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# Linguistic Strategies of Imperial Appropriation

## Why Ukraine Is Absent from World Film History

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The idea of this chapter emerged from a close reading of the texts written in Ukrainian, Russian, and English that, in their entirety or part, dealt with Ukrainian filmmaking, starting with the late nineteenth century up until today. The process of Ukraine's cultural decolonization that follows its political independence from Russia has been slow and conflicted not least because a long history of imperial appropriation has affected and continues to affect the very way Ukrainians think of themselves but also the way Europe and the rest of the world see Ukraine. Imperial appropriation means such a discursive presentation of the colonized that their culture, history, language, and other identity traits either disappear completely or merge with the respective aspects of the hegemonic imperial identity. The imperial appropriation seeks to deprive a colonized people of a sense of their authenticity and, with it, of the will to exist as a separate self-sustained and self-reproducing culture. Alongside literature, historiography, film, and other domains of human creativity involved in the production of ideologies of domination, language has been a central tool of the imperial appropriation of the colonized. This study is an attempt to understand some of the linguistic strategies used to cause the "dissolution" of Ukraine as a culture and its cinema in particular within the Russian discourse, and as a result make Ukraine hard to spot today on the cultural map of Europe.

First, I propose a typology of narratives on Ukraine, which the reader interested in Ukrainian film and culture is bound to encounter. This will be followed by an analysis of some of the most frequent appropriation strategies applied to various identity designators (spelling, lexical semantics, and lexical distribution), whether direct or implicit. Central in this analysis is the "identity seme," the component of the semantic structure that ties the word's referent to a specific culture as its marker. I also discuss how the concept of "homeland" have been redefined to replace the original identity of the colonized with the imperial identity centered on Russian culture and negating Ukrainian distinctiveness.

### Typology of Narratives on Ukraine

The repertoire of linguistic devices and the way each of them is used to present a colonized culture as part of a colonial empire depends on the characteristics of the text or narrative on Ukraine as its topos. Narratives on Ukraine or any similarly situated postcolonial nation can be of three types, each determined by how Ukraine is conceived of as a cultural identity. The *imperial master narrative* is generated by the colonizer; in the case of Ukraine, it has been most often the Russian imperial center. Such a *primary narrative* regards Ukraine as an inseparable part, whether political, geographic, economic, historical, psychological, cultural, or linguistic, of Russia. The idea of Ukrainian otherness in all these aspects is rejected, and instead the concept of Ukraine's unity with the empire is advanced in a variety of forms. A detailed, perceptive, if not always indisputable, but invariably thought-provoking analysis of these forms, articulated over more than two hundred years by Russian literature has been done by Marko Pavlyshyn, Ewa Thompson, Myroslav Shkandrij, Vitaly Chernetsky, and others.

A *counternarrative of resistance* is created by the colonized as a response to the assimilationist policies of the imperial center. The collective author of this *secondary narrative* type are the Ukrainians who are or become aware of their identity and seek to regain their appropriated cultural and political agency through ideologies of political independence and belief in their very own historical destiny. Initially it is the colonized, who create narratives of resistance, though subsequently these narratives can be carried on by noncolonial others who ally themselves with the colonized. There is also a *tertiary narrative*. It originates in the countries situated outside the sphere of influence of the Russian imperial center. The tertiary narrative is more often than not derived from either the primary or the secondary narrative, the latter has increasingly been the case after the implosion of the Soviet Union.

Elements of various levels of language structure can be activated for the purposes of imperial appropriation: spelling, phonomorphological, lexicosemantic, and the level of text (discourse). All languages that cater to these three narrative types (Russian, Ukrainian, English, French, German, etc.), can be manipulated in order to either deny the colonized their separate identity or recognize and take it for granted. There is no neat correlation between a given narrative type and the specific language used to write it. Though Russian is the principal language of the Soviet imperial master narrative, Ukrainian, English, French, and other languages have been also actively used as its vehicles. There is a massive body of Ukrainian language literature in all spheres of knowledge actively advancing Russian/Soviet imperial ideology.

The secondary narrative has been articulated first and foremost in the language of the colonized, in this case in Ukrainian. At the same time, other languages, including Russian, have also been used as a tool of resistance.<sup>1</sup> Since independence, Russian has become a regular medium to articulate the cultural and political project of Ukrainian liberation.<sup>2</sup> Scores of Western publications on Ukraine, which appeared in such Ukrainian studies centers as the Ukrainian Free University in Munich, Harvard Ukrainian

Research Institute, the Peter Jacyk Centre for Ukrainian Historical Research at the University of Toronto, the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies at the University of Alberta, the Shevchenko Scientific Society in France (Sarcelles) as well as in America, ever since their inception before Ukraine's independence, have also generated texts of the secondary narrative type.

The linguistic strategies of imperial appropriation I shall now discuss are: (1) orthographic assimilation, (2) change in lexical semantics, and (3) appropriation by omission. Each is found in all three narrative types on Ukraine, including even the secondary narratives of resistance ostensibly intended to stake out a Ukrainian identity that is different from Russian, but often and subconsciously subject to the inertia of colonial self-perception. Each of these strategies can, with modifications, be deployed in any language. My observations are primarily focused on Ukrainian, Russian, English, and to a lesser extent French and Italian.

#### *Type One: Spelling as An Appropriation Device*

Appropriation by spelling is a consistent privileging of the Russian version of Ukrainian proper names of people, cities, rivers, or of common names designating specifically Ukrainian cultural phenomena. It can be argued that every language comprises a special vocabulary group, which has one important feature in common, I shall term it the *identity seme*. It is a component of the word's meaning that links its referent to a specific national culture. The seme colors the otherwise culture-nonspecific referential meaning.<sup>3</sup> The identity seme signifies that a given referent is a creation of a particular culture, and beyond this culture ceases to exist as such, and becomes something else.<sup>4</sup>

In many cases, the form of the word acts as the vehicle of the identity seme (*congee*, *kielbasa*, *borshch*, *bossa nova*) in others, it is the signified that becomes the vehicle of the identity seme (e.g., American historical terms such as *Prohibition*, *Abolition*). The change of vehicle, whether the signifier (as in *borshch*, *ale*, *kielbasa*) or the signified (as in *Prohibition*, *art nouveau*, *Bauhaus*) breaks the linkage with the specific culture and opens up the possibilities for reinterpreting the word in terms of either another national culture (*Pol. golombki* → *Ukr. holubtsi* [stuffed cabbage rolls]; *Yid. blintzes* → *Russ. blinchiki* [pancakes]) or in culture-neutral terms (*Ukr. / Yid. borshch* → culture-neutral beetroot soup, *Span. gaspacho* → culture-neutral tomato soup). The change of the word form (spelling) and the cultural reinterpretation it allows have been widely used as a basis for the linguistic appropriation of the colonized by the colonizer. In our case, these are respectively Ukrainian and Russian cultures. Non-Ukrainian language primary narratives almost always Russify Ukrainian proper names and similar culture-specific designators. Thus the poet *Ievhen Hrebinka* becomes *Evgenii Grebionka*, *Dmytro Pavlychko*—*Dmitrii Pavlychko*, *Serhii Zhadan*—*Sergei Zhadan*. An uninformed reader is given the impression that these are the names of Russians and not Ukrainians.

Once appropriated by the empire, the colonized was then presented to the rest of



the world and, ironically, to the very periphery wherefrom they originated, exclusively under a Russified, not their original Ukrainian, name, as if they were indeed Russian. In an important sense, the loss of their original names caused the loss of their cultural authenticity, they ceased to exist for their indigenous culture—their appropriation thus came full circle. The situation was entirely different when Russian cultural figures resettled to Ukraine. This change did not result in their Ukrainianization. Quite the opposite, they remained loyal to their Russian culture and often acted as agents of Russification, as conduits of Russian assimilationist cultural, linguistic, and ideological influences.

A typical example of how Ukrainian films are presented in Western tertiary narratives is the director Oleksander Dovzhenko. Although his identity is indisputably Ukrainian for everybody who knows the facts of his biography, Dovzhenko continues to be considered in Russia and in most of the world as Russian, at least inasmuch as Russianness is suggested by the Russified spelling of his first name *Aleksandr* and the translated or dubbed intertitles, scenarios, and dialogues of his films. Because of this, the imperial appropriation through spelling has created a tradition of its own that appears impossible to break even to some publishers and writers who contest and reject the imperial narrative.<sup>5</sup>

A similar spelling approach has been almost uniformly applied by Western scholars to the entire body of Ukrainian film legacy. In Dovzhenko's film *Arsenal*, the Ukrainian soldier/worker Tynish sports a Russian name *Timosh* (Kenez 56),<sup>6</sup> just as the actor who interprets his part *Semen* Svashenko becomes *Semion* (Youngblood 2007, 26).<sup>7</sup> Vance Kepley, Jr. transliterates the names of Ukrainian protagonists using both the Russian, for example, *Nikolai Khvylovy* (instead of *Ukr. Mykola Khvylovy*), *Faust Lopatynsky* (instead of *Ukr. Favst Lopatynsky* [29]), and original Ukrainian forms, for example, *Pavlo* (in Dovzhenko's film *Zvenyhora* instead of the expected *Russ. Pavel*). The same is practiced by film historians in France and Italy, both of Soviet and post-Soviet periods (Passek 307–312; Schnitzer 380–383). The history of Soviet and Russian cinema by Giovanni Buttavafa refers to all Ukrainian films by the Russian titles as if they were the original ones: *Teni zabytych predkov* [Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors], *Vecer na kanune Ivana Kupala* (*Večer*—*Eng. translit.*) [Night Before the St. John's Feast], *Belaja ptica s chernoj ometinoj* (*Belaia ptitsa s chernoj ometinoi*—*Engl. Translit.*) [White Bird with a Black Mark]. Likewise the names of all Ukrainian filmmakers are given in Russian not Ukrainian (Buttavafa 115, 137). A notable recent exception from the rule is the French film scholar Lubomir Hosejko whose *Histoire du cinéma ukrainien* (in our classification an example of the secondary narrative), consistently uses original Ukrainian names and titles (Hosejko).

A simple Internet search on a Ukrainian film subject reveals the massive extent to which Ukrainian culture is presented as if it were part of Russian culture. A good illustration is the treatment Dovzhenko's favorite actor Mykola Zakharovych Nademsky is given on the Internet today. A Google search has revealed a total of fifty-six results for the original Ukrainian spelling of the actor *Mykola Nademsky*, zero results for his extended name, patronymic and surname: *Mykola Zakharovych Nademsky*. For

the Russian spelling of his name *Nikolai Nademsky* there were about 2,330 results. Even ignoring the fortyfold numeric difference between the Ukrainian and Russian linguistic packaging of the individual (the discrepancy can be in part explained by the high frequency of the Russian name *Nikolai* (as in *Nikolai Gogol*, *Nikolai Turgenev*)—one can hardly ignore an important qualitative moment in this picture. All fifty-odd references with the Ukrainian name originate either from the Ukrainian corner of the World Wide Web, that is, they represent a small community of scholars, specialists in the field of Ukrainian culture and film or authors with knowledge of the Ukrainian language (secondary narrative type).<sup>8</sup> Internet sites on world cinema typically use the actor's name transcribed from its Russified spelling.

#### *Embracing the Colonizer*

Spelling assimilation has been actively practiced in the Ukrainian-language primary as well as secondary narratives, with the important difference that it is not Ukrainian but Russian culture that becomes the object of assimilation (Ukrainianization). Ukrainians have had a long tradition of fully assimilating Russian proper names, above all anthroponyms, simply by replacing them with their Ukrainian equivalents and presenting their Russian bearers as Ukrainian, for example, Russ. *Sergei* becomes *Serhii*, likewise *Nikolai*—*Mykola*, *Ol'ga*—*Ol'ha*, *Nadezhda*—*Nadiia*. Thus an uninformed reader appears in no position to tell apart the national identities of Ukrainians and Russians in texts that deal with both cultures. By this simple linguistic device the two identities become one, merge into the identity that has historically been dominant—Russian. Paradoxically or predictably, the colonized appears to be embracing the colonizer, as it were, by their own will merging with the latter. Such a total Ukrainianization of names has not been applied to other cultures and seems to have been reserved for Russian names. The current Ukrainian orthography provides for a measure, though not complete, of phonomorphological assimilation of non-Russian Slavic names, for example, Pol. *Slowacki* becomes Ukr. *Slovats'kyi*, however Pol. *Juliusz* does not become Ukr. *Iulii* and the name of the Polish poet in Ukrainian still sounds Polish: *Juliusz Slovats'kyi*. It follows the same teleology of appropriation of the colonized by the colonizer even though it may seem that the empire dissolves within its colony. The past and current practice of translating Russian proper names into Ukrainian, whereby Russ. *Aleksandr Pushkin* becomes Ukr. *Oleksandr Pushkin*, and respectively *Mikhail Lermontov*—*Mykhailo Lermontov*, and so on, suggests the idea of sameness not only between these pairs of names but also between their respective languages and more generally—their cultures. As a result, the Ukrainian identity is presented as something not really different from the Great Russian identity.<sup>9</sup>

The effects of this practice can be better appreciated against a wider historical context of Ukrainian–Russian cultural “interaction.” What may seem like a regular exchange between two cultures, in the reality of the colonial situation, has always been the relationship of domination over and assimilation of the colonized. Ukrainian–Russian cultural “exchange” has invariably favored the colonizer. Ukrainian authors,



film directors, actors, or other cultural figures who went to work in Russia, became Russified not only in fact but in name as well. In their work, they switched to Russian and were “provided” credentials of Russian cultural figures with the obligatory assimilation of their names. Their Ukrainian origin, cultural background, psychology, and other distinctive identity traits would be ignored or reduced to a footnote of no consequence.<sup>10</sup> Ukrainian *Mykola Hohol* would become the great Russian writer *Nikolai Gogol*; *Davyd Burluk* became the father of Russian futurism *David Burliuk*; *Oleksander Dovzhenko*—the Russian film director *Aleksandr Dovzhenko*; *Ihor Savchenko*—the Russian film director *Igor Savchenko*; and on and on ad infinitum.

### *Type Two: Altering Lexical Semantics*

Appropriation of the colonized can also be affected through manipulation with lexical semantics. The object of the manipulation is a limited group of words, I shall call *identity designators*. A geographic name such as *Ukraine*, *Poland*, *Russia*, or *England* is an identity designator for its respective cultural collectivity—of Ukrainians, Poles, Russians, and English. In their turn, each of these nations views one of them as the name they identify with. At the same time, all other names are something they identify against or in distinction to. Identity designators can refer to the country of origin directly (the examples above). Direct designators can be both nouns and adjectives derived from them, for example, *Ukr. Ukraïna* (Ukraine) → *ukraïns'kyi* (Ukrainian) → *ukraïnka* (a Ukrainian woman), *ukraïnstvo* (Ukrainians, Ukrainianness). The country of origin can be implied, for example, *motherland*, *fatherland*, *hometown*, *native* (as in *native land*, *native language*, *native culture*, *native cinema*), and understood only from the context in which the implicit identity designators are used.

Both explicit and implicit identity designators have been a battlefield between the colonizer and the colonized over their exclusive interpretation. The toponym *Ukraine* exemplifies this struggle in a number of aspects—word usage, meaning, and etymology. As regards its usage, the Russian imperial regime proscribed this word and instead favored *Malorossiiia* [Little Russia], *Iugo-zapadnyi krai* [South Western Land]. Common was also the use of the local identity designators that presented a specific area as part of a larger imperial whole and not of Ukraine. Thus southern parts of Ukraine (Odesa, Kherson, Mykolaïv) were customarily referred to as *Novorossiiia* [New Russia].<sup>11</sup> The adjective *Russ. ukrainskii* (Ukrainian) was similarly shunned in favor of *Malorossiiskii* (Little Russian) or *Iuzhno-rossiiskii* (South Russian).<sup>12</sup>

With the collapse of the Russian dynastic empire in 1905–1917, the policy of proscribing the Russian words for *Ukraine*, *Ukrainian* stopped being enforced.<sup>13</sup> In the Soviet period, the struggle shifted to the area of lexical collocability. At issue were the attributes that were allowed to modify the noun *Ukraïna* and those that were not. Since the toponym *Ukraine*, when used alone, was open to interpretation and could be used by practically any political ideology, the Soviet narrative early in the day started attaching to it the attribute *Soviet* (*Russ. Sovetskaia Ukraïna / Ukr. Radians'ka Ukraïna*). By the same token, its use without any attributes, was increasingly avoided as if to preclude

its association with the ideology of Ukrainian national independence. The attribute *Russ. sovietskaia / Ukr. radians'ka* was attached to all other identity designators that, if used alone, could suggest the idea of a self-sufficient Ukrainian identity.

This tendency is manifest in names of Soviet-era periodic publications that were obliged to include the adjective "Soviet," for example, the all-Ukrainian Communist Party daily *Ukr. Radians'ka Ukraïna* [Soviet Ukraine], other dailies *Ukr. Radians'ka Volyn'* [Soviet Volyn], *Ukr. Radians'ka Bukovyna* [Soviet Bukovyna], and countless others. By the same logic the collocations *vil'na Ukraïna* [a free Ukraine], *nezalezhna Ukraïna* [an independent Ukraine], and particularly *samostiïna Ukraïna*<sup>14</sup> [an independent Ukraine] became linguistic taboos associated with Ukrainian bourgeois nationalism.<sup>15</sup> With this peculiarly construed meaning attached to the name *Ukraïna* by the Soviet regime, Oleksander Dovzhenko's 1943 documentary film (Russian language) title *Bitva za nashu Sovietskuiu Ukrainu* [Battle for Our Soviet Ukraine] seems to have been preordained.

Today there is increasing contestation in the secondary narrative type of what, until recently, has been generally "accepted" etymology of the name *Ukraïna* [Ukraine], as meaning the "borderland," from the *Russ.* preposition *u* (near, by) + *krai* (edge, border). This explanation of the word's meaning made Ukraine, quite within the imperial logic, a periphery, a wild frontier in need of the civilizing and order-creating imperial center. It does not explain how those in the Ukrainian ethnic community who use this toponym as a self-identifier, with it, also chose the imperial optics of seeing their country not as the center of their universe but as the borderland of another nation, the Russian empire. This etymology, very much in use today,<sup>16</sup> is being increasingly subjected to critical revision, more often motivated by resistance to the inertia of imperial appropriation than based on compelling scholarly data.<sup>17</sup> Secondary narratives offer such alternative meanings as "land," "homeland," "country," and others.<sup>18</sup> Irrespective of whether or not these very different etymologies of *Ukraïna* are grounded in fact, they reveal how this identity designator is at the center of contestation that allows a new self-asserting vision of the Ukrainian identity.

#### *That Sweet Word "Homeland"*

Each nationality is based on identification with its real or imagined homeland. In every language, the concept of homeland is signified by a group of synonyms that are identity designators by implication; the country they refer to remains a nameless territory considered to be one's own, while its name can only be gleaned from the context. In Russian and Ukrainian, these words are: the nouns *Russ. otechestvo* [fatherland], *rodina* [homeland], *strana* [country] and the *Ukr. bat'kivshchyna, vitchyzna, kraïna* with the adjectives derived from the two former nouns and meaning "native"—*Russ. rodnoi, otechestvennyi* and *Ukr. ridnyi, vitchyzniani*. The original referent of the *Ukr. "bat'kivshchyna"* [fatherland] should be coterminous with the territory of Ukraine. It has remained so in the Ukrainian diaspora unaffected by Soviet influences. Acting out Karl Marx's motto "the proletariat has no fatherland," the Russian Bolsheviks



replaced it with their concept of fatherland, whereby the true fatherland of the world's proletariat was "the Soviet Union (the Russian dynastic empire turned into a socialist empire), the first workers' and peasants' state in the history of humanity." Ukrainians were gradually trained to think of the Soviet Union, not Ukraine, as their fatherland. An emblematic case of this appropriation through semantic reconfiguring was Soviet Ukrainian director Leonid [Lev] Lukov's feature film *Bat'kivshchyna moia, komsomol* [My Fatherland, Komsomol] (1929) in whose title the traditional concept is indeed replaced by the Soviet one.<sup>19</sup>

These designators (*Ukr. bat'kivshchyna / vitchyzna* and *Russ. otechestvo / rodina*) came to be increasingly used in the Soviet times to replace the original Ukrainian concept of fatherland by the Soviet one, coterminous with the empire (USSR). The Russian and Ukrainian words for "fatherland" referred not to the Russian Federation and Ukraine, respectively, but both to the new, one and the same Soviet motherland—the Soviet Union. The results of such a semantic reformatting were very markedly different for the colonizer and the colonized. The colonizer came to understand and use the nouns *Russ. otechestvo* and *rodina* and their cognate adjectives the *Russ. otechestvennyi* and *rodnoi* as synonymous with *Russia* and *Russian*, respectively, just as their Soviet correlates the noun *USSR* and the adjective *Soviet* were understood as synonyms for *Russia* and *Russian*, respectively.

For the colonized Ukrainians such semantic shift caused their own native land to disappear in the imperial Soviet "motherland." By this logic the Ukrainian expression *vitchyzna* now referred to the Soviet Union and not to Ukraine. Thus, from the original fatherland, Ukraine was reduced to a mere province (a Soviet republic) or—the Ukraine.<sup>20</sup>

The adjective *vitchyzniany* is a very curious case of semantic manipulation. In the context of Ukrainian film history, Soviet Ukrainian authors often refer to things both Russian and Ukrainian, whether films, themes, actors, directors, inventors, and so on, as "our own" using one and the same word *vitchyzniany* (from the Russian borrowing *vitchyzna* → "fatherland") (Buriak 11–12). The Ukrainian adjective is a semantic, if not morphological, calque of the Russian *otechestvennyi* (from *otechestvo* "fatherland" → *otets* "father"). *Vitchyzniany / otechestvennyi* loosely correspond to the English adjective *home* as in *the home industry*). That the word is an innovation introduced into Ukrainian from Russian with a specifically Russian idea of what is one's own as opposed to foreign is manifest in its etymology.

It is derived from the noun *vitchyzna* [fatherland], a relatively recent borrowing that, with the exception of the adjective *vitchyzniany*, has no direct derivational correlates in the Ukrainian vocabulary. The academic eleven-volume *Dictionary of the Ukrainian Language* illustrates its usage by relatively late examples from I. Nekhoda (1947) and A. Malyshko (1956) (*Slovnyk* vol. 1, 690). The noun *vitchyzna* was borrowed from Russian despite the fact that Ukrainian had had its own cognate term *bat'kivshchyna* derived from *bat'ko* [father] meaning the same [fatherland] and, according to the same lexicographic source, going as far back as the eighteenth century.<sup>21</sup>

The Ukrainian *bat'kivshchyna* is extensively connected within its indigenous



lexical system through its root *bat'ko* [father] which has a multitude of derivatives.<sup>22</sup> However, the noun *bat'kivshchyna* had a serious flaw, it could not be used to derive an *otechestvennyi*-type adjective of implicit identity designation to be decoded only from the context. It is possible that this "shortcoming" necessitated the introduction into Ukrainian of the word *vitchyzna* by calquing the Russian *otechestvo*, *Russ. otets* → *Ukr. otets'*, *Russ. otchyzna* → *Ukr. vitchyzna*. The much-needed adjective *vitchyznianskyi* was then derived from *vitchyzna*, yet again following the Russian pattern.<sup>23</sup>

The authoritative *Dictionary of the Ukrainian Language* published by the Academy of Sciences of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, provides the word *vitchyznianskyi* with the following description: "created in one's own state; not foreign" (*Slovyk* vol. 1, 690). The collocation of this adjective with the noun *viina* [war] gets a special lexicographic treatment that gives it an interpretation based on the premise that the Russian colonial empire is the homeland for Ukrainians. Thus, *Vitchyznianska viina*, is "a war for the liberty and independence of one's own country against occupiers" (*ibid.*). There are only two wars referred to by the collocation *vitchyznianska viina* in Soviet Ukrainian history books—the Russian war with Napoleon of 1812 (*Ukr. Vitchyznianska viina 1812 roku* or *Russ. Otechestvennaia voina 1812 goda*) and the Soviet war with Nazi Germany, the so-called Great Patriotic War of 1941–1945 (*Ukr. Velyka Vitchyznianska viina* or *Russ. Velikaia Otechestvennaia voina*). Both these expressions suggest that Ukrainians fought for their country in 1812 and 1941–1945, even though their state did not exist in those years, unless one considers Russian empire and the USSR to be Ukrainian states.

In contrastive linguistics, the adjective *otechestvennyi* / *vitchyznianskyi* is classified as a nonequivalent item, that is, a word that structures its meaning in a culture-specific, cognitively unique manner. Its segmentation of reality finds no comparable reproduction in another language. Its translation or, to be more precise, interpretation depends on both its immediate and extended context, for example, *otechestvennyi kinematograf* should be translated as Russian cinema. *otechestvennoe kinoproizvodstvo*—as *home filmmaking*; *otechestvennaia voina*—as *patriotic war*; *otechestvennaia literatura*—as *Russian literature*. The adjective *otechestvennyi* and its Ukrainian equivalent *vitchyznianskyi* should have the area of reference exactly identical to those of the English adjectives "Russian" and "Ukrainian," respectively. In the reality of colonial discourse, they are not identical either by their referential meaning or by their ideological implications.

*Otechestvennyi* refers to Russia and what is Russian by implication, to everything that falls under the ideological concept of *otechestvo* [fatherland], but not under the geographical area of ethnic Russia. The word has often replaced the adjective *Ukrainian*, which is exclusive of Russia. Whereas *Ukrainian* allows no semantic equivocation as to the cultural attribution of the concept it modifies, the adjective *Ukr. vitchyznianskyi* (*Russ. otechestvennyi*) does not have its independent semantics and derives its meaning from two types of context: horizontal and vertical. The horizontal context is the immediate textual surrounding of the word. When the adjective is used in the context of, say, Ukrainian, Georgian, or Belarusian cultures, it should refer

respectively to each of them and be concretized in translation as Ukrainian, Georgian, or Belarusian, respectively.

The vertical context is the history of its usage and the conceptual, sentimental, and other associations that emerge as a result. Its inherently Russian origin and its past strong association with the concept of Russian imperial territoriality causes it to be linked to Russianness first and foremost in the mind of the Russian speaker in situations when the adjective is taken out of context. *Otechestvennyi* is not used in reference to American, English, French, or even Polish—cultures that are outside the Russian colonial realm. It is emblematic that this peculiar imperial designator can be used in reference to and in self-reference by the cultures that are still soundly within the Russian colonial hegemony, such as Ukraine, Belarus, Kazakhstan. The recently published statistics on the language balance in Ukraine reveal the tendencies of increasing Russian cultural hegemony in the country in such strategic spheres as mass media, filmmaking, the Internet, book publishing, business, services, entertainment, and show-business.<sup>24</sup>

Every time *vitchyzniany* / *otchestvennyi* was used in reference to members of a non-Russian ethnic community of the Soviet domain, their idea of their own country either disappeared or appeared as part of the Russian empire, in other words this semantically “tempered with” identity designator made it problematic for the colonized to articulate their own concept of the homeland. The adjective that, at first glance, shares the same referent with its contextual synonyms *Ukrainian*, *Belarusian*, *Georgian*, *Kazakh*, and so on, in the reality of imperial discourse subverts the intended meaning of these words, extending its referential sphere onto the subjects that are logically outside these national designations. Thus to classify Oleksander Dovzhenko as *ruskii rezhiser* is problematic even in the primary narrative type, while to classify him as *otchestvennyi rezhiser* has been the colonial norm. Once he is *otchestvennyi*, then by implication he is also *ruskii*, and, consequently, he sports a Russian first name too—Aleksandr.<sup>25</sup>

### *Type Three: Appropriation by Omission*

The appropriation of the colonized can be effected at the level of discourse, when the colonized is presented as something that has no distinguishing features of its own, by inclusion in the text that deals with Russian culture. *Appropriation by omission* occurs when the non-Russian identity of the subject is omitted from the text. An illustration of this is Jay Leyda's book *Kino. A History of Russian and Soviet Cinema*. Contrary to the expectation created by its title, Leyda does not discuss other Soviet cinemas that are not Russian, that is, film schools such as Ukrainian, Georgian, Belarusian, Kazakh, and so on, as separate categories. He uses “Soviet” not as an umbrella term but only as a synonym of “Russian.” The non-Russian cinemas are omitted from Leyda's tertiary narrative, while the films they produced are subsumed under the general category of Russian cinema. Neither the book's table of contents nor the subject index has headings for Ukraine, Georgia, or Kazakhstan. Leyda enumerates some of



the best Soviet and, by his own logic, Russian films in the 1971 "Introduction" to his book. ". . . we might never have seen *Ballad of a Soldier* (Cannes, 1960), *Shadows of Our Forgotten Ancestors* (Mar del Plata, 1965), *The First Teacher* (Venice, 1966), *Andrei Rubliov* (1969)" (Leyda 12).

The reader is left unaware that not all of these films are Russian. Sergey Paradzhanov, the Armenian-Georgian director of the now cult picture *Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors*, risking a ban on his film refused to have it dubbed from Ukrainian into Russian. Till February 2008, the film could be acquired in North America only in a washed out copy transferred onto a VHS cassette. Subverting Paradzhanov's intention, it features subtitles where Ukraine-specific cultural designators, including proper names, are translated into English from Russian. The DVD with a new widescreen transfer of the film released in North America by the Kino International in February of 2008 carries a blurb on its box that treats the story of the film within the context of «Russian regional history» even though the part of Ukraine (the Carpathian Mountains) where it unfolds in the 19th century became part of the Soviet territory only towards the end of WW2. As with so many other non-Russian Soviet colonial subjects, the imperial logic proved stronger than even the message the film's creator wanted to send. Armenian by ethnicity, Tbilisi-born Paradzhanov himself is by far better known to the world under the Russified version of his original name *Sarkis Parajanian*. Appropriation by omission often goes together with spelling assimilation and altered lexical semantics. The multivolume dictionary, not incidentally entitled *Noveishaia istoriia otechestvennogo kino 1986–2000* [A Newest History of Our Film] treats Ukrainian, Georgian, Azeri, and other non-Russian filmmakers as part of Russian film history.<sup>26</sup>

The British film scholar Graham Roberts, in his essay on the Ukrainian filmmaker Kira Muratova, "The Meaning of Death: Kira Muratova's Cinema of the Absurd," glosses over the fact that Muratova spent her entire creative life (from 1961 to the present) in Odesa, Ukraine (Roberts 144–160). That she is universally considered (including by herself) to be a Russian auteur does not change this fact. Even if a scholar, as Roberts writes, is primarily interested in "her place in the context of Russian and European culture," to remain blind to Muratova's immediate context of Ukrainian culture—whether loved, reviled, or ignored by her—means to limit the space of inquiry and its outcomes to the framework preset by the imperial discourse.

Appropriation by omission occurs irrespective of what the artists subjected to it consider themselves culturally. The Brit David Gillespie, who approaches Muratova as ". . . [undoubtedly t]he major female director in Russian cinema" while allowing that "[m]ost of her films were produced in Ukraine" (Gillespie 92), presents another Ukrainian filmmaker Viacheslav Kryshtofovych as only Russian (ibid. 97). However, Kryshtofovych spoke of his cultural identity as follows: "I received a mainly Russian education, but I have always considered myself to be a Ukrainian. It's difficult to explain, but, except for my work as a student, I have never before chosen specifically Ukrainian material for my projects. All my films have been made in the Russian language, but I do believe you can find a piece of my Ukrainian soul in each of them."<sup>27</sup>



These strategies characterize the relationship of the imperial culture with Ukraine as its colony and never involve noncolonial cultures that come into contact with Russia: Polish, English, French, Italian, and other proper names do not get translated into Russian, with the exception of instances that have a tradition of usage, such as biblical names or names of kings and popes.<sup>28</sup>

### Conclusion

In a recently published book *East European Cinemas*, one of the contributors, Dina Iordanova, bemoans a stunning and embarrassing editorial oversight: "... there was no entry on the [sic!] Ukraine. Nor was there one on Belarus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, and any other of the former Soviet republics . . ." (Imre 230). This omission appears not so much an editor's oversight as the result of a certain way of thinking or linguistic segmentation of the post-Soviet space as essentially part of the Russian cultural dominion. It once again proves that the described strategies of imperial appropriation continue to be reproduced today where not only Ukraine but also other former Soviet colonies are concerned. The persistence with which the world remains ignorant of Ukraine's past and present contribution to filmmaking is greatly a function of the effectiveness of these strategies. Having originated in the imperial center, over decades, they have been adopted and internalized by the colonized and the rest of the world to such an extent that the latter reproduce and perpetuate them often unintentionally. In an important sense, these strategies condition narratives on Ukraine, whether of the primary, secondary, or tertiary type, in such a manner as to preempt the emergence of Ukrainian culture as self-sufficient, independent, and authentic.

### Notes

1. Other colonies, classical, such as India, Cuba, and the Congo, hidden, such as Ireland; or internal, such as the Native Americans in the United States and Canada, have also used their respective imperial languages to create narratives of resistance.

2. The bilingual Ukrainian-Russian national publications, such as the daily *Den'* and *Dzerkalo tyжня*, the Russian language Ukrainian Internet sites [www.obkom.net.ua/](http://www.obkom.net.ua/) and [www.grani.kiev.ua/](http://www.grani.kiev.ua/), bilingual [www2.pravda.com.ua/](http://www2.pravda.com.ua/) and [www.telekritika.kiev.ua/](http://www.telekritika.kiev.ua/), to name but a few, all use Russian to generate the narratives of resistance.

3. For example, the English noun *money* has a culture-neutral referent signified by the Ukrainian equivalent *hroshi*, the French *argent*, the Russian *den'gi*, the Italian *soldi*, and so on. Concretized for every respective culture these nouns become *dollar* for the United States, Australia, and Canada, *pound sterling* for the United Kingdom, *hryvnia* for Ukraine, *euro* for France, *rubl'* for Russia. The "identity seme" is isolated in the opposition of two kinds (1) culture-neutral vs. culture-specific (*hroshi* vs *hryvnia*); (2) culture-specific vs. culture-specific (*hryvnia* vs. *dollar*). In both, the result of such an opposition will be the "identity seme" interpreted as "Ukrainian." Likewise the pair *den'gi* vs. *rubl'* suggests the same seme but already interpreted as "Russian," *den'gi* vs. *funt sterlingov*—as "British," *den'gi* vs. *zloty*—as "Polish."

4. Within the paradigm of national currency names, *franc* replaced by *euro* can still be used as currency, but it is no more specific to the French identity only. Words can comprise the "identity seme" in a variety of ways. The most common one is due to the cultural specificity

of the referent, examples thereof are: (1) names of national dishes and drinks, *borsch* (Ukr. beetroot soup), *kielbasa* (Pol. sausage), *congee* (Chinese rice gruel eaten for breakfast); musical instruments, *bandoneon* (Argentina), *bandura* (Ukraine), dances, *polka* (Poland), *foxtrot* (United States), *samba* (Brazil), and so on; (2) terms for national historical phenomena, *hetman* (Ukr. military leader of the country), *tsar* (Russ. king), *Prohibition* (ban on sale and consumption of alcohol in the United States), and so on; (3) proper names of people and places, for example, Ukr. *Petro Mohyla*, Russ. *Aleksei Tolstoy*, Pol. *Adam Mickiewicz*.

5. George Liber, author of the Dovzhenko biography published by the prestigious British Film Institute, titled his solidly researched monograph *Alexander Dovzhenko: A Life in Soviet Film* (Liber). The same spelling that ignores the original name form *Oleksander* is used earlier in the book prepared by Marco Carynnyk—*Alexander Dovzhenko: Poet As Filmmaker: Selected Writings* (Carynnyk). Whether the choice of spelling (Alexander) is informed by the tradition of established Russian (primary narrative) or, more likely in this case, Western (tertiary narrative) usage, is of no importance for the purpose of this study. Despite the fact that both books rest on the premise that Dovzhenko is a Ukrainian film director and writer, linguistic form has its own logic and creates its own optics, whereby the Soviet director Alexander Dovzhenko is perceived as a Russian and not a Ukrainian director.

6. The same author refers to the main protagonist in Mark Donskoy's 1943 film *Rainbow* by her original Ukrainian name Olena, rather than using its Russian equivalent Elena (Kenez 177).

7. On another occasion, the same author clearly points out one such salient instance of appropriation by spelling in relation to the actress Natalia Lysenko, a Ukrainian born in Kherson (see Youngblood 1999, 53).

8. Among the sources are: the Ukrainian Hollywood Trident Association, the brama.com (one of the largest Ukrainian content portals on the Internet, George Liber, the U.S. expert on Ukrainian history and Dovzhenko, Ray Uzvyshyn, who wrote a Ph.D. dissertation on Dovzhenko, or more obscure Web sites such as [www.filmreference.com](http://www.filmreference.com) or [www.foto-marlin.ch](http://www.foto-marlin.ch), which seem to feature Mykola Nademsky rather than Nikolai Nademsky by accident rather than intentionally (they present other Ukrainians as Russians with Russian names).

9. Examples of these are: [www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com); [movies.uk.msn.com](http://movies.uk.msn.com); [silentera.com](http://silentera.com); [slant-magazine.com](http://slant-magazine.com); [sensesofcinema.com](http://sensesofcinema.com); and commercial sites such as [amazon.com](http://amazon.com), [ebay.com](http://ebay.com), [kino.com](http://kino.com), and others. It appears in English, French ([amazon.fr](http://amazon.fr)), German ([zelluloid.de](http://zelluloid.de)), Dutch ([biosagenda.nl](http://biosagenda.nl)), Danish ([laserdisk.dk](http://laserdisk.dk)), Japanese ([amazon.co.jp](http://amazon.co.jp)), Chinese ([dy.yesho.com](http://dy.yesho.com)), and others. This comparison suggests that the primary narrative type on Ukraine dominates the World Wide Web and that the tertiary narratives favor the colonial linguistic practices and continue to ignore those of the secondary narratives of resistance.

10. A proper name, unlike a common name, singles out its referent as one of a kind and unique compared not only to other referents (cf. *Gerard Manley Hopkins* and *a poet / Jesuit priest*) but also to other languages that often have their own equivalents. A simple comparison reveals this unique culture-identifying function of anthroponyms (cf. *Eng.* Peter, *Span.* Pedro, *Ital.* Pietro, *Fr.* Pierre, *Russ.* Piotr, *Ukr.* Petro). Each of them is unique to its respective culture. The semantic structure of each contains the "identity seme." The Russian-Ukrainian name-swapping subverts this unique nomination and deprives the colonized of what could, in a noncolonial situation, have been their very own means of self-identification.

11. The Russian dynastic colonial empire followed the logic of classical European imperial powers: England with its colonies in *New England*, Spain and its colonies in the Americas and Asia, collectively known as *Nueva Espana*, and France with its North American acquisitions a.k.a. *la Nouvelle France*.

12. The policy was given an official articulation by the Valuev Decree (1863) and the Ems Decree (1876). In a characteristic treatment of this identity names, the Russian words for Ukraine or Ukrainian [*Ukraina* and *ukrainskii*] are either used with the qualification the "the so-called"



[tak nazyvaemyi], or with overt connotations of opprobrium, or most often not used at all; instead such imperial designators as *Little Russia* [*Malorossiiia*], *Little Russian* [*malorossiiskii*], *South Russian* dialect, or simply *the dialect* are preferred (Magosci 369–374).

13. According to Paul Magosci, the Ems Decree that forbade public use of Ukrainian was never officially repealed, and starting with the revolution of 1905 neither was it enforced (Magosci 380).

14. In a curious semantic development the adjective *samostiinyi* “independent” and its cognate nouns *samostiinist’* “independence,” *samostiinyk* “a champion of independence,” in the Soviet discourse, lost their neutral connotation and was given a clearly derogatory flavor. Their collocations with other words became derogatory clichés, for example, *samostiina Ukraina* “independent Ukraine”, *samostiinyts’ke holoto* “independentist cesspool” used in reference to organized Ukrainian immigrant groups in the West advocating an independent Ukraine. This new derogatory semantics proved so useful that the expression *samostiina Ukraina* was borrowed into Russian usage. Today both the noun *samostiinist’* and the adjective *samostiinyi* have not fully shed the imperial stigma of derogation. They are all too often avoided in favor of their emotively neutral synonyms *nezalezhnist’* and *nezalezhnyi*. The adjective *samostiinyi* in Russian continues to be used as a political swearword. A vivid example of this usage is the self-explanatory book title *Samostiinaia Ukraina: istoki predatelstva* [An Independent Ukraine: The Sources of Treason] by A.K. Glivakovsky. For details, see [www.knigoprovod.ru/?topic\\_id=23;book\\_id=248](http://www.knigoprovod.ru/?topic_id=23;book_id=248). Russian imperial discourse resorts to borrowing an identity designator and using it unchanged in its original form as a slur. The Ukrainian adjective *nezalezhnyi* even though it is neutral in Ukrainian is used in Russian as such a slur, for example, “. . . postulat or nezalezhnoi i samostiinoi Ukraine . . . eto cho-to iz razriada nauchnoi fantastiki . . .” [the postulate about free and independent Ukraine is something taken from science fiction] at <http://groups.rambler.ru/groups/rambler.news.ukraine/1603522.2.html>; This pattern of slur-production through unchanged borrowing is known in other languages, for example, the nouns *Polak* and *Yid*, the American English derogatory names for a Pole and a Jew, respectively.

15. The title of the daily newspaper of the Lviv Regional Communist Party Committee *Za vil’nu Ukraïnu* [For a Free Ukraine] was the proverbial exception that proved the rule.

16. Orest Subtelny starts his *Ukraine. A History*, translated into Ukrainian and repeatedly reprinted in Ukraine, with just such etymological reproduction “Ukraine means borderland” (Subtelny 3). Anna Reid, author of *Borderland: A Journey through the History of the Ukraine* puts the same idea in the title and the synopsis, “The word ‘Ukraine’ means ‘borderland’ and for most of its history the lands that make up present-day Ukraine have been a collection of other countries’ border regions” (Reid 1997). The amazon.co.uk description of her book is “An extremely vivid history of the Ukraine, a politically and culturally rich collection of borderlands” ([www.amazon.co.uk/Borderland-Journey-Through-History-Ukraine/dp/1842127225](http://www.amazon.co.uk/Borderland-Journey-Through-History-Ukraine/dp/1842127225)). A Google search under the heading “Ukraine means borderland” reveals the massive influence this etymology commands on the Internet—88,300 results.

17. Reacting to Reid’s book title, O. Zuk writes, “Unfortunately the author did not get the basic premise correct. Ukraine does not mean borderland. The oldest use of the word found in written text is in the 10th [sic!] century chronicle of Slovo o Polke Ihoria [sic!]. The term Ukraine is used as meaning within the kingdom, at the heart of the kingdom. The opposite of what the author writes. Borderland would mean Okraina, this is the difference between in and out” ([www.amazon.com/Borderland-Journey-Through-History-Ukraine/dp/customer-reviews/0813337925](http://www.amazon.com/Borderland-Journey-Through-History-Ukraine/dp/customer-reviews/0813337925)).

18. A popular articulation of an alternative interpretation of what the toponym *Ukraina* means is the article by V. Skliarenko “Where Does the Name Ukraine Originate From?” [Zvidky pokhodyt’ nazva Ukraïna?] published in early 1991, before Ukraine became independent from Russia (Skliarenko).

19. The pioneering film director Dziga Vertov actively engaged in a conceptual redefinition



of "homeland" for all the peoples of the Soviet Union along the colonial lines in his romantically charged narrative documentary *One Fifth of the World*.

20. The same technique of semantic reconfiguring is manifest in the appeals by the French imperial administration to the insurgent Algerians in Gillo Pontecorvo's film *The Battle of Algiers* (1966). Trying to dissuade the colonized from taking part in the rebellion, the colonial administration evokes France, not Algeria, as the fatherland of the Algerian.

21. The Ukrainian linguist Ievhen Tymchenko dates *bat'kivshchyna* in the meaning "fatherland" to the eighteenth century (Tymchenko 61).

22. Some of the derivatives of *bat'ko* are: *bat'ky* (parents), *bat'kivs'kyi* (fatherly), *bat'kivstvo* (fatherhood), *bezbatchenko* (a person with no loyalty to the fatherland), *po-bat'kivs'ky* (like a father), *batiushka* (form of address or reference to an Orthodox priest), *baten'ko* (dimin. of *bat'ko*), *batechko* (dimin. of *bat'ko*), *po-bat'kovi* (patronymic), *batia* (dimin. father), *bat'kuvary* (to curse mentioning somebody's father), *bat'kovhyvets'* (father-killer), and so on.

23. The adjective *vitchyzniani* could have been the first to appear in Ukrainian, whereas the noun *vitchyzna* that should be expected to be its derivational base, was reproduced later by analogy. This issue needs a separate study.

24. Movnyi balans Ukraïny. [www.politua.ru/humanitarian/292.html](http://www.politua.ru/humanitarian/292.html).

25. Today, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Russian discourse continues to actively use the adjective *otechestvennyi* as a tool of imperial appropriation. In March 2007, the *Entsiklopediia otechestvennoi multiplikatsii* [Encyclopedia of Our Animated Filmmaking] was published in Moscow by Algorium-Kniga Publishers. This 816-page volume with more than 1,000 biographic entries includes in the realm of Russian/Soviet animated filmmaking—all subsumed in the adjective *otechestvennyi*—filmmakers from Ukraine and other former Soviet republics. The Ukrainian National film portal Kino-Kolo quotes some seventy names of animated film directors, scriptwriters, cinematographers, composers, artistic designers, actors, producers, and so on, presented in this encyclopedia.

26. The ranks of Russian filmmakers thus are expanded by the Georgians Tengiz Abuladze, Veriko Andzhaparidze, Aleksandr Atanesian, Lomer Akhvlediani, Teimuraz Babluani, Lana Gogoberidze, the Belarusians Ales Adamovich, Viktor Dashuk, the Armenians Boris Airapetian, Karen Gevorgian, Ruben Gevorgiants, the Kazakhs Ardak Amirkulov, Serik Aprymov, the Latvians Via Artmane, Ianis Streich, Andris Lapinsh, Ivars Seletskis, the Lithuanians Sharunas Bartas, Ingeborga Dapkunaite, Vitautas Zhalakiavichus, the Estonians Arvo Ikho, Mark-Toomas Soosaar, Kalie Kiysk, the Tadjiks Valery Akhadov, Davlatnazar Khudonazarov, the Moldovan Valeriu Zheregi, the Uzbek Elter Ishmukhamedov, and the Ukrainians Borislav Brondukov, Sergey Bukovsky, Grigorii Gladii, Viktor Gres, Mykhail Iliencko, Yuri Iliencko, Aleksandra Svenskaia, Viacheslav Krishtofovich. This is by far an incomplete list of non-Russian figures appropriated by the Russian film history. Whereas non-Eastern Slavic names in the list preserve their original form, for example, Moldovan *Valeriu Zheregi* does not become Russian *Valerii Zheregi*. Ukrainian anthroponyms are all invariably Russified, first names always and family names where possible, for example, Serhii Bukovs'kyi becomes Sergey Bukovskiy, Hryhorii Hladii—Grigorii Gladii, Mykhailo Illiencko—Mikhail Il'enko, and Oleksandra Svens'ka—Aleksandra Svenskaia.

27. See [www.columbia.edu/cu/ufc/events/2005\\_2\\_10.html](http://www.columbia.edu/cu/ufc/events/2005_2_10.html).

28. For example: *Fr.* Louis XV → *Russ.* Liudovik XV; *Eng.* King James II → *Russ.* Korol' Yakov II; *Ital.* Giovanni Paulo II → *Russ.* Ioan Pavel II.

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