This presentation focuses on the issue how making of the Ukrainian nation-state and the idea of national intersect with constructions of gender identity. It is underlined that unlike in the Western women’s movement in Ukraine an approach to woman’s identity directs not to the notion of “different” but to the notion of the “other” which accentuates not a principle of woman’s subject autonomy but a particular status of “woman’s” in the Ukrainian culture. In the structure of “woman’s” as “other” not a problem of gender discrimination is putting in the forefront but a role of an ideal model of “woman’s” and conformity of an individual woman’s subjectivity to this model.

Today in Ukraine the model of “woman’s” as “other” is embodied in a model of Berehynia – a pagan goddess, who is, as perceived by today’s Ukrainian society, mother and guardian of the nation. This metasymbol has become a cultural icon portraying a traditional, hence innately ideal Ukrainian woman. Ukrainian patriarchally-structured society victimises its women by inducing them to accept the reinvented matriarchal paradigm as at once a genuine manifestation of Ukrainian cultural values and a true measure of contemporary reality. Seduced by the myth of female empowerment, Ukrainian women all too eagerly embrace their delusive superiority, and are deterred thereby from any independent program of action that might afford them authentic authority.

Analysing domination of the national priorities in the contemporary Ukrainian women’s movement and reasons of the unfavourable attitude to feminism, the author explores successes and challenges experienced by gender studies in higher education in Ukraine and emphasises significance of its further development as a tool for women’s empowerment, gender awareness, and critical self-consciousness.