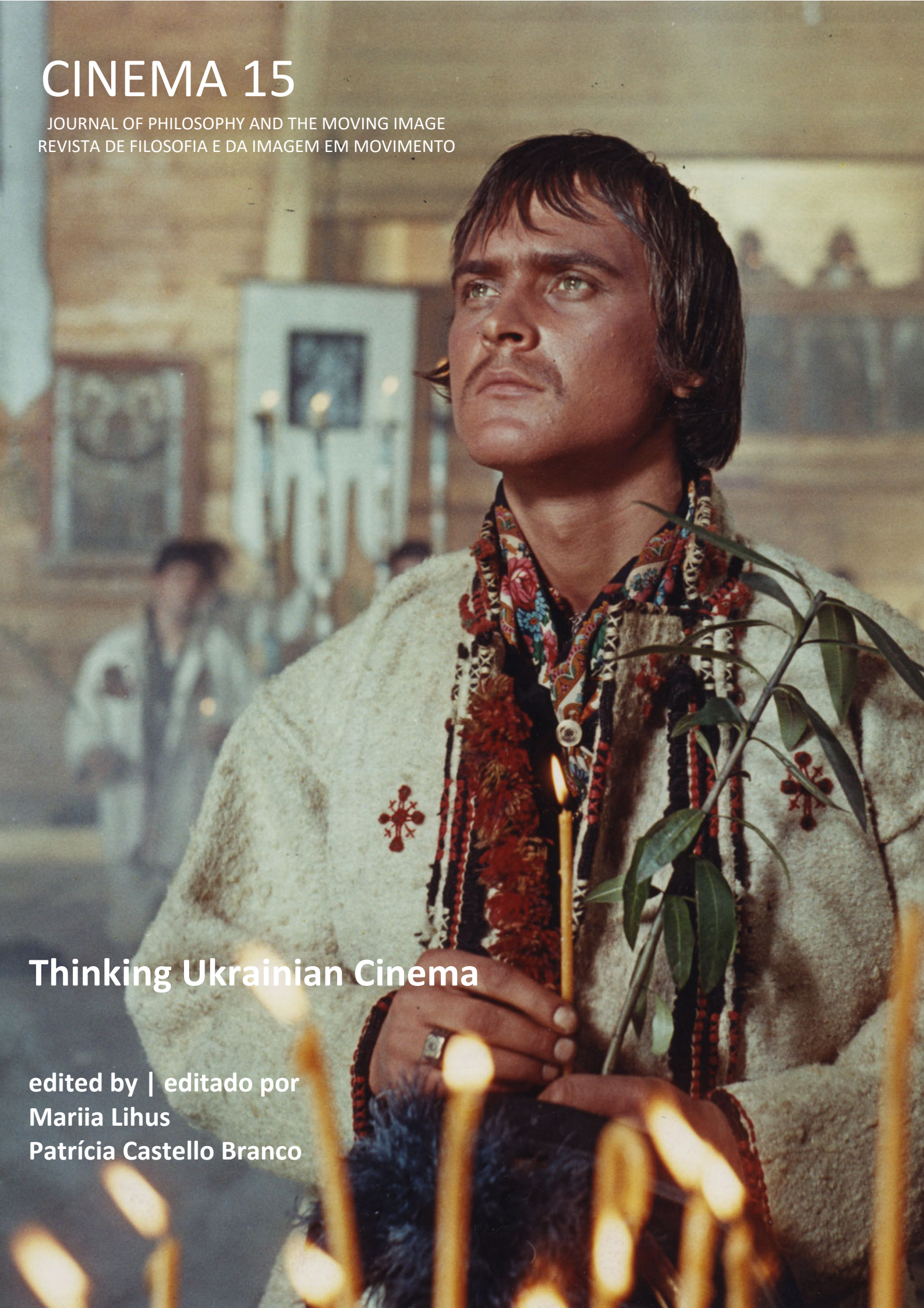
CINEMA 15
JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY AND THE MOVING IMAGE
REVISTA DE FILOSOFIA E DA IMAGEM EM MOVIMENTO



Thinking Ukrainian Cinema

edited by | editado por
Mariia Lihus
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ISSN
1647-8991

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Scopus
The Philosopher's Index

PUBLICATION
IFILNOVA -Nova Institute of Philosophy
Faculty of Social and Human Sciences
Nova University of Lisbon
Campus de Campolide, Colégio Almada Negreiros Gab. 319
1099-032 Lisboa
Portugal
www.ifilnova.pt

WEBSITE
https://cinema.fcsh.unl.pt

CINEMA: JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY AND THE MOVING IMAGE 15, "*Thinking Ukrainian Cinema*"
*Editor*s: Mariia Lihus; Patrícia Castello Branco

Peer review (in alphabetical order): Bentia, Iuliia; Bryukhovetska, Olha; Colbert Costa, Maile; Denishchenko, Irina; Kryvda, Nataliia; Novikova, Liudmyla; Radecka, Aniela; Russel, Sandra; Shpolberg, Masha; Tymchuk, Nadiia; Veselovska, Hanna; Volosheniuk, Oksana.

Publication date: Dec. 2023

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Revisão por pares (por ordem alfabética): Bentia, Iuliia; Bryukhovetska, Olha; Colbert Costa, Maile; Denishchenko, Irina; Kryvda, Nataliia; Novikova, Liudmyla; Radecka, Aniela; Russel, Sandra; Shpolberg, Masha; Tymchuk, Nadiia; Veselovska, Hanna; Volosheniuk, Oksana.

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UKRAINIAN CINEMA AND CULTURAL MOBILIZATION DURING THE RUSSIAN INVASION (2022)

Elżbieta Olzacka

(Jagiellonian University, Krakow, Poland)

ABSTRACT This article examines the mobilizing function of Ukrainian cinema in response to the Russian invasion. It starts by providing a concise overview of the mobilizing aspect of Ukrainian culture during the initial stage of Russian aggression in 2014-2019. The following section presents the situation of the Ukrainian film industry during the Russian invasion in 2022 and 2023, as well as the role played by cinema in mobilizing Ukrainian society and the world community to counter the aggressor. As shown, the production of new audiovisual content and the promotion of Ukrainian films strengthen the resiliency and unity of Ukrainians while also contributing to the formation of a coherent narrative encircling ongoing events. Furthermore, Ukraine's engagement in international film festivals and the dissemination of Ukrainian cinema via dedicated screenings play a significant role in fostering a positive perception of Ukrainians and Ukraine, acquiring moral support and financial and military aid. The article's final section analyzes recent cinematic projects related to the ongoing Russian invasion, examining the reasons and obstacles their creators face. The article is primarily based on analysis of pre-existing data sourced from the official websites of Ukrainian cultural institutions and renowned Ukrainian online media.

KEYWORDS: Ukrainian cinema, war, cultural mobilization, Russo-Ukrainian war

MUSIC OF UKRAINIAN POETIC CINEMA AS A SPACE FOR CONSTRUCTING NATIONAL IDENTITY IN UKRAINIAN CULTURE

Mariia Lihus (National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy)
Olha Lihus Olha Lihus (Borys Grinchenko Kyiv University: Kyiv)

ABSTRACT This article examines the means of constructing and performing Ukrainian national identity in the music of Ukrainian poetic cinema. Cultural identity is considered a dynamic performative process, whereas film music is justified as a performative instrument of the organization and construction of cultural identity in situations of shared experience. The problem of Ukrainian national identity is exemplified by music in *Shadows of the Forgotten Ancestors*, *A Spring for the Thirsty*, *The Evening on Ivan Kupalo*, *The Stone Cross*, *White Bird with a Black Mark*, *The Lost Letter*, and *Babylon XX*. Authentic folklore and author music are regarded as the main music dimensions of constructing cultural identity in Ukrainian poetic cinema. In particular, Ukrainian authentic folklore and modern performances of the folk melodies of different national cultures are analyzed as a musical foundation of Ukrainian poetic films. The article also considers neo-folklorism of Myroslav Skoryk, avant-garde musique concrete of Leonid Hrabovskyi, and Volodymyr Huba's music characterized by a combination of national musical timbres with intonations of different eras and national cultures.

KEYWORDS: Ukrainian music, Ukrainian poetic cinema, Thaw, cultural identity, performance, author music, folklore.

NARRATIVE RESISTANCE IN KIRA MURATOVA'S CINEMA

Edgaras Bolšakovas

(Vilnius University, Lithuania)

ABSTRACT In the late winter of 2022, just before the brutal Russian invasion of Ukraine, a screening of Kira Muratova's film *The Long Farewell* (1971) was scheduled in one of Vilnius' cinemas. When the invasion took place, the screening was cancelled, motivated by censorship of Russian cultural products. This misunderstanding was quickly corrected by the simple fact that Muratova's cinema is Ukrainian cinema. But this incident is an example of a wider historical misunderstanding regarding Ukrainian cinema and especially Muratova's films. The main aim of this paper is to challenge the assumption that Muratova belongs to Russian cultural tradition through an analysis of three of Muratova's melodramatic films – *Brief Encounters* (1967), *The Long Farewell* (1971) and *The Asthenic Syndrome* (1989). In the current analysis I show that although these three melodramas do not explicitly refer to Ukrainian identity, the search for a more universal and humanistic morality through melodramatic temporality is closely linked to Ukraine. This can be seen in the reception of the films by the local Soviet authorities, which resulted in strict censorship and repression of Muratova's creative possibilities. I argue that while these films are in stark contrast to the official guidelines of the artistic dogmas of the Soviet state apparatus, they formulate a vision of life that resembles what Stanley Cavell calls moral perfectionism. However, Muratova's films not only adhere to Cavell's legacy but by showing the negative of Cavell's vision – what happens when members of society do not have the means to pursue an authentic moral life – she expands and updates Cavell's thought. The dialogue between Muratova's cinema and Cavell's philosophy is important not only because it extends and universalizes Cavell's notion of moral perfectionism, but more importantly because it shows a strategy of temporal resistance that is not based on folkloric references and filmed landscapes, but on the moral and philosophical human need for an autonomous life. As can be clearly seen in Muratova's films, one of the necessary conditions for such a life is political liberty.

KEYWORDS: Kira Muratova; Stanley Cavell; Ontology of Cinema; Melodrama; Performative Cinema.

ON THE POETICS OF CINEMATIC INFLUENCE: GROSSMAPPING GESTURES IN THE FILMS OF KIRA MURATOVA AND EVA NEYMANN

Irina Schulzki

(University of Hagen)

ABSTRACT: Reflecting on the confines and the opportunities that the concepts of national identity and the artistic canon entail, this article offers a comparative analysis of two Ukrainian filmmakers with multicultural backgrounds: Kira Muratova and Eva Neymann. While film critics have speculated about Muratova's 'disciples', frequently citing Eva Neymann among them, Neymann herself has openly dismissed any idea of being an epigone – a position perhaps rooted in the "anxiety of influence" that artists often experience with respect to heir forerunners. Nonetheless, a thread of continuity is discernible in Neymann's oeuvre, not only through the shared backdrop of Odesa but also in the nuanced parallels in visual composition, narrative, and pacing that recall Muratova's works while maintaining Neymann's unique cinematic voice. Employing Harold Bloom's theory of influence alongside Elizabeth Bronfen's concept of crossmapping, this article aims to illuminate the dynamics of productive, albeit not necessarily conscious, influence within the cinematic worlds of the two filmmakers. Focusing on Neymann's debut feature, By the River (2007), and her subsequent film House with a Turret (2012), the analysis reveals how Muratova's iconography resonates within these works. It also examines how cine-poetic lineage is sustained through aesthetic formalisation, circulation, appropriation, quotation, and refiguration of images and gestures. This contributes to the development of a national cinematic canon and offers an understanding of national cinematic identity as an entity in flux.

KEYWORDS: Ukrainian cinema, Odesa, national identity, canon, multiculturalism, intercultural cinema, influence, crossmapping, gestures, image formulas, cinematic heredity, visual genealogy, female authorship, women filmmakers.

THE UKRAINIAN FILM BUTTERFLY VISION (2022) AND WOMEN'S RESISTANCE TO WARTIME TRAUMA

Natascha Drubek
(Freie Universität Berlin)

ABSTRACT This article explores the Ukrainian film *Butterfly Vision* (2022) by Maksym Nakonechnyi, which addresses the complex themes of wartime rape, women's resistance to wartime trauma, and the societal repercussions of such acts. Set against the backdrop of the occupation of Donbas, the film focuses on the life of Lilia, a female soldier who returns home from captivity to face the reality of her pregnancy resulting from rape. Through Lilia's journey, the film challenges societal norms and the trivialization of wartime rape, highlighting the struggle of women to reclaim their bodies and identities in the aftermath of violence.

The article examines the legal and historical context of wartime rape, citing the transformation in its perception from a 'crime of honor' to a recognized instrument of war and colonization, as evidenced by the Rome Statute and research on genocidal rape. It emphasizes the role of filmmakers in making visible the often overlooked or minimized narratives of wartime sexual violence.
In its analysis, the article contrasts Lilia's personal battle with broader discussions on the representation of women in cinema, particularly those who resist traditional roles and face societal shaming. The discussion extends to the portrayal of female figures with cropped hair, notably Jeanne d'Arc, as symbols of bravery and non-conformity. The film's portrayal of hair as a marker of femininity and vulnerability is analyzed in connection with historical and cinematic representations of women who defy gender norms.

Butterfly Vision is presented not only as a narrative about individual trauma and resilience but also as a commentary on national identity, gendered shaming, and the intersection of personal and political spheres. The article concludes by reflecting on the film's contribution to the discourse on wartime sexual violence and women's agency, positioning it as a significant work that challenges conventional narratives and promotes a deeper understanding of the complexities of women's resistance in times of conflict.

KEYWORDS: "Butterfly Vision", wartime rape, women's resilience, Ukrainian cinema, sexual violence in war, Maksym Nakonechnyi, female soldiers, post-trauma recovery,

CONSTRUCTION AND REPRESENTATION OF CULTURAL TRAUMA IN CONTEMPORARY UKRAINIAN CINEMA

Oleksandra Kalinichenko
(Kyiv National I. K. Karpenko-Karyi Theatre, Cinema and Television University, Ukraine)

ABSTRACT Ukrainian history has numerously been marked by large-scale historical events that caused cultural trauma and thus influenced and transformed Ukrainian art and cinema. Studying contemporary Ukrainian cinema within the context of cultural trauma is crucial for understanding the impact of historical and socio-cultural events on the country's contemporary cinema. On the one hand, such an approach helps expand knowledge of traumatic events' cultural manifestations and their impact on national memory and identity. On the other hand, the cinema itself could be viewed as a commemorative practice to overcome cultural trauma.

This article explores selected films of contemporary Ukrainian cinema through the lens of cultural trauma and how it could be represented through the audio-visual language of the cinema. The concepts of cultural and psychological trauma through sociological and psychological theories are used to read and decode the films (feature live-action films and documentaries). The article also features a brief overview of the history of Ukrainian cinema through the lens of cultural trauma theory, which allows to trace which particular images and film language have been transferred to contemporary Ukrainian cinema due to cultural trauma.

KEYWORDS: Contemporary Ukrainian Cinema, National Cinema, Trauma Representation in Cinema, Historical Trauma, Documentary, Alternate History in Film, Historical Cinema, Historical Memory.

PERSPECTIVES ON UKRAINIAN CINEMA: CONSTRUCTING NATIONAL IDENTITY AND CULTURAL RESILIENCE

Mariia Lihus (National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy)
Patrícia Castello Branco (IFILNOVA)

Cinema plays a central role in shaping national identity, particularly in postcolonial contexts such as Ukraine. This issue of *Cinema – Journal of Philosophy and the Moving Image* embraces the fundamental premise of regarding film not only as an art or mass media form but also as a means of political engagement, serving as a catalyst for constructing social and political identities. Films not only depict specific 'realities' but also convey statements. Therefore, understanding how Ukrainian cinema portrays Ukrainian society, politics, and national identity, especially amid the ongoing military, civil, cultural, and political conflict in the country, becomes vital. All articles within this issue delve into Ukrainian cinema's exploration of national history, deconstruction of imperial narratives, and construction of identity. Contributors analyse themes such as the mobilizing potential of Ukrainian cinema during times of crisis, the role of music in constructing national identity, and the cinematic heritage of Kira Muratova as a form of narrative resistance. Additionally, the articles explore representations of gendered violence, cultural trauma, and collective memory in contemporary Ukrainian cinema. By employing postcolonial perspectives, the authors collectively argue for Ukrainian cinema's significance as a dynamic cultural phenomenon that reflects and shapes the nation's intellectual and artistic traditions.

Cutting across all articles is the notion that exploring and studying the narratives of national identity in cinema holds particular significance for Ukraine, positioned as a postcolonial entity. The quest for a national identity originates from their shared premise: the Russian expansionist cultural and memory policy not only silenced Ukrainian voices but also often appropriated them, attributing Ukrainian artists and their creative output to Russian culture. All articles concur that, despite the hermeneutic marginalization of Ukrainian culture during Soviet times, Ukrainian cinema constantly demonstrated its powerful intellectual and creative potential. Of notable interest is the observation that after the revival of Ukrainian independence, cinema survived the economic crisis of the 1990s, flourished after the Revolution of Dignity, and did not falter following the Russian full-scale invasion of 2022, remaining a crucial means of cultural resistance.

Elżbieta Olzacka, in "Ukrainian Cinema and Cultural Mobilization during the Invasion (2022)", considers the manifestations of Ukrainian cultural resilience in the national film industry

and cinematic practices facing the existential threat. Elżbieta Olzacka demonstrates the mobilizing potential of Ukrainian cinema in promoting Ukrainian culture and counteracting Russian imperial narratives in the information war. In particular, the author examines the role of national film institutions and Ukrainian and international film festivals in demonstrating resilience, representing Ukrainian identity, and obtaining international support through the production, distribution, and popularization of Ukrainian films. Much attention is given to film projects that incorporate elements of both documentary filmmaking and mobilization efforts. The author also addresses the challenges in making feature films in Ukraine, particularly related to the moral aspects of dealing with the collective trauma of genocide still being committed by the Russian Armed Forces.

In "Music of Ukrainian Poetic Cinema as a Space for Constructing National Identity in Ukrainian Culture", Olha and Mariia Lihus address Ukrainian poetic cinema as a phenomenon in the Ukrainian art movement of the Thaw that performs its national character not only by visual means but also through music imagery. The authors apply the performative approach to define the constitution of national identity through the music of Ukrainian poetic cinema. For this purpose, they analyse the film music of Shadows of the Forgotten Ancestors, A Spring for the Thirsty, The Evening on Ivan Kupalo, The Stone Cross, White Bird with a Black Mark, The Lost Letter, and Babylon XX as the most prominent Ukrainian poetic films, distinguishing authentic music and author music of Myroslav Skoryk, Leonid Hraboskyi, and Volodymyr Huba.

Edgaras Bolšakovas considers Kira Muratova's creative output as Ukrainian film heritage in his article "Narrative Resistance in Kira Muratova's Cinema". Analysing Muratova's three films Brief Encounters (1967), The Long Farewell (1971), and The Asthenic Syndrome (1989), the author defines universal humanistic morality through melodramatic temporality (moral perfectionism in terms of Stanley Cavell) as their key characteristics that point to Muratova's cultural resistance against Soviet ideology. The author explores the dialogue between Muratova's cinema and Cavell's philosophy to demonstrate the rootedness of the value of political freedom in Muratova's artistic outlook that defines her close link to Ukrainian identity.

In "On the Poetics of Cinematic Influence: Crossmapping Gestures in the Films of Kira Muratova and Eva Neymann", Irina Schulzki reflects on the development of a Ukrainian national cinematic canon and presents a comparative analysis of Kira Muratova's and Eva Neymann's cinematic heritage. The author considers them as filmmakers who have complex cultural identities and represent both "intercultural cinema" (in terms of Laura U. Marks) and Ukrainian national cinema. Relying on the concept of artistic canon proposed by Harold Bloom, the author demonstrates how Muratova's work embodies "aesthetic dignity" and the profound influence upon her successors, in particular Eva Neymann. Irina Schulzki examines Muratova's and Neymann's visual dialogue and defines gestures and visual motifs present in the films of both female directors, where they depict the intercultural environment of Odesa. In the article, the

author emphasizes the controversial nature of national canon formation that lies through cross mapping, de-canonisation, and deconstruction.

Natascha Drubek examines the cinematic representation of gendered violence on the female body, women's shaming, and occupation of their bodies as a war weapon and instrument of colonization in the film Butterfly Vision (2021) by Maskym Nakonechnyi. The author analyses the crucial manifestation of women's shaming in this film – rape and hair cutting outlining the female visual imagery of resistance in the world culture, in particular, Joan of Arc. Discussing the paradigm of resistance to oppression and tyranny through shedding external female "adornment", Natascha Drubek addresses the image of the female warrior and martyr in contemporary Ukrainian cinema who strives to overcome the traumatic experience through the symbolic act of hair cutting. The author demonstrates how this ritual and character's decision to give birth after the rape is a manifestation of the free will and resistance against the societal stigma of a rape victim.

The article "Construction and Representation of Cultural Trauma in Contemporary Ukrainian Cinema" by Oleksandra Kalinichenko reveals the audio-visual representations of the collective traumatic experience in the history of Ukrainian cinema focusing on its contemporary development. The author considers Ukrainian contemporary cinema as a commemorative practice, which has therapeutic potential as a means of expressing pain and finding a way to overcome it. Oleksandra Kalinichenko focuses on historical films as a space for reviving cultural memory via representing the real past or proposing alternative histories. The author also explores the narrative tool of the documentary films that demonstrate the resilience and resistance of individuals and communities.

Overall, the authors examine Ukrainian cinema as a dynamic and performative phenomenon, rooted in its distinct intellectual and artistic heritage. They analyse it as a unique symbolic realm, serving as a catalyst for socio-cultural mobilization, a medium for commemorative expression, and a platform for shaping national identity. Throughout their articles, they explore how identity is manifested through shared values across various elements of Ukrainian films. Moreover, this edition of the *Cinema – Journal of Philosophy and the Moving Image* provides a chance to delve into a filmography predominantly undiscovered beyond Ukraine, emphasizing the profound cultural significance of Ukrainian cinema on a global scale.

UKRAINIAN CINEMA AND CULTURAL MOBILIZATION DURING THE RUSSIAN INVASION (2022)

Elżbieta Olzacka
(Jagiellonian University, Krakow, Poland)

INTRODUCTION

The response of the Ukrainians to the full-scale Russian invasion, which began on February 24, 2022, was not only an effective military mobilization but also a spontaneous and massive mobilization of individuals, organizations, and institutions supporting the war effort and seeking global support for Ukraine. Since the beginning of the Russian aggression, a significant role in organizing local and international resistance has been played by the so-called "cultural front," which is self-organizing and initiated by individual artists and activists, various non-governmental organizations, and state institutions. The war prompted the active involvement of several creative individuals, including writers, poets, musicians, visual artists, and filmmakers, who deliberately chose to employ their artistic expressions as a means of resistance against the aggressor. Therefore, visual art exhibitions, music concerts, theatrical performances, and film screenings have been conducted at home and abroad. These events serve to disseminate information about ongoing hostilities, foster national unity, and solicit support and financial resources for the ongoing conflict.[1]

Also, national cultural institutions continue to operate, endeavoring to initiate and coordinate spontaneous initiatives and conduct effective cultural diplomacy. On the fifth day of the invasion, the Executive Director of the Ukrainian Cultural Foundation, Vladyslav Berkovskyi appealed to "all cultural institutions in Ukraine, to all cultural managers, to all who create the cultural landscape of our country" to join the war effort.[2] The Ukrainian Cultural Foundation, a state-owned institution created in 2017, has become the coordinator of initiatives related to documenting Russian cultural crimes, fundraising campaigns helping Ukrainian culture, and obtaining international support under the banner of "Stand with Ukraine." Other state institutions also remained active such as the Ukrainian Institute, developing an impressive wartime cultural diplomacy, and the Ukrainian State Film Agency (USFA), which since 2014 has been developing an effective film policy linked to the needs of a country fighting against external aggression.[3]

In the paper, I will focus on cinema and how cultural practices related to the production, distribution, and popularization of Ukrainian films are used to fight against the aggressor. In

contrast to 2014, when Russia was able to aggressively manipulate the narrative surrounding events in Ukraine and influence the emotional responses of both its own population and the global community, Ukrainians today are much more aware of the importance of winning the information war.[4] From the first days of the full-scale invasion, people associated with the film industry actively joined the resistance against the aggressor and started mobilizing international support. Many of them actively participated in the conflict by enlisting in the Armed Forces of Ukraine, joining the Territorial Defense Unit, or engaging in voluntary activities.[5] Others have decided to utilize their professional expertise and skills to produce cinematic content aimed at aiding the ongoing battle and coordinating events with significant mobilization capabilities.

The article starts by providing a concise overview of the mobilizing aspect of Ukrainian culture during the initial stage of Russian aggression in 2014-2019. Next, I focus on the state of the Ukrainian film industry during the war and the role of cinema in galvanizing Ukrainian society and the international community to resist the aggressor. Finally, I examine recent cinematic projects related to the ongoing Russian invasion, examining the reasons and obstacles their creators face. The article is primarily based on analysis of pre-existing data sourced from the official websites of Ukrainian cultural institutions and renowned Ukrainian online media.

2014-2019: THE MOBILIZING ROLE OF CULTURE IN THE FACE OF RUSSIAN AGGRESSION

According to recent studies and analysis, there has been a significant upsurge in Ukrainian culture since 2014,[6] related to the empowerment of Ukrainian-speaking artists, the growing demand for their products in the country and abroad, as well as the unprecedented state support. In accordance with the post-Maidan cultural policy, deliberate efforts were made to cultivate and advance the Ukrainian language in the cultural sphere. Ukrainization strategies encompass the utilization of various mechanisms, including prioritizing cultural products in Ukrainian when allocating state funds and implementing quotas for radio and television content, mandating a certain proportion of Ukrainian-language programming and music. Additionally, establishing "national screen time" on Ukrainian TV stations promotes the popularity of Ukrainian films.[7]

Significant emphasis was placed on the development of the film industry, with cinema given careful consideration as a potent instrument for fostering a unified national identity and projecting Ukraine's image on the international stage.[8] In 2014, the Ukrainian State Film Agency (USFA) was headed by Pylyp Illienko, the film director and producer, who actively participated in Euromaidan and had political affiliations with the nationalist party "Svoboda." Illienko openly acknowledged his belief in film's capacity as a potent ideological instrument, crucial in fostering the development of a collective national awareness: "Cinema must become our powerful artistic weapon because it is a weapon more effective than the Kalashnikov."[9]

Filmmakers were also encouraged to address particular subjects in their films. These were primarily topics related to national history and traditions, "forgotten" heritage, and promoting the biography of famous Ukrainians. Considerable emphasis was also placed on the production of films, series, and television programs that depict the contemporary political history of Ukraine and its emerging heroes.[10] Notable is the fact that creators enthusiastically embraced these state incentives, resulting in a significant increase in "patriotic" films, series, television shows, and novels. The Euromaidan movement, the subsequent power transition in Ukraine, and the subsequent armed conflict compelled millions of Ukrainians to take personal responsibility for the nation's future. This circumstance made it possible to bridge the distance between the official state cultural institutions and the independent cultural sphere.[11] Artists, who previously tended to avoid engaging with political topics, began to demonstrate a greater propensity for active participation as conscientious citizens and patriots.

In addition, new initiatives supported by state cultural institutions have focused on using cinema to create a "coherent cultural space"[12] and enhance the Ukrainian populace's sense of allegiance to the Ukrainian nation, particularly in regions where the local society lacks a strong connection to Ukrainian culture and the Ukrainian state. One of the notable initiatives was the "Days of Ukrainian Cinema in Donbas" project, inaugurated in 2017.[13] Another project was an initiative titled "Ukrainian Cinema – to the front," launched in 2019.[14] This involved Ukrainian soldiers stationed in the front-line region and the local populace being exposed to freshly produced Ukrainian films to boost their morale and foster their commitment to ongoing efforts. Notable is the fact that the successful completion of both initiatives is attributable to a collaborative effort involving activists, non-governmental organizations, and state institutions.

THE UKRAINIAN FILM INDUSTRY DURING TIMES OF WAR

The struggle to maintain film production and distribution

On February 24, 2022, when Russia brutally assaulted Ukraine, the film industry, along with many other aspects of Ukrainian life, abruptly ground to a halt. The extensive hostility exhibited by Russia impeded the growth and hindered the acquisition of adequate public support for the cinema development.[15] According to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine's Resolution on March 10, 2022, the funds for the development of cinema were reallocated for military objectives.[16] As a result, the initially projected budget of UAH 1.6 billion for the USFA in 2022 has been drastically reduced to UAH 115 million, making it impossible to provide financial support for ongoing productions and facilitate subsequent competition selections. In order to sustain its operations, the USFA initiated a fundraising campaign via a dedicated online platform, appealing for contributions of any amount, including the equivalent of a single cinema ticket.[17] The funds were designated to

support the Ukrainian film industry and filmmakers during the war and to facilitate the production and completion of films considered to be of the utmost importance.

In April 2022, the Council for State Support of Cinematography released a comprehensive list of priority projects, encompassing 18 feature films, four documentaries, and two animations that are currently in advanced phases of development.[18] In order to execute these initiatives, efforts were made to secure additional financial resources from various sources, including international collaborations with foreign film institutes such as the Polish Film Institute, Film Fund Luxembourg, and Slovak Audiovisual Fund. Additionally, efforts were made to increase attendance of Ukraine at international film festivals.

Within three months of the beginning of the Russian full-scale invasion, the 75th Cannes Film Festival played a crucial role in garnering support for Ukraine and procuring tangible financial resources to sustain the beleaguered Ukrainian film industry. During the festival, the audience viewed two Ukrainian films – "Butterfly Vision" (*Bachennia Metelyka*, dir. Maksym Nakonechnyi) and "Pamfir" (dir. Dmytro Sukholytkyy-Sobchuk) – which were well received. In addition, as an integral part of the official program of the Marche du Film, a screening was organized to showcase nine Ukrainian film projects in advanced production. This screening's primary objective was to identify potential co-financing partners for these initiatives.[19]

Furthermore, the initiation of the European Solidarity Fund for Ukrainian Films (ESFUF) was announced at the Cannes General Assembly in May 2022. This collaborative effort brings together 19 partners from 16 different countries. The fund's primary objective is to provide financial assistance for the cinematographic works by Ukrainian directors at the development or finalization stage.[20] The inaugural fundraising drive was also conducted by Filmmakers for Ukraine, an independent European group of filmmakers that convened after the start of the war in Ukraine in February 2022.[21] In addition, to uphold backing and aid for the Ukrainian film industry, the USFA became an associate member of the European Film Agency Directors association (EFAD) in September 2022.[22]

Due to the comprehensive support provided, a diverse range of films were successfully completed and presented to the festival audience by mid-2023. These films include "Luxembourg, Luxembourg" (dir. Antonio Lukich) in 2022, as well as "La Palisiada" (dir. Philip Sotnychenko), "Stepne" (dir. Maryna Vroda), "Forever-forever" (*Nazavzhdy-Nazavzhdy*, dir. Anna Buryachkova), and "Do you love me?" (*Ty mene liubysh?,* dir. Tonya Noyabrova) in 2023. Some of these films were also screened at Ukrainian film festivals, which continue to operate despite the ongoing conflict. Despite facing challenges including frequent air-raid alerts and power outages in 2022, the organizers of prominent events including the Kharkiv MeetDocs Eastern Ukrainian Film Festival, Kyiv Critics' Week, DocudaysUA, and Molodist Kyiv Film Festival demonstrated resilience and determination. In addition, the Odesa International Film Festival, the most prestigious film festival in Ukraine, implemented the "Beyond Borders" format in 2022. This

format required the festival to be conducted in conjunction with other prestigious international film festivals, including the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival in July, the Prishtina International Film Festival (PriFest) in August, and the Warsaw International Film Festival in October. In 2023, the festival was held in the southwestern Ukrainian city of Chernivtsi and, to a lesser extent, in Odesa.

Also, the pursuit of commercial cinema remains ongoing, exemplified by the recent accomplishment of the feature-length computer animation "Mavka. The Forest Song" (*Mavka: Lisova Pisnia*, dir. Oleh Malamuzh and Oleksandra Ruban), which debuted in Ukraine in March 2023. The final phases of the film's production were already taking place during the full-scale Russian invasion. The filmmakers discussed the associated challenges, such as animators' work in temporarily occupied territories or working from shelters.[23] The film achieved significant success by being distributed in 80 countries worldwide, including France, Germany, Spain, Portugal, Italy and Romania.[24] Nevertheless, the picture achieved its greatest success in Ukraine, where it rapidly ascended to the position of the highest-grossing film. Throughout fifteen weeks, the picture garnered a remarkable viewership of 1.2 million individuals in Ukrainian cinema theaters, resulting in a substantial box office revenue of over 150 million hryvnias.[25]

The cinematic success of "Mavka" demonstrates that the film industry in war-torn Ukraine is viable and necessary. The domestic distribution of films has been maintained despite the persistent and continuous threat of aerial attacks, which impedes cinemas' operational capacity. In 2022, a selection of newly-produced films that were concluded shortly before the invasion were released nationwide. Among these films were the highly successful comedy titled "I Work at the Cemetery" (*Ia pratsiuiu na tsvyntari*, dir. Alexey Taranenko), a fantasy film based on a well-known comic book about Cossacks, titled "Maksym Osa" (*Maksym Osa ta Zoloto Pesyholovtsia*, dir. Myroslav Latyk) and the war drama titled "Sniper. The White Raven" (*Snaiper. Bilyi Voron*, dir. Marian Bushan). Notably, the premieres of the last two films were aligned with commemorating significant national holidays: Independence Day on August 24 and Day of the Defender of Ukraine on October 14.

According to Artem Denysov, the producer of the film "Sniper" broadcasting the film on Independence Day is a suitable decision: "We believe that our film will once again remind us that war knocked on peaceful Ukrainian homes eight years ago, and all this time, Ukrainian soldiers bravely defend our land – just like our Sniper."[26] During its first weekend in theaters, the film was seen by over 11,000 individuals, demonstrating that Ukrainians want to participate in cultural life despite the war, and that the war with Russia is of particular interest. In 2023, Independence Day was celebrated with the premiere of the long-awaited film "Dovbush" (directed by Oles Sanin), which depicts a legendary Hutsul hero.

The political and mobilization aspects of cinema during the Russian invasion

In times of war, the film industry and associated cinematic practices extend beyond their conventional roles in entertainment, business, artistic endeavors, and cultural diplomacy during times of peace.[27] Similarly, in contemporary Ukraine, institutions, organizations, and individuals associated with the film industry are not only involved in maintaining film production and distribution but also in resistance activities against Russia. First of all, following the commencement of Russia's full-scale invasion, the USFA and the Ukrainian Film Academy[28] promptly initiated the process of drafting petitions and dispatching open letters to the global film community, urging them to support a boycott of Russian films. The organizers of prominent film festivals such as Berlinale, Venice, Cannes, Karlovy Vary, Locarno, Sundance, Rotterdam, San Sebastian, and Toronto were requested to abstain from including Russian films in both competitive and non-competitive sections.

Requests were also submitted to the leading film studios and VOD platforms, urging them to promptly cease the rental of their films within the Russian Federation and Belarus' jurisdiction and prohibit the utilization of content that Russian creators produce. Furthermore, various international film organizations, ministries, national cinema centers and studios, foreign producers, and distributors were asked to discontinue collaboration with Russian film producers and cease distributing Russian films. As a consequence of these activities, Russia has been excluded from participation in Eurimages, and official Russian delegations have been denied acceptance at prominent international film festivals. Simultaneously, Ukraine experienced unparalleled assistance from the international film industry.

This support was evident at film festivals, which not only served as a platform for securing financial assistance, as previously stated, but also for organizing political demonstrations. The 2022 Cannes and Venice film festivals commenced with inaugural addresses by President Zelenski, in which he implored the film community to stop remaining silent and speak out loud and with one voice about Russian crimes.[29] In addition, the Ukrainian national pavilions hosted events aimed at educating the public about Russian aggression and atrocities, as well as casting light on the difficult circumstances the Ukrainian film industry faces against the backdrop of armed conflict.[30] According to Maryna Kuderchuk, the director of the USFA, film festivals "have become a battlefront" and emerged as a platform where Ukrainian cinema can effectively convey the voice of Ukraine to the global audience, thereby enabling it to be authentically recognized.[31]

Film festivals also provided a venue for conducting public political actions. During the premiere of "Butterfly Vision," there was a protest action in which Ukrainian filmmakers participated. The artists associated with the film staged an event accompanied by simulated air raid sirens and the slogan "Russians kill Ukrainians. Do you find it offensive and disturbing to talk about this Genocide?" As the film's producer, Daria Bassel, explained, the creators were appealing to the international community's conscience regarding the previously underestimated risks

associated with Russia's aggressive foreign policy and the crimes committed by Russians that have gone unpunished.[32]

In addition to Ukraine's presence at international film festivals, initiatives that promote Ukrainian cinema to a larger audience are crucial. Coordinated by organizations at various levels, these special film screenings are frequently used to disseminate information about the current situation in Ukraine, demonstrate support for the soldiers engaged in frontline combat, express solidarity with Ukrainian society in its self-defense efforts, and raise funds for the country's pressing needs. Many of these screenings are organized as part of the huge initiative the World Film Marathon "CinemaAid Ukraine", launched in March 2022 by the USFA, the Ukrainian Film Academy, and the "Watch Ukrainian!" Association, with the support of many other partners.

Maryna Kuderchuk, in her appeal on the project website, clearly indicates the mobilizing potential of these events: "Unfortunately, with bombs dropping everywhere, we cannot watch high-quality Ukrainian cinema with our friends and share our emotions as well as our impressions. But foreign viewers do have the chance to do this and thereby join us in our common struggle against the enemy. Victory will be ours and we will achieve this together!"[33] Typically, prominent Ukrainian filmmakers, diplomats, and activists attend these screenings and speak about Ukraine and their experiences. Furthermore, notable individuals from the hosting country articulate their words of support and encourage the audience to offer help to Ukrainians.[34]

Simultaneously, an important aspect of Ukraine's cultural diplomacy even during times of war is to present and discuss Ukraine not solely within the context of conflict, but rather to highlight Ukrainian culture as a subject worthy of wider recognition and interest. The filmmakers themselves recognize the significance of cinema, as it occupies a central position in this context. Therefore, the presence and success of Ukrainian cinema at international film festivals, as well as the increasing presence of Ukrainian films in foreign distribution and on international online platforms, are crucial.

Furthermore, akin to previous years, the implementation of cinema screening practices exerts a significant influence on the mobilization of Ukrainian society. The mobilizing capacity of cinema was articulated by the USFA website as follows: "Cinema is our weapon against the enemy on the cultural front (...) Ukrainian fairy tales comfort children in shelters, full-length films and series raise the morale of soldiers at the front and serve as psychological support for Ukrainian refugees."[35] An impressive initiative of the USFA, in cooperation with the Chancellery of the President of Ukraine and the Association "Watch Ukrainian!" is the national film tour "Cinema for Victory!" (Kino zarady Peremohy!), which started in August 2022.

The effective coordination of this event can be credited to the tremendous support provided by sponsors, volunteers, and numerous bodies including the Armed Forces of Ukraine, the police, and regional military administrations. During the first edition of the National Tour, which lasted until October 31, 2022, a total of 1036 screenings were conducted across 177 towns

in 18 regions of Ukraine.[36] Film screenings were conducted in metropolitan areas as well as in locations that typically lack access to film viewings, such as military units and rural communities. The screenings were accompanied by interactive sessions featuring prominent figures from the film industry, including Bohdan Beniuk, Akhtem Seitablayev, and Ada Rohovtseva, who serve as official ambassadors for the project. Furthermore, the individuals involved in the production of the aforementioned films, including the actors and directors, actively took part in these sessions.[37]

According to the organizers, the primary objective of the project is to cultivate a heightened sense of resilience and resolve within the Ukrainian community. Additionally, the initiative seeks to promote social solidarity in the quest of victory, as well as to further the preservation and appreciation of Ukrainian cultural heritage. Shows organized for internally displaced people and military personnel are particularly noteworthy. These sessions frequently extend over a substantial duration and evoke intense emotional responses. According to Andriy Rizol, an organizer, it is crucial for soldiers to receive genuine and benevolent expressions of gratitude during séances involving renowned Ukrainian cultural figures: "They need to hear sincere and kind words of gratitude, to feel understanding that their effort is extremely appreciated, that all of Ukraine is incredibly proud of its soldiers."[38] The success of the first edition of the tour led to the commencement of the subsequent edition in June 2023.

WAR-RELATED FILM PRODUCTION

Documentaries as a tool of mobilization

Since February 2022, the Ukrainian film community has assumed a significant role in disseminating information to the Ukrainian populace and the global community regarding the ongoing events in Ukraine and in conveying the personal and collective experiences of Ukrainians during the Russian invasion. Consequently, many documentaries are produced, focusing on the continuous conflict. For example, the informal collective of filmmakers known as "Babylon'13," established in 2013 during the Revolution of Dignity, persists in capturing the emergence of the "new civil society" through their ongoing documentation efforts. Immediately after the start of the full-scale Russian invasion, filmmakers started documenting the besieged cities and the Ukrainian populace's resistance against the invading forces. The result is short films[39], including the series "Mariupol Fortress" (*Fortetsia Mariupol',* dir. Yuliia Hontaruk) founded on video calls made to soldiers surrounded on Azovstal. Also, the full-length documentary film titled "One Day in Ukraine" (*Den ukrainskoho dobrovoltsia*), directed by Volodymyr Tykhyi, was shot during a single day, on March 14, 2022.

Furthermore, numerous film projects incorporate elements of both documentary filmmaking and mobilization efforts. One illustrative instance is the "Ukrainian Witness"

initiative, which was established "to capture and memorize the terrible events in Ukraine."[40] Within the scope of this project, short documentaries are produced with the intention to chronicle the Ukrainian resistance to Russian aggression, "a chronicle that our children, and our children's children, will study in their history lessons." In the initial month of the conflict, a total of 70 concise documentaries were distributed across several social media channels, resulting in substantial levels of public participation. As of the middle of 2023, a cumulative count of over 500 items has been produced, resulting in an audience over 35 million on YouTube.[41]

In addition to the documentary aspect, the project's authors place significant emphasis on its aim to inform and mobilize society to fight. The project initiator is Vitalii Deineha, a public activist and founder of the International Fund Come Back Alive. According to him, the project is needed in order not to lose the information war again. According to his statement, posted on the project website: "I barely remembered the beginning of the war back in 2014. (…) Nobody fixed those events... At the same time, Russian propaganda was already writing about us, changing how history is recorded and remembered. We were losing the informational battle. When Russia attacked us again in 2022, the whole story repeated itself. We were unprepared to document our history. I needed to fix that." The international community is an essential target of this information war, emphasizing the importance of producing content that is tailored for a global audience. As stated by the project's authors, this has the potential to facilitate the acquisition of financial and armament support, particularly from countries in Europe and North America.

Documentaries focused on the perspectives and behaviors of prominent individuals within the Russian invasion also possess a mobilizing aspect. An example of such an initiative is a series of 25 short documentaries titled "Art in a Wartime Country" (*Mystetstvo v kraini viiny*), which pays homage to artists who remained within the country's borders and actively resisted the Russian invasion. Documentaries were broadcast on YouTube[42] as well as all regional channels of Public Television as part of the project "Suspilne. Sprotyv" (Public. Resistance). The films were additionally showcased in the National Museum of Art of Ukraine in Kyiv, where screenings were organized with the participation of the project's creators and artists.

The primary aim of the film project was to examine the changing dynamics between artists and their artwork within a community that has been impacted by armed conflict. The films illustrate the active participation of Ukrainian artists in various aspects of wartime engagement. These include voluntary initiatives, and the creation of visual art, poetry, and musical compositions that revolve around war themes. Additionally, the films emphasize the artists' promotion of their Ukrainian heritage while seeking international recognition for their artistic pursuits. According to Kostiantyn Klyatskin, the director and co-founder of DocNoteFilms studio, which is accountable for the execution of the project, "Our project aims not only to tell the story of 25 Ukrainian artists – we also want to show the strength and versatility of Ukrainian art, and its ability not only to reflect but also to motivate and inspire in the most challenging times for Ukraine."[43]

In turn, the project "Culture vs. War" (Kultura vs. Viina), implemented by the Association "Watch Ukrainian!", aims to chronicle the experiences of Ukrainian filmmakers and artists who have actively participated in the Armed Forces and have been engaged in the defense of Ukraine since February 2022. The films present introspective examinations of the characters' transformation in the context of war, the reassessment of societal principles, and their patriotic attitudes. Additionally, the film incorporates authentic depictions of the protagonists' experiences in the military. The principal protagonists in the first two films are Serhii Mykhalchuk, a cinematographer, and Akhtem Seitablayev, an actor and director. The initiative was initiated at the onset of the Bouquet Kyiv Stage, an esteemed international high arts festival, in August 2022 in Kyiv. According to Kadim Tarasov and Andrii Rizol, the project's creators, "Cinema is a weapon. Culture will win the war!"[44] Undoubtedly, this type of film has a significant impact on social mobilization, as it depicts admirable patterns of behavior and heroic dispositions.

Additionally, the project's creators recognize the need to engage both the Ukrainian population and the international community. As they admitted, the films in the "Culture vs. War" series are intended for two distinct target audiences: Ukrainians and foreigners. "We want to show the Ukrainian audience that even famous artists are absolutely sure of our victory and will take up arms. In our opinion, this is a motivating factor for people. We also want to tell the foreign audience that, since the first days of the war, we have not only been fighting for ourselves, but we have been a shield for Europe. All our foreign activities are to show that our Ukrainian values are identical to European ones. We hope that the foreign audience will feel this message,"[45] they claimed.

It is also noteworthy to consider feature-length documentaries specifically tailored to international viewership. One illustrative instance is the film titled "The Rising Fury" (dir. Lesia Kalynska and Ruslan Batytskyi), which came into fruition in 2023 through the means of funding predominantly sourced from American institutions and people.[46] The film effectively establishes the historical backdrop of the Russian invasion, beginning with the events that transpired on Kyiv's Maidan in 2013. It continually conveys that Russian aggression towards Ukraine did not commence solely on February 24, but has persisted since 2014. The film was showcased at many international film festivals, including the Chicago International Film Festival, the Melbourne Documentary Film Festival, and the New York Tribeca Film Festival. Additionally, it is presented at exclusive screenings held at universities and local cultural centers to raise awareness about the war in Ukraine.[47]

Challenges in making feature films

Moreover, there have been the first attempts to produce dramatized documentaries or even full-length films centered around contemporary occurrences. The first one is "Region of Heroes"

(Oblast Heroiv, dir. Artur Lerman), which was produced by Oleksii Komarovskyi. Instead of employing professional actors, the film relies on volunteers who personally encountered the events depicted in the film. The plot is comprised of four true stories, each of which depicts the courageous actions taken by residents of the Kyiv region during the Russian occupation in March 2022. The film presents an authentic and candid account of the events that transpired during the challenging period of hostile occupation in various locations such as Bucha, Vorzel, Hostomel, and Irpin. As the film's creators explained, every courageous confession presented in this context transcends the individual, embodying instead the collective experiences of numerous Ukrainian volunteers who represent the unwavering spirit of the Ukrainian nation.[48]

Shooting for the film commenced in July 2022, and by November of the same year, the film was released in Ukrainian cinemas, indicating a highly accelerated production schedule. The promotional campaign for the film showing used the slogan "Ukrainian cinema warms not only the soul," as proceeds from ticket sales were used to purchase heaters for orphans in Ukraine. According to Oleksiy Kuleba, the head of the Kyiv Regional State Administration, the video holds historical significance for Ukraine as it highlights the pivotal role performed by ordinary Ukrainians in securing victory in Kyiv. Hence, "This film project is part of the emotional and moral reconstruction of the Kyiv region and Ukraine."[49] Similarly, Kuderchuk, the head of USFA, an institution that supported this film project, admitted that "cinema is a powerful tool for restoring and rebuilding Ukrainian space." This acknowledgment highlights the significance of filmic imagery in facilitating trauma recovery and restoring psychological balance after dramatic experiences.

The film was additionally disseminated internationally through streaming platforms, either accompanied by English subtitles or with a voiceover in the respective local language. As the film's producer explained the decision on foreign distribution, "The purpose of this film is to show the whole world how heroic Ukrainians are."[50] The film, like the previously mentioned documentaries, seeks to engage in information warfare by portraying Ukraine as the victim of Russian aggression. In addition, the film skillfully depicts the brutal realities of the Russian occupation in the vicinity of Kyiv, thereby fostering sympathy and solidarity for Ukrainian refugees among communities where they found new homes.

The second project, a feature-length film titled "Bucha" (2023, dir. Stanislav Tiunov), examines the Russian occupation of the Kyiv region with a greater degree of controversy. The film is based on a true story about a Kazakh refugee who valiantly rescued several Ukrainians in Bucha and other occupied territories in the suburbs of Kyiv. The production of the film was made feasible by the funds raised through a dedicated crowdfunding platform. The film was shot in March and April of 2023 in the same geographic locations where the actual events took place. The film's premiere, originally scheduled for the autumn of 2023, has been postponed to 2024. Over

120 actors and over 700 crowd-sourced actors participated in the project, including the renowned actor Viacheslav Dovzhenko, known for his portrayal in "Cyborgs. Heroes Never Die."

However, after the release of the trailer, which depicted the execution of noncombatants in a ruthless manner, the Ukrainian Film Academy issued a highly critical statement regarding this film project. It is accused of an insensitive approach, an opportunistic use of the tragedy, and the risk of retraumatizing individuals who experienced violence at the hands of the occupiers. "The use of heavy military equipment, pyrotechnics, Russian army uniforms, and the recreation of violent events now reminds people who have experienced the violence of these events," the authors of the appeal state explicitly.[51] Consequently, those who have experienced such occurrences may be more prone to reliving traumatic events, both through their participation as background actors during shooting and subsequent viewing of the final footage.

In response to these accusations, the creators of "Bucha" emphasized the importance of contemporary cinema as a crucial element of public diplomacy and information warfare. According to their viewpoint, it is crucial for Ukrainians to produce films that address contemporary issues, as failure to do so could lead to the proliferation of films that promote narratives concentrated on Russia.[52] Hence, according to the film's official website, the primary purpose of the film is to counter Russian propaganda and "tell the entire world what really happened."[53] Moreover, as asserted by the creators of "Bucha," cinema is a suitable medium for commemorating war casualties and engaging in the collective effort to address trauma, which encompasses both personal and societal dimensions. At the same time, they acknowledge the need for a sensitive approach to potentially traumatizing issues and the participation of individuals who have experienced violence. As they explain, this is why the scriptwriters endeavored to contact all the individuals and families depicted in the film. In addition, a psychologist was consulted during the film production.

Nonetheless, it is essential to recognize that Ukrainian filmmakers exhibit a variety of perspectives regarding the permissible limits of wartime cinema. As demonstrated by the outcomes of a collaborative initiative between the Ukrainian Film Academy and Netflix, "Grant Program: script development and exclusive sessions with industry experts," filmmakers and producers are interested in the topic of conflict. As a result of the script competition, 48 successful projects, which will receive funding for further development, were selected; the majority of these projects deal with events related to the Russian full-scale invasion and the diverse responses observed in Ukrainian society.[54] At the same time, certain directors, such as Oleh Sentsov, who won the script competition for a film about Azovstal, have stated their intention to begin production only after the achievement of Ukrainian victory.[55]

CONCLUSIONS

The article examines the mobilizing function of Ukrainian cinema in response to the Russian invasion. Despite the ongoing war, the Ukrainian film industry continues to operate. This is possible due to the extraordinary mobilization of the film community, the efforts of state cultural institutions, and, most significantly, the substantial support from international film institutes, film agencies, and various organizations. [56] Due to the collaborative efforts, Ukrainian filmmakers are able to continue their ongoing film projects and initiate new ones, including those centered on the ongoing conflict. This phenomenon is both pragmatic – assuring jobs in the film industry and sustaining filmmakers and their families – as well as highly symbolic.

The production of new audiovisual content and the promotion of Ukrainian films serve to strengthen the resiliency and unity of Ukrainians, while also contributing to the formation of a coherent narrative encircling ongoing events and their affective evaluations. Additionally, Ukraine's participation in international film festivals and the promotion of Ukrainian cinema through special screenings contribute to the cultivation of a favorable perception of Ukrainians and Ukraine, resulting in the acquisition of tangible and moral support, including financial and military aid.

Film productions that aim to depict the horrors of war and the associated experiences of millions of Ukrainians hold significant value. They play a vital role in the information war, influencing the interpretation of events in a manner that favors Ukraine. In addition, they have significant psychological value, facilitating the process of grappling with the difficult aftermath of Russian aggression. In addition, the cinematic depiction of the harrowing ordeal endured by innumerable Ukrainians, which resulted in the loss of their homes and loved ones, has the potential to enhance the global audience's comprehension of the current events in Ukraine. This can facilitate the development of a hospitable and empathetic attitude toward the large number of Ukrainian refugees who are presently displaced from their homes and their integration into local communities.

Simultaneously, the initial endeavors to produce feature films centered around the ongoing war sparked intense debates within the Ukrainian cinema community.[57] Unquestionably, a crucial aspect of these debates is emphasizing the importance of ethics in the filmmaking industry, particularly with regard to war films and the management of extremely sensitive subject matter. A significant concern that has been raised is the need to ensure the psychological safety of individuals engaged in filming activities, particularly those who have witnessed gruesome events during times of conflict. In addition, it is essential to provide specialized care for children and adolescents involved in such filmmaking endeavors.

[1] The Ukrainian Cultural Foundation regularly reports these events through the Ukrainian-language version of the online digest "Chronicles of the cultural front," available at: https://uaculture.org/digests/.
[2] "Vladyslav Berkovskii: "We shall collect facts on the russian-belarusian aggression," Ukrainian Cultural Foundation, February 28, 2022, https://ucf.in.ua/en/news/28-02-2022.
[3] For more about the war-related activities of these institutions, see: Elżbieta Olzacka, "The development of Ukrainian cultural policy in the context of Russian hybrid aggression against Ukraine," *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, OnlineFirst, (2023), https://doi.org/10.1080/10286632.2023.2187053.
[4] After the successful Revolution of Dignity and the change of power in the country, in February/March 2014, the Russians annexed Crimea and supported the pro-Russian separatists. On the territory of Donbas, the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics, supported and armed by Russia, were established, against which the Ukrainian state began military operations. The events were portrayed by the Russian media as an internal struggle within Ukraine, and the narrative of a "Ukrainian crisis" was also actively propagated in Western media. See, for example, Taras Kuzio, "Russian Military Aggression or 'Civil War' in Ukraine?" *E-International Relations* (2020), https://www.e-ir.info/2020/11/27/russian-military-aggression-or-civil-war-in-ukraine/.
[5] The profiles of the filmmakers who were directly involved in the combat are presented as part of the project "Culture Fight Back," launched by the Ukrainian Institute. Available at: https://ui.org.ua/en/culture-fights-back-2/.
[6] See, for example, Olzacka, "The development of Ukrainian cultural policy;" Maria Pesenti, "Cultural Revival and Social Transformation in Ukraine. The Role of Culture and the Arts in Supporting Post-Euromaidan Resilience," *Chatham House Research Paper*, November 20, 2020, www.chathamhouse.org/2020/11/cultural-revival-and-social-transformation-ukraine; Nataliia Zlenko, "Socio-Cultural Development and Cultural Policy of Ukraine: Experience of Formation and Implementation," *Three Seas Economic Journal* 48, no. 1 (2020): 48–53, doi:10.30525/2661-5150/2020-4-8.
[7] See more Olzacka, "The development of Ukrainian cultural policy."
[8] Olzacka, "The development of Ukrainian cultural policy," 8–9.
[9] Iryna Shtohrin, «Kino ie zbroieiu efektyvnishoiu, nizh Avtomat Kalashnikova» – Illienko ["Cinema is a More Effective Weapon Than a Kalashnikov" - Illenko]." *RadioSvoboda*, December 28, 2016, https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/28202432.html.
[10] For more about patriotic filmmaking in the context of Russian aggression see: Elżbieta Olzacka, "The Development of National Cinema in Post-Maidan Ukraine," *East European Politics and Societies*, 37, no. 2 (2023), 435–454, https://doi.org/10.1177/08883254221101907.
[11] Olzacka, "The development of Ukrainian cultural policy," 11.
[12] Olzacka, "The development of Ukrainian cultural policy," 7.
[13] More about the project see Aleksei Pershko, "Dni ukrainskoho kino na Donbasi," *Kino-Teatr*, May 10, 2017, https://kino-teatr.ua/uk/articles/dni-ukrainskogo-kino-v-donbasse-4461.phtml.
[14] "Proekt «Dyvys ukrainske» stav chastynoiu nadvazhlyvoho proektu «Ukrainske kino – frontu»" [Project "Look Ukrainian!" became part of the important project "Ukrainian cinema - the front".], *Look Ukrainian!,* 2019, http://www.kinoua.org/ua/news/proekt-divis-ukrainske-stav-castinou-nadvazlivogo-proektu-ukrainske-kino-frontu.
[15] Despite the problems associated with the coronavirus pandemic and lockdowns, the film industry has grown steadily. See: Pesenti, "Cultural Revival," 20.
[16] Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine "Pro spriamuvannia koshtiv do rezervnoho fondu derzhavnoho biudzhetu" [On the allocation of funds to the reserve fund of the state budget], available at: https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/245-2022-%D0%BF#Text.
[17] See the appeal of Maryna Kuderchuk, head of the USFA, available at: https://usfa.gov.ua/press-center/pidtrymay-ukrainske-kino-derzhavne-agentstvo-ukrainy-z-pytan-kino-ogoloshuye-akciyu-na-pidtrymku-i12252.
[18] Full list available at: https://usfa.gov.ua/press-center/do-uvagy-vyrobnykiv-filmiv-shho-perebuvayut-na-zavershalnykh-stadiyakh-vyrobnyctva-i12020.

[19] About the "Ukrainian Films Now" initiative see more: Ben Dalton, "12 European film funds partner on Ukraine fundraising event in Cannes (exclusive)," *ScreenDaily*, May 11, 2022, https://www.screendaily.com/news/12-european-film-funds-partner-on-ukraine-fundraising-event-in-cannes-exclusive/5170348.article.
[20] See more at: https://esfuf.eu/.
[21] "Who is behind Filmmakers for Ukraine," available at: https://filmmakers-for-ukraine.com/about/.
[22] "The Ukrainian State Film Agency becomes the 36th EFAD member," EFAD, September 21, 2022, https://europeanfilmagencies.eu/news-publications/our-press-releases/2515-the-ukrainian-state-film-agency-becomes-the-36th-efad-member.
[23] Polina Hrytsyk, "Mavka. Lisova pisnia. Khronolohiia/Problemy/Perspektyvy" [Mavka. Forest Song. Chronology/Problems/Perspectives], *UA Geek*, 2023, https://uageek.space/mavka-forest-song/#gs.5cm1c0.
[24] For more, see: ""Mavka. Lisova pisnia" u svitovomu prokati — prodiuserka pro uspikh multfilmu, sykvel i krytyku" ["Mavka. Forest Song" at the global box office — the producer about the success of the cartoon, the sequel and criticism], *SuspilneKultura*, April 10, 2023, https://suspilne.media/438489-mavka-lisova-pisna-u-svitovomu-prokati-produserka-pro-uspih-multfilmu-sikvel-i-kritiku/.
[25] "Za rezultatamy piatnadtsiatoho tyzhnia u natsionalnomu prokati, kasovi zbory multfilmu «Mavka» skladaiut 150 952 041 hrn" [According to the results of the fifteenth week at the national box office, the box office of the cartoon "Mavka" is UAH 150,952,041], USFA, June 13, 2023, https://usfa.gov.ua/press-center/za-rezultatamy-p-yatnadcyatogo-tyzhnya-u-nacionalnomu-prokati-kasovi-zbory-multfilmu-mavka-i13018.
[26] "Ia khochu vyhnaty tu navoloch zi svoiei zemli: do Dnia Ukrainskoi Derzhavnosti predstavliaiemo treiler filmu "Snaiper. Bilyi Voron"" [I want to drive that bastard out of my land: for the Day of Ukrainian Statehood, we present the trailer of the film "Sniper. White Raven"], USFA, July 28, 2022, https://usfa.gov.ua/press-center/ya-khochu-vygnaty-tu-navoloch-zi-svoyei-zemli-do-dnya-ukrainskoi-derzhavnosti-predstavlyayemo-i12208.
[27] See, for example, Michael Hammond, *The Big Show: British cinema culture in the Great War (1914-1918)* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2006); Guy Westwell, *War Cinema. Hollywood on the Front Line* (New York: Wallflower Press, 2006); Klaus Dodds, "Hollywood and the Popular Geopolitics of the War on Terror," *Third World Quarterly* 29, no. 8 (2008): 1621-1637, DOI: 10.1080/01436590802528762.
[28] The Ukrainian Film Academy (Ukrainska kinoakademiia) was established in 2017 as an association of experts and professionals in the field of cinema and film production.
[29] "Prezydent Ukrainy Volodymyr Zelenskyy vystupyv na tseremonii vidkryttia Kannskoho kinofestyvaliu" [President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy spoke at the opening ceremony of the Cannes Film Festival], USFA, May 17, 2022, https://usfa.gov.ua/press-center/prezydent-ukrainy-volodymyr-zelenskyy-vystupyv-na-ceremonii-vidkryttya-kannskogo-kinofestyvalyu-i12069.
[30] For example, during the 2022 Cannes Film Festival, two discussions were held, "Canceling Russian Culture: Cinema as an Instrument of Russian Propaganda and War" and "Women In Industry." These discussions focused on the topics of Russian propaganda and the role of women filmmakers in the context of war.
[31] Ukraina na 75-mu Kannskomu kinofestyvali: kulturna dyplomatiia za chasiv viiny" [Ukraine at the 75th Cannes Film Festival: cultural diplomacy during the war], USFA, May 12, 2022, https://usfa.gov.ua/press-center/ukraina-na-75-mu-kannskomu-kinofestyvali-kulturna-dyplomatiya-za-chasiv-viyny-i12054.
[32] "U den svitovoi premiery komanda filmu "Bachennia metelyka" provela aktsiiu na pidtrymku Ukraïny na chervonii dorizhtsi Kannskoho kinofestyvaliu" [On the day of the world premiere, the team of the film "Butterfly Vision" held an action in support of Ukraine on the red carpet of the Cannes Film Festival], USFA, May 25, 2022, https://usfa.gov.ua/press-center/u-den-svitovoi-premyery-bachennya-metelyka-komanda-filmu-provela-akciyu-na-pidtrymku-ukrainy-na-i12101.
[33] See at the official project's website: https://www.cinemaid.org/.

[34] Detailed report on activities undertaken available at: https://www.facebook.com/CinemAidUkraine.
[35] "Pidtrymai ukrainske kino: Derzhavne ahentstvo Ukrainy z pytan kino oholoshuie aktsiiu na pidtrymku vitchyznianoi kinoindustrii" [Support Ukrainian cinema: the State Film Agency of Ukraine announces an action in support of the domestic film industry], USFA, August 22, 2022, https://usfa.gov.ua/press-center/pidtrymay-ukrainske-kino-derzhavne-agentstvo-ukrainy-z-pytan-kino-ogoloshuye-akciyu-na-pidtrymku-i12252.
[36] For more, see: "Videozvit zi spohadamy ta vrazhenniamy vid I etapu Natsionalnoho turu «Kino zarady Peremohy!»" [Video report with memories and impressions from the 1st stage of the National Tour "Cinema for Victory!"], USFA, 23 November 23, 2022, https://usfa.gov.ua/press-center/videozvit-zi-spogadamy-ta-vrazhennyamy-vid-i-etapu-nacionalnogo-turu-kino-zarady-peremogy-i12514.
[37] Olesya Kotubey, ""Kultura pratsiuie na vyperedzhennia": Seitablaiev, Beniuk ta Rizol pro Natsionalnyi tur "Kino zarady peremohy!"" ["Culture works in advance": Seitablaev, Benyuk and Risol about the National Tour "Cinema for Victory!"], USFA, September 13, 2022, https://usfa.gov.ua/press-center/kultura-pracyuye-na-vyperedzhennya-seitablayev-benyuk-ta-rizol-pro-nacionalnyy-tur-kino-zarady-i12311.
[38] "«Kino zarady Peremohy!»: u mezhakh turu filmy pokazaly vzhe v 11 oblastiakh" ["Cinema for Victory!": during the tour, films were already shown in 11 regions], USFA, September 16, 2022, https://usfa.gov.ua/press-center/kino-zarady-peremogy-u-mezhakh-turu-filmy-pokazaly-vzhe-v-11-oblastyakh-i12323.
[39] See at the official project's YouTube channel: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCrJIIeADD45RsffK2yYgmSw.
[40] The official project's website available at: https://uw.media/en/.
[41] See at the official film's channel: https://www.youtube.com/@UkrainianWitness/about.
[42] Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YvU0rL8J7mQ.
[43] "Mystetstvo v kraini viiny: iak my znimaly dokumentalnyi serial u 2022-mu" [Art in the Wartime Country: How We Filmed a Documentary Series in 2022], *Lb.ua*, January 30, 2023, https://lb.ua/blog/docnotefilms/544164_mistetstvo_kraini_viyni_yak_mi.html.
[44] "U Kyievi startuvav proiekt «Kultura vs viina »" ["Culture vs War" project launched in Kyiv], *Ukrinform*, June 6, 2023, https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-culture/3719156-u-kievi-startuvav-proekt-kultura-vs-vijna.html.
[45] "U Kyievi startuvav proiekt «Kultura vs viina»."
[46] List of donors available at the official film's website: https://arisingfury.com/.
[47] See at the official film's Facebook profile: https://www.facebook.com/arisingfury/.
[48] "Ukraïns′kyĭ fil′m «Oblast Heroiv» Oleksiia Komarovaskoho vykhodyt u svitovyi pokaz" [Oleksiy Komarovskyi's Ukrainian film "The Region of Heroes" is being released worldwide], USFA, March 1, 2023, https://usfa.gov.ua/press-center/ukrainskyy-film-oblast-geroiv-oleksiya-komarovskogo-vykhodyt-u-svitovyy-pokaz-i12750.
[49] "Na Kyivshchyni rozpochalys zyomky dokumentalnoho filmu "Oblast Heroiv"" [Filming of the documentary film "Region of Heroes" has begun in Kyiv Region], USFA, July 27, 2022, https://usfa.gov.ua/press-center/na-kyivshhyni-rozpochalys-zyomky-dokumentalnogo-filmu-oblast-geroiv-i12214.
[50] "Ukrainskyi film «Oblast Heroiv»."
[51] Polina Horlach, "Ukrainska kinoakademiia zaklykala do dyskusii cherez zyomky ihrovoho filmu "Bucha"" [The Ukrainian Film Academy called for a discussion about the filming of the feature film "Bucha"], *SuspilneKultura*, September 16, 2022, https://suspilne.media/282456-ukrainska-kinoakademia-zaklikala-do-diskusii-cerez-zjomki-igrovogo-filmu-buca/.
[52] Oleksandr Shchur, "Tsym filmom my khochemo vshanuvaty pamiat zahyblykh – stsenaryst filmu «Bucha»" [With this film, we want to honor the memory of the dead - screenwriter of the film "Bucha"], *#Bukvy*, June 3, 2023, https://bykvu.com/ua/mysli/tsym-filmom-my-khochemo-vshanuvaty-pam-iat-zahyblykh-rezhymer-i-stsenaryst-filmu-bucha/.
[53] See at the official film's website: https://bucha.film/.
[54] All winning projects available at: https://www.development.uafilmacademy.org/en/projects.

[55] Polina Horlach, “Oleh Sentsov napyshe stsenarii do filmu pro "Azovstal"” [Oleg Sentsov will write the script for the film about "Azovstal"], *SuspilneKultura*, September 16, 2022, https://suspilne.media/282373-oleg-sencov-napise-scenarij-do-filmu-pro-azovstal/.

[56] Based on the survey done by the Ukrainian Film Academy, Ukrainian filmmakers expresses discontent with the operations of the USFA, perceiving them as lacking competence and falling short of expectations. In the present circumstances, as highlighted by the filmmakers, the paramount factor is the establishment of a personal network of connections that facilitates the identification of sponsors and the provision of assistance for cinematic endeavors. The results of a survey available at: https://uafilmacademy.org/news/rezultati-opituvannja-chleniv-kinoakademiji-schodo-stanu-ukrajinskoji-kinoindustriji.html.

[57] The public discussion on this topic was initiated by the Odesa International Film Festival and was held, among others, during the 2022 film festivals Kharkiv MeetDocs and Kyiv’s Critics Week.

MUSIC OF UKRAINIAN POETIC CINEMA AS A SPACE FOR CONSTRUCTING NATIONAL IDENTITY IN UKRAINIAN CULTURE

Mariia Lihus (National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy)
Olha Lihus (Borys Grinchenko Kyiv University: Kyiv)

UKRAINIAN POETIC CINEMA IN THE CULTURAL CONTEXT OF THE THAW

Ukrainian poetic cinema is a complex aesthetic, stylistic, and socio-political phenomenon that occurred during the national rise of the 1960s known as "the Thaw" when Ukrainian artists reflected on the phenomenon of national culture breaking the frames of Soviet ideology. This short period in the history of Ukrainian cinema is considered a revival after decades of Russian cultural expansion that suppressed the performance of Ukrainian national identity in Ukrainian culture. The cultural revival became possible due to a certain social and political liberalization after Joseph Stalin's death in 1953 and the overcoming of his personality cult in 1956, which marked the era of the Thaw. In Ukraine, de-Stalinization was particularly important, since Ukraine was affected the most by the Stalinist terror: Ukrainian nation survived through Holodomor, mass repressions, and extermination of the national elite. The Thaw lasted a little longer in Ukraine than in other Soviet republics due to Petro Shelest – the head of the Communist Party of Ukraine in 1961-1972. Although his political outlook was not liberal, he had a national sentiment recognizing the significance of the Ukrainian language and its role in representing Ukrainian cultural identity.[1] In such a political climate of the 1960s, Ukrainian progressive youth – the sixtiers – founded creative youth clubs to rehabilitate the historical memory and moved from socialist realism in their creative work.

The leading aesthetic principles of the 1960s Ukrainian art movements were the poetization of folklore, the revival of the traditions erased from the collective memory, and their modern metaphorical reinterpretation. They can be traced in the creative outputs of the Ukrainian poetic cinema artists: Serhii Parajanov (*Shadows of the Forgotten Ancestors*, 1964); Yurii Illienko (*A Spring for the Thirsty*, 1965; *The Evening on Ivan Kupalo*, 1968; *The White Bird with a Black Mark*, 1971); Leonid Osyka (*The Stone Cross*, 1968; *Zakhar Berkut*, 1971); Borys Ivchenko (*Annychka*, 1969; *The Lost Letter*, 1972); Volodymyr Denysenko (*Conscience*, 1968); and Ivan Mykolaichuk (*Babylon XX*, 1979). The characteristic features of the Ukrainian poetic cinema movement are:

> parable character, attraction towards metaphorical imagery and allegoricity in understanding reality, appeal to irrational motives and images, use of folk symbols as an integral part of everyday life, visual reproduction of national traditions and rituals, presence of typological images of villages, people, particular social groups, and characters.[2]

At the same time, Ukrainian poetic cinema has never been a purely ethnographic phenomenon, because its films "do not simply appeal to sight, hearing, and motor sense ..., but think with texture, color, pattern, rhythm, nature, sound, shot composition – and all their strong totality."[3] Moreover, Ukrainian poetic films ironically dispel ethnographism at the plot level. In particular, the scene in Illienko's *The Evening on Ivan Kupalo,* when the Russian empress Catherine II travels around her "possessions" – the Ukrainian lands, is a demonstrative counterargument to identifying poetic aesthetics as ethnographic decorativeness. Going past carton Ukrainian houses and hiding Cossacks, Catherine II wonders why they are neither dancing Ukrainian folk dance hopak nor drinking Ukrainian alcoholic beverage horilka. Catherine II expects this behavior since she believes that "as soon as the sun rises, they dance". Seeing the Cossacks' immediate reaction who start dancing like drunks, Catherine II exclaims: "Now that's right!". This scene ironically mocks "sharovarshchyna" – a stereotypical identification of Ukrainian culture as a low culture of peasants and Cossacks. The mentioned scene deconstructs the misrepresentation of Ukrainian poetic cinema as an ethnographic movement and the Soviet ideological concept of the Ukrainian national identity as a fixed message transmitted through artistic means of only folklore.

Ukrainian poetic cinema was widely recognized in Western culture. The triumph of Parajanov's *Shadows of the Forgotten Ancestors* at the international film festival in Mar del Plata, Argentina, drew the world artistic community's attention to the new ideologically independent Ukrainian art. However, Ukrainian poetic cinema's success lasted only a few years at home. In the early 1970s, the Soviet authorities began a brutal attack on talented directors, including Parajanov, with devastating criticism and repression, restricting artists' creativity, and eventually, forbidding the poetic cinema movement. Many films were stigmatized as "ideologically unreliable" and removed from distribution. Although Ukrainian films were not accused of nationalism directly, it was clear that their strong national identity annoyed Soviet officials the most. Even after the political censorship was softened, in 1979, Mykolaichuk overcame many challenges to get permission to film *Babylon XX* from the Soviet authorities. Only after the restoration of Ukraine's independence in 1991 did the viewers, film critics, and experts get access to the Ukrainian poetic cinema heritage. Still, most of the publications on various aspects of the Ukrainian poetic cinema output are journalistic and popular-science. The lack of scholarly research on this topic, thus, demonstrates its relevance.

The Ukrainian poetic cinema music has never been an object of specialized scholarly research. Some information about it can be found in general overviews of the history of Ukrainian

cinema in film and music studies, particularly in the dissertations of Oksana But and Olena Yankovska, articles by Halyna Filkevich, Olha Lytvynova, Larysa Bryukhovetska, and Volodymyr Davydenko. Therefore, the consideration of the Ukrainian poetic cinema film music in terms of the formation of national identity from the philosophical and musicological standpoint is the first comprehensive study of this topic. In this context, it is expedient to analyze the film music of *Shadows of the Forgotten Ancestors*, *A Spring for the Thirsty*, *The Evening on Ivan Kupalo*, *The Stone Cross*, *White Bird with a Black Mark*, *The Lost Letter*, and *Babylon XX* as the most prominent Ukrainian poetic films.

PERFORMANCE OF CULTURAL IDENTITY THROUGH FILM MUSIC

Sound is one of the key dimensions of Ukrainian poetic cinema. It constitutes an "added value" of poetic films – structures vision, ensures the reprojection "onto the image the product of their mutual influences,"[4] and creates a sound polyphony of the film frames. In Ukrainian poetic films, poetic thinking dominates the word by various audible means. Silence, nature sounds, human voice, dialect speech, Ukrainian musical instruments, the performance of folklore, and the instrumental music of Ukrainian composers collectively form the sound world of Ukrainian poetic cinema. Music appears to be its most significant component as it implies a complex intellectual and corporeal experience of film creators and the audience. It transforms the film space by performing the invisible (what was not seen before). Thus, even though music is not directly seen in the film, it exists in a space of vision: constituting films' imaginative and symbolic dimensions, it is an instrument for performing collective representations. The music of Ukrainian poetic films, thus, can be analyzed as a space for the construction of national identity. For this purpose, national identity construction through the music of the Ukrainian poetic cinema can be fruitfully considered a performative phenomenon.

Jeffrey C. Alexander's cultural pragmatics within the cultural sociological approach appears to be a fruitful methodology for considering film music as a cultural performance. Alexander defines cultural performance as a collective action aimed at the realization of the script as a foundation of social integration and consensus.[5] From the standpoint of Alexander's conception of cultural performance, film music is not a reflection of a social group's collective ideas, but a shared experience of the film's creators and the audience while watching a film that enables viewers and listeners to maintain solidarity, raise relevant social issues, and influence a social reality. Therefore, film music as a performance is not an abstract artistic activity or object but a dynamic process, collectively created and interpreted by the composer and the audience.

Simon Frith, a British socio-musicologist, shares this perspective. Frith defines music as a performance and a story, and the unity of the event and the text. He claims:

> not that social groups agree on values which are then expressed in their cultural activities … but that they only get to know themselves as groups (as a particular organization of individual and social interests, of sameness and difference) *through* cultural activity, through aesthetic judgment. Making music isn't a way of expressing ideas; it is a way of living them.[6]

Frith demonstrates that music gives people an intensely subjective sense of being sociable and encourages members of the community to experience their collective identity as "what we would like to be, not what we are" giving "a real experience of what the ideal could be."[7] Therefore, the music of the Ukrainian poetic cinema participates in constructing the national myth and transforming the national culture under the pressure of the Soviet regime into an integrated system.

Accepting these theoretical foundations enables the authors to regard film music as a performative instrument of the organization and construction of identity in situations of shared experience, which incorporates collective self-images into broad cultural narratives. In particular, the music of Ukrainian poetic cinema is demonstrated not as a text that reflects a fixed normative guidance of what Ukrainian identity is but as a space for deliberation about it and the platform of its construction.

FOLKLORE AS AESTHETIC AND ARTISTIC FOUNDATION OF UKRAINIAN POETIC CINEMA MUSIC

The national character of Ukrainian poetic cinema music is determined primarily by the themes of its literary sources. Mostly these are works of Ukrainian classic and modern authors who create ethnographic pictures of Ukrainian villages in different regions of Ukraine. The films *Shadows of the Forgotten Ancestors* and *The Stone Cross* based on the eponymous works by Mykhailo Kotsiubynskyi and Vasyl Stefanyk depict the daily life and customs of peasants of the 19th-century Prykarpattia. *The White Bird with a Black Mark* highlights the life of the Bukovynian village, whereas the action of the films *The Evening on Ivan Kupalo* and *The Lost Letter* on the motives of Mykola Hohol's writings takes place in the Cossack settlements of Central Ukraine. *Babylon XX* based on Vasyl Zemlyak's novel *Swan Flock* and *A Spring for the Thirsty* filmed from a screenplay by Ivan Drach both depict the rural life of the Kyiv region. These films' direction is peculiar for involving real villagers in the mass scenes and a close relation of the film's plot to the actual life of the village. It is no coincidence that authentic folklore represented in all its genre-

ritual and thematic diversity plays an important role in the musical dimension of Ukrainian poetic cinema.

Authentic material

Authentic music is particularly notable in *Shadows of the Forgotten Ancestors*. This film embodies Ukrainian poetic mythology full of magical rituals, archaic emotions, pre-Christian customs, and at the same time Orthodox traditions. Every sound in the film acquires a special symbolic meaning. Oksana But notes:

> The film constantly reproduces the cyclical nature of the archaic worldview: 'life – love – death'. It begins with the sound of cutting spruce symbolizing the broken fate of Ivan's little brother. The boy's cry 'absorbs' the trembita sound traditionally associated with the most significant events in Hutsuls' life – weddings and funerals. Another 'ambiguous' attribute that expresses both joy and grief is church bells. Before the wailing for the deceased could be heard we hear the bright and enchanting play of the jaw harp, bells, pipes that sound at the village fair; then, without a pause, the bells ring again, but now festive ones, and church singing.[8]

The repeated sound of a considerable number of specific authentic instruments and ritual scenes with musical accompaniment gives grounds to talk about a branched system of leit-timbres (hurdy-gurdy, floyara, jaw harp, trembita) and leit-genres (prayer, vocal lament, chant). Myroslav Skoryk, a composer of *Shadows of the Forgotten Ancestors,* recalled his trip to Verkhovyna by bus. There he found musicians in mountain villages and took them to the recording studio in Kyiv by plane.[9] The most common among purely musical phenomena in the film are rhythmic intonations of kolomyika, which dynamizes the plot development, as well as a whole range of calendar songs that frame Hutsuls' life in Kryvorivnia: carols, spring songs, wedding songs, and commemorative songs. Parajanov thoroughly selected the song material, carefully studying Hutsuls' life and customs.

The White Bird with a Black Mark also stands out for its remarkable authentic music component. The film deals with the tragic story of the Dzvonar family, musicians from the Bukovyna village Hlynytsia, during the violent 1930s and 1940s when the region was under Romanian and later Soviet occupation. The Second World War scattered the brothers on different sides of the political and military confrontation. According to Illienko's directorial idea, the instrumental ensemble of the Dzvonar family consisted mainly of instruments typical for Bukovyna: cymbals (Petro), violin (Orest), trombone (Bohdan), bells (Heorhii), basolia (Les). Authentic folk melodies recorded by folk musicians are presented here in various genres: fair march, Christmas carol, patriotic military song, and wedding song. The film's key leitmotifs are the humorous kolomyika "You combed your hair, you licked your hair, you dressed in white pants", which characterizes Petro, and the melody of the Sabash wedding dance that sounds in the key dramatic scenes related to the tragic love story of Orest and Dana.

In *The Stone Cross*, authentic folklore is used in one of the most important dramaturgic episodes – the scene of the protagonist's farewell to the residents of his native village on the eve of his emigration to Canada. The film composer Huba recorded a significant part of the music in Pokuttia. Kolomyika's sound and polka's catchy dance melodies performed by folk musicians contrast with the depressed psychological state of the farewell attendees. One of the most emotionally powerful parts of the farewell episode is also the scene of the blind musicians' passage, during which a short motif is played by old, "almost decayed by the time",[10] detuned cymbals that Huba accidentally found in the attic of an abandoned house.

Folklore in the music direction of Ivan Mykolaichuk

Ivan Mykolaichuk played an important role in introducing folklore as a musical counterpart to the aesthetics of Ukrainian poetic cinema. A talented actor and director considered a symbol of Ukrainian poetic cinema, Mykolaichuk had remarkable musical skills and knew Ukrainian folklore well, especially of his native region Bukovyna. In many acting works, he sings and plays cymbals (*The White Bird with a Black Mark*), violin (*Mistake of Honoré de Balzac, Babylon XX*), and double bass (*Such Late, Such Warm Autumn*). Mykolaichuk attached great importance to the musical component in his directorial practice:

> A good film should be built as a musical piece. The dramaturgy of a musical work is the greatest and most powerful dramaturgy. If I ever managed to build a film plot and all my film-thinking in the way that it is possible to do in music, then I would not dream of anything else...[11]

Mykolaichuk initiated a selection of musical material for several Ukrainian poetic films, including *The White Bird with a Black Mark*, *The Lost Letter*, and *Babylon XX*. Larysa Briukhovetska notes that "the entire musical part of the films, for which Mykolaichuk prepared music, consists of folklore, which has its roots in the distant past."[12] In these films, there are both authentically performed songs and interpretations of folk songs by modern professional performers, such as the trio "Zoloti Kliuchi" created under the auspices of Mykolaichuk (*The Lost Letter*), recordings of bandura player Halyna Menkush (*The Lost Letter*), and Moldovan singer Nicolae Sulak accompanied by the folk music ensemble "Fluierash" (*Babylon XX*).

The Lost Letter is a kind of anthology of Central Ukrainian musical folklore, in which Ukrainian folk songs of various genres are heard: the lyrical "Unhitch the horses, boys" ("Rozpryahayte, khloptsi, koni"), "Oh, willow, willow, where did you grow" ("Oi, verbo zh, verbo, de ty zrosla"), "And I'm poor, unhappy" ("A ia bidnyi, neshchaslyvyi"), the wedding song "Bless, the Earth" ("Blahoslovy, zemle"), a humorous dance "A fish danced with crayfish" ("Tantsiuvala ryba z rakom"), which became a humorous characteristic of the main characters – brave and witty Cossacks Vasyl (Mykolaichuk) and Andrii. However, heroic Cossack folklore and authorial melodies associated with the struggle of Ukrainians for national independence and

statehood occupy the most important place in the film. Since authentic Ukrainian culture was taboo in the Soviet Union, Zaporizhian march as the film's leitmotif, the historical song "The black arable", and the Cossack march "Let's take the weapons, brothers" ("Hey numo, brattia, do zbroii"), written in the 19th century by the coryphaeus of Ukrainian theater Marko Kropyvnytskyi, were a bold move. It is no coincidence that bandura – a symbol of the Cossack musical epic – in Halyna Menkush's recording turned out to be the leit-timbre of the film's music design. In addition, Mykolaichuk planned to use the song "And already two hundred years as a Cossack's been in captivity" ("A vzhe dvisti rokiv iak kozak u nevoli"), which expresses an angry protest against the destruction of Cossacks' autonomy by the Russian Empire. Even though this song was removed from the film for political reasons, the film was censored and banned for 10 years.

The variety of national musical symbols can also be traced in *The White Bird with a Black Mark*. Among the above-mentioned authentic Bukovynian melodies, the UPA song "Oh, the rebels were standing in the forest on the lawn" ("Oi u lisi na poliantsi stoialy povstantsi") banned by the Soviet censorship is also present in the film. To avoid problems, Mykolaichuk had to "disguise" the national expressiveness of the film music by the contrast introduction of "ideologically correct" Soviet songs following the plot of the film. However, this juxtaposition only strengthened the feeling of foreignness of Soviet ideology and the savagery and brutality of the "liberators" of free Hutsuls. In this regard, there is a demonstrative scene with the timber rafting related to the establishment of Soviet authorities in a Zakarpattian village. The stressed cheerful music of the Soviet "Aviators March" sharply contrasts with the muted Bukovynian melodies and lines of the rebels and sounds intrusive and frightening.

Folkloric melodies of different backgrounds coexist in the music of *Babylon XX* – the last work of Mykolaichyk, where he demonstrated his talents as a director, leading actor (philosopher Fabian), and composer. Although the plot of this film (defined by Mykolaichyk as a "folk romantic true story") refers to the events of the 1920s in Central Ukraine, its music is collected from different Ukrainian regions. Moreover, the Moldovan folk song about unrequited love performed by Nicolae Sulak has the key dramatic importance appearing in romantic scenes of the main characters – Fabian and Malva. This melody, atypical for the location of the film, is both "offscreen" and "onscreen":[13] it sounds not only in the background of the film frame but is also diegetic since the characters react to it. Fabian states that it is "Walachian" music – the music from a historical region in Zakarpattia, which Ukrainians called "Woloshchyna" that included Romanian and Moldovan territories at different times. The use of Moldovan folklore, widespread in Mykolaichuk's native Zakarpatiia, probably indicates the artist's feeling of special kinship with the image of his character.

Similar to *The White Bird with a Black Mark*, in *Babylon XX*, traditional Ukrainian folk songs "The cows went from oakwood" ("Yshly korovy iz dibrovy"), "Oh, my grove, green grove" ("Oi haiu mii, haiu, haiu zelenenkyi") and dance melodies performed by Three musicians contrast

with the Bolsheviks' folklore ("How my mother saw me off", "I have courted Maruska for three years"), but sometimes their intonations merge. As Mykolaichuk later explained:

> We wanted the film frame to contain the very life of the village of the 1920s – as it was created by the centuries-old course of the development of people's culture, especially as the revolution broke the centuries-old lifestyle. People started speaking different languages.[14]

At the same time, the artist justly reminded that Bolsheviks borrowed the melody of the song "How my mother saw me off" from the Ukrainian folk song "Oh, what a noise was made" ("Oi shcho zh to za shum uchynyvsia").

ARTISTIC AND STYLISTIC FEATURES OF AUTHOR MUSIC OF UKRAINIAN POETIC CINEMA

Another area that forms space for performing Ukrainian national identity in Ukrainian poetic cinema is the author music of the composers Myroslav Skoryk (1938-2020), Leonid Hrabovskyi (born 1935), and Volodymyr Huba (1938-2020), who represent the "sixtiers" generation. In the 1960s and early 1970s, along with the strict rejection of radical musical experiments, official circles temporarily tolerated the work of young talented artists who sought to renew the palette of musical and expressive means. This relative freedom of creativity encouraged composers to conduct creative pursuits in the field of film music, which were successfully realized together with the innovative direction of Paradjanov, Osyka, Illienko, Ivchenko, and Mykolaichuk. Symphonic scores of the Ukrainian poetic films are marked by vivid timbre characteristics, rhythmic richness, an expressive leitmotif system, and the dynamism of the unfolding of musical thought.

Author music in Ukrainian poetic cinema is presented in different stylistic dimensions and composition techniques. The features and techniques of different styles often coexist in one film, depending on the peculiarities of the plot and imaginative dramaturgy. In this regard, Hrabovskyi equated a composer's approach to creating music in films with acting:

> An actor has make-up, accessories, and costumes, which all work to change his/her image. A composer has only different styles – historical, modern, or perhaps even future styles. Thus, the composer operates with styles as characters.[15]

The closest style to the folk aesthetics of Ukrainian poetic cinema is neo-folklorism (*Shadows of the Forgotten Ancestors, The Evening on Ivan Kupalo*), permitted by Soviet censorship and relevant in the times of the Thaw. The composers used techniques of musical language stylization, appealing to general historical styles: romanticism, baroque, and classicism

(*The Stone Cross, The Evening on Ivan Kupalo*, and *The Lost Letter*) and avant-garde techniques, in particular, musique concrete (*A Spring for the Thirsty*).

Neo-folklorism of Film Music by Myroslav Skoryk

The music of *Shadows of the Forgotten Ancestors* is one of the first and brightest manifestations of Ukrainian neo-folklorism. Myroslav Skoryk, a 26-year-old Lviv composer, created a nationally expressive symphonic "poem" based on authentic Carpathian chants and instrumental motifs reinterpreted using modern compositional techniques with sharp dissonances, non-standard combination of instrumental timbres, and complex bouncy rhythm. Skoryk's symphonic episodes are harmoniously woven into the heterogeneous soundscape of the film, in which the components of authentic folklore interact in a variety of instrumental and vocal-instrumental performances, animal voices, noises of the natural environment, and sounds of church bells.

Skoryk's music characterizes primarily the images of the film's main characters Ivan and Marichka, the dynamics of their relationship, and the tragic vicissitudes of their fates. Each episode reveals the connection of the musical material with a certain folklore motif: in the part "Childhood of Ivan and Marichka" there are noticeable kolomyika rhythms, in the theme of love – intonations of sad Hutsul chants, whereas in the dramatic film scenes ("Thunderstorm and Marichka's death", "Cry of Ivan's mother", "Ivan's suffering", "Appearance of Marichka's ghost") a gloomy memorial theme occurs, in which trembita sound merges with orchestral timbres. The dramaturgical importance of Skoryk's music is also strengthened by his appeal to the principle of leitmotivism. One of the film's most prominent musical leitmotifs is related to the image of death: its tense ominous sound appears at different times in the death scenes of both characters.

Even though the music of *Shadows of the Forgotten Ancestors* is the only Skoryk's creative work in the movement of Ukrainian poetic cinema, it was a milestone in the history of the development of Ukrainian cinema. It also influenced significantly the formation of the composer's creative individuality, defining the neo-folklore style of his further works. Skoryk recalled: "Working on this film inspired me to create my original music both for this film and for the next work – the Carpathian concert for the symphony orchestra."[16] Based on music for *Shadows of the Forgotten Ancestors*, Skoryk also created the symphonic suite "Hutsul triptych".

The Diverse Musical Style Palette of Leonid Hrabovskyi

Hrabovskyi's work in the film *A Spring for the Thirsty* which appeared the next year after *Shadows of the Forgotten Ancestors* embodies a radically different aesthetic concept of the music accompaniment. In this film, for the first time in Soviet cinema, the composer appeals to

the techniques of musique concrete. This technique presupposes the use of pre-recorded ambient sounds and natural noises followed by sound processing and editing. The sound score of the film is dominated by the sounds of pottery, the rattle of iron chains, the sound of sand, splashing water, children crying, old woman swearing, etc. Musique concrete was relevant in the works of avant-garde West European and American composers of the middle of the 20th century – Pierre Schaeffer, Edgard Varese, John Cage, and Karlheinz Stockhausen. In the Soviet Union, avant-garde techniques were almost unknown, besides, the technical capacities to work with sound were extremely limited. Therefore, Hrabovskyi had to almost completely manually slow down and speed up the tempo on the tape to get the reverberation effect:

> We lived in the pre-computer era when cinema sound standards were primitive. It was not possible to add any 'tricks': reverberations, flangers, and mixes. We worked in a stairway and released there the sound, which came back with an echo, and we recorded it.[17]

A Spring for the Thirsty was banned by Soviet censorship having been in a drawer for 22 years. In 1972, Eduard Artemiev, the Russian composer, used the techniques of musique concrete in *Solaris* by Andrei Tarkovsky. Since Illienko's film was unknown at that time, Russian cinema was mistakenly considered to be the first to introduce the innovative techniques of musique concrete.

Hrabovskyi considers his second work for Ukrainian poetic cinema – the music for *The Evening on Ivan Kupalo* – to be one of his best works. Like Skoryk, he published it as an independent musical opus under the title *Symphony-Legend* (1976). This score is distinguished by the layering of various stylistic components, following the director's idea of the film, which resembles "a kind of temporal cocktail, a whimsical mixture of different epochs and cultures: here Ukrainian ritualism and classicism, Tatar-Mongols and even elements of Soviet reality are combined."[18] In Hrabovskyi's music naturally coexist features of sophisticated modernism, neo-folklorism, and stylization of distinct historical intonation practices, including Viennese classicism. Hrabovskyi himself explained his work principle in this film:

> I tried to make the music as Ukrainian as possible creating reminiscences from folk songs, sometimes partially, sometimes completely reformatted. In general, the music had to be romantic, colorful, and with a rich timbre of instruments.[19]

The film's central musical episode, which reveals the Ukrainian national character, is the adaptation of the Kupala song performed by a female choir. This song embodies the idea of the unrequited love of the film's main characters – Petro and Pydorka. The song accompanies the frames that represent ancient rituals: water and fire, burning wheels, dances around the fire, and chasing girls by boys. In this adaptation, Hrabovskyi artfully combined the techniques of folk polyphony with the principles of sonorous technique and stylization of West European musical classics. Davydenko even sees here the intonation parallels with the medieval canon by Guillaume de Machaut and the fis-moll fugue from the first volume of The Well-Tempered Clavier by

Johann Sebastian Bach. According to Davydenko, all three themes (Kupala song, canon, and fugue) have connected not only intonationally but also semantically. Bach's theme symbolizes the crucifixion figure, Machaut's theme embodies the sadness of unrequited love, whereas the Ukrainian song – the image of a drowned girl.[20]

The romantic character of Hrabovskyi's film music reveals the poeticization of Ukrainian folklore and the fairy-tale atmosphere of the plot, according to which Peter sells his soul to the devil to marry his beloved Pydorka. The sound solution of the afterlife vividly depicts mystical images and impresses with the ingenuity of the composer's timbre dramaturgy. In the film music, there are 58 orchestral voices, and each string instrument has its own part creating an expressive sonorous effect. At the same time, parody is perhaps the most characteristic feature of Hrabovskyi's music for *The Evening on Ivan Kupalo.* It unites all the different stylistic layers of the music score. Especially amusingly stylized intonations of symphonic music in the spirit of Joseph Haydn are heard in the above-mentioned scene with Catherine II passing Cossack settlements. These intonations ironically display the Russian imperial court's orientation towards West European fashion and traditions which are rapidly replaced by the stylized sound of folk musicians (Three musicians) accompanied by a parodic dance of "drunk" Cossacks. Therefore, Hrabovskyi reveals the national specificity of the music for *The Evening on Ivan Kupalo* reinterpreting Ukrainian folklore through the prism of his creative imagination and intellectual experience based on a deep knowledge of the music history of different times and cultures.

National Determinants in the Film Music of Volodymyr Huba

Volodymyr Huba is recognized as a film composer given his significant achievements in this field, in particular Ukrainian poetic cinema. Similar to the director-composer tandem of Illienko and Hrabovsky, Huba successfully collaborated with Osyka, the director of *The Stone Cross, Hetman's Kleinods*, and *Zakhar Berkut*. Each of these films is distinguished by the original music solution, especially *The Stone Cross* which reveals a special "aesthetic kinship"[21] between the composer and the director. This film is considered an artistic culmination of the Ukrainian poetic cinema wave because it concentrates a feeling of the Ukrainians' deep physical and spiritual rootedness in their native land, the memory of ancestors, and the collective national consciousness. Through music, Huba skillfully reveals the depth of the tragedy of the main character – a poor, exhausted peasant Ivan Didukh forced to leave his native land in search of a better future for his children in Canada.

The music analysis of *The Stone Cross* reveals an authentic combination of folk-national and European features of musical writing amid the dominant romantic style. The main theme that characterizes the main character is presented by a technically undemanding dreary narrative melody intonationally close to a Ukrainian romance song. Repeated performance of this theme

(first piano, then orchestral) creates an effect of monotony and symbolizes the monotony of Ivan Didukh's life: every day he plows a field in severe conditions of the mountain landscape. This theme functions as a leitmotif accompanying the main character in key dramatic episodes.

Another important leitmotif represents Didukh's disturbing premonition. This emotional state is conveyed with the help of cymbals' short beat, which the composer interprets as "a generalized mystical 'sound timbre'."[22] Both leitmotifs appear in the central scene of the film, where the character pulls a heavy stone cross to the top of the hill and installs it there at night. However, the most important musical theme of this silent episode is an expressive organ melody in the style of Bach's organ preludes and passions, which symbolically embody the Way of the Cross with distinctive intonation symbolism (the primacy of chromatic motifs alternately in descending and ascending move). This melody gradually matures from the intonations of the first theme, but later displaces it, gaining strength and covering an increasingly wide sound range. And when Didukh prays in front of the stone cross on the hill, the organ melody sounds at full volume, as if filling the night space in the frame with sound.

Apart from the organ, Huba used bells in the music of *The Stone Cross* which is another timbre associated with a religious ritual. Bells sound in the last culmination accompanying old men's singing in the church, which is associated with the burying of the deceased. The composer perceived the ringing of the bells as an act of purification:

> This is a special timbre of both loss and depth of thought... The timbres of the bells are timeless, but also native to Christian Ukraine. They can influence a person's subconsciousness: if one hears them even from a distance, he/she already enters a state of mystical concentration. They contribute to goodness, beauty, and peace.[23]

Thus, the Ukrainian national authenticity in this film's music is revealed through the interaction of musical timbres and intonations of different eras and national cultures.

CONCLUSION

Music is a significant dimension of constructing the national identity in Ukrainian poetic cinema that enhances visual symbols and is an independent medium of meaning-making. Embodying and fostering the collective cultural experience and deliberation on the Ukrainian culture, the Ukrainian poetic cinema music becomes a means of performing Ukrainian national identity that opposes the official Soviet representational strategy aimed at the marginalization of Ukrainian culture.

The national identity in Ukrainian poetic cinema is constructed through music by the use of:

- folklore of different regions of Ukraine;
- musical symbols of the Ukrainians' struggle for freedom and independence which were banned in Soviet times;
- modern trends in academic and popular music;
- interaction of Ukrainian music with motifs of other national cultures;
- national original material through the reinterpretation of European musical classics.

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NARRATIVE RESISTANCE IN KIRA MURATOVA'S CINEMA

Edgaras Bolšakovas
(Vilnius University, Lithuania)

THE DUBIOUS RECEPTION OF MURATOVA'S CINEMA

Kira Muratova (1934-2018) was a Ukrainian filmmaker born in the town of Soroca, Romania (contemporary Moldova). Her oeuvre includes such films as *Brief Encounters* (1967), *The Long Farewell* (1971), *The Asthenic Syndrome* (1989), *The Sentimental Policeman* (1992), *Chekhov's Motif* (2002), and other films that are still awaiting worldwide recognition. Muratova spent most of her life in the city of Odesa, Ukraine, fighting for the right and opportunity to realise her creative vision of the world through something she loved and knew best – directing films.

The misunderstandings and the falsehood of the recent and not-so-recent reception of Muratova's cinematic legacy are easily understandable, but not sound. In the English-language-based scholarly literature, one does find a strange tradition of reception, aligning Muratova's cinema as a part of the Russian national cinematic world. Jane Taubman, the author responsible for the first English-speaking monography on Muratova's cinema declares that "she quickly became a cult figure, revered by lovers of serious Russian film, admired for her brilliant and totally idiosyncratic approach to film-making".[1] While the quotation can give the impression that the author speaks about the expectation of the *audience,* recurrent comments[2] throughout the book clearly indicate in which cultural tradition Muratova is assigned. Yet Soviet should not mean *Russian*. The different ways various ex-Soviet countries developed after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and the different local communist party approach to state apparatus that existed in the USSR republics, indicates a different context for cinematic production and reception, which should not be put under the same umbrella.

A more interesting example of inadequate reception can be found in a more recent monograph on Ukrainian identity in cinema during the Thaw period. Joshua First declares that:

> "Nonetheless, film-makers at Odesa did not participate in the specifically Ukrainian cultural politics that pervaded Dovzhenko Studio during this period. The *Odessity* did not, like the *Dovzhenkovotsy*, consider themselves 'Ukrainian film-makers', nor did they consider their work to be emblematic of "Ukrainian national cinema". Therefore, I feel it necessary to exclude this studio from analysis in this book, believing that film production in Odesa would best be examined in relation to central studios like Mosfilm and Gorky".[3]

This statement is convenient because it clearly conveys two general mistakes that are often made in the post-colonial discourse on art regarding Eastern Europe. The first one is the presupposition that there exists a direct link between the creator and the art. This presupposition essentially means that the artist's explanation and contextualization of her art is the defining feature of an artwork. It is a modern belief, stemming from the idea of Enlightenment, that consciousness is transparent to itself. After a century of scholarly work on power politics, psychoanalysis, philosophy of difference, and other hermeneutics of suspicion, I take this presumption to be false.

The second dubious presumption regarding the contemporary reception of Muratova's work is thinking about identity in representational terms[4]. While there is a huge contemporary debate about the genesis and being of personal and national identity, and which to cover would exceed the limits of this paper, the fundamental aspect of identity that I will emphasize in this work is *performativity*. When scholars find *Ukrainiannes* in movies that depict landscapes filled with sunflowers, Carpathian Mountains, or Ukrainian national clothes[5], they are embracing the rules of identity articulation that were proposed by the totalitarian government – the communist party of the Soviet Union itself. Essentially, this concept of identity is *ethnographic*, because ethnicity, as a remnant of the bourgeois past, is supposed to function only as a historical reference in ethnographic discourse for the glorification of the present. Even to try to find more honest representations of Ukrainian ethnic identity would be to remain within the contours drawn by the Soviet apparatus. To avoid this ping-pong, the notion of identity in this work is not understood as something static, based on historical work, which has essential qualities that filmmakers should try to represent. A good example of such a rigid understanding of identity can be found in contemporary Russia, in its guide to relevant creative themes for filmmakers[6].

Instead, the narrative resistance that Muratova's films *do*, implies a processual, always-becoming, and acknowledgement-seeking conception of identity. I will not juxtapose *Brief Encounters, The Long Farewell,* and *The Asthenic Syndrome* between Ukrainianness and Sovietness, but I will try to show how Muratova's films create a different temporal and spatial understanding of identity, which conflicts with official Soviet temporality. Historicism, the scientific belief about the determined progress of historical time was not specific only to the Soviet project. This modern notion of temporality is characteristic of modernity in general[7]. But speaking in a more relevant context, a good conceptual illustration of the link between cinema and Soviet historicism can be found in one of the great directors and film theorists in the 20th century, Sergei Eisenstein's attempts to conceptualize the performativity of cinema's temporality:

> "Here is another organic secret: a leaping imagist movement from quality to quality is not a mere formula of growth but is more, a formula of development – a development that involves us in its canon, not only as a single "vegetative" unit, subordinate to the evolutionary laws of nature, but makes us, instead, a collective and social unit, consciously participating in its development. For we know that this very leap, in the interpretation of

> social phenomena, is present in those revolutions to which social development and movement of society is directed".[8]

It is interesting to see, that the performative aspect of cinema, the *making* of audience was already noticed in the beginning of cinema as art and yet came to the forefront in the theory and philosophy much later – firstly in the writings of Stanley Cavell. During the cinema of the Thaw and later epochs, the understanding of identity did get more sophisticated, but the essential narrative juxtaposition of the *personal lagging temporality* against the *collective progressive history* is one of the fundamental characteristics of the cinema in Soviet colonial republics.

I hope that by providing this context a certain contour of conceptual strategy emerges. My proposed reading of Muratova's three melodramas and the exposition of the interlink between it and Ukrainian identity will follow in advancing a threefold thesis. a) The articulation of specific, present-oriented temporality and spatiality in Muratova's films that clashes with the official Soviet Union's historicism. b) The analysis of two Cavell's proposed essential notions of cinema – skepticism and moral perfectionism. c) An explication of the performative ontology in the melodrama genre.

NARRATIVE RESISTANCE IN MURATOVA'S MELODRAMAS. BRIEF ENCOUNTERS

From the synopsis, *Brief Encounters* looks like a melodrama classically structured around a love triangle. The two female protagonists – Valentina and Nadia throughout the film try to regain and understand their relationship with the never directly seen, guitar-playing geologist Maxim. But what is actually at stake, is not the possibility of romantic love, but the being, the *presentness* of the heroines themself. Maxim is someone whose existence consists of spending time in the great outdoors and constantly being away – absent. By profession, he is a geologist – the modern and subtler version of classical land conqueror. We see him only in flashbacks, in the memories of Nadia and Valentina. The absence of Maxim, who in the female protagonist understanding is shown as an essential key to acquire presence, both in spatial and temporal meanings, and the gradual realization of the futility of this desire is the main narrative axis of the film.

The film starts with Valentina reciting over and over her speech for the local communist party committee about the contemporary state of the provincial town's sewage. Yet she mumbles, and fails to finish, the speech must be repeated again and again. What does repetition mean in its most simple terms? It means a discrepancy in the smooth flow of time. The theme of repetition and its implications for narrative continuity will be an important artistic tool in most of Muratova's films. "Forestalling time and narrative alike, repetition opposes the historicist logic

of diachronic progression and culmination."[9] The repetition of speech is accompanied by the sound of a ticking clock. But the clock works smoothly. The following scene establishes the basic motive of the whole film – the unstoppable passage of objective historical time and its dissonance with the personal, experiential time and the ensuing focus on the more present things – everyday objects. Things, objects, and even dirty dishes (in Valentina's case, the metaphysical monologue of Hamlet is changed by a monologue about washing dishes – *to wash or not to wash*) *are* more than the characters themselves. The constant detail shots of clocks, beds, newspaper headlines, walls, and other objects enjoy a haptically inspired presence while Nadia and Valentina are more absent than present.

Nadia, a waitress from a small country café comes to Valentina's apartment in a provincial town to help her with daily chores. But the true reason for her arrival is to meet the man she falls in love with – the same wild, yet charming bard Maxim. In one of the pivotal scenes, Nadia, before going to sleep, touches a mirror. A bit later, her sleep is filled with dreams of the idyllic life of Valentina and Maxim. We as the viewers know, that this is only a fantasy. In Valentina's memories, we see, that around Maxim she feels insecure, constantly analysing him and trying to tame him. Which, as the film shows, fails. Here again, we see the dynamics of absence and presence. The mirror being an analogy for Maxim, is a perfect symbol of nothingness, that through its absent qualities can reflect the presence of others. But the reflection itself does not enjoy the full substantiality of presentness – hence the flashbacks and the discrepancies of speech. The failures of communication, both in semantic and phonetic terms, a constant theme throughout the film, indicates the trouble that the heroines have with having a *voice* and participation in the process of signification.

While it can be interpreted that Muratova is influenced by that particular, Thaw era sensibility and the fashionable iconology of still-life, the juxtaposition of the human beings and objects emphasizes the two kinds of presentness:

> "The presentation of still life-like images, of both direct and oblique kind, becomes for Muratova nothing less than a method for creating two spatial systems within one sequence or often one shot, moving from a regular, realistic setting to what we might call an aesthetic space, which discards the usual hierarchies among people, objects, and the environment (such as foreground and background, or container and contained), asking instead for their equal consideration."[10].

Both women have their own way in coming to terms with their presentness, although, at the end of the film, only Nadia can be expected to join the non-hierarchical presentness of the things. In the last shot of the film, she prepares the dinner table for both Maxim and Valentina. Before leaving she snatches an orange from the perfect still-life of the table, acknowledging a more optimistic path in her future. *Brief Encounters* finds presence in the *things* it shows on the screen, while the heroines are always lacking presentness. The accomplishment of the film is not to posit the two main women between the things, *as* a thing, with all the ensuing problems of

objectivation of gender, but to quit the rules of becoming present that the contemporary society proposes.

As we know from the production history, Kira Muratova did not intend to appear in the film as the leading actress, but circumstances led her to play the bureaucrat Valentina. Remembering, that most of the actors in the film were non-professionals, I believe the reason for her to take the leading part is a simple sense of identification with the character of Valentina. In the Soviet regime, there is no essential difference between a film director and a housing bureaucrat. The communist party plans and the rest of society does the implementation. In *Brief Encounters*, the plot is superficially structured around a love triangle, but essentially it presents a story about how women struggle to be present. It touches the Cavellian theme of the interdependence between individuals while asking the question – how to live in a world where men reign yet are non-existent? Being one of the first Muratova's films, it ends with a touch of hope. Nadia, a subliminal daughter of Valentina, realizes the impossibility of being with Maxim, becomes more resolved than Valentina herself, and leaves us with the hope of leading an authentic, autonomous, and integrity-filled life.

THE LONG FAREWELL

The Long Farewell centres on Evgenia Vasilievna, a divorced woman stuck in her role as a mother and a small-time translator, who is unable to acknowledge her son – Sasha's growth. She refuses to believe that he has grown up and to allow him to leave the house. The same way her husband has left her. Evgenia's main identity, and frankly the only identity she has left, rests on being a mother. When she is approached by a sympathetic man who shows interest in her – she declines. Evgenia is a complex character, a woman who is so afraid of coming back to the multitude of perspectives in life, that she neurotically clings on being with her son. In comparison with *Brief Encounters*, *The Long Farewell* shifts from the lack of female presentness of a girlfriend or a lover to the over-presentness of the mother. This over-presentness essentially is a form of control, forcing her son Sasha into a state of absence, unacknowledgment. While a simpler depiction of their relationship could contain psychoanalytic references, here Muratova again employs the dialectics of absence and presence. The presence of Evgenia rests on the control and absence of Sasha's part. Yet while unable to acknowledge her son, she lacks confirmation of her presence from her immediate surroundings.

Both Evgenia's and Valentina's fixations rely on the male counterpart, and in both cases, the leading females are afraid of autonomy. Evgenia's presence exists only in the relationship with her son. While in *Brief Encounters* we encountered the presence allowing factor – Maxim, only through flashback, the main technical feature of emphasizing the female heroine's absence

in *The Long Farewell* is the constant use of repetition. The film is filled with narratively unmotivated, repetitive shots. The various mise-en-scenes are also repeated with no clear function, the narrative action and dialogue happen in the margins of the shot, while the camera focuses its attention on trivial things – a chat between Sasha's classmates, on a tree, or an old gardener watering the plants.

The narrative and compositional repetition we see throughout the movie creates an effect, that there is something wrong with these ordinary melodramatic events. The repeating of the repetitions suggests that the characters and the movie itself try to catch up with the flow of time. But because of the narrative tension, the objective and the subjective times are forking, making the main characters lose their presentness. In the same way Evgenia fails to be acknowledged as being present in one of the last scenes of the film when she is denied her seat in the pantomime performance, and yet as she tries to fight the situation, the public defeat comes with personal victory:

> "It is in the final scene that both the audience and Sasha first see Zhenia in her true state, utterly vulnerable, and racked with hurt pride. She symbolically removes the wig, an attribute of her falseness. By being forced to confront the silence between herself and her son she has also been forced to acknowledge her own self-deception: her son is an adult and she is no longer the merry, frivolous young woman she pretends to be. Zhenia's final acceptance of herself also brings about asea change in Sasha he decides that he cannot leave her".[11]

The film was not shown in the public cinema theatres, motivated by the lack of represented progress and blatant mood. While *Brief Encounters* ended on a less positive note, the protagonists in *The Long Farewell* do find hope in their presence. Sasha's late affection for his mother and the promise to stay home in the final scene of the movie is an acceptance of her mother instead of the pursuit of imaginal and absent reality (Sasha's fixation with viewing slides, his admiration for the father who left the family, or inability to express affection to Kartseva).

The Soviet authorities clearly saw the bleak portrayal of everyday life, its hopelessness, the lack of joy in the historical progress, and the emphasis on individual choices as something not akin to social realism. The film was forbidden to be shown publicly, Muratova's creative rights were taken away, and for the next twenty years, she filmed movies that did not have the ambition to reflect the conditions of ordinary life in Soviet Ukraine. *The Long Farewell* is often considered Muratova's best film, ingeniously presenting the despair and absence of the people found not in cinematic experiments, but on the surface of ordinary people's lives. It is a film about negating the future and accepting the presence and the reality embodied in it.

Brief Encounters and *The Long Farewell* form a cinematic diptych, researching the tragedy of human relationships and the necessary link of the Other for the I to exist. The films can be called melodramas only formally because they play with the classical conventions of the genre. We do not find any of the five essential qualities that are usually attributed to this genre[12]. One of

the reasons for the inability of an honest filmmaker to create a classical melodrama story rests on the all-pervading nature of totalitarian politics:

> "Melodrama has persisted as a dramatic mode because, in a fundamental sense, it succeeds in expressing "the truth of life," capturing a crucial existential truth, an aspect of life that affects everyone—namely, that, ultimately, we are all governed by random forces of happenstance."[13]

Where time is determined by historical laws, there can be no random forces. But an honest artist will always find a creative way to deal with obstacles. *Brief Encounters* and *The Long Farewell* can be aligned to the broader, poetic way of creating cinema that was gaining popularity in the Thaw era of the Soviet Union[14]. But the next film steps over the inclinations of the poetic-oriented filmmakers and shows what happens when laws of history cease to exist.

ONTOLOGY OF MELODRAMA

The constant reference to the dialectics of presence and absence in my reading of Muratova's films takes shape in Cavell's thought as the problem of *skepticism*. The philosophical problem of skepticism in simple terms means the negation of the ordinary.

Usually, the research on Cavell's philosophy of films starts with the exploration of the link between Cavell's thought and the fundamental influence that late Wittgenstein and his *Philosophical investigations* had on him. It is often believed that late Wittgenstein was trying to show how to *overcome* skepticism. If one stays in this line of thought, there is a risk of misreading Cavell's research on film. To emphasize a different reading on Cavell's film ontology, I would like to start with a quote that shows a different strand of influence:

> "When I learned of an essay of Heidegger's called "The Age of the World View," the mere words suggested to me, from my knowledge of Being and Time, a range of issues—that ours is an age in which our philosophical grasp of the world fails to reach beyond our taking and holding views of it, and we call these views metaphysics."[15]

In the referenced essay, Heidegger argues that the state of contemporary Western civilization has achieved a tragic point, where the fundamental understanding of the world is reduced to a *worldview*. The skeptical (in Heidegger's vocabulary *nihilistic*) result of this standpoint means, that to acquire the worldview, and to base the ontology of the world on a human perspective, means to lose the world – to be in a state of *weltloss.* For Heidegger, this contemporary state is consistent with modernity's obsessive search for certainty and the metaphysics of presence that manifested itself from the beginning of philosophy – namely Plato itself. Hence the title of the book, *The World Viewed*, which already gives a hint, about the forthcoming Cavell's aspirations in thinking about cinema.

Cavell's main ontological thesis about cinema is that film is a *moving image of skepticism*. Because of its photographic nature, cinema articulates our ontological condition – being in present yet absent reality. The modern doubt on reality not only made us lose our belief in reality itself, but without it, we lose our belief in the existence of ourselves. The way to treat this modern problem, according to Cavell is to move towards a new moral philosophy.

The two Cavell's books, which deal more with philosophy *in* film rather than philosophy *on* film – *The Comedy of Remarriage* (1981) and *Contesting Tears*: *Hollywood Melodrama of the Unknown Woman* (1996) are concerned with the same problem yet offers two different situations. In the comedies of remarriage, the female protagonist does achieve a certain acknowledgment through the transformation of her relationship with her husband and the social milieu, while in the melodramas of *Contesting Tears*, the marriage and the relationship with the husband and the surroundings are not willing or incapable to transform to meet the heroines need for personal growth and integrity, meaning that the heroine is denied acknowledgment. Ultimately, the movies analysed in this pair of books depict various ways of struggling towards what Cavell calls *moral perfectionism*. The films discussed in the former deal with the various ways a woman protagonist does find means and companionship in the pursuit of some state of moral perfectionism, while the latter explicates the ways, where four analysed films show what happens when they reach for moral perfectionism is denied by the surrounding world and the possible positive outcomes of such failure. A natural question arises – what is moral perfectionism?

By searching for a unique, American understanding of what makes a good life, Cavell brings his attention to the founding fathers of a forgotten moral philosophy in addition to utilitarianism and deontology. Viewing these two moral conceptions as imported, specifically European systems of thought, Cavell formulates a theory of moral philosophy by refocusing on the writings of two famous American transcendentalists – Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau. Moral perfectionism emphasizes the constant, yet never fully achievable growth of an individual's integrity, the individual's ability to create conditions for socialization, and responsibility for one's being. While the "European" moral philosophy emphasizes the consequences of moral action or the necessary duty of morality, perfectionism strives for the goal of becoming a better version of oneself. But this goal is never achievable – a person exists within society, and the change of the person changes the fabric of society and *vice versa*. It means, that perfectionism is deeply anti-foundationalist – there is no final goal. Or to put it differently, moral perfectionism is the journey in which a person befriends the world and others:

> "Perfectionism is the province not of those who oppose justice and benevolent calculation, but of those who feel left out of their sway, who feel indeed that most people have been left, or leave themselves out, of their sway. It is a perception, or an intuition, that Emerson articulates as most men living in "secret melancholy" and that Thoreau a few years later transcribes as "the mass of men liv[ing] lives of quiet desperation."[16]

Putting aside the chauvinistic understanding of humanity, I quote this excerpt in length for the temporal implications this passage presents. Here, and through other Cavell's investigations in the dealings with moral perfectionism, a modern struggle with futurity appears. The men living in quiet desperation, or the women in the melodramas of *Unknown Woman* deal with a sense of time being out of joint, of not participating in the dealings, and sphere of presence. But the present time here, as in general modern understanding, acquires its meaning and worth only through comparison with the future. In this sense, the moral perfectionism theory of acquiring presence implicates the aligning of the present with the path of the future: "The first theme is that the human self—confined by itself, aspiring toward itself—is always becoming, as on a journey, always partially in a further state".[17]

Through contemplation, realisation, or action, the heroes of moral perfectionism acquire presence and participate in the affairs of the present by acquiring the possibility to influence the desirable future outcomes. In a negative situation – denied by their milieu, the future they demand is not achievable and we are shown the following failure of becoming present. A quality melodrama deals with the tragic failings of acknowledging the heroine's presence and the main tactic these films show in coping with this failure is sacrificing her future for the future of the other – almost always her children.

In the huge scope of melodramatic production, there is room for qualitative differentiation. In Muratova's case, *Brief Encounters*, *The Long Farewell,* and especially *The Asthenic Syndrome* form a triptych which in my reading, provides a different phenomenological experience than the bulk of most melodramatic production, including the quality ones that Cavell interprets in *The Contesting Tears*. What do I mean here by phenomenological experience? Cavell's provided ontological notions show that the main function of cinema is to *defamiliarize* the familiar – to explicate the always implicit ordinary conditions for communication between human beings and the reach for moral well-being which in Cavell's case takes the name of moral perfectionism. The shaking up of the habitual phenomenological intentions is described by Cavell as:

> "It is in answering these questions concerning the procedures of traditional epistemology that we ought to arrive at a more visible appreciation of three phenomenologically striking features of the conclusion which characterizes skepticism: the sense of *discovery* expressed in the conclusion of the investigation; the sense of the conflict of this discovery with our ordinary "beliefs"; the *instability* of the discovery, the theoretical conviction it inspires vanishing under the pressure (or distraction) of our ordinary commerce with the world." [18]

Cavell speaks here about the procedures and the phenomenological results of the ordinary language philosophy. But there is no reason to declare, that the same phenomenological *performativity* cannot be done by cinema. Considering, that the journey of moral perfectionism starts with grasping and taking responsibility for one's life, it should not be shocking to believe in cinema's performative power:

> "The persistence of this feature of metamorphosis indicates the cause of these genres as among the great subjects of the medium of film, since a great property of the medium is its violent transfiguration of creatures of flesh and blood, its recreation of them, let us say, in projecting and screening them."[19]

Here Cavell indicates a simple yet fundamental feature of cinema – the ability to change reality. In this case melodramas, by articulating the ordinary conditions of acknowledgment by others and acceptance of the world, invites the female audience to pursue moral perfectionism, to change their lives. By showing a different status of possibilities, of the *future*, the present can be changed.

It would not be a violent reading if we would localize *Brief Encounters* and *The Long Farewell* in the broader, modern search for Cavellian moral perfectionism. But in the case of Muratova's *Asthenic Syndrome*, the simple division between present and future is not that evident. As I noted above, Muratova cannot show a perfectionist understanding of personal development concerning future possibilities. In a totalitarian regime, the distinction between private and public does not exist. When the public world is destroyed – as is shown in *The Asthenic Syndrome,* people are not given back the private sphere. They are left in a nihilistic void. In Muratova's milieu – the Soviet Union and Soviet Ukraine, the present time and the personal experience of temporality had always to be sacrificed for the future, for the objective, determined time. When these historicist notions fade, the philosophy of moral perfectionism becomes impossible to achieve.

THE ASTHENIC SYNDROME

The usual reading of Muratova's *The Asthenic Syndrome* is that it is a film that reflects the ending of the Soviet empire and the uncertainties of the future. Keeping in the tradition of the film's controversial nature, I proposed throughout the article that *The Asthenic Syndrome* is a melodrama. Or to be more precise, a metamelodrama. The reason for this is that I find a fundamental conceptual change in the ability of the film's characters to acquire presence.

The films that Muratova filmed between *The Long Farewell* and *The Asthenic Syndrome* are less concerned with moral perfectionism than the examined ones here – reacting to the harsh criticism from *Goskino* officials and the creative ban Muratova received, these four films align more with the casual Soviet Ukraine production. While they can be seen as experimentation in style, strongly influenced by the success of Sergei Parajonov and the ornamentalism found in his films, the films present themselves to the contemporary viewer as certain compliance with the Soviet film system. The scandal following the release of *The Long Farewell* crippled Muratova's creative possibilities, so a certain loyalty to the values of social realism had to be shown.

The Asthenic Syndrome can be divided into two parts – the short introductory film, which works as an allusion to previous Muratova's melodramas, where the main heroine Natasha loses her husband and simultaneously loses the structure of the world. She aims to bring back her ordinary life by sleeping with a first found bum on the street, which fails miserably. Like *Brief Encounters* and *The Long Farewell,* the beginning is filmed in black-and-white. But as the film continues, we are shown that the beginning of the film is just a *film*. And this puts the viewer on a different, *meta cinematic* grounds. The most defining feature of meta-cinema is that it breaks the inertia of suspension of disbelief and asks the viewer to reflect on what is she seeing on screen.

The audience in the film quits the cinema disappointed, in rage, mumbling about the lack of beauty and comfort in contemporary cinema. The second part of the film is about Nikolai – a young man suffering from asthenic syndrome. When Nikolai is overwhelmed, he passes out and starts sleeping. Both Natasha and Nikolai are unable to cling to the world, to be present – for a simple reason of the inhumanness of the world, of the world not existing. The film is not about the loss of political order and societal structure, even if the structure is totalitarian, but about the impossibility of the world. And the impossibility of the world, by implication means the impossibility of selfhood. *The Asthenic syndrome* is not about epochal change, but about the fragments of the world that the fall of the Soviet system had created. The virtues that people in the Soviet Union thought made them better than the regime – human dignity, social bonds, empathy, and reach for beauty, were only an illusion. The societal structure existed mostly because of fear of punishment. In *Glasnost,* when the fear became irrelevant, the true status of human integrity can be seen. For Nikolai, this image is worse than death – hence his inability to continue to live, and his body's decision towards metaphorical death. The film works as a direct opposition to Cavell's notion of moral perfectionism, showing the finitude of human choice. The responsibility of selfhood has limits in acknowledging the world, in the sense, that the world must be not fundamentally corrupt for it to be acknowledged and accepted.

The Asthenic Syndrome is the final part in Muratova's trilogy of melodramas because it speaks about the world failing to acknowledge other human beings. It is the most personal Muratova's film, where Muratova's position is concerned not about the place of the lover or the mother in the Soviet system, but her own existential experience as a film director. We can see it in the clear notion of the director's disappointment and the naivety and conformism of the audience. In essence*, The Asthenic Syndrome* confronts the idea of the universal self, the construction of always present subjectivity. The film provides an alternative, skeptical view on the existence of the selfhood. For Cavell, this ordinary self is the ground for adequate expression, acknowledgment, ethics, and politics. The temporality of moral perfectionism, the opening of the future for the possibility of presence for Muratova, and the decaying world depicted in *The Asthenic Syndrome* are impossible. Cavell believes, that by saving the selfhood, the world can be restored. Muratova, on the contrary, in *The Asthenic Syndrome* shows, that without the world,

there is no self. And the world that exists no more, that was built in the past by fundamentally relying on the promise of the future, is left with fragmented temporality where the present can be defined as the *nostalgia for the future*[20].

CONCLUSION

The event of modernity fundamentally changed the way we phenomenologically structure time. Before modernity, the normative aspect of the meaning of time was linked to the past. The divine creation of the world had happened before, so to seek order in the present meant to align the present with the past through various performances – ritual, celebration, study of ancient texts, sacrifice. Modernity offered an alternative vision in the ontology of change – the idea of progress was introduced; the spread of technology increased the acceleration of time, resulting in a reorientation of the present towards the future. The Soviet Union, a self-proclaimed child of the Enlightenment, took these notions of the future in the present to their extreme limits. The difference between the future and the present became a feature of the past. The metaphysical doctrine of Soviet historicism, the desire for the end of history, and the deterministic notion of the movement of time, in which the present is the future, although in reality was never achieved, had to be articulated through various narrative practices. One of these glorified practices was cinema. Kira Muratova and her three melodramas, as I interpret them in this paper, refuse to sacrifice the present for the glory of the future. In *Brief Encounters* and *The Long Farewell*, the present and presence itself is something to be achieved, something her heroines lack. Muratova shows in her films that without the temporal present, there is no spatial present, no *presence*. While Cavell's thoughts on cinema have great merit in unfolding the narrative, temporal, and performative tensions in Muratova's melodramas, they lack an understanding of the primacy of politics in individual life. *The Asthenic Syndrome* can be read as a critique of the Cavellian moral perfectionism, emphasizing the primacy of political liberty before individual freedom. For Cavell, personal autonomy is an unreflected ontological notion from which a stable and democratic political way of life may or may not emerge. In the triptych analysed above, Muratova shows, based on her first-hand experience in a totalitarian regime, that only a political realm that aspires to liberty is the basis for individual autonomy. It is the established forms of political life that create the space for personal autonomy, the presence of the individual, and not the other way round. Herewith I find the link between Muratova's work and Ukrainian identity. Muratova's heroines seek recognition, and her cinema tries to *create* the conditions that are lacking in the present order of things. On a larger and far more tragic scale, Ukraine is doing the same as it enters the third year of fighting against the brutal Russian military invasion.

[1] Jane Taubman, *Kira Muratova*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2005) 6.
[2] Jane Taubman, *Kira Muratova*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2005) 8, 77.
[3] Joshua First, *Ukrainian Cinema: Belonging and Identity During the Soviet Thaw*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2015) 6.
[4] An important but nonconceptual note: a third reason for the various misunderstandings is the simple lack of empirical experience with Eastern and Central Europe. Even in the context of propaganda films, Richard Taylor's seminal study of Nazi and Soviet film propaganda *Film Propaganda* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1976), in which one of the films the author discusses is probably the most vulgar example of Soviet film propaganda - *The Fall of Berlin* (1946). Tayler identifies three Soviet soldier protagonists - two Russians and one soldier from Central Asia - who march in and occupy Berlin throughout the film. But he fails to distinguish between the two "Russian" soldiers. Anyone who has heard Ukrainian language knows that the second protagonist is not a Russian but a Ukrainian. It may sound trivial, but the narrative during the film shows that both the Ukrainian and the Central Asian soldier die for the glorious expansion of the Soviet empire, and the only protagonist who is left alive is the Russian soldier, Aleksei. An accurate and prescient depiction of the fantasies of the contemporary Russian power elite.
[5]Joshua First, *Ukrainian Cinema: Belonging and Identity During the Soviet Thaw*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2015) 9,20,78.
[6]https://culture.gov.ru/press/news/minkultury_rossii_opredelilo_prioritetnye_temy_gospodderzhki_kinoproizvodstva_v_2023_godu/
[7] Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: On The Semantics of Historical Time,* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 9-26.
[8] Sergei Eisenstein, *Film Form, Essays in Film Theory,* (New York: HBJ Book, 1977) 126.
[9] Tom Roberts, ''Simply an anachronism': repetition and meaning in Kira Muratova's Chekhovian Motifs", in *Studies in Russian & Soviet Cinema* (2013), 41. doi: 10.1386/srsc.7.1.39_1
[10] Lida Oukaderova, *The Cinema of Soviet Thaw. Space, Materiality, Movement,* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2017), 158.
[11] Helen Ferguson, Silence and Shrieks: Language in Three Films by Kira Muratova in *The Slavonic and East European Review* vol. 83, no. 1, (2005), 58.
[12] Ben Singer, *Melodrama and Modernity,* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 44-48.
[13] Ben Singer, *Melodrama and Modernity,* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 52.
[14] Elizabeth A. Papazian, Ethnography, Incongruity, History: Soviet Poetic Cinema in *The Russian Review*, vol. 82, (2023), 68–90. https://doi.org/10.1111/russ.12400
[15] Stanley Cavell, *The World Viewed: An Ontology of Film*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), XXIII.
[16] Stanley Cavell, *Cities of Words*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 24-25.
[17] Stanley Cavell, *Cities of Words*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 26.
[18] Stanley Cavell, *The Claim of Reason: Wittgenstein, Skepticism, Morality, and Tragedy,* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979) 129.
[19] Stanley Cavell, *Contesting Tears: The Hollywood Melodrama of an Unknown Woman*, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1996), 7.
[20] Анатолій Круглашов, Україна та Європейський Союз: ностальгія за майбутністю, *Політичні студії*, (2010), (4), 40-49.

ON THE POETICS OF CINEMATIC INFLUENCE: GROSSMAPPING GESTURES IN THE FILMS OF KIRA MURATOVA AND EVA NEYMANN

Irina Schulzki (University of Hagen)

KIRA MURATOVA AND THE CHALLENGES TO UKRAINIAN NATIONAL CINEMATIC IDENTITY AND THE (INTER)NATIONAL CANON

In discussions about national identity and cultural heritage, a spectrum of contested perspectives and concepts often emerges. The nature of national identity – whether innate, primordial, inherited, or imagined and therefore socially constructed, or acquired, chosen and thus subject to change and overlaps – is a topic of continuous discussion.[1] In contemporary Ukraine, amid the protracted Russian-Ukrainian war, this inquiry assumes existential significance as the nation grapples with the daunting task of articulating its identity and communicating its essence to the global community while simultaneously fighting for survival on multiple fronts. In this pursuit of identity, Ukrainians are striving to break free from the imperial, Russo-centric legacy while withstanding the current military aggression of the country's neighbouring empire, as the latter not only lays claim to parts of Ukrainian territories but also contests the very existence of a distinct Ukrainian culture, language, and ethnicity. These challenges unfold against the backdrop of globalisation and mediatisation, prompting a reevaluation of conventional narratives of national identity and nationalism and shifting towards transnationalism, multiculturalism, inclusion, and diversity.

As per Benedict Anderson's prominent assumption that the social psyche is shaped by the power of print media, cinema might be more adept at constructing and nurturing a sense of national unity and belonging by evoking affective responses in viewers. The risk associated with affective collective identifications lies in the potential for institutional control and manipulation that modern apparatuses entail. In the Foucauldian vein, Giorgio Agamben has notably attributed to apparatuses, including cinema, "the capacity to capture, orient, determine, intercept, model, control, or secure the gestures, behaviours, opinions, or discourses of living beings."[2]

In light of what is said above, this article addresses the unique Ukrainian cultural space of Odesa, a city traditionally viewed as anything but homogeneous regarding the language, religion, origins, and ethnicity of its inhabitants and cultural bearers. The Odesite

multiculturalism, which teeters on the brink of self-mythologising[3] and cultural superiority,[4] presents an excellent case for probing the complexity of identificatory processes, where the concepts of "identity" and "nation" are seen as perpetually evolving entities subject to continual negotiation and reformulation. These dynamics – crucial for the emerging civic notion of Ukrainian identity and reflected in Odesa's long cinematic culture – contest rigid constructs of essentialism, hierarchisation, and normativity.

This article focuses on two female directors, Kira Muratova and Eva Neymann, representing two generations of filmmakers whose films were predominantly produced at the Odesa Film Studio. While their national identities might not be straightforward, I argue that their filmographies have played a significant role in shaping and advancing Ukrainian national cinema and its canon. Despite assertions by certain scholars that filmmakers from Odesa did not intend their work to represent "Ukrainian national cinema",[5] this article advocates for a versatile and nuanced understanding of national cinema in line with the diverse identity of Odesa. Furthermore, both directors epitomise *auteur*, or more appropriately, *autrice* cinema, consciously resisting ideological and aesthetic constraints. In this context, it is pertinent to introduce the term "intercultural cinema", a concept coined by Laura U. Marks to delineate experimental film styles that reflect the experience of navigating between multiple cultural knowledge systems. Marks explicates that "[i]ntercultural indicates a context that cannot be confined to a single culture. It also suggests movement between one culture and another [...]."[6]

Kira Muratova (1934-2018) was born in Soroki, Romania (now Moldova), into a bilingual family – to a Romanian-Jewish mother and Russian father. She graduated from the world famous VGIK film school in Moscow, where she specialised in filmmaking, and following her first marriage to the Ukrainian director Oleksander Muratov, she relocated to Odesa, dedicating her entire career to making films in the Russian language and collaborating with artists from diverse backgrounds, including Ukrainian, Russian, Jewish, Roma, and others. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Muratova remained in Odesa, becoming a notable embodiment of intercultural negotiation, appropriation, and re-attribution between Russia and Ukraine. Yet, she seemingly maintained a poised detachment from these debates, appearing aloof and unaffected by their sway. Furthermore, Muratova has been predominantly acknowledged by film scholars as a director who transcends specific national boundaries. Her distinctive film style, unbridled freedom of expression, and intentional nonconformist self-positioning across her entire artistic trajectory led to years of artistic persecution during the Soviet era and culminated once in her dismissal from the Odesa Film Studio. Even after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, her unwavering defiance against any form of ideological and aesthetic conformism allowed her to resist emerging essentialist and hegemonic categorisations. Throughout this period, now within independent Ukraine and as an integral part of its cinematic landscape, Muratova created most of her films, maintaining her distinct artistic integrity.

However, Muratova's association with Ukrainian cinema has recently been vehemently rejected. Thus, film scholar Yuri Shevchuk characterises Muratova after 1991 as a prominent figure in what he terms "cinematic depopulation" and "cultural aggression" against Ukraine.[7] This perspective suggests that certain filmmakers contribute to erasing a colonised nation's identity, language, and culture from its historical territory, replacing it with imperial culture, and regarding the territory as an extension of their own living space. According to Shevchuk, Muratova's film work (and Neymann's too, as Muratova's cinematic heir) "depopulates Ukraine most consistently" by reproducing Russian narratives within Ukraine, "devoid of any meaningful civilisational presence of Ukrainians and represented on the screen as an essentially Russian ethnoscape."[8] He remarks that Ukrainian voices and the Ukrainian language are scarcely heard in her works and when they are, they represent the voices of the socially marginalised.

While Shevchuk's critique raises several valid concerns, considering that language can indeed serve as a sign of collective belonging, it may still oversimplify the heterogeneity of the Ukrainian filmscape, specifically represented by Odesa's cinema and Muratova's film work.[9] I would argue that neither the colonisation nor assimilation of one culture by the other prevails in her films; instead, there is a productive intercultural intertwining, in Marks' terms. Additionally, her films primarily revolve around the marginalised, the excluded, and the neurodiverse, irrespective of ethnicity or language. While her characters may speak Russian and draw upon Russian culture, among other things, their marginalised status contradicts the idea of colonisation since hierarchies disintegrate in the decentred and ex-centric cinematic realm that she creates. Furthermore, the use of the Russian language in Muratova's films goes beyond imperial and colonising gestures. The dialogues create endless circulations of clichés, ranging from socialist rhetoric to snippets of Russian literature, trivial set expressions, and fragments of popular songs.[10] Characters transform into impersonal speaking automata, precluding the establishment of points of identification and, thus, destabilising power relations. The cumulative effect of language clichés and repetitions is strikingly evident – language, far from serving as a channel for ethical and power articulations, is laid bare as a meaningless, if not absurd, realm of human (in)actions.

Lastly, following the Russian annexation of Crimea and the ensuing war in Donbas in 2014, Muratova declared publicly and unequivocally her support for Ukraine, effectively affiliating herself with the Ukrainian nation and Ukrainian cinema.[11] Notably, the overwhelming majority of Ukrainians, regardless of their primary language, identify themselves as part of a civic community bound by shared sentiments of national belonging, attachment to the land, and allegiance to the state. This collective sense of unity embraces a broader, inclusive concept of national identity in contrast to a narrow, ethno-linguistic understanding.[12] Thus, it is unsurprising that Muratova identifies with this model of civic nationhood and intercultural identity.

It is just as important to note that all of Muratova's films, like the films analysed in this article, were produced before the onset of the Russo-Ukrainian war in 2014. This moment is

particularly significant as it precedes the turning point when the questions of national identity, including the paramount role of the Ukrainian language and cultural heritage, become particularly pressing concerns – arguably, a matter entwined with the very survival and resilience of the nation amidst the ongoing Russian aggression.

The question of canonisation in relation to Muratova is as equally complex and contradictory as the exploration of her national identity. After a contentious collaboration with a French production company on *The Sentimental Policeman* (*Chutlyvyi militsioner / Chuvstvitel'nyi militsioner,* 1992), the first film Muratova made in a newly independent Ukraine, her subsequent films faced limited international theatrical releases, being showcased primarily at sporadic screenings and film festival retrospectives. Muratova's leading expert, French film historian Eugénie Zvonkine, attributes this lack of interest to the apparent non-political nature of her films, a stark contrast to the political backdrop through which she gained initial recognition in the West during perestroika. Furthermore, her films are replete with 'insider' references to Soviet and post-Soviet culture, employ dialects and utilise the mix of non-literary Russian and Ukrainian language (so-called *surzhik*). These elements present a challenge for viewers unfamiliar with the languages or the regional cultural contexts. Such complexity may account for the attention her cinema garners among Western scholars rather than film critics and, even less so, the audience.[13]

In 2020, Tilda Swinton highlighted a glaring omission in the international film community by pointing out the lack of commemoration for Kira Muratova, who passed away in 2018, and urged for the long-overdue inclusion of her legacy in the global cinematic canon. Swinton emphasised that Muratova's "[e]pic, rebarbative, wildly chaotic, furious, visionary films have earned her a revered place in the international – intergalactic – canon for her work of five decades. It's high time she made it over the wider wire."[14] Elena Gorfinkel, an American film scholar of Ukrainian descent, echoes Swinton's stance: "Muratova's path toward inclusion in what Tilda Swinton calls the 'intergalactic canon' of cinematic masters has long been deterred by a lack of wider appraisal and exhibition of her work beyond Eastern Europe, despite resounding critical, scholarly, and cinephilic acclaim."[15]

However, enshrining Muratova within a canon inherently clashes with the essence of her unconventional standing and artistic philosophy. As Toril Moi claims in her seminal work *Sexual/Textual Politics* (1988), canonisation by itself is an inherently prescriptive and, therefore, repressive practice.[16] The hierarchical structuring, exclusionary principles, and adherence to normative ideologies, prevalent in traditional canon formation, stand in stark contrast to Muratova's ethos, threatening to impose conventional standards on her oeuvre and curtail its idiosyncrasy.

The word "canon" possibly derives from Ancient Greek *κᾰνών,* denoting "any straight rod or bar; rule; standard of excellence," or from *κάννα* "reed."[17] According to the Merriam-

Webster dictionary, to canonise means "to declare (a deceased person) an officially recognised saint" or "to treat as illustrious, preeminent, or sacred."[18] I argue that the strength inherent in Muratova's cinema lies precisely in its de-canonising impulse, pivotal in forging an anti-hegemonic canon capable of destabilising prevailing power structures. It becomes imperative to confront and deconstruct the canon, and actively engage in *de*canonisation. One should also be aware of the homophony between "canon" and "cannon", framing the process of decan(n)onisation as a pacifist endeavour akin to a procedure of disarmament and demilitarisation. In the act of decan(n)onisation, one can discern a pacifist gesture reminiscent of Muratova's known ethos.

REPUDIATION AND APOLOGIA OF CANON.

In discussions surrounding canons, the implicit reference commonly pertains to the Western canon, encapsulating visual arts, literature, philosophy, and other spheres. The criticism directed at the Western canon from diverse intellectual quarters such as feminists, deconstructivists, and critical theorists have been notably incisive. These critiques purposefully seek to confront the inherent ideological biases and limitations embedded within the Western canon. Notably, Elena Gorfinkel elucidates the contentiousness of the canon discourse in her essay titled "Against Lists" published in 2019. Gorfinkel assertively posits the stance that the mere compilation of lists remains futile in the quest for engendering new canons, particularly ones that are inclusive of lost narratives of women, queer, trans, Black, Latinx, global south, decolonial, and anti-colonial filmmakers. "Who will ask Barbara Hammer, Kathleen Collins, *Kira Muratova*, and Sara Gómez for their lists?", Gorfinkel enquires.[19] Gorfinkel's impassioned articulation dismantles the ostensible claims of lists, deeming them as anti-historical constructs fixated upon their temporal moment, even ensnared within the narrow ambits of contemporaneity. She denounces their tendency to reinforce entrenched predilections and consolidate and reaffirm the tastes of the epoch. Furthermore, Gorfinkel elucidates how lists, in their essence, operate as a form of intellectual colonisation, resulting in an impoverishment of the imagination.

> Lists pretend to make a claim about the present and the past, but are anti-historical, obsessed with their own moment, with the narrow horizon and tyranny of contemporaneity. They consolidate and reaffirm the hidebound tastes of the already heard.
> Lists colonise the mind and impoverish the imagination.[20]

An opposing stance within the canon discourse finds its prominent voice in the seminal work, an elegiac ode to the Western literary canon, as the title suggests, by literary scholar Harold Bloom.[21] Central to this book is Bloom's contention that the process of canonisation is not solely

borne from contemporary ideologies or critical reactions to an artist's oeuvre. Instead, there are two determining forces: firstly, the "aesthetic strength" or "aesthetic dignity"[22] inherent within a specific work, and secondly, the profound influence exerted by preceding authors upon their successors.

Concerning the first aspect, Bloom believes that *"[o]ne breaks into the canon only by aesthetic strength, which is constituted primarily of an amalgam: mastery of figurative language, originality, cognitive power, knowledge, exuberance of diction".*[23] This distinct originality, alternately termed "strangeness", or "weirdness", is characterised as something that "cannot be assimilated, or that so assimilates us that we cease to see it as strange. […] When you read a canonical work for the first time you encounter *a stranger, an uncanny startlement* rather than a fulfillment of expectations".[24] This unconventional originality, Bloom contends, comprises a mosaic of elements that form the bedrock of aesthetic strength, propelling an oeuvre into the revered realm of the canon. As for the second facet, the connection between the canon and the concept of influence, Bloom's analysis increasingly gravitates towards Freudian ideas.[25] He notes that canons, too, are "achieved anxieties".[26] In essence, literature and art do not aim to console or alleviate our anguish; instead, they expose us to what Bloom – arguing against Barthes – labels as "high unpleasure,"[27] a force looming and poised to contaminate with its distinctive style.[28] In another context, he characterises poetic influence as a manifestation of melancholy.[29]

In *A Map of Misreading* (1975) and *The Anxiety of Influence* (1997), Bloom propounds a perspective on the study of influence, transcending the confines of mere source study,[30] "the history of ideas," or "the patterning of images".[31] Poetic influence further eschews a simplistic focus on verbal resemblances between poets[32] and dismisses the notion of a mere transmission of images and ideas from predecessors to successors. Instead, influence signifies the absence of standalone texts, giving way solely to relationships between them. These relationships hinge upon a critical act – a "misreading" or "misprision" – that one poet enacts upon another.[33] Through this lens of revisionism and belatedness, an author is able to surmount anxiety and carve out a distinctive voice in relation to their predecessors. Bloom outlines six phases of progressive deviation from the influential Other – *clinamen, tessera, kenosis, demonisation, askesis, and apophrades*.[34] The ultimate and most significant phase, *apophrades*, or "the return of the precursors" stands precisely for the figure of influence, which Blooms understands primarily as a trope by likening it to the rhetorical figure of metalepsis, or transumption.[35] Bloom elucidates *apophrades* as a profound juncture where the new poem's achievement imbues it with an uncanny semblance to the precursor's distinctive work, almost as if the later poet had authored the precursor's most characteristic work.[36] In other words, the notion of *apophrades* encapsulates the internalisation of the precursor, akin to the concepts of introjection in psychoanalysis and allusiveness in art.[37]

EVA NEYMANN: A MURATOVA'S SUCCESSOR?

Muratova unquestionably holds an iconic stature within Soviet and Ukrainian cinema, although recent discourse has featured critical voices asserting that Muratova, more than anyone else, epitomised the Russian colonisation of post-Soviet Ukrainian cinema.[38] This article is not intended to confirm or contest Muratova's rank in the cinematic hierarchy. Instead, aligning with Bloom's insights, it seeks to explore the principal structural elements that facilitate inclusion within a canon – be it national or global ("intergalactic" as Tilda Swinton terms it). As shown, Bloom's perspective underscores, on the one hand, the enduring significance of artistic merit and "strangeness"[39] and, on the other hand, the interplay of literary lineage in the formulation of canonical works. I demonstrate how Ukrainian canonical film tradition, as represented by Muratova, is shaped by the circulation of images and their appropriation, citation, refiguration, misprision, and various engagements found within the works of her successor.

Muratova openly acknowledged the influence of global filmmakers like Charlie Chaplin and Federico Fellini alongside several Soviet filmmakers. The influences on her film work span beyond her VGIK teacher Sergei Gerasimov, extending to figures like Sergei Parajanov, a film director and artist with Armenian and Georgian background, one of the founders of Ukrainian poetic cinema, and Rustam Khamdamov, a Soviet and Russian director and artist of Uzbek origins.[40] When discussing Muratova's influence on other directors, the conversation inevitably confronts the widely held belief that her style is so unique that identifying those influenced by her work is exceedingly complex, if not altogether impossible. However, in the quest for Kira Muratova's 'disciples', several names are frequently mentioned, including the Russian director and actress Renata Litvinova, along with Ukrainian filmmakers Eva Neymann and Oleksandr Shapiro.[41] In the ensuing discussion, my attention will be directed toward Neymann's feature films, exploring the ways in which her film aesthetics draw from Muratova's visual repertoire, whether done consciously or through subconscious assimilation.

Eva Neymann [Ukrainian: Єва Нейман, Yeva Neiman] was born in 1974 in Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine, but she has been living in Germany since 1993, where she graduated from the German Film and Television Academy Berlin in 2006. Her filmography encompasses three short films,[42] four documentaries (all but one produced in Germany),[43] and three full-length feature films, all produced in Ukraine by Odesa Film Studio in the Russian language. These are: *By the River* (*Bilia richky / U reki*, 2007), *A House with a Turret* (*Budynok z vezhkoiu / Dom s bashenkoi*, 2011), and *The Song of Songs* (*Pisnia pisen' /Pesn' pesnei*, 2015). In my analysis, I concentrate on Neymann's first two feature films. Both are adaptations of short stories written by Friedrich Gorenstein (Fridrikh Gorenshtein), the Soviet Ukrainian prosaist and screenwriter, known for scripting Andrei Tarkovsky's, Rezo Esadze's and Ali Khamraev's films, among other works.

Neymann's most recent film, *The Song of Songs*, pays tribute to another luminary of Yiddish literature, Sholem Aleichem (Solomon Rabinovitch), and, in many ways, inherits the aesthetic traditions of Ukrainian poetic cinema.

Concerning her first two feature films, critics suggest that Neymann is an observant admirer of Soviet auteur cinema from the 1970s and 1980s, mainly drawing inspiration from the works of Aleksei German Sr., Andrei Tarkovsky, and specifically, Kira Muratova. However, Ukrainian critic Aksinya Kurina contests this view, asserting that linking Neymann's work to Muratova's is merely wishful thinking on the part of critics and enthusiasts of Muratova, who seek to anoint successors to her legacy.[44] Neymann adamantly dismisses any suspicion of being an epigone, a sentiment understandable in light of the Bloomian "anxiety of influence"[45] that any artist worries about vis-à-vis their precursors. Sheemphasises,

> I do not view myself a direct disciple of Kira Muratova or 'Kira Muratova-2' or a complete newcomer, as some journalists claim. It's simply not true! [...] She did contribute to my advancement! And I am immensely thankful to her! I learnt from my teachers in Berlin [...] and from watching classic films […]. In 1999, I had the chance to intern with Kira Muratova during the production of the film *Minor People*.[46]

Yet, in the end credits of *Freeze, Fade Away* and *By the River*, she thanks Kira Muratova for her support. In another instance, she acknowledges the influence of Fellini, a figure widely regarded as having directly impacted Muratova's work. Neymann recounts,

> I watched Fellini's *Amarcord* when I was twelve, and it left a lasting impression on me. Would Fellini have ever imagined that someone in Zaporizhzhia, somewhere in Ukraine, would watch his film and start dreaming about making their own films?"[47]

The fear of lacking originality and being unable to create something new persistently looms over artists as the anxiety of influence, Bloom asserts, is as powerful as inescapable.[48] However, per Bloomian logic, greater denial often translates to increased influence, since denial functions as a defence mechanism against the anxiety of influence.

Several discernible, if not surface-level, parallels between Muratova and Neymann are evident: Firstly, both directors filmed their works primarily in Odesa, although the city is never explicitly named in either of their films.[49] Instead, they depict an indistinct, predominantly Russophone city or town far from the metropolitan centre. This ambiguity in space and time stands as a shared characteristic between both filmmakers.[50] Secondly, in both Muratova's and Neymann's films, we encounter recurring Ukrainian and Russian actors, namely Nina Ruslanova, Sergei Bekhterev, Nataliia Buz'ko, Yurii Nevhamonnyi, and Serhii Chetvertkov.[51] The third shared characteristic pertains to what is commonly termed as 'literariness' – both directors extensively draw upon literary sources and engage in meticulous textual work.[52] However, a

notable difference in their approach to literary scripts is that Muratova frequently modifies and rewrites the original storyline, while Neymann usually adheres closely to the literary sources and makes no significant alterations therein. Finally, an enigmatic and elusive quality akin to what Bloom might have categorised as "strangeness" and "weirdness", which I define further as cinematic gesturality, comes into play. Neymann's films reveal a noticeable lineage to Muratova's oeuvre by demonstrating resemblances in image structure, narrative, repetitions, and rhythm. These components evoke Muratova's style while enabling Neymann to uphold her distinct cinematic signature. It is the latter point, from my perspective, that best explicates the deliberate or inadvertent reverberations (misprision) of Muratova's imagery found within Neymann's cinematic oeuvre.

CROSSMAPPING GESTURES: MURATOVA AND NEYMANN

Incorporating two separate narrative threads, *By the River* (2007, Odesa Film Studio) is based on two short stories by Friedrich Gorenstein, *Old Women* (*Starushki,* 1964) and *Conversation* (*Razgovor*, 1966), echoing Muratova's hallmark technique of interweaving two or more storylines into a single narrative. Neymann's film intertwines an episode of a riverboat captain (played by Yurii Nevhamonnyi), who spends his day off work by the riverside, with the storyline of two older women, a mother and her daughter (portrayed by Maria Politseimako and Nina Ruslanova, respectively), living under the same roof. It is the latter storyline that the film mainly focuses on – the complex and stirring relationship between the mother and the daughter, in which a role reversal occurs: the daughter assumes a maternal role, caring for her mother as if she were her own child, while the mother embraces a carefree and reckless demeanour. Tensions rise as the women argue, with the mother vehemently rejecting the daughter's attempts at control. Succumbing to her mother's latest whim, the daughter acquiesces and takes her to the riverbank for a walk and a boating trip. Throughout the day, they frequent a café and a restaurant and take a stroll. However, the daughter repeatedly finds herself embarrassed by her mother, feeling compelled to apologise to others for her misbehaviour. Eventually, they encounter two young girls who agree to transport them to an island in a flimsy boat, where tensions escalate. At the film's denouement, the daughter, caught in a downpour, burstsinto tears, prompting the mother to cease her pretence of mischievous playfulness. Instead, she embraces her maternal role by tenderly hugging and consoling her distraught daughter.

Curiously, a similar mother-daughter dynamic, albeit in a markedly more perverse manifestation, underpins one of Muratova's most acclaimed films, *Three Stories* (1997), specifically its second novella, *Ophelia* (written and performed by Renata Litvinova). Within this storyline, the female protagonist, Ofa (shortened from Ophelia), a serial killer and morbid nurse,

exhibits a manic fixation on her genealogy as she searches for her mother, who abandoned her after childbirth. In her pursuit of retribution, Ofa murders a young mother, Tania, who gives up her newborn baby for adoption. After that, Ofa surveils her own mother, mimicking her clothing, hairdo, and mannerisms. The story culminates with Ofa drowning her mother in the sea. However, another vignette depicting the relationship between a mother and daughter is inserted into this story, serving as a deviation and a sort of mise-en-abyme (**Video 1**). Chasing her mother through the streets of Odesa, Ofa passes by an elderly woman who, raising her head and gesticulating, calls out to her own mother in despair: "Mama! Why doesn't she come out? Mama! Mama! […] Oh, I'm worried! […]" In the subsequent scene, her elderly, deaf mother appears on the balcony, noticing her daughter but unable to hear her. With a trembling voice, she asks:

> Mother: "Why don't you call me on the phone? I've been worried."
> The daughter replies: "I'm calling and calling you."
> Mother: "Why don't you call me?"
> Daughter: "You don't hear the phone ringing!"
> Mother: "I'm waiting and waiting…"
> Daughter: "Mama, you don't hear the phone ringing. I've been worried."
> Mother: "I've been worried. Why don't you call me? I'm waiting and waiting…"
> Daughter: "Why don't you answer the phone?"
> Mother: "I'm worried."
> Daughter: "I've been worried so much."
> Mother: "What are you saying?"

Video 1: Clip from Kira Muratova's *Three Stories* (Part 2: "Ophelia"): Two mother-and-daughter couples, https://youtu.be/z28AO4xfPEw (or click on the image to view)

This quasi-accidental encounter with another similar-looking mother and daughter pair sheds new light on the primary narrative, creating a doubling and shifting effect akin to the relation and distribution of series as described by Gilles Deleuze. In this framework, the series are interrelated in a constant state of displacement and imbalance: "There is thus a double-sliding of one series over or under the other, which constitutes both, in a perpetual disequilibrium vis-à-vis each other."[53] The series of doppelgangers, represented by Ofa and her mother, intersect or, more precisely, slide past another pair of the older daughter-mother duality. These two pairs, or

dualities, undergo displacement in relation to each other: Ofa's mother remains oblivious to being followed, and the mother in the other pair does not hear her daughter's reprimands. Both couples also exist in mutual ignorance of each other. Along the line of their fleeting contact, at the boundary of these series, a sense characterised by reduplication and displacement is formed.

In Neymann's *By the River*, the mother and daughter get ready for a walk (**Video 2**). An intriguing scene occurs before their departure when they welcome an administrative worker (portrayed by Sergei Bekhterev, a frequent actor in Muratova's films) into their old hoarded apartment. The man could equally be a swindler trying to gain the trust of the gullible ladies (like the piano tuner and con artist Andrei in Muratova's *The Tuner*). As the trio exits the flat, a prolonged static shot captures them in the rundown entrance hall, accompanied by the distant sound of howling dogs (another implicit nod to Muratova).[54] Their conversation mirrors the absurdist tone and wordplay found in many of Muratova's later films:

> The man: "Gosh, I left my *barsetka* [leather pouch]. It's a small handbag for businessmen."
> The mother: "That's an interesting word. I thought it meant a dog, like a *levretka* [leurette]. Did I tell you that Masha has sclerosis?"
> The man: "And you have bedbugs."

Video 2: Clip from Eva Neymann's *By the River*: The mother and the daughter go for a walk, https://youtu.be/XZIJbcoy7_w (or click on the image to view)

After their bewildered visitor hastily departs, the exasperated daughter vents her frustration at her mother, pointing out her extravagant outfit: "Ribbons, beads, feathers – you're ridiculous!" The mother retaliates, exclaiming: "You are nothing to me. You are not my daughter!" Grumbling and laughing, the women step out into the courtyard typical of the Odesa old town, where the camera pauses on a series of variegated residents – from local drunkards to a neighbour puffing on a cigarette at an open window, then to a cat, and finally to a woman drying her nail polish by rhythmically shaking her hands. This episode, exquisitely captured by cinematographer Oleksii Ubieiwolk, could just as easily have been part of Muratova's Odesa film universe with its attention to minor details, somewhat quirky characters, cliched speech, repetitive gestures, and, of course, animals. "Masha, don't slouch. Keep your back straight", the mother

reproaches. This exchange echoes a similar parental dynamic in Muratova's *The Long Farewell*, where a mother nags at her son: "Take a nailfile, get your hands cleaned up!"

Similarly to Muratova, in one of the subsequent scenes, the mother and daughter come across another mother-daughter duo: a young girl and her mother (portrayed by the renowned Ukrainian pantomime actress Nataliia Buz'ko), both clad in black-and-white checkered dresses (**Video 3**). However, unlike the fleeting, divergent interactions in *Three Stories*, the meeting between the two parent-child pairs in *By the River* takes a contentious turn, leading to a squabble. Nevertheless, the maternal metaphor seems crucial for both directors, evident not only at a narrative level but also within the aesthetic realm. It encapsulates notions of repetition, similarity, heredity, kinship, and genetic ties, opening up an immeasurable field of cinematic influence. Paraphrasing, or rather misprisioning Bloom's patriarchal motto: to live, a director must misinterpret the mother.[55]

Video 3: Clip from Neymann's *By the River*: Two sets of mother-and-daughter duos, https://youtu.be/1_aKmt2olC4 (or click on the image to view)

The reduplication and twins, along with Nina Ruslanova's, Yurii Nevhamonnyi's, Nataliia Buz'ko's, and Sergei Bekhterev's distinctive acting, are not the sole inadvertent nods to Muratova within Neymann's cinematic succession. Neymann's films boast an array of visual motifs that echo Muratova's style, discernible in the framing of shots and the decorative finesse exuding from the faktura. A juxtaposition of stills from Muratova's and Neymann's films reveals their profound artistic kinship. Thus, the ornamental style of the mother's and daughter's clothing in *By the River* ("ribbons, beads, feathers") recalls the adornments, veils, necklaces, and hats that Muratova often used to embellish her characters. So do the arrangement of figures in space, or what Sergei Eisenstein termed mise-en-geste[56] – characters' lining up in front of the wall, standing motionless behind window or mirror frames, and staring into the camera. The camera picks out the figures of eerie doubles and twins and shows close-ups of old memorabilia, useless trinkets, and green and red apples scattered around; it focuses on a woman's hands gently touching a plant root, or a bright red ribbon in the water (**Video 4a**).

Video 4a: Fig. 1-38 (00:00-01:09). Crossmapping gestures in the films of Muratova and Neymann. A Juxtaposition, https://youtu.be/cwrnABdArNw (or click on the image to view the clip)

These and other similar images do not stem from direct quotations or intentional allusions to Muratova. They defy easy classification or description. Nevertheless, an astute viewer familiar with Muratova's work could discern the line of heredity in Neymann's film, even if such moments of recognition rest on a subtly perceptible sense of resemblance and reminiscence resisting systematic categorisation. *By the River* nearly flawlessly embodies Bloom's concept of *apophrades*, generating an effect as though Neymann were the creator of Muratova's most distinctive work.

Elisabeth Bronfen's concept of crossmapping, elaborated in several of her publications, most prominently in *Crossmappings: On Visual Culture* (2018), presents another pertinent theoretical framework for analysing the principle of productive, albeit not necessarily deliberate, influence evident in Neymann's films. According to Bronfen, crossmapping entails a comparative analysis that offers a cartography of image formulas and figures of thought "for which no simple or unequivocal intertextual relation can be determined".[57] This method draws attention to similarities between aesthetic formalisations that may have remained overlooked or uncharted. Bronfen's theory of crossmappings is based explicitly on Aby Warburg's pathos formulas, or gestures, and their comparative reading at different historical moments and different aesthetic media.[58] Another source for Bronfen's theory is Stephen Greenblatt's idea of the circulation of social energies, alongside Mieke Bal's notion of "preposterous history", or "reversal, which puts what came chronologically first ('pre') as an aftereffect behind ('post') its later recycling."[59] (Here, one might feel reminded of Bloom's metaleptic figure of *apophrades* with its effect of reversed chronological order). Finally, Bronfen is indebted to Georges Didi-Huberman's discussion of "the survival of pathos formula as a poignant symptom of cultural haunting".[60] In an earlier work, *Specters of War* (2012), she explains the persistence of image formulas by

highlighting their ability to expose the irregular and inconsistent connections they forge with subsequent realisations.

> The image formulas that reemerge are taken as evidence that we continue to be haunted by the past. At the same time, such survival of traces from the past through the incessant revival of past pathos formulas is best charted by tracing unconventional or unexpected correspondences. At stake is a more transversal knowledge […].[61]

These connections do not originate from intertextuality but rather from the haunting nature of visual formalisation. While Bronfen does not explicitly cite Bloom's theory of influence as a source for her idea of productive interlacement, the concept appears to align with the spirit of Bloom's anxiety of influence.

In my approach, I opt to employ the term "gesture" over "pathosformula" or "image" for various reasons. Firstly, I align with Agamben's perspective, who, an admirer of Aby Warburg and Gilles Deleuze, famously posited that the essence of cinema lies not in the image but in the gesture. More precisely, Agamben emphasises the urge to "extract" gestures from images to underline their mediality.[62] Secondly, gesture has semiotic potential that facilitates discussions concerning the subject, the author, and their unique signature, unlike the circulation of anonymous images, even though these aspects may coexist. Thus, gesture allows for establishing a discernible form of dissemination – an immediate lineage and (personal) genealogy between the precursor and the successor, anchored in the anxiety of influence. Moreover, in contrast to pathos formulas, gestures are not universal, symbolic, prescriptive, or iconic. Neither do they necessarily have any semantic meaning, nor do they perforce reflect the movements of history; they may even be ahistorical.[63] Rather, they represent pre-symbolic, non-canonised, and often secondary and elusive components of cinematic imagery. Gestures encompass not only the characters' facial expressions and movements but also acting style, colour, sound, mise-en-scene, camera work, elements of the plot, and more. In other words, gestures embody a productive difference – transcending mere similarity and resisting assimilation – while preserving heredity and identity.

*

In Neymann's second feature film, *A House with a Turret* (2011), the line of heredity with Muratova may appear less evident despite the film being made entirely in black and white (Muratova is known for her fondness for black and white). *A House with a Turret* remains utterly faithful to Gorenstein's eponymous short story *Domik s bashenkoi* (1964) regarding plot development and character lines.[64] The film's narrative unfolds linearly and contains no vignettes or deviations from the main plot. It is set in winter or early spring, presumably around 1944, and revolves around a mother (Ekaterina Golubeva) and her roughly 8-year-old son (Dmytro Kobets'kyi) returning to Soviet Ukraine after having been evacuated. The mother comes down with typhus on the way home. She is taken off the train and transported to a hospital in an unnamed town. The story is experienced through the eyes of her son, who, left to fend for himself,

sets out to find his ailing mother. The image of a distinct house with a turret near the railway station is etched into the boy's memory, serving as a mnemonic sign reminding him of the place where he parted ways with his mother and guiding his path home. As he roams through the labyrinthine settings – the railway station, the unwelcoming town streets, a bus, and the post office – his journey ultimately brings him to the hospital. There, he witnesses his mother's passing. Left alone, he is compelled to find his way home, where his grandfather can take care of him.

Besides revisiting the theme of the mother-child relationship, *A House with a Turret* further crossmaps with Muratova's cinematic legacy, even if their interconnectedness is less pronounced than in *By the River*. The closest reference appears to be Muratova's *Melody for a Street-Organ* (*Melodiia dlia katerynky* / *Melodiia dlia sharmanki*, 2009), which likewise opens with a scene in a train carriage and portrays the plight of hungry half-siblings who have just lost their mother. They arrive in a big city (apparently Odesa) and wander through urban winter landscapes in search of their fathers. Muratova's film draws inspiration from literary sources, encompassing a rich tradition of Christmas literature that includes Charles Dickens' *Christmas Books* (1940s), Hans Christian Andersen's *The Little Match Girl* (1945), and Fedor Dostoevsky's *The Beggar Boy at Christ's Christmas Tree* (1875), among others. Yet, Muratova playfully mocks the clichés of the genre: her film blends elements and codes from the Christmas narrative and early Christmas films (the Christmas tree, costumes, hungry and wandering children, the quest for food, the indifference of those around them, and the abundance behind glass or shop windows, as well as biblical prophecies). Muratova liberates these elements from their conventional Christian and sacred contexts, imparting them with a new, profane guise. Her film is intentionally devoid of the pathos of a traditional Christmas mysterium and the miracle of redemption, and it eschews the sentimental and melodramatic affectivity typically associated with the genre. It is utterly pessimistic and culminates with the death of a little boy named Nikita, one of the two main characters, who freezes to death.[65]

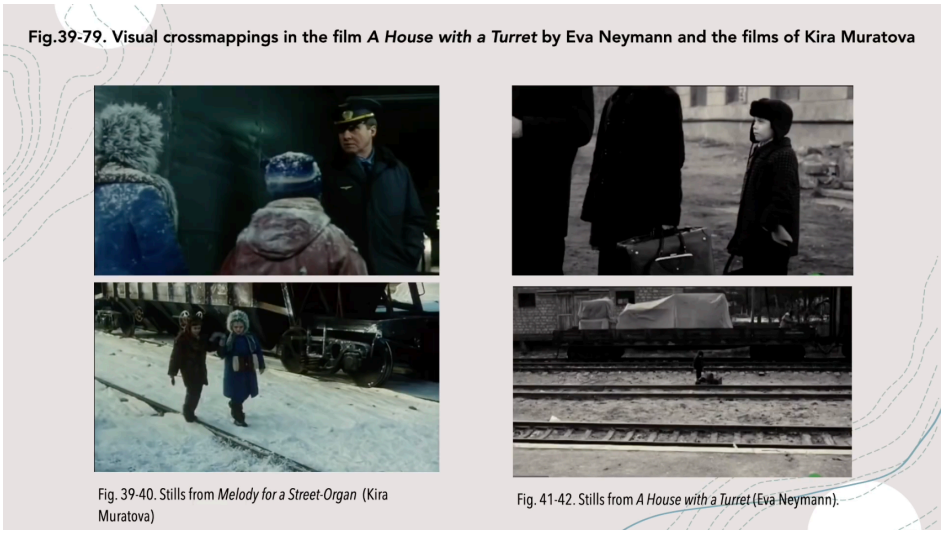
A House with a Turret, while subtly resonating with Muratova's film, mainly due to the horizon of expectations shaped by comparable situations, leading the viewer to anticipate a tragic outcome, ultimately takes a different direction. After his mother's death, the boy sets out to return home by train, accompanied by a family with a younger child. They seize the opportunity to travel with the newly orphaned child, as he is entitled to a train ticket without the wait. Particularly striking is the woman's character (masterfully portrayed by Vitalina Bibliv), a grotesque figure in the spirit of Muratova's cinematic universe. She is utterly insensitive and greedy, at one point lecturing her own son by pointing at the boy and saying, "Look, the boy disobeyed his mom, and [this is why] his mom died". Later on the train, she deftly extorts the boy's remaining money. However, the film ends on a positive note, as the other passengers stand up for the boy and help to return the stolen goods to him. Protected, he continues his journey home.

The final parallel between these two films is the subtly conveyed child's point of view that permeates both narratives. A telling episode in Muratova's film revisits a motif from the 19th-century Christmas novella of children gazing into windows, where a festive atmosphere and an abundance of gifts and food are displayed, contrasting with the children's own desperate situation. Frozen and hungry, they gaze in awe at the Christmas idyll behind the glass – a series of postcard-like images of festive family reunions unfolds before their eyes in a prolonged silent take, as if they were watching a silent film from the early 20th century (the only sounds are their breath and the snow squeaking underfoot). In *A House with a Turret*, the child's perspective is already embedded into Gorenstein's short story, where adults are often represented by synecdoches – typically by their coats, jackets, or simply by their backs. For instance, it is noted that "wherever the boy went, he ran into other people's backs".[66] Neymann's film visualises the boy's perspective through the frequent use of low-angle camera perspective. Particularly moving, however, is the child's gaze in the scene of his mother's death: the camera focuses on the boy as he approaches her bed, saying, "You know, I was scared at night when you were lying there and didn't move." The camera lingers on his still, silent face, capturing the unspoken emotion in his intensely peering eyes. Although the mother is not shown, it is evident that he is witnessing her final moments, a fact confirmed by an off-screen patient's voice calling, "Nurse, a woman is dying!" The boy closes his eyes at the exact moment, then, swaying slightly, opens them and looks at his mother's body, which remains out of the camera's view. Simultaneously, the music playing on the radio comes to a halt. Contrasting with Muratova's film, where the child's gaze is placed within an artificial, grotesque, and somewhat alienated frame, here it is imbued with profound psychological realism and utter emotive force (**Video 5**).

Video 5: The child's gaze. Clips from *Melody for a Street-Organ* and *A House with a Turret*, https://youtu.be/o83K6G2MoZM (or click on the image to view)

The visual language of Neymann's film, while more restrained than in *By the River*, nevertheless bears discernible similarities to Muratova's works. This connection is clear in the

portrayal of settings such as trains, platforms, and railway stations, and in the detailed depiction of certain bodily postures and attitudes – including children seeking assistance from apathetic adults, the hustle of busy crowds, passengers sleeping while waiting for trains, and even the feet occasionally captured in the frame. The sequence of images below illustrates how *A House with a Turret* engages in a visual dialogue with Muratova's films through bodily movements, camera angles, or the arrangement of props, whether intentionally or accidentally (**Video 4b**). Thus, a boy on his way to the hospital gets hit with mud by a passing lorry, just like the heroine of the short *Spring Rain* (*Vesennii dozhd'*, Kira Muratova and Oleksandr Muratov, 1958). The image of the turreted house, with its shabby balustrade, the dog, and the little girl is reminiscent of the mise-en-scène in *The Long Farewell* and *Three Stories (*part 3: *The Little Girl and Death)*. In the picture of the austere, unfriendly hospital ward, one easily recognises similar spaces depicted in *The Asthenic Syndrome* and *Three Stories* (part 2: *Ophelia*).



Video 4b: Fig. 39-79 (01:10-02:31). Crossmapping gestures in the films of Muratova and Neymann. A Juxtaposition, https://youtu.be/pYG4bHK-Wkg?t=72 (or click on the image to view the clip)

The similarities extend to close-ups of hands pressing against window panes (an evocative image that also opens Muratova's *Melody for a Street-Organ*), a smoked fish placed on a piece of paper (echoing the long close-up of a smoked fish that female hands tear apart in *The Asthenic Syndrome*), and the square-shaped hat worn by an unnamed woman at the railway station, reminiscent of the nearly identical hat worn by the protagonist of Muratova's *The Long Farewell*, Evgeniia Vasil'evna. The latter detail is hardly accidental: similar to the protagonist of *The Long Farewell,* who writes a letter dictated by a man at the railway station, the woman in the hat (Marina Politseimako) in *A House with a Turret* dictates a letter to another woman herself. The theme of dictation and writing recurs when the boy takes a seat next to the woman in the hat and requests a stranger (Yurii Nevhamonnyi) to pen a telegram to his grandfather.

Both Muratova's and Neymann's films feature numerous instances of figures, adults and children, framed within windows and mirrors or other structured and superimposed surfaces. These secondary screens not only flatten the space and eliminate depth but also accentuate the two-dimensionality of the filmic image, distorting visual perception in the process. Furthermore, particular intonations of voice, the monotony of repetition, or the abruptness of grotesque cackling laughter induce a feeling of déjà vu. (**Video 6**).

Video 6: Repetitions and laughter in Neymann's *A House with a Turret* and in Kira Muratova's films, https://youtu.be/Ow-jvOBIv-w (or click on the image).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Any canon formation, be it in cinema, literature, or any field, relies on crossmapping – artists borrowing from their predecessors. Simultaneously, canonisation necessarily involves deviation from the precursors, revisiting and de-canonisation, a necessary step within the deconstructivist framework. This view of influence encompasses both its dangerous, contagious nature (akin to *influenza*), which can overshadow one's voice and ideas, and a mode of *fluent* production, protean creativity predicated on prolific crossmapping and an embrace of otherness. Bronfen rightly observes that

> We cannot get rid of images that haunt us from the past, even though […] these images are often hard to grasp, let alone apprehend. While they influence the image formulas that have succeeded them, they are often screened out by what they themselves have engendered.[67]

Using Bronfen's concept, which has itself been born under the influence of other cultural theorists, I have demonstrated how Muratova's iconography lives on in these works and how this process of cine-poetic heredity relying on the iterability of images and gestures and their aesthetic formalisation creates lines of continuity and contributes to the ongoing formation and reconfiguration of the contemporary Ukrainian cinematic canon in all its intercultural diversity and complexity.

While this comparison, based on formal similarities and often fortuitous coincidences, may seem more intuitive than methodical, the perceived randomness does not detract from the result. What emerges is a visual and auditory cartography – an atlas of images and gestures that reflects the intercultural cinepoetic environment of Odesa. As Vitaly Chernetsky rightly observes, the Odesa myth warrants reevaluation.[68] This cartographic exploration, therefore, serves a dual purpose: on the one hand, it reveals the processuality and fundamental openness of any aesthetic configuration, and on the other hand, it fosters a reimagining and potential redefinition of the 'Odesa Myth', redirecting it towards subverting patriarchal narratives and celebrating female authorship – a bold stride towards an inclusive cinematic legacy.

List of visuals

Video 1: Clip from Kira Muratova's *Three Stories* (Part 2: "Ophelia"): Two mother-and-daughter couples, https://youtu.be/z28AO4xfPEw.

Video 2: Clip from Eva Neymann's *By the River*: The mother and the daughter go for a walk, https://youtu.be/XZIJbcoy7_w.

Video 3: Clip from Neymann's *By the River*: Two sets of mother-and-daughter duos, https://youtu.be/1_aKmt2olC4.

Video 4: Fig. 1-79. Crossmapping gestures in the films of Muratova and Neymann. A Juxtaposition of stills, https://youtu.be/cwrnABdArNw.

Video 5: The child's gaze. Clips from *Melody for a Street-Organ* and *A House with a Turret*.

Video 6: Repetitions and laughter in Neymann's *A House with a Turret* and in Kira Muratova's films, https://youtu.be/Ow-jvOBIv-w

Acknowledgment.

My sincere thanks to Mariia Lihus, Irina Denischenko, and Adelaide McGinity-Peebles for their insightful feedback as the initial readers of this essay.

[1] Cf. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections of the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* [1983] (London, New York: Verso, 2006); Eric R. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

[2] Giorgio Agamben, "What is an Apparatus?" In *What is an Apparatus? And Other Essays*, trans. David Kishik and Stefan Pedatella (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 14.

[3] Cf. Patricia Herlihy, *Odessa Recollected: The Port and the People* (Boston, USA: Academic Studies Press, 2018), 2-26.

[4] Cf. Chernetsky, Vitaly, "Ivan Kozlenko's *Tanzher* and the Odesa Myth: Multidirectional Memory As a Strategy of Subversion." *East/West: Journal of Ukrainian Studies*, 9(2), 2022: 43–63. https://doi.org/10.21226/ewjus605.
[5] "The Odessity did not, like the Dovzhenkovtsy, consider themselves 'Ukrainian filmmakers', nor did they consider their work to be emblematic of 'Ukrainian national cinema'." Joshua First, *Ukrainian Cinema. Belonging and Identity during the Soviet Thaw* (London, New York: I.B. Tauris, 2015), 18.
[6] Laura U. Marks, *The Skin of the Film. Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses* (Durham, London: Duke UP, 2000), 6.
[7] Yuri Shevchuk, "Filmmaking as Cultural Aggression," *Images. The International Journal of European Film, Performing Arts and Audiovisual Communication*, 34(43), 2023: 29–48. https://doi.org/10.14746/i.2023.34.43.2.
[8] Schevchuk, "Filmmaking as Cultural Aggression," 40-41.
[9] Regrettably, Shevchuk's argument inadvertently weakens the Ukrainian resistance and paradoxically supports the linguistic principle that underpins the Russian Federation's claims to Ukrainian territories and cultural heritage.
[10] According to Nancy Condee, Muratova's characters are not so much individuals or identities but rather "fragments left behind from the world's conversations", or simply "disconnected utterances". Nancy Condee, *The Imperial Trace: Recent Russian Cinema* (Oxford, New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2009), 126, 128.
[11] Cf. Kira Muratova, "'Pust' ostaviat Ukrainu v pokoe': Izvestnyi rezhisser – o situatsii v rodnoi dlia nee Ukraine. I o povedenii rossiiskogo rukovodstva," interview by Iurii Safronov, *Novaia gazeta*, April 12, 2014, https://novayagazeta.ru/articles/2014/04/12/59173-kira-muratova-pust-ostavyat-ukrainu-v-pokoe; Kira Muratova, "'Net, ia ne nad skhvatkoi, ia prinimaiu storonu Ukrainy': Znamenityi rezhisser o voine, Odesse i antivoennom kino," interview by Ian Shenkman, *Novaia gazeta,* July 20, 2015: 19. https://novayagazeta.ru/articles/2015/07/16/64919-kira-muratova-171-net-ya-ne-nad-shvatkoy-ya-prinimayu-storonu-ukrainy-187.
[12] On the prevalence of Ukrainian civic identity over the ethnic and linguistic ones among the Russophone population in Ukraine, see Volodymyr Kulyk, "Competing Identities of Ukraine's Russian Speakers," in *Ukraine's Many Faces: Land, People, and Culture Revisited*, ed. Olena Palko, Manuel Férez Gil (Bielefeld: transcript, 2023), 315-330.
[13] Cf. Eugénie Zvonkine, *Kira Mouratova: Un cinéma de la dissonance* (Lausanne: L'Age d'Homme, 2012), 190f.
[14] Tilda Swinton, "Last and first movie memories," interview, *Metrograph* Vol. 25, Spring 2020, https://metrograph.com/last-and-first-movie-memories-tilda-swinton/.
[15] Elena Gorfinkel, "Kira Muratova's Searing World," *Close-up*, 2019. https://www.closeupfilmcentre.com/library/essay/kira-muratovas-searing-world
[16] Toril Moi, *Sexual /Textual Politics* [1988] (London, New York: Routledge, 2002), 77.
[17] "Canon," Online Etymology Dictionary, https://www.etymonline.com/word/canon.
[18] "Canonize," Merriam-Webster Dictionary, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/canonize.
[19] Elena Gorfinkel, "Against Lists," *Another Gaze*, November 29, 2019, https://www.anothergaze.com/elena-gorfinkel-manifesto-against-lists/; emphasis added.
[20] Gorfinkel, "Against Lists."
[21] Harold Bloom, *The Western Canon: The Books and School of the Ages* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1994).
[22] Bloom, *The Western Canon*, 29, 36.
[23] Bloom, *The Western Canon*, 29.
[24] Bloom, *The Western Canon*, 3, 26; emphasis added.
[25] Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (New York: Oxford UP, 1997), xxviii.
[26] Bloom, *The Western Canon*, 38.
[27] Bloom, *The Western Canon*, 30.
[28] On contamination, see Bloom, *The Western Canon*, 523.
[29] Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence,* 7.

[30] Harold Bloom, *A Map of Misreading* (New York: Oxford UP, 1975), 74.
[31] Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence,* 7.
[32] Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence,* 19.
[33] Bloom, *A Map of Misreading*, 3.
[34] I will spare the details, as these stages are expounded upon comprehensively in Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence*.
[35] Bloom, *A Map of Misreading*, 73.
[36] Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence,* 15-16.
[37] Bloom, *A Map of Misreading*, 152.
[38] Shevchuk, "Filmmaking as Cultural Aggression," 40-41.
[39] Muratova's film style is frequently labeled as "eccentric" or "weird" – a clear sign of material's defiance and, as per Bloom's view, of artistic merit of Muratova's oeuvre. This characteristic has become commonplace in every introduction to her body of work, which is why I refrain from providing specific references.
[40] See Viktor Bozhovich, *Kira Muratova: Tvorcheskii portret* (Moskva: Soiuzinformkino, 1988), 3 (references to Chaplin, Fellini, Gerasimov, and Parajanov); Zara Abullaeva, *Kira Muratova: Iskusstvo kino* (Moskva: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2008), 209, and Kira Muratova, "Ženščina, kotoroj skučen alfavitnyj porjadok," interview by and Viktor Matizen, *Film.ru*, July 20, 2001, https://www.film.ru/articles/zhenshchina-kotoroy-skuchen-alfavitnyy-poryadok; (references to Khamdamov). Studies on Muratova's creative dialogues and (possible) mutual influences are not as extensive. Among them: Lilya Kaganovsky, "Ways of Seeing: on Kira Muratova's Brief Encounters and Larisa Shepit'ko's Wings". *Russian Review*, Vol. 71, No. 3 (July 2012): 482-499. On a detailed analysis of Parajanov's and Muratova's similarities, see Olha Briukhovetska, "Through the Looking-Water: Ex-Centric Visions in Sergei Parajanov's *Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors* and Kira Muratova's *Brief Encounters*," (manuscript, courtesy of the author) in *The Films of Kira Muratova: Essays on Cinematic Rebellion from the Margins*, ed. Irina Gradinari & Irina Schulzki (forthcoming). In the same volume, Michael Niehaus compares Muratova to Agnès Varda, and Ilja Kukuj draws parallels with the German filmmaker Herbert Achternbusch (manuscripts, courtesy of the authors).
[41] Shevchuk mentions in passing Neymann and Shapiro as Muratova's followers ("Filmmaking as Cultural Aggression," 41). On Litvinova, see Irina Schulzki, "The Genealogy of Gesture: From Kira Muratova to Renata Litvinova". *Gesture*, special issue of *Practices & Interpretations. A Journal of Philology, Teaching and Cultural Studies* 6(3), 2021: 22-48. DOI: https://doi.org/10.18522/2415-8852-2021-3-22-48.
[42] Neymann's short films: *Chrysanthemums in Yellow* (*Khrizantemy v zheltom*, 1998), *Chronicle of a Farewell* (*Khronika proshchaniia*, 2000), *Freeze, Unfreeze* (*Halt still, mach weite*r, 2001).
[43] Neymann's documentaries: *It's the same old thing* (*Alles beim Alten,* Germany, 2005), *To See the Sea* (*Das Meer sehen,* Germany, 2006), *God's Moves* (*Wege Gottes,* Germany, 2006), and *The Market* (*Pryvoz,* Ukraine, 2021).
[44] Aksinya Kurina, Andrei Alferov, Anton Dolin, "Dom s bashenkoi – fil'm Evy Neiman o mal'chike, ostavshemsia v polnom odinochestve vo vremia voiny," *Meduza*, June 9, 2022, https://meduza.io/feature/2022/06/09/dom-s-bashenkoy-film-evy-neyman-o-malchike-ostavshemsya-v-polnom-odinochestve-vo-vremya-voyny?fbclid=IwAR3KId72kJJe8PP-t8tbFjxGX-kwtzj2escsVJ5L7_WeSoen6mEXkfk15mA&fs=e&s=cl.
[45] Bloom, *A Map of Misreading*, 13.
[46] Snezhana Pavlova, "Eva Neiman: Ia ochen' blagodarna Kire Muratovoi!", *Korotko pro*, July 17, 2007, https://kp.ua/odessa/7451-eva-neiman-ya-ochen-blahodarna-kyre-muratovoi
[47] „Die Suche nach Licht", *Deutschlandrundfunk*, Oktober 25, 2007, https://www.deutschlandfunkkultur.de/die-suche-nach-licht-100.html.
[48] Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence*, xviii.
[49] Muratova only shot one film, *Getting to Know the Big Wide World* (*Piznaiuchy bilyi svit /Poznavaja belyj svet*, 1979) at Lenfilm Studio; *Change of Fate* (*Zmina doli / Peremena uchasti*, 1987) was made in Central Asia, while *Passions* (*Zakhoplennia /Uvlechen'ia*, 1994) was filmed in Piatigorsk, Russia. Neymann's film *By the River* was shot in Odesa and Berdychiv (Zhytomyr

Oblast), *A House with A Turret* was filmed exclusively in Odesa, and *The Song of Songs* in Odesa and Vylkovo (Odesa Oblast).

[50] It is also the central argument of Shevchuk's critique. Thus, he resents the fact that Neymann's *By the River* takes place in the post-Soviet Berdychiv, "yet once again completely cleansed of Ukrainians and depicted as a provincial corner of the Russian cultural and geographic space. […] Thus, depopulated of Ukrainians, Berdychiv is cinematically appropriated for the coloniser as a Russian city." ("Filmmaking as Cultural Aggression," 41-42).

[51] Notably, Chetvertkov not only portrayed diverse characters across Muratova's films but also served as a scriptwriter for all her short films, including *Letter to America* (*Lyst do Ameryku / Pis'mo v Ameriku*, 1999), *The Certificate* (*Dovidka / Spravka*, 2005), *The Dummy* (*Lial'ka / Kukla*, 2006), as well as for the feature *The Tuner* (*Nastroiuvach / Nastroishchik*, 2004). Additionally, Chetvertkov penned the screenplay for Neymann's debut short film *Freeze, Unfreeze* (approx. 19 min, Germany/Ukraine), in which he played the lead role.

[52] On the literary sources of Muratova's film, see Denis Larionov's talk within the international symposium *"People don't like to look at this…": The Cinema of Kira Muratova* (May 14, 2021), https://youtu.be/wle7csDz7XY?list=PLdR6GfPTyMsVQaVY08yLqWOJuzgXpabO8&t=84.

[53] Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense* [1969] (London: The Athlone Press, 1990), 40.

[54] See, for example, dog's barking and whimpering in *The Asthenic Syndrome /Astenichnyi syndrom/ Astenicheskii sindrom* (1989) and *The Sentimental Policeman*, as well as a tiger's growling in the soundtrack of *A Change of Fate* and peacock cries in *Three Stories* (Part 1: *Boiler-Room Nr 6*).

[55] The original reads as follows: "To live, the poet must misinterpret the father, by the crucial act of misprision, which is the re-writing of the father." (Bloom, *A Map of Misreading*, 19)

[56] Sergei Eisenstein, *Mise en jeu and mise en geste* [1948], trans. Sergey Levchin (Montréal: Caboose, 2014).

[57] Elisabeth Bronfen, *Crossmappings: On Visual Culture* (London, New York: I.B. Tauris, 2018), 4-5.

[58] Bronfen, *Crossmappings*, 2.

[59] Bronfen, *Crossmappings*, 7-8.

[60] Elisabeth Bronfen, *Specters of War: Hollywood's Engagement with Military Conflict* (Rutgers University Press, 2012), 8.

[6161] Bronfen, *Specters of War*, 8-9.

[62] Giorgio Agamben, *Means Without End: Notes on Politics* [1996], trans. Vincenzo Binetti and Cesare Casarino (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 49–60.

[63] Consider, for instance, Georges Didi-Huberman's examination of uprising-pathosformulas as the fundamental motion underpinning cultural and historical phenomena, ranging from collective emotions to mass movement and upheavals : "Uprisings occur as *gestures*." (*Soulèvements / Uprisings*, Exhibition booklet, Jeu de Paume, Paris, 2016, https://jeudepaume.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/PetitJournal_Soulevements.pdf).

[64] Fridrikh Gorenshtein, "Dom s bashenkoi," *Iunost'* 6 (1964): 47-57.

[65] Eugénie Zvonkine contends that *Melody for a Street-Organ* exhibits a Kafkaesque narrative structure, where each action and spatial movement of the main characters consistently brings them into increasingly dire circumstances (Zvonkine, *Kira Mouratova*, 251).

[66] "куда бы мальчик ни подходил, он всюду натыкался на спины." Fridrikh Gorenshtein, "Dom s bashenkoi," *Iunost'* 6 (1964): 49.

[67] Bronfen, *Crossmappings*, 7.

[68] Chernetsky, "Ivan Kozlenko's *Tanzher*…", 52.

THE UKRAINIAN FILM BUTTERFLY VISION (2022) AND WOMEN'S RESISTANCE TO WARTIME TRAUMA

Natascha Drubek (Freie Universität Berlin)

THE UKRAINIAN FILM *BUTTERFLY VISION* (2022) AND WOMEN'S RESISTANCE TO WARTIME TRAUMA

> ...in wearing a dissolute, ill-shaped and immodest dress against the decency of nature, and hair cropped round like a man's, against all the modesty of womankind…
> (*The Trial of Jeanne d´Arc*, XIII)

LEGAL FRAMEWORKS CONCERNING WARTIME RAPE

> We need to investigate individual male rapists' assaults on women (and on some men) in Bucha, in Kigali, in the Kachin region of Myanmar – while also asking whether there have been patterns to those seemingly random acts. (Cynthia Enloe, 2023)

In her chapter "Make Wartime Rape Visible," Cynthia Enloe critiques the "trivialization of wartime rape" and urges "feminist researchers, lawyers, and forensic investigators" to challenge this "lazy narrative." Given the broad reach of their medium, filmmakers are uniquely positioned to present stories that can be widely heard and seen. Surprisingly, some of the most compelling works on this topic in the post-Soviet regions are not documentaries driven by "feminist curiosity" but rather fiction films that stand as genuine masterpieces. 1 Maksym Nakonechnyi's debut film Butterfly Vision (2021), a film about war time rape, scripted together with Iryna Tsilyk, stands out among these.

For a considerable time, rape was perceived merely as a "crime of honor," a perspective altered by the Rome Statute. The Oxford Handbook of Feminist Theory defines "genocidal rape" as "rape as policy" intending to destroy a community.2 Ethiopia, according to research by Dyan Mazurana and Amnesty International, witnessed rape as a "weapon of war" and "torture and reproductive harm" in "rape camps." Rape has therefore not only been a weapon of war, but also one of the most effective instruments of colonisation.

As articulated in Article 7 of The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), crimes against humanity encompass acts committed "as part of a widespread or systematic attack

directed against any civilian population, with knowledge of the attack." The United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide (OSAPG) identifies "genocidal acts" in its analysis framework, encompassing involuntary sterilization, forced abortion, long-term separation of men and women, or other acts carried out with the intention to prevent procreation.3 This shift in perspective was prompted by the horrific events of the 1990s, both in Africa (Rwanda) and Europe (Post-Yugoslavia). In her dissertation on the systematic use of sexual violence in genocide,Viktoria Nicolaisen describes four goals and effects of rape in her chapter "Deliberate reproduction":

(1) Reproduction within the ethnicity/nationality/religion of the father

(2) To occupy the woman's body so that she cannot reproduce within her own group

(3) Causing such harm to the woman that she becomes unable or unwilling to bear a child in her future

(4) Stigmatizing the women so that they will be abandoned by their husbands.4

All points will be relevant for our analysis of Butterfly Vision.

Synopsis and Context of the Film Butterfly Vision

Butterfly Vision / Bachennya Metelyka / Бачення метелика, Maksym Nakonechnyi's debut feature film, was produced prior to February 2022, at a time when the assault on Ukraine appeared containable despite the annexation and occupation of Crimea and Donbas. Nakonechnyi, himself a native of Odesa, investigates two divides within Ukrainian society in his film: firstly, the existential and psychological gap between those directly impacted by military conflict or captivity and those who were not, and secondly, the gender divide, which takes on distinctive dynamics during times of war.

In addressing these divides, this article seeks to unravel the historical paradigms of cinematic representations of the shaming of women and their resistance to it. It explores their struggle against both the violent occupation of their bodies by the enemy and societal pressures, including the norms and misogyny that target the "weaker" members of society as scapegoats. For the analysis I chose a distinct visual motif – the shearing of women.

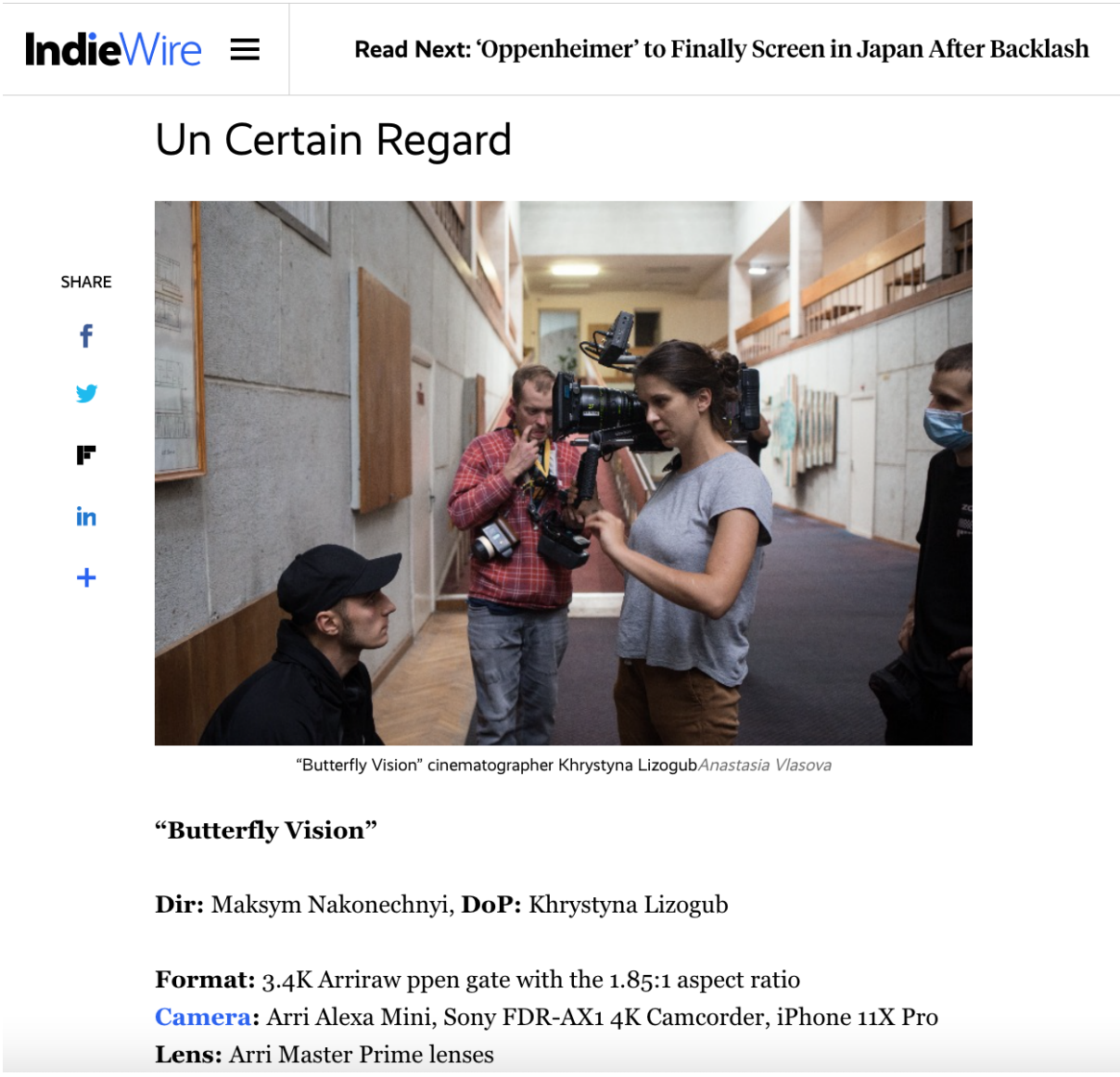
The film's narrative would have taken a different turn had the main protagonist been a man. Lilia (Rita Burkovs'ka), who operates a drone named "butterfly" (metelyk), is a female soldier – a circumstance not uncommon in Ukraine. Unfortunately, her experiences during captivity in Donbas, where she endures months of confinement, torture, and sexual assault, has become tragically familiar to the world in the past two years. Following Lilia's return home through a POW exchange, a medical examination reveals her pregnancy, a result of rape. However, the psychological wounds causing her PTSD remain undisclosed and unaddressed.

Upon Lilia's return, her husband Tokha (Lyubomyr Valivots') has shifted towards a radical political direction, aligning himself with a racist "National Patrol" targeting vulnerable minority groups in Ukraine, all captured on film during a mobile recording of the "pogrom." Both Tokha and Lilia's community expect her to terminate the pregnancy, viewing her violated body as a public matter, no longer belonging to her.

Contrary to societal expectations, Lilia, deeply traumatized by the crime, rejects the notion of her person being entangled in political and public discourses. She resents the loss of 'ownership' over her own body, both through the rape and the reactions of her surroundings. Remarkably, the film portrays Lilia's perspective, where the unwanted pregnancy represents a natural consequence of an evil act that cannot be denied but which, in her view, must be endured. Despite societal pressures, she opts against undergoing an abortion.

"HAIR CROPPED ROUND LIKE A MAN'S". CINEMATIC REPRESENTATIONS OF BRAVE GIRLS WITH SHORT HAIR

As Olesya Khromeychuk remarks in a Q & A with the cinematographer, Khrystyna Lizohub, the director "surrounded himself with women".[5] Nakonechnyi indeed was backed by a strong line-up of women professionals who contributed to this work: Besides the camerawoman and the scriptwriter, the leading producers are two women from Ukraine, Darya Bassel and Yelizaveta Smith (of the production company Tabor).[6]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Un Certain Regard

SHARE

"Butterfly Vision" cinematographer Khrystyna Lizogub*Anastasia Vlasova*

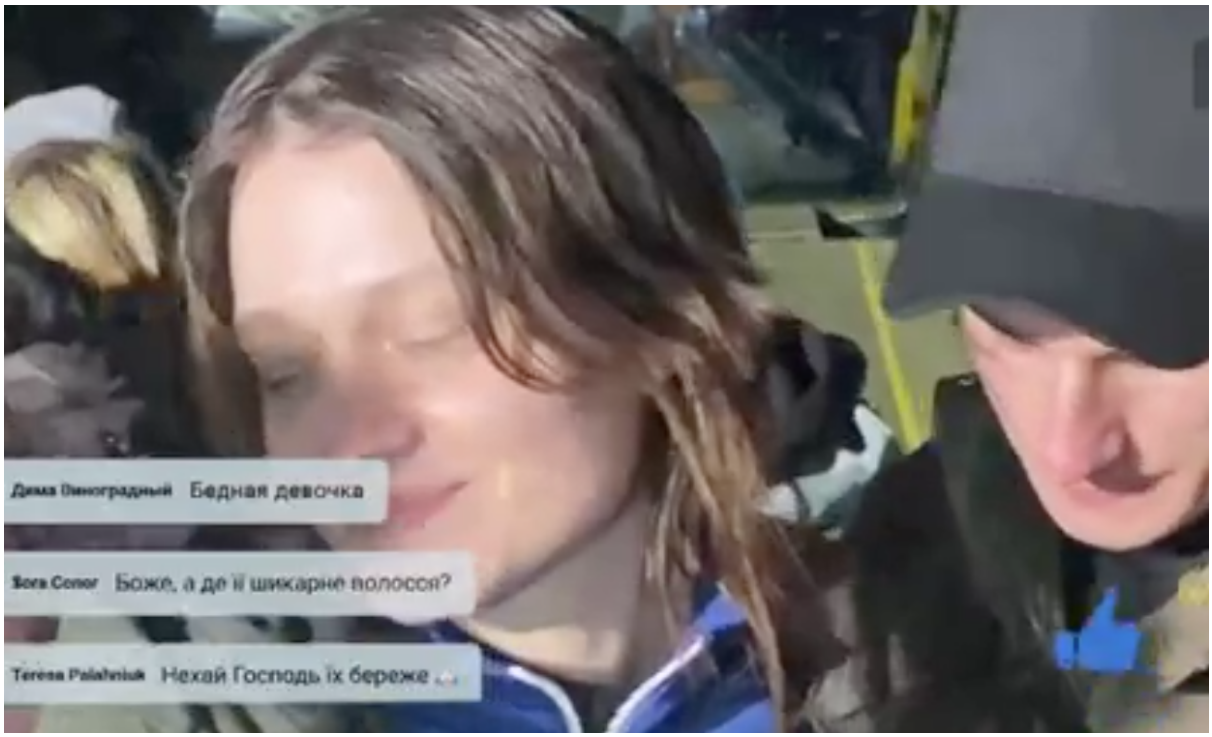
"Butterfly Vision"

Dir: Maksym Nakonechnyi, **DoP:** Khrystyna Lizogub

Format: 3.4K Arriraw ppen gate with the 1.85:1 aspect ratio
Camera: Arri Alexa Mini, Sony FDR-AX1 4K Camcorder, iPhone 11X Pro
Lens: Arri Master Prime lenses

Screenshot of the interview with the DOP of the film, Khrystyna Lizohub, for *Indiewire* https://www.indiewire.com/features/general/cannes-2022-cinematography-cameras-lenses-1234725082/3/

Butterfly Vision, shot predominantly with a "handheld camera", the ARRI Alexa Mini,[7] initially resembles a documentary; however soon the film reveals itself to be rich in citations from film history, all interconnected through the central theme of hair. The film explores hair as both a marker of femininity and the vulnerability of the female body.



Reactions on Social Media: Lilia, having disembarked the plane, and in the background, Tokha

When Lilia disembarks from the plane in Kyiv, her disheveled and jagged hair is captured in a social media clip. A comment in the chat queries, "God, where is her gorgeous hair?" Only at the film's conclusion do we learn the fate of her mane, realizing that she had not been honest with the reporter who inquired about the treatment in captivity, responding with a simple, "It was okay."

When Lilia is finally on her own, she investigates the inside of her mouth, the marks on her back and other parts of her body. Lilia is struggling to make sense of her bruised and slowly swelling body which does not seem to belong to her anymore, nor to her husband whose touch she avoids. The traces of inimical occupation on her body unfold themselves in front of our eyes in a step-by-step process.

In a shower scene, which was used for the trailer, we see Lilia washing her hair, signaling its centrality to the film's meaning. Lilia seems to carry out a symbolic cleansing ritual privately, together with other procedures after her captivity, such as medical tests for venereal disease.

The motif of missing hair and cascading tresses serves as a leitmotif that warrants further exploration. The act of cutting hair or shaving one's head is profoundly gendered and rooted in historical contexts. While for men, it could signify a vow of celibacy as a monk or joining the army, for women who openly displayed cropped hair, it signified shame (to be revisited later). Tracing back through history, women with cropped hair faced persecution, as it was viewed as an unnatural state, deemed "against the decency of nature," as exemplified by the case of Jeanne d'Arc. She was burned at the stake on May 30, 1431, accused of blasphemy and dressing like a man, as it says in chapter V of the transcripts of the *The Trial of Jeanne d´Arc*:

V

> You have said that you wore and still wear man's dress at God's command and to His good pleasure, for you had instruction from God to wear this dress, and so you have put on a short tunic, jerkin, and hose with many points. You even wear

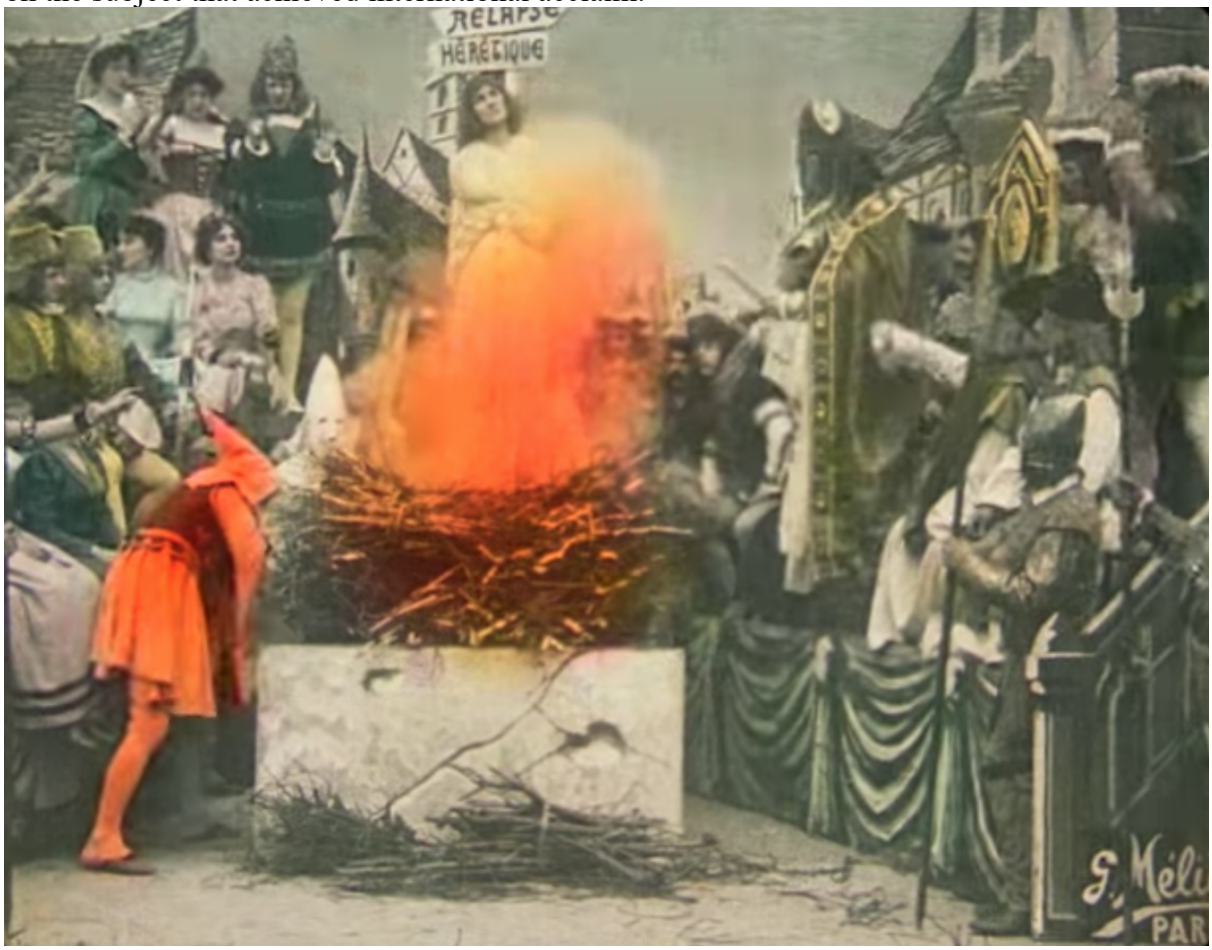
> your hair cut short above the ears, without keeping about you anything to denote your sex, save what nature has given you.[8]

Jeanne explains at the court that she dressed like a man since she lived among men. After all, she rode a horse and was clad in armor.

XII

> And, the better and more easily to accomplish her plan, the said Jeanne required the said Captain to have a male costume made for her, with arms to match; which he did, reluctantly, and with great repugnance, finally consenting to her demand. When these garments and these arms were made, fitted and completed, the said Jeanne put off and entirely abandoned woman's clothes; with her hair cropped short and round like a young fop's, she wore shirt, breeches, doublet, with hose joined together and fastened to the said doublet by 20 points, long leggings laced on the outside, a short mantle reaching to the knees, or thereabouts, a close-cut cap, tightfitting boots and buskins, long spurs, sword, dagger, breastplate, lance and other arms in the style of a man-at-arms, with which she performed actions of war and affirmed that she was fulfilling the commands of God as they had been revealed to her.[9]

Through her efforts, France secured key military victories and Jeanne herself crowned a King. The combative girl, "with her hair cropped short," might have rescued her country, yet she still met her fate at the stake. Jeanne's martyrdom was officially ascribed to "relapsed heresy," as depicted in Georges Méliès' 1900 film – an early work on the subject that achieved international acclaim.



Jeanne d'Arc (Georges Méliès, 1900), here still dark hair, as in paintings before

Jeanne was ultimately forced to sign the following „Abjuration" which did not save her but only exempted her from excommunication:

> in wearing a dissolute, ill-shaped and immodest dress against the decency of nature, and hair cropped round like a man's, against all the modesty of womankind; also in bearing arms most presumptuously; in cruelly desiring the shedding of human blood. (*The Trial of Jeanne d'Arc*)

Why did her hairstyle matter? Cara Wilson provides a less known but highly relevant biblical background. In the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 21:10-13) hair is

> the corporeal site of mourning, purification, and punishment, such as in Deuteronomy 21:10-14 [...] When you go out to war against your enemies, and the Lord your God hands them over to you and you take them captive, suppose you see among the captives a beautiful woman whom you desire and want to marry, and so you bring her home to your house: she shall shave her head, pare her nails, discard her captive's garb, and shall remain in your house a full month, mourning for her father and mother; after that you may go in to her and be her husband, and she shall be your wife.

Shaving one's head is here described as a rite of passage designed for a 'foreign' woman during which mourning and punishment coincide in an act of desexualization and alienation from herself and her family in order to bring about a shedding of her previous identity.

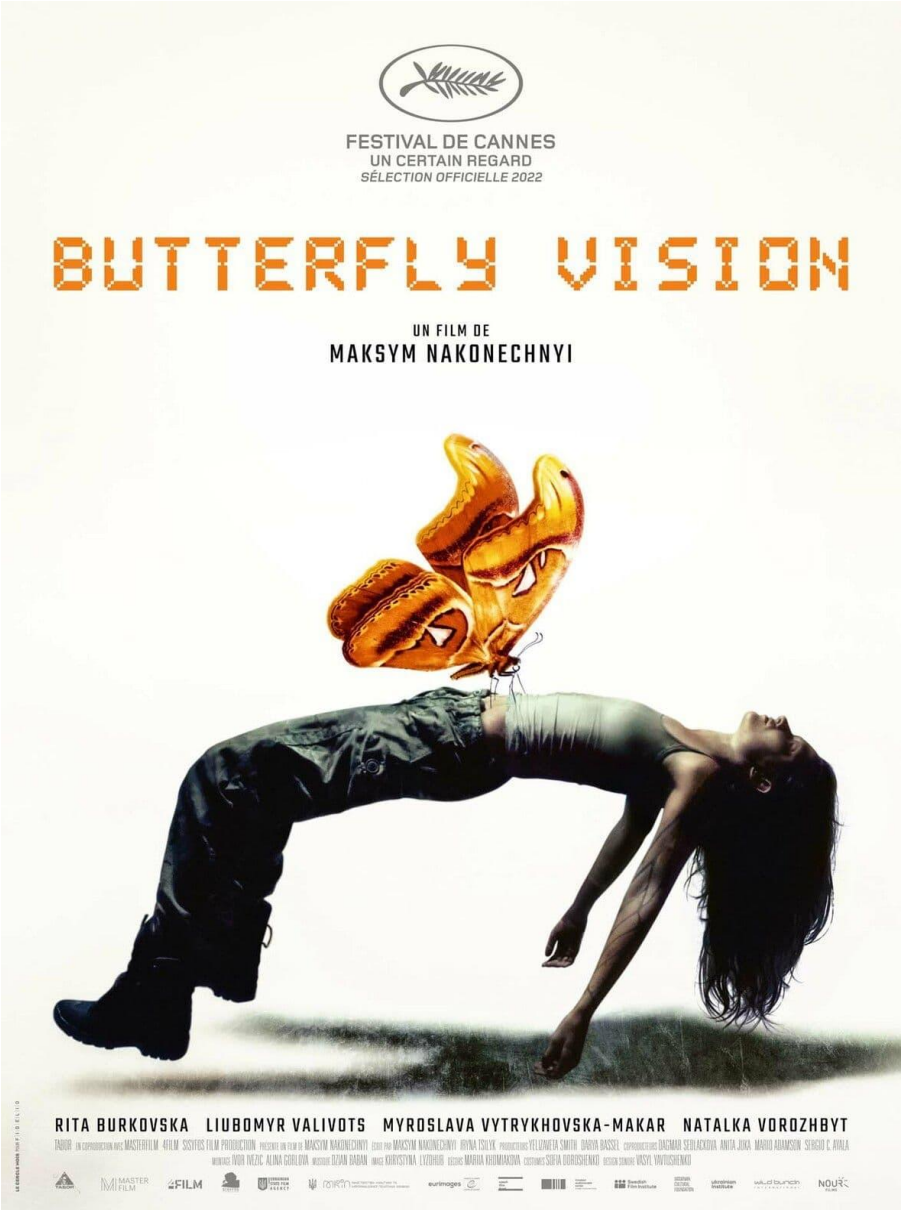
In the New Testament apostle Paul sees woman's hair as "'her glory', and thus a means for women to attract attention. Indeed, the covering of a woman's "glory" came to be a sign of her virtue."[10] These religious 'arguments' concerning hair might seem sophistic. In certain cultures, shaving heads is customary – Hindu children's heads are shaved at four and some Hasidic women do it for modesty, wearing wigs.[11]

The term "relapse", which is applied to Jeanne's actions, is a testament to her unrelenting resistance against all authorities. This complex and rich historical and literary-cinematic intertextual background looms large over Lilia in *Butterfly Vision*. She appears to be the soldier we identify with the most, regardless of our own gender. Unlike Tokha or Soroka, she is the 'star' – once able-bodied, now violated but "undefeated," a modern hero(ine) of Ukraine.

Probably the best portrayal of a tomboyish Jeanne d'Arc was delivered by another "kick-butt queen" from Kyiv, Milla Jovovich, who played the French heroine in 1999 in Luc Besson's *The Messenger: The Story of Joan of Arc*.[12]

Milla Jovovich, born as Militsa Bohdanivna Jovovich in Kyiv in 1975, *The Messenger: The Story of Joan of Arc* (1999)

FROM DOVE TO DRONE: HOW A BUTTERFLY REPLACED THE BIRD OF PEACE



Film poster for *Bachennya Metelyka*

In *Butterfly Vision*, hair acts as a "superficial" marker of Lilia's femininity, contrasting with her typical bulky combat attire or loose sweaters that hide her figure. In the poster, she is strikingly depicted with long hair and a butterfly on her abdomen, indicating gentle contact as the butterfly seems to feed on Lilia's "nectar".

The representation of her levitating body is one of a sacrifice – again harking back to religious concepts of an innocent victim, a lamb led to the slaughter. Only her long hair seems to touch the ground, holding her in that precarious balance. Differently from Tarkovsky's scene with the director's mother levitating mid height in the autobiographical film *The Mirror* (USSR, 1975), Lilia's head points to the right.

Maria, the hero's mother (Margarita Terekhova) in *The Mirror* (USSR, 1975) and the dove

While a white dove flies through the room, Maria's head is on the left of the image; she lies on her side and her flowing hair forms a curve with the rest of her body, not affected by gravity. In the Ukrainian film, the butterfly drone has replaced the white dove, the symbol of peace.

Levitating Lilia already has marks of blood on her upper body but due to another flashback shot we know that this is an image of her before her hair – and her strength? – was cruelly cut.

The fist of the torturer – possibly also the rapist's ? – grabbing Lilia by her hair and cutting strands off

However, a more in-depth examination of the shot, taken in the basement where she is held and tormented by Ukraine's enemies, suggests that this scene likely captures her mental state immediately before the assault. The juxtaposition of her vulnerability in this moment challenges the initial image of femininity associated with her tresses.

Soon Lilia will lose her long hair, probably after the rape. We cannot know whether the man who raped her is the same as the one who cut off strands of her hair (possibly, as a form of shaming, or marking her as his object)?

On the poster, the butterfly's wing looks more like a moth's – an effective nocturnal pollinator. Crucially, it becomes clear that the lepidoptera in title and on poster, despite the seemingly innocent symbolism, refer, in reality, to a piece of military equipment – a drone, i.e. another insect, with even less pleasant connotations. The poster underscores the complex symbolic layers of the film as well as the tropes of the (sheared) hair and the drone in connection with the occupation and strategies of sexual aggression. After all, in nature a drone is a male bee in a colony of social bees; the drone does not collect nectar but fertilizes the queen. Is the male drone, masked as a butterfly, attempting to 'capture' the Ukrainian queen bee?

> "THIS SHAVEN HEAD WAS THE PURITY OF JOAN OF ARC. […] IT WAS THE RESISTANCE TO OPPRESSION AND TYRANNY" (JEAN RENOIR)

If Lilia's head is brutally grabbed by her hair for the sake of humiliation, Jeanne is shaven by orders of the church before she is burned at the stake.

> The afternoon of the same day, May 24th. Jeanne puts on woman's dress
>
> …Jeanne answered that she would willingly wear woman's dress, and in all things obey and submit to the clergy. She was given woman's dress which she put on immediately she had taken off the male costume: she desired and allowed her hair, which had hitherto been cut short round the ears, to be shaved off and removed.[13]

This detail did not find its way into any of the older pictorial representations – until Carl Theodor Dreyer's film of 1928, produced by the French Société Générale des Films.

Cropped hair of a warrior: Renée Jeanne Falconetti in *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc* (Carl Th. Dreyer)

The first approximation seems indeed to have been Dreyer's decision to show Jeanne's cropped hair during the trial which for its time – even if it was the 1920s – was indeed ultra-short.

In a later scene her head is shaved – by the hands of the church, as preparation for her death at the stake:

Jeanne, shaven by a monk, after her "relapse into heresy"

The act of cutting or shaving hair for a film often sparks discussions both on and off the film set, especially when it involves actresses portraying characters like Jeanne d'Arc. This debate gained traction in the popular press, particularly post-war. The loss of hair significantly alters the actress's physical appearance, garnering more attention than changes to a man's hairstyle, both in the eyes of the crew and the audience.

Ira Nirsha, the acting coach for *Bachennya Metelyka*, who advocated for the necessity of trimming Rita Burkovs'ka's hair for the film, even ties this decision to freeing oneself from the colonising effects of acting schools:

> I'm proud of Rita, the performer of the main role, she was really brave: she lost and gained weight, cut her hair, trained for the role of a soldier, was in constant search and researched prototypes. The Ukrainian school of film acting does not yet have a system or method. Due to the fact that we were constantly restricted, prevented from developing, Russian and Soviet systems of acting would influence the role.[14]

Has Lilia's decision to crop her hair become not just a form of withdrawal but also a conscious effort by Rita Burkovs'ka and N. Vorozhbyt to "de-occupy" Ukrainian styles of acting, cutting oneself off from Russian acting traditions and counteracting the Soviet cinematic heritage? This transformation is evident in the poster featuring Burkovs'ka levitating under a butterfly or a lucifugous moth, challenging or even reversing the cinematic imagery linked to Tarkovsky's Terekhova and the dove – a symbol of peace that became a cliché after its extensive usage in Soviet propaganda posters during the Cold War period.

The ongoing decolonisation of the film history of Russia[15] and the exploration of Ukrainian cinema heritage highlights the diverse origins of figures in 1920s French cinema, often labeled as "Russian," however today we would call them Polish, Jewish, Baltic-German, Caucasian, or Ukrainian.[16] Many producers hailed from Ukraine. For instance, *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc* was produced by a studio founded by emigrés from the Russian Empire. In 1920, with a capital of 1,000,000 francs, Ermolieff-Cinéma was established, evolving into Société Albatros under leaders like Alexandre Kamenka, a native of Odesa, Ukraine. Kamenka's studio became a key player in the French silent film era, significantly contributing to projects like Abel Gance's *Napoléon* and relying on a cosmopolitan crew with cameraman Rudolph Maté from Kraków or inventor of the lighting grid Simon Feldman, also born in Odesa.[17]

ACTING (OUT)? FALCONETTI AND BURKOVS'KA

Falconetti’s tears in *La Passion de Jeanne d’Arc* by Carl Th. Dreyer

Rumours of Dreyer tormenting Falconetti to elicit tears and pain for Jeanne's portrayal persisted despite the studio's accomplishments. This unsubstantiated narrative highlights the alleged sadistic or tyrannical methods of male film directors in the early days of “high film art,” frequently associated with claims of genius.

In this context, cropped hair represents a juncture of violence and performativity in art. Jean Renoir, in his 1968 article „Dreyer’s Sin,“ highlighted the deep effect of shaving Falconetti’s head on the Danish director and its subsequent influence on the film’s production.

When Dreyer asked Falconetti to have her head shaved to play the part of Joan of Arc in prison, he was not asking for a sacrifice for a mere external truth. I think that primarily this was an inspiration for Dreyer. The sight of this admirable deprived of its natural adornment plunged Dreyer into the very heart of this subject. This shaven head was the purity of *Joan of Arc*. It was her faith. It was her invincible courage. It was the resistance to oppression and tyranny; it was also a bitter observation of the eternal brutality of those who believe themselves to be strong.

Renoir’s post-war comment on the “shaven head” as "the resistance to oppression and tyranny" and “the abstraction of the whole epic of Joan of Arc” suggests a dual interpretation.

Firstly, Jeanne d’Arc, historically known for her defiance against political and institutional oppression, symbolizes a broader resistance that extends beyond her personal struggles. The shaven head, in this context, becomes a visual representation of her defiance and refusal to submit to oppressive forces.

Secondly, the abstraction of the epic of *La Passion de Jeanne d’Arc* emphasizes the gender-related aspect. Jeanne's shaven head, stripped of traditional feminine adornment, becomes a symbolic abstraction of herstory. It transcends the specifics of her historical narrative and resonates with universal themes of courage, faith, and resistance against gender-based constraints.

The act of cutting her hair, a signifier of her femininity, becomes a visual metaphor for breaking free from societal expectations by challenging gender norms.

This is why Jeanne's "resistance to oppression and tyranny" through shedding external "adornment" is the paradigm we are most interested in. Burkovs'ka treads in the footsteps of this unadorned woman as she asks that her hair be shorn, embodying the roles of both female warrior and martyr in contemporary Ukraine. However, Lilia is a warrior with cropped hair – without the traditional *chub* or *oseledets* of the Ukrainian Cossack. This new persona leaves hardly any space for a husband who finds it difficult to reestablish his role opposite his soldier wife challenging the traditional gender balance.

THE ROLE OF HAIR IN NATIONAL FORMS OF GENDERED SHAMING

In his essay "Le péché de Dreyer", Renoir accentuated the impact of Falconetti's bare skull on present-day viewers:

> This shaven head said all this and much more to Dreyer. It was and remains the abstraction of the whole epic of Joan of Arc. What is miraculous is that this is also the case with the spectators who continue to come and purify themselves in the pure waters of Dreyer's Joan of Arc. ("Le péché de Dreyer")[18]

In his 1968 comment on "the resistance to oppression and tyranny," Renoir might also be hinting at something else, possibly alluding to recent interest in a sensitive period of French history. Shaving women's heads as a form of punishment was not exclusive to the 15th century. Public shamings of women accused of collaboration at the end of the Second World War were executed as radical and visible, yet simultaneously reversible changes to the women's public appearance, specifically their hair.

Shame and shaming have been theorized as a gendered emotion, given women's role to be treated as the objects of shaming activities and narratives in patriarchal societies. In France, the liberation is followed by an *Épuration* in its two forms, *légale* and *sauvage,* the wild one entailing rituals of shearing women's heads.[19] In her dissertation, Cara L. Wilson connects shame and shaving or shearing, *honte* and *tonte*:

> Existing historical and literary scholarship on the tondues explores the tontes as a form of gendered violence on the female body. Ultimately these studies portray the manner in which the divisions in France's national identity between collaboration and resistance are inscribed on the female body. The frantic quest to punish female collaborators and thereby purify the country of the shame of collaboration betrayed a desire to rebuild a unified national identity of heroic resistance through the summary judgement and punishment of the tondues as a national scapegoat. The tondues have also been used to question the myth of the Resistance that was established in the post-war era as a way to solidify France's national identity as a country of heroic and morally superior resistants. While the tondues were punished for representing the "honte" of French collaboration with Nazi Germany, in the years following the war, the tonte, as a form of gender-based

> violence, would come to represent the “honte” of the Liberation entrenched in patriarchal values and masculinist anxiety.[20]

The theme of “inscribing” shame “on the female body” is a central focus in our analysis of *Butterfly Vision*, prompting us to explore where women in times of war stand in the face of threats, accusations, and other challenges related to their gender. This extends to the potential accusation of 'collaborating' with the enemy, particularly if a pregnancy occurs.

THE HISTORICAL PARADIGM OF THE PIXIE AFTER WORLD WAR II: TO GIVE UP WHAT COULD “DENOTE YOUR SEX, SAVE WHAT NATURE HAS GIVEN YOU”

An essay in the 1932 English language edition of the trial proceedings of Jeanne d’Arc underscores the challenge of comprehending the phenomenon of Jeanne:

> The Maid's followers believed that she came from God and adored her as a prophet, saint and military idol. The Burgundians and English were stricken with fear at her success and when she was captured condemned her as a witch and apostate. The Roman Catholic Church has canonized her as a saint. Mr. Shaw has hailed her as the first Nationalist and the first Protestant. Other interpretations of her personality are as completely far apart. Every book about her adds to the controversy.[21]

The drama *Saint Joan* (1923) by G.B. Shaw mentioned above experienced a revival in Otto Preminger's film, where, in 1957, he cast Jean Seberg in her first role. Now, the act of hair being “cut short above the ears” (1431) took on a different meaning. It harked back to the provocation of the absence of a differentiating sign, the lack of something "to denote your sex, save what nature has given you."

Cutting the Jean(ne) pixie in Otto Preminger's 1957 film *Saint Joan*

The cinematic figure of Jeanne introduced one of the first realized modern pixie haircuts as a distinctive fashion style for a female protagonist, embodied by Jean Seberg.[22] Tragically, Seberg's life ended in a manner akin to Falconetti's – both women committed suicide.

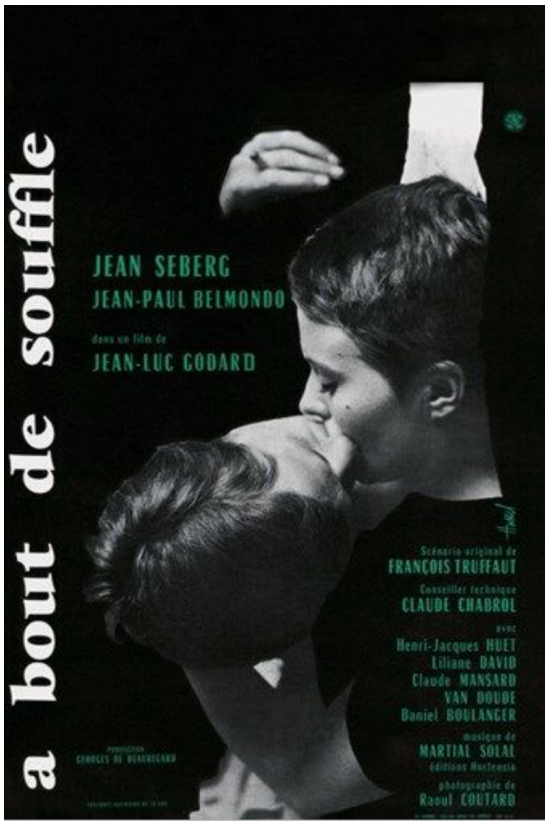
Seberg's untimely death was seemingly provoked by FBI surveillance and persecution through the COINTELPRO operation, driven by her political affiliations with liberal causes and the Black Panthers. The FBI aimed to tarnish her public image by disseminating reports about her unborn baby in the context of an "interracial" relationship. The premature birth of the child, who did not survive, further added to Seberg's woes in the 1970s, when she was blacklisted.

While Falconetti/Dreyer's rendition focused on the universal and national, the power of institutions, particularly the church in France, the post-war vision of Jeanne represented a shift to the international, while strengthening the gender aspect. Women, by cutting their hair, were

staking a claim to equal rights and opportunities traditionally associated with men. This departure was reflective of changing societal norms and had to be adapted for the sensibilities of the 1950s.

Seberg in “The Iconic Hairstyles in Cinema” (“Les coiffures cultes au cinema”) in the journal *Elle*[23]

Jeanne underwent a transformation, becoming a blonde, and casting shifted away from French actresses (Ingrid Bergman took on the role twice, in 1948 and 1954, the latter in a film directed by Rossellini).



Equality in haircuts: The original French poster of *À bout de souffle* (1960)

In turn, the rebelliously spiky hair of the American Seberg played a pivotal role in paving the way for foreign actresses as icons of the French nouvelle vague (in *À bout de souffle*, 1960, directed by J.-L. Godard) and the vulnerable figures of pregnant mothers in urban environments.

Roman Polanski's psychological horror film *Rosemary's Baby* (1968) is also a 1960s film about a pregnancy and the men interfering with it, treating a woman's body as the instrument which helps them to reach their goals.

Mia Farrow as the scared mother-to-be in Polanski's 1968 film

Lilia. The TV calls her the "Undefeated"

In front of the camera, both women examine the marks on their backs. Similar to Rosemary who carries "Satan's" child, Lilia chooses to deliver the baby.[24]

Rosemary before her hair was cropped (the actress is wearing a wig in this scene)
Images of Publicly "Shorn Women": When the Female Body Becomes Political

Shaving women's heads was carried out in France in market places or on stairs which form a scene for the spectacle, sometimes by professionals, at the time by men who had been or claimed to be part of the resistance.

Shaving of women's heads and branding their skulls with swastikas, others watching (Dordogen 1944)

http://espritdepays.com/dordogne/histoire/epuration-femmes-en-dordogne-1944-1951-1re-partie

In France some of these so-called *tondues* and "shorn women" were photographed by members of the Allied armies and filmed by GIs in formerly occupied France or in Menton, which was annexed by Italy, occupied for a year by Germany and liberated on 8 September 1944. The disturbing photos taken of women being shorn begs for an analysis from the point of view of a spectacle of gendered violence accepted by the community. Among the photographers was also a woman journalist, the American Lee Miller.[25] Cynthia Enloe reminds us of the difficulties of standing up to "sexist editors", who at that time helped to maintain a "masculinization of war" which in turn "helped to sustain the fog of war."[26]

Wilson explains the pivotal role of hair in these rituals:

> Thus, I propose to reposition hair as a central aspect of the tonte as an innovative way of understanding why the shearing of hair became the chosen punishment for the tondues' alleged sexual transgressions. And through my discussion of maternal myths, I understand the punishment of the tonte to be a pseudo-religious purification ritual by which the female reproductive body is symbolically cleansed of its "foreignness" and reinscribed into patriotic myths in a patriarchal state (Wilson 2019, 31-32)

Wilson points out a salient continuity between war-time and post-liberation ideologies:

> Though there is a tendency to frame the nationalistic rhetoric of the Vichy regime as an aberration, the nationalist rhetoric espoused by the Resistance during and after war also provides a clear example of how women's bodies were considered an extension of the national territory during and after the war. Below, I briefly contextualize the feminized imagery employed by Vichy and the Resistance to show how the two ideologically-opposed movements nevertheless overlapped in their politicization of the female body. In a patriarchal society, the perpetuation and transmission of national identity depends on the fidelity and fertility of the female body. And in Pétain's Vichy, it was considered a moral and political imperative for women to reserve their bodies and their reproductive capacities for French men. (Wilson 2019, 36)

Wilson's analysis highlights how women can undergo a nominal "de-occupation" through the ritual. For the *tondue*, the removal of her hair was an attempt to decontaminate or 'de-occupy' the female body of its Germanness." But her astute analysis of literary and cinematic works reveals that the ritual goes deeper and is more ambivalent:

> In the case of the captive woman and the *tondue*, the loss of their hair represented a temporary desexualization of the female body; if hair is considered an instrument of female seduction, the shearing of their hair temporarily disarmed them. And finally, the desexualization of the female body and her alienation from the community due to the shame of her shorn head lead to a temporary quarantine of female fertility.[27]

A quarantine" by getting rid of one's hair is certainly something Lilia is looking for. She turns to her older friend, Magpie (Soroka), who once was a hair-dresser. Magpie offers her to report the rape as a war crime. Notably, Lilia does not take up her offer but asks her to cut her hair, instead.

MAGPIE'S HAIRCUT, LILIA'S CAMOUFLAGE AND QUARANTINE

The maiden now unplaits her braids
And will become a nun...
("The Kerchief", Taras Shevchenko)[28]

Even if Lilia is in a different position from that of the French women shorn in 1944, we can ask ourselves whether giving up one's hair can indeed have a therapeutic function, and under which circumstances? Lilia's hair is not cut publicly or as punishment. When she asks her friend and co-combatant Magpie (Natalya Vorozhbyt, in real life a writer and filmmaker herself)[29] to perform the cutting – the result is a haircut which indeed resembles the one of Jeanne and her warrior-descendants:

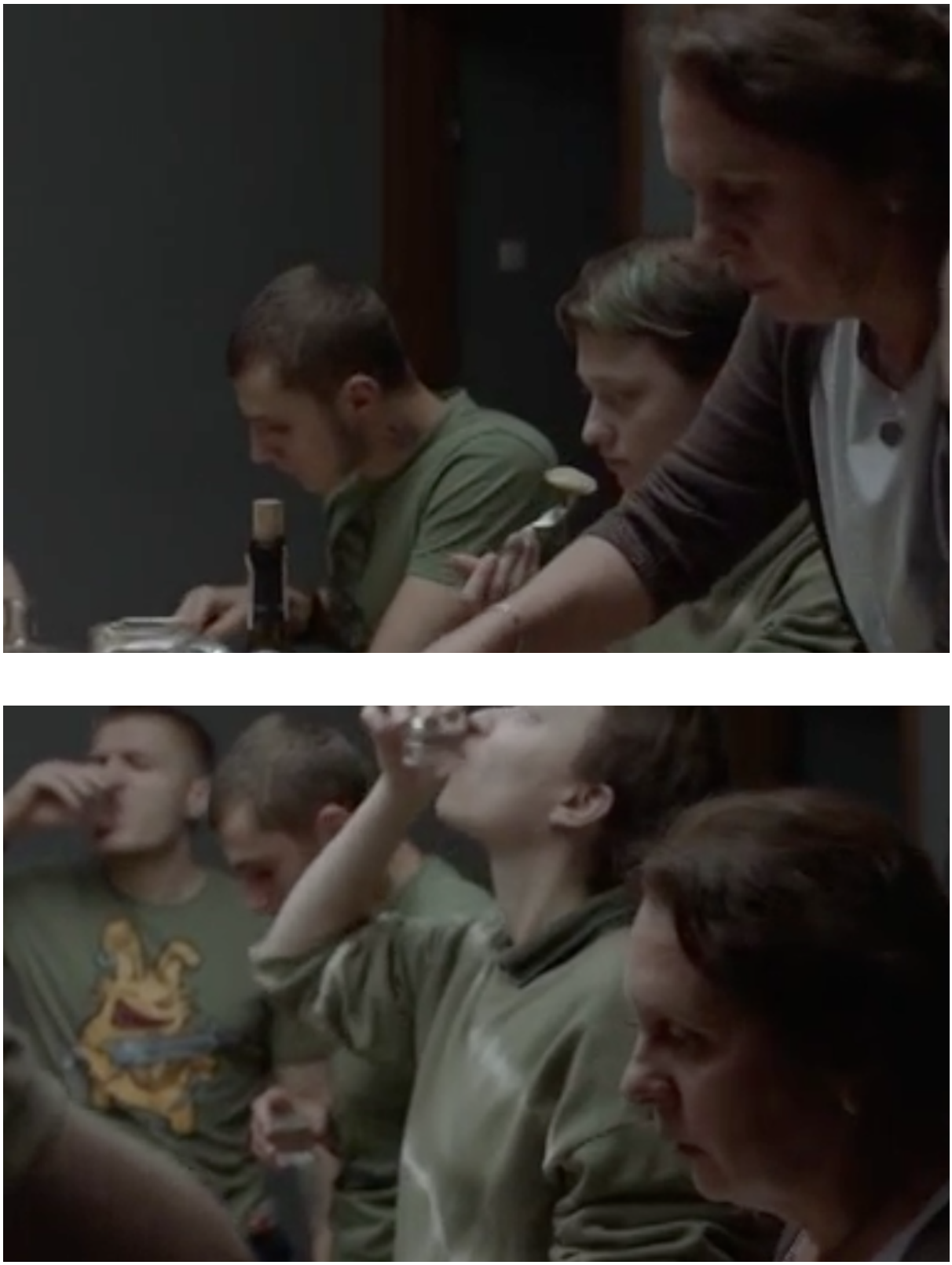
Hair cut by Natalya Vorozhbyt

Above we saw men (members of the WWII resistance) shearing women. In the film *Butterfly Vision,* we see a relaxed as well as intimate women-only episode, when Magpie gives Lilia a haircut and also colours a strand of her hair in green, the colour of military fatigues.

After her hair is cropped, Lilia visually aligns with her husband, differentiating herself starkly from her mother, who wears a traditional feminine hairstyle – the bun, similar to Tarkovsky's women in *The Mirror* (1975). We also follow her "traditional" female or maternal behaviour, which the actress (Myroslava Vytrykhovs'ka-Makar) displays at the table, serving others:

The dinner for Lilia’s return: Tokha, Lilia, her mother

Whereas Lila’s mother only sips from the vodka, Lilia drinks it up in one gulp and has more than one glass. Lilia at this point is still pondering the fate of the embryo while she drinks, perhaps hoping that the alcohol will lead to the loss of the child.



Drinking with the lads

Lilia is blending in with the other soldiers. With her green streak (chub) she camouflages herself. All belong to the volunteer Bakhmut Battalion.

Voluntary Battalion Bakhmut

Can the loss of Lilia's tresses be considered a private cleansing ritual? Is she, like the women in France who were shorn by members of the Resistance, ready or even eager to change her outer appearance to stay intact inside and become de-feminized for a little while, as a respite, far away from male attention? It appears that Lilia is consciously choosing this rite of passage as both a physical shedding of hair "touched" by the enemy, therefore impure, and a symbolic act.

Lilia and Magpie after the completed hair cut

To better understand the ritual of hair cutting it is helpful to turn to history again.

HIROSHIMA *MON AMOUR* AND OTHER POST-WAR FILMS ON SHORN WOMEN

When we look at the documentary films and photos of the shearing of women, we realize that they have a theatrical moment. They are indeed a ritual, and humiliating as they are, they do not constitute the grave punishment that would have been extended to serious offenses of genuine collaborateurs. And it surprises us to see that many women shown seem ot be enduring the ordeal relatively indifferently.

The topic of shame engendered by *tondues* was picked up by several post-war films, most memorably by Alain Resnais' *Hiroshima mon amour* (1958). Cara Wilson describes the heroine created by Marguerite Duras and Alains Resnais as accepting the shearing of her hair "as a tiny relief" ("a me soulage un tout petit peu") – which in this case is related to mourning her German lover, who was shot in the end of the war in Nevers, her hometown.[30]

> For Elle, the lack of hair is not a constant reminder of her transgressions, but rather, the constant regrowth of hair is a reminder that she is still alive and did not die with the rest of her body, which is how she describes the German soldier as he lay dying beneath her. The *tonte* creates a physical state in which she is continuously recalled to the moment of trauma. Previously I claimed that the symbolic punishment of the *tonte* is a regeneration of certain cultural myths that form the foundation of patriarchy and patriotism, and here Elle ultimately manages to subvert her body's inscription into these myths by experiencing her hair as not only the site of trauma, but also as the site of remembrance, or a *folle renaissance*.[31]

We can see that Lilia's story and her short hair finds itself in a paradigm of such film icons as Emmanuelle Riva's shamed Elle (*Hiroshima mon amour*) or as the national heroine Jeanne in *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc* (a catholic martyr since 1920) who was born not far from Nevers, which is the city where the heroine was humiliated and lived in a cellar until her hair grew back – Duras might have inserted this reference to Jeanne's "capita rasa" before her burning.

The late 1950s and the year 1960 appear to have been particularly receptive to unlocking the memory of shaved heads, concurrently breaking away from the social norms of the 1950s.

Five Branded Women: Vera Miles, Barbara Bel Geddes, Carla Gravina, Silvana Mangano and Jeanne Moreau (directed by Martin Ritt, 1960)

Italian poster of the shorn woman (*Five Branded Women*, here the Italian title *Jovanka e le altre*)

Public shamings of women accused at the end of the Second World War occurred in many liberated countries, including Italy and Yugoslavia. While I can't provide a detailed analysis here, I would like to let the posters speak to this topic.

Head shaving was often connected to undressing and marking the women accused of collaboration. Most of these films, even if they exploited the sexual topic of so-called “horizontal

collaboration" and included nude scenes, the best films among them stressed the ambivalence of the state women found themselves in during the war.

Poster of five "shorn and shamed" women (*Five Branded Women*)

NOT A HORROR FILM

Butterfly Vision tells us a story of Lilia's ability to exercize her free will. Even if the Ukrainian society does not want the public shame of a raped "butterfly", it affords Lilia the option to decide herself whether to abort or not.

Rosemary (Mia Farrow) is changing while impregnated with Satan's child

The Ukrainian film is not a horror movie where the baby will be a monster in the vein of Polanski's horror film *Rosemary's Baby* but a film about a woman who has seen and experienced more than the people around her – after all, she has the multiple vision of a butterfly. Lilia will give the child up for adoption – we see a couple from Croatia, Liza and Mustafa, receiving the child, overjoyed.

Now, we might also understand why she decides not to report the rape as a war crime, as doing so would mark the child as the daughter of a war criminal. It's worth noting that this decision for Ukrainian audiences must seem debatable now, in light of the internationally known mass rapes in Bucha and many other places.

THE OTHER VISION OF THE BUTTERFLY

"For me, Lilya is the general collective representation of female soldiers, of Ukrainian resistance, and of Ukrainian women's ability to overcome victimization," director Maksym Nakonechnyi stated.[32] Let us unpack this statement.

Initially, there's a perceived imperative that Lilia's body must be purified, as her womb was seen as invaded by hostile sperm, preparing her for further maternal 'use.' This topic surfaces in Vitalii Manskii's documentary, *Eastern Front* (2022) where we follow an Orthodox baptism and listen to an Ukrainian woman how she berates the diminishment of the country's "Genofond". The significance of becoming a mother for the sake of the nation's continuation is a theme ambivalently echoed in *Butterfly Vision*.

When the film takes a different turn, it emphasizes Lilia's agency over her body and her child. The narrative unfolds with the crucial decision not to undergo a medical intervention,

recognising that such an act would be another form of violence against both her and the embryo. Importantly, it is Lilia's untreated PTSD that prompts her to resist the doctor's touch, evoking memories of being tied by her torturer.

The birth itself plunges Lilia back into the traumatic experiences of torture and rape, revealed for the first time clearly in a flashback after 1.5 cinematic hours, dispelling her earlier public statement that she was not mistreated. The audience is made aware of the intense pain Lilia endures during all medical procedures, juxtaposed with short memory flashes related to the assault on her body in a basement.

Surprisingly, Lilia's decision to have the baby and give it up for adoption emerges as the most humane solution, resisting potential negative consequences of the period of captivity on a female Ukrainian soldier. This choice is not only a reflection of universal "life-affirming"[33] values but also aligns with the ideals of a young state like Ukraine, seeking to distinguish itself from crude separatist nationalisms, resist ideologies of DNA-implants and ward off invaders attempting to infiltrate and occupy the bodies and minds of Ukrainian individuals.

Lilia resists the societal stigma attached to her as a rape victim. The film challenges preoccupations with ethnicity and nationalist concepts of reproduction. In this regard, it stands out as one of the most progressive works from the region in the last five years. It instills hope that humanity can learn, as indicated by the poignant detail of the baby being adopted by loving parents from Post-Yugoslavia. The narrative gestures towards an inability to conceive naturally after traumatic experience and introduces a deeper dimension of the recent history of genocidal rape, showcasing an understanding not only of the female psyche but also our recent history.

I extend my gratitude to Ivan Kozlenko, Irina Schulzki, and Denise Youngblood for their valuable ideas, insights, and constructive feedback.

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[1] Cynthia Enloe, *Twelve Feminist Lessons of War*. (United Kingdom: Footnote Press Limited. 2023). https://www.google.co.uk/books/edition/Twelve_Feminist_Lessons_of_War/cmG9EAAAQBAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=%22lazy+narrative%22&pg=PT101&printsec=frontcover. I owe a debt of gratitude to Rachel Morley for providing me access to this text.

[2] Lokaneeta, Jinee, 'Violence', in Lisa Disch, and Mary Hawkesworth (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Feminist Theory*, Oxford Handbooks (2016; online edn, Oxford Academic, 6 Jan. 2015), 1019. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199328581.013.50, accessed 1 Dec. 2023.

[3] Nicolaisen, Viktoria, The systematic use of sexual violence in genocide: Understanding why women are being targeted using the cases of Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, (Uppsala University, Disciplinary Domain of Humanities and Social Sciences, Faculty of Theology, Department of Theology. 2019), 8. Diss. Uppsala https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1359249/FULLTEXT01.pdf%C2%A0

[4] Nicolaisen, The systematic use of sexual violence, 24.

[5] "Butterfly Vision: Q&A With Khrystyna Lizogub." Q&A with the cinematographer of *Butterfly Vision*, Khrystyna Lizogub, talking to Olesya Khromeychuk, 15 September 2023. Ukrainian Institute London.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GlyyABXUcyM [Oct 2, 2023]
[6] https://taborproduction.com/production/fiction-films/spas.html. The film is a co-production of Ukraine with the Czech Republic (Dagmar Sedláčková), Croatia (Anita Juka), and Sweden (Mario Adamson and Sergio C. Ayala). („Two Czech Co-productions selected for Cannes," 14 April 2022, https://www.filmcenter.cz/en/news/two-czech-co-productions-selected-for-cannes).
[7] „As for the camera we chose the Alexa Mini because we wanted the camera to be small and comfortable for long handheld shots. Almost all of the film was shot on handheld camera to make it look more documentary, so Alexa Mini was the best decision." Chris O'Falt and Erik Adams, "Cannes Cinematography: Here Are the Cameras and Lenses Used to Shoot 49 Films. How I Shot That: The world's best cinematographers tell IndieWire how they created the look of their highly anticipated features at Cannes." *Indiewire*,
May 27, 2022, https://www.indiewire.com/features/general/cannes-2022-cinematography-cameras-lenses-1234725082/3/
[8] *The Trial of Jeanne d'Arc* translated into English from the original Latin and French documents by W.P. Barrett with an essay. (Gotham House, Inc. 1932), 332. https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/basis/joanofarc-trial.asp
[9] *The Trial of Jeanne d'Arc*, 160-161.
[10] Cara L. Wilson, *Tondues, Rasées, Voilées, Défrisées*: The Therapeutic Re-memberings of Francophone Women's Hairstories, (PhD Dissertation Vanderbilt University 2019), 55.
[11] As Wilson further explains, the practice of hair-shaving and wearing a wig (sheitel) „evolved, from the *halakhah* regarding hair-covering, as a custom that is now primarily practiced amongst Hasidic Jewish communities of Eastern European origins." Hair was considered as a potential source of impurity while cleaning oneself when submerging in the bath of mikweh (Wilson, *Tondues*, 119).
[12] "I just love watching beautiful women kick butt. It's so inspiring," she says, laughing. " Milla Jovovich: kick-butt queen, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 Sept 2012, https://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/celebrity/milla-jovovich-kickbutt-queen-20110926-1kssc.html
[13] *The Trial of Jeanne d'Arc*, 348.
[14] https://elle.ua/ludi/interview/des-lyudi-ginut-shchodnya-a-zovsm-poruch--restoran-sukn-ta-kvti-komanda-flmu-bachennya-metelika-pro-kannskiy-knofestival-ta-rosysko-ukransku-vynu/
[15] Cf. Decolonising the (Post-)Soviet Screen, ed. by Gerritsen, Heleen. 2023. *Apparatus. Film, Media and Digital Cultures of Central and Eastern Europe*, no. 17. https://doi.org/10.17892/app.2023.00017.359.
[16] Natascha Drubek, 2021. „Hidden Figures: Rewriting the History of Cinema in the Empire of All the Russias". *Apparatus. Film, Media and Digital Cultures of Central and Eastern Europe.* Nr. 13 (December):109-44. https://doi.org/10.17892/app.2021.00013.284
[17] Feldman was the technical director of *Fantômas* (Pal Fejös) and *Napoléon* (1927). (https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0271116/)
[18] „Le péché de Dreyer", Jean Renoir, Reprinted as " Le Pêché de Dreyer " in Jean Renoir, *Ecrits 1926-1971.* Paris. Editions Pierre Belfond. 1974. See also: Carl Theodor Dreyer, *Jesus*. 1972, 307.
https://www.google.co.uk/books/edition/Carl_Th_Dreyer/4zg0AQAAIAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&bsq=Jean%20Renoir%20%20Le%20p%C3%A9ch%C3%A9%20de%20Dreyer%20par%20Jean%20Renoir&dq=Jean%20Renoir%20%20Le%20p%C3%A9ch%C3%A9%20de%20Dreyer%20par%20Jean%20Renoir&printsec=frontcover
[19] Fabrice Virgili, *La France virile : des femmes tondues à la Libération*, (Paris Payot 2000).
[20] Wilson, *Tondues*, 32.
[21] *The Trial of Jeanne d'Arc*, 307.
[22] Unlike shaven heads or cropped hair, which from the 1940s were associated with war, persecution, deportation, forced labor, captivity, camps, genocide, occupation, death zones, and

exploitation, the pixie cut represents a distinct style. In this context, analysing hairstyles in Wanda Jakubowska's Polish camp epic, *The Last Stage / Ostatni etap* (1948), would be insightful.

[23] „Jean Seberg adopte la coupe garçonne dans « A bout de souffle » de Jean-Luc Godard, film emblématique de la Nouvelle Vague. Sorti en 1960, il reflète l'image de la société où souffle un vent de liberté, où les femmes se permettent de porter les cheveux courts comme Twiggy ou Mia Farrow."
https://www.elle.fr/Loisirs/Cinema/Dossiers/Les-coiffures-cultes-au-cinema/Jean-seberg-breathless

[24] An early motif of a pregnancy induced by Satan can be found in the 1917 Ernol'ev studio production directed by Iakov Protazanov, called *Satana likuiushchii / Satan Triumphant*: An ascetic pastor (played by I. Mozzhukhin) falls victim to the influence of a diabolic portrait and impregnates his sister-in-law, played by Ukrainian actress Natalia Lysenko who later played in French productions, many produced by Kamenka. Olga' Blazhevich's screenplay includes motifs from N. Gogol's 1835 text, "Portret"/ "Portrait", where an impoverished artist acquires a demonic painting to become successful.

[25] How has Miller – who herself was not only raped as a child but also infected by a venereal disease which her mother treated with painful measures – reacted to this shearing? Has she – in her capacity as a surrealist artist or a journalist – tried to interfere or was she just silently documenting the scene as an Allied reporter? How have the shorn ones reacted to a woman recording their public 'shame'? These questions arise have not been answered in the recent exhibitions about Lee Miller, held in cooperation with the Lee Miller Archives, East Sussex, such as in the https://brightonmuseums.org.uk/event/lee-miller-dressed/.

[26] Cynthia Enloe, *Twelve Feminist Lessons,* 2023.

[27] She continues, „that the nature of the *tonte* as a pseudo-religious rite of purification juxtaposed with the natalist rhetoric of de Gaulle during the Liberation, while not necessarily concerned with the potential fertility of the individual *tondues*, is nevertheless concerned with reappropriating the reproductive bodies of the *tondues* to serve as a symbolic warning to women who do not consecrate their sexuality and fertility for French men and the regeneration of the French nation." Wilson, *Tondues*, 56.

[28] "U nediliu ne huliala ta na shovky zarobliala". *The Poetical Works of Taras Shevchenko. The Kobzar*. Translated from the Ukrainian by C.H. Andrusyshen and Watson Kirkconnell. Published for the Ukrainian Canadian Committee by the University of Toronto Press, 1964. Toronto and Buffalo. Printed in Canada, Reprinted 1977, p. 178 - 181.

[29] She directed Ukraine's 2021 Oscar nominee for best international film, the omnibus *Bad Roads*, which is about a female journalist held captive by a separatist soldier attempting to rape her. In order to prevent him from doing so, the journalist starts a conversation with her torturer. Vorozhbyt often applies black humor in her works.

[30] „While I frame the *tonte* as a punishment for perceived sexual transgressions, the trauma of being a *tondue* for Elle is intimately connected with and displaced by the death of her lover rather than patriarchal society's attempts to control female reproductive bodies. During the *tonte*, Elle primarily remembers her grief at the death of her lover and registers the shearing of her hair as relief: "Ça me soulage un tout petit peu...de...ta mort...comme.../ ...comme, ah! tiens, je ne peux pas mieux te dire, comme pour les ongles, les murs, de la colère" (Duras 97). Elle experiences the *tonte* as a rite, a symbolic death, that allows her to accompany her lover into death; the *tonte* is a renaissance into *folie*. Because of this decapillation, she has figuratively "lost her head," and she finds herself entering a space without reason, a space in which she can continuously remember and mourn her lover." Wilson, *Tondues*, 58.

[31] Wilson, *Tondues*, 93

[32] „We thought the title seemed relatable in that it expresses the main idea for the film. Lilya, who's [sic] callsign is Butterfly, is struggling to keep her own vision of her life and make her own decisions. It also tells us about this special, broader vision of reality that she has after having her traumatic experience – perhaps not because of what she experienced, but a person who's undergone an experience like Lilya has acquired a different outlook on themselves and the world around them." (Andrew Murray, "It was a really precious process": An interview with Maksym

Nakonechnyi on *Butterfly Vision*. 22 May 2022. https://www.theupcoming.co.uk/2022/05/27/it-was-a-really-precious-process-an-interview-with-maksym-nakonechnyi-on-butterfly-vision/)

[33] Ibid.

CONSTRUCTION AND REPRESENTATION OF CULTURAL TRAUMA IN CONTEMPORARY UKRAINIAN CINEMA

Oleksandra Kalinichenko
(Kyiv National I. K. Karpenko-Karyi Theatre, Cinema and Television University)

INTRODUCTION

Ukrainian history has numerously been marked by large-scale historical events, that could be deemed traumatic from many perspectives. In the last hundred years only, some of these landmark events were the Soviet invasion and occupation at the beginning of the 20th century, the Chornobyl disaster in 1986, and the ongoing Russian-Ukrainian war. Each of these unmistakably has left its scars in the national memory, thus changing the nation's identity and worldview. Such upheavals consequently have influenced and transformed Ukrainian art and cinema.

At first glance, the traces of cultural trauma may almost be invisible in the national consciousness, and, as a result, in national cinema. However, they are rooted there and continuously influence the construction of cinematic images of the present. The study of contemporary Ukrainian cinema within the context of cultural trauma is crucial for understanding the impact of historical and socio-cultural events on the country's contemporary cinema. It helps to expand our knowledge of the cultural manifestations of traumatic events and their impact on artistic creativity, which allows us to better understand the national memory, identity, and worldview of one's country and nation. Films that explore cultural traumas directly or vice versa become important testimonies and reflections of the past and present.

In this article, I will explore selected films of contemporary Ukrainian cinema through the lens of cultural trauma and how it could be represented through the audio-visual language of the cinema. To do so, I will examine the concepts of cultural trauma and psychological trauma through sociological and psychological theories and use them as tools for reading and decoding the films. I will also provide a brief overview of the history of Ukrainian cinema through the lens of cultural trauma theory. This will allow me to trace which particular images and film language have been transferred to contemporary Ukrainian cinema as a result of cultural trauma such as political repression and censorship of the Soviet Union.

THE THEORY OF CULTURAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAUMA: HOW TO DECODE CINEMA?

The Cultural Trauma and its Manifestation in Cinema

Cultural trauma is the deep wounds inflicted on a collective group, society, or nation as a result of large-scale and painful events. These events can vary in nature and origin, from war, genocide, colonization, and natural or environmental disasters to the loss of cultural heritage and identity. Such experiences deeply affect the affected community, shaping its collective memory, identity, and worldview.[1]

Cultural trauma occurs when a society experiences an event or series of events that profoundly undermine its fundamental beliefs, values, and norms. These events challenge the social fabric, leading to a break in cultural narrative, identity, and collective memory. Worldwide examples of cultural trauma include the Holocaust, the Rwandan genocide, and the forced displacement of indigenous peoples. These traumatic events disrupt the stability of social structures, leaving individuals and communities vulnerable to long-term psychological, emotional, and social consequences.[2] In Western psychological theory, the focus on such impactful events of the past has generated a vast body of literature on collective and cultural trauma. However, these concepts are also important for understanding Ukrainian history, as Ukraine in the 20th century experienced a huge number of catastrophes and traumatic experiences. These included World War I (1914-1918), the Civil War (1918-1920), collectivization and deportations (1929-1933), the Holodomor of 1932-1933, the Great Terror (1937), World War II (1939-1945), the Holodomor of 1947, and the Chornobyl disaster (1986). Similarly, the history of modern Ukraine has seen events that cannot but affect national identity and memory: The Orange Revolution (2004-2005), the Revolution of Dignity (2014), the annexation of Crimea (2014), and the Russian-Ukrainian war (2014-ongoing). Most of these tragic events are well-researched factually but are difficult to comprehend and to weave into the national narrative.[3]

Cultural trauma changes the collective memory and identity of a community. A traumatic event becomes an indelible part of a shared narrative that is passed down from generation to generation. The memory of the trauma is preserved in stories, rituals, and cultural expressions, serving as a constant reminder of the pain and suffering experienced. This collective memory shapes the identity of a group, often leading to feelings of victimization, loss, or injustice.[4] The process of healing cultural trauma begins with recognizing and honoring traumatic events, as well as examining the effects of historical trauma across the communities. Acknowledging the

suffering experienced and the injustice perpetrated is crucial to validate the experiences of survivors. Commemorative practices, such as memorials, museums, and public rituals, provide a space for remembrance and reflection, allowing individuals and communities to collectively mourn, grieve, and honor the past. Healing cultural trauma also requires empowering affected communities so that they can regain agency and control over their narrative. This includes promoting cultural revitalization, reconnection of people with their culture, supporting cultural expressions, and providing platforms for marginalized voices to be heard.[5]

Cinema can be interpreted in many ways, but in connection to history it could be more than the documents of the past, or the instrument for researching and reflecting on historical events, it can also be a powerful tool for commemorative practice and creating a space for living with cultural trauma, both for the authors of a particular film and for the audience. For instance, Steven Spielberg's film *Schindler's List* (1992) depicts the Holocaust and the trauma suffered by the Jewish community during World War II. The film follows the story of Oskar Schindler, a German industrialist who saved over a thousand Jewish lives by employing them in his factories. Through powerful visuals and emotionally charged acting, the film depicts the horrors of the Holocaust, the loss of identity, and the collective trauma experienced by the Jewish people. Another example is the documentary *The Act of Killing* (*Jagal,* 2012) by Joshua Oppenheimer, Christine Cynn, and an anonymous director. The film delves into the events of the 1965-1966 Indonesian massacres, during which approximately 500,000 people were killed. The narrative follows former leaders of Indonesian death squads who are invited to recreate their killings in different film genres. This unusual approach allows the perpetrators to confront and reflect on their actions, providing insight into the collective trauma experienced by the victims and the legacy of violence in Indonesian society.[6]

These are just two prominent examples from the vast world history of cinema, but there are many more. Every country and nation have reflected on traumatic events through art in one way or another and has also used it as a means of raising awareness, provoking discussion, and building empathy for the deep and lasting effects of cultural trauma. Through their stories, the films provide a glimpse into the experiences of individuals and communities affected by historical events and allow viewers to reflect on the meaning of collective memory and healing.

From Collective to Personal

In his work Poetics, from which drama and screenwriting in the contemporary sense evolved, Aristotle states: "A perfect tragedy should, as we have seen, be arranged not on the simple but on the complex plan. It should, moreover, imitate actions that excite pity and fear, this being the distinctive mark of tragic imitation. It follows, in the first place, that the change, of

fortune presented must not be the spectacle of a virtuous man brought from prosperity to adversity: for this moves neither pity nor fear; it merely shocks us. Nor, again, that of a bad man passing from adversity to prosperity: for nothing can be more alien to the spirit of Tragedy; it possesses no single tragic quality; it neither satisfies the moral sense nor calls forth pity or fear. Nor, again, should the downfall of the utter villain be exhibited. A plot of this kind would, doubtless, satisfy the moral sense, but it would inspire neither pity nor fear; for pity is aroused by unmerited misfortune, fear by the misfortune of a man like ourselves. Such an event, therefore, will be neither pitiful nor terrible. There remains, then, the character between these two extremes, – that of a man who is not eminently good and just, – yet whose misfortune is brought about not by vice or depravity, but by some error or frailty. He must be the one who is highly renowned and prosperous, – a personage like Oedipus, Thyestes, or other illustrious men of such families."[7] To pair it with the thought of Bessel van Der Kolk, MD, psychiatrist, and trauma research writer, in which he states that traumatic experiences leave their marks, whether on a large scale (reflected in our history and culture) or on a smaller scale, changing the lives of our families and turning into dark secrets that people unconsciously pass on from generation to generation.[8]

From the work of Bessel van Der Kolk, MD we can follow that cultural traumas are often reflected at the individual level.[9] Moreover, according to Aristotle, it is individual traumas that serve as the plot engine of history. So, the psychological theory of trauma can be applied to decode and analyse most audio-visual cinematic works.

Moreover, in the course of the development of the film language, specific techniques and images appeared that with time have already become a conventional and widely used symbol for depicting trauma. For instance, which techniques are used in cinema to convey the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (hereinafter referred to as PTSD)? This disorder was recognized only after the Second World War and the Vietnam War, when veterans returned from the frontline and many of them had similar symptoms and difficulties in adjusting to civilian life.[10] One of the symptoms is an influx of intrusive memories of life-threatening events in which the person was involved. Such a technique as the time loop (although it appeared for the first time in cinema in 1933 in the American film *Turn Back the Clock* by Edgar Selwyn) at some point turned into a specific technique to denote PTSD, as a symbol of the fact that a person is stuck in a traumatic event and cannot escape from its circle. Such use of time loop in film can be seen in the American science fiction action thriller film *Source Code* (2011) directed by Duncan John.[11] Contemporary Ukrainian cinema has depicted PTSD in various films: the documentary *No Obvious Signs* (*Явних проявів немає*, 2018), and feature films *Atlantis* (*Атлантида*, 2019), *Blindfold* (*Із зав'язаними очима*, 2020), *Bad roads* (*Погані дороги*, 2020) with the short feature *Bullmastiff* (*Бульмастиф*, 2020). As these films delve into the topic of the Russian-Ukrainian war, they are rooted in reality and depict PTSD subtly through the use of color, camera angle, and character development arcs.

UKRAINIAN CINEMA HISTORY THROUGH THE LENS OF CULTURAL TRAUMA

Ukrainian cinema has a rich and complex history that reflects the country's journey, also depicting influences of cultural trauma. Ukrainian filmmakers have overcome the challenges of censorship, political repression in the Soviet Union, and the deep scars left by historical events (that naturally have affected the state of the film industry in the country). Ukrainian cinema emerged at the beginning of the 20th century, marked by a period of avant-garde artistic exploration and national awakening.[12] However, the occupation by the Soviet Union brought with it a new era of cultural trauma for Ukraine. Under Soviet rule, the Ukrainian film industry became an instrument of propaganda, suppressing creative freedom and imposing a rigid ideological framework. Films were expected to conform to socialist realism, promote Soviet values, and downplay Ukrainian nationality.[13]

Already in the 1930s, Ukrainian filmmakers learned to speak to the audience indirectly, using hidden symbols and cultural codes. Later, this metaphorical and symbol-rich cinematic movement would be known worldwide as Ukrainian poetic cinema. The most striking films of the 1930s that reflect this, of course, are those of Oleksandr Dovzhenko. His fourth film *Zvenyhora* (*Звенигора*, 1928) seemed to meet the government's objectives, but the director managed to formulate the key dilemma of the Ukrainian intelligentsia of his generation within the framework of the available plot. Professor of film studies at Brock University Bohdan Nebesio writes about this, that internal conflict between the national revival or social revolution is depicted in the film as a confrontation between seemingly opposite poles: nationalism (symbolised by the character of Pavlo) and socialism (symbolised by the character of Tymish) against the background of Ukrainian national history (symbolised by the character of Grandfather).[14]

In his iconic film *Earth* (*Земля*, 1930), one of the canonical images is that of an apple as a rich native land. At the beginning of the film, the viewer sees a wealth of apples in the frame: an old man lying under an apple tree, his fellow grandfather sitting on an apple stump, and a child trying to eat an apple on the grass. And it was this richness of the apple tree that played against the glorification of collectivization, which the audience immediately decoded. For example, the director Pudovkin asked the question "why was it necessary to organize a fight for a tractor[15] if there is wealth and an excess of material goods around, when people die peacefully, having bitten an apple for their last pleasure, and there are thousands and thousands of such apples around when you just have to stretch out your hand and the luxurious gifts of nature will fall on your shoulders."[16]

One of the most crucial cultural traumas in Ukrainian history is the Holodomor, an artificial famine organized by the Soviet regime in the early 1930s. The consequences of this tragedy have been reflected in Ukrainian cinema, albeit with restrictions imposed by censorship. Films about the Holodomor were often censored or banned because they could expose the Soviet state's responsibility for the famine and undermine the official narrative, which is why such films mostly appeared after 1991 or outside Ukraine during its occupation by the Soviet Union. An example of such films is the documentary *The Living* (*Живі*, 2008) by Serhiy Bukovsky[17], where the Holodomor-genocide is woven into the plot of world events of the 1930s: the aftermath of the Great Depression in the United States, Hitler's rise to power in Germany, the extermination of Ukrainian villagers by the Stalinist regime. Also, the Canadian historical documentary *Harvest of Despair* (*Жнива розпачу*, 1984) by Slawko Novytsky[18] and the feature film *Famine-33* (*Голод-33*, 1991) by Oles Yanchuk explore the causes and consequences of the famine.[19]

Censorship in Ukrainian cinema can be seen as a product of cultural trauma. Traumatic events such as the Holodomor, Soviet repression, and political instability left deep scars on Ukrainian society. The Soviet government, realizing the potential ability of cinema to shape public opinion and collective memory, sought to control and manipulate the narrative to keep power in its hands. Censorship became a tool for suppressing dissent, erasing painful memories, and promoting a distorted version of history that served the regime's interests. Films that directly addressed or challenged the cultural traumas experienced by the Ukrainian people were often heavily censored, cut, or banned altogether. The censorship of Ukrainian cinema not only suppressed artistic expression but also perpetuated a cycle of cultural trauma. By suppressing research and documentation of historical events and their impact on Ukrainian society, the authorities sought to preserve collective amnesia, preventing healing and slowing down the process of confrontation and reconciliation with the past. This deliberate suppression of cultural trauma perpetuated the sense of injustice, silencing the voices of victims and reinforcing the power dynamics that caused the trauma in the first place.

The 1960s and 1970s were the time when a new wave of Ukrainian filmmakers emerged who sought to challenge the oppressive Soviet regime through their work. These dissident filmmakers used the medium of cinema to confront and expose the traumas inflicted on Ukrainian society. However, their attempts to raise painful topics were met with severe censorship and repression. Films that depicted the Ukrainian struggle for independence, historical injustice, or human rights violations were often suppressed or destroyed. One of the most prominent examples is Ukrainian poetic cinema, in particular, *Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors* (*Тіні забутих предків*, 1965) by Serhiy Parajanov, which tells the story of a tragic love against the backdrop of Ukrainian folk traditions and cultural identity. The film faced censorship because of its poetic and symbolic representation of Ukrainian heritage.[20]

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 brought new opportunities and challenges for Ukrainian cinema. After gaining independence, Ukrainian filmmakers sought to reclaim their cultural identity and explore previously forbidden topics. However, the trauma of the past remained, and censorship continued to exist in various forms. The transition period was marked by political instability, economic hardship, and attempts to control artistic expression. Filmmakers faced pressure from both state authorities and market forces, which hindered their ability to freely explore sensitive topics related to cultural trauma. At that time, the director Yuri Ilyenko created films that explored the actions of the repressive machine from different perspectives. For instance, The film *Swan Lake: The Zone* (*Лебедине озеро. Зона*, 1990) was made as a metaphor for the life of Serhiy Parajanov and the creative oppression and repression that artists of his time faced. Scholar Larysa Bryukhovetska writes about this film, that Yuri Illienko turned to the parable, to a visual, almost wordless way of expressing meaning. As the main character, a fugitive, chooses a hiding place he finds himself in the tin monument in the form of a hammer and sickle, which acquires a symbolic meaning, personifying the country called the Soviet Union.[21]

DEPICTION OF TRAUMA IN CONTEMPORARY UKRAINIAN CINEMA

Two main categories of films in contemporary Ukrainian cinema that reflect upon trauma can be partitioned: films, that depict historical trauma and films that represent and fixate the ongoing traumatic events. Films with the representation of historical cultural trauma are most often live-action films (rarely documentaries, consisting of found footage and archive materials). These live-action films revolve around certain historical events or figures, even mythologizations of one's biography. The main purpose is overcoming censorship, taking control of the narrative, and the return of the cultural memory. The second category deals with the ongoing events, mainly the Russian-Ukrainian war. These films[22] are the first response to the traumatic events and are used for exploration and fixation of war crimes and trauma on different levels: personal, national, ecological, etc.

Historical Films as a Return of Cultural Memory

Since Ukraine gained its independence, a large number of historical films have been released including *Bohdan-Zynovii Khmelnytskyi* (*Богдан-Зіновій Хмельницький,* 2006), *The Guide* (*Поводир*, 2014), *Black Raven* (*Чорний Ворон*, 2019), *Stus* (*Заборонений*, 2019), *Mr. Jones* (*Ціна правди*, 2019), *Carol of the Bells* (*Щедрик*, 2022) *Dovbush* (*Довбуш,* 2023). Naturally,

some films were more successful, others less so, but the most important thing was the return of subjectivity and cultural memory, and attempts to reclaim it through art.

Let's analyse closely historical film *The Guide* (*Поводир*, 2014), directed by Oles Sanin, through the lens of cultural trauma theory. The plot of the film is based on the story of the executed congress of kobzars[23] in Kharkiv in the 1930s. Although historians have expressed doubts about the authenticity of this particular event, the film highlights many other factual historical events, as the plot unfolds in the 1932-1933s in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic during the period of industrialization, collectivization, before and during the Holodomor and the repression of the representatives of the Executed Renaissance. *The Guide* explores the lasting impact of cultural trauma on the Ukrainian people and their struggle to preserve their identity and heritage. One of the central aspects of cultural trauma theory is the recognition that traumatic events can profoundly influence the collective memory and identity formation of a group. In *The Guide*, the traumatic events of the Soviet policy of collectivization and forced Russification serve as the backdrop for the narrative. These policies were aimed at suppressing the Ukrainian language, culture, and traditions, forcing Ukrainians to conform to Soviet ideals and eroding their sense of identity. The film depicts cultural trauma through the experiences of its characters, including protagonist Ivan, the blind bandura player. Ivan's journey becomes a metaphor for the collective experience of the Ukrainian people. His blindness represents the inability to fully see and understand the trauma inflicted on the nation, while his musical talent symbolizes the power of art and cultural expression as a means of resilience and resistance. In addition, the film shows the suppression of the Ukrainian language and culture, which further exacerbates the cultural trauma experienced by the characters and the nation as a whole. The ban on Ukrainian-language publications, the prohibition of traditional folk practices, and the imposition of the Russian language and customs all serve as mechanisms of control and erasure. This suppression of cultural identity leads to a sense of cultural displacement and loss, which further exacerbates the collective trauma.

Music becomes an important aspect of the reproduction of cultural memory in the film. More than a hundred real blind people and kobzars were invited to shoot some episodes, including bandura player Taras Kompanichenko[24]. Kobzars in the film performed ancient Cossack and historical songs, dumas, psalms, and cantos in the film. This allowed us not only to create a believable historical setting for the film but also to deepen our understanding of the cultural code. The visual aspect of the film also amplified the story. The cameraman for *The Guide* was Honored Artist of Ukraine, cinematographer Serhiy Mykhalchuk. The whole film is shot in cold colors, sometimes the colors seem to be borderline to black and white, or the episodes are submerged in a viscous fog. Only in the last minutes of the film does the sun fill the frames with warmth. These colors and the content of the shots also serve as a mythological interpretation of the past, emphasizing its tragedy and the fact that much remains unknown due to the Soviet Union's policy

of concealing and distorting facts. However, the ending gives hope that light can be shed on these events.

Since his debut film *Mamay* (*Мамай*, 2003), director Oles Sanin has shown how skillfully he can operate with archetypal images. The character of bandura player Ivan becomes a prototype of Ukrainian history itself, as he preserves the traditions and history of Ukraine through his music. His actions demonstrate that remembering and honoring one's cultural heritage is a way to preserve a sense of identity and resist the erasure of cultural trauma. Thus, *The Guide* emphasizes the importance of remembering and preserving cultural heritage in the face of cultural trauma.

As mentioned in the previous section, political censorship has become a kind of cultural trauma in Ukrainian culture. It is precisely because of this trauma that the specific and metaphor-rich cinematic language of Ukrainian poetic cinema emerged. This cinematic language has also become an important component, and in the time of independent Ukraine, some directors have turned to it, while rethinking it in the contemporary context. In addition, under Soviet rule, history was silenced or distorted, which led to the trauma of oblivion. Let's turn to the film *Toloka* (*Толок*a, 2020) by Mykhailo Illienko to see how the allusions to poetic film language represent the trauma of forgetting and, at the same time, the return of cultural memory.

In *Toloka*, Mykhailo Illienko (*The Seventh Route*, *Fuzhou*) adapted a ballad by Taras Shevchenko, a renowned Ukrainian poet, known simply as Kobzar, whose art became synonymical with Ukrainian culture. The plot of *Toloka* covers almost 400 years of Ukrainian history and recreates the most significant events, including the Cossacks era, the Soviet occupation, World War II, and the Chornobyl disaster. At the centre of the plot is a woman named Kateryna and her house. Each historical event, that could be deemed as a trial, destroys Kateryna's house. But she stubbornly, like hundreds of generations of Ukrainians, raises it from the ruins again and again. In a letter (which was written back in 2004, long before the release of the film) to the Greek director Fotos Lamprinosos, Mykhailo Ilyenko told him about his idea, explaining also the film's title: "If the house was burned down by lightning, careless children, a jealous neighbor, a drunken older brother, a witch, the Chornobyl accident, or destroyed by a raid of nomads, Tatars, Lithuanians, Crimeans, Muscovites, White Guards, or Nazi invaders, the survivors have a chance to quickly build a house and survive using materials that are always nearby, always available. This is exactly what Kateryna does: although warned of the inevitability of the execution, she builds the walls of her house again and again, just as millions of Ukrainians have done throughout their history. Kateryna saves not only her home, but also those whom it has sheltered and preserved from winter cold, famine, wars, fires, revolutions, and floods. The film could be called *The Life of a House* because the person moulded the house, and the house moulded the person — their life, habits, soul, tolerance, wisdom, stupidity, humour, songs, and history. Over the course of its existence, the toloka has outgrown its domestic framework and turned into a natural phenomenon that can compete with hurricanes, floods, and wars."[25]

The film, like representatives of poetic cinema, is full of symbols and archetypal images. The house symbolizes Ukraine itself, while Kateryna is the image of a woman guardian. And the process of toloka itself is an image of the cohesion of Ukrainian civil society. In its imagery and plot structure, *Toloka* resembles Dovzhenko's *Zvenyhora*, where large-scale historical upheavals are conveyed through hints and individual symbols. However, *Toloka* is also an antidote to the oblivion of history.

Once Upon a Time in Ukraine: Alternative History as a Narrative Tool for Overcoming Cultural Trauma

In the fourth chapter of the book *The Horrors of Trauma in Cinema: Violence Void Visualization*, the author of the essay *Vengeful Fiction: (Re-)Presenting Trauma in Inglourious Basterds (2009)* Dania Hückmann reads Quentin Tarantino's war film *Inglorious Basterds* (2009) through Sigmund Freud and Josef Breuer's concept of revenge, which they outlined in Studies in Hysteria (1895). Hückmann states, that the reaction of a victim to trauma has a fully 'cathartic' effect only if it is an appropriate reaction, such as revenge. But language serves as a surrogate for action; it can be used to relieve the affect almost as effectively. She also writes: "In the context of the psychoanalytical theories about revenge outlined thus far, a fantasy of revenge is always contrasted with acting upon it, because the former is open to revisions. Film may serve the same function as a "surrogate for action," which Freud and Breuer attribute to language." Therefore, Dania Hückmann sees the alternative history in Tarantino's film, where Hitler, Goebbels, and the Nazi leadership die in flames, as an act of revenge that is necessary to live through the trauma of the Holocaust.[26]

This tool could also be considered in a broader sense, namely as a narrative practice. In psychology, narrative structures are considered by many researchers to be an important factor in ordering, organizing, and modeling mental reality. Each new event in a person's history receives its interpretation, which is determined by the previous course of events. And if a certain total interpretation is positive, then a person develops a positive attitude toward his or her experience, biography, and life in general.[27] As Viktor Frankl writes, a personality reveals itself in its biography, it reveals its unique essence only to biographical explanation, without being subjected to direct analysis. Ultimately, biography is nothing more than an explanation of the personality in time.[28]

In 2020, the film *Once Upon a Time in Ukraine* (*Безславні кріпаки*, 2020) directed by Roman Perfilyev was released in cinemas. The film is set in 1844. Escaping from the persecution of the Emperor of Japan, the samurai Akayo enters the territory of Ukraine. By chance, he meets the young Taras Shevchenko. They unite for their own purposes: Akayo seeks revenge for his

master, and Shevchenko wants to save his beloved from the serfdom. One can see two allusions to Quentin Tarantino's work: in the title (*Inglourious Serfs*[29]*/Inglourious Basterds*) and in the use of martial arts by main characters, which often results in violent scenes (as in *Kill Bill: Volume 1*, 2003). The film's aesthetics also lean toward Tarantino's films: bloody fight scenes, bright colors, and the use of alternative history. The director Roman Perfilyev said that he came up with the idea for the film during the Revolution of Dignity, when Ukrainian artists began to depict the classics of literature in modern setting (for instance, the series of illustrations *Shevchenko's Quantum Leap* by Oleksandr Grekhov[30]). It was then that he imagined Taras Shevchenko as a samurai. It was since the Revolution of Dignity that the canonical figures of Ukrainian culture, which in Soviet-era art were depicted as long outdated and fossilized, seemed to come to life and become a symbol of a new Ukrainian identity.

Looking at Inglorious Serfs from the perspective of narrative practices and Freud's revenge theory this film seems to be a therapeutic rethinking of history. On the one hand, it shows such events as serfdom, which left a trace of trauma in Ukrainian cultural memory. However, at the same time, it endows an alternative figure of Shevchenko with the knowledge and skills (oriental martial arts) to carry out a Freudian act of revenge. Such a narrative seems to change the way we look at history, taking power away from the traumatic event and returning the power over history to the hands of its bearer.

Documentations of War

Since the beginning of the Russian-Ukrainian war in 2014, and with the full-scale invasion in 2022, documentaries, videos, and most of the audio-visual images capturing the war and the following crimes have become important documents of events. They also play an important role in capturing and transmitting the experiences of people affected by the war, as well as shedding light on the cultural trauma that society has suffered. Moreover, the Russian-Ukrainian is becoming the most documented war in history.[31] The team of International Human Rights Documentary Film Festival Docudays UA has created Ukraine War Archive – a unified database containing digital materials and registered evidence of war crimes against Ukraine, with the involvement of a broad network of both Ukrainian and international partners, which of now has approximately 6,8 millions of uploaded files, which cover civilian resistance against the Russian army, as well as the destruction, violence and other crimes committed in Ukraine by the aggressor.[32]

Film critic and programmer of the Docudays UA Festival Yulia Kowalenko discusses the nature of war documentaries, and documentaries at all – how every shot, every cut, every character in the frame, and every comment are ultimately the result of the author's choice. This

leads to the conclusion, that the documentary is a process of reduction reality according to the author, and with this, it is someone's choice: what is important to tell, and what can be left in the shadows. This process is always quite political – and more than ever when it comes to war. Yulia states: "This should mean that every even documentary film about the war is not an objective panoramic cast of reality, but rather is someone's political will to tell one or more of the possible stories about the war, cutting away others."[33]

In the last nine years, Ukrainian filmmakers have created a great amount of short and feature-length documentaries, capturing the war, reflecting on the topic, and with this exploring the themes of cultural trauma and its impact on the Ukrainian people. From exploring the trauma on the collective level (*Train Kyiv-War* (*Поїзд Київ-Війна*, 2020), *20 Days in Mariupol* (*20 днів у Маріуполі*, 2023)), or on the personal level (*Alisa in Warland* (*Аліса в країні війни*, 2015), *The Earth Is Blue as an Orange (Земля блакитна, ніби апесильсин,* 2020*)*, *I Did Not Want to Make a War Film* (*Я не хотіла робити фільм про війну*, 2022)) — to challenging the cinematic language, trying to find new forms to reflect on the topic (*This Rain Will Never Stop* (*Цей дощ ніколи не скінчиться*, 2020), *Iron Butterflies* (*Залізні метелики*, 2023), *Divia* (*Дівія*, in development)).[34] Ukrainian documentaries about the war often delve into the historical context of the conflict, creating a backdrop for understanding cultural trauma. They explore the roots of the war, the complex geopolitical dynamics, and the historical narratives that have shaped Ukrainian identity. By contextualizing the war in a broader historical context, these documentaries illuminate the deep cultural trauma experienced by the Ukrainian people.

In the context of how Ukrainian documentaries capture the ongoing trauma, let's look closely at the films *No Obvious Signs* (*Явних проявів немає*, 2018) by Alina Gorlova and *War Note* (*Зошит війни*, 2021) by Roman Lyubiy. Ukrainian war documentaries often use personal narratives as a means of conveying the cultural trauma experienced by individuals. In *No Obvious Signs,* Gorlova explores in detail the life of a woman who returned from the war and struggles with PTSD and panic attacks as she tries to return to civilian life. Through her story, the film presents a multidimensional perspective, capturing the psychological, emotional, and physical effects of war. This personal approach allows the audience to connect to the event emotionally and to understand the cultural trauma more deeply. On the other hand, there is a more collective approach, when the director tries to create a more collage-type of picture, featuring many voices and experiences. Such approaches could be seen in *War Note,* as the film consists of the found footage materials: personal videos from the phones, camcorders, cameras, and GoPros of Ukrainian soldiers are woven into a surreal journey to the frontline of the war with Russia. Through the editing, Roman Lyubiy depicts one year of life in the state of war. Visual images play a crucial role in war documentaries such as *War Note*, highlighting the destruction and devastation caused. Such documentaries show the physical impact of war on cities, infrastructure, and landscapes. These images not only serve as evidence of the cultural trauma inflicted on

Ukraine, but also evoke the feelings of loss, displacement, and confusion experienced by people. Despite depicting cultural trauma, Ukrainian documentaries about the war also emphasize the resilience and resistance of individuals and communities. They demonstrate acts of courage, unity, and determination in the face of adversity. For example, the film *War Note* highlights the strength, resilience, and even humor of Ukrainian soldiers on the front line, while *No Obvious Signs* captures the psychological resilience of the main character. Such images counterbalance the depiction of trauma, offering a sense of hope and resilience amidst cultural destruction.

CONCLUSION

By analyzing films from the perspective of cultural trauma, we can perceive and interpret them not only as works of art but also as a mechanism for revealing and reflecting on painful memorable events. This allows us to better understand the emotional and psychological depth of films and helps to shape our consciousness about important historical experiences and their impact on us as individuals and society as a whole. The study of contemporary Ukrainian cinema in the context of cultural trauma has a significant impact on the development of cinematic art and the expansion of our worldview. It helps us to deepen our understanding of historical processes, to reveal the positive potential of art in revealing traumatic experiences, and to foster a dialogue between nations past and present. In addition, the study of films that highlight cultural trauma can have practical implications in the context of healing and recovery from traumatic events. They can become a means of expressing pain and finding a way to overcome it, which contributes to the healing process and strengthening of society.

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[2] Ibid.
[3] "Cultural Trauma in Modern Foreign Historiography: Concept and Method", Ukrainian Institute of National Memory ("Культурна травма у сучасній зарубіжній історіографії: концепт та метод", Український інститут національної пам'яті), accessed October 17, 2023, https://old.uinp.gov.ua/publication/ogienko-vi-kulturna-travma-u-suchasnii-zarubizhnii-istoriografii-kontsept-ta-metod
[4] Alexander, Jeffrey C., Ron Eyerman, Bernhard Giesen, Neil J. Smelser, And Piotr Sztompka. "Toward a Theory of Cultural Trauma."
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[6] Paris, Y. (2022). "Perpetrator Trauma as a Possible Solution for Cultural Trauma: The Case of Joshua Oppenheimer's The Act of Killing (2012) and The Look of Silence (2014)". Analecta Política, 12(22), 1-26. doi: http://dx.doi. org/10.18566/apolit. v12n22.a02

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[8] Bessel van der Kolk M.D. “The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma” (Penguin Books, 2015), 1-7.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Ibid, 7-22.
[11] Michael Elm (Author), Kobi Kabalek (Editor), Julia B. Kohne (Editor) “The Horrors of Trauma in Cinema: Violence Void Visualization” (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), 108-125
[12] “Essays on the Ukrainian Cinema History”. Edited by V. Sydorenko (*chairman)* and others; Institute of Contemporary Art Problems of the Academy of Arts of Ukraine - Kyiv: Intertochnology, 2006. (“Нариси з історії кіномистецтва України”. Редкол.: В. Сидоренко (голова) та інші; Інститут проблем сучасного мистецтва Академії мистецтв України. — Київ: Інтертехнологія, 2006 - 864с.), 53-77
[13] Ibid, 117-165.
[14] Nebesio Bohdan, “The Silent Film Trilogy of Alexander Dovzhenko” (“Німа кінотрилогія Олександра Довженка”) trans. from English. Stanislav Menzelevskyi, Kyiv: Oleksandr Dovzhenko National Centre, 2017. 200 pp. (in Ukrainian)
[15] Tractor in the film is perceived as a symbol for industrialisation and progress.
[16] Foka Maria. “The Suggestion of Subtextual Meanings in the novel "Earth" and in the Film of the Same Name by Oleksandr Dovzhenko” (Марія Фока. “Сугестія підтекстових смислів у кіноповісті «Земля» та в однойменному фільмі Олександра Довженка”), accessed October 22, 2023, https://lnam.edu.ua/files/Academy/nauka/visnyk/pdf_visnyk/29/11.pdf
[17] “Director Serhiy Bukovsky about the film *The Living*” (“Режисер Сергій Буковський про фільм «Живі»”), Docuclub, accessed October 22, 2023, https://docuclub.docudays.ua/story/-rezhisea-sergiy-bukovskiy-pro-film-zhivi/
[18] Holodomor Museum, Google, accessed October 22, 2023, https://holodomormuseum.org.ua/en/film/harvest-of-sorrow/
[19] Larysa Bryukhovetska. “Hidden Films: Ukrainian Cinema of the 1990s” - Kyiv: ArtEk, 2003 (Лариса Брюховецька. “Приховані фільми: Українське кіно 1990-х” - Київ, Видавництво «АртЕк», 2003), 73-77
[20] “Essays on the Ukrainian Cinema History”. Edited by V. Sydorenko (*chairman)* and others; Institute of Contemporary Art Problems of the Academy of Arts of Ukraine - Kyiv: Intertochnology, 2006. (“Нариси з історії кіномистецтва України”. Редкол.: В. Сидоренко (голова) та інші; Інститут проблем сучасного мистецтва Академії мистецтв України. — Київ: Інтертехнологія, 2006 - 864с.), 195-267
[21] Larysa Bryukhovetska. “Hidden Films: Ukrainian Cinema of the 1990s” - Kyiv: ArtEk, 2003 (Лариса Брюховецька. “Приховані фільми: Українське кіно 1990-х” - Київ, Видавництво «АртЕк», 2003), 65-73
[22] Mainly documentaries, although before full-scale invasion there were released live-action films, that depict the ongoing war: *Cyborgs: Heroes Never Die* (*Кіборги. Герої не* вмирають, 2017), *U311 Cherkasy* (*U311 Черкаси*, 2019), *Bad Roads* (*Погані дороги*, 2020), *Reflection* (*Відблиск*, 2021), *Klondike* (*Клондайк*, 2022), *Butterfly Vision* (*Бачення метелика*, 2022).
[23] Ukrainian bard who sang to his own accompaniment, played on a multistringed bandura or kobza.
[24] “Taras Kompanichenko: The Guide and Sanin, Budnyk and Tkachenko, Kobzar's Heritage and His Own Contribution” (“Тарас Компаніченко: "Поводир" і Санін, Будник і Ткаченко, кобзарська спадщина та власний внесок”), Youtube, accessed October 27, 2023, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hmn5FiHM0mA
[25] “Foreword to the film *Toloka*” (“Передмова до фільму «Толока»”), Google, accessed October 29, 2023, http://archive-ktm.ukma.edu.ua/show_content.php?id=268
[26] Michael Elm (Author), Kobi Kabalek (Editor), Julia B. Kohne (Editor) “The Horrors of Trauma in Cinema: Violence Void Visualization” (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), 90-108
[27] “Narrative psychotechnologies”. Chepeleva N.V., Smulson M.L., Shylovska O.M., Hutsol S.Y.; edited by Chepeleva N.V. - K.: Glavnyk, 2007 (“Наративні психотехнології”. Чепелєва

Н.В, Смульсон М.Л., Шиловська О.М., Гуцол С.Ю.; за заг. ред. Чепелєвої Н.В— К.: Главник, 2007. — С.144. (Серія «Психол. інструментарій»)), 17

[28] Viktor Frankl, “Man's Search for Meaning”, Beacon Press, Boston , 2021, 3-15

[29] The direct translation of the title *Безславні кріпаки* is *Inglourious Serfs.*

[30] “Shevchenko’s Quantum Leap”, Google, accessed November 1, 2023, https://uatv.ua/en/shevchenkos-quantum-jump/

[31] “From drone videos to selfies at the front, Ukraine is the most documented war ever”, Google, accessed November 1, 2023, https://www.npr.org/2023/08/02/1191557426/ukraine-war-news-coverage

[32] Ukraine War Archive, Docudays, accessed November 4, 2023, https://ukrainewararchive.org/eng/

[33] “Filming the War: The Art of Mapping the Routes Politically”, Google, accessed November 4, 2023, https://www.kinotabs.com/en/reviews-filming-the-war/

[34] Of course, this list is only the tip of an iceberg. For more documentaries covering the topic of Russian-Ukrainian war, please see the list: https://boxd.it/gGszW