

## PROBLEM OF THE TYPICALNESS OF LITERARY CHARACTERS IN GIORGI TSERETELI'S THOUGHTS

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### Abstract

The article concerns explaining the essence of the typical nature of literary characters in Georgian literature of II half of XIX century and its problem in literary studies. It is shown that very often Georgian writers of this period criticized their own works as well as works of other writers. Writers of the sixties started discussing the problems of a type and typical genesis from the very beginning of their literary arena. Ilia Chavchavadze and his followers completely shared Hegel's, Chernishevski's, Belinski's considerations about the mentioned issue and considering the Georgian reality even enriched it. The article focuses of Ilia Chavchavadze's, Akaki Tsereteli's, Niko Nikoladze's, Giorgi Tsereteli's and Vazha-Pshavela's considerations and discussions on the genesis of type and typicalness. It is noteworthy that Vazha-Pshavela evaluates type and typicalness in an absolutely different way. According to the writer, it is an author's duty to create types and ideal characters as if literature expresses the country's needs, types created by it will be tendentious. It is vividly seen in the article that Giorgi Tsereteli understood the problem of type and typicalness in a different way than Ilia Chavchavadze, Akaki Tsereteli and Vazha-Pshavela; though, he was not able to neglect the principles of the writers of the sixties on the mentined literary problems in his literary work. Giorgi Tsereteli's theoretical viewpoints stayed separately not only from the current literary processes, but also from the writer's literary practice.

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**Keywords:** Litterrary characters, Giorgi Tsereteli's Thoughts

### Introduction:

Explaining the essence of the typical nature of literary characters always was one of the difficult problems of literary studies. Georgian literature of II half of XIX century also was facing this problem. Very often, Georgian writers of this period criticized their own works as well as works of other writers. Some of our writers rather skillfully used even literary works to characterize literary type in theoretical aspect. The essence of type, the issue of its origin and general theoretical values was properly defined in Hegel's Aesthetics. Considerations of almost all well-known European and Russian literary theorists originate namely from the thought of this German Philosopher. Georgian writers are interested in this phenomenon.

According to the requirements of the principles of literary realism, creation of a type is based on right phenomena of life, people's particular adventures and their multifaceted nature. A writer's talent, his/her creative fantasy, finding new relation bonds and generalizing their sense – everything this has the greatest significance for final formation of a type. Writers of the sixties started discussing the problems of a type and typical genesis from the very beginning of their literary arena. Ilia Chavchavadze and his followers completely shared Hegel's, Chernishevski's, Belinski's considerations about the mentioned issue and considering the Georgian reality even enriched it. For Ilia Chavchavadze, like for Belinski, type was "familiar stranger". He fully expressed truth of life and a human's natural wealth. It

concerned positive as well as negative types. All kinds of type had to express something useful for the country and society.

According to Ilia Chavchavadze's point of view, with types literature introduces complicated and deep signs of life to us. In spite of the fact that a writer should truly show the social type existing in literature, a type of a literary work cannot be identical to a type existing in life. A type created by a writer often displays the events hidden in the depth of reality and makes them reveal them to everybody. For instance, the literary type of Luarsab Tatkaridze brings to light not only vital issues of life, but also secret sides of a human's character. I. Chavchavadze wishes to show how universal human features exist in separate individuals. If a writer guesses a person's multifaceted nature, he/she will be able to create a general type according to his/her world outlook. According to Ilia Chavchavadze, type is a sample; it shows the unity of a lot of socially valuable phenomena. In the preface to his story "Is That a Man?!", the writer addresses his future character: "- Perhaps you feel ashamed and start scrubbing clean yourself. That is the reason I want the world you see you ducking in filthy mud that you sarcastically named as life.

- Damn you for choosing me; can't you see thousands like me?
- You are like thousands and thousands are like you. That's why I have chosen you".<sup>268</sup>

These words vividly show the necessity of finding the general essence of a type in order to seek for and create a literary type. A negative or positive type has content; he/she should convey general idea. The writer also notes in the preface: "Everyone knows that we do not touch individuals. We write about our common pain". Thus, according to the writer's standpoint, type is a generalizing phenomenon of social life; the meaning of a type of the realistic literature is not determined by finding a living type and exactly reflecting it. An author's talent and mind "are measured by gathering social signs". He instructs a type not to lose truth, but he/she should generalize this truth artistically and make the aesthetic influence on a reader.

Georgian writers of II half of XIX century thoroughly knew European and Russian literature. They were very interested in those theoretical social-philosophical and literary opinions that were expressed about European and Russian writers. Among these Georgian writers Giorgi Tsereteli occupied the prominent place. He expressed his social-literary viewpoint in the article "Daybreak's Cacophony" which was published in Ilia Chavchavadze's journal "Bulletin of Georgia". Even being the first year student G. Tsereteli argued with the old generation and the journal "Tsiskari" (dawn) to defend Ilia Chavchavadze's position. He showed his loyalty to Ilia's opinion not only with his standpoint but also with the form of polemics. The publicist shared Ilia's opinion about the purpose of press, obligation of a writer and literature, literary imitation and other issues. But time passes and Giorgi Tsereteli, Niko Nikoladze and Sergei Meskhi established the group "New Youth" and called it the Second Troupe. The followers of the Second Troupe gathered around the journals "Droeba" and "Krebuli" (collected articles). Namely here appeared publications depicting their social-political and theoretical-literary opinions. The considerations of the leaders of the Second Troupe about the specificity of literature and art are very important to us at present. The main thing that was stated on behalf of the leaders of the Second Troupe was to mark off and distinguish their position from the position of Tergdaleulebi's First Troupe by understanding literary methods in a new way. In 1973, one of the leaders of the Second Troupe, Niko Nikoladze discussed Ilia Chavchavadze's story "The Beggar's Tale" in the journal "Krebuli" (collected articles) and rejected it as defective from the viewpoint of using the literary method and the characters' typical nature. He considered it to be written by the influence of foreign literature.

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<sup>268</sup> Ilia Chavchavadze. Literary works. Vol. II, Tbilisi, 1988, p. 575.

According to N. Nikoladze, in the story Ilia was drawing "...purposefully coloured, skillfully disguised and sophisticated peasant who spoke and behaved like a German brought up under the influence of sentimental literature. No peasant could express him/herself like this in that period".<sup>269</sup> In the critic's opinion types of such literary work are invented and are far from truth; they are unimportant. While discussing Giorgi Tsereteli's work "Kikoliki, Chikoliki and Swaggerer", Niko Nikoladze gives remarks to the writer and shows how a Georgian fiction writer should not write from the standpoint of artistic skills. Though, he considers that creation of the Swaggerer's type and other natural pictures should be exemplary for future writers. N. Nikoladze notes: "Variety of valuable things, pictures, characters, types is scattered throughout our country... He who can manage to transfer these new and unknown characters from nature into literature, he can create literary types out of these characters will easily gain good reputation in literature".<sup>270</sup> By displaying colourless realism in such a way, N. Nikoladze acknowledges the necessity of depicting truth precisely but considers that unlike a social type, a literary type still is a phenomenon "to be created".

G. Tsereteli extremely exaggerates significance of colourless unrepaired realism and rejected as defective Ilia Chavchavadze's stories "Is That a Man?!" and "Letters of the Traveler". According to the writer, colour and "forced tendency" are the greatest fault of these literary works. He writes: "His (Ilia Chavchavadze's) Luarsab and Darejan are caricatures of Georgian types of noblemen rather than artistically created typical creatures".<sup>271</sup> G. Tsereteli requires from Ilia Chavchavadze copying of social types for creating types. From his viewpoint, the First Troupe's social-political and literary-fiction quest as well as fight for novelty is over. He considers that depicting new types according to the principles of "colourless realism" is the main aim of literature. Under "depicting types" is implied not colouring them but finding them in live and describing them in fiction precisely. From G. Tsereteli's standpoint "life itself and its phenomenon is sense and idea". That is why type should be free from a creator's subjective, emotional and imaginary additions. Moreover, the writer states that: "Harmful is literature and art if it explores and depicts unrealistic but desirable by the author pictures instead of those existing in reality. Such trend in literature and art is called tendentious trend".<sup>272</sup> G. Tsereteli considers filling of real life facts and stories and their transformation in literature as tendentious and harmful to literature. From the writer's point of view a literary work should be completely free from an author's subjective, emotional attitude as the reality that should be depicted obtains feeling and sense itself. According to G. Tsereteli, colouring social life type, changing it in literary fiction means such tendentiousness that harms art. He believes that coloured types do not express the truth of life. Generally, the writer protecting colourless realism appreciates the literature expressing unbiased opinion.

Giorgi Tsereteli is against drawing artistic or coloured type; thus, tendentious opinion should not be given in the literary work. Like Emil Zola's thought, G. Tsereteli considers that knowledge of natural studies is the base for "colourless realism" and tendentiousness revealed by a type is absolutely unacceptable. On the contrary, under Emil Zola's influence he supposes that it is the positive phenomenon that "a novel follows the modern development of real sciences – physiology, anatomy"<sup>273</sup>. Thus, the writer identifies such correlation to truth as of natural sciences and art. He presents rather narrow naturalistic understanding of type and tendentiousness. He neglected Belinski's standpoint about type – type is "familiar stranger". G. Tsereteli based his views on N. Chernishevski's considerations. According to N. Chernishevski, "generalizing a real character artificially is not necessary as such a character is

<sup>269</sup> G. Tsereteli. Kita Abashidze and "Our Youth". Newspaper "Kvali", N 46. 1897, p. 814.

<sup>270</sup> N. Nikoladze G. Tsereteli's First Works. Bulletin, N 3. 1894. 158.

<sup>271</sup> G. Tsereteli. Kita Abashidze and "Our Youth". Newspaper "Kvali", N 46. 1897, p. 816.

<sup>272</sup> Tsereteli G. Colletion of Works "Giorgi Tsereteli about Theatre". Tbilisi, 1955, p. 131.

<sup>273</sup> G. Tsereteli. Lectures in the Study Group. Tbilisi Digest, N 38.

already generalized in its original form”.<sup>274</sup> G. Tsereteli filled this idea with French naturalists’ considerations in his own way; unlike modern writers, even N. Nikoladze, he considered that creating literature type, expressing tendentious strivings with the help of this type is harmful to literature. Condemnation of literature type and tendentiousness was the extreme point of G. Tsereteli’s theoretical-literary thought. This extremely wrong idea was caused by G. Tsereteli’s desire to dissociate himself from the literary-theoretical considerations of Ilia Chavchavadze’s Troupe.

Though G. Tsereteli expresses his viewpoints about type and tendentiousness, we suppose that his theoretical considerations were isolated not only from literary processes but also from the author’s literary practice.

As opposed to his own literary-publicistic considerations, Giorgi Tsereteli created remarkable types, such as: Swaggerer, Bakhva Pulava, Ieremia Tsarba who, certainly, also expressed the author’s tendentious thought.

Giorgi Tsereteli’s contemporary writer Vazha-Pshavela gives absolutely different evaluation of type and tendentiousness. He writes: “A poet converses with readers through images, creates types, often ideal types that the poet desires to see in real life trying to raise them to perfection. One of the duties of a poet is to create types: negative types on the one hand and on the other hand – positive types that are necessary to change life for better”.<sup>275</sup> As it is seen from these words, it is a writer’s duty to create types and ideal characters. The types drawn by an author should change life for better and identify his/her tendentious idea. According to Vazha-Pshavela, impartial literary work cannot exist. If literature has to express the country’s needs, the types created by an author will be tendentious. The poet notes: “Who can say that it refers to tendentious poetry and not real poetry? This will be senseless as all poetical creations are more or less tendentious; an inexperienced reader can take one as tendentious and the other – unbiased... Yes, poetry should serve motherland’s needs and for this purpose create both – real and ideal types”.<sup>276</sup> As Vasha-Pshavela considers literature cannot exist without real and ideal literature type that should reveal deep social tendencies.

### Conclusion:

Giorgi Tsereteli understood the problem of type and typicalness in a different way than Ilia Chavchavadze, Akaki Tsereteli and Vazha-Pshavela. He equalized a type to making a copy of a real person; an author should not reveal a subjective, emotional, intellectual or ideal reason in fiction. The writer considered that such literary approach would distinguish his Troupe from others. He writes: “If we find out the principle trend of the Second Troupe, we will clearly see that it has established different ideals in life and literature. It has founded realism in literature”.<sup>277</sup>

In his last years G. Tsereteli defended his own and the Second Troupe’s literary positions in the letter published in the newspaper “Kvali”. He confirmed that he did not agree with the First Troupe’s positions in the issue of typicalness and tendentiousness of literature; though, he was not able to neglect the principles of the writers of the sixties on the mentined literary problems even in his literary work.

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<sup>274</sup> N. Chernishevski. Selected Philosophical Works. P. 389.

<sup>275</sup> Vazha-Pshavela. Complete Works in 10 Volumes. Vol. IX., p. 400.

<sup>276</sup> Vazha-Pshavela. Complete Works in 10 Volumes. Vol. IX., p. 403.

<sup>277</sup> G. Tsereteli. Kita Abashidze and “Our Youth”. Newspaper “Kvali”, N 46. 1897, p. 816.

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