

## Parabolic Language as a Method of Coexistence with Censorship

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### Abstract

This paper examines the development and function of parabolic language in Soviet Georgian cinema as a sophisticated creative response to ideological censorship and political repression. Under the totalitarian conditions of the Soviet Union, of which Georgia was a constituent republic, the state exercised pervasive control over artistic production, rendering art a vehicle for ideological conformity. Films that deviated from officially sanctioned frameworks risked prohibition or outright destruction — a fate that befell early masterworks such as Kote Mikaberidze's *My Grandmother* (1929) and Mikheil Kalatozishvili's *Jim Shvante* (1930) during the suppression of the Georgian avant-garde.

Faced with these constraints, Georgian filmmakers progressively developed a distinctive allegorical and parabolic cinematic language — a system of encoded expression that enabled directors to articulate dissent, critique power, and explore prohibited themes while evading censorship and its consequences. This oblique mode of address simultaneously preserved authorial integrity and invited the viewer into an active interpretive role, transforming the audience into a co-conspirator tasked with decoding layered subtexts, irony, and allusion.

The emergence of this language is most prominently associated with the generational movement of the 1960s, when young directors — among them Giorgi and Eldar Shengelaia, Otar Iosseliani, Merab Kokochashvili, Mikheil Kobakhidze, and Lana Gogoberidze — introduced non-idealized protagonists and formally innovative narratives that implicitly challenged Soviet orthodoxy. Yet parabolic language was far from exclusive to this decade; it remained a vital cinematic strategy through the 1970s and 1980s, as evidenced by the work of Eldar Shengelaia and Tengiz Abuladze.

Drawing on close analysis of specific films across these periods, this paper traces the historical, ideological, and aesthetic conditions that shaped parabolic expression in Georgian cinema, illuminating its mechanisms, its evolving forms, and its enduring significance as an act of cultural resistance.

**Keywords:** Soviet Georgian cinema, parabolic language, allegorical cinema, the Sixties generation, cultural resistance