

## THE FOUNDATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF ARMENIAN PSYCHOLOGICAL THOUGHT (THE POSSIBILITIES FOR CREATING AN ARMENIAN PSYCHOLOGICAL DIRECTION)

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### **ABSTRACT**

*In this paper discussed the works of Armenian philosophers about human psyche in chronological order. It also referred to the works of Armenian psychologists and their possible role in the creation of an Armenian psychological direction.*

*The last part of the article introduces the Armenian psychologist A. I. Mirakyan's scientific concept, which is known as "Transcendental Psychology". The work also presents the role of transcendental psychology in the new solution of the current problems facing psychology.*

**Keywords:** *science, Armenian philosophers, Armenian psychologists, Armenian psychological direction.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

**The urgency of the work** is due to discovery of the psychological approaches of Armenian thinkers (since 5th century) and showing their importance for modern psychology, in the context of the history of psychology.

**The object of the research** is research of the works of Armenian psychologists.

**The subject of the research** is a study of the approaches of Armenian psychologists and the outline of the creation of the Armenian psychological school in the context of the history of psychology.

**The purpose of the work** is to discover important approaches to psychology in the works of Armenian thinkers (since 5th century), which will allow to make a contribution to the history of psychology. Also, outline the creation of an Armenian psychological school.

**The problems of the research** are to study the works of Armenian thinkers in terms of revealing psychological approaches. In the context of the establishment of the Armenian Psychological School, research the works of Armenian psychologists.

**Theoretical significance.** can provide additional knowledge in the subject of 'History of Psychology'.

The history of science shows that its formation and development is a dynamic process and it goes from the general to the specific. After various scientific disciplines had been formed (physics, chemistry, mathematics, biology), they started being separated into different branches (physics: electromagnetics, thermodynamics, quantum mechanics, etc.; chemistry: agrochemistry, inorganic chemistry, medical chemistry, etc.; mathematics: arithmetic, algebra, geometry, etc.; biology: botany, zoology, anatomy etc.).

This general-to-specific vector had a fundamental role in the science formation process: thus, issues discussed within the framework of philosophy were specified, specific emphasis was made and they were included into another analytic field which later emerged as a science. As shown above, this tendency (from the general to the specific) did not stop even after the formation of the science, it began branching within itself, allowing to delve deeper into the essence of the issues under discussion.

Thus, the science, from the very beginning of its formation, made use of the rich materials collected within the scope of philosophy, discussing issues meeting the requirements of different sciences. However, the science has not ever been isolated from philosophy and even after its creation, in cases when it was not possible to solve the problems facing the science within its framework only, philosophy was ready to help again. Thus, Newton introduced mechanics into physics, Einstein introduced theory of relativity and quantum physics into physics, Lobachevsky proposed a completely new approach to geometry and so on. And philosophy remained a kind of repository for the science that could make new discoveries using rich materials of philosophy whenever needed.

Psychology was formed and developed like these sciences too. In 1879, when it became a separate discipline, philosophers had already collected a great number of materials referring to psychology which were later used by this discipline. Thus, thoughts and interpretations of different philosophers collected since ancient times, especially works of such Greek philosophers and thinkers as Socrates, Sophocles, Homer, Epicurus, Plato, Aristotle and others became very precious for psychology. This circumstance (mostly the acquaintance with the works of Greek philosophers and thinkers) was mainly conditioned by the fact that the Greek language, culture and

literature were widely spread as a result of Alexander the Great's conquests.

The works of these philosophers and not only have had a great impact on modern psychology, for example 'The Theban plays' of Sophocles can be considered as a basis for Freud's 'Oedipus complex' (Kun A.N., 1979) and in Schopenhauer's 'The World as will and representation' it is possible to find Freud's ideas about pansexualism (Schopenhauer A, 2005). Plato's *Phaedo* contains ideas related to unconscious mind (Plato, 1993), Aristotle dedicated a huge work to the human psyche (Aristotle, 1976) and so on.

Important issues related to psychology have been discussed also in the works of Armenian philosophers very appreciated not only for their multifaceted analysis but also for their discussions about Armenian people, issues related to the Armenian society and psychological features of the Armenian gene's bearers. And besides all this, if we take into consideration the circumstance that to date, there is no Armenian psychological direction, despite the fact that a lot of work has been done by Armenian psychologists (which we will see in the next part of the work), studying Armenian philosophers' approaches regarding human psyche is becoming more and more important and urgent.

In this part we will briefly present works of Armenian philosophers on psychology which will allow us to have a general idea of their approaches and do a thorough analysis of their works in case of necessity.

The Armenian psychological thought has been forming and developing since 5th century, since the creation of Armenian letters (404-405). Before that, of course, there were no writings in Armenian language and thus, it was difficult and impossible to follow the process of formation of Armenian psychological thought (Nalchajyan A, 1997).

After the creation of the Armenian alphabet, along with the translations of many famous books, Aristotle's, Plato's and other famous philosophers' works were translated. These translations were mainly done by Armenian thinkers who were well acquainted with Greek literature and language.

Agathangelos, Eznik of Kolb, Faustus of Byzantium, Ghazar Parpetsi and Yeghishe are the most famous thinkers of that period. Their works, that have been preserved to this day, contain various issues related to psychology.

'History' of Agathangelos (IVth or Vth century) also known as 'Teaching of St.Gregory' (translated into a number of languages) (Topchyan A, 2005) is one of the unique works that have reached us. This book acquaints the reader not only with the remarkable events of Armenian history but also speaks about the new religion adopted in Armenia and people's attitude towards Christianity, which is very precious from the

point of view of psychology.

Eznik of Kolb (ca. 380-450) in his 'Refutation of Sects', devoted again to matters of faith, refutes sects and tries to prove his theory doing psychological and philosophical analyses. This was a book of significant importance for that period of time (Sargsyan R.G, 1970).

Very precious information from the point of view of psychology can be found in the book called 'History of Armenia'. The author is Faustus of Byzantium (IVth or Vth century) who included in his book the dialogue between Armenian Commander Vassak and Shapur II, Shah of Persia, and in this dialogue are reflected those psychological features with which Armenian people were endowing their leaders. (Martirosyan A, 1976).

The next Armenian thinker and historian of great importance is Ghazar Parpetsi (from 442 to the beginning of the VIth century) with his 'Armenian History' and 'Letter to Vahan Mamikonian'. In the second book the author speaks about some psychological peculiarities like envy, betrayal, ambition, loyalty and so on (Yuzbashyan K.N, 1983).

'History of Vardan' written by Yeghishe (400-480) has an important value from the point of view of psychology too. In his work he puts forward the ideology of national liberation struggle (Nalbandyan V.S, 1987) and, in our opinion, this is a unique work which hasn't lost its relevance and can serve as a guide for forming a national ideological strategy (Minasyan E, 1943).

One of the most important thinkers of the Middle Ages who had a great impact on the development of Armenian psychological thought is David the Invincible (from the Vth to the VI<sup>th</sup> centuries, the dates of birth and death are unknown). His 'Definitions of Philosophy', 'Analysis of Porphyry's Introduction' and 'Commentary on Aristotle's Analytics' have reached our days and in his 'Definitions of Philosophy' we can find very interesting information for psychology. In this work he speaks about the structure of the soul, which consists of three parts: reason, anger and desire. He also singles out four spiritual virtues: courage, fairness, wisdom and sagacity (Arevshatian S, 1980, p. 79). In his works David the Invincible also discusses issues regarding death, senses, emotions and will (Nalchajyan A, Takushyan H, 1997).

The most renowned medieval Armenian philosophers and thinkers are Anania Shirakatsi (around 610 - 685), Grigor Narekatsi (951 - 1003), Grigor Magistros Pahlavuni (990 - 1058), Hovhannes Sarkavag (1047 - 1129) and Hovhannes Erznkatsi (1230 - 1293). The latter thought that "... the human soul does not have innate knowledge and a moral character. The mind is like an uncultivated soil, whatever one sows, that will be reaped" (Ambartsumian V,1987). The works of scientist, doctor and founder of Armenian

classical medicine Mkhitar Heratsi (1120 - 1200) deserve special attention. While studying the human psyche, he paid close attention to the physiological state of a human, trying to draw parallels between the psyche and the brain. According to him, for overcoming various mental problems music and the physician's influential speech can be of great importance (Ktsoyan A.S, 1968).

Among the famous thinkers of 14-18 centuries are Hovhannes Vorotnetsi (1315-1386), Grigor Tatevatsi (1346-1409), Arakel Syunetsi (1350-1425), Simeon Jughayetsi (1595-1657) and Khachatur Erzurumtsi (1666-1740), who tried to interpret and discover in their works a number of issues concerning the origin and nature of the soul (Ambartsumian V, 1987).

Psychology changed greatly at the end of the 19th century, when W. Wundt founded the first psychological laboratory (1879) and psychology became a separate discipline. Of course, Armenia was influenced by these changes too. But before speaking about this, it is important to speak about two well-known Armenian scientists, whose works had a significant impact on the development of Armenian psychological thought. The first was Stepanos Nazaryants (1812-1879), who was a lecturer at Kazan University and in 1851 he published his book 'Speech on Experimental Psychology', which can be considered one of the first works on psychology in the Armenian language (Tutunjyan H.M, 1988, p. 130). In this book S. Nazaryants speaks mainly about basics of psychology, pathological issues, pedagogical psychology, etc. Speaking about the boundaries of the applicability of psychology, he emphasized the importance of psychological knowledge not only for teachers but also for lawyers, physicians and those who cannot organize their activities without that knowledge (Nalchajyan A, Takushyan H, 1997).

The next scientist is Mikael Nalbandyan (1826-1866). He was mainly interested in issues related to philosophical foundations of psychology, cognitive psychology and speech, personality psychology, ethnic psychology and art psychology (Simonyan Sh, 1969). Despite his young age, M. Nalbandyan left a rather rich heritage for psychology.

This was the overall image of Armenian psychological thought when in 1879 psychology became a separate discipline. At that time, many scientists from all over the world went to study and receive training at Wundt's laboratory. One of these scientists was our compatriot G. Edilyan (1885-1942). After the training he returned to Armenia and in 1921 he founded the Department of Psychology and Pedagogy and the Laboratory of Experimental Psychology at YSU (Sahakyan L.A, 1968).

G. Edilyan's works were mainly aimed at interpreting the phenomenon of perception. According to him, perception is a mental process that differs from other mental

processes, and when we are able to differentiate between these phenomena, we will understand their peculiarities. G. Edilyan's thoughts were, of course, greatly influenced by Wundt, who thought that in order to better understand different mental phenomena it is necessary to divide them into subsets (structuralist approach). G. Edilyan was convinced that perception is one of the manifestations of objective reality, and that object perception is conditioned by someone's direct perception, which has nothing to do with the space where that object is located: every perception process is always specific, that is, it refers to a certain object that exists in nature (Hayrapetyan D.R, 2010).

Many of G. Edilyan's works are dedicated to making Armenian letters more readable. From 1933 to 1935 five manuals were published in Armenia, where we can find the results of his experiments. Some of these manuals are 'Script Legibility' (1933), 'Line Legibility Issues' (1933), 'Book Formation Issues' (1933), 'Legibility of Printed Letters' (1935), etc. (Hayrapetyan D.R, 2010).

In 1946 a new department of psychology was founded also at Armenian State Pedagogical Institute after Khachatur Abovyan. G.T. Hovsepyan, whose professional activities were mainly devoted to child observation issues (Hovsepyan G.T, 1939), was appointed as the head of this department (Hakobyan A.H, 1975).

During the Soviet era (1920-1991) G. Edilyan somehow managed to avoid the influence of Marxist ideology (Nalchajyan A, Takushyan H, 1997), but the works of many psychologists of this period should be considered within the framework of materialist ideology. Despite these limitations, a huge work has been done by Armenian psychologists in the fields of general psychology, history of psychology, child psychology, pedagogical psychology, medical psychology, work and engineering psychology, sports psychology and social psychology (Nalchajyan A, Takushyan H, 1997), (Tutunjan H.M, 1988), (Hakobyan A.H, 1975) in particular.

The first complete textbook on psychology in the Armenian language was published in 1934 and its author was M. Mazmanyanyan (1910-1977) (Hakobyan A.H, 1975, p. 5). After that various university textbooks on psychology were published. Some of them were called 'Outlines of Psychology', 'Sensory Insights' (Mazmanyanyan M.A, 1951) and 'Lectures on Psychology' (Mazmanyanyan M.A, 1959).

Much valuable work on history of psychology has been done by H. Tutunjan (1918-1994), who wanted to overcome the one-sidedness in studying the history of science and proposed to study the history of psychology in comparison with philosophical directions on the one hand and with all the historical influences and specific scientific achievements on the other hand (Katunyan A.S, 2013).

The most famous researchers in the field of child psychology are M.S. Yeritsyan, I.M. Geodakyan, G.R. Kanetsyan and E.A. Alexandryan (Tutunjyan H.M, 1988). Their works are mainly dedicated to children's emotional development (Alexandryan E.A, 1972).

A.H. Hakobyan, G.H. Hovhannisyan, L.S. Vardanyan and some other psychologists stood out in the field of pedagogical psychology. Significant work has been done on students' thinking problems by K.V. Voskanyan (1930-1996) (Voskanyan K.V, 1966) and N.S. Kocharyan (Kocharyan N.S, 1973).

A.A. Mehrabyan's (1904-1986) and L.A. Hovhannisyan's (1885-1970) works were of significant importance in the field of medical psychology. A. Mehrabyan's works were mainly dedicated to the clinical manifestations of 'depersonalization' in mental illnesses (Mehrabyan A.A, 1962), as well as to a number of general and pathological psychological problems (Mehrabyan A.A, 1984). In his works L.A. Hovhannisyan spoke about the relationship between somatic and psychological problems (Hovsepyan L.A, 1961).

In the field of legal psychology, it is important to emphasize S.J. Arzumanyan's role (1941-2009), who developed the theory of social psychological attitudes (Arzumanyan S. J, 2000).

E.M. Mileryan's works (1913-1986) were dedicated to the issues of work psychology and vocational education (Mileryan E.A, 1973). A.A. Lalayan (1925-1983) and A.H. Kostanyan (1927-1996) are known for their contribution to sports psychology. A.A. Lalayan spoke mainly about physical education, sports and other issues (Lalayan A.A, 1966). A. Kostanyan's research was mainly dedicated to the psychology of sports and physical education, as well as the issues of psychophysiology, age, pedagogy and special psychology (Avanesyan H.M, 2010).

It is worth mentioning that during the Soviet era a number of well-known Armenian psychologists contributed to the development of psychology and worked outside of Armenia. Among them are B.G. Ananyev (1907-1972, Leningrad, now St. Petersburg), T.T. Djangarov (1921-1980, Leningrad, now St. Petersburg), A.I. Mirakyan (1929-1995, Moscow) and others. The works of the first two have been included in different textbooks and manuals (Ananiev B.G, 1996), (Dzhamgarov T.T, Pun A.C, 1979) but the same cannot be told about Mirakyan's works. His works haven't been included in any textbook on general psychology or on psychological reflection (neither in Armenian nor in Russian) despite the fact that his approach to psychological reflection was significantly different from other approaches and was in line with the scientific logic. The reason was not that A.I. Mirakyan's contribution was of less importance or he has less to say, but the main

reason was that on the one hand, his analysis and interpretations did not fit the requirements of materialism, Marxist ideology (Mirakian A.I, 1990), (Naghdyan R.M, 2015) and on the other hand, in order to understand this concept, it was necessary to go beyond the limits of mechanical, physical thinking and to manifest 'aphysical' thinking, which was not an easy task.

A.I. Mirakyan's concept of psychological reflection which was called transcendental psychology of perception by the author, allowed not only to see the phenomenon of perception in a new light but also to look at the underlying principles and patterns of mental processes from another perspective and interpret them differently (Yesayan G.S, 2016).

A.I. Mirakyan's concept of transcendental psychology of perception has been later developed by his followers. This concept entered also into other fields of psychology with the name 'the concept of transcendental psychology' (Yesayan G.S, 2016), (Naghdyan R.M, 2018), (Panov V.I, 2014), (Shukova G.V, 2013).

It wouldn't be possible to discuss issues related to other fields of psychology (psychology methodology, eco-psychology, psychotherapy, education) within the framework of transcendental psychology, if Mirakyan didn't begin to build his concept upon a new picture of the world, which should have allowed him to answer many questions facing psychology (Mirakian A.I, 1995). Such a need arose as a result of taking a phenomenological (product) approach in psychology and this became possible due to Mirakyan's analysis of various philosophers' works, which served as the basis for developing methodology in psychology.

Nevertheless, transcendental psychology, unlike many other psychological concepts, introduced a completely new methodology (non-productive) and used a new 'building material' to construct the concept - another picture of the world, that would meet the demands of psychology and would answer many questions facing this discipline.

Summing up my paper, I would like to mention that the heritage left by Armenian philosophers and psychologists is invaluable and it is necessary to study and analyze it thoroughly. In that case the creation of an Armenian psychological direction, reflecting the Armenian 'soul' and peculiarities, will be inevitable.

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