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Faculty of Art Sciences, Media, and Management

Specialty of film criticism

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Georgian film studies - history of relations between criticism and censorship

Synopsis

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Content

Objectives of the work	3
Relevance of the study	4
Methodology of research	4
Results and scientific novelties of the research	5
Overview of the literature	8
Structure of the work	10
Works published on the subject of the dissertation	17

Objectives of the work

The objective of the work is to familiarise professional circles and a broad circle of readers with the history of Georgian film criticism. The work also presents specific features of relations between film criticism and Soviet censorship, their description, and the identification and systematisation of most important instances and trends.

No scientific work has ever been done on the history of Georgian film studies. There are no works of some other type on the aforementioned issue either. (There are only several articles in the *Kino* and *Sabchota Khelovneba* magazines). In addition to the history of the formation and development of the field, this work will familiarise those interested with the essence of film studies in general, film criticism, and film theory, milestone events and personalities in the film history of various countries, those, who created this profession and exerted a major impact not only on it, but also on the understanding and development of cinema in general.

The main objective of the work is to create a corpus of Georgian film criticism - a kind of pattern that comprises most important historic stages identified chronologically and semantically. This is necessary to make the work of researchers in the field of Georgian film criticism easier in the future and enable them to have systematised data, which will make it possible for them to go deeper into individual themes and stages in their research.

The discoveries and assessments found in this work introduce ideas and positions in Georgian art criticism and film history and new ways of understanding history that are in some cases in stark contrast with established opinions.

Speaking about the history of film criticism in this work, I often describe and characterise the country, cinematography, and public trends. To explain reasons for specific phenomena, it is necessary to study the background, as answers to many questions are to be searched for in some details that lie beyond the front of the stage.

In addition to the history of the development of film studies, reflecting the past of the country was also an objective of the work. Film criticism is the best in reflecting topical issues, ideologies, approaches, visions, and, what is most important, language of various eras. Observations on the styles of writing and narration revealed thinking categories characteristic of all important stages of Georgia's recent history, changes in the categories, and reasons of the changes determined by the official policy of the state. Thus, observations reflected in the work will be useful not only for people interested in film studies or simply history of the cinema, but also those, who study totalitarianism, the influence of ideologies on masses, relations between censorship and artists, conflicts between generations, the role of social and philosophic theories in shaping specific discourses, and so forth.

The work will help future film critics and not only them, to study the past of their profession and let them shape their opinion on the past and present of Western film studies, important discussions and events in the American, British, and French film criticism. They will be able to learn the standards and norms of film criticism, the structure of reviews, the essence of criticism, and its mission.

The work focuses on Georgian analytical film criticism, its style, and the system of values that Georgian film critics have created and have been based on. I also consider the direction in

Georgian film criticism that was guided by comparatively low professional norms, using trite and pathetic forms. Thus, the work will help film critics to develop skills and standards and raise the latter.

Relevance of the study

William Faulkner said: "The past is never dead. It's not even past" (*Requiem for a Nun*). It follows that history, whether it is the history of a country or a specific field - film criticism in this case, cannot be regarded as past. History determines the present and the future even if this happens unconsciously, in other words, if the past has not been studied well.

For example, Sigmund Freud said that it is impossible to forget the past (*The Uneasiness in Culture*) and it always coexists with us, dominating our conscience. History leaves a mark on us as an element that shapes being, which, according to Karl Marx, determines consciousness (*Capital*). I shared in this work precisely the paradigm of the 20th-century material philosophy that opposes Hegel's idealist perceptions, declaring that consciousness that is determined by being is behind all ideas and actions of humans.

Georgia is a former Soviet country. Therefore, its recent past is much more important than it can be in the countries that do not have a totalitarian past. Georgian film studies and film criticism conveyed Soviet ideology for years. They emerged together with this ideology and went through all the stages in the history of the USSR.

The situation in Georgian film studies is different today. Every new generation tries to isolate themselves from the Soviet past as much as possible and to overcome it, which is manifested in the use of Western practices, terms, and approaches. However, having no appropriate knowledge of the past, they struggle against superficial perceptions and the external side of Soviet criticism, while the content that has continued to determine a lot up to now remains untouched.

Struggle against history leads to nothing. I would say it is even useless. It is possible to overcome the past and get rid of it or recognise it only by means of studying history. That is why research in the past of film criticism is extremely topical and important, as I noted, not only for specialists of the field, but also a broad spectrum of researchers.

Methodology of research

The object of the study - **the history of Georgian film studies: Relations between film criticism and censorship** - determined a variety of methods. I had to work on archive materials and I also processed numerous articles and reviews. Other methods of research were also used occasionally.

At the initial stage, I retrieved the literature on the history of world film studies. At the next stage, I familiarised myself with works that dealt with film studies in general. I gradually approached Georgian film studies that had not been researched prior to me, never mind being systematised. Therefore, I had to outline important stages and classify them.

Countless reviews and letters that had appeared in Georgian periodicals since 1897 made the research more complicated. The work ends in the study of the events in 2003 and the role of film criticism in the Rose Revolution, which means that the period I studied covers about a century and I retrieved and processed letters published during the period.

During the research I made electronic versions of many articles to create a general database in the future to host all the aforementioned articles, reviews, and various kinds of notes about the cinema. I also studied and processed all monographs by Georgian film experts published in Georgia.

During the work on the aforementioned problem, I used bibliographic lists of the National Library of the Georgian Parliament, thematic catalogues, and data and materials available at databases. Unfortunately, some sources are no longer kept either there or in the Georgian National Archives. Due to this, for example, one of the first newspaper notes on a cinema show held in Georgia should be regarded as lost forever. The same is true of the first epistolary dispute over Alexander Tsutsunava's *Kristine* (1919). The primary sources reflecting this historic dispute have been lost and we have to rely only on memoirs when speaking about this. In other cases, any opinion expressed or fact referred to are supported by original sources.

For this work, I also studied the history of the American, French, and, partially, British film criticism and the authors, themes, and editions that determined the state of film criticism not only in these countries, but also worldwide. Thus, I tried to discover some parallels and common features in Georgian and Western film studies by using the method of synchronic analysis in this work.

In addition to quantitative research, methods of qualitative research are also extensively used in this work. Resorting to the structural analysis of articles and monographs, I tried to clarify the semantics of events and determine their nature and context. Any letter or review can be regarded as an individual item, but they can also be regarded as part of a broader process. All letters, trends, and aspects discussed in this work are generalised within the context of Soviet history. Examples drawn from spheres adjacent to the subject of research, which I often used in the study, made this context or the general background even clearer.

Results and scientific novelties of the research

The subject of the study and research of this work was **the history of Georgian film studies and their relations with censorship**. Several discoveries were made during the research. Readers will learn for the first time about the first Georgian film critics and their fate. Due to their being incompatible with the state censorship, most of them became victims of repressions.

Censorship and the cultural policy of the Soviet Union are an extremely deep and dimensional issue, so it is impossible to exhaustively deal with it in one work. This is also true of the history of Georgian cinema criticism. However, my objective was to carry out a qualitative, not quantitative study of the problem. Therefore, I often resorted to the generalisation of events, trying to discuss broad issues based on concrete events or articles.

Observation on the historic background is the keynote of this work, particularly as the dialectic of film criticism tells the history of the development of the country and the cinematograph. For example, first Georgian film critic Gaioz Imedashvili and his letters and tragic fate are the best

illustration of the atmosphere of the 1920s and the situation in the newly-created Soviet Union. Research of this stage showed that censorship had not yet taken its final shape and had not developed unified norms and criteria critics were to be guided by. Such a situation took shape in the Soviet Union for a second time only in the late 1980s.

Soviet censorship had a complicated bureaucratic apparatus, which gradually became sophisticated after 1922, taking the shape of intricate official subordination. Quite a strange system was formed after Socialist Realism was declared as the only "correct" method in arts. Stalin's personal directives also played a role (his letters published in the *Pravda* newspaper or statements at his meetings with representatives of various spheres, where the dictator did not shun imposing his personal taste and preference on them). It proved to be not so easy to understand the logic and standards of the system.

This work presents most important stages of development and aspects of Soviet censorship:

- Soviet censorship has never had a single document like a constitution and precise norms developed based on it. Historic examples show that personal opinions of specific officials and their views on "Soviet reality" and its protection were often behind prohibitions or interferences. It also became clear that censorship was often used for mercantile purposes and personal score-settling. For example, newly-discovered materials make it clear that Mikheil Chiaureli was behind the rejection of numerous projects by film director Kote Mikaberidze that were put on the back burner. Mikaberidze was involved in a longstanding conflict with Chiaureli;
- Former radicals and rebels were the first "fathers" of censorship as exemplified by Besarion Zgenti. In the past, he represented the Futurist movement and used to publish extremely bold letters and manifestos in the *H2SO4* magazine. Later, he became head of the local censorship machine and declared war on Formalism;
- Censorship became extremely strict but also grotesque in the Stalinist times. Most prohibitions were based on the leader's personal taste, not ideological principles. It was according to his decision that the second part of *Ivan the Terrible* by Sergei Eisenstein, *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District* by Dmitry Shostakovich, and *The Great Friendship* by Vano Muradeli were banned and the Central Committee of the Communist Party adopted a resolution that condemned Anna Akhmatova and Mikhail Zoshchenko, who were then expelled from the Union of Soviet Writers, and so forth.
- The *Sabchota Khelovneba* magazine altered the well-known speech by Nikita Khrushchev at the 20th Congress of the Communist Party, omitting the passage on the condemnation of the personality cult. Such arbitrariness was a good example of the extremely "flexible" nature of censorship. To balance the fact, the same magazine devoted later series of articles to Khrushchev and his whims (about the role of the cinema in the development of the corn culture, his visit to the United States, and so forth).
- The criteria of censorship took a seemingly more complete shape in the Brezhnev era. The most frequent demand of censors of the time was to "brightly depict the Socialist world". This implied the return to Socialist Realism, which had almost been overcome in the post-Stalin era both in arts and criticism. (The new generation called Sixtiers emerged in the arena at that time.) The attempt to revert to the myths of Socialist Realism and the criteria of those times can be seen in the epistolary dispute between

Irina Kuchukhidze and Giorgi Kharatishvili. A detailed analysis of the dispute shows the face of modified censorship and the climate in the 1970s;

- And finally, what happened to Soviet censorship first in the era of Mikhail Gorbachev's Glasnost and then in the post-Soviet period? Memoirs of various personalities make it clear that since the last years of the Brezhnev rule, the main censorship agency - Glavlit, the General Directorate for the Protection of State Secrets in the Press - retained almost nominal functions. It had unofficially established "red lines", i.e. control over open anti-Soviet calls and it did not and, in a number of cases, could not go beyond them. For example, the *Sabchota Khelovneba* magazine published Sergei Eisenstein's essay *El Greco and the Cinema* in 1984 after unsuccessful previous attempts to publish it in Russia. However, Georgian censors demanded omission of only several short passages.
- As regards the post-Soviet period, censorship took quite a different shape. A new notion emerged - **the anonymous field of censorship**. In this case, we have to deal with unidentified sources of censorship. The force/forces behind anonymous censorship exert major influence on public sentiments and individuals, hence the state. It is the Georgian Orthodox Church that is such. It has demanded covertly and often openly and is continuing to demand banning individual films, books, TV programmes, and authors and evicting them from the public space and stigmatising them. It is the description of this phenomenon that ends the discussion of the history of Soviet censorship.

As regards the second direction in film studies - the development of cinema theory, I would like to identify several aspects here too.

It should first and foremost be noted that discussions related to film theory started on the pages of the *Teatri da Tskhovreba* magazine in 1915. Several periodicals wrote about the cinema in the 1920s, including *H2SO4*, *Memartskheneoba*, and others. For example, Ioseb Imedashvili devoted a letter to the emergence of sound films and Georgian Futurists wrote manifestos, in which they declared the cinema as an art of the future. Mikheil Kalatozishvili, Nikoloz Shengelaia, and Nutsa Gogoberidze offered interesting theoretical reasoning in the press of that time.

Georgian film criticism was isolated from the Western world during decades. Theoretical and other types of novelties were either unable to penetrate the "iron curtain" or reached us behind time and via the Russian metropole, which had a bad impact on film criticism. On the one hand, it was under the pressure of the ideology and on the other hand, it was isolated from the free theoretical thinking spaces and processes.

The language, style, manner, and thinking of film criticism were overwhelmed with ideological and pathetic motives in the Stalin and post-Stalin era. Criticism did not want and could not produce in-depth analysis, was not objective and unbiased, and did not observe high professional standards. I think the main reason for this was the environment that was not free. **Only a free person is able to carry out an internal thinking act** (Merab Mamardashvili, *The Topology of Consciousness*).

Of course, this does not mean that only primitive articles and reviews were written even during the most complicated years for film studies. Even in that period, it is possible to find letters that reflect all ideological and stylistic demands of the era and at the same time, they were written on the basis of high professional standards.

The situation changed sharply after a new generation emerged in film studies. Young film critics were different from the old generation in many aspects, including education, as they had received professional education of journalists and film specialists. The emergence of this generation caused such major moves that they were believed to be at the root of Georgian film criticism for many years, which is not true historically. In spite of this, Tata Tvalchrelidze, Kora Tsereteli, Natia Amirejibi, and Olga Tabukashvili can definitely be regarded as "founding mothers" of Georgian film studies.

Numerous examples given in this work show that Georgian film criticism made quick progress. Its main aim was to accumulate intellectual capital, which was then used in scientific works and letters published in newspapers and magazines. By the 1980s, film criticism had managed to change readers' attitude. Interest and trust in film criticism grew significantly as a result.

Finding a common language with readers has always been the main problem everywhere. Film criticism managed to establish quite close relations with broad masses in post-Soviet Georgia. It also became involved in the formation of civic society, which was one of the most important challenges in post-Soviet Georgia. It should also be noted here that it would be erroneous to imagine that film criticism was a monolithic phenomenon. There were personalities supporting obscurantism and reactionism at every stage of the development of film criticism and the post-Soviet period was no exception in this regard. However, I limited myself to generalised reasoning about the phenomenon.

Georgian film criticism is in expectation of a new stage of its development now. Attempts to draw closer to Western experience and share its standards and paradigms are continuing.

The role of film studies in Georgian cinematograph and the country's history is not homogeneous. Despite numerous failures, film criticism has seen the emergence of new ideas and theories that have been more frequent. Its role in overcoming post-Soviet crises in both the cinema and civic society is also noteworthy. It should also be noted that Georgian film criticism played a role in the Rose Revolution manifested in the promotion of civic society values and critical analysis in the period ahead of the revolution.

Overview of the literature

I have used in this work about 80 monographs and about 100 articles published in periodicals, including supplementary literature, archive materials, notes of various types, and so forth. Since no scientific research has been done in Georgian film studies, I had to be guided by just several articles that tell the story of the sphere. These are as follows: *There are Georgian Film Studies, there is an almanac* by Giorgi Gvakharia published in the *Kino* magazine (1987), *The main Objectives of Georgian Film Studies* by Lala Tabukashvili published in *Kino* (1979), *Patron* by Guram Zhvania about one of the first Georgian film critics, Ioseb Imedashvili and his magazine *Teatri da Tskhovreba* published in *Kino* (1982).

In addition to the sources referred to in the bibliography, I also familiarised myself and studied a lot of letters published in Georgian periodicals in 1897-2003. They include magazines *Teatri da Tskhovreba* (1910-1926), *H2SO4* (1924), *Memartskheneoba* (1927-1928), *Sabchota Khelovneba* (1927-2004), *Sinema* (1962-1996), *Akhali Pilmebi* (1964-1990), and *Kino* (1976-1990); newspapers *Drouli* (1925-1926), *Musha* (1922-1939), *Akhalgazrda Komunisti* (only in

the 1980s), *Ekranis Ambebi* (1959-1991), *Kartuli Pilmi* (1987-1999), *Kinorezonansi* (1997), and others.

I familiarised myself with all books by film specialists. Although most of them were not directly related to the subject of my work, I nevertheless discussed some of them and referred to some others because of the translations or opinions expressed about film studies. These are the book *Film Criticism and Theory: Basic Concepts of Film Analysis* by Lika Kalandarishvili, Manana Lekborashvili, and Maia Levanidze (Kentavri Publishers, 2016), *New Waves in the Western Cinema of the 1950s and 1960s* by Teo Khatiashvili (Ilia State University Publishers, 2015), *Tearful Glasses* by Gogi Gvakharia (Bakur Sulakauri Publishers, 2013), *Classical and Modern Texts of the Film Theory* by Diana Maglakelidze (Kentavri Publishers, 2013), and others.

Working on censorship, I had to deal with numerous works, including those by one of the most important researchers in Soviet censorship Arlen Blyum. I also familiarised myself with *The Commissar Vanishes. The Falsification of Photographs and Art in Stalin's Russia* by David King (2005), *Dialogue about Censorship* by Lasha Bugadze, and others.

As regards the history of film criticism proper, the number of such works is very low. I managed to find only completed monographs written in the United States and France. Unfortunately, even short works about the history of film studies in other countries such as Romania, Japan, or others are not available.

Considering American film studies, I relied on *The Complete History of American Film Criticism*, by Jerry Roberts (2010), in case of French film criticism, on *French Film Theory and Criticism* by Richard Abel (1988), *From the History of the Idea of French Cinema* (in Russian) by Mikhail Iampolski (1988). I deal very superficially with British film criticism, but nevertheless touch on several important representatives of the country and the monograph *Signs and Meaning in the Cinema* by Peter Wollen (1972) and Ian Cameron's letters about British and American film studies.

I compensated the lack of works on film criticism in general at the expense of the literature on film studies, which comprise scattered both historical notes and various theoretical aspects of the cinema, the path of its development, and a general description of the field. I would like to mention the following works: *The Language and Style of Film Criticism* by Andrew Klevan and Alex Clayton (2011), *Criticism and Ideology in Contemporary Film Criticism* by David Rodowick (1995), *Film Theory and Criticism* by Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen (2009), *Post-Theory: Reconstructing Film Studies* by David Brodwell and Noel Carroll (1996), *The Real Gaze: Film Theory After Lacan* by Todd McGowan (2007), and others.

As regards film critics, I touched on the works by such authors as Andre Bazin, Siegfried Kracauer, Louis Delluc, Bela Balazs, Sergei Eisenstein, Walter Benjamin, Roland Barthes, Slavoj Zizek, Boris Groys, and others.

Structure of the work

The work starts with Introduction. The body of the text is divided into four chapters and subchapters. The work ends with a conclusion that is followed by the bibliography and the name index. The dissertation is on 156 pages.

Introduction

In the *Introduction*, I briefly overview the past and present of film studies, trying to explain its main aspects, peculiar features of film criticism, differences between annotations and reviews, peculiarities of genres, and new directions in the shape of blogging (aggregate platforms are also implied here: Rotten Tomatoes, Metacritic, IMDb, and others). I also discuss the importance of film theory and philosophic and social theories in the professional activities of film critics.

Film studies as a scientific discipline are not regarded as an independent branch in many countries. It is usually regarded as a sub-discipline of art history (like, for example, in Georgia) or as part of some other social science. Considering it as part of media studies is the most widespread approach. There are problems in the academic sphere too: Film studies are not taught at all in many countries.

According to the information I found, very few universities throughout the world have departments of film studies. For example, no school issues diplomas of film experts in France for the exception of American and British universities based in that country. However, this does not mean that film theory and history are not taught in France. Research in the cinema is done in many universities starting with Sorbonne. As regards film criticism, most French film critics are journalists by profession and they become specialised when doing practical work.

Cinema studies are quite popular in Anglo-American academic circles. All important departments are precisely in the United States, Britain, and Canada, According to the Guardian magazine,¹ cinema studies were taught as an independent academic concentration at 97 universities of Great Britain alone in 2017.

Georgia is a prominent country in this regard. Unlike many European countries, cinema studies have become established in universities since 1972, when the Cinema Faculty was created at Shota Rustaveli Theatre and Film Georgian State University. The scientific and research sector of film history and theory that united seven film specialists was established before that, in 1970. Also in 1972, cinema expert Tata Tvalchrelidze founded a cinema faculty at Tbilisi State University.

As regards roots, film studies in Georgia, as well as throughout the world, have their roots in newspapers. From the very beginning, they consisted of news reports and more serious works devoted to theoretical issues related to films. Ricciotto Canudo, an Italian author, who lived in France, is regarded as the first film expert. He wrote the first cinema manifesto - *The Birth of the Sixth Art*. The title was later altered to *The Birth of the Seventh Art*, as Canudo added dancing as sixth art, moving the cinema to the seventh place.

¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/education/ng-interactive/2017/may/16/university-guide-2018-league-table-for-media-film-studies>.

Canudo was one of the first, who founded film clubs. In 1921, he gave the name "The Club of Friends of the Seven Arts" (Club des Amis du Septième Art - CASA) to a club that was founded at his initiative. It was there that films were shown and discussions held. However, much earlier than Canudo, Georgian camera operator Alexander Digmelov (pseudonym **John Morris**) and his son travelled throughout the world, showing films. It was not a saloon film club, although it was a precondition of such clubs.

Then I consider first American newspaper letters, editions, and authors about the cinema as well as first books about film theory. I briefly touch on the first American film critic **Frank Woods** (1860-1939), first American film theoretician Vachel Lindsay, first magazines and newspapers (for example, *The New York Dramatic Mirror*), and so forth.

It is interesting to note David Bordwell's assessment. He referred to American film studies before 1970 as an "infamous field". He believed that film criticism acquired an intellectual value and weight after it became familiar with Lacan's Post-Structuralism and other philosophic and social theories. It was at that time that Susan Sontag emerged. Her contribution to raising the intellectual level of film criticism is much bigger. Most prominent authors in the history of film studies Andrew Sarris and Pauline Kael appeared in the scene in the same period. I continue considering their well-known dispute in Chapter 1.

Chapter 1

Chapter 1 of the work starts with the discussion of the influence of Structuralism, Post-Structuralism, and Semiotics on film studies. Works by Siegfried Kracauer, a representative of the Frankfurt school and one of the first film theoreticians, comprise the structural analysis of the cinema and the use of the critical theory. For example, he arrived at the roots of Nazism by making research in the German cinema expressionism of the 1920s. Post-Structuralist film studies that made research in social structures and phenomena based on the cinematograph were also based on such an approach.

Andrew Sarris can be regarded as a kind of representative of this school. He was one of the most well-known film experts and he was opposed by Pauline Kael, an author, who was no less popular.

Their dispute unfolded around the objectives and approaches of film studies. Sarris supported scientific practices, while Kael supported free, phenomenological, and subjective analysis that can be described as "emotional interpretation", which, for its part, was a kind of echo of "new journalism" that emerged in American journalism in the 1960s and 1970s.

Kael's approaches are very popular in the world, which is confirmed by the fact that one of the most renowned film experts, Roger Ebert, was also a follower of "emotional interpretation". In spite of this, many intellectuals took Sarris' side, including British film expert Ian Cameron. The latter also made research in Anglo-American film studies and published several articles on it.

Cameron introduced in film studies Roland Barthes' approaches the latter used in his essay *The Third Meaning* devoted to *Ivan the Terrible* by Sergei Eisenstein. Cameron considered three important aspects of reviewing: Impression, detail, and meaning, which acquire the same function as "obtuse meaning" (le sens obtus) with Barthes.

Post-Structuralists present a more truthful and multilayer side of life through "deciphering" signs and codes existing in culture. They seem to be opening new opportunities and vision for our eyes, ears, and reason. Let us call this "semiotic catharsis". However, letters written in the style introduced by Pauline Kael have a similar potential, which is often able to exert even more influence.

The aforementioned issues naturally raise the need in overviewing the film theory. In the historic insight, I also use the principles of critical theory, considering, for example, the cinema as secular magic that emerged as a result of the development of the Modernist era, technical progress, and capitalism. Walter Benjamin's work *The Arcades Project* led me to this opinion and I found the confirmation of my opinion on the magic nature of the cinema with Andre Bazin and his "souvenirs" and "mummy complex" theories.

The first film screening by the Lumieres showed what the cinema is and what force the artistic world it created has, as fiction created an equivalent to reality (like the theory of "map and territory" by Jean Baudrillard) and launched an attack on viewers. I call this the **effect of the Lumieres** and I think that observing, studying, and discussing it is one of the major functions of film studies.

Chapter 2

I make research in the roots of Georgian film studies in Chapter 2 of the work. The Georgian press first mentioned the cinema in the *Tsnobis Purtseli* newspaper in 1886 (advertisement of the film screening by the Lumieres). For a second time, it was mentioned in *Tiflissky Listok* in 1897. Writing about the cinema has never stopped in Georgia since then.

As noted above, together with advertisements, analytical letters were also published in the *Teatri da Tskhovreba* magazine. It was a novelty for Georgian film studies to discover Ioseb and Gaioz Imedashvilis. Gaioz Imedashvili, who wrote under the penname of Kaius Peli, mostly discussed the cinema in the aforementioned magazine. Therefore, he should be regarded as the first film expert. I also describe how I found out, who was behind the penname, which was not easy. I had to look through archive materials, compare them with each other, and check the information with his descendants.

I continue with two magazines published by Georgian Futurists, where the cinema and film theories occupied a significant place. *H2SO4* and *Memartskheneoba* laid the foundations of film studies and their development. However, this period - the end of the 1920s - coincides with Stalin's coming to power in the Soviet Union and reinforcement of his policy, which was followed by tougher censorship, repressions, and the adoption of the doctrine of Socialist Realism. All this determined the future of both arts and criticism.

Due to this, Georgian film studies that were in the process of emergence, stopped their natural development and found themselves within the general frames determined by Stalin. The *Sabchota Khelovneba* magazine started appearing in the same period. The latter had the status of the central edition on arts, combining the function of developing the criticism of the branches of arts. It is the detailed analysis of this magazine that my research is based on.

I start discussing the history of censorship in the same chapter. I hold up as a model Besarion Zhgenti, who used to be a member of the Futurist movement in the past, but later, he headed the

ensorship apparatus and accused people inconvenient for the regime of what he himself supported in Futurist manifestos and poems published on the pages of H2SO4 before the adoption of the Socialist Realism doctrine.

Censorship before the 1930s seems to be inoffensive compared with the practices of the times of "Great Terror". The first film censorship affected in Georgia was *Who is the Culprit?* by Alexander Tsutsunava (1926). Without consulting the author, the film was re-edited in Goskino (the State Committee for Cinematography) in Moscow and then screened throughout the Soviet Union. Such artists would definitely have ended up in a labour concentration camp or on the list of those condemned to death during Stalinist repressions.

During the following years, Stalin took care to build a censorship vertical. The main censorship agency - Glavlit - was set up back in Lenin's time, in 1922, when its rights and obligations were just formal. The situation changed in 1924, when the size of its personnel significantly grew and the area of its activities expanded. At that time, 104 staffers worked in it and their number increased every year. For example, 197 people worked in Moscow Glavlit alone in 1934 and they had a well-formulated working programme.

The effacement of different people from history started in the same period. This happened to Georgian writer Grigol Robakidze, who was the head of the Department of Scenarios of Goskino. After he emigrated and was accused of anti-Soviet activities, not only his books were banned, but it was prohibited even to mention his name. (In this passage, I refer to David King's work *The Commissar Vanishes*, in which he speaks about mechanisms and examples of erasing from history figures undesirable for Stalin.)

Thus, considering this example and many others, I attempt in this chapter to classify and analyse the roots of Georgian film studies and identify significant circumstances of the emergence of Soviet censorship. Chapter 2 ends in an overview of French film studies and explanation of the reasons for their supremacy. I also touch on major works, ideas, and theories of Andre Ember, Jean Tedesco, Emile Vuillermoz, Blaise Cendrars, Leon Moussignac, Jean Renoir, and others. I also discuss the magazines entitled *Montjoie!*, "Cinéa-Ciné pour tous", and, what is most important, *Cahiers du Cinéma*, Andre Bazin, the *Cahiers du Cinéma* group, editors of the magazine, and the state of affairs today.

Chapter 3

Andre Bazin is such a prominent figure in film studies and the history of cinematograph that he is referred to in the work on many occasions. Chapter 3 starts with discussing him. In the subchapter *The Importance of Film Theory in Philosophy and Social Sciences*, I consider the phenomenon of "new waves" and changes in thinking that followed their emergence.

Andre Bazin was behind the new generation in the French cinema. He regarded the cinema as a new type of memory. According to his theories, the cinema immortalises, stores, and conserves time and space, preserves human life, and humans themselves. This can be called a mechanism for immortalising an individual that has analogies in political philosophy and political theology and, of course, in art history. At the same time, I consider the phenomenon of "two bodies" researched by Ernst Kantorowicz (He said that a souvenir has two bodies: Biological, i.e. mortal, and political - immortal.), and the "Who" theory by Hannah Arendt (Arendt said that

starting with the Greek tradition, heroes were immortalised in narratives by moving to collective memory that is transmitted from generation to generation.).

Bazin's idea that the cinema preserves ontological reality and it is only the cinema that is able to perfectly reflect and preserve on a film the life of a person as a whole, i.e. "Who", is a continuation of the discussion on immortality, which Kracauer, Barthes, and other thinkers reacted to. Earlier, Freud also wrote on the same issue - the problem of memory.

Today, following the technological and thinking revolutions, we should add the definition of "**body iconic**", which is the visual embodiment of ideologies and theorems to those of natural and political bodies. In order to enable individuals not to be forgotten, they must create a visual (digital) version of their personalities, which will acquire life by means of reproduction. Film studies are obliged, as a science studying moving images, to observe all the components in the digital era. This is a kind of development of Bazin's ideas both in the cinema and adjacent spheres.

I revert to this problem once again in the last subchapter of the work, discussing the future of film studies in it. Let us now revert to the history of Georgian film studies again. Film criticism stopped following the natural path of development and came under the doctrines of Stalinism after the "personality cult" was established in the Soviet Union (from the 1930s to Khrushchev's speech at the 20th Congress of the Communist Party in 1956).

It is noteworthy that during the period of the "personality cult", the language and style of the Georgian printed press and film criticism were particularly full of ideology, excessive emotionality, and propaganda. Attempts of making a deep analysis of events, pieces of art, and films stopped, as well as the practice of expressing radical and new ideas and opinions, which was quite frequent in the film criticism of the 1920s.

On the one hand, this was due to fears caused by the "Great Terror" and on the other, by the change of the paradigm, in which the ideological component was the main one that determined whether a piece of art was good or bad (in accordance with the method of Socialist Realism). "Soviet reality" was to be depicted not only in the present, but also in the past. It is here that the campaign of Revisionism started. The first person, who spoke about the role of criticism in the protection of the "historic truth" and the building of a new state, was a certain K. S. The research I have done shows that it is highly likely that the author of this major letter published in *Sabchota Khelovneba* was Stalin himself.

Film criticism had not yet taken its final shape in the 1930s. Various people wrote about the cinema and what these people had in common was not professionalism, but ideology. I discuss several important letters that convey best the spirit and sentiments of that era and the Soviet cultural policy.

The stronger Stalinism turned the weaker became the opportunities of analysing things in the press. World War II started soon after and the intellectual crisis was made more complicated due to the economic and political situation. Production of films dropped and film criticism lost objects of inspiration and observation. The "iron curtain" did not allow discussion of foreign films and trends. That is how Middle Ages started in Georgian film studies.

The cultural policy of the Stalinist era is well reflected in Maxim Gorky's letter "about a new man", which was a kind of revision of Leon Trotsky's concept of "new man" and offered an original version of a new Soviet man. Films of that period were devoted to the collective act of the transformation of individualist *ego* into Socialist *ego* (for example, *Belated Future Son-in-Law* (1939) by Kote Mikaberidze).

Kita Buachidze, Shalva Alkhazishvili, and Karlo Gogodze wrote a lot about this phenomenon. For the exception of Gogodze, this generation of film experts shared the fate of the Imedashvilis, falling victim to repressions. Correspondingly, the formation of a Georgian school of film criticism was thwarted again. This was also accompanied by the dominance the Stalinist theory of no conflicts, which hindered the development of both cinematographers and film critics.

After Khrushchev condemned the "personality cult", the short period of post-Stalin liberalisation was not duly reflected in Georgian art and criticism. The Stalinist style, mythology, and principles were maintained until the generation of the 1960s, aka Sixtiers, emerged in the horizon. Following young film directors, young film experts also appeared in the arena. Unlike the previous generations, they had received education in the history of arts and film studies and they were trying to establish themselves by means of completely new ideas and styles of writing/thinking.

Chapter 4

In Chapter 4 of the work, I consider the initial stages of Georgian film criticism and the path of its development. The new generation in film criticism founded a school of film studies. The cinema departments and research laboratories they founded worked on film theory and history, the creation of the corpus of Georgian films, and, what is most important, the problem of raising a new generation of film experts.

Major moves started in film criticism from the 1960s. Completely new examples of reviews emerged. The orientation on emotions and ideology characteristic of the Stalinist era disappeared from letters by young cinema experts and the share of cinema theory and the level of their being oriented on progress and renovation in their reasoning increased. New authors proved to be more daring and bold. For example, Kora Tsereteli started openly criticising old films referring to the cinematograph of the Sixtiers as a balance. A struggle against "fathers" started and young film directors and cinema experts stood on one side in this confrontation.

In spite of this, the standards and norms of criticism that took shape in the Stalinist era continued to exist. A clash between the new and old schools was inevitable. The 1970s were marked precisely with these disputes. Attempts were made to clarify in what direction film studies and, in general, art and society were going to develop. To illustrate these processes, I consider one of the high-profile events in the history of Georgian film criticism - Irina Kuchukhidze's review of *The Tree of Desire* by Tengiz Abuladze, which was followed by a major stir.

Kuchukhidze exposed signs of Socialist Realism still existing in Georgian cinema. She also spoke about the essence and role of film criticism, adding that there was no alternative to deep analysis and objectivity. The letter raised an unseen stir and was followed by a series of

responses in newspapers. The Cinema Union even held special meetings and film director Siko Dolidze even accused Kuchukhidze of "betrayal of the people".

A similar stir was raised after Yury Bogomolov's article devoted to the Georgian cinema - *The Georgian Cinema: Relation with Reality*, which was published in the Russian cinema magazine *Iskusstvo v Kino*. Bogomolov summed up the cinema of the Sixties, which, in his opinion, was at odds with reality and invented myths and fairy tales.

In this chapter, I consider the history of the creation of this letter that was most important for Georgian film criticism and cinematograph in general and the processes that accompanied it.

Two different schools existed in Georgian film studies at the same time. This conflict ended in the victory of Kuchukhidze's and, to a certain extent, Bogomolov's line. New film critics that appeared in the professional arena in the 1980s decided it was preferable to be guided by the critical thinking and style of assessment characteristic of the aforementioned authors. They continued to oppose the cinema of their "fathers", putting emphasis on the cinema of the young and their "peaceful rebellion".

By the end of the 1980s, cinema studies found themselves in the forefront of progress and renovation, which cannot be said about the cinematograph in general, as it found itself beyond the processes under way in society. Despite Mikhail Gorbachev's Perestroika and Glasnost era, the Georgian cinema was overwhelmed by a wave of "non-conformism" and alienation. Film studies accumulated both the intellectual and value-based capital and managed to find a common language with broad masses. It is there that the "Gold Age" of film criticism started. It was the time, when reviews and letters about the cinema found a broad circle of readers.

Due to the financial and political crisis following the restoration of Georgia's independence, the production of films came to a standstill and many periodicals stopped to exist, which had an impact also on film criticism. However, film experts quickly managed to adapt to the new times. They introduced rubrics in new magazines and newspapers that everyone was interested in and some started making TV and radio programmes, bringing film criticism to the foreground of the public processes again, actively supporting progress and the development of civic values.

In spite of this, the processes did not unfold without confrontation. Gogi Gvakharia's programme *Sarkmeli* was closed on the state-run TV station in 1995, because Gvakharia wanted to show *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant* by Reiner Werner Fassbinder, which the directorate opposed. This incident found a broad response. Some part of society justified the censors. The Georgian Orthodox Church played a major role in the developments. It was during these processes that a new type of censorship took shape. It differed from the Soviet censorship in that it was some part of society that demanded prohibition, not a state agency. This phenomenon is called "the anonymous field of censorship". As a rule, we have to deal with artificially managed processes in such cases.

Despite such an attack of post-Soviet censorship, film criticism that supported progress and reappraisal of values became reinforced and even bolder. In a short period of time, it became a kind of platform for public discussions. Gogi Gvakharia's programme *Psiko* that was broadcast by independent TV station Rustavi-2 is a good example of this. Public figures, politicians, scientists, and artists invited to the programme watched a film and then discussed various issues, moral problems, values, civic culture, the Soviet past, the need in changes, and so forth.

According to the assessment of some commentators, it was this programme that served as a catalyser of the Rose Revolution in 2003. The programme used the cinema to launch public discussions of many acute problems. This spirit and approach were common for film criticism of that period. It was the reappraisal of values and rapprochement with the West that were discussed in many issues of the programme. Finally, it was the peaceful revolution that took place in Georgia in 2003 that determined the country's pro-Western course.

And at the end, I revert to the problem of the future of film studies and discuss to a certain extent all topical issues the profession is facing. I first and foremost touch on the issues of reality, a discussion I started in previous chapters. The paradigms that Post-Modernism has changed made observation of reality even more complicated. The situation did not change by the short-term period of post-theory. We are now in the time of "post-truth", which gives rise to new challenges and barriers for film studies. Post-truth is characterised by an inner structure and certain links to the system of a cause-and-effect system and objective reality and has falsehood at its roots.

I regard from the angle of post-truth the term introduced by Counsellor of US President Donald Trump Kellyanne Conway - "alternative facts"; a statement by White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer, in which he denied the objective reality in the photos of Trump's and Obama's inaugurations; and film expert Tara Judah's example related to the post-truth era in the cinema - the film *Her* (2013) by Spike Jonze, in which Judah discovered a notion similar to "alternative facts" - "extra cinematic time".

Thus, film studies are now facing a double challenge. On the one hand, they will have to clarify various versions of reality and determine communication models only after that.

Conclusion

In *Conclusion*, I briefly overview censorship, identifying most important stages in the history of Georgian film studies. *Conclusion* also comprises scientific novelties and discoveries of the work, which were discussed above. I also made an attempt in *Conclusion* to draw certain parallels between Georgian and Western film studies and characterise film studies and their prospects.

Works published on the subject of the dissertation

1. *The fight against the Myths of Socialist Realism in Georgian Film Studies. The Art of the 20th Century: Interpretation of Myths in Arts*, Tbilisi, Kentavri, 2018, pp 128-136. (In Georgian);
2. *The Concept of Authorship in the First Cinema Studios. Culture and Art: Research and Management*, Batumi: Batumi Art Teaching University, 2017, pp 248-252. (In Georgian);
3. *The Non-Conflict Theory of Stalinism and Challenges of Georgian Film Criticism. Modern Interdisciplinarity and Humane Thinking*. Kutaisi: Akaki Tsereteli State University, 2017, pp 499-504. (In Georgian);

4. *Reasoning about the Cinema and Reality*. Research in Art Sciences, Tbilisi: Kentavri, 2017, #1(70), pp 81-92. (In Georgian);
5. *Filmic or Photogenic?* Semiotics, Tbilisi: Semiotics Research Centre, 2016, Vol. 16, pp 233-241. (In Georgian).
6. *(Post-)Structuralism in American Film Studies: Dispute between "Intellectuals" and "Anti-Intellectuals"*. The 17th annual international conference of American studies. Tbilisi, Georgia. 19-21 May 2016.
7. *The Basics of Georgian film criticism*. Seminar of Science and Innovation Festival. Tbilisi, Georgia. 27 September 2018.