

Bartosz Wiczorek

Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego

Faces of Georgian Cinema

Oblicza kina gruzińskiego

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to present, on the basis of foreign literature, the main characters and the main lines of development in Georgian cinema from its inception to the present. In Poland there have been no comprehensive studies of this issue. The presented text focuses mainly on the history of Georgian cinema, showing its uniqueness. Closer to the present is the profile of Tengiz Abuladze, one of the greatest Georgian directors. This text does not pretend to present a comprehensive panorama of Georgian cinema, but it outlines the most important components. A full presentation of the Georgian cinema still requires numerous studies.

KEYWORDS:

Georgian cinema, history of cinema, social realism, Tengiz Abuladze

ABSTRAKT

Celem niniejszego tekstu jest prezentacja, na podstawie zagranicznej literatury przedmiotu, głównych postaci i najważniejszych linii rozwojowych w kinie gruzińskim od czasu jego powstania do czasów najnowszych. Jak dotąd w Polsce nie pojawiło się żadne całościowe opracowanie tego zagadnienia. Prezentowany artykuł skupia się głównie na historii kina gruzińskiego, pokazując jego specyfikę i wyjątkowość. Bliżej zaprezentowana zostanie sylwetka Tengiza Abuładzego, jednego z najwybitniejszych gruzińskich reżyserów. Niniejszy tekst nie pretenduje do całościowego zaprezentowania panoramy kina gruzińskiego, ale do nakreślenia najważniejszych jego elementów. Pełna prezentacja dorobku kina gruzińskiego wymaga jeszcze licznych studiów.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE:

kino gruzińskie, historia kina, socrealizm, Tengiz Abuładze

*Art is about creating harmony out of chaos,
establishing order, extracting form from the formless.¹*
Tengiz Abuladze

Georgia, situated between the Caucasus Mountains and the Black Sea, dependent throughout its history on influences from great empires – the Roman, Persian, Ottoman, and Russian empires – is a small country with an unusually

¹ N. Nikulenkova, *Грузинский Кинематограф Абуладзе*, <http://nnikulen.livejournal.com/> (accessed 8.10.2015).

colorful history that is very proud of its past. Christianity (Eastern Orthodoxy and monophysitism), Islam, and the remnants of Zoroastrianism and pagan cults that continue to linger in the margins, form the complex spiritual background of Georgia as one of the oldest Christian countries.² The deep Georgian spirituality, the attachment to the faith of ancestors, the patriotism, and the love of freedom and beauty rooted in the Hellenic and Byzantine cultures find reflection in the magnificent Georgian cinema.³ The creators of Georgian cinema are aware of this heritage: "I represent the last Mediterranean culture alive, the roots of which date back to Antiquity," says Otar Ioseliani, the famous Georgian film director.⁴ The uniqueness of this land and this cinema was also noted by the Italian cinema master, Federico Fellini, who wrote that "Georgian cinema is a strange phenomenon; philosophically light, sublime, and at the same time childlike, pure, and innocent. There is everything in it that can make me cry and, I must admit, it is not an easy thing to do."⁵

The Georgian cinema continues to be terra incognita, somewhat exotic, like the country's highlands. One of the reasons for this is the fact that Georgian films were incorporated in the shared main body of Soviet cinema and shown as creations of the homeland of communism. The majority of Georgian productions are still held in the archives of the Russian Gosfilmfond. The people of Georgia have made attempts to recover them, but the armed conflict with Russia in 2008 put an end to those hopes.

The beginnings of Georgian cinema coincide with the birth of cinema as such. The first public showing of a film took place in Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia, in 1896; by the beginning of the 20th century the country already had several screening rooms. The first permanent movie theater, "Iluzjon," was opened in Tbilisi, on Golovin Avenue (now Rustavele Ave.) in 1904. Among Soviet cities after the First World War, only Petrograd (St. Petersburg) had more screening rooms than Tbilisi.⁶

² E. Dulgheru, "Serge Parajanov and Tengiz Abuladze: Two Models of Anticommunist Testimony through Cinema in Soviet Georgia", in *International Journal of Orthodox Theology*, 2014, <http://orthodox-theology.com/media/PDF/IJOT3.2014/Dulgheru.pdf> (accessed 8.10.2015).

³ E. Dulgheru, op. cit.

⁴ <http://www.moma.org/visit/calendar/films/1510> (accessed 8.10.2015).

⁵ <http://www.tofifest.pl/pl/program-2010/s/8> (accessed 8.10.2015).

⁶ A. Mikaberidze, *History of the Georgian Cinema*, <http://rustaveli.tripod.com/cinema.html> (accessed 8.10.2015).

At first, Georgian cinematic productions consisted of images of daily life recorded during producers' trips to the Caucasus Mountains. Alexander Digmelashvili, Simon Esadze, and Vasil Amashukeli were its precursors. Unfortunately, their works have been lost and we know about them only from mentions in the contemporary literature.⁷ In 1908, Vasil Amashukeli and Alexander Digmelashvili filmed some experimental footage and four years later directed their first full-length documentary film, entitled *Akaki's Travel*. It was a narrative on the trip taken by the poet Akaki Cereteli to the Racha-Lechkumico region between July 2 and August 2, 1912. This event can be recognized as the birth of the Georgian film industry.⁸ Next, in 1916, Alexander Cucunava shot a short movie called *Christine*, which was based on a short story by the renowned Georgian writer, Egnate Ninoshvili, which began the idea of adapting popular works of Georgian literature.

Georgia gained its independence in 1917 as a result of the October Revolution, after ages of being a Russian colony. Unfortunately, it was annexed again in 1921 by Bolshevik Russia and subjected to dictatorship, repressions, and powerful propaganda. These dramatic historical events isolated Georgia from the world for 70 years.⁹

CINEMA IN THE SHADOW OF IDEOLOGY

In the period 1923–1926, a new generation of Georgian film directors brought a new perspective and sensitivity to the cinema. Important productions from that time include “My Grandma” (1929) by Kote Mikaberidze (whose works were confiscated by Soviet censors); *Caucasian Love* (1928) by Nikolai Shengelay; *Sol Swanetii* (1930) by Mikheil Kalatozishvili; *Amok* (1927) by Kote Marianishvili; and *Saba* (1929), *Chabarda* (1931), and *Great Luna* (1938) by Mikheil Chiaureli. In those years, Alexander Cucunava and Kote Marianishvili, both with a theatrical background, introduced the best dramatic traditions of Georgian theater to the art of film and the Georgian Film Studio (Goskinprom) was established in Tbilisi in 1923.¹⁰

⁷ L. Ochiauri, *Georgian Cinema before and after Independence*, <http://www.kinokultura.com/specials/12/ochiauri-independence.shtml> (accessed 8.10.2015).

⁸ <http://www.tofifest.pl/pl/program-2010/s/8> (accessed 8.10.2015).

⁹ *Ibidem*.

¹⁰ P. Rollberg, *Historical Dictionary of Russian and Soviet Cinema*, Lanham 2009, p. 274.

The original evolution of Georgian cinema was suppressed by the socialist realism that became the leading trend in Soviet art. Georgian cinema lived through this painful experience from 1930 to 1950, being turned into a part of the Stalinist propaganda machine. The new regime demanded that the cinema obey communist ideology. At that time, Georgian films were shot by non-Georgian directors, including Ivan Perestiani, Vladimir Barskij, and Amo Bek-Nazarov, who were attracted to the exoticism of the mysterious Caucasus and its “savage” inhabitants. They shot films based on Russian and Georgian literature, intending to develop a new “Revolutionary” cinema. The films were set in the Georgian reality but foreign to the traditional Georgian culture.

The forced socialist realism inhibited the artistic growth of Georgian artists and turned the cinema into a pseudo-art representative of Soviet culture.¹¹ A statement by one scholar of Georgian cinema illustrates the issue well: “A true work of art can come into existence only when it serves the truth. (...) In the years 1930–1940, it served a deception, and false ideas gave rise to false messages. A single lie spawned a whole string of subsequent lies. The cinema walked a path of half-truths and fake reality.”¹² Thus, Georgian cinema languished in this very unfavorable environment for decades. The socialist Georgian republic needed new heroes to create new values and lifestyles. It required new myths to explain the new reality to people. The cinema, as a modern mass medium, was ideally suited for spreading propaganda. The works of Mikheil Chiaureli, the author of the first Georgian sound film, *The Last Masquerade* (1934), a satire on the bourgeoisie, is a good example of such use of the power of cinema.¹³ Chiaureli entered the history of cinema as one of the most faithful apologists and one of the makers of the cult of Stalin. This is what he wrote in one of his articles on this Soviet leader: “Many artists met Comrade Stalin often. They heard his voice, saw his warm smile, shook hands cordially with him. There was the wisdom of our times in his simple words and a flare of genius in his eyes.”¹⁴

¹¹ L. Ochiauri, op. cit.

¹² Ibidem.

¹³ P. Rollberg, op. cit., p. 275.

¹⁴ P. Kenez, *Cinema and Soviet Society: From the Revolution to the Death of Stalin*, London, 2001, p. 208.

The Second World War set the whole public life on military tracks, so there were no new films apart from productions by Chiaureli, including the historical film entitled *Giorgi Saakadze* (1942–43).

THE CINEMA OPEN TO INDIVIDUALITY

In time, the iron curtain that isolated Georgia from the rest of the world started to weaken. The first crack showed during Khrushchev's thaw in the 1950s. That did not mean that the Soviet propaganda was lessened or that one could speak freely, but there was a change of climate in Russian politics that extended the scope of societal and cultural liberties.

This new trend became noticeable in the Georgian cinema of the 1960s in terms of not only subjects open to discussion, but also to new styles and ways of thinking, which started to break free from the context of real socialism. Most importantly, the cinema moved on from the collective "us" to the individual "me," exploring human inner life and looking for the unique, which used to be suppressed by political and social pressures.

A path slowly opened towards the creation of a new human being and new guiding values. Step by step, the cinema relieved itself of servicing social myths and focused more on human individuality.

The first film that held promise for a revival of Georgian cinema was *Magdana's Donkey* (1956), by Tengiz Abuladze and Rezo Czcheidze. Later, in 1962, Giorgi Shengelaia filmed *Two Stories*, which became a kind of creative manifesto of the generation of the 1960s. These authors, like their counterparts in the following decade (Eldar Shengelaia, Otar Iosseliani, Alexander Rekchashvili, Lana

Gogoberidze, Mikheil Kobakhidze, Merab Kokochashvili, Rezo Esadze, Nodar Managadze, and Irakli Kwirikadze), started to speak frankly about their personal problems. Anxious about censorship, they selected such genres as legend, myth, fairy tale, comedy, or tragicomedy, which gave them creative freedom and relieved them from political responsibility: The truth was passed in their movies in an allegorical fashion.

The main source of power of these films was their individualism and the unusual poetic form that has become a distinguishing mark of Georgian cinema. Apart from the above-mentioned films, this artistic current included *Other People's Children* (1959) and *The Begging*¹⁵ (1968) by Tengiz Abuladze¹⁶; *Pirosmani* (1969) by Giorgi Shengelayi; *Georgian Chronicles of the 19th Century* (1979) by Alexander Rekchashvili; *The Big Green Valley* (1967) by Merab Kokochashvili; *An Unusual Exhibition* (1968) and *Eccentrics* (1973) by Eldar Shengelayi; *There Was a Thrush* (1970) by Otar Ioseliani; *A Soldier's Father* (1964) by Rezo Czcheidze; *Under One Sky* (1961) by Lana Gogoberidze; *A Nylon Christmas Tree* (1985) by Rezo Esadze; and *The Wedding* (1964) and *An Umbrella* (1967) by Mikheil Kobakhidze. In these films, remote from ideological, political, and social contexts, an individual awareness was liberated from the collective mind. Their narratives were poetic and the plots headed in various directions.¹⁷ The story told by each of the films was set in a mythical, timeless, or ahistorical world. Pieces of reality did not disturb the integrity or inner dynamics of the work. The arbitrariness of the fictitious world, the multitude of literary references, and the poetic narration turned into the distinguishing features of Georgian film art. The world of these films – metaphoric, symbolic, and unreal – was a specifically modeled microcosm.¹⁸ They beamed with a spirit of the stoic philosophy and lyrical intonation.¹⁹ National and universal

¹⁵ Many Georgian films had troubles with the censors and had a limited reach. This is what happened to Tengiz Abuladze, whose film *The Penance* was held up by the censors for a few years. The film turned into a legend – one of the most prominent long-term shapers of public opinion that, by unveiling the brutality of Stalinist rule contributed to a gradual change of public awareness in the Soviet Union. See Mikaberidze.

¹⁶ Tengiz Abuladze makes an original transformation of the Italian neo-realism in his films. See Oleksiewicz, p. 4.

¹⁷ L. Ochiauri, op. cit.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ J. Bogomowlow, "Kino gruzińskie - stosunek do rzeczywistości", in: *Film na świecie* no. 10, 1979 p. 7.

matters, the moral challenges faced by human beings, respect for tradition, and the imperative of following one's own moral code were the main themes raised by these new productions. Another explanation for the uniqueness of Georgian cinema comes from the different style of acting: the "code" of Stanislawski, popular in Russia, was unsuitable for expressing the Georgian emotional temper.²⁰

Tengiz Abuladze: The Cinema's Poet

Tengiz Abuladze (1924–1994) first gained artistic experience at the Theatrical Institute of Tbilisi, from Giorgi Towstonogow and Dimitri Aleksidze. Abuladze did not become a *regisseur*, but he benefited greatly from his exposure to the tradition of Georgian theater.²¹

Abuladze enrolled in WGIK, the Moscow film academy – one of the best in the world in 1946 – together with his friend Rezo Czcheidze. That was possibly owing to the support of Sergei Eisenstein, to whom the two friends wrote a letter.²² They both were admitted to the class of Sergei Utkevitch, where they could learn from outstanding film producers, including Lev Kuleshow, Alexander Dowzenko, Wsiewolod Pudowkin, and Mikhail Romm. Working together, they shot *Magdana's Donkey*, which was awarded at Cannes in 1956. Even this first movie, recognized as a cornerstone of the Georgian film school, reveals the fusion of realism and poetry so characteristic of the works of Abuladze. The lyricism, the reconstruction of Georgian society, and the humor and love showing through in the depiction of the characters became the distinguishing marks of his style.

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²⁰ L. Menashe, *Moscow Believes in Tears: Russians and Their Movies*, Washington 2010, p. 325

²¹ N. Nikulenkowa, op. cit.

²² I. Alajew, *Мольба и покаяние Тенгиза Абуладзе*, <http://m.ritmeurasia.org/news-2014-02-28-molba-i-pokajanie-tengiza-abuladze-11574> (accessed 8.10.2015).

The second film by Tengiz Abuladze, *Other People's Children* (1958), under the convention of Italian neo-realism, is the story of a female student at the University of Tbilisi who decided to adopt two orphans.²³ The next film by the Georgian director, *The Grandma, Grandpas and Me* (1962), based on the novel by Nodar Dumbadza, is a lyric and gently humorous story about the Georgian countryside. Another excellent work is *The Begging* (1967), the first part of a famous (though unplanned for) trilogy. It was the gold winner at the festival in San Remo in 1973. The film tells the story of the poet Waza Pshaveli's inner world, the struggle against evil, and love and fidelity in the context of the great hostility of two neighboring nations. *The Necklace of My Loved One* (1973) is a charming fairy tale about discovering the world and a contemplative comedy where the contemporary is interwoven with the past, realism with fantasy, and eccentric humor with poetic metaphor.²⁴ *The Tree of Wishes* (1977), the second part of the trilogy, full of metaphors and understatements, consists of a dozen or so short stories portraying the life of the Georgian countryside just before the revolution. The film is about dreams and about people willing to sacrifice everything for their ideas.

In 1978, while returning from a screening of *The Dream of Wishes*, Abuladze had a car accident, which gave him an idea for his next film, *The Penance* (1987), which closed the trilogy. The film excited a strong public resonance and attracted crowds of film fans to box offices. This universal story of a dictator and the struggle for freedom was meaningful, particularly because the dictator could be identified with Stalin.²⁵ "The film shook us. (...) It was a manifest taller than the art itself. This philosophical story changed the minds of a massive audience," said Rezo Czcheidze.²⁶

²³ Abuladze shot his next film by himself. "Here, the neo-realistic inspirations were manifest enough to inspire very adverse responses. This came as a surprise because neo-realistic films were screened and received quite warmly in the Soviet Union: first, for their subject matter, and second, because of their correct ideological background. The Communist sympathies of some neo-realists were not a secret. However, there was a difference between the remote Italians and the native authors. Abuladze was accused of an inclination for 'abstract humanism,' a departure from the rules of socialist realism" (J. Wojnicka, *Przypowiesci Tengiza Abuladze*, http://ekrany.hekko24.pl/images/18_abuladze.pdf).

²⁴ A. Horoszczak, "Mądrość współczesnej bajki", in: *Kultura Filmowa* no. 6, 1973, p. 96.

²⁵ M. Markow, *Мольба Тенгиза Абуладзе*, http://www.filmz.ru/pub/2/20250_1.htm (accessed 8.10.2015).

²⁶ I. Alajew, op. cit.

Since then, the works of Abuladze have been perceived as a kind of anti-totalitarian therapy for Georgians and an inspiration for resistance against sovietization. His *The Penance* can be defined as one of the most powerful anti-communist and anti-totalitarian cinematic testimonies in history. The pivotal work of this director, the trilogy composed of *The Begging* (1967), *The Tree of Wishes* (1976), and *The Penance* (1987), invokes the archetypal world of values: a source of the Georgian identity and an antidote against Russian cultural imperialism.²⁷

However, Abuladze was not a typical dissident. Until 1974 he was an academic teacher at the Theatrical Institute of Tbilisi; he remained a member of the communist party until 1978; he was nominated a member of the Supreme Council of the Soviet Union; and in 1980 he was awarded the prestigious title of a "National Artist." This inconspicuous participation in the official life enabled the director to speak quite freely through his films. This is why the artist could refer to tradition (biblical, evangelical, Caucasian, European, and Medieval) to present a model of an "old-time person." This person was a figure rooted in the world of ancient invariable values, such as liberty or beauty, which were rejected by the socialist society with its ideological vision of a "new man." This artistic strategy turned out to be effective, though it was inherently dangerous to the state ideology: "What could be more dangerous to the Marxist-Leninist ideology-driven art than the depiction of the wealth of the Medieval world presented in *The Begging* by Abuladze?"²⁸ According to Elena Dulgheru, this work by Tengiz Abuladze is "full of love for people, homeland, God and tradition (...) highlighting the faith in beauty (...) the strongest testimony to the strength of Christian values and their ability to survive under the communist regime."²⁹

THE NEW GEORGIAN CINEMA

The year that the Film Faculty at the Theatrical Institute of Tbilisi was established, 1972, was a very important event for Georgian cinema. It laid the foundation for the development of the Georgian film school that has given Georgia and the world a number of outstanding film producers. Giorgi Danielij, Eldar and Giorgi

²⁷ E. Dulgheru, op. cit. (accessed 8.10.2015).

²⁸ Ibidem.

²⁹ E. Dulgheru, op. cit.

Shengelai, Otar Iosseliani, Lana Gogoberidze, and Mikheil Kobakhidze all graduated from this department.³⁰ A whole generation of new producers who came to the industry in the 1980s – including Temur Babluani, Goderdzi Czokcheli, Dito Cincadze, Dato Janelidze, Otar Litanishvili, Nana Jorjadze, Nana Janelidze, Tato Kotetishvili, Gogita Czkonია, Aleko Cabadze, Levan Glonti, Levan Tutberidze, Levan Zakareishvili, Zaza Kchwalwaszi, and Marina Kchonelidze – sought their own film narration styles, characters, and topics.

The producers of that time converted from the hitherto prevailing poetic style to a more careful observation of the world, which was a consequence of new challenges faced by the new generation. The reality presented in their films is dark; there is an atmosphere of hopelessness, lost opportunities, and disappointment; life is gray, monotonous, and lonely; the lack of spiritual roots aggravates the state of isolation of the individual; only the strongest and the most ruthless can survive. This kind of attitude is represented in *The Sun of the Sleeping* (1992) and *Brother* by Temur Babluani, *Mother Earth* (1982) by Goderdzi Czokcheli, *A Trip to Sopot* (1980), and *The Family* (1985) by Nana Jorjadze; *Quasimodo* (1981) by Levan Eristavi, or *Anemia* (1987) by Tato Kotetishvili.

The year 1991 brought a huge political and social change to Georgia. The old regime fell and the country regained its independence. The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991 brought liberty, but on very complex terms. Most importantly, this liberty was not guaranteed to last forever.

The initial years of Georgia's independence were marked by chaos, the emergence of a new order, economic change, and most of all, the Abkhazian war that deprived Georgia of a significant part of its territory. These events were followed by a long crisis that inhibited the development of the country's economy and culture, including cinema.

³⁰ A. Mikaberidze, op. cit. (accessed 8.10.2015).

The social havoc and economic uncertainty that was typical of former Soviet republics, including Russia, urged filmmakers to deal with new topics. The erosion of the rules of social life, the conflict of old and new values, and the blunting of the meaning of life placed Georgian film producers in a new position.

Many emigrated to Russia and other European countries. Today, Otar Iosseliani and Mikheil Kobakhidze work in France and Nana Jorjadze and Dito Cincadze work in Germany. Jorjadze's career is developing superbly: She was awarded for *The Robinsonade* (1987) in Cannes and her *1001 Recipes by Love-struck Chef* (1996) was nominated for the American Film Academy Award.³¹ Gela Babluani has won the Silver Bear at the Berlinale for *The Sun of the Sleeping* (1992).

THE GEORGIAN CINEMA OF THE 21ST CENTURY

After the 2002 Revolution of Roses that made president Eduard Shevardnadze step down, the course of Georgian history turned again: the country started to develop, heading in quite a new direction. Cinema continued to witness this process and gained new film-making infrastructure, new studios (Aisi, Remka, Sanguco, Independent Film Project, Cinetech), and new group of producers (Levan Korinteli, Archil Gelowani, Zurab Magalashvili, and Guka Rcheulishvili), which created opportunities for shooting independent films with more or less cooperation from the Georgian National Film Center. The Georgian–Russian conflict in South Ossetia, initiated in 2008, disturbed this growth. No wonder that the contemporary Georgian cinema focuses on painful historical events that menaced the country after the collapse of the Soviet Union: the civil war and conflict in South Ossetia and Abkhazia, the conflict in Chechnya, and the unremitting tension in Upper Karabakh. These events echo in a number of contemporary Georgian films: *A Trip to Karabakh* (2005) by Levan Tutberidze, *The Russian Triangle* by Aleko Cabadze (2007), *The Conflict Zone* by Wano Burduli (2009), and *The Other Bank* (2009) by Giorgi Owashvili. This cinema is not poetic any more.

A Trip to Karabakh tells the story of young people experiencing the civil war in Georgia and the conflict between Armenians and Azerbaijanis in Upper Karabakh – the lost generation who cannot come to terms with the atrocities and

³¹ The film is a successful reference to the Georgian cinema of the 1960s and 1970s. See Chyb, p. 96.

whose values have been disturbed by the war. *The Russian Triangle* is set in Russia, after the Chechen wars. The characters have lived through the hell of the war and cannot find themselves in their daily lives. Torn apart by their painful memories, they are desperate to straighten out their lives. *The Other Bank*, the debut of Giorgi Owashvili, is about a 12-year-old refugee who lives with his mother, in separation from the father who stayed in his native Abkhazia. The titular “other bank” is Abkhazia, to which the boy sets out to find his father. The film depicts the disastrous consequences of war.³²

Contemporary Georgian cinema touches upon problems of daily life, the quest for one’s own way of living, and the building of new values and rules of social life. This is the subject area of *Tbilisi, Tbilisi* (2005) by Levan Zakareishvili, *Three Homes* (2008) by Zaza Urushadze, *An Embassy Man* (2006) by Dita Cincaze, *I Would Die Without You* (2010) by Levan Tutberidze, or *Dependency* by Archil Kawtaradze.

Other, more recent, successful films include *The Corn Island* by Giorgi Owashvili (a slow-cinema picture of the daily life of the provinces with ethnic conflicts in the background), *Tangerines* by Zaza Urushadze (a cameral look at the Abkhazia war), and *The Brides* by Tinatin Kadzrishvili (a highly acclaimed debut at Berli-nale 2014).

Georgian cinema has a long and sophisticated history. At its very onset, it was contaminated with the Bolshevik ideology and exposed to Soviet propagan-da. However, the great strength and the Christian–Mediterranean rooting of the Georgian culture allowed it to develop the phenomenon of Georgian cinema – full of poetry, fabulous realism, and lyric tonality. Against all the immense obstacles, Georgian cinema has posed a veiled resistance to the pressing socialist values, protecting the ideal of a person faithful to themselves, free and aware of their merit. Today, Georgian cinema faces new challenges: the conflict with Russia, the economic crisis, or the rise in new values and lifestyles. However, judging by some extremely successful films, such as *The Corn Island* by Giorgi Owashvili or *Tan-gerines* by Zaza Urushadze, the essence of Georgian cinema has stayed intact: it continues to present pure, poetic, distanced, and wise attitudes to current events, drawing from its own roots and history.

³² L. Ochiauri, op. cit.

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About the autor

Bartosz Wieczorek is a doctor of philosophy. He has published articles in *Przegląd Filozoficzny*, *Studia Philosophiae Christianae*, *Znak*, *Zeszyty Karmelitańskie*, *W drodze*, *Jednota*, *Frona*, *Przegląd Powszechny*, and *Studia Bobolanum* and is the author of radio plays. From 2000 to 2002 he was secretary of the editorial office of the sociocultural monthly *Emaus*. Contact: bartosz.wieczorek@poczta.fm