

From the Russian conquest of Georgia in 1801 until its restoration of independence in 1918, Georgia's relations with Europe were limited to cultural and educational channels mediated by Russia. During the short period of Georgia's restored independence from 1918 to 1921,

the situation changed significantly, and efforts to connect Georgia with Europe intensified.

Although the pursuit of a state-level connection with Europe effectively ceased after Georgia's re-occupation by Russia in 1921 and its incorporation into the Soviet Union, questions concerning European political orientation continued to attract the interest of several prominent Georgian writers into the late 1920s. From the 1930s onward, however, the drastic tightening of Soviet ideological control and the onset of mass repressions brought an end to this line of thought as well. As a result, Georgia's engagement with Europe became confined to narrowly regulated intellectual and cultural exchanges.

The pursuit of closer ties with Europe entered a fundamentally new phase after 1991, following the re-establishment of Georgia's state independence. Since then, successive governments have pursued policies to deepen political, economic, and cultural relations with Europe.

All of the above observations are particularly relevant in this context, as the question of Georgia's political and state orientation emerged as a central theme shaping the creative perspectives of Georgian writers. Following the restoration of Georgia's independence in 1918, this issue gained particular significance. Unfortunately, this chapter in the country's history lasted less than three years, and in February 1921, Georgia was occupied by Soviet Russia. Before that, however, debates over the political direction the newly independent state should pursue and the developmental path it ought to follow were both active and intense. Georgian writers of the period actively participated in these discussions, contributing their voices to the broader national dialogue.

Evidence from their writings indicates that most Georgian authors supported the necessity of pursuing a pro-European political orientation. They viewed alignment with Europe as essential not only for Georgia's statehood but also for the advancement of Georgian culture, literature, art, education, and broader intellectual development. This perspective can be illustrated through selected passages from authors who were particularly prominent in articulating such views.

One notable example is Mikheil Javakhishvili (1880-1937), whose pro-European outlook was manifested not only in his journalistic articles but also through his active practical work as a member of the governing bodies of the National Democratic Party. The writer, who was thoroughly versed in the essence of global events at the time, was deeply convinced that Georgia should permanently reject the Northern orientation and choose Western Europe as the central reference point for state development. He asserted that, unlike the previous era, the path of our country's state development "no longer went through Moscow and Petrograd, but cut across the Black Sea and passed over the Danube valley" (Javakhishvili, 2001, p. 569). The writer gave the following assessment to this kind of political-state vector shift towards Western Europe: "Enough of feeding on European culture sifted through Moscow and Petrograd. It contains more Mongol poison than the pure drink of the West" (Javakhishvili, 2001, p. 569).

Mikheil Javakhishvili's national, political, and state perspectives broadened in the articles he wrote between 1917 and 1921, following the collapse of the Russian Empire. Specifically, in his publications from that period, he uncompromisingly opposed the Russophile position of the Georgian Social Democrats and strongly condemned those who were, in the author's

words, “accustomed to someone else’s patronage” and still expected help from the North, even in the changed political situation. Dissatisfied with their stance, Javakhishvili once wrote with astonished indignation: “We could not internalize the obvious truth that we no longer have a ‘patron,’ and that instead of help and order from the North, we will inevitably face the wrath of God in the form of reaction and anarchy” (Javakhishvili, 2001, p. 570).

Konstantine Gamsakhurdia (1893-1975) plays a particularly crucial role among the Georgian writers active in the 20th century, who contributed significantly to further establishing European values in Georgian reality. The writer, who was educated in Europe and thoroughly understood the essence of the events taking place there, was not only actively connected to contemporary European literary processes through his artistic work, but also actively sought to ensure that the Georgia of his time would become a more organic part of the European world.

Konstantine Gamsakhurdia’s positive attitude toward Europe led many contemporaries to regard him as an “apologist for European culture”. In his own words, he was not merely a writer and thinker oriented toward Europe; he actively sought to ensure that the future development of Georgian literature would be aligned with European cultural processes. His perspective was grounded in the conviction that, at that historical moment, the “only correct path” was the one charted by European culture, and that “without it, everything else belonged to the past and to a provincial world” (Gamsakhurdia, 1983, p. 438). Konstantine Gamsakhurdia asserted that, despite the fact that Georgia had been “severed from Europe” due to circumstances beyond its control, the “ideas from there often followed the airwaves, and the core of our newest literature was permeated by this general European spiritual mood” (Gamsakhurdia, 1983, p. 251).

Konstantine Gamsakhurdia emphasized that the inclusion of Georgian literature in the European space, as well as the beneficial influence of events there, was preceded by a relatively long period during which “Georgian literature was shaped by dominant Eastern cultural influences. There were Arabian, Persian, and Byzantine periods in Georgian literature. Aleksandre Chavchavadze ended the Persian influence. He also began the Russian cycle in Georgian literature. This cycle was ended by... Ilia Chavchavadze” (Gamsakhurdia, 1983, p. 418).

In Konstantine Gamsakhurdia’s opinion, a large number of writers who emerged on the literary arena in the 1900s and 1910s considered the main factor in the “renewal of the ancient tradition of Georgian literature” (the writer’s words) as closely linked to their efforts to introduce Symbolist, Impressionist, and Expressionist tendencies. Here is the assessment Konstantine Gamsakhurdia gave to this phenomenon in his 1922 article, *Impressionism or Expressionism*: “The Impressionist-Symbolist current came to Georgia through two paths. One through Russia, the other through Europe. Going to Europe was becoming commonplace. This was an unusual thing until now. However, the last five years of warfare completely severed Georgia from Europe” (Gamsakhurdia, 1983, p. 418).

According to K. Gamsakhurdia, the Georgian nation’s longstanding aspiration toward Europe, visible at nearly every stage of the country’s history, also implied a commitment to safeguarding the Christian faith from the “fanatical East”. For centuries, the Georgian

people fought continuous wars against enemies advancing predominantly from the East. Although they repeatedly appealed to Europe for assistance, usually in vain, Georgians nonetheless fought not only to defend a religious faith central to their national identity but also, to some extent, to shield Europe itself against eastern aggression.

For example, in his article *A Good European*, Gamsakhurdia offers the following assessment: “The tragedy of our history was our solitude. If there truly is a blind Moira in history, it was realized upon us. This joyless Moira assigned us such cultural-historical tasks in the East, to the realization of which we sacrificed our best energy and blood. Fate delivered us into the mouth of the fanatic East. The Georgian nation, a pioneer of Western Christian civilization, was crucified for the cross of Christ, and the Christian West practically never came to our aid. The Christian countries of the West also fought the East, but they always had a common front. Our kings and princes always called upon Europe, always looked for rescuers, and the response was only outlined in delicate epistles. Today, too, the Georgian race is alone” (Gamsakhurdia, 1985, p. 292).

Galaktion Tabidze (1891-1959) played a significant role in the “Europeanization” of 20th-century Georgian literature. He emerged as a poet who actively established European modernism through his creative work. From this perspective, his 1919 poetry collection *Artistic Flowers* (Tabidze, 1919) is particularly significant. According to many literary critics, it is the most innovative work in 20th-century Georgian poetry.

Galaktion Tabidze’s European perspective was manifested not only in his creative proximity to European literature but also in the critical attitude he displayed towards the negative phenomena in everyday life, including spiritual life, as a result of the powerful influence of the Asian factor. In the 1924 poem *We Are Asia*, for example, Tabidze expressed his critical stance toward the Asian world (Tabidze, 2005, p. 73):

Anger and hunger make us speak
 We are Asia, we are Asia, we are uncultured.
 And unculturedness is a dog, a huge dog,
 Which is always snarling and biting.
 No, it is even crueler than a rabid dog.
 Nothing will be harmed if we kill it.
 Let us go and kill the disgusting unculturedness.
 They say we have a great capacity for patience.
 What is patience? Show us some other capacity as well.
 The capacity for work, the capacity for enlightenment, the capacity for feeling.
 ... So, do away with the waste of the past, do away with the swamps,
 Death to the merciless enemy of the masses - unculturedness.

Galaktion Tabidze was no exception. His critical attitude toward the Eastern (or Asian)

world and his active attempts to incorporate European literary innovations into Georgian literature were among the dominant trends in Georgian literature during the first third of the last century. From this point of view, the *Tsisperkantslebi* (*Blue Horns*)'s contribution to "aligning the Georgian verse with the European radius" (in the words of Titsian Tabidze) is particularly valuable. Although they were only partially able to realize their creative ambitions, the *Tsisperkantslebi* made a significant contribution to the establishment of new tendencies in Georgian literature.

In assessing their literary activity in this way, it is essential to note that the *Tsisperkantslebi* directed the developmental trajectory of Georgian literature toward Europe, thereby making European literary processes, together with national traditions, a central driving force in its evolution.

Their worldview is clearly evident in both poetic texts and essays and literary articles that reflect their artistic and aesthetic views. Despite the internal contradictions and dual approaches that sometimes characterize the thought expressing the creative credo of the *Tsisperkantslebi*, the main direction of their aesthetic perspective is, first and foremost, a clearly expressed European orientation.

For example, in the article *Translated Literature*, published in the first issue of the 1923 newspaper *Rubikoni*, Paolo Iashvili (1892-1937) noted with regret that, unlike the earlier centuries when "our ancestors read Plato in Georgian, and Greek philosophy had its own school among us", the period of Georgian literature considered by many to be the age of revival is sinful "for being confined within ethnographic borders and for lagging behind European culture" (Iashvili, 1923).

Paolo Iashvili, as the head of the literary group he founded, considered their pro-European orientation to be the primary path to realizing the creative plans of the *Tsisperkantslebi*. He gave the following assessment to the process of renewal initiated by their entry into the literary arena: "Our thought was always directed toward the world arena of poetry... Within the limits of our ability, we conscientiously studied and worked on all the problems that exist today in the world poetry today" (Robakidze, 1920).

Other representatives of this group also gave such an ambitious assessment to the contribution of the *Tsisperkantslebi* in the process of establishing Europeanism in Georgian literature. Titsian Tabidze (1895–1937) articulated this view as follows: "Despite the fact that we were severed from reality and proved incapable of correctly comprehending social and political affairs, the new school of poets still played a great role against the background of the impoverished Georgian verse of that time. We were the first to introduce words into Georgian verse that had been banished or were never used at all. Real sonnets, tercets, and triolets were written for the first time. Rhyme was given a new scope. We used alliteration and assonance in a new way. The translations of Baudelaire, Verlaine, Rimbaud, and other French and Russian poets expanded the scope of poetic themes and images. Georgian verse acquired a new sonority" (Tabidze, 1985, p.9).

As Titsian's statements clearly show, he considered *Tsisperkantslebi*'s most significant accomplishment to be their active effort to introduce European Modernist tendencies into Georgian literature.

For Tabidze, this pro-European orientation formed the foundation of his artistic and aesthetic worldview, leading him to fundamentally oppose, and even reject, the Asian world and its spiritual values. He openly and radically expressed this position in his Symbolist-period articles and poetic texts.

In this regard, his article *Manifesto to Asia*, published in the first issue of the newspaper *Barrikadi* in 1920, is of particular importance. In it, Titsian revealed his anti-Asian outlook with radicalism. Specifically, he gave a strongly critical assessment of Georgian writers' historical attitude towards Asia, conceiving the future of Georgian spiritual life as complete isolation from this world. Titsian Tabidze emphasized that, by expressing this opinion, he was not only revealing his personal position but also speaking on behalf of his entire creative group. He began and ended the aforementioned *Manifesto* with a call expressing this viewpoint. Specifically, he declared at the beginning: "The first thesis of the 'Blue Horns', Rejection of Asia". At the end, he wrote, "The first voice is the voice of fighter poets, the denial of Asia" (Robakidze, 1920, p. 2).

In Titsian's opinion, his attitude toward Asia stemmed from the belief that Georgia had been turned into its de facto part. At the same time, the doors connecting it to Europe remained so restricted that, despite centuries of attempts, it could not cross this threshold. Specifically, here is the assessment Titsian himself gave to this historical event in the aforementioned publication: "Georgia is never mentioned unless it is together with Asia.

Georgia exists on its own. The traditions of Asia are merely a nightmare... We abandoned all previous religions and approached the eunuch Byzantium. The nation, whose foot was set to cross immense Asia, could not fit into the worn-out measure of Byzantium. Its history is one magnificent revolt against Byzantium, which stood at the entrance of Europe's doors. The sea of Mongols, which surrounded Georgia, moved south across the Black Sea. The doors close forever. And Asia, that old and fat cretin, lay down upon Georgia" (Robakidze, 1920).

It would not be an exaggeration to say that the anti-Asian perspective expressed by Titsian in the aforementioned fragment was the result of a subjective and unsubstantiated assessment of historical reality. The claim that this factor played only a negative role in Georgia's history is fundamentally wrong.

Titsian's markedly critical stance toward Asia was far from incidental, a point reinforced by several of his other writings. Particularly noteworthy in this respect is his article *Irony and Cynicism*, published in issues IX–X of *Dreaming Ibexes* in 1923, in which he not only elaborated further on his anti-Asian perspective but also addressed the question of integrating Georgian literature into the "radius of Europe". Titsian argued that nineteenth-century Georgian literature "reminds us of the song of a man sitting in a jar. The whole tragedy of Georgian poetry was that the poets lagged behind the native primitive, and the radius of Europe always bypassed Tiflis [Tbilisi]" (Tabidze, 1923, p. 6).

The primary purpose of such an assessment of the works of 19th-century Georgian writers (including Ilia and Akaki), which occupied an essential place in Titsian's Symbolist thought, was motivated by the ambitious desire to glorify the role that, in the poet's opinion, the representatives of the *Tsisperkantslebi* literary group were playing in the process

of aligning Georgian literature with the “European radius”. For example, Titsian asserted that it was primarily they who “first and consciously rejected the theory of the synthesis of Asia and Europe. Grigol Robakidze proved that any talk of Asian influence in Georgia was impossible. Here, the influence was not that of the Mongols and other conquering nations, but of complete destruction... This national decadence has persisted in us to this day. The Georgian verse and the Georgian word fell into the hands of the *Tsisperkantslebi* like a burnt-out firebrand. And a real miracle was needed for the verse to become a verse and for the primacy of form and idea to arise” (Tabidze, 1923, p. 6).

In addition to the subjective assessment of the historical development of Georgian literature and the creative role of the *Tsisperkantslebi* in the cited fragment, Titsian provided an incorrect interpretation of Grigol Robakidze’s views. Titsian noted that Robakidze had a similarly dismissive attitude toward the Eastern world, but this is not the case. In reality, this is not the case because Robakidze believed that historically, both Western and Eastern tendencies were strongly manifested in Georgian literature.

It is also important to note that, in the early phase of his creative career, Titsian Tabidze did not maintain a consistent position on this issue. In particular, in some of his publications of that time, he connected the path of Georgian literature’s development not only to European literary processes but also to the Eastern poetic values that he himself fundamentally rejected. For example, in the poem *From the Book “Cities of Chaldea”*, written in 1916, Titsian defined the factors that became the foundation of his own poetic individuality as follows (Tabidze, 1985, p.77):

I put Hafiz’s rose in Proudhon’s vase,

I plant Baudelaire’s evil flowers in Besiki’s garden...

As the cited lines indicate, Titsian considered his main achievement to be his successful merging of European modernism, implied by the name of the famous French modernist poet Proudhon (or Prud’homme/Prudhon), and classical Persian verse, mentioned by the name of Hafez, the famous 14th-century Persian poet, into Georgian poetry (*Besiki’s garden*, in his words).

In discussing the worldview of pro-Western Georgian writers, particular attention should be given to an article by Geronti Kikodze (1886-1960) published in 1916 in issue No. 279 of the newspaper *Sakartvelo*, titled *The Gates of the West*. In the article, Kikodze argued that the only desirable path for the development of Georgian literature was its integration into the European literary space.

Geronti Kikodze asserted that the Eastern world played a significant role in the development of Georgian spiritual culture, but only in the past. At that time, “Persian, Arabian, Syrian, and Byzantine cultures flourished in the East, while Western Europe was sparsely populated. However, for a long time now, the world’s focus has shifted toward the West, with Western Europe serving as the primary source of contemporary intellectual and cultural vitality. Therefore, opening the gates to the West is paramount for any self-aware, active nation. Otherwise, its hearth will cool and its name will freeze” (Kikodze, 1916).

“This viewpoint was further reinforced by Kikodze’s interpretation of contemporary Georgian realities. As a result, he provided an overly biased assessment of Georgia’s creative heritage: “If we lacked cultural ideas until now, it was because unavoidable natural and social barriers were erected between our country and Western Europe” (Kikodze, 1916).

Alongside his affirmative stance toward Western European cultural values and his sharply critical attitude toward the Eastern world, Geronti Kikodze was equally severe toward authors with Slavophile orientations, evaluating the incorporation of Georgian as lacking meaningful future prospects. He attributed this to what he considered a fundamental circumstance: that “Slavic culture”, as an independent and fully “established type”, did not exist, and that the Slavs had merely “more or less assimilated elements of the great Western European culture”. As for the “Slavic tribes” themselves, Kikodze argued that Russians did not occupy a leading position even among them; in his view, the Poles and Czechs were more advanced in this regard, while Russia was a “half-European, half-Asian country that carried divisive forces within its very essence from the outset” (Kikodze, 1916).

Based on all of the above, Geronti Kikodze believed that the only path forward for Georgian culture was to establish closer ties with the Western world. He declared: “We must open the doors to the West wide so that European ideas can flow in abundantly”. Kikodze believed this was the only way for the Georgian nation to “enter the broad cultural arena and escape the narrow, damp cell where it was imprisoned” (Kikodze, 1916).

Although some of Geronti Kikodze’s opinions are the result of a biased assessment of events rather than an objective discussion and analysis of reality, the main point of his article, that a pro-Western orientation is the path forward for Georgia’s spiritual culture, aligns with the national perspective of that period and the view of a large part of contemporary Georgian society.

When discussing the pro-European views of Georgian writers active during the period under review, particular attention should also be paid to Grigol Robakidze (1880–1962). Notably, unlike in his earlier publications, where he regarded Georgian culture as the product of a synthesis between Eastern and Western elements, his speech, published in the first issue of the newspaper *Barricade* in 1920, delivered on behalf of Georgian writers during a meeting with a European socialist delegation, reveals a nuanced shift. Although the pro-Eastern orientation evident in his previous works is toned down, Robakidze nevertheless reaffirms the special role of the Eastern world in Georgia’s historical development. To clarify Robakidze’s perspective, the following passage from this address to the European guests is instructive: “For two thousand years, Georgians, by nature, have been waiting for you: the chosen children of the West.

We lived in the hot heart of Asia Minor, and, weary from the sun, we felt our drowsy gods in the burnt stones. The Eastern vision was alight within us. But we could not endure the lustfulness of the great midday of the East and rushed toward the North. We passed through the hot fields of Chaldea and took refuge on the slopes of the Caucasus... and, having forsaken the East, we yearned toward the West. Every stroke of our creativity is etched with this yearning” (Robakidze, 1920).

Grigol Robakidze argued that this dual orientation of the Georgian people was fundamentally shaped by what he called “the tragedy of geography”, a condition that placed Georgia in a suspended state, “separated from the East, yet unable to fully enter the West”. In Robakidze’s view, after centuries of enduring the consequences of this liminal position, and given the transformed circumstances of his own era, the Georgian people ultimately oriented their future not toward the East but toward Europe.

CONCLUSION

As the foregoing analysis of artistic and journalistic texts from the 1910s and 1920s demonstrates, many Georgian writers of the period made significant contributions to bringing both the country and its literature closer to the European world. This tendency gained particular momentum following the restoration of Georgia’s independence on May 26, 1918. Although this trajectory was fundamentally disrupted by the Soviet occupation of Georgia in February 1921, the Europeanization of Georgian literature continued for a brief period thereafter. Soon, however, the dictatorial policies of the Soviet regime severely restricted not only Georgia’s political relations with Europe but also its cultural and literary connections, effectively halting the European-oriented development that had begun in the preceding years.

This governmental policy became particularly severe beginning in the 1930s and persisted until the 1980s. In the 1980s, however, the rise of National Liberation Movements within several of the so-called fraternal republics of the Soviet Union, most prominently in Georgia, set in motion a process that ultimately culminated in the collapse of the Soviet Empire and the restoration of Georgia’s state independence in 1991. With independence, the aspiration for firm integration into the European space, now accompanied by a pronounced pro-American orientation, became a priority direction for Georgia’s political, economic, and cultural-educational development. Georgian writers’ sustained engagement with the question of the nation’s relationship with the outside world was largely shaped by the country’s geographical location and the historical reality that, at nearly every stage of its past, Georgia was surrounded by powerful imperial states and frequently became the target of their aggression. The perspectives expressed in Georgian literature of the period under analysis regarding this issue may be conditionally grouped into the following main directions:

The representatives of the most widespread view (Galaktion Tabidze, Mikheil Javakhishvili, Konstantine Gamsakhurdia, Grigol Robakidze, the *Tsisperkantslebi*, Niko Lordkipanidze, and Geronti Kikodze) actively supported the implementation of a pro-European policy. This policy was expected to establish Georgia as an integral part of the European world. They believed that this path was the primary means to preserve Georgia’s state independence and defeat its hostile environment. For the vast majority of Georgian writers, an important factor reinforcing the pro-European view was the belief that closer rapprochement with European spiritual values and creative processes would provide a powerful internal impetus for Georgian literature and establish new tendencies. Along with literary traditions, the restoration of Georgia’s state independence was a key factor in shaping its perspective.

In contrast, some individual representatives of Georgian literature did not share this perspective and linked the prospects for the country's future development not primarily to political factors, but instead to spiritual and cultural processes and to the strengthening of ties with the Eastern world. According to these writers, the internal impulses that had shaped the evolution of Georgian literature historically were drawn not only from Europe but also from the East; therefore, in their view, its future development should continue along this dual trajectory. For them, Georgian literature, and by extension, Georgian cultural identity, should not be cut off from either the European sphere or the Eastern world.

Unlike the proponents of the aforementioned perspectives, a third group of Georgian writers categorically distanced themselves from both positions. They regarded rapprochement with the Asian world as the most promising direction for developing Georgia's spiritual culture, including its literature.

Following the Soviet occupation and Georgia's incorporation into the Soviet Union, the ideologically oriented segment of Georgian writers embraced a sharply pronounced pro-Russian orientation as an alternative to these earlier views. It came to perceive Georgia's future as inseparable from Russia.

Ethics Approval and Conflict of Interest

This study was conducted in accordance with relevant ethical standards. The authors declare that there are no financial, personal, professional, or institutional conflicts of interest that could have influenced the design, conduct, interpretation, or publication of this work.

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Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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