



The 70s are probably the most diverse decade in terms of both political and cinematic processes. Thematic diversity in the world cinema has been transformed into interesting forms, though often indirectly and in a metaphorical-symbolic way. In almost every country in Europe, new authors are appearing to the public, creating films that are completely different from each other in terms of style, genre or theme. Britain, Denmark, France, Germany, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Hungary - in the 70s, interesting processes begin in the cinematography of these countries ...

New German cinema is born: Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Walker Schlöndorff, Wim Wenders, Werner Herzog - this group of young people condemns the "old" cinema and creates a "new German wave". Unlike Western European authors, completely different stylistics resides in the North. Swede director, Ingmar Bergman's mysterious, mystical film world, is still the inspiration for many contemporary authors. The "Golden Age" of Hollywood is over in the 70's. Martin Scorsese, Steven Spielberg, Francis Ford Coppola, Brian de Palma, George Lucas are forming a new American film identity. In Britain, in the 70s, American director Stanley Kubrick creates the epoch-making film "Mechanical Orange" starring Malcolm Magdale.

In the Georgian cinema of the 1970s : Tengiz Abuladze, Rezo Chkheidze, Eldar Shengelaia, Giorgi Shengelaia, Rezo Esadze, Sasha Rekhviashvili, Otar Ioseliani, Lana Ghoghoberidze proceed with the work.

Lana Ghoghoberidze's film "Several Interviews on a Personal Issue" (1978) narrates about many problems characterising modern life of that time. However, Soviet censorship was still severe in the 1970s. This was the reason for Georgian directors to either use the classics of literature (Tengiz Abuladze's "The Wishing Tree" in 1977) or to reflect the problems of modernity in grotesque style. "Feola" by Baadur Tsuladze (1970), "Kvevri" by Irakli Kvirikadze (1970), "Record" Guram Pataria (1973). Another way in which directors chose to express their views on the system or to protest against the epoch, under the harsh conditions of censorship, was the allegorical narration. Eldar Shengelaia's film "Sherekilebi" ("The Eccentrics") is a clear manifestation of this tendency in Georgian cinema of the 1970s.

Eldar Shengelaia is one of the most important directors of Georgian cinema; he is the eldest son of director Nikoloz Shengelaia and actor Nato Vachnadze. He started working in the film studio "Georgian Film" in 1960 and in a few years, together with Tamaz Meliava, he made his first film "White Caravan", in 1964 he created the film "Mikela", based on the story by Davit Kldiashvili. In 1977, he returned to the work of the Georgian classic writer and made the film "Samanishvili's Stepmother". In the 1970s, Eldar Shengelaia began active collaboration with a playwright Rezo Gabriadze and a composer Gia Kancheli. "Unusual Exhibition" and "Sherekilebi" ("The Eccentrics") were created together with these artists.

It should be noted that Georgian composer and conductor Jansug Kakhidze participated in the creation of the musical composition for "Sherekilebi" ("The Eccentrics") together with Gia Kancheli. On his initiative a sample of Georgian folklore enters the finale of the film: the song "Chiti Gvriti Moprinvda" performed by one of the main characters of the film. Such an ending puts an impressive final chord in "Sherekilebi" ("The Eccentrics").

Probably it is not publicly known, that "Sherekilebi" ("The Eccentrics") was originally conceived as a comedy about the first Georgian pilots, but the idea underwent a cardinal transformation. Finally, the film is based on Rezo Gabriadze's story "Foreign Bird" and if we look at his story superficially, we cannot see anything doubtful. After the death of his father, Ertaoz goes to the city in search of fortune, where he meets a beautiful Margalita, a woman, who hosts her admirers at home during her husband's service. Ertaoz, who fell in love with Margalita, helps her to get rid of the head of the prison, because of this Ertaoz will be caught and imprisoned. In prison, a young man meets prisoner Christopher, an old man who is bothered by the idea of creating a flying machine. "Sherekilebi" ("The Eccentrics") - Ertaoz and Christopher escape from prison and, to everyone's surprise, they can make the flying machine work and fly into the sky in the finale of the film.

This film is a kind of metaphor of 1970s Georgia. In the Soviet system imaginary freedom, love and fake mutual respect prevailed. For the Soviet citizens, the desire for freedom was a hidden feeling that no one dared to speak out about. The flight of the film's characters is a kind of metaphor, an escape from a locked-in totalitarian system, the breaking down of walls and the pursuit of freedom.

The director himself says about the film: "The Eccentrics did not fly to the West, nor to the East, they simply wanted to escape the reality in which they were, where there was no freedom." It can be assumed that the story told in the metaphorical way of Eldar Shengelaia in "The Eccentrics" was difficult for the Soviet censors to understand, or that it was considered completely safe and did not contain dangerous elements. It is said that the Soviet censors "baptized" the film as the story of two crazy characters, and the masterpiece of the Georgian cinematography escaped being put on the shelf or completely destroyed. One thing is for sure, the allegory turned out to be a kind of refuge for Georgian authors in the 70s.

"Storytelling with allegories", as a cinematic method, allowed Georgian authors to speak indirectly and metaphorically. If we look at it from this point of view, censorship even helped the process of development of cinema in the 1970s. With the advent of "Perestroika" (Reorganization), Soviet censorship gradually waned. Authors no longer had to carry out ideological orders or create scripts or compromise on filmmaking. Although, strange as it may seem, simultaneously to this process of weakening censorship, in Georgian cinema some signs of crisis appeared.