



DYNASTY GEORGIAN WOMEN FAMILY IN CINEMA

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L. Ochiauri¹

¹Shota Rustaveli Theatre and Film Georgian State
University
(Tbilisi, Georgia)

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Abstract

The article analyzes the outstanding sector of Georgian women's cinema, which deserve a place in the cinematography. Despite the fact that there always have been women filmmakers in Georgia, their number has dramatically increased in the beginning of the 20st century. Certainly, we could speak about the gender misbalance in the past, but nowadays this problem has been solved. One of the significant segments of the Georgian cinematography today could be called 'female films', not just because they are made by women directors, or because they have been successful, but because their subject is women and their everyday life in the environment of contemporary reality.

We do not consider that the female films exist separately and/or are out of context of Georgian cinematography. Films produced by the representatives of both sexes do have many common features and they are organic parts of the one whole called Georgian cinema. Common concerns of contemporary Georgian cinematography and the determinants and tendencies when choosing subjects for their field of art are as follows: spiritual status of contemporary society on the milieu of the contradictory lifestyles; relation and collision with reality; problems of spiritual crisis; choices of the younger generation.

Keywords: Georgian cinematography, "women cinema", representatives, determinants, tendencies, status, features, contemporary society.

Introduction

Before starting the analysis of the current situation in Georgian cinematography, we need to look back to the history as it is impossible to define its present or future without the people who represented it during many years.

The very first Georgian women film-maker Nutsa Ghogoberidze (1902–1966) made the first fiction film in the Soviet Union.[1] It happened in 1934 and the name of the film was «Fever» (Uzhmuri). Nutsa's life (same as the life of other Soviet artists) and the destiny of her films were really dramatic. One of her films BUBA (1930) was returned home only 82 years later. Someone incidentally discovered it in one of the archives in 2012. The reason is that Nutsa Ghogoberidze had undergone repressions and in 1937 she was exiled to Siberia. Nutsa spent 10 years in the GULAG camps just because her husband Levan Ghogoberidze held one of the high-rank positions during Bolshevik period, and, when the October Revolution started to «swallow» its own children, Levan and his family happened to be the victims of their own party. As a result, the art and any other information on so called «Enemies of people and motherland» were tabooed. The film BUBA did not contradict the ideas of Social Realism, though. On the contrary, it served to express the above-mentioned ideas. BUBA is a documentary-fiction film of specific direction called Cultural Films. Nothing helped Nutsa Ghogoberidze though, and the young female director was exiled to Siberia anyway. The new life turned her perfect past life into hard labour at the River Pechora (Siberia) and painted her life in dramatic colors. After coming back home she never returned to cinematography.

Methods

There was a big pause after the repression. Even men film directors had problems making films. The Soviet Government used cinematography as a tool for ideological propaganda. Not everybody could form part of such mechanism. Gender discrimination took place and they used to say that making films is not a job for women. In addition, there were some illogical cultural traditions.

After decades had passed, in the early 60s (the so called 'warming' period) an outstanding representative of the younger generation of filmmakers was a female director Lana Ghogoberidze – the daughter of Nutsa Ghogoberidze. The main subject of Lana's films was based on women's destiny, their role in the social life, and their personal and social activities in extreme situations.

Results

The main themes of Lana Ghogoberidze's films are: passions, interests, emotions and spiritual state of contemporary women. Her most outstanding films are: Under One Sky (Erti Tcis Kvash, 1961) [2], Transfiguration (Periscvaleba, 1968), I See the Sun (Me vxedav mzes, 1965), Several Interviews on Private Matters (Ramdenime Interviu Pirad Sakitxebze, 1981), Day Is Longer Than Night (Dges Game Utenebia, 1982), Waltz on the Pechora (Valsi Pechoraze, 1992) and so on. [3] These films will be discussed in detail below.

Another interesting Georgian woman film-maker of the same generation was Leila Gordeladze (1927–2002), whose art includes a diversity of genres: comedies and musical comedies (e.g. 'Tamar was Kidnapped' (Moitaces Tamarkali, 1971) and 'From here to You' (Akedana da

Senamde, 1984); Some of her films are based on modern and classical literary works, e.g. – Alooba (1967); Dog (Zagli, 1974); Bata Kekia (1978) and others. These films depict the lives of contemporary people, their hardships, troubles and daily routine.

Nana Mchedlidze is a representative of the same generation of woman film-makers. She mostly described the characteristic features of the contemporary society and focused on specific people and topics rather than stories of concrete persons. Her films are mostly comedies and tragic-comedies – The First Swallow (Pirveli Mertskali, 1975, received Special Prize of the Jury for Best Direction at Tehran International Film Festival and the Grand Prix and FiPresci Prize at Oberhausen International Sports Film Festival); Imeretian Sketches (Imeruli Eskizebi, 1979) and Grandmas and Grandsons – (Bebiebi da Svilishvilebi. 1969) are full of warmth and humorous adventures of children; The White Rose of Immortality (Ukvdavebis Tetri Vardi. 1985) and Inspiration (Agmafrena, 1964) and, finally, films about the youth making choice between moral dilemmas – Someone Misses the Bus (Vigacas Avtobusze Agviandeba, 1971); Crime has Been Committed (Danashauli Moxda – 1988), etc.

Discussion

Among the female directors of the 70s mention should be made of a writer, director and essayist Liana Eliava (Since the military coup of the 90s she has emigrated to Finland). The scope of her interests, same as that of Leila Gordeladze, goes beyond purely feminine problems, and she is interested in various topical issues and genres.[4] Her films are: «Bzianeti» (1968), «Bishop at the Hunting»

(1971), «Cinema» (retro style. 1977) and others. These films are diverse in genre and content.

Several years later, on the edge of the 70s and 80s, a new generation of Georgian women film directors showed up. They were distinguished by their individual style and a strong civil position; new interests and original artistic thinking. These are Nana Janelidze (writer, director) and Nana Jorjadze (architect, actress, director), who are still in the avant-garde of Georgian Cinematography.

Nana Jorjadze attracted the attention by her debut work – Trip to Sopot (Mogzauroba Sopotshi. 1980) where she, for the first time in the Soviet Cinematography, showed the life of hobos, who were not considered as humans and members of the society.[5] Afterwards she continued to discuss «prohibited» topics and the stories of characters that had never been mentioned in Soviet films, e.g. she combined political events from the history of Georgia's Sovietization and romantic histories of her heroes in the films «Robinsoniada or My English Grandfather» (Robinzoniada anu Chemi Ingliseli Papa), awarded Caméra d'Or in Cannes in 1987 and «1001 Recipes of the Chef in Love» (Shekvarebuli Kulinaris 1001 Recepti. 1996) starring Pierre Richard (thanks to whom she gained international fame and became the first author of co-production film in Georgia).

Nana Janelidze plays an outstanding role in Georgian cinematography. She was script-writer and second director of the most popular Soviet film REPENTANCE (MONANIEBA. 1984) made by Tengiz Abuladze (Nana Janelidze also made a marvelous selection of music for the film).[6] Her first independent full length feature film LULLABY (Iavnana. 1990) is distinguished with its poetic style, romantic

esthetics and metaphoric narration. The film was much spoken about and the number of the attracted audience was almost as large as in case of «Repentance».

For years, Nana Janelidze has worked both in feature and documentary cinema, and is equally successful in both genres. Even her documentary films «Will There Be a Theatre up there?» (Netav Ik Teatri Aris? 2011) and «The Knights of Georgian Chant» (Galobis Raindebi. 2010) are characterized by the same artistic features and distinguished by her own fiction – documentary stylistics, depicting heroes from new and old history of Georgia, who created Georgian national folk treasure and shared the tragic destiny of the country.[7]

A representative of the generation of the 80s Ketii Dolidze is an actress, theatrical and film director (she started by staging plays and later turned to filmmaking). Her well-known films are: Cucaracha (based on a famous story by one of the most popular 20th century Georgian writers – Nodar Dumbadze. 1981) – a romantic and tragic story of a Soviet policeman in the period of World War II.[8] The film is both tragic and comic and its main theme is the eternal struggle between good and evil. Although kindness is defeated at the end of the film, strong faith in the immortality and significance of kindness prevails; «Oh, How Sweet is This Tender Sadness of Parting. Euridice» (O, Ra Tkbilia Ganshorebis Es Nazi Sevda... 1991), «Dinosaur Egg» (Dinozavris Kvercxi. 1993) – these films are myths that reflect both eternal and contemporary problems.

In the past decade, especially beginning from 2005–2006, when the generation of the 2000 came to the fore, the interest towards Georgian films increased to an unprecedented scale, and the number of female directors grew. The new generation

of filmmakers transformed Georgian cinema to a new stage. There is notable progress (both qualitative and quantitative) regarding the profession of a producer, which was inexistent in the Soviet epoch. Although the female temperament seems to be unsuitable for this profession, young Georgian female filmmakers achieved great success as producers (and created favourable grounds for coproduction) and led to the success of Georgian films worldwide.

Young female directors who have recently joined the group of experienced filmmakers mentioned above (who still lead cinematographic activity of the country alongside the male Georgian film-makers), prove that Georgian cinema has moved to a special stage of its history and development. It needs to be noted that almost all the film-makers and their films listed below have won international prizes. They are: Felicity by Salome Aleksidze (2010), KEEP SMILING (2012) by Rusudan Chkonia (also producer of the film), In Bloom and My Happy Family (2012–2013) by Nana Ekvtimeishvili (with Simon Gross);. The following fiction films were also successful: Salt White (2011) by Ketevan Machavariani; Susa (2010) by Rusudan Pirveli (producer of the film – herself); 'Born in Georgia (2011) by Tamar Shavgulidze; «Brides» (2013) by the debutant director Tinatin Kajrishvili (also one of the most successful producers); «Brother» (2013) by Teona Mghvdeladze– Grenade. Mention should also be made of the documentary films: Bakhmaro (2011) by Salome Jashi; Tinatin Gurchiani's – The Machine Which Makes Everything Disappear (2011–2012), Chechnian Lullaby (2002), Durakovo: Village of Fools (2008) and «Something about Georgia» (2009) – all by Nino Kirtadze (actress, reporter and director, producer of films in

hot spots, winner of multiple international festivals), etc.

The above-mentioned generation which emerged in Georgian cinematography at the beginning of the 21st century has become an indivisible part of the world cinema by depicting interesting characters, expressing something new and at the same time eternal i.e. familiar to the rest of the world. Anyway, we should start by analyzing the beginning of female films in the history of Georgian cinema. With this aim, we have to go 85 years back, as the foundation laid in in 20s and 30s of the past century has given its fruits in the first decade of the 21st century. The main focus of the given article is the life and activities of representatives of three generations of one and the same family – grandmother, mother and granddaughter. Lasha Bakradze, a specialist in German philology and Director of Giorgi Leonidze Georgian State Museum of Literature, published an article «Nutsa Ghoghoberidze (1902–1966)– the First Female Georgian Director» in Hot Chocolate magazine (in 2012). In this article he brought all the existing documents to light. The novelty of the article is the fact that the biography of the author is directly linked to Georgian reality, and to the story told in the film, which exposes history from several angles–personal, social, artistic and cinematographic. The Soviet Union, a state run by the Communists for 70 years, no longer exists. There are no more commissars or repressions, no more «gulags» or executions of passionate, idealist Bolsheviks, no more Soviet ideology, no more governmental decrees, sessions or directives. Prohibitions are a matter of the past, and most hidden materials have come to light. However, the film created by the first female Georgian

director has only returned to life 82 years after it was produced. Unfortunately, the director herself did not live to witness the revival of her film.

While working on archive materials, Lasha Bakradze discovered the film by chance. According to him, a copy of Buba was ordered from «Gosfilmfond» (where all Soviet films are kept) in the 1980s.[9] However, despite its return to Georgia, the film was shown only twice, in narrow circles – then forgotten again, perhaps due to the hardships of the 1990s. Without Lasha Bakradze, the film would have remained forgotten for many years more.

Apart from some fragments kept in the National Archives, there was no other copy of the film in Georgia. The documentary and archive materials about Buba and its director are scarce. Why didn't Buba find favor with the Soviet authorities, and why was it condemned to anonymity? Strangely enough, a film that fulfilled all the criteria of Soviet ideology and censorship and conformed to the decrees of the Communist Party was nearly lost. It almost failed to become part of the history of Georgian cinema!

She painted, wrote scripts, worked out projects and searched for new themes.

Her first independent film Felicità («Happiness») was created in 2009 and in the same year the film was awarded special prize of the Jury at the festival in Venice. Later, the film was awarded special prize of the Jury at Trieste festival. At Torun festival in Poland the film was recognized as the Best Film of «Tofifest». The film was successfully screened at festivals in Brussels, New–York Lincoln Center, San Francisco, Creteil, Rome and Hungary.

In 2010 at the Italian festival Lessinia XVI, Felicità was awarded the main prize LESSINIA D'ORO. [10] The attention of the Jury and the audience was caused by two

reasons: the problem depicted in the film and the artistic approach of the director, consisting in «new and humorous vision of serious economic and political problems» (to quote the festival of Venice) and original when her husband dies, she cannot arrive in Georgia for the funeral and cries bitterly on the phone (in general, the mourning ritual is very important for Georgian society, especially in the regions, and consists of loud outcry of various texts about the deceased person, his/her character, actions etc. It often contains emotional phrases «out of context», a mixture of weeping and sadness).

Salome Alexi's observation and experience, her love and sympathy to suffering people are reflected on the vivid artistic generalization, as well as the film's structure, narration, emotional background and style.

«Felicita» is an organic mixture of sadness and humour, imagination and reality. Emigration itself is multi-sided phenomenon: people are free to travel throughout the world and live and work wherever they like, but frequently in this process they lose contact with family, children, motherland and even freedom.

Conclusion

People living under the Soviet regime strived for freedom. This aspiration was revealed in their inner freedom. Opening of the borders relieved the physical barriers, but freedom in another country turned out to be illusionary.

Economic hardships force people to abandon their homes and search for «happiness» in more developed countries. However, many people have to pay hard for this happiness.

Is this «happiness» worth striving for? (majority of people are illegal immigrants; their payment is so small that they have

no time for anything but hard work; they are unable to come back to their country periodically to see their relatives and friends or relieve the pain of loneliness in this way. They are even unable to say farewell to their deceased family members).

Is it happiness when villages and towns are abandoned, houses are locked and the boards hammered to the windows remain so forever?!

Is it happiness when children grow up without seeing their parents and communicate only via Skype or mobile phones?! Will they be able to recognize one another after years?!

Salome Alexi shares this pain, although she herself is free to travel around the world and arrive in her motherland whenever she wishes to. This pain is the main theme of her film.

With refined humour, she tries to disguise the pain and shorten the distance separating wives and husbands, parents and children, friends and relatives. The director draws a panorama of human tragedy in a refined manner, and depicts feelings and passions in each frame and mise-en-scene of the film.

Salome Alexi was assisted in creating «Felicita» by her French friends, Koka Togonidze and her mother Lana Ghoghoberidze. The crew consists of: Giorgi Beridze, Gia Kancheli, Nasim El Munabi, Vazha Jalaghania, Mariam Kandelaki, Elene Murjikneli, Salome Machaidze, Asya Ziffer, Cyril Holtz. The cast consists of: Marina Kobakhidze (voiceover), Gia Abesalashvili, Nika Kakhia, Paata Guliashvili, Nino Kasradze, Ia Sukhitashvili, Ana Gordeziani, Lana Togonidze, Gio Togonidze and Sandro Togonidze. This international crew worked on sheer enthusiasm and did their best for the success of the film.

Currently Salome Alexi is working on a new film. It seems she has found the right material that will enable her express her attitude, position and relationships with people in a new and interesting manner. She has found «New happiness» of being able to work and express herself. The shootings are close to an end and soon, following the contemporary rhythm of life, «its laws and standards», she will present the film to professionals and ordinary audience. Thus, she is continuing the century–old filmmaking traditions of the family.

The circle is closed, but the story goes on, same as any other story and life as such. Naturally, there have been joys and sorrows. The train of happiness of the legendary artist Nutsa Ghoghoberidze is following its route for the third time. It continues moving forward. The grandmother started making films in the 30s of the past century, and the granddaughter continues the tradition in the 21st century. This is the only creative dynasty in Georgia, which has been led by the feminine line. Thus, in return for the sufferings, torture and losses, the family has obtained peace, comfort and true happiness.

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Л. Очиаури

*Грузия мемлекеттік Шота Руставели атындағы Театр және кино университеті
(Тбилиси, Грузия)*

КИНОДАҒЫ ГРУЗИН ӘЙЕЛДЕРІНІҢ ОТБАСЫ ДИНАСТИЯСЫ

Аңдатпа

Мақалада кинематографияда маңызды орын алатын Грузин әйелдер киносы талданады. Грузияда кинематографист әйелдердің бұрыннан болғанына қарамастан олардың саны 20 ғасырдың басында күрт өсті. Әрине, бұрындары біз гендерлік теңсіздік мәселесі болғаны жасырын емес, бірақ қазіргі уақытта бұл мәселе шешілді. Бүгінгі грузин кинематографиясындағы маңызды бір сегменттердің бірі «әйелдер фильмі», олардың маңыздылығы фильмдерді әйел режиссерлер түсіргендіктен немесе жетістікке жеткендіктен емес, әйел адамдардың заманауи ортадағы күнделікті өмірінің көрініс табуы болып табылады.

Біз әйелдер фильмі грузин кинематографиясынан бөлек деп қарастырмаймыз. Әйелдер түсірген фильмдерде де, ер адамдар түсірген фильмдерде де ортақ ерекшеліктер бар және олар грузин киносы деп аталатын тұтас дүниенің органикалық бөлшектері болып табылады. Қарама-қайшы өмір салты ортасындағы қазіргі қоғамның рухани мәртебесі; шындықпен байланыс және онымен қақтығыс; рухани дағдарыс мәселелері; жас ұрпақ таңдауы сынды дүниелер қазіргі грузин кинематографының жалпы проблемаларын, сондай-ақ өнердің осы саласы үшін тақырыптарды таңдау кезіндегі факторлар мен үрдістерді анықтайды.

Трек сөздер: грузин кинематографиясы, «әйелдер киносы», өкілдер, детерминанттар, үрдістер, мәртебе, ерекшеліктер, заманауи қоғам.

Л. Очиаури

*Грузинский государственный университет театра и кино им. Шота Руставели
(Тбилиси, Грузия)*

ДИНАСТИЯ СЕМЬИ ГРУЗИНСКИХ ЖЕНЩИН В КИНО

Аннотация

В статье анализируется выдающийся сектор грузинского женского кино, занимающего значительное место в кинематографе. Несмотря на то, что в Грузии всегда были женщины-кинематографисты, их число резко увеличилось в начале XX века. Конечно, в прошлом мы могли говорить о гендерном дисбалансе, но в настоящее время эта проблема решена. Один из значительных сегментов грузинского кинематографа сегодня можно назвать «женскими фильмами» не только потому,

что они сделаны женщинами-режиссерами, или потому, что они добились успеха, но и потому, что их предметом являются женщины и их повседневная жизнь в среде современной реальности.

Мы не считаем, что женские фильмы существуют отдельно и находятся вне контекста грузинской кинематографии. Фильмы, снятые представителями обоих полов, имеют много общих черт, и они являются органическими частями единого целого, называемого грузинским кино. Общие проблемы современного грузинского кинематографа, а также определяющие факторы и тенденции при выборе предметов для этой области искусства заключаются в следующем: духовный статус современного общества в среде противоречивого образа жизни; связь и столкновение с реальностью; проблемы духовного кризиса; выбор молодого поколения.

Ключевые слова: грузинская кинематография, «женское кино», представители, детерминанты, тенденции, статус, особенности, современное общество.

Author's bio:

Lela Ochiauri – Professor, Doctor of Arts Shota Rustaveli Theatre and Film Georgian State University (Tbilisi, Georgia)
e-mail: lelaochauri@mail.ru

Автор туралы мәлімет:

Лела Очаури — өнертану докторы, Шота Руставели атындағы Театр және кино Грузия мемлекеттік университетінің профессоры
(Тбилиси, Грузия)
e-mail: lelaochauri@mail.ru

Сведения об авторе:

Лела Очаури — доктор искусствоведения, профессор Грузинского государственного университета театра и кино им. Шота Руставели (Тбилиси, Грузия).
e-mail: lelaochauri@mail.ru

