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Georgian Symbolism: Reorientation of Cultural Centre and Redefinition of National Identity

The subject of interest of the paper is the identification of the cultural, world – view and esthetic basis of Georgian Symbolism and how the socio – political changes shaped its characteristics.

After being more the century part of the Russian Empire, In the 1910s (1918 – 1921), Georgia obtained independence for a few years, but from 1921 was forced to become one of the members of the Soviet Socialist Republic. As for a cultural context, the beginning of the 20th c. is considered a period of stagnation. Subsequently, the significance of emerging the first symbolist group, “Blue Horns”, with clearly stated purposes and esthetic position was a big event. As a result of the drastic transformation of the social formation, in parallel with the revolutions and World War I, Georgia faced the necessity of re – conceptualizing the national identity.

The main goal of the symbolist poets was a renewal of Georgian literature and its inclusion into the western context. A group of young poets attempted to broaden the area of thought and modernization of Georgian culture not only with their art but also through their public activities. They transformed the well – established notion of centre – periphery relations and declared Tbilisi as the cultural centre, thus rejecting the status of the cultural periphery.

The birth of Georgian Symbolism coincides with the short period of independence of Georgia. From the 21st century perspective, identifying the importance, features and place of Georgian Symbolism is crucial to place Georgian literature in the context of European modernism and to understand the development of Georgian literature.