

PERSPECTIVES ON UKRAINIAN CINEMA: CONSTRUCTING NATIONAL IDENTITY AND CULTURAL RESILIENCE

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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.