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Theoretical Concepts of Film Studies in *Cinema Art* Journal: XXI Century

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Abstract

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the editors of *Cinema Art* apparently realized that the attempts to transform the magazine into a socio-political one, made at the end of the "perestroika" era and in the 1990s, had not yielded the expected dividends. As a result, the journal returned to the format of a cinematic publication. Hence the increase in the number of theoretical articles on cinema, which in the 21st century averaged eighteen a year.

Daniil Dondurey (1947–2017), who directed *Cinema Art* until 2017, maintained the journal's course towards a sociological understanding of the media process, while attracting leading authors in the field. The film critic Anton Dolin, who replaced him in the second half of 2017, on the one hand re-emphasized political accents and also strengthened passages in the journal texts that opposed the authorities, and on the other hand began to pay much more attention to the genres of mass culture in film.

Our analysis of the concepts of film studies (in the context of the socio-cultural, historical, political situation, etc.) in the journal *Cinema Art* in the 21st century has shown that the theoretical works on cinematic topics in this period can be divided into the following types

- Articles, discussions devoted to the analysis of the theoretical heritage of the classics and the history of Soviet cinema (A. Fomenko, N. Izvolov, N. Kleiman, O. Kovalov, E. Maisel, E. Margolit, A. Medvedev, N. Sputnitskaya, V. Shmyrov, A. Shpagin, A. Shcherbenok and others);

- Articles attempting to understand the film process from a theoretical point of view (O. Aronson, D. Golyenko-Wolfson, E. Maisel, L. Manovich, etc.);

- articles devoted to the sociological and cultural problems of cinema, television, and film distribution (O. Berezin, K. Bogoslovskaya, D. Dondurey, D. Golyenko-Wolfson, E. Maisel, I. Poluekhtova, K. Razlogov, V. Zvereva, etc.); at the same time, the analysis of the phenomenon of the Internet and virtual reality has become a new theoretical trend of the journal.

- theoretical articles on foreign cinema (A. Artyukh, D. Komm, N. Tsyrukun, etc.).

In general, *Cinema Art* in the 21st century, as in the 1990s, offered new interpretations of the history of Soviet and world cinema and tried to find theoretical approaches to the current film process.

Keywords: *Cinema Art* journal, film studies, film criticism, theoretical concepts, cinema, film, movie, cinematography, Russia, cinematic art.

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1. Introduction

This article focuses on the analysis of theoretical concepts of film studies in the journal *Cinema Art* in the 21st century, when its chief editors were Daniil Dondurey (1947–2017) and Anton Dolin.

Table 1 presents statistical data reflecting the changes (from 2001 to 2022) in the organizations whose organ was the journal, its circulation, its periodicity; the names of the journal's chief editors and the time intervals of their leading work in the publication, the number of articles on film theory for each year of the journal's publication are also indicated.

Table 1. *Cinema Art* journal in the 21st century: statistical data

Year of issue of the journal	The organization whose body the journal was (founders/publishers)	Journal circulation (in thousand copies)	Periodicity of the journal (number of issues per year)	Chief Editor journal	Number of articles on film theory
2001	Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation, Cinematography Service, Union of Cinematographers of Russia, Editorial Board of the <i>Cinema Art</i> journal	*	12	D. Dondurey	28
2002	Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation, Cinematography Service, Union of Cinematographers of Russia, Editorial Board of the <i>Cinema Art</i> journal	*	12	D. Dondurey	19
2003	Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation, Cinematography Service, Union of Cinematographers of Russia, Editorial Board of the <i>Cinema Art</i> journal	*	12	D. Dondurey	29
2004	Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation, Cinematography Service (No. 1-5), Ministry of Culture and Mass Communications of the Russian Federation (No. 6-12), Union of Cinematographers of Russia, Editorial Board of the <i>Cinema Art</i> journal	*	12	D. Dondurey	13
2005	Ministry of Culture and Mass Communications of the Russian Federation, Union of Cinematographers of Russia, Editorial Board of the <i>Cinema Art</i> journal	*	12	D. Dondurey	16
2006	Ministry of Culture and Mass Communications of the Russian Federation, Union of Cinematographers of Russia, Editorial Board of the <i>Cinema Art</i> journal	*	12	D. Dondurey	14

Year of issue of the journal	The organization whose body the journal was (founders/publishers)	Journal circulation (in thousand copies)	Periodicity of the journal (number of issues per year)	Chief Editor journal	Number of articles on film theory
2007	Ministry of Culture and Mass Communications of the Russian Federation, Union of Cinematographers of Russia, Editorial Board of the <i>Cinema Art</i> journal	*	12	D. Dondurey	11
2008	Ministry of Culture and Mass Communications of the Russian Federation (No. 1-5), Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation (No. 6-12), Union of Cinematographers of Russia, Editorial Board of the <i>Cinema Art</i> journal	*	12	D. Dondurey	13
2009	Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation, Union of Cinematographers of Russia, Editorial Board of the <i>Cinema Art</i> journal	*	12	D. Dondurey	19
2010	Non-commercial partnership "Editorial office of the <i>Cinema Art</i> journal"	*	12	D. Dondurey	18
2011	Non-commercial partnership "Editorial office of the <i>Cinema Art</i> journal"	*	12	D. Dondurey	17
2012	Non-commercial partnership "Editorial office of the <i>Cinema Art</i> journal"	*	12	D. Dondurey	27
2013	Non-commercial partnership "Editorial office of the <i>Cinema Art</i> journal"	*	12	D. Dondurey	16
2014	Non-commercial partnership "Editorial office of the <i>Cinema Art</i> journal"	*	12	D. Dondurey	14
2015	Non-commercial partnership "Editorial office of the <i>Cinema Art</i> journal"	*	12	D. Dondurey	16
2016	Non-commercial partnership "Editorial office of the <i>Cinema Art</i> journal"	*	12	D. Dondurey	11
2017	Non-commercial partnership "Editorial office of the <i>Cinema Art</i> journal"	*	8	D. Dondurey (No. 1-3), A. Dolin (No. 4-8)	10
2018	Non-commercial partnership "Editorial office of the <i>Cinema Art</i> journal"	2.7-3.0	12 **	A. Dolin	23
2019	Non-commercial partnership "Editorial office of the <i>Cinema Art</i> journal"	3.0	12**	A. Dolin	34

Year of issue of the journal	The organization whose body the journal was (founders/publishers)	Journal circulation (in thousand copies)	Periodicity of the journal (number of issues per year)	Chief Editor journal	Number of articles on film theory
2020	Non-commercial partnership "Editorial office of the <i>Cinema Art</i> journal"	1.5-4.0	12**	A. Dolin	14
2021	Non-commercial partnership "Editorial office of the <i>Cinema Art</i> journal"	3.0	12**	A. Dolin	30
2022	Non-commercial partnership "Editorial office of the <i>Cinema Art</i> journal"	1.0-3.0	12**	A. Dolin (No. 1-2), S. Dedinsky (No. 3-12)	22

Notes:

* From 2001 to 2017, the circulation of *Cinema Art* was not mentioned in the mastheads of the issues. According to data found on the Internet, the journal's circulation from 2001 to 2017 was around two to three thousand copies, which is even lower than in the 1930s and 1940s.

** For one year, from 2018 to 2022, *Cinema Art* was actually published six times a year, as all issues were double issues.

Until 10 May 2017, the film sociologist D. Dondurey (1947-2017) was the editor-in-chief of *Cinema Art*. Then (until spring 2022) the film critic A. Dolin took over the post of editor-in-chief.

2. Materials and methods

The methodology of the research consists of the main philosophical provisions on the connection, interdependence and integrity of the phenomena of reality, the unity of the historical and social in knowledge; scientific, cinematological, socio-cultural, cultural, hermeneutic, semiotic approaches proposed in the works of leading scientists (Aristarco, 1951; Aronson, 2003; Aronson, 2007; Bakhtin, 1996; Bazin, 1971; Bessonov, 2012; Bibler, 1990; Casetti, 1999; Demin, 1966; Eco, 1975; Eco, 1976; Gledhill, Williams, 2000; Hess, 1997; Hill, Gibson, 1998; Khrenov, 2006; Khrenov, 2011; Kuleshov, 1987; Lotman, 1973; Lotman, 1992; Lotman, 1994; Mast, Cohen, 1985; Metz, 1974; Razlogov, 1984; Stam, 2000; Villarejo, 2007 and others).

The project is based on the content approach to research (identification of the content of the process under study, considering the totality of its elements, the interaction between them, their nature, appeal to facts, analysis and synthesis of theoretical conclusions, etc.), on the historical approach – consideration of the specific and historical development of the declared topic of the project.

Research methods: complex content analysis, comparative interdisciplinary analysis; theoretical research methods: classification, comparison, analogy, induction and deduction, abstraction and concretization, theoretical analysis and synthesis, generalization; empirical research methods: collection of information related to the project topic, comparative-historical and hermeneutical methods.

3. Discussion and results

History of Soviet and Russian Cinematography

D. Dondurey (1947–2017), editor-in-chief of *Cinema Art*, dramatically expanded the range of sociological material of the journal in the 21st century. Another thematic field of the journal was the publication of materials on foreign cinema (reviews, reports on international film festivals, creative portraits of actors and directors, etc.). From year to year, the editorial line of *Cinema Art* became more and more oppositional to the Russian authorities, especially against the background of the Ukrainian events (from 2014).

Against this background, articles on the history of Soviet and Russian cinema occupied a rather modest place in the magazine.

In the 21st century, *Cinema Art* continued to rethink the history of Soviet cinema.

A number of articles were devoted to the films of the "Silver Age" (Grashchenkova, 2007), Alexander Drankov (Pozdnyakov, 2008), the colors in the era of silent cinema (Izvolov, 2001), early Soviet animation (Sputnitskaya, 2021), the work of Sergei Eisenstein (Fomenko, 2018; Kleiman, 2011), Dziga Vertov (Izvolov, 2019; Izvolov, 2022; Kovalov, 2008; Medvedev, 2017; Shcherbenok, 2009; Shcherbenok, 2012), Lev Kuleshov (Kovalov, 2009), Mark Donskoy (Margolit, 2010), Alexander Ptushko (Sputnitskaya, 2015), Marlen Khutsiev (Kovalov, 2008), the image of America on the Soviet screen (Kovalov, 2003), the revolutionary Leninist theme in Soviet cinema (Maisel, 2017; Shmyrov, 2017), the influence of Soviet cinema on the world film process (Razlogov, 2006), etc.

In particular, Alexei Medvedev (1969–2023) noted that D. Vertov's film *Man with a Movie Camera* is the highest point of conflict between intention and reality, between the author and the viewer, between the autonomy of film language and the orientation towards understanding, between the visual and the verbal. "But let's not forget the socio-political side of this conflict. ... Vertov himself called *The Man with the Movie Camera* an 'impossible possibility', initially recognizing the utopian nature of his intention to purify film speech from literary impurities. It is a utopia, but it is a utopia that has been realized, at least once. Further, there will be only compromises, but *The Man with the Movie Camera* has forever established the possibility of a different approach, a different path" (Medvedev, 2017: 123).

And A. Shcherbenok believed that Vertov's theoretical legacy can be imagined as a set of justifications for the particularities of the film thing. Vertov's claim to its exceptional revolutionary character is based on the documentary nature of the film thing. If a feature film can be both progressive and reactionary, the film thing is progressive only because it directly reflects reality, and reality is on the side of the proletariat. Vertov's specific innovations – the hidden camera, mass amateur filming, synchronized sound, ideological and poetic editing of newsreel footage, reflection on the characteristics of a movie camera and film language within the film – have long been widely used by Soviet/Russian and world documentary film, having developed, among other things, under direct influence. However, apart from the historical context of their origin, these documentary filmmakers are confronted with a completely different, non-dialectical understanding of reality.

It is enough to read an interview with almost any modern documentary filmmaker, especially a Russian one, to see an insoluble conflict between the passionate desire to show "life by surprise" and the bitter realization of the fundamental impossibility of doing so, the dependence of the final product on the director's design. The same tension underlies Vertov's theory, but for Vertov it is not a tragic horizon that ultimately renders documentary cinema meaningless as a project opposed to fiction. For Vertov, the antinomic duality of the filmic thing is not a verdict on cinema's ability to reflect real life, but a powerful source of intellectual energy.

Comparing the theoretical approaches of S. Eisenstein and D. Vertov, A. Shcherbenok reminded the readers. Shcherbenok reminded the readers of *Cinema Art* that while Eisenstein, in his program theory of the montage of attractions, allowed "the weaving into the montage of whole" images "and a coherent plot intrigue", even "not as something self-sufficient and all-determining, but as a powerful attraction consciously chosen for a given purpose", Vertov completely rejected it as an unacceptable vestige of literature and art, "a terrible poison of habit" poisoning the "organism of cinematography". Vertov contrasted traditional cinema, based on the adaptation of literary conventions to the screen, with cinema that took life by surprise – he shot without sets or actors, showing real people going about their daily business. At the same time, Vertov's aesthetic is directly opposed to passive representation. Vertov's films of the 1920s, especially his famous *The Man with the Movie Camera* (1929), are characterized by abstract montage dynamics, accelerated, slow-motion and reverse filming, and other formal devices that reflect the specifics of the cinematographic "camera" – a set of technical means – from the film camera to the editing suite and the projector. The apparatus, which Vertov referred to with the metaphor of the "cinema eye", also becomes one of the main objects of the image. At the same time, since the view of the "cinema eye" is conceptualized by the director as fundamentally different from that of the human eye, Vertov's cinema depicts the everyday world from a non-human point of view, from the perspective of a machine (Shcherbenok, 2009: 107).

With a thorough frame-by-frame analysis of Vertov's films *The Man with the Movie Camera* and *Lullaby*, film critic and director O. Kovalov arrived at a scientific hypothesis about the influence of Joyce's *Ulysses* on the poetics of these famous and still unresolved films: *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929) by Dziga Vertov. Even externally, it has so many points in common with the general design of *Ulysses* that it is curious why this most obvious "similarity" has not been noticed

by researchers, especially since it immediately had a reputation for being incredibly innovative. This inexplicable blindness is probably due to the fact that readers and viewers traditionally live in different reservations and their circles of artistic impressions simply do not overlap. Vertov's film seems to meet these expectations perfectly: the author uses Joyce's experience rationally, as a "bourgeois specialist" in production: he takes from him "useful things" – techniques and equipment – and resolutely cuts off "spiritual decay" – we do not and cannot have it (Kovalov, 2008: 73-74).

In his article on S. Eisenstein's theory of montage, A. Fomenko also emphasized that in the late 1920s and 1930s, processes were taking place in Soviet art that, although not in conflict with the official line, were not the result of directives issued from above and could not be reduced to their obedient implementation. There was room for artistic experimentation (even if it ran counter to the principles of the classical avant-garde) and its conceptualization. One of the results of this conceptualization is the theory of "deductive montage". Leaving aside the particular political aims that Eisenstein allegedly had in mind, his article contains one of the most convincing and articulate theories of the image in the history of aesthetic thought. By undertaking to rehabilitate montage, Eisenstein transcends the level of the task at hand and defines this strategy as the universal basis of any artistic practice, rooted in the functioning of human consciousness itself: in other words, contrary to his initial modest remark, he concludes that montage is everything (Fomenko, 2018: 195).

When analyzing the history of Soviet cinema, E. Margolit wrote that if we try to determine the key symbol that most fully expresses the phenomenon of Soviet cinema, then first of all a child can claim this role. The explanation lies in the very nature of screen reality – the image of a completely renewed ideal world. This symbol is common in Soviet culture, it is enough to remember it: Nikolai Zabolotsky's "baby world" from *The Feast of Agriculture*, Mayakovsky's "teenage country", Platonov's children.

However, the modifications of the symbol of the child are extremely diverse (and we are not only talking about the actual images of children, but much more broadly – about the prevalence of the childish principle in the character, regardless of his age), the appearance of the child as a central character in cinema is always associated with moments of (one way or another) liberalization of the Soviet regime, while for the cinema of Stalin's time it is the ideal embodiment of a citizen of the new state, wholly devoted to the motherland and the father-leader as the central figures of the narrative (Margolit, 2002: 76).

E. Margolit was convinced that the hyperbolic stability of both the political system and its artistic model of those years was in fact based on a direct denial of historical time, which was directly reflected in the policies of the pre-war Stalinist state. In this context, eternal youth is transformed into a child's consciousness, arrested in one of the stages of its development, in modern terminology – "juvenile consciousness" (Margolit, 2002: 82).

E. Maisel rightly pointed out that the transformation of Lenin (and the revolutionary in general) from a hero to a thinking – and therefore tragic – figure, which took place in the early 1960s, signaled a new stage in the "humanization" of the leader of the world proletariat. From the hero of epics (as well as of folklore and urban legends), a genius of thought and the possessor of an inflexible will, leading the party and humanity along paths known only to himself towards the final goal, Lenin was gradually transformed in the 1960s into a private individual, a solitary man, a citizen of the world, a left-wing intellectual. This Lenin, who continued to direct the moods of the masses, already treated "useful and necessary" violence with a certain distance, not to say selectively and squeamishly. The contemplativeness, capriciousness, and dandyism of qualities previously unnoticed and unlikely in this guise have mutated in some biographies into endearing character traits. This Lenin often hesitates and makes hard decisions; he dreams of distracting himself from the nightmare around him and reminds the strongmen, Dzerzhinsky and Stalin, that there is no need to cut because people are not shards (Maisel, 2017: 111-112).

On a similar theme, V. Shmyrov emphasized that Mikhail Shatrov, the main inspirer and co-author of films, performances and television series about Lenin in the 1960s and 1970s (including his best film, *The Sixth of July*), through the mouth of the leader of the world proletariat and his comrades-in-arms, tried to teach the playwright a lot about modern society, even to substantiate and explain the need to liberalize the political system. But does this mean that the new mythology, which was created in opposition to and in confrontation with the old mythology, could once and for all take the place of historical truth, or at any rate prevent progress towards this truth already in a new time, unencumbered by yesterday's conventions and restrictions? (Shmyrov, 2017: 87).

In his analysis of Soviet films about the Great Patriotic War, A. Shpagin concluded that M. Chiaureli's *The Fall of Berlin* was the culmination of the myth. One could boldly say that a new religion crystallized on a single territory: the religion of the just war, the religion of the new world. And there's no need for revolutions anymore – that's it, the world revolution has taken place – if not in the whole world, then in a considerable part of it (Shpagin, 2005: 66). And in the era of the 'buried' Soviet filmmakers, paradoxically, they unconsciously sought a social ideal in the war. Cinematographers of the mid-1950s, emerging from Stalin's hell, turned to this theme in the hope of finding a foothold. The war in their films was a source of true light – it rallied the nation in a great and just impulse. People united to dispel the darkness that followed and to find light in this struggle – was this not the main dream of the revolution and, in general, the dominant feature of socialism? And it is absolutely clear that they were sincere, because they were fighting a terrible evil – fascism. Their actions were guided by something higher – it led to victory (Shpagin, 2005: 66). But in the 1970s, as A. Shpagin rightly noted, the military theme on the screen took a form convenient for everyone: it turned into an adventure genre (Shpagin, 2005: 83).

Recalling the period of the Thaw, O. Kovalov stressed that the split with power, reflected and expressed in M. Khutsiev's *Zastava Ilyicha (I'm 20 Years Old)*, was not along social, but moral categories: not "Sovietism – anti-Sovietism", but "idealism – cynicism". It was this division of society into romantics and cynics, believers and non-believers that made those in power more vulnerable than if it had been a traditional social critique (Kovalov, 2008: 66).

Analyzing T. Lioznova's famous TV series *Seventeen Moments of Spring* (1973), M. Adamovich compared the protagonist of *Moments...* – with the popular super-agent of Western spy novels and films James Bond, arguing that Bond-Stirlitz, like Osiris, is reborn with each new series and is capable of endless rebirth. Because it is just a function whose indices can be changed and changed again. In this sense, both super-agents have good reason to claim the status of hero in the ancient sense of the word. Three dozen books, two dozen Bond films add nothing and do not develop Fleming's character. Throughout the twelve episodes of Lioznova's film, despite the outward claim to be psychological, the character of the Soviet intelligence officer remains static, fixed – at the level of the dossier read in the first series. All series (or books) are not a deepening of the character, but an illustration of the declared characteristic. The super-task of the hero function is something like the task of the knight George: to overcome the evil of the world in the form of fascism, communism, terrorism and every other "ism". In other words, all such series are based on political, national and racial issues and contain a gigantic ideological potential. Obviously, the very structure of the myth, based on binary oppositions, is ideal for ideological propaganda, especially for creating the image of the enemy. Isn't that why the Bond saga is as successful today as it was almost fifty years ago (Adamovich, 2002: 78-79).

Y. Bogomolov (1937–2023) published a kind of brief history of Soviet cinema in the pages of *Cinema Art*. Turning to the post-Soviet history of national cinematography, he noted with insightful bitterness that a new utopia has emerged in these times. The world is once again in danger of toppling over into irrational idealism. If it hasn't already overturned and fallen. Only now it will be based not on cinematic mythology, but on propagandistic television, aided by a trolley-active Internet. As in the Soviet past, the superstructure will be the economy. Patriotic rhetoric and demagogic geopolitics will be the tools for manipulating public opinion. Why "will" or "will be"? This possible future is already partly our present. The hypothetical utopia is becoming a counter-utopia before our very eyes. But no longer in an artistic form, but in the mode of the online (Bogomolov, 2016: 113).

Theoretical film studies concepts

Theoretical articles on cinematography in the traditional sense of this type of text in the *Cinema Art* journal in the XXI century are, unfortunately, few and far between. Gone are the arguments about film language, editing, etc. that were so familiar in the 20th century. Instead, articles of a culturological nature have come to the fore.

For example, the culturologist M. Kurtov published a detailed article on the phenomenon of boredom in the cinema. Paradoxically (and, in our opinion, not very convincingly), he tried to make the readers of the magazine understand that even entertaining cinema does not eliminate boredom, since it is inherent in the very conditions of cinema. Such films only alleviate boredom by organizing affective participation: the spectator feels entertained as a result of a change of mood (a transition, according to Heidegger, from the second to the first type of boredom) but remains imperceptibly bored. The boredom that drives people to the cinema only takes milder forms there.

It is cured by films that deliberately deepen it. It is paradoxical that the machine, which is a source of boredom, seeks to eliminate it. It can only eliminate boredom by secretly subjugating the spectator. Cinema is the first cultural and social phenomenon whose ontological basis was boredom. Therefore, to the extent that boredom is the "hidden purpose" of modernity, cinema has a kind of privilege over other arts in revealing this purpose (Kurtov, 2009: 90-91).

Z. Abdullayeva proved to be much more radical in her theoretical messages, arguing that in cinema fatigue – in the form of hysterical outbursts or nervousness, not always ecstatic – forms a thin red line that pierces the beginning of the zero years. "Left" and "right", avant-garde art and conservative art, poor and bourgeois, feature films and documentaries – all of this ceased to be not only intelligible, but meaningful. Oppositions no longer work; they remain rhetorical figures of speech that explain little in either social or artistic life. And – they do not take away where it is worth thinking, practising. Reality itself is so strange and false that mythological images become more spontaneous and authentic. And even truthful. Certain mythologies absorb a kind of reality. Including a way of documenting reality, which is falsified not only on television, but also in the author's – figurative – "real cinema". And which perhaps explores the combination of art (born during the editing process) with non-art (Abdullaeva, 2006: 51, 53).

Reflecting on the problems of the art of cinema in the 21st century, S. Sivy believes that at a time when the expansion of mass culture into the protected areas of intellectual cinema is clearly observed, the author is forced to seek a compromise between entertainment and aesthetics. This is the only strategy for the survival of art in the conditions of market globalization. Money has become in modern conditions a much more significant obstacle to independent or experimental cinema than, say, censorship (Sivy, 2006: 73).

In this context, I. Sukmanov bitterly noted that in the 21st century the watershed between distribution and festival cinema is becoming more and more fatal. Now he sees less a clash of tastes than a generation gap. Adolescent passions boil in multiplexes. The nature of human action is translated into the language of comics. Fantasies replace reality. Life as such, in all its manifestations, is lived out on the big screen, and with it, the spectator who has absorbed this experience of life, is banished from the halls. In recent film realism, the marginal world is still the main object of attention. And not only because in this environment a person is constantly in a borderline situation, subject to strong passions and more natural than ever. He is a representative of another society, which for most viewers is terra incognita. And when reality appears on the screen in its ugliest form, the viewer's interest is motivated by the possibility of living an experience that he does not have. We want to know another existence that we have safely avoided or are afraid to experience. Under the influence of emotional stress, we shed our complexes and fears of hostile vital elements. The more authentic the environment, the more fully we perceive it and soberly evaluate it (Sukmanov, 2013: 85, 89-90).

I. Sukmanov drew attention to another cinematic trend of the new era: the mixing of playful and non-playful spaces in cinema is another step towards the cherished dream of cinematographic art to embrace the world and see it objectively. If each type of cinema is incapable of accomplishing this task, perhaps they can come closer to the ideal by joining forces. The desire for an unattainable cinematic truth is still one of the main tasks of art. In post-documentary and post-fiction cinema, this problem is solved by a head-on collision of the opposites of fact and fiction: if one lies, the other acts against it. In this case, the author tries to take the position of an observer. And when the disoriented public asks about morality, they are more likely to be told that "modern art only asks questions but does not give an answer". In their search for objectivity, modern authors prefer to distance themselves from the image and at the same time hypnotize it, so as not to lose sight of it, without being distracted by any side effects. Real sounds instead of music, a mobile handheld camera that follows the characters and extends the action instead of the "American" montage, natural people instead of honoured artists: the realist's arsenal, which has almost become a cliché. The deadly unemotional space, the vacuum that remains between the image and the viewer, is like a psychological attack. It is it that infuriates the audience, makes them fidget, worry – no less than genre gadgets (Sukmanov, 2013: 90).

K. Fokina, in her article, turned to a topic that is rare for the *Cinema Art* journal – brand transformation in cinema (Fokina, 2007: 72-77), recalling that, in the most general terms, a brand is a well-known trademark that has a name (title), a logo (visual image) and specific attributive characteristics (properties, qualities, the use of "branded" products). The way a brand is presented in the market is called its positioning. Depending on the scope, price category and functional

advantages of the product, a specific, fairly broad group of its consumers is formed, called the brand's target group. For the interaction of the brand and its target group, for its promotion on the market, it is common to use various types of symbols – specially organized audiovisual elements, which are designed only to identify products of a certain brand in a series of similar products. As "promotional" elements, legends (beautiful stories about the origin and development of a brand), which form the basis of advertising and information activities, are widely used (Fokina, 2007: 73).

As for the "branded" film, K. Fokina believes that its name is primarily associated with the emotions received before, during and after watching it, with what was written about it, what was said about it, with the legends surrounding it, with the main storyline of the script, with those techniques and imaginative solutions that made it bright and original, with its creators and performers, with those slogans that "left the people" from the screen (Fokina, 2007: 77).

The philosopher and art critic B. Groys devoted his article to the theory of modern "auteur" (cinema) art, which, according to him, is not only open to rationally thinking citizens, but is also post-Fucaudian and post-Deleuzian in the sense that it does not forget madness and childishness. In short, it seeks to integrate into its sphere what ordinary society cannot and will not integrate. In this sense, art is not elitist, opposing itself to a wider sociality, but even more social than the society around it. Such super-sociality leads to a rupture between the artist or thinker and his environment. But this rupture is not caused by elitism, but precisely by the fact that the artist's sociality is more radical than the sociality surrounding him (Groys, 2012: 132).

As far as mass cinema is concerned, B. Groys is convinced that while European cinema is mainly concerned with "the human, too human", mainstream Hollywood is gradually concentrating more and more on metaphysical issues. He is interested in gods, demons, aliens from outer space and thinking machines. The heroes of these films are haunted by the question of who or what is hidden beneath the surface of the visible world. In this way, Hollywood is moving towards the thematization - and at the same time radicalization – of the traditional critique of the film industry. As you know, this criticism accuses the film industry of offering us a seductive illusion, a beautiful production whose purpose is to mask, hide, deny a repulsive reality. Many of the latest Hollywood films, however, claim the opposite. There is no longer a cinematic "beautiful illusion", and the everyday "real" world appears in them as a kind of dramatization. Consequently, Hollywood responds to the suspicion of aesthetic manipulation by reactivating a much older and deeper metaphysical suspicion, according to which the whole world around us may turn out to be a film shot in some otherworldly Meta Hollywood. In this case, any Hollywood film would be more "truthful" than any reality, because reality usually reveals neither its artificiality, its madness, nor its underbelly. On the contrary, the latest Hollywood cinema, by thematizing its methods, offers a new metaphysics that interprets the act of creation as a studio production. And in this respect, Hollywood cinema is far superior to the majority of contemporary culture. After all, the question of whether Hollywood is right or wrong in its metaphysical project is not so important compared to the fact that the subject here is once again the other side of the world (Groys, 2005: 77).

Based on this kind of reasoning, B. Groys finally came to a very sharp and even outrageous conclusion for the traditional theory of cinematography, namely that all attempts by theorists to describe artistic practice as part of reality appear unsatisfactory, no matter how interesting and original they may be. This applies both to Bourdieu's sociology of art and to systems theory (the two most fashionable, programmatically anti-metaphysical sociological theories today) (Groys, 2005: 86).

No less paradoxical were the conclusions of E. Maisel, who studied the phenomenon of "cinema and religion". According to E. Maisel, religious cinema is free from faith, but expresses what happens to it and around it, where it happens (Meisel, 2012: 112).

The philosopher and film critic O. Aronson decided to examine the problem of violence on the screen from a theoretical point of view, believing that this question is itself dictated by the spirit of *imitatio*, in which violence is already present as a certain politics of images. For this political, the manifestation of aggression is only one of the many affective manifestations of life... The forces of politics depend on aggression and violence, which are constantly fed. Mimesis here has a dual character: on the one hand, "violence is inescapable", there is even a certain need for it, and therefore images of suffering bodies cannot be completely excluded; on the other hand, they are constantly endowed with negative characteristics, demonized, condemned (Aronson, 2003).

At the same time, we can probably agree that the borderline between positive and negative violence on the screen is extremely blurred, floating. It is controlled by dominant values (ideology), politics, morality. This boundary is the theatrical stage on which the performance unfolds, telling us through the technologies of identification and the politics of the image: look, this is your experience. And we're watching. And we agree and are practically certain that the experience is really 'mine', that it belongs to 'my' body. In this way, sensuality becomes hostage to politics, in which images of suffering bodies act as a substitute for desires and experiences that are not controlled by the authorities. These images not only represent violence, demonstrate its danger and threat, but also divert attention, locate violence in the realm of natural aggressiveness, and hide the violence that emanates from the political and social order itself, in the form of "desired prohibitions" and sometimes "sweet restrictions". When a tear wells up in the viewer's eye at the next standard twist in a melodramatic plot, or when a child's smile in a yogurt advert elicits programmed tenderness, we are present to the same politics of images that control and shape our sensuality, which is no less violent than the negative images of aggression it produces (Aronson, 2003: 86-88).

Continuing the theme of screen violence, the culturologist E. Baraban wrote that in Russian cinema about the war of recent decades, emotional and ethical messages are legitimized by positions of pragmatic individualism, and the bearers of a sense of patriotism are individuals who are not united and not united in the unity propagated by the Soviet reading of the war. The models for reworking the Soviet war discourse in post-Soviet films are different.

These are aesthetic eclecticism against a background of anachronistic ideology, the inversion of the ideology and aesthetics of Soviet war films, the construction of plot elements in the fantasy genre, and the use of stylistic and genre elements of Soviet war history to revise the key tropes of the Soviet idea of war. An analysis of the ways in which new films model the Soviet past helps to recognize the disappearance of the previously unified perception and reproduction of war, and the fact that nostalgia for the Soviet past actually occupies a rather limited place as a fact of post-Soviet culture (Baraban, 2012: 83).

Reflecting on the ethics and aesthetics of war on the screen, D. Golyenko-Wolfson (1969–2023) emphasized that the recognition and legalization of the gestures of humanitarian intervention made by the superpowers significantly modified the system of humanistic principles that determined both the theory of war and the practice of military operations. Traditional military humanism was based on the idea of civil society expressed in the Hegelian philosophy of history and the corresponding idea of the sovereignty of the individual. The ultimate goal of military conflict, whether driven by territorial claims or religious zeal, liberation or conquest, was to uphold the norms of national sovereignty and the standards of human autonomy. The fact that the movement towards this "sacred" goal was accompanied by the assertion of the demonic will of the commander or the absolute dominance of the ruler always introduced into the rhetoric of military humanism the effect of a contradictory duality. ... Today, war does not mean the clash of (more or less) equal armies, but the clash of the military machine of a developed superpower with detachments of rebels from economically backward regions that are disproportionately strong. The doctrine of humanitarian intervention became the dominant military strategy during the bombing of Yugoslavia. But military experts began to propagate it as early as the early 1990s, after the end of the Cold War and the fall of the Iron Curtain, when the world became unipolar. ... The war was transformed from a real event into a media show broadcast via satellite networks (Golyenko-Wolfson, 2004: 100-103).

Thus, both in cinema and in reality, in the ideology and tactics of modern warfare, a significant detail has undergone a metamorphosis: the factor of protection (by the constitution or the UN charters) has now disappeared. Now, potentially, any state found guilty of wrongdoing before the world community can be subjected to a preventive military strike or an act of retaliation. ... The question of humanism appears as an indispensable core of many documentary or fictional depictions of war. For better or worse, their authors have to soften and rationalize the absurdity and chaos that characterize the real, aesthetically unadorned course of war. The structure of the battle narrative – and the diegesis of a military action film – is based on a precisely calculated contraction (or termination) of two levels: a highly symbolic level of militaristic rhetoric and a non-symbolic level where horror and suffering are unalienable, and the individual is nothing more than cannon fodder. The director's interpretation and evaluation of war is subject to an unstable balance found by the author between the pathos of war, its symbolic, and the madness of war, its real...

In military dramas, physiology and naturalism are paradoxically either almost excluded or significantly muted, but ideology literally eats away at not only the heroized replica characters, but also their physical plasticity. The configuration of the military experience in the genre of the military thriller is given by one or another ratio of two inseparable plans – the heroism and madness of war, its symbolic and real; the same correspondence predetermines the model of humanism that prevails in a certain historical period (Golyenko-Wolfson, 2004: 103-104).

Referring to the influence of mass media in general, D. Golyenko-Wolfson writes that the ultra-fast growth of telecommunication technologies contributes to the fact that humanistic views become relative, appropriated by television, advertising or political PR, and begin to be reshaped to suit market interests. ... Perhaps the era of information-computer wars, in which the regularity of attacks and the number of "victims" can be watched with intrigue from the comfort of a television chair or by buying a game console for a personal computer, would have dragged on for a long time. Had it not been for the NATO bombings in Yugoslavia on 11 September, the overthrow of Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq and much more... Suddenly, the war did not seem funny and comical, but a serious, too serious "event" that pointed to the personal responsibility of each and every one of us. It suddenly ceased to be a monstrous anomaly, relegated to the cultural periphery, and instead claimed to be an everyday norm, given the cynical "name" of an anti-terrorist operation and spreading everywhere (Golyenko-Wolfson, 2004: 106-107).

As part of the theoretical understanding of the phenomenon of serials, A. Korolev reminded the readers of the Journal that the appearance of Mexican serials has given rise to a new phenomenon of existence - the soft addiction to soap operas. Millions of housewives live from one series to another... What does this violent passion mean? It's about not living your own life. We want to live there! Do not beg in the nooks and crannies of your ordinary destiny, do not get lost in an aging body, but always live your fate without yourself, outside your own destiny, in a young body, in the space of radiant love... A virtual monster of otherness begins to emerge from the depths of the universe to devour humans. Another century of genetics or techno genetics – and a human being will be able to live life at the level of a chip connected to virtual reality. And I assure you, there is no inhumanity and dehumanization in this evolution of society. A person will have the opportunity to choose from several options of being. The first is life within the fate of others... The second option is the real destiny in real time. This destiny will be chosen by a few, those saints who will create programmed happiness for the sleeping billions. ... But still the third way is the most probable – a mixture of two forms of being – real and imaginary. A symbiosis of the possible and the impossible (Korolev, 2001: 47).

The sociologist K. Bogoslovskaya devoted her theoretical article to the topic of the relationship between serials and the audience (Bogoslovskaya, 2007: 93-103).

Here she quite sensibly emphasized that the main metaphor characterizing the many ways in which the modern viewer perceives serials can be recognized as their existence as an alternative to the empirical world. It is precisely in this way – and primarily in this way – that regular viewers begin to live in 'soap operas', and this is confirmed by years of focus group data. And this is not only true of serials: a television program is largely perceived as an endless series, the main feature of which is to "switch reality" from everyday life to television. This phenomenon is particularly evident in the case of serials: many viewers describe soap operas as their "second family", in the world of prime time, the fate of the heroes is not limited to romantic relationships, but includes a wider context – it is the fate of friends who are deeply indifferent to you... Paradoxically, with the introduction of "unreal", mystical, fairy-tale content into the plots of series, there are few magical stories in the literal sense on Russian television. Serial 'fairy tales' are not based on fantasy, but on real, sometimes quasi-documentary material, and this corresponds to the conscious and unconscious desires of the audience (Bogoslovskaya, 2007: 93).

At the same time, we agree that serials do not shine with a variety of mythological eternal plots. Out of the huge spectrum, three meta-plots are most often used: "Cinderella" (a heroine who, after great suffering, finally finds happiness in the person of a handsome prince...), "Robin Hood" (a hero who restores social justice by "expropriating" illicit wealth), "Rich they cry too" (proof that the powerful of this world also have problems, extinguishing envy and, as a result, social aggression) (Bogoslovskaya, 2007: 103).

On the basis of many years of sociological research, K. Bogoslovskaya comes to the conclusion that in order to be successful for the masses, the world of serials must, first of all, have a "general television quality": a clear and transparent plot, strong intrigue, vivid characters, good

acting... Secondly, and this is not so obvious, the world of serials captures the feelings and thoughts of the audience when it speaks in an understandable, transparent language about human destiny in terms of its ultimate categories – life, death, love. They are important and recognizable to people regardless of the specific time and space in which the series is set. They can be described in terms of Jung's classic archetypes: "hero" and "shadow", "anima" and "animus". Directly translated into the language of the plot, this is the relationship between hero and anti-hero, between man and woman... The presence of these qualities in the world of the series is a necessary but not sufficient condition for its success. Above the plot of the series there is a "superstructure": the ideals and values to which its characters aspire and which the serial world as a whole follows. This superstructure organizes what are commonly referred to as the show's basic messages, since they answer questions about why the show's characters live, what they do, and how life works in general. In the case of linking these two worlds – the series and the viewer – it is the superstructure that becomes the foundation of success (Bogoslovskaya, 2007: 94-95).

We share the opinion of K. Bogoslovskaya, who is convinced that the outlines of a successful serial world, its ideals and values, should correspond to the content of the collective ideas in which the majority of viewers live, to those "myths" that the audience consciously – and more often unconsciously – shares. These collective ideas do not tell us what the world really is, but what it dreams of, what it should be. In other words, they outline the constructions of a fairy tale that will embody, on recognizable material, the hidden expectations of the audience. This is how the "mythological quality" of the series is created, which determines whether it becomes an event or goes unnoticed despite its high "television quality". ... The basic metaphors of a successful series must be in line with the cultural and social currents that dominate society at the time. At the same time, however, they do not correspond directly, but in such a way that the viewer sitting in front of the television remains in a space of symbolic security – he personally, his image of the world, his values, his identity at the time of watching should not be threatened by anything (Bogoslovskaya, 2007: 95).

The last factor is very important, because the appearance in the series of a striking reality or the actualization of too painful topics of our time immediately affects its popularity... The viewer does not want to be reminded of his defenselessness, the proximity of death and other existential problems. The worlds of the series are designed to extinguish this fundamental anxiety, not to fuel it. The bitter truth, which exposes illusions, is not needed by the viewers of the series. ... However, the complete exclusion of those parts of reality that evoke strong associations and arouse basic fears from the serial worlds does not work either - the series lose their relevance, and the audience already talks about them with disappointment... For the series to be successful, it must correspond exactly to the most public ideas that were relevant at that moment, but at the same time did not arouse basic anxiety (Bogoslovskaya, 2007: 97).

However, in the 1990s, the *Cinema Art* journal liked to write about serials. In fact, the analysis of the phenomenon of the Internet and virtual reality has become a new theoretical trend of the journal in the 21st century.

It is characteristic that the very title of the article by the media researcher L. Manovich – "YouTube and the Future of Film Theory" – was a kind of challenge to the previous ideas about film studies.

L. Manovich wrote that the presence of "big data" is very important for the study of cinema as an art form. The word "cinema" here means not only studio cinema, but also videos produced by bloggers, music videos, educational videos, advertisements, etc. What unites all these products (with an understandable difference) is the use of the parameters and resources of cinema – that is, what we call cinematic language. The emergence of social media in the 2000s, as well as the gradual digitalization of the works of the past, has caused a real revolution in the study of culture. ... The second common feature of this new paradigm is the use of statistical methods. ... The statistical theory of cinema was proposed by David Bordwell in the 1980s of the last century. He proposed to describe the language of classical Hollywood not as a set of rules, formulas or recipes, but as statistical regularities. ... This very interesting idea has not been further developed in film studies. But now that the statistical approach has become standard in the study of culture through the analysis of "big data", such a theory looks quite attractive... If we are interested in studying the artistic languages of cinema in its current manifestations (including all kinds of genres and forms of what is so prevalent on YouTube), we now have truly unique opportunities to do so. ... The presence of billions of video clips and films on the web means that we are potentially seeing

not just one cinematic language, but many different dialects, their differences and all the variety of forms of these languages. Unlike natural languages, which are rapidly diminishing in number on the planet, in the world of media we are seeing a constant expansion and emergence of new dialects and hybrids. And there is probably no other platform that presents such a variety as YouTube. This video hosting site can be likened to a giant metropolis populated by people who speak many hundreds of languages that influence each other. But if changes in natural languages can take centuries, decades or years, modern media languages can change much faster. This rate of change gives us all the more reason to study them and better understand the dimensions of human creativity. This includes how it is affected by globalization, the development of media technology, access to the cultural heritage of the past and the infinite number of works of the present, the use of machine learning for search and recommendation, and many other factors that determine the specificity of our cinematic civilization (Manovich, 2021: 12-13).

Thus, L. Manovich's theoretical approach and prognosis not only contradicted all previous ideas about "classical" film studies as a science that primarily studies the theory and history of the artistic peaks of cinematography, but also pushed aside "newer" (including – local) theoretical approaches to the science of cinema related to semiotics, gender, Freudianism, etc. (Manovich, 2021: 12-13).

As if continuing L. Manovich's reflections, the film critic V. Lyashchenko argues that YouTube has become a platform for film studies with a million viewers (Lyashchenko, 2021: 32-35), because wordy or wordless, suggestive or chewy video essays combine the analytical with the sensual. They explain, they fascinate, they immerse, they assimilate what they talk about, that is, they become metacinema. And in this capacity, they are in demand by millions of viewers... It is unlikely that all these viewers will go on to make their own films, but the material from the film schools, presented in this way, captivates them. Which, by the way, makes the distributors of festival, copyright, independent, etc. cinema think of these people as their potential customers... The video essay is not a substitute for film criticism, there is no such task, but it significantly enriches the perception on both sides of the YouTube window. Both the person who sits down at the digital editing table to dissect another director's technique and the person who waits for the release of another video with such a dissection make the conversation about cinema more meaningful (Lyashchenko, 2021: 35).

In this connection, however, O. Aronson drew the attention of the readers of the magazine to the negative aspects of watching video files on YouTube, since a reasonable question arises: what should we associate more with cinema today: films – works that make its history, or replicated bad copies, films deformed by special programs, censored, shredded into fragments, and reassembled in numerous video reviews? (Aronson, 2021: 16).

At the same time, in the modern audiovisual sphere (including the Internet), there is no "internal censor" (i.e., one's own morality) that can prohibit the author from using this or that means of expression. Morality never belongs to the subject, but every "I" is included in the world of others, in which the forces of morality operate together with others (economic, erotic, etc.), structuring the "I" as a subject. But even if we accept the existence of an "internal censor", it is still not clear how it can forbid something to another? In any case, the introduction of an "internal censor" implies the totalization of ethical principles, the recognition of certain values as unshakable, universal, divine (Aronson, 2001: 81).

Reflecting on a similar issue, L. Uzarashvili recalled that with the fact that YouTube doesn't produce content like TV or film studios gives the impression that it doesn't control or participate in shaping the content of its platform. ... On the one hand, it is clear that the myth of YouTube's unconditional progressiveness is largely based on a democratic ideology that is embedded in the company's positioning as a platform with the slogan "broadcast yourself". Despite this promise, the platform's algorithms work in the opposite direction, discriminating against non-selling content and prioritizing conforming blogs that can, or already do, earn from advertising. On the other hand, as a result of the less lucrative and more meticulous work of individuals, alternative content bubbles are indeed popping up on YouTube to create a more democratic and progressive future. This is the merit of the people, not the technologies themselves, which resist such practices rather than support them (Uzarashvili, 2021: 42, 44).

D. Golyenko-Wolfson (1969–2023) focused on the negative characteristics of the Internet, stressing that in the age of high technology it is the electronic media that become generators of groundless panic and superstitious fear. Networks. The role of the infernal machine that spreads

evil, not for selfish or moral motives, but according to its own infernal whims that cannot be deciphered. Anxiety becomes the psychotic tuning fork of modern man, who has seen on Internet a reservoir of the mysterious, the cruel and the uncontrollable, but has not found a way to contain this mysteriousness and adapt it to his own advantage. Any attempt to give scientific explanations to this mysterious, to apply an ethical scale to it, or to put it into a moral framework, and to call the virtual to consciousness, is ridiculous and doomed to failure from the start – this is what modern cinema diagnoses (Golyenko-Wolfson, 2003: 96).

Film expert M. Terakopyan believes that the digital image changes our sense of the necessary connection between the camera and non-film reality. The presence of both is no longer absolutely necessary. Now it's much easier to 'photograph' what you can't see. Computer technology converts the image into pixels that can be easily transformed, processed, altered. The line between animation (which creates images where there were none before) and editing (which deals with the rearrangement of fragments of events that occurred in front of the camera) is blurred. When the artist is able to easily manipulate the digital image, either as a whole or frame by frame, the film becomes a series of drawings. The ability to draw by hand on digitized images is a very serious change in the status of cinema, paradoxically returning the "art of the moving image" to its origins (Terakopyan, 2007: 71).

E. Maisel's theoretical article "The Mirror Stage: VR and Cinema" focused on the phenomenon of virtual reality (Maisel, 2019: 169-182).

In it, E. Maisel writes that although this technology has entered the life of a person of the XXI century, virtual films or art objects have not become a public cultural event... Cinematography is not afraid of VR and is ready to eat it with all the giblets, but there is one small detail, the ability of the viewer to somehow participate in the action of the picture. Undoubtedly, in terms of its significance, such a transformation, if it occurs, will not yield to the problem of sound, nor even to digitalization, because we are talking about a change in the basic and still untouchable pattern of consumption: from a viewing session, watching a film becomes an active search session. On the one hand, this innovation guarantees the demand for a normal 'observational' cinema (just as painting and photography survived with the advent of cinema and television), on the other hand, this transition itself will radically change the functions not only of the viewer, but also of the image, and possibly in general the whole image system of what we now call cinema (Maisel, 2019: 181-182).

The same E. Maisel further noted that the modern "video mass" is increasingly turning to the subject of more and more minorities that were previously ignored or misrepresented on the screen, such as homosexuals, queer audiences, colour and ethnic minorities, representatives of post-colonial societies, and further down to people with one or another disability. This process is not yet complete, its logic and pathos are far from exhausted, but at the beginning of the 2000s of our century it is reaching a kind of climax in the rediscovery of our animal neighbours on the planet, with their subjectivity, with their time, with their expressive silence, long abandoned by a man who knew the necessity of work and with it the bitterness of alienation (Maisel, 2020: 101).

As far as theoretical approaches to Russian cinema are concerned, M. Lipovetsky, in the pages of *Cinema Art*, argued, in full accordance with the "Western critical view" of Russia, that today's culture is trying to get rid of the Soviet legacy, understood as a failure into archaic savagery, and return to modernity. But, firstly, there is nowhere to take modernity except from the Soviet experience. Secondly, these attempts are superimposed on postmodern trends coming both from their own aesthetic underground and from the wide-open doors to the West – to postmodern Europe. If the postmodern consciousness offers a constant problematization and deconstruction of the norms and absolutes of its culture – also from the point of view of other consciousnesses – then, for example, a pronounced nostalgia for empire and imperial greatness, characteristic not only of the older but also of the younger generation of filmmakers, could not but stand in the way of, say, postcolonial discourse. It seems that it should naturally accompany the collapse of the empire, but it does not, because it is not accompanied – at least in Russian culture – by a critical reflection on the colonizing role of this very culture; on the contrary, it is Russia and the Russians who are always offended and suppressed in the mass consciousness and in the most popular works' (Lipovetsky, 2003: 79-80).

Within the framework of the same theme of theoretical understanding of the processes in post-Soviet cinema, E. Maisel quite rightly noted that in recent Russian cinema, as a reaction to these socio-historical traumas, post-topic moods are clearly distinguished, and sometimes even a complete reduction of the utopian dimension in general – to the extent that it is possible...

So, in general, young Russian cinema is post-topic. If there is a utopian motif in it – as a hope for the best, as a hero's search for himself, as a belief in certain forms of self-realization – it is usually escape. Modern heroes believe in escape: from society, from the metropolis, from degraded urban (that is, simply public) relations (Maisel, 2010: 35).

Despite all this, according to E. Maisel, in the Russian cinema of the first two post-Soviet decades there were no images of many hot, painful topics, and this is also a syndrome of a post-topic state of mind. In particular, we almost never make films about the value of freedom, either individual or public. The latent apology of liberalism can only be found in retrospective films about the thawed perestroika reality, that is, about the last three decades of the USSR, when the "West" symbolized for our relaxed compatriots such blessings that are scarce in their world, such as freedom of speech, style, lifestyle, purchasing and travelling... There is no honest socialist cinema in the sense of some Ken Loach... The rejection of many current issues by young authors, the emphasis on "non-principle" and the flight from clear semantic accents are the result of the rigidity of our general post-shock state. All these gaps are the result of a huge public disappointment, the extent of which we have yet to grasp (Maisel, 2010: 35, 39).

The articles by K. Razlogov (Razlogov, 2002: 83-92) and N. Sirivlya (Sirivlya, 2001: 69-76) were devoted to the attempt of post-Soviet cinema to reflect on the screen the glamorous life of the so-called "new Russians", which had minimal contact with the everyday life of ordinary Russian citizens. In this regard, I. Mantsov believed that Russian filmmakers "need only look carefully at the social reality of their country and reflect it on the cinema and television screen to the best of their ability and talent. Everyone. No formal frills, no such genius required. Just an honest look. Not into the abyss of my subconscious (which, by the way, is absolutely predictable, like the subconscious of almost everyone, or like modern Russian cinema), but into the abyss of everyday reality. I promise you that the selectors of the largest Western festivals will immediately reach out to you, the national audience, and even to cunning producers with great financial resources. Because the truth always costs more. More than anything else. Unfortunately, this point of view is still unpopular in Russia" (Mantsov, 2002: 73).

Interesting in this regard is the article by the ethnologist E. Romanova, devoted to the study of the mythopoetic chronotope of Yakut visuality (Romanova, 2021: 38-45) in the context of its reflection of the real world. In particular, E. Romanov wrote that the agia of Yakut language, the fragility and fluidity of time, the permeability of profane and sacred boundaries, the flow of spaces and symbols, the appeal to the culture of memory, ontological symmetry as the organization of the world, plurality of choice, co-creation: these components of the traditional Yakut mentality set a new visual program of aesthetic experiences. Understanding the author's imaginary landscapes and the transformation of reality reveals the film language of Yakut cinema as a phenomenon of co-spatiality. Its sign system demonstrates a spatial perspective, and the transcendent quality of the mutual flow of space and time, characteristic of archaic traditions, creates a special mythopoetic language of visual narrative. One of the key visual techniques of Yakut auteur cinema is a metaphorical model for describing the hero's inner world through landscape topoi. The directors' appeal to spatial archetypes has an internal logic and refers to the traditions of national culture. The experience of spatial visualization in Sakha culture can be described as a kind of media archaeology. The visual method of superimposing one cultural layer on another, where the past breaks through the new, becomes for Yakut cinema a window into the modern world film process (Romanova, 2021: 44-45).

Discussions about the problems of cinema and society

Never before has there been so many discussions in the *Cinema Art* journal as in the first two decades of the 21st century. To a large extent, they were devoted to socio-political problems, however, to no lesser extent – cinema problems.

For example, during the discussion "Film distribution: mission (im)possible?" (Kinoprokat..., 2002: 5-18), D. Dondurey (1947–2017), editor-in-chief of the *Cinema Art* journal, recalled that in our country the production economy exists in complete isolation from the distribution economy. Russian producers realize all their economic interests at the stage of film creation. It's like making shoes you don't wear and sausages you don't eat. Multiple premieres in several cinemas cannot recoup real production costs. There are only a few known cases of Russian films paying off... So, our production exists in abnormal conditions, but there are good cinemas, there are more and more audiences, and rental incomes are growing... Since 1988, filmmakers have been saying: the problem is that, by adopting a new model of cinema, we have missed out on the distribution,

we have handed it over to "foreign" hands, to the local authorities. Now it is clear that this was the only right decision. Today, rental is already "recovering" and production is on the verge of a complete collapse (Kinoprokat..., 2002: 6).

During another discussion, D. Dondurey noted that in this situation he saw three customers who were quite powerful, both in terms of quantity and in terms of authority and economics. The most influential of these is the commercial cinema audience, mostly American... This audience doubles almost every year, represents the main contingent of theatrical distribution, and feeds our entire film industry. ... The second segment of the audience is those post-Soviet people who live mainly in memories of the past, who explicitly or indirectly hate the very principles of present life. They concentrate on cinema, which can be called commerce in the old sense. They do not go to cinemas, old or new, but sit in front of their televisions and watch series that are indistinguishable from each other. They love Soviet cinema, of course... But the cinema designed for such an audience has no future either in the cinema or on video, because its content, in encoded "versions of reality", can only live on television. Finally, the third part of the audience is made up of professionals and film lovers who can perceive auteur cinema and who place all their expectations on it. Of course, there are not many of these audiences, but they are very influential because, through the institution of criticism, they hold the evaluation of modern cinema in their hands. Their representatives sit on the juries of all the European film festivals and make the weather there. One of the fundamental, strategic problems of modern Russian cinema is that these audiences practically do not touch each other. Each lives its own life and looks at the world and the functions of cinema in its own way. It turns out that our cinematography today literally appeals to three different nations, even though these people live in one country and speak the same language (I..., 2004: 5-6).

Similar positions were expressed by D. Dondurey in the discussion "The Code is Unknown" (Cod..., 2004: 99-108), adding that in Russia there is an incredible boom in TV series, which make up 20 percent of all broadcasts, and together with feature films, documentaries, and animation, they make up 54 percent of all film broadcasts. It's not so easy to kick ER (Emergency Room) or Sex and the City off the TV screen, to "put up" the world's best TV shows from our prime time, but it has happened: Russian TV shows won (Cod..., 2004).

Film critic V. Fomin argued with D. Dondurey: "I was struck by the wording of the discussion: 'The code is unknown'. And it is famous! This is the code of the Russian artistic tradition, which, in spite of official ideological pressure, found its way into our national cinema, albeit in a limited, truncated form. And our whole cinema was based on it. With the beginning of perestroika, we lost this code. The system of artistic values that dominates our cinema today is something imitatively cosmopolitan. The system of values that was alien to us, that led us into a blind alley, is not only not disappearing, on the contrary, it has been adopted by the majority of young Russian filmmakers" (Fomin, 2004: 101).

By 2005, the situation in film distribution began to change with the appearance of several Russian box office hits. And in 2005, the *Cinema Art* journal reflected these changes in its pages with a discussion on blockbusters (Blockbuster..., 2005: 6-23).

At the beginning of the discussion, D. Dondurey rightly noted that a year and a half ago there were no films in Russia that could be called blockbusters: films with big budgets, stars, special effects, full-scale advertising, films that could compete with Hollywood products at our box offices. With the arrival of the *Night Watch*, a new era began... As a result, in just one-year Russian cinema tripled its presence at the annual Russian box office. And if in 2003 the fees were no more than 5 percent, in 2004 our films were already earning 15-16 percent, and these are serious figures. If in 1997 our cinema market was estimated at 8 million dollars, in 2005 the fees were at least 370 million. The rate of growth in this industry over six years is so great that even the oil and gas industry has not seen anything like it. But although Russian cinema has made progress thanks to a few blockbusters and has increased its presence on the screens, it has still done little to impress the Americans, who continue to receive up to 80 percent of all box-office receipts in our country (Blockbuster..., 2005: 6-7).

Y. Bogomolov (1937–2023) drew attention in his speech to the problems of film globalization and the role of cinematic mass culture in Russian society: "It seems to me that our cinematography will indeed have a very difficult, difficult, contradictory path ahead of it. After all, what makes the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century different from previous eras? In the past, high culture and its genres were visible, they were representative, and low culture existed and developed in

the fields of mass high culture. It existed, it developed, but it was treated condescendingly. Now there has been a castling, which consists in the fact that mass culture has, strangely enough, become the center of all culture, and authorial culture exists on its periphery" (Bogomolov, 2005: 20).

During a discussion entitled "In Search of Meaning: New Patriotism" (V..., 2006: 5-25), D. Dondurey noted the paradoxical situation that had developed in Russia by the beginning of the 21st century: the population of our country perceives the processes of renewal as unjust, wrong, unbearable. As a result, the understanding of what is happening is totally inadequate to what is happening in reality itself. People who have been in the market for many years have a very negative perception of private property (there are many sociological studies on this subject). Entrepreneurs are portrayed – on television, in the imagination, and therefore in life itself – exclusively as bandits. This is confirmed by more than two thousand episodes filmed in the last three years, in most of the nine hundred films made since 1991. Intellectuals and artists have offered virtually no productive models to help their compatriots adapt to a new life. In the minds of the people, a whole worldview system has grown up, according to which work, creativity and activity are not values (V..., 2006: 7). On the other hand, according to D. Dondurey, it seems strange that in Russia in the 21st century patriotism is mainly associated with war and sports, to the detriment of a peaceful understanding of patriotism in a vast and complex peaceful life (V..., 2006).

The film critic and culturologist K. Razlogov (1946–2021) drew attention to the fact that the possibilities of the state and artists to influence the processes of real cultural life are minimal, since we are really talking about some unconscious forces and impulses (Jung called it the "collective unconscious"), which sooner or later lead to the same results, despite the fact that all participants of the socio-cultural action seem to want to lead society towards something completely different. It seems that some stable structures of the psyche are reproduced in the structures of social relations. No matter how hard we try to break them up and make them turn the other way, we fail. They can only be washed away, buried, sometimes even blown up, but after decades a remake is built again, just as it was (V..., 2006).

The film expert D. Komm wrote in this connection that at the beginning of the 21st century on Russian television almost all the more or less sane political scientists disappeared, and in their place figures like Leontiev and Dugin took over, tirelessly singing a song about how "the enemies burned their own huts"... Individual journalists who mistakenly believed that their duty was not to spread patriotism but reliable information were driven out of the profession. Naturally, filmmakers could not remain aloof from these titanic efforts. Moreover, love for one's homeland is not a cheap affair, and the budgets allocated to it are so large that it would be a sin not to control them. The result was the revival of the good old military-patriotic cinema, which was hastily consigned to the archives (Komm, 2006: 113).

In this respect, however, the opinion of the film critic M. Turovskaya (1924-2019), expressed in an earlier discussion in the pages of *Cinema Art*, seemed very reasonable: "The task of our cinema is not to create some kind of ideological project. I do not believe in such ideological projects, I do not believe that with the help of television, the media, etc., one can present an ideological project to the people. I believe that this ideological project can only take root if it corresponds at least to some extent to the expectations of the masses. You can add something to it, you can reject something, but if the ideology does not meet people's expectations, they will not accept it. ... I think that if our cinematography were to describe everyday reality, and we are living in an amazing reality, in a transitional period, – that would be its invaluable contribution to the creation of our mythology, ideology, etc. But our real everyday life remains uncovered, it is not described on the screen. The screen basically expresses itself" (Turovskaya, 2001: 169).

In a discussion of violence in cinema (Ves..., 2003: 5-22), film critic and director O. Kovalov recalled that there was simply no crueler and more naturalistic cinema than Soviet cinema in the 1920s – 'bourgeois censorship' would not have allowed a hundredth of the atrocities depicted in Russian films about the revolution to be shown. German censors made banknotes in the film *Battleship Potemkin* (Ves..., 2003: 11-12).

Turning to the present, O. Kovalov stressed that the rivers of blood in today's genre cinema are not at all surprising: it has always supplied the market not only with dreams, but also with "cutting, slashing, stabbing" and "terrible stories". Today it is the same kind of booth, a mixture of fairground attraction and computer game. This machine operates according to the laws that have always been laid down for it. It does not change its nature because the notorious new technologies have entered the world of farce. It makes little difference if a papier-mâché head flies off the

shoulders of a character or if a mass of bodies writhes on the screen as laser beams cut through them. From such spectacles one falls into an addiction similar to that of a drug: the first shock becomes numb, the user waits for a stronger injection, and this process is endless" (Kovalov, 2003: 14). However, in the "auteur genre", the cinema of aesthetes and refined intellectuals, the sophisticated consciousness, teasing and provoking, will indulge in aesthetic games with violence: it will give rise to its most bizarre forms or provocatively exchange good and evil. This is the realm of salon violence. "And here our humanistic views come into paradoxical conflict with the aesthetic sense. We admit that the famous scene from Hitchcock's *Psycho*, in which the female body writhes under the blows of a madman's knife, gives us aesthetic pleasure... Simply put, we enjoy looking at it" (Kovalov, 2003: 14).

One of the most notable discussions in the pages of *Cinema Art* of the 21st Century was entitled "The End of Arthouse?" (Konets..., 2005: 16-29), in which film critic A. Shpagin argued that arthouse today is the direction in art that used to be called "avant-garde". Avant-garde (and now art-house) is a kind of split form (usually with a very complex structure, or even without it): a deliberately confusing language, a cascade of coded and strangely combined images, often something artificially slowed down, boring, developing according to the whims of the author, who openly deceives the audience with his originality and mystery. In any avant-garde work, the moment of provocation plays an important role: a confrontation with the usual myth and the destruction of hardened clichés of perception.

And film critic A. Plakhov emphasized that there is a movie with a high concentration of the author's principle, and there is a movie with a minimal concentration... At one time they liked to talk about elitist (festival) and mass cinema. But even this is not the most accurate opposition, it is more accurate to define it as high-budget and low-budget cinema, high-paying and low-paying cinema... In the same way that Soviet ideologists spoke of "diffusion of ideological and commercial cinema in the West"... Today, after postmodern expansion, everything is mixed up in the Oblonsky house, including art house with the mainstream. The new aesthetic centaur – art mainstream – is actually not so new and is a compromise product suitable for display in more halls... The mainstream also includes many taboos and reservations of modern culture, such as pornography (Konets..., 2005: 7-8).

On the problems of film criticism and film studies

In 2001, the *Cinema Art* journal celebrated its 70th anniversary. In this regard, a number of materials devoted to the history of the journal were posted on its pages. Film critic and culturologist M. Turovskaya (1924–2019) wrote about the *Cinema Art* of the 1930s (Turovskaya, 2001: 15-18), film historian V. Fomin wrote about the journal in the 1940s (Fomin, 2001: 19-22), film critic and culturologist N. Zorkaya (1924–2006) – about the journal periods of the 1950s and 1970s (Zorkaya, 2001: 23-25; 31-35), film historian E. Margolit – about the 1960s (Margolit, 2001: 26-30), journalist and writer T. Moskvina (1958–2022) – about the 1980s (Moskvina, 2001: 36-39), writer and film critic D. Bykov – about the 1990s (Bykov, 2001: 40-43). The history of the different periods of the *Cinema Art* journal was touched upon in the articles by film critics Y. Bogomolov (1937–2023) (Bogomolov, 2001: 5-7), A. Zorky (1935–2006) (Zorky, 2001: 8-10), V. Kichin (Kichin, 2001: 11-13), A. Medvedev (1938–2022) (Medvedev, 2001: 14-16), N. Sumenov (1938–2014) (Sumenov, 2001: 18-20), P. Shepotinnik (Shepotinnik, 2001: 20-22), K. Shcherbakov (Shcherbakov, 2001: 23-24), R. Yurenev (1912–2002) (Yurenev, 2001: 25-29). Due to their specificity, these articles were analyzed and cited by us earlier (Fedorov, 2022; Fedorov, Levitskaya, 2022; Levitskaya, 2022), so here we only note that all these texts were small in volume and written in a rather free style of an essay.

But, as before, the most heated discussions in the *Cinema Art* journal were about the problems of film criticism and film studies.

One of the most heated discussions in the journal on this topic was called "Criticism as PR" (Kritika..., 2003: 13-29).

Here, the film critic N. Zarkhi (1946-2017) drew attention to the mutation of criticism, the disappearance of still relevant genres, the loss of almost the main components of our profession, its ontological properties. Traditional critical methodology, case-based analysis, critical intrigue and individual style are increasingly giving way to the power of public relations, designed to present a film or a name as a tidbit and promote it to the consumer. Pressure, a snappy word, a biting, slogan-like and actually meaningless phrase imprinted in the brain – all these techniques

turn into criticism, and concepts such as depth, for example, become almost a curse (*Kritika...*, 2003: 13).

The writer and film critic D. Bykov was not so categorical: "I have nothing against honest PR. We all do it one way or another, and certainly people who are interested in technology are convinced that every word I say here is PR for me, and not an attempt to understand the subject. I have nothing against that approach. From a certain point of view it is. The problem is that most of the time our critic is not doing PR for the product, but for himself. He tries to show what words he knows, what festivals he has been to recently, what parties he has been to... If there is such a PR for oneself, one's party or one's generation, it is not only not very meaningful, it is simply dishonest in relation to the image one is writing about. Because it is necessary to see it, the image, and not you. That is how it seems to me. And the tasks of critics, as opposed to PR people, I think there have always been two, and Blok formulated them in Pushkin's speech. One, of course, is to help the artist understand himself, and the second is not to call art what is not art. And these tasks, in my opinion, will always be relevant" (*Kritika...*, 2003: 14).

Film critic V. Matizen recalled that "there is no such thing as a completely independent critic, but we must strive for it. Every critic is dependent on certain aesthetic concepts. And not only from them... The dependence of the critic on friendship with filmmakers is a reality. Andrei Plakhov wrote well about this with reference to Truffaut's criticism. And he came to the same conclusion: it is better to be a traitor who has lunch with the director today and criticizes his new film tomorrow, than a true friend who praises his unsuccessful work. ... Of course, no one has the right to forbid a person to combine the role of critic with the role of film critic, journalist, advertising PR specialist, and even with the role of screenwriter or director. But there is such a thing as a critical reputation, which is not easy to gain and can be lost overnight" (*Kritika...*, 2003: 16).

The philosopher and film critic O. Aronson agreed that most of the people we call critics out of inertia will, to one degree or another, serve the interests of some kind of capital: cinematographic, production, festival, whatever - that is obvious. Moreover, they will all be called (and call themselves) critics, and we have to come to terms with that somehow... So, even though all these critics will exist under the name of critics, the question remains of the professional position of the critic, of the critical position and the critical statement that does not belong to this service of the interests of capital. ... If independent professional criticism is possible today, then it implies, in a certain imperative order, the suspension of judgement from the point of view of taste. ... The professionalism of the critic turns out to be closely linked to his ability to maintain a certain social moment in his statement, considering a certain impossibility of trusting the primary impulse of sensuality. Today there are practically no professional critics in this sense... Criticism is necessary. It is always PR, but PR in the literal sense of the word, that is, public relations, because it establishes, in one way or another, a link with society. ... So, a critic is someone who, first of all, forms a kind of community around himself. This community may be arbitrarily small, but it listens to him because it knows that it agrees or disagrees with the critic's statement, that it has the possibility of thinking and feeling. It is this kind of socially significant statement that is important in criticism (*Kritika...*, 2003: 18-19).

V. Shmyrov noted that in Russia of the 21st century, film criticism in its former form is probably no longer needed in large newspaper pages... On the other hand, another, new critic has not appeared. After all, look at the boom that television is experiencing, how many series are being shown. And, it seems, people are switching channels and writing about it. This is also a reality that should be of interest to critics and readers. But the profession of the columnist, the television critic, who would describe the state of the art of telecinema, is unfortunately simply absent today. There doesn't even seem to be a need for this specialization. Moreover, the very formulation of such a task will be perceived as deeply offensive by the majority of those present. And here we are faced with a paradoxical phenomenon: the fewer people can see the film; the more critics write about it. ... Today, the life of criticism continues on the Internet. It is carried out by very different people, whose names we do not always know and whose language is very specific. But this is what makes film criticism a real thing, in demand. This is film criticism that focuses more on aesthetics and technology than on ideology or "general civic principles". And this, it seems to me, is the guarantee that today not everything is so hopeless (*Kritika...*, 2003: 19-20). Thus, V. Shmyrov concluded that Russian professional film critics are far from readers who like to read about cinema, that is, they have absolutely nothing to do with the public to whom they should represent our film process.

Film expert A. Artyukh drew attention to the fact that in the 21st century, in contrast to the situation in Russia twenty years ago, the film process is assessed by critics as much more complex, branched and multidimensional. Due to their specialization, critics are forced to rely on the knowledge of their colleagues on issues that they themselves do not have time to study due to the unprecedented multidimensionality of the film process. The first thing we have gained in the current market situation is an understanding of the need to study and analyze the audience, which is the consumer of film products. Critics, along with distributors and creators, began to bear serious responsibility for how films are perceived by the audience, how high the degree of trust of the viewer is ([Kritika..., 2003: 27-28](#)).

But I. Mantsov, in fact, ignoring the main target of film criticism – the public, believed that for the film critic is the guardian of the hearth, the person who controls the real film process, and only in the second, third place is the writer. A film critic works directly with filmmakers: directors, producers, scriptwriters, officials of the Ministry of Culture. The real task of the film critic is: sometimes by cunning, sometimes by rudeness, sometimes by flattery, sometimes by Aesopian speeches, as they say, to "breed" practising filmmakers and officials into actions, plots, style, form and content that seem optimal to him (the film critic) ... Under the guise of "film critics" in Russia there are "scientists" and "writers". Well-trained scientists are not concerned with the construction of cinematography, with the process of filming, but with individual written discourse. They are interested in the smoothness of the presentation, the logical chain, the writing as such. Our film writers compete. They write to show each other their training. Unconsciously, but no less aggressively, they imitate "scientific" discourse and play clever. There is a competition between the subjects of written university culture, which parasites on cinema, which these subjects often despise ([Mantsov, 2002: 5-6](#)).

Unlike I. Mantsov, film critic D. Komm believed that the main audience for film criticism was not directors, producers, and officials, but the general population, which had not lost interest in cinema. "The previous generation of film fans and film clubs," wrote D. Komm, "had mixed feelings of envy and reverence for the critic, because he (according to their ideas) was admitted to the inner sanctum: he went to special screenings, went to foreign festivals, could see the classics and even communicate with them... For the older generation of filmgoers, who gleaned their information from Polish and Bulgarian magazines, the critic was about the same as for the rest of the citizens, the shopkeeper who could pull carefully hidden imported goods from under the counter...". Then, at the beginning of the 1990s, when a flood of foreign films arrived, the critic turned out to be even more in demand, because people wanted to be guided by this flow" ([Komm, 2005: 15](#)).

However, as D. Komm rightly continues, by the beginning of the 21st century a completely new type of cinephile had emerged in Russia. Modern cinephiles are young, independent people who have grown up without a lack of both cinema and information about it, who speak foreign languages, travel abroad and actively use the Internet. This is a demanding, not at all superficial audience, which has already decided on its tastes and preferences and does not tolerate stupidity in critical texts... And for these young people, the authority of film criticism is unfortunately extremely low... Meanwhile, we are discrediting ourselves in the eyes of thinking young people, and criticism is being actively squeezed out of the media on the pretext that, as they say, "the people are not interested in your fabrications". It turns out that people only need to know the budgets of films, the novels of stars... Maybe most viewers don't really need film criticism (although no one has proven this), but even if they do, we are now losing an interested minority, which is sad ([Komm, 2005: 15-16](#)).

However, film critic A. Artyukh reminds D. Komm that such tendencies are not unique to Russia: "According to FIPRESCI general secretary Klaus Eder, criticism in the West is also beginning to lose its former positions in the press". And in Russia, "it is not that the older generation of critics is leaving, and the younger ones do not want to become their heirs. By and large, there is nothing to inherit: our older generation of film critics has gone no further than structuralism and semiotics... Neo-formalism, feminism, queer studies, case studies, post-structuralism, post-modernism – all these things evoke horror mixed with hatred in many patriarchs.... The deplorable state of Russian criticism is only a reflection of the general confusion and vacillation in the humanitarian sphere. Film criticism always feeds on the ideas of academic writing. But if academic writing is limited to the historical texts of the journal *Film Studies Notes*, what do we expect from critics? Of course, the most advanced members of the film press have long since abandoned the local context and are inspired by Western studies. But such enthusiasts are few and far between. Moreover, they are often unappreciated. There are no serious analytical

assignments. There is Russian cinema, for example, on which the magazine *Seance* tries to base its cultural strategy. But it is still boring to write about our cinema because, with rare exceptions, it exists outside the global context" (Artyukh, 2005: 16-17).

Pessimistic sentiments about the demand for film and television criticism were also reflected in a number of other articles (Sekretnaya..., 2008; Stishova, 2005: 27-31; Tsyrukun, 2005: 77-79 and others).

Meanwhile, film critic V. Belopolskaya was convinced that those who say that we have the death of criticism ignore the obvious fact that we have a flourishing of criticism. When, under what other political, social, or technological conditions, could literally any half-wit get a podium? And that is exactly what has happened - and that is why criticism has flourished. We have so much criticism in print, electronic and other media, so many critics accredited to international festivals, so many professional people at press screenings, so many warriors of the invisible front of film journalism, that it is simply impossible not to notice the rapid flowering (Belopolskaya, 2005: 80).

At the same time, V. Belopolskaya emphasized that she meant film criticism and not PR, not announcements in various kinds of reference and poster publications, not notes on cinema in glamorous glossy publications.

Commenting about film criticism at the beginning of the 21st century, V. Belopolskaya noted that the Internet has caused "irreparable mental damage" to Russian "classical" film criticism: "Some write to it unlimitedly, others read it unlimitedly. So there are: a) mountains of critical rubbish, texts marked by the cosmically idiotic arrogance of the authors – sites, unlike paper and broadcast publications, are rubber, and b) non-virtual criticism, containing mountains of information rubbish, gleaned virtually... Blooming criticism is concerned only with its positions and its position in social reality" (Belopolskaya, 2005: 81).

Similar tendencies were also noted in the discussion of the role of Russian film criticism in the Internet space (Versiya..., 2011: 87-97).

Culturologist M. Davydova, reflecting on the role of "ordinary film criticism" in social media, understood it as reviews by Internet users on various works of art or events. She argued that, as a rule, the authors of such materials have neither professional status nor special education. The quality of the reviews, if judged from a professional point of view, leaves much to be desired in most cases. Nevertheless, such texts are in great demand. The novelty of this phenomenon does not lie in the appearance of critical texts written by non-professionals. The boundaries of the professional have always been more or less blurred. The very possibility of trying one's hand at writing a literary or critical text is attractive. The classical amateur critic could not remain in this role for long. Either he received recognition from the public and/or his colleagues, or he refused to experiment any further, or he resigned himself to the stigma of being a loser and a graphomaniac. Today, the texts of everyday criticism take on a fundamentally different status. From a private creative experience, which in rare cases can develop into something more, everyday criticism becomes a self-sufficient and institutionalized system that ensures the reproduction and consumption of relevant texts (Davydova, 2012: 9).

Film critic R. Korneev was in many ways in solidarity with M. Davydova, noting that with the advent of the mass Internet in the 21st century, professional film criticism, which had stopped somewhere deep in the 1990s in its ideas about its own attitude towards the viewer-reader, when "you say and they listen", was dealt the same blow as torrent trackers for film distributors. And while graduate film critics, along with the rest of journalism, were slowly moving out of the pages of magazines and into virtual space. A community of millions of film fans had already formed on the web. Today, this vast army, which has its own hierarchy and its own system of values, is itself an active source of the same evaluative consensus that was once the prerogative of an exclusively professional environment. ... The availability of video media and, above all, of broadband Internet for their distribution has, in recent years, created a broad layer of incredibly savvy viewers whose experience of watching film classics exceeds all the possibilities of specialized film universities. ... What's more, the new generation of formally non-professional film critics has always been given a walking distance to modern cinema, from the most exalted art house to television series, which a dozen years ago were not at all within the scope of interests of professional film criticism (Korneev, 2012: 6-7).

R. Korneev aptly noted that in a rather conflicted Internet space, top film bloggers, who, unlike venerable professionals, have passed through the hellish forge of selection by millions of ordinary moviegoers, are not only ready for these challenges, but they also cannot imagine life in a

less aggressive environment. They are well aware that the modern reader is only interested in someone else's opinion, however weighty, if it coincides with his own. For the average cinema-goer, the best opinion is his own. The art of presenting a non-banal thought in such a way that others, after reading it, say: "There! Just as I thought!" is the most important thing for a film critic blogger. This is the only way to earn a name and an audience. ... The ultimate art is to get readers to come over to your side. To do that, you must be more weighty, more conscientious, more readable. At the end of the day, just to have a polemical gift. And it is completely pointless to complain about the dominance of non-professionals. And at the top, as always, are those who, within the framework of large online publications, have managed to combine academic knowledge with the ability to conduct a dialogue with their audience. Or, on the contrary, those representatives of the non-professional writing community who have managed to save face and go beyond the confines of their "cosy blog" or social network community. Those who themselves created first quasi-, and then full-fledged thematic Internet publications, where the name, as always on the Web, is identical to the audience (Korneev, 2012: 8).

Problems of documentary and popular science cinema

The *Cinema Art* journal published very little about documentary and popular science in a theoretical vein in the 21st century. At the same time, only one article was published about popular science cinema at the level of theory, and that one was about the work of the one of French cinematographers (Fomenko, 2014: 113-121).

Referring to the Russian documentary cinema of the post-Soviet years, film critic L. Malkova wrote that the "Factory of Facts" was embodied on television in the fullness of Vertov's concept, taking on all the functions of the newsreel, with which analytical functions have increasingly merged in recent years. ... Losing its social function, the newsreel is transforming itself before our eyes into a style of screen thinking, gravitating towards two models: The Soviet film journal, reflecting the inertia of mass consciousness, and the pre-revolutionary, mute-laconic journal, consciously playing with cheap black-and-white film and resorting to inscriptions to avoid narration. St. Petersburg documentary filmmakers have been subjecting their newsreels to this kind of deliberate stylization for a number of years, although this style has not been fully maintained since 1998 – life dictates its own. In general, the national film journal is gradually becoming a separate trend of modern documentary cinema, for which the direct chronicle is almost an ideological and aesthetic credo, eliminating the conceptualization of the flow of life and political conclusions (Malkova, 2001: 96, 99).

Film critic S. Sychev has argued conclusively that in the 21st century the lack of access to documentary films for the viewer (on television ... it is shown not only extremely rarely, but mainly at night) has a detrimental effect on the state of national documentary filmmaking itself. Authors lose contact with the audience because they do not expect their film to be seen by anyone other than a small circle of professionals... TV bosses shy away from a good film. Television documentaries function solely on the principle of infotainment unpretentiousness: the three most common genres on television today – investigation, portrait film and popular science program – are made according to the same templates, without any hint of artistry" (Sychev, 2008: 75).

Meanwhile, according to S. Sychev, without successful film distribution, nothing seems to be able to force the viewer and television to change their attitude towards non-fiction films... A new stage in the distribution of non-fiction films can be digital distribution – a system of distributing film copies to cinemas not on film, but on any digital medium, when there is no need to spend money on printing film copies of the film, which was one of the significant obstacles to the distribution of low-budget films... It should not be forgotten that during the perestroika period the films of Podnieks, Goldovskaya, Uchitel, Govorukhin attracted many more viewers to the cinemas than many feature films. Nor should we forget Vertov... Perhaps we are at the stage of a serious tectonic shift for non-fiction cinema in Russia, and it is now very important to make sure that the earlier alarm is not false (Sychev, 2008: 79).

Alas, time has shown that the hopes of S. Sychev did not come true at all: documentary films in Russia have not managed to take root in cinema halls, and on television it is still shown mainly in the formats listed above by the film critic. Of course, quite a few documentaries are shown on the *Culture* channel, but its rating in relation to the leading TV channels of the Russian Federation is very low, and its audience does not exceed 2 % – 3 % of the total number of television viewers.

In general, in relation to documentary cinema, the position of the *Cinema Art* journal was very politicized, especially after the Ukrainian events of 2014.

Hence, it is not surprising that in 2017 the journal published an article by the biased Ukrainian film critic D. Desyaterik "Between Fiction and Trench. Ukrainian documentary after the Maidan" (Desyaterik, 2017: 24-35), where he, being completely on the side of the Kyiv "Maidan" of 2014, wrote that "revolution is a spectacular and effective experience of joint mass living, if by effect we mean not only the overthrow power, but also changes in the collective consciousness. Accordingly, Ukrainian documentarians do not regain their language – they master it again, not without the risk of falling into journalism... For Ukrainian cinema, the Maidan and the ATO remain the most important generators of plots and characters" (Desyaterik, 2017: 25, 29).

Animation issues

Theoretical aspects of animated cinematography in the *Cinema Art* journal of the 21st century were devoted to several more publications.

In 2001–2003, from issue to issue, the *Cinema Art* published chapters from the book by animation director Y. Norshtein, where he, in particular, wrote that when writing a new film, the director must assume practical shooting. The new film is a new aesthetic, that is, a sensual space. Aesthetic magic can become as intriguing as the action itself. The new aesthetic is not a way of painting. It is a new behavior of the image in action, coupled with new psychological tasks. Every detail of a character originates in the space of the frame (Norshtein, 2003: 127).

Film critic N. Sputnitskaya wrote about early Soviet animation (Sputnitskaya, 2021: 92-99), Russian commercial animation and blockbusters (Sputnitskaya, 2017: 34-43; Sputnitskaya, 2018: 193-202). At the same time, she noted that in the twenty-first century, the total reworking of Russian fairy tale plots and Soviet rarities in jingoistic animated films can only be compared to the persistence of directors who redraw the past, not always glorious but quite worthy, according to the meagre patterns of the present (Sputnitskaya, 2018: 202).

And thinking about Russian internet animation, N. Sputnitskaya was convinced that if we return to the idea of national identity, then analogues of Russian-language web animation can be found in ancient Russian face collections and popular prints. Everything that advertising recommends introduces the cinematic mainstream, everything that is mass is an object of mockery, of deconstruction, which the blogosphere indulges in with visible pleasure and finds ardent sympathy from the public. So what? Why is the ideology of postmodernism (and the blogosphere is postmodern in its purest form) worse than the correct forms of Russian democratic realism – from advertising to news? (Sputnitskaya, 2018: 258).

In his theoretical article "3D and view. Full-length animation: from Disney to modern times", the film critic N. Krivulya, in our opinion, very sensibly noted that digital technologies have taken animation to another level, significantly changed it. Today, it is dominated by visual appeal, often to the detriment of artistic expression. ... To surprise the audience, filmmakers rely on technical improvements and the development of new software. After overcoming the short format and mastering the field of full-length animation, computer technologies define a new style and set new artistic criteria. Films were no longer just fairy tales for children, but spectacles that could be enjoyed by children and adults alike. At the same time, the content of these films has lost its former edifying quality, and the plot is built on different levels: it has something that can be understood by a simple spectator and something that can attract an "advanced" film fan. Among the favorites techniques that fill the dramatic scheme are film quotations and parodies of famous films, cult film characters and well-known motifs of classical and modern cinema. Often, the seemingly simple and traditional plot is interspersed with episodes dealing with current issues in modern politics, mass culture, national-racial problems, and relations with the authorities. Again, this is not lost on adult viewers. As a result, animated films expand their audience and become a product of mass consumption (Krivulya, 2008: 69).

Also referring to the phenomenon of full-length animation, which has found a mass audience in the 21st century, the film critic L. Malyukova drew the attention of the Journal's readers to the fact that a sense of exhaustion of ideas and techniques is forcing filmmakers to stop considering animation as a younger sister (especially since it is much older). The art of animation is now regarded by thoughtful filmmakers as an alchemical laboratory in which the substance of film aesthetics is created, molecularly reformed. Cinematography, in line with the general movement of the arts, merges into a stream of unprecedented syncretization (Malyukova, 2009: 83).

In 2021, L. Malyukova turned to another audiovisual phenomenon of the 21st century: animation: "Until recently, many authors and artists had an arrogant attitude towards documentary animation. And it conquers new aesthetic and semantic spaces... It beckons with the

possibility of expanding and transgressing the boundaries between life and art. Penetration into spiritual vibrations charged with the current of reality. The reality that disappears in the overproduced documentary is transformed, as Baudrillard so aptly observed, into something else, albeit visible. Entering the spiral of multiplication (author's point of view + camera selection + montage + voice + mode of expression, film language), the physical world, the character with his experiences is transposed into post-memory, drawn through the eye of a suggestive, figurative. Animadoc – atmosphere. Another way of witnessing. An attempt to penetrate the subtle settings, the shimmering details, to contemplate the hidden, the opaque. A grandiose art laboratory for searching, for discovering oneself in the haystack of the global world with its white noise" (Malyukova, 2021: 253).

And two extensive theoretical articles in *Cinema Art* were devoted to a very popular Russian comedy-satirical series of flash cartoons by O. Kuvaev called Masyanya.

D. Golyenko-Wolfson (1969–2023) wrote that for millions of viewers "Masyanya appeared as a touchingly defenseless and self-confident sexual fetish... Why did Masyanya, and no other "devils and evil spirits" from flash cartoons, acquire an aura of hyper-popularity? What is the teleology of fame? What are the mechanisms of selection and choice in the top ten ratings? Multiple socio-economic concepts of public relations are unlikely to help us deal with the "Masyanya incident" – we are probably not dealing with a mathematically verified, but an unconsciously impulsive one. ... The general "goodness" of computer comics about the adventures of a "mean girl" is motivated by the fact that they inadvertently allow users to investigate the real, and to recoil immediately from the bleak prospects opened up to them. Prospects (and here we find an important key, know-how, for the interpretation of Masyanya's public confession) of the total internal failure of modern man, which is not amortised, but on the contrary, exacerbated by his social arrangement, the comfortable interior of well-being and security" (Golyenko-Wolfson, 2002: 98-99).

Moreover, D. Golyenko-Wolfson points out that the cartoons about Masyanya, using various layers and clichés of urban folklore, anecdotes and stories of the kitchen intelligentsia, or jokes and witticisms of an apolitical lumpen, are unlikely to imply a calculated target audience. The cartoon series about Masyanya (unlike the "soap operas") seems to consciously evade the choice of a clear target group; Masyanya is caressed and warmed by everyone, from the young to the old. Adult sceptics adore her in spite of (or perhaps because of) her infantile absurdity, and children forgive her a certain obscene, cynical unruliness. Masyanya's nationality and mass character can compete with the visual genre of hard pornography, demanded by polar and kaleidoscopic consumer groups, satisfying the tastes of picky university intellectuals and businessmen as well as vulgar bartenders and inhabitants of the working suburbs. Such an unexpected parallel is not surprising: pornography in the modern media space points to the tragic impossibility of a healthy transmission of the emotional and bodily experience of sex, and ultimately to an irreversible internal failure, a conscious crisis of love in the unifying conditions of a market economy (Golyenko-Wolfson, 2002: 100).

D. Golyenko-Wolfson further reveals the image of a character named Masyanya, noting that she seems to be a trivial type of yuppie woman for a post-industrial economic metropolis, advanced and frustrated at the same time, claiming independence and remaining a chip in the amusements of the multiplied male fantasy... Masyanya is not, of course, as dangerous and destructive as a vampire. As a wayward and rebellious girl, she seems to signal that the virtual is no longer a "dead zone" of the unknown but is already firmly established and domesticated in each of us (Golyenko-Wolfson, 2002: 101, 103).

E. Petrovskaya wrote that "Masyanya lives safely in his native element, not counting on expansion into other media. But even with such natural modesty, her existence is endowed with a binding meaning: created by a few cursory strokes, the (anti)heroine is elevated to the category of the bearer of a new national idea. (This is how one of the Internet journalists interprets it.) ... Masyanya really takes us by surprise, capturing our emotions and at the same time determining their further development. It is like a phenomenon of mass culture... The more understanding, the higher the degree of emotions. ... We fell in love with Masyanya because there is a particle of Masyanya in everyone. That, despite her cheeky manner of speaking and frankly bad habits, she is kind, good, vulnerable... sincerity peeps through this irony... Not hidden anywhere, on the contrary, clearly and even defiantly superficial, which can only be encouraging, since the "new" sincerity is equally open to all. This is the designation of the collective as openness itself (as opposed to sectarianism) or a commonwealth endowed with neither the essence nor the image of the ultimate goal, but, to use a well-known metaphor, the commonwealth of idle people who are not concerned

about the convention. Masscult is most sensitive to such invisible pulsations. He always deals with form in the making, and this form is social in the original sense" (Petrovskaya, 2002: 93-94, 97).

Theoretical articles about foreign cinema

In the 21st century, the *Cinema Art* journal devoted a record number of materials to foreign topics, but these were mainly reviews of foreign films and reviews of international film festivals. There were few theoretical articles on foreign cinema.

In 2007, A. Artyukh turned to the problem of film noir, reminding the readers of the Journal that the emergence of this film style was marked by a series of dark films, not so much in the canon of police or gangster genres, but offering "new criminal adventures" or "new criminal psychology". Strangeness, eroticism, nightmare, cruelty, ambivalence: these were the key words that had already been found for American noirs. Most of them revolved around murder. The latent obsession with death or the dynamics of cruel death found its impressive visual solutions in noirs" (Artyukh, 2007: 94).

At the same time, we can agree that "fate or destiny, which thwarted the plans of the heroes faster than the police could break them, meant a lot in noirs. Moral determinism, leading to retribution, kicked in as soon as the hero made a wrong move: he usually fell under the spell of a femme fatale or (which meant almost the same thing) undertook the task of an absurd rich man to make money and go far, far away with a beloved beauty. The heroes did not immediately understand that this was a fatal step. And when they understood, they couldn't do anything about it (Artyukh, 2007: 94-95).

A. Artyukh has been very accurately identified as the main character of classic film noir: a woman who embodies fantasies and obsessions, who fights "for her place under the sun, believing that any means are good for it. For the women of noir, the man was a means to an end: whether it was an older, rich man, whom they usually married, or a young hero, through whose hands they sought to eliminate a rich spouse as an obstacle to their long-awaited independence. The triangle here is the basic form of the relationship between the characters" (Artyukh, 2007: 97-98).

A. Artyukh was absolutely right that hopelessness, alienation, claustrophobia, a sense of fatalism are key words for noir. All this is supported, among other things, by the black-and-white, almost graphic style of the films, which creates what can be called a noir look... Noir's favorite technique is to half-light the protagonist's face, creating the effect of a collision between light and darkness, which can be interpreted as the visual embodiment of eternal moral dilemmas. Noir loves the streets at night, the play of shadows on the walls of dimly lit rooms and, following German Expressionism (another precursor of Noir), prefers vertical lines to horizontal ones... For example, noir had in common a low-key lighting technique in which the actors' figures were simultaneously illuminated by strong beams from above, creating black shadows, and by soft, diffuse light from the front (the light source was placed in front of the camera), which made the shadows more pronounced, filled them in, and made them more contrasting and expressive. In this way, light and darkness collided, darkening faces, rooms, the cityscape, creating an effect of mystery, suspense, danger. Varying the overhead lighting (it could be at a 45-degree angle, or placed behind the actors' backs), as well as eliminating the front light (which creates an area of darkness), provided different lighting possibilities... The noir favorite technique – deep focus and shooting with a wide-angle lens in intense lighting – allows to "stretch" the frame, create multi-figure compositions and avoid "figure-eight" montage during dialogues (Artyukh, 2007: 98-99). Understanding film noir as a style rather than a genre, A. Artyukh noted that noir continues to surprise with its new transformations even in the twelfth century.

Culturologist J. Lurie also analyzed film noir, noting that in it acts of destruction and violence... are aestheticized and given a dark, but extremely refined romantic coloring. Murder scenes, as an example of the highest level of destruction in terms of the degree of sophistication of visual techniques, are often perceived as separate, colorful showstoppers... Noir can be seen as an example of a crisis of social principles, the space where they do not work is perverted. The ideas of freedom of choice and dreams of success, key to American ideology, are subjected to cynical retribution in noir: plans do not work, and every choice leads to wrong steps or death. The characters and plots of the films embody Heidegger's idea of "being towards death", in the context of which death is a possibility, rendering all other possibilities impossible, revealing the meaninglessness of any project. In the land of possibility, no possibility is realized, and the self-made man becomes the self-destroyed man (Lurie, 2013: 100-102).

The film critic D. Komm has written that American noir, French polar or Italian giallo are not genres at all, but only different styles within one genre: a crime film, a thriller. Indeed, if we

compare the typical examples of noir and giallo, it turns out that on the level of the genre formula they are not so different: a brutal murder, a private or police detective, his investigation, a beautiful and mysterious woman who often turns out to be a criminal, an unexpected and shocking clue, etc. The stylistic difference is enormous. But the stylistic difference is colossal, and thanks to it, no one will ever be afraid of noir and giallo. In this case, the style defines the genre (Komm, 2009: 85).

In 2010, A. Artyukh turned to Hollywood in the era of the formation of media industry conglomerates and identified two main trends: one is an attempt to preserve the model of traditional spectacular blockbusters aimed at everyone and based on simple plots, powerful special effects and the associated opportunities for franchising... The second is the active exploration of complex, elite themes and unusual visual aesthetics, including computer games. ... Artificial blockbusters competing with traditional hits ... uphold the idea of "cinema for the elite". In contrast to the concept of "Hollywood for the whole planet", they bring back the idea of audience segmentation (Artyukh, 2010: 86).

As we well remember, in Soviet times, the articles of film critics and experts in the *Cinema Art* journal on foreign cinema were mainly about "high genres" and outstanding "progressive masters" of film art. When the journal wrote about film noir and giallo, for example, it was in a passing, dismissive, negative way, exposing the "degradation of bourgeois cinema".

In the *Cinema Art* journal of the 21st century, "low genres" have become the subject of numerous articles. And film critic D. Komm, for example, became a consistent researcher of giallo and horror films, once despised by Soviet film studies (Komm, 2001: 83-90; 98-107; Komm, 2003: 108-115; Komm, 2004: 101-105; Komm, 2006: 71-81; Komm, 2008: 69-79).

As early as 2001, D. Komm defined the cinematic "technology of fear" as a complex set of dramatic, stylistic and technical devices involving constant experimentation with the language of narration, the psychology of perception, the use of archetypes and myths of mass consciousness. It is the presence of this mechanism, and not the presence of the actual object of fear, that ultimately ensures the genre identification of the work as a horror film. ... Technologies of fear must overcome the localization of the object of fear, destroy its boundaries and release the basic fear contained within it. To make the spectator see what cannot be shown, even for a second, to release the energy of chaos on the screen: this is the most important task of any horror film, whether its creators are aware of it or not. Only in this case is the aesthetic experience of fear possible, which is associated with the birth of horror as a work of authorship (Komm 2001: 98-99).

After analyzing dozens of films that can be classified in one way or another as giallo, D. Komm came to the logical conclusion that, in terms of narrative structure, giallo resembles a pornographic film. In this type of film, scenes that serve to develop the plot and do not carry a fundamental semantic load alternate with the actual acts of love when the action freezes and the choreography of the flesh turns out to be the main content of the film. The same principle can be observed in giallo: narrative scenes serve only as a basis for the demonstration of self-sufficient shows – murders. ... If gialli are structurally similar to porn films, then the depiction of murders in them evokes associations with a fashion show. The female body is fetishized in these scenes, as the object of the perverted fantasy of a madman – director – spectator. The way the victim is dressed, the way the light falls on her body as she writhing in agony, and the way her corpse fits into the bizarre ornamentation of the frame mean much more here than any psychological motivations for the behavior of the killer and the victim. This is a far cry from Hitchcock and his "love murders". In giallo, the victim is actually a model in a surreal act of creativity – a murder performed on the screen by a mad artist. The corpse, in its completeness, is an ideal object for the application of the killer's creative fantasy, his work of art, a kind of artefact (Komm, 2001: 103).

Referring to horror films, D. Komm noted that modern horror is a bizarre phenomenon. Constantly mimicking, borrowing formulas and techniques from other genres, it has little in common with what was commonly understood as horror thirty years ago, let alone the static and uniformly created "monster stories" of Hollywood's "golden age". There is no clear hierarchy within the genre itself... The horror film is truly conservative: in the sense that it is closely linked to the dominant cultural and religious tradition, to symbols, mythology and mystical ideas. The blurring of these ideas, their mixing with a different cultural tradition each time, puts horror in a crisis, forcing a radical revision of the foundations of the genre (Komm, 2003: 108, 112).

D. Komm was convinced that multiculturalism was the main enemy of the horror film. In a situation of coexistence of different, often mutually exclusive religious practices and mythological systems, each of them loses its claim to universality and becomes one of the many "propagandas"

struggling for survival. Accordingly, they lose their clear contours of ideas about the nature of evil and methods of combating it, without which a horror film is simply unthinkable (Komm, 2003: 112).

In 2006, D. Komm, analyzing the so-called cinematic, wrote that the Gothic style, inconceivable without hallucinations and daydreams, was to the taste of the followers of the esoteric revolution... and the followers of the sexual revolution actively used the Gothic's ability to wrap forbidden subjects in a fantastic package. They also discredited the genre in the 1970s, when the victorious sexual revolution expelled the spirit of romanticism from cinema, and gothic (in name only) films became platforms for the demonstration of perverse sex scenes. ... The result of these processes is the disappearance of gothic from the screens in the era of Reagan conservatism – as morally obsolete and ideologically dubious (Komm, 2006: 76), and only Francis Ford Coppola, with his 1992 film *Bram Stoker's Dracula*, marked the neo-Gothic stage...

In his commitment to the "lower genres", D. Komm was so consistent that in 2012 he came to the radical conclusion that when cinema is caught between Scylla and Charybdis, that is, between the marketing-oriented, calculated and predictable concept of a Hollywood blockbuster and the irresponsible, charlatan production of the "art house", only showstoppers remain small islands of creativity on which the embodiment of original artistic ideas can still take place. And since showstoppers belong exclusively to genre cinema, this leads us to the inevitable conclusion that today the realization of true authorial potential is only possible in genre works (Komm, 2012: 123).

An article by the sociologist E. Davydova was devoted to the semiotics of eroticism in American cinema, where she noted that, however different the sacred Hollywood monster may be from its audience, it is, like any idol, a gigantic projection of its desires, fantasies and fears. The erotic icons of the 1950s are characterized by a strange, almost schizoid duality. On the one hand, they are sex-obsessed, neurotic products of censorship; on the other, they are a premonition and prediction of the sexual revolution that the Swinging Sixties will soon rock the world with (Davydova, 2001: 82).

At the same time, E. Davydova expressed the reasonable opinion that, contrary to the postulate widespread in feminist film criticism that the gaze of the camera is always a male gaze, having in mind a woman as a sexual object, cinema from its first steps proved the opposite, seducing both female and male eroticism. The seducer has never left the screen. That's why he's a seducer who is attracted by traditional masculine qualities, but only by beauty... Eroticism is the only effective weapon of the seducer, whether he has power, whether he occupies a high social position, and whether his goal goes beyond the satisfaction of his own desires. More precisely, in this case beauty is power (Davydova, 2001: 86).

But then, according to culturologist D. Golyenko-Wolfson (1969–2023), "a postmodern vision of ambivalent sexuality emerged, with the obligatory ironic escape from the object of attraction, with a carnival change of cultural masks, with parodic quotes and theatrical props", and in the 21st century a "new intimacy" appeared on the screen, in which the reversal of the roles of man and woman became an unalterable leitmotif. The image of the cautious seductress passes to the woman, and the man is cast as an unapproachable narcissist, an object of long-term conquest... or a tiny toy of whimsical desire (Golyenko-Wolfson, 2003: 98).

B. Lokshin's article was also devoted to the theme of cinematic sex, recalling that the sexual revolution of the 1960s promised universal sexual freedom, but ended with freely distributed pornography. Capitalism digested the sexual revolution, packaged it commercially and sold it wholesale and retail. As for sexual repression, American universities, paranoid about rape, have begun requiring students to get written permission from each other before having sex. The revolution ends in reaction. Sexual permissiveness becomes sexual repression (Lokshin, 2017: 190).

Several theoretical articles by the authors of the *Cinema Art* journal in the 21st century were devoted to film comics (Bektemirov, 2019: 36-44; Golyenko-Wolfson, 2003: 100-107; Gorelikov, 2019: 20-28; Khitrov, 2019: 228-231; Loginova, 2019: 239-247; Sputnitskaya, 2019: 232-238; Tsyrukun, 2010: 131-137; Tsyrukun, 2012: 124-135; Shorokhova, 2019: 29-35).

D. Golyenko-Wolfson believed that in the 1990s, the gradual displacement of comics from the heights of mass culture coincided with the confident entry into the forefront of the postmodern genre of film comics, which often makes fun of the canonized techniques of comic stamping themselves. Cinematography borrowed from the comics its manner of presenting fairy-tale puppet reality in a nostalgic key, its conditional decorativeness and mannequin psychosomatics of the characters (Golyenko-Wolfson, 2003: 102).

At the same time, according to D. Golyenko-Wolfson (1969–2023), the comic in cinema acts as a legislator of the moral and ethical code of the builder of liberal democracy. At the epicentre of his plots there is always an apocalyptic-cosmogonic struggle between a tireless advocate of humanistic justice (in everyday life a shy schoolboy, a dandyish gentleman) and an unrestrained monster who personifies the fiend of totalitarian evil... Using the "atlas" of psychotic types and behavioural pathologies... It is most appropriate to include comic characters in the "autistic schizoid" column: hence their anchorage and detachment from worldly pragmatics, hence the confusion of their socio-symbolic roles. They are eternally and polarly divided into human and non-human avatars, which is evident in their masquerade-inspired, prop-shaped wardrobe and in their remarkable talent for acting out a trivially respectable life scenario during the day and transforming into elastic and demonic "ghosts of revenge" at night (Golyenko-Wolfson, 2003: 105-106).

Film critic A. Gorelikov reminds us that the image of the jester, the trickster, the harlequin is one of the key images of world culture... The analysis of the archetype can lead to a bad infinity, but at least it should be noted that the jester is associated with transgression, a transitional state, a carnival space where everything is turned upside down and laws are abolished. That is why even the kindest clown contains the potential of horror and there is an element of diabolical ambiguity (Gorelikov, 2019: 21).

Film expert N. Tsyrukun, in our opinion, has rightly pointed out that even the aged and sad Batman remains a beloved hero in film comics, because his fans still see their own reflection in him in one way or another. They see him as a person, unlike Superman, and identify with him, learning from his example how to deal with their own fragmentation, disorder, etc. In the postmodern situation, people need this kind of protection almost every minute, and in this sense the therapeutic function of comics is unique (Tsyrukun, 2012: 134).

Continuing the study of genres that in Soviet times were considered low and unworthy of the attention of film studies, the *Cinema Art* journal in the 21st century wrote extremely seriously and scientifically about films about zombies (Arkhipova, 2019: 146-151; Sandanov, 2011: 53-62) and vampires (Kushnareva, 2012: 136-141), about grindhouse (Pavlov, 2013: 61-70), camp (Tsyrukun, 2013: 55-60) and "vulgar authorship" (Pavlov, 2013: 54-63) in cinema.

Film critic A. Sandanov, analyzing film narratives about zombies, came to the bold, but in our opinion very controversial conclusion that it is rotten and mindless corpses that help modern man look at his insecurities and fears from the outside (Sandanov, 2011: 53).

Then A. Sandanov proceeded to a detailed systematization of the zombie theme, arguing that 1) unlike previous monsters, zombies are apocalyptic. Any other monster is a local disturbance in the normal picture of the universe... The very concept of the modern zombie implies the ubiquity and irreversibility of its presence; 2) zombie films are not limited to exploiting basic animal fears. The zombie apocalypse involves a series of real fears generated by an excess of insecurity. These are not just fears, but unresolved informational contradictions: Fear of global catastrophe in any form; fear of microbes, epidemics, radiation, "chemistry"; fear of alien, incomprehensible cultures; fear of irrational violence, street crime; fear of xenophobia, racism and other prejudices; fear of one's own and others' madness, nonconformity; fear of conformity; religious fear of retribution; fear of destabilization of society, anarchy, helplessness of the government in the face of global challenges; dependence of the individual on the infrastructure of civilization, lack of control over one's life, fear of state violence" (Sandanov, 2011: 55-56).

Thus, films of the "classical" zombie model, on the one hand, serve to playfully live out real "apocalyptic" fears, eliminating uncertainty, and, on the other hand, they are effective as raw material for identity formation through identification with obviously imperfect heroes... The therapeutic function of the film is therefore not only and not so much to show the fears and to overcome them. It is the "training" of a new identity. Mobile, maximally open and minimally burdened with abstruse models of behavior and self-identification (Sandanov, 2011: 62).

In our opinion, A. Sandanov's article is a vivid example of how, with a strong desire, any trash can be provided with a "deepest scientific basis", which in fact has (almost) nothing to do with the mass of primitive tapes about zombies.

In this sense, A. Pavlov was more cautious when trying to understand another phenomenon of "low genres" – grindhouse. In particular, he noted that grindhouse was, on the one hand, sexploitation films of various genres - from vulgar comedies, strange melodramas, light erotica, and hard pornography; on the other hand, horror films of various shades and films with taboo themes. Another type of grindhouse cinema were the tapes known as blaxploitation. Another popular theme

of exploitation cinema was the Nazis and all the possible atrocities and perversions that could be attributed to nazisploitation. Roughly on the same theme, but without the Nazis, there were images of "women behind bars", we can talk about the revival of the grindhouse in a postmodern sense. Unlike remake films, here the emphasis is on deliberate stylization and irony in relation to the legacy of the grindhouse (Pavlov, 2013: 64).

In the distant 1980s, film critic N. Tsyrukun liked to criticize and expose the "destruction of the spirit" in bourgeois cinema (Tsyrukun, 1986). But in the 21st century, on the pages of the *Cinema Art* journal, she was already seriously and with emphasized scientific piety analyzing Western film comics and camp and queer.

For example, she wrote quite profoundly that "queer theory, which exists in various forms, whether or not it is included in the umbrella term 'camp', is nevertheless applicable as an explanatory framework for 'being different' in a variety of ways, when it comes to exploring otherness or diversity, as a critique of rigid identity frameworks, but also as a tool for thinking about (and deconstructing) mechanisms of power. In particular, the historically established system of power relations that affirms the dominance of heterosexuality over all other forms of sexuality, that is, the heterosexist cultural matrix as a variant of totalitarian dictatorship" (Tsyrukun, 2013: 60).

A. Pavlov recalled that "vulgar auteur cinema" is usually ignored by critics because of the supposedly frankly low intellectual level of their films. It is also believed that the critics' rejection of these "authors" may be due to a personal aversion to the violence that "vulgar directors" preach. What is very important is that this violence is almost always not softened by irony, and when it is presented as "fun", it still tends to repel those who are used to watching more "serious" films. Supporters of "vulgarism" strive to find high art where it has not been customary to look for it (Pavlov, 2013: 56). And then he comes to the paradoxical conclusion that the supporters of "vulgar auteur cinema" ultimately bring the concept of authorship back into broader cultural spheres, trying not to limit the discussion to discussions of feminism, race, and queer culture... So, there is much more to the new phenomenon than it seems at first glance. And no matter how fragile the concept may be, it must be taken seriously and perhaps even sympathetically (Pavlov, 2013: 56, 63).

Of course, in the twenty-first century, the *Cinema Art* journal could not pass without a detailed analysis of the adaptations of the *Harry Potter* novels (Golyenko-Wolfson, 2002: 65-71), the phenomena of the *Toy Story* franchise (Lugovoy, 2020: 188-201), and the *Game of Thrones* series (Meisel, 2019: 281-289). Once again, the Journal turned to the James Bond franchise (Brileva, Brilev, 2021: 231-237; Fomochkin, 2021: 211-230; Kartsev, 2021: 240-251). The mass success of these media texts allowed the authors of *Cinema Art* to practice a lot of psychoanalysis, scientific formulations, and meaningful conclusions.

Here, D. Golyenko-Wolfson believes that the novels and films about the adventures of Harry Potter have managed to adapt precisely and elastically to the neo-sentimental ideological trend that prevails today... Moreover, *Harry Potter* had become the best spokesman for the new ideological "truth" about a person: a wizard, a sorcerer. It is not difficult and shameless for a modern person to become a mystagogue and, in general, a supernatural creature, one only has to make sure that armadas of glamorous puppet-board evil spirits scatter and burst at the wave of the most "ordinary" wand (Golyenko-Wolfson, 2002: 66).

And the film critic E. Maisel wrote that despite the fundamental and irrevocable connection of media franchises to literature, the key to creating and launching a franchise is not the art of storytelling and not the mastery of the show, but what researchers call transmedia world building – "transmedia construction of fictional worlds" (Dan Hessler – Forest). It sounds grandiose, but what it really means is that the previous art forms (the novel and the serial) have been replaced – in full accordance with the prophecies of the ideologists of postmodernism – not by a new actual form, but by a production concession that unites and adapts all art forms, old and new, with the same indifferent efficiency ("nothing personal") with which capital imperturbably transforms everything it touches into itself. Without this in mind, the innocent practice of franchising reveals to us a rather monstrous truth about the total convergence of this world, which denies any individual value by placing it in a kind of common market register (Maisel, 2019: 283).

Furthermore, E. Maisel, in our opinion, rightly points out that, using the example of *Game of Thrones*, one can also observe such a trend as the greatly increased role of franchise fans: "a common occurrence in our everyday life, fans have been in the center of attention in recent decades. From previously despised urban lunatics with a dash of masochism, they have turned into venerable evangelists actively involved in the creation of fantasy, superheroes and other universes

of Big Hollywood. Giants such as Fox or Disney enter into agreements with them and coax exclusives, and theorists try to see through a magnifying glass: who are they? fans? enthusiasts? cultists? But whoever they are, the paradoxical existence of fans is determined by the fact that their consumption coincides with the immaterial labor they produce, which is the basis of post-Fordism. It turns out something like an asymmetric symbiosis between producer and consumer. In any case, it is through the feelings and devotion of the fans that the brand establishes its authenticity, authenticity and, ultimately, value” (Maisel, 2019: 284).

Looking back on the history of Bond, the translator and film critic P. Kartsev wrote that the creator of the image of James Bond is the writer Ian Fleming, who created a literary hero whose basic quality and condition of existence is the need to be a loner, also because any contact with him is destructive. The main dynamic of his image is the initially impossible, doomed attempt to share this solitude with someone who is both opposite and identical to him; he confronts himself, armed with a big gun and an infallible ability to choose treacherous or doomed women as partners. His inner psychological conflict – like any psychological conflict – is insoluble, but through the Jungian transcendental function, which allows the integration of differently directed desires, and with the help of the initially false technology of capturing shadows and light on celluloid film, the lonely hero, destined to be a ritual sacrifice to the dark mother, becomes the property of the world and finds salvation in the infinite renewability of the life-affirming creative act (Kartsev, 2021: 351).

In this connection, O. and A. Brilev drew the attention of the magazine's readers to the fact that, despite all the dubious aesthetic and pedagogical value of the Bond character, he excellently fulfils a function that is usually not even mentioned in textbooks of literary criticism: ritual. The strict formality of Bond plots corresponds almost exactly to what Vladimir Propp describes in *Morphology of a Fairy Tale*: the hero is given the task of correcting some misfortune, he crosses the symbolic boundary between the world of the living and the world of the dead, receives magical gifts and a guide (usually a woman), is tested, enters into a confrontation with a monster (many Bond villains are outright monsters), receives a mark (wound or identification), wins and returns to the world of the living. What is the nature of this journey? It is a description of a primitive initiation rite in which a person symbolically died and was reborn in a new status. Passing through all the stages of the trials with the hero gives the audience a feeling of renewal, of a new beginning. But for this to happen, the formula of the ritual must be followed with minimal deviations. A spy in our world is an analogue of a shaman in the primitive world. He exists on the borders between worlds, dangerous and mysterious, terrifying, and necessary. His ability to transform himself at any moment into a beast, a dead man, a stranger, an enemy, repels and attracts him at the same time. Things are acceptable to him that are unacceptable to other members of society: he is allowed to lie, kill, steal, come into contact with the ritually unclean. The tribe needs him as a gate to the Other: but the gate, to keep the Other beyond the threshold, must come into contact with the Other. Therefore, a shaman cannot live among the people, he lives on the outskirts, has no family, does not participate in the daily affairs of the people. He is an instrument of the tribe's will, but not part of it. But when the social structure changes, the image of the shaman merges with that of the warrior. A hero is born – the victor over the monsters, often a half-monster himself, but also a demigod... Yes, we are talking about Odysseus, the "wise Ulysses" (Brileva, Brilev, 2021: 234-235).

One of the articles by the film critic E. Maisel was devoted to the history of the American underground through the prism of the theoretical works of T. Adorno (1903–1969).

E. Maisel came to the reasonable conclusion that for about thirty years, the American underground, resisting the standards of commercial cinematography, carried out something like a comprehensive "negative dialectic" of cinema (Adorno's terminology). This negative dialectic was achieved 1) aesthetically – through the development of any form other than realism – this discourse of power, saturated with lies and full of them, even at the stage of imaginary mimesis; 2) economically – through the refusal to participate in the struggle for people's love, through the voluntary choice of directions that are far from being the most accessible to the general public and not the most "turnable" directions, through the refusal to turn both cinema and art into a market commodity; 3) politically - by free thinking and ignoring censorship restrictions, by independence from mass media and distrust of the consumer world, by contempt for power, for capital and its manipulation under the guise of cultural and educational expansion; 4) ethically – by preferring the personal to the personal, the private to the mass, art to industry, and honest research to manipulative entertainment. Taken together, this characterizes the American underground – and non-commercial avant-garde practice in general – as a kind of exception to the rule, as an

antidote that neutralizes the evil inherent in cinema by its very magical nature; as the other side of cinema, revealing its ability to be aesthetically non-offensive, economically non-corrupt, ethically sound, politically non-reactionary (Maisel, 2021: 68).

Reflecting on the religious theme in Hollywood cinema, film critic N. Sirivlya noted that for the mass consciousness, Christianity today is just a set of universally accepted ethical norms and humanistic principles, a metaphor for abstract philanthropy. At the same time, modern civilization is not so far removed from paganism in its ideas about the supernatural as a source of dubious power and an undeniable threat to human existence. And it turns out that, at the level of anthropology, we already exist, so to speak, in the post-Christian era: "God is dead". And according to His commandments, human beings must save themselves (or, as they used to say: "Man is descended from an ape, so let us love each other!"). And at the level of vague, poorly articulated religious feelings – into pre-Christian and perhaps even pre-Biblical times. "A civilization with such an internal gap in the ideas of God and man cannot exist normally, it always falls into a kind of schizophrenia, when philanthropy inevitably turns into violence, and attempts to collect, unite and order the world make its destruction more and more real. Perhaps this is the obsessive expectation of the inevitable end? (Sirivlya, 2001: 93).

One of the issues of *Cinema Art* in 2021 was devoted to media art, video art and audiovisual avant-garde (mainly foreign).

Art historian A. Krasnoslobodtseva recalled that, historically, video art is the art of resistance. From the moment of its birth more than sixty years ago, video art began to work closely with social issues, criticism of mass media, illusionist cinema, consumer society, comprehended political events, was the most important tool in the feminist struggle. Video art makes it possible to record events in real time without time limits, to edit images quickly and without a large team of narrow professionals, to create multi-layered statements with comments of various formats (Krasnoslobodtseva, 2021: 160).

Art critic T. Fadeeva wrote that media art offers us a unique experience: the experience of "expanding" ourselves through sensations that testify to new, unusual facets of reality, so that we go beyond the usual automatic perception. Like Deleuze and Guattari's postmodern subject, "born out of the states it consumes and reborn with each state"... Media art can thus be seen as an apparatus for generating "extensions" of our sensory interface, transit zones and even paradigms, and the apparatus is constantly improving and modernizing (Fadeeva, 2021: 49).

Media art specialist M. Dantsis, referring to the topic of feminist video art, noted that feminism today is not only a struggle for equality. First of all, feminist video art is a versatile study of society, introspection and self-observation, rethinking of personal experience, self-irony and humour. Today's video artists are working with a feminist agenda, using the possibilities of new technologies, their art is communicative and controversial, it offers the viewer a unique experience regardless of gender and social attitudes (Dantsis, 2021: 132).

4. Conclusion

In the years 2001–2017, the circulation of *Cinema Art* was not mentioned in the imprint of the journal. According to data found on the Internet, the circulation of the journal in 2001–2017 was around two to three thousand copies, which is lower than even in the 1930s and 1940s. Since 2018, the journal's circulation initially remained at about the same level, but by the end of 2022 it had fallen to one thousand copies.

At the beginning of the 21st century, the editors of *Cinema Art* apparently realized that the attempts to turn it into a socio-political journal, made at the end of the era of "perestroika" and in the 1990s, did not bring the expected dividends. As a result, the magazine returned to the format of a cinematic publication. Hence the increase in the number of theoretical articles on cinema, which in the 21st century averaged eighteen a year.

Daniil Dondurey (1947-2017), who directed *Cinema Art* until 2017, maintained the journal's course towards a sociological understanding of the media process, while attracting leading authors in the field. The film critic Anton Dolin, who replaced him in the second half of 2017, on the one hand re-emphasized political accents and also strengthened passages in the journal texts that opposed the authorities, and on the other hand began to pay much more attention to the genres of mass culture in film.

Our analysis of the concepts of film studies (in the context of the socio-cultural, historical, political situation, etc.) in the journal *Cinema Art* in the 21st century has shown that the theoretical works on cinematic topics in this period can be divided into the following types.

- Articles and discussions devoted to the analysis of the theoretical heritage of the classics and the history of Soviet cinema (A. Fomenko, N. Izvolov, N. Kleiman, O. Kovalov, E. Maisel, E. Margolit, A. Medvedev, N. Sputnitskaya, V. Shmyrov, A. Shpagin, A. Shcherbenok and others);

- articles attempting to understand the film process at a theoretical level (O. Aronson, D. Golyenko-Wolfson, E. Maisel, L. Manovich, etc.).

- articles devoted to the sociological and cultural problems of cinema, television and film distribution (O. Berezin, K. Bogoslovskaya, D. Dondurey, D. Golyenko-Wolfson, E. Maisel, I. Poluekhtova, K. Razlogov, V. Zvereva, etc.); at the same time, the analysis of the phenomenon of the Internet and virtual reality has become a new theoretical trend of the journal.

- theoretical articles on foreign cinema (A. Artyukh, D. Komm, N. Tsyrukun, etc.).

In general, *Cinema Art* in the 21st century, as in the 1990s, offered new interpretations of the history of Soviet and world cinema and tried to find theoretical approaches to the current film process.

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Appendix

The main dates and events related to the historical, political, economic, ideological, socio-cultural and cinematic context in which the publication of the *Cinema Art* journal was carried out in the 21st century.

2001

January 20: George W. Bush Jr. becomes President of the United States.

June 16: First meeting (Ljubljana) of US President George W. Bush and President of Russia V. Putin.

June 3–14: Festival Kinotavr-2001. Main prize: *Tender Age* (directed by S. Solovyov). Grand Prix: *Poisons, or the World History of Poisoning* (director K. Shakhnazarov).

June 21–30: Moscow International Film Festival in Moscow. The main prize "Golden George": *The Believer* (USA, director G. Bean).

July 16: Russian and Chinese Presidents signed an agreement on good neighborliness, friendship and cooperation.

September 11: Air attacks in New York and Washington.

October 7: The US starts the war in Afghanistan.

November: V. Putin's visit to the USA.

2002

May 23–26: visit of US President George W. Bush Jr. in Russia.

Establishment of the NATO-Russia Council.

- June 5–14: Festival Kinotavr-2002. Main prize: *War* (directed by A. Balabanov). Grand Prix: *Lover* (directed by V. Todorovsky).
- June 13: The US denounces the anti-ballistic missile treaty.
- June 21–30: Moscow International Film Festival in Moscow. The main prize "Golden George": *Resurrection* (Italy-France, directors P. and V. Taviani).
- October 23–26: Chechen terrorists take hostages in the House of Culture during the musical performance *Nord-Ost* in Moscow.
- November: visit of US President George W. Bush Jr. in Russia.
- 2003
- March 20: The US starts the war in Iraq.
- May 31 – June 1: visit US President George W. Bush Jr. in Russia.
- June 3–17: Festival Kinotavr-2003. Main prize: *Old Women* (directed by G. Sidorov). Grand Prix: *Chic* (directed by B. Khudoynazarov).
- June 20–29: Moscow International Film Festival in Moscow. The main prize "Golden George": *Divine Fire* (Italy-Spain, director M. Hermoso).
- September 26–27: meeting of George W. Bush Jr. and V. Putin in the USA.
- 2004
- January 4: M. Saakashvili won the presidential elections in Georgia.
- June 5–15: Festival Kinotavr-2004. Main prize: *Driver for Vera* (director P. Chukhrai). Grand Prix: *My stepbrother Frankenstein* (directed by V. Todorovsky).
- July 18–27: Moscow International Film Festival in Moscow. The main prize "Golden George": *Ours* (Russia, director D. Meskhiev).
- September 1–3: Chechen terrorists take hostages at a school in the city of Beslan.
- November 13–16: Russian President V. Putin's first official visit to the United States.
- November–December: the victory of the "Orange Revolution" in Ukraine.
- 2005
- January 23: V. Yushchenko became the President of Ukraine.
- February 24: Meeting of Presidents George W. Bush Jr. and V. Putin in Bratislava.
- May 10: Russia-EU summit (Moscow).
- June 2–12: Festival Kinotavr-2005. Main prize: *Poor Relatives* (director P. Lungin).
- July 17–26: Moscow International Film Festival in Moscow. The main prize "Golden George": *Space as a presentiment* (Russia, director A. Uchitel).
- July 7: Attacks on the London Underground.
- August 8: Iran resumed its uranium enrichment program and pulled out of negotiations with the EU.
- September 16: Meeting of Presidents George W. Bush Jr. and V. Putin in the USA.
- 2006
- January 1–4: "gas crisis" between Russia and Ukraine.
- January: Russian President V. Putin announced the end of the counterterrorist operation in Chechnya.
- May 4: US Vice President R. Cheney in his speech accused Russia of using its natural resources as a foreign policy weapon of pressure, of human rights violations by Russia and of its destructive actions in the international arena.
- June 4–12: Festival Kinotavr-2006. Grand Prize: *Playing the Victim* (directed by K. Serebrennikov).
- June 23 – July 2: Moscow International Film Festival in Moscow. The main prize "Golden George": *About Sarah* (Sweden, director O. Karim).
- July 14–17: G8 summit in St. Petersburg.
- 2007
- Political conflict between the United States and Russia over the intention of the United States to deploy missile defense systems in Poland and the Czech Republic.
- February 8: US Secretary of Defense said that the United States "should be prepared for a possible armed conflict with Russia".
- February 10: Russian President V. Putin sharply criticized US foreign policy at the World Security Conference in Munich.
- June 3–11: Festival Kinotavr-2007. Main prize: *Simple Things* (directed by A. Popogrebsky).

June 21–30: Moscow International Film Festival in Moscow. The main prize "Golden George": *Traveling with pets* (Russia, director V. Storozheva).

July 14: President of Russia V. Putin signed the Decree "On the Suspension by the Russian Federation of the Treaty on Conventional Arms in Europe".

2008

March 2: D. Medvedev is elected President of Russia.

April 5–6: meeting of George W. Bush Jr. and V. Putin in Sochi.

May 8: V. Putin is confirmed as prime minister of the Russian government.

June 7–15: Festival Kinotavr-2008. Main prize: *Shultes* (director B. Bakuradze).

June 19–28: Moscow International Film Festival in Moscow. The main prize "Golden George": *Easier than simple* (Iran, director R. Mir Karimi).

July: World oil prices reach a new peak of over \$140 per barrel.

August 8–16: Armed conflict between Georgia and Russia over South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

August 26: Russian President D. Medvedev signed a decree recognizing the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

December 18–20: The seventh congress of Russian filmmakers, at which an attempt was made (in the absence of the necessary quorum) to remove the director N. Mikhalkov from the post of Chairman of the Union of Cinematographers and elect director M. Khutsiev (1925–2019) to this position.

August – December: with the fall in world oil prices (first to \$100 per barrel, and then below) and the collapse of key US credit and banking consortiums, the worst global economic crisis since the 1930s begins, especially felt in the export-dependent oil to the Russian economy. World oil prices are falling sharply (4.6 times): from \$140 per barrel in July to \$30 per barrel in December.

August – December: a sharp depreciation of the ruble (by 30 %) against world currencies.

2009

January 20: B. Obama becomes President of the United States, the beginning of the "reset" of US-Russian relations.

January: another "gas crisis" between Russia and Ukraine.

March 30–31: The Extraordinary Congress of the Union of Cinematographers of Russia canceled the illegitimate (due to lack of quorum) election of M. Khutsiev (1925–2019) and by a majority of votes again elected director N. Mikhalkov to the post of Chairman of the Union of Cinematographers of Russia.

May: The editorial staff of the *Cinema Art* journal received a letter signed by the chairman of the Union of Cinematographers N. Mikhalkov with an order to vacate the premises on the first floor of the house on Usievicha Street (Moscow), owned by the Union of Cinematographers of Russia. In August of the same year, the editorial office rented another office, also located in Moscow. The main reason for the eviction of the *Cinema Art* editorial office was the active participation of the editor-in-chief of the *Cinema Art* journal D. Dondurey (1947–2017) in an attempt to remove director and actor N. Mikhalkov from the post of Chairman of the Union of Cinematographers of Russia at the congress on December 18-20, 2008.

June 7–15: Festival Kinotavr-2009. Main prize: *Spinning Top* (directed by V. Sigarev).

June 19–28: Moscow International Film Festival in Moscow. The main prize "Golden George": *Petya on the way to the kingdom of heaven* (Russia, director N. Dostal).

June: World oil prices rise to \$70 per barrel.

July 1: In Russia, gambling establishments are allowed to operate only in special gambling zones.

July 6–7: US President B. Obama's first visit to Moscow, his meetings with Russian President D. Medvedev and Prime Minister V. Putin.

September: US President B. Obama announced the reversal of the US decision to deploy missile defense systems in Poland and the Czech Republic.

December 5: Fire at the *Lame Horse* nightclub in Perm, Russia (156 people died).

2010

February 7: Presidential elections in Ukraine were won by V. Yanukovich, who officially took office on February 25.

April 8: US President B. Obama and Russian President D. Medvedev signed in Prague an agreement on the limitation of nuclear weapons.

March 18: The Clay Institute of Mathematics announced the award of \$1 million to G. Perelman for proving the Poincaré conjecture.

April 8: Russian President D. Medvedev and US President B. Obama signed the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty in Prague.

April 10: a plane crash near Smolensk, which killed the President of Poland L. Kaczynski and his wife, and several other Polish statesmen.

June 6–13: Festival Kinotavr-2010. Main prize: *Truce* (directed by S. Proskurina).

June 17–26: Moscow International Film Festival in Moscow. The main prize "Golden George": *Brother* (Venezuela, director M. Raskin).

August 31: US President B. Obama officially announced the end of the military operation in Iraq.

September 9: Ministry of Justice of The Russian Federation issued a certificate of state registration of the Regional Public Organization "Union of Cinematographers and Professional Cinematographic Organizations and Associations", which included less than two hundred filmmakers who disagree with the decisions of the Extraordinary Congress of the Union of Cinematographers of Russia dated March 31, 2009 and with the candidacy of N. Mikhalkov. The Film Union included directors A. German (1938–2013), Y. Gusman, B. Khlebnikov, N. Khomeriki, P. Lungin, V. Mansky, A. Mitta, G. Natanson (1921–2017), Y. Norshtein, A. Popogrebsky, A. Proshkin, E. Ryazanov (1927–2015), A. Sokurov, V. Todorovsky, E. Tsymbal, A. Zeldovich, screenwriters Y. Arabov, A. Gelman, editor-in-chief of the *Cinema Art* journal D. Dondurey (1947–2017), writer, publicist and film critic D. Bykov, film critics and film experts L. Arkus, Y. Bogomolov (1937–2023), N. Kleiman, V. Matizen, N. Nusinova, L. Pavlyuchik, A. Plakhov, E. Stishova, K. Shcherbakov and others.

September 28: Moscow Mayor Y. Luzhkov dismissed "due to the loss of confidence of the President of the Russian Federation".

2011

January 25: The Russian State Duma finally ratifies the Start-3 treaty.

March 1: The law "On Police" comes into force in Russia.

April 16: A visa-free regime between Russia and Turkey comes into force.

June 4–11: Festival Kinotavr-2011. Main prize: *Indifference* (director O. Flyangolts).

June 23 – July 2: Moscow International Film Festival in Moscow. The main prize "Golden George": *Waves* (Spain, director A. Morais).

December 16: Protocol on Russia's accession to the World Trade Organization is signed.

O. Sentsov, co-owner of a computer club in Simferopol, made an amateur feature film *Gamer* at his own expense.

2012

March 4: V. Putin became the winner in the presidential elections in Russia.

May 7: V. Putin officially takes office as President of Russia.

May 8: D. Medvedev is approved for the post of Prime Minister of Russia.

June 3–10: Festival Kinotavr-2012. Main prize: *I'll be there* (director P. Ruminov).

June 21–30: Moscow International Film Festival in Moscow. The main prize "Golden George": *Junkhearts* (Great Britain, director T. Krishnan).

July 10: The State Duma of Russia ratified the treaty on Russia's accession to the World Trade Organization.

2013

January 20: B. Obama takes office for a second term as President of the United States.

June 2–9: Festival Kinotavr-2013. Main prize: *The Geographer Drank His Globe* (directed by A. Veledinsky).

June 20–29: Moscow International Film Festival in Moscow. The main prize "Golden George": *Particle* (Turkey, director E. Tepegöz).

August 1: The Anti-Piracy Law came into force in the Russian Federation.

2014

February 7–23: XXII Winter Olympic Games (Sochi, Russia).

February 18–21: "Maidan" conflict in the center of Kyiv (77 people died).

February 22: The Verkhovna Rada deprived the President of Ukraine V. Yanukovych of presidential power.

February 23: Interim duties of the President of Ukraine are assigned to A. Turchynov.

February 27: Russian special military operation begins in Crimea.

March 8–13: Kinosoyuz website publishes a letter in support of the new leadership of Ukraine and against the Russian special military operation in Crimea.

March 11–13: A letter from some famous Russian cultural figures in support of the policy of the Russian Federation in Crimea was published on the website of the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation.

March 11: The Crimean Parliament adopted a declaration of independence from Ukraine.

March 16: A referendum on the status of Crimea was held in the Republic of Crimea and Sevastopol. According to the official results of the referendum, 96.77 % of the voters of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and 95.6 % of the voters of Sevastopol chose to include of Crimea to Russia.

March 17: Russian President V. Putin signed a decree recognizing the independence of Crimea.

March 18–21: the reunification of Crimea with Russia, Crimea became part of the Russian Federation on the rights of autonomy.

April 7: Proclamation of the Donetsk People's Republic, which declared itself independent on May 12.

April 27: Proclamation of the Lugansk People's Republic, which also declared itself independent.

April – December: armed clashes in the Donbass between the formations of the DPR and LPR and the Ukrainian army.

May 2: in Odessa, there were clashes between supporters and opponents of the Ukrainian authorities, dozens of people died.

May 10: O. Sentsov, former co-owner of a computer club in Semferopol and amateur director, was detained in Crimea by the Russian Federal Security Service on suspicion of terrorism.

May 25: P. Poroshenko won the early presidential elections in Ukraine, officially taking office on June 7.

June 1–8: Festival Kinotavr-2014. Main prize: *Test* (directed by A. Kott).

June 19–28: Moscow International Film Festival in Moscow. The main prize "Golden George": *My man* (Japan, director K. Kumakiri).

September 5: The Minsk Agreements on Donbass are signed.

2015

February 11–12: A meeting of the presidents and representatives of the Foreign Ministries of Germany, Russia, Ukraine and France took place in Minsk. A Declaration on Donbass was adopted and steps were developed to implement the Minsk Agreement.

June 7–14: Festival Kinotavr-2015. Main prize: *About Love* (directed by A. Melikyan).

June 19–26: Moscow International Film Festival in Moscow. The main prize "Golden George": *Losers* (Bulgaria, director I. Hristov).

August 25: The North Caucasus District Military Court sentenced amateur director O. Sentsov on charges of terrorism to 20 years in prison in a strict regime colony.

September 30: Russia launches first airstrike against ISIS positions in Syria, launching Russia's special military operation in Syria.

November 16: Premiere of the first season of the series *Servant of the People* with comedian V. Zelensky, which later became part of his presidential election campaign in Ukraine.

January-December: continuation of the "frozen" conflict in Donbass.

2016

March 15: Russia begins withdrawing a military group from Syria.

June 6–13: Festival Kinotavr-2016. Main prize: *Good Boy* (directed by O. Karas).

June 23–30: Moscow International Film Festival in Moscow. The main prize "Golden George": *Daughter* (Iran, director R. Mirkarimi).

July 14: In Nice, during the celebration of Bastille Day, a terrorist in a heavy vehicle rammed a crowd of people, killing 85 people, about 200 were injured.

July 15–16: unsuccessful coup attempt in Turkey (about three hundred people died).

December 19: Berlin bombing: truck plows into crowd at Christmas market, killing 12, ISIS claims responsibility.

December 25: after taking off from Sochi airport, a TU-154 plane crashed, killing 92 people, including artists of the Song and Dance Ensemble of the Russian Army, well-known public figure E. Glinka, and others.

January – December: continuation of the "frozen" conflict in Donbass.

2017

January 20: D. Trump takes office as President of the United States.

May 7: E. Macron wins the presidential elections in France.

June 7–14: Festival Kinotavr-2017. Main prize: *Arrhythmia* (directed by B. Khlebnikov).

June 22–29: Moscow International Film Festival in Moscow. The main prize "Golden George": *Crested Ibis* (China, director Ts. Liang).

October 14–22: XIX World Festival of Youth and Students (Sochi).

October 23: premiere of the second season of the series *Servant of the People* with comedian V. Zelensky, which later became part of his presidential campaign in Ukraine.

January – December: continuation of the "frozen" conflict in Donbass.

2018

March 4: The incident with the poisoning of the former British spy S. Skripal and his daughter in Salisbury, which led to a political conflict between Russia and the UK.

March 18: V. Putin again won the presidential elections in Russia.

March 25: Fire at the *Winter Cherry* shopping center in Kemerovo, resulting in loss of people life.

April 19–26: Moscow International Film Festival in Moscow. The main prize "Golden George": *The Tsar Bird* (Russia, director E. Novikov).

June 2–10: Festival Kinotavr-2018. Main prize: *Heart of the World* (directed by N. Maschaninova).

July 16: Meeting between Russian President V. Putin and US President D. Trump in Helsinki.

October 3: President V. Putin signed the Federal Law on amendments to pension legislation, including raising the retirement age.

October 11: The Synod of the Patriarchate of Constantinople officially announced the start of granting autocephaly to the Orthodox Church in Ukraine, in particular, lifting the anathema imposed by the Russian Orthodox Church on the leaders of the canonically unrecognized "Kiev Patriarchate" and the UAOC Filaret and Macarius, canceling the decision of 1696 on the accession of the Kiev Metropolis to Moscow Patriarchate.

October 15: break of the Eucharistic communion of the Russian Orthodox Church with the Patriarchate of Constantinople.

October 17: massacre at the Kerch Polytechnic College; 21 people (including the student-killer) were killed, more than fifty were injured.

January-December: continuation of the "frozen" conflict in Donbass.

2019

January 1: The US decision to withdraw from UNESCO comes into effect.

January 4–6: schism of the Orthodox Church – Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople signed the tomos on autocephaly of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine, thereby legitimizing the granting of autocephaly to the Orthodox Church in Ukraine; this decision was not recognized and condemned by the Russian Orthodox Church and a number of other local Orthodox churches.

February 2: US suspends Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, Russia responds symmetrically.

March 27: premiere of the third season of the TV series *Servant of the People* with comedian V. Zelensky, which became part of his presidential election campaign in Ukraine.

April 18–25: Moscow International Film Festival in Moscow. The main prize "Golden George": *Personal growth training* (Kazakhstan, director F. Sharipov).

June 9–16: Festival Kinotavr-2019. Main prize: *Bull* (director B. Akopov).

May 20: comedian V. Zelensky, who won P. Poroshenko, took office as President of Ukraine.

July 21: The *Servant of the People* party of President V. Zelensky won the early parliamentary elections in Ukraine.

August 2: The United States formally withdrew from the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty with the USSR.

September 7: Imprisoned amateur director O. Sentsov was released early from his place of detention as part of an exchange of detainees between Russia and Ukraine and left for Ukraine.

December 8: The SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus pandemic, which causes COVID-19, begins.

December 9: The summit of the Normandy Four (Germany, France, Russia and Ukraine) was held in Paris, following which the territories of the Donetsk and Lugansk regions, which are under the control of the self-proclaimed DPR and LPR, are extended the status of a "special region".

January-December: continuation of the "frozen" conflict in Donbass.

2020

January 8: Russian President V. Putin and Turkish President R. Erdogan opened the Turkish Stream gas pipeline.

January 15: The Russian government headed by D. Medvedev resigned.

January 21: A new government is formed in Russia headed by Prime Minister M. Mishustin.

January 31: The UK left the European Union (Brexit).

January 31: World Health Organization declares the coronavirus outbreak a public health emergency of international concern.

February 29: The US and the Taliban sign a peace agreement to end the war in Afghanistan.

March 17: The European Union closes the external borders of the community for 30 days due to the coronavirus COVID-19.

March 18: Russia restricts entry for foreigners due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

May 25: African-American J. Floyd dies during arrest in Minneapolis, sparking massive protests against racism in the US and elsewhere.

July 1: Freight rail traffic on the Crimean bridge across the Kerch Strait was opened.

August 20: Russian oppositionist A. Navalny was hospitalized in the Omsk hospital with poisoning, from where he was later transferred to Germany for treatment.

September 11–18: Festival Kinotavr-2020. Main prize: *Scarecrow* (directed by D. Davydov).

September 27: Beginning of the armed conflict in Karabakh.

October 1–8: Moscow International Film Festival in Moscow. The main prize "Golden George": *Siege Diary* (Russia, director A. Zaitsev).

November 10: Armenia and Azerbaijan sign a ceasefire declaration. Armenia handed over territories in Nagorno-Karabakh to Azerbaijan.

January – December: continuation of the "frozen" conflict in Donbass.

2021

January 6: Trump's supporters seize the US Congress building in Washington to reject the official results of the 2020 presidential election and support Trump's demand for Vice President Michael Pence and Congress not to recognize Joe Biden's victory in the 2020 elections.

January 20: J. Biden officially takes office as President of the United States.

January 23: opposition actions in support of A. Navalny in several Russian cities.

January 29: Russian President V. Putin signs the law on the ratification of the agreement extending START-3 for five years.

February 2: the court in the case of "Yves Rocher" replaced the oppositionist A. Navalny with a suspended sentence for a real one lasting 3.5 years – in a penal colony.

April 10: A. Navalny's political videos, prepared by him with the help of Western media professionals in Germany, *I called my killer* (2020) and *Palace for Putin* (2021), received a special award from the White Elephant from group of Russian film critics.

April 22–29: Moscow International Film Festival in Moscow. The main prize "Golden George": *#asshole* (Romania, director A. Khutsulyak).

September 18–25: Festival Kinotavr-2021. Main prize: *The sea worries once* (director N. Khomeriki).

December 8: German Chancellor A. Merkel resigned. O. Scholz was appointed the new Federal Chancellor of Germany.

January-December: continuation of the "frozen" conflict in Donbass.