Foreigners' Portrayal in Russian Film over 1924-53 and 1991-Present

by

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Abstract

The Russian film industry has changed dramatically since Stalin ruled the communist Soviet Union from 1924 to 1953, with a new capitalist system in the post-Soviet period from 1991 to present day changing the motives for making these films as well as changing the way characters are depicted. This study analyses the subject matter through the prism of cultural studies, going beyond narrative content and an analysis of the Russian film industry to identify trends and differences in how foreign characters are portrayed in Russian films during these two periods. A binary representation of foreigners as heroes and villains is demonstrated by applying theories including Hall's Representation, Barthes' Mythology and Bakhtin's Dialogical Theory. The study reveals that there are generally negative portrayals of foreigners in Stalinist film that stemmed from the dominant ideology of socialist realism, with mixed portrayals in the post-Soviet period that coincide with a more balanced portrayal of Russian characters. This is attributed to propagandic motives for making the films changing to fiscal ones, motives that changed from influencing the audience to showing them what they want to see.

Introduction

This study is on foreigners' portrayal in Russian film, over the Stalinist period from 1924 to 1953 and the post-Soviet period from 1991 to present day. The study's focus is on the culture of Russian cinema and its evolution; whilst well-known for its political intrigue and portrayal of events, few have pursued it for such a specific question, or for one that compares different periods of Russian cinema. To this end I am focusing on the image of foreigners in Russian films, comparing the Stalinist period and the post-Soviet period, because these periods have the strongest potential for contrasting analysis. They represent two extremes of government and are conceivably in completely different eras, despite only being half a century apart. This is certainly the case for filmmaking itself, which first gained significance in the Stalinist period and has developed into the industry we know since 1991, making these two

periods most apt for a comparative study as opposed to those in between. Control of the industry has shifted from the government to big business. With this there has been a significant change in the incentives for making films, from generally propagandic purposes to the target of as much financial revenue and commercial success as possible. This suggests that foreigners would be portrayed in the way that the audience wants to see them portrayed, rather than the government.

The image of the foreigner that this study focuses on alludes to Russia's perception of itself in the world and its relations with others, as well as its perception of foreign interpretations of Russian cinematic culture. For the purposes of this study a foreigner is defined as a Westerner, specifically west of Russia. In most cases the foreigners are American or German, with one analysed film having Nordic protagonists and another having Polish antagonists. The former Soviet republics, or the "close abroad", could be argued as foreign in the post-Soviet era but this would involve a wide-ranging separate debate that is not within the scope of this study. The "close abroad" is discussed further in the Literature Review and Chapter 1 whilst also being relevant to the film *Taras Bulba*, but the study's focus is on foreigners from the "far abroad" and how they interact with or differ from Russian characters. In order to reach definitive conclusions on how Russians' views on foreigners have been reflected in film, a selection of films with various subject matter and "aims" need to be analysed and compared to one another. These films have been selected based on genre and their award-winning film directors who reflect the periods' essence and influence. As such, these are the most useful case studies for a project so focused on Russian culture of the time.

The Stalinist era films include Grigori Aleksandrov's *Circus* from 1936 and Sergei Eisenstein's *Alexander Nevsky* from 1938, whereas the post-Soviet period's films include Aleksei Balabanov's *Brother 2* from 2000, Vladimir Bortko's *Taras Bulba* from 2009 and Aleksandr Rogozhkin's *The Cuckoo* from 2002. There are a multitude of post-Soviet films made possible by the modern era that have important foreign characters, but the aforementioned films have been chosen to prevent an imbalanced approach to this study and to include as much ideological context as possible, providing a non-

exhaustive amount of material evidence through the source of film analysis. This avoidance of too much focus on numerous film narratives allows for extensive examination of the chosen films' content, whilst also detailing background ideological and contextual factors that significantly influenced the foreign characters' portrayal in both periods.

This study will aim to evaluate the depiction of foreigners of Russian cinema through a unique contribution to this field of research which involves social, historical and cultural aspects. The key theme of Personality and Representation is examined through foreigners' behaviour and morality, Nationality through the cultural values of the different nations and how Russia compares them to its own, with Directors and Ideology through the degree of authorship, bias and political leaning. When analysing these key themes of Personality and Representation, Nationality, Directors and Ideology, as well as factors including race, music and mise-en-scène, it becomes progressively clear how interwoven they are. This cultural study's general argument is that the Stalinist period of films promoted a false reality and focused on influencing the audience's mindsets, while the post-Soviet films emphasised the negative side of reality after the release of pent-up demand for this, also appealing to raw human emotions and desires in a way reminiscent of Hollywood in order to boost viewing figures and profits, hence being influenced by the audience's existing mindsets.

Circus

Circus is a melodramatic comedy musical film directed by Grigori Aleksandrov, a prominent Soviet film director who was named a People's Artist of the USSR in 1947 and a Hero of Socialist Labour in 1973, as well as being awarded the Stalin Prizes for 1941 and 1950.[1] His distinguished career is a key reason for choosing this film, showing that he is a good representative of popular Soviet cinema and Stalinist society's culture. Furthermore, the film features Lyubov Orlova, the glamorous and immensely popular first recognised star of Soviet cinema. Orlova plays an American circus artist called Marion Dixon who gives birth to a black baby called Jimmy, as a result of which she experiences racism and is

[1] J. Leyda, Kino: A History of the Russian and Soviet Film, p. 12.

forced to stay in the circus. Despite this, she discovers happiness once in the Soviet Union, where she finds safety and love with the Soviet performance director Ivan Petrovich Martynov.

As the protagonist Marion is shown throughout to be innocent but oppressed, initially by the racist United States and then by her German manager Franz von Kneishitz. Her beautiful voice and looks as well as the actress' stardom prompt pity for this dancer as she acclimatises to the Soviet Union, whose people treat her better than the Americans and her German manager. In one significant scene when von Kneishitz tells her he loves her and wants to go to California with her, she says she wants to stay in Moscow. After saying to Marion that "they don't marry people like you" he starts to throw expensive clothes at her that he bought as presents, costing thousands of dollars, but she declares that the Marion he bought them for is no more. Jimmy then appears on screen and von Kneishitz asserts that she would not be forgiven for this past in Moscow, that her new love interest Ivan would despise her for it.

This scene demonstrates the purpose of Marion's character as a rare foreign protagonist in the Stalinist era, as well as why the film was produced. Marion exists to show Russians that the Soviet Union is a better place to live than the United States, that people do not need American consumerism in the form of expensive clothes to be happy in Moscow. Marion prefers the Soviet Union as it is friendlier and more accepting of people's diversity. After von Kneishitz leaves, Marion sings to Jimmy in a mixture of English and Russian, showing her integration into the Soviet Union. Jimmy is shown to be welcomed by hospitable Soviet people who are not racist unlike the Americans and von Kneishitz, with various representatives of Soviet ethnicities taking turns singing a lullaby to him at the end of the film. These are examples of music's influence in *Circus,* with the film containing several songs which instantly and probably intentionally became Soviet classics - the most famous is the patriotic "Song of the Motherland".[2]

[2] R. Manvell (ed.), Experiment in the Film, p. 169.

The cruel German manager von Kneishitz is a reflection of the Soviet Union's tense politics with Germany at the time, less than twenty years after World War One and five years before entering World War Two. He is clearly shown as the villain in the film and the Russian Ivan is the much more attractive love prospect. The story feeds in to the theme of differences in portrayals of foreigners according to nationality and race, with characters including a black child, a German manager and an American dancer. The contrast between the American racism and Soviet acceptance is instructive as an important trait of a Stalinist era film and the Russian-American rivalry, making it significant for the study.

Alexander Nevsky

Alexander Nevsky is a historical drama film directed by Sergei Eisenstein, known for his historical films including *Battleship Potemkin* from 1925. *Alexander Nevsky* was very popular, and Russia Beyond has described the Stalin Prize-winning film as one of the 10 best Russian war films.[3] The second part of his film *Ivan the Terrible* was only released in 1958 because Stalin disapproved of the content, who in 1947 wished him and his colleagues success after giving instructions before saying, "May god help them!". Significantly, while giving instructions to Eisenstein about the film in February 1947, one of Stalin's issues with the film was that "You have shown the oprichnina incorrectly… You have shown this oprichnina to be like the Ku-Klux-Klan." – with Eisenstein saying the Ku Klux Klan wear white cowls as opposed to the black ones they used.[4] This harks back to the theme of race as a differentiator in portrayals of foreigners.

The opinions of individuals such as Eisenstein and especially Stalin heavily influenced the depictions of ethnic groups in films, with Stalin more so than controversial individuals in the modern post-Soviet era could. This is one aspect of why the film is significant for the study and like *Circus* shows a desire to be seen as racially tolerant, as opposed to the United States. Another element of interest is that

[3] B. Egorov, *10 best Russian war movies*, Russia Beyond, https://www.rbth.com/arts/329058-10-best-russian-war-movies

[4] G. Maryamov, Kremlevskii Tsenzor, pp. 84-92.

Eisenstein exposed himself to the Western world prior to directing the 1936 *Alexander Nevsky*, touring Europe in 1928 with the cinematographer Eduard Tisse and his perennial film collaborator, none other than the *Circus* director Grigori Aleksandrov.[5] Whilst the official purpose of the trip was to learn about sound motion pictures and presenting the Soviet artists in person to the capitalist West, for Eisenstein it was also an opportunity to see landscapes and cultures outside the Soviet Union.[6] It can be inferred from this that Eisenstein was open-minded regarding foreign cultures, and would not necessarily be as biased to non-Soviets as a director who had never left the country.

The film, however, depicts the brutal attempted invasion of Novgorod in the 13th century by the German, or Teutonic Knights of the Holy Roman Empire and their defeat by Prince Alexander Nevsky, who faced similar crises to those anticipated in Soviet Russia. The traitorous mayor Tverdilo is shown to aid the invasion of Pskov, with its population massacred including women and children. At the turbulent time of the film's 1936 release, the traitor would act as a motivator for citizens to report anyone they suspected of treachery. This represents another difference between the Stalinist and post-Soviet periods, that formerly citizens would relay anything remotely suspicious they heard to the authorities, promoting a xenophobic culture not reflected in cinema. Russian cinema at this time was indeed not a reflection of reality.

The timing of the 1936 release as well as the Stalinist trend strongly suggests that it was produced to inspire patriotism. Political tensions were high with Germany and the German antagonists are portrayed as particularly villainous, similarly to *Circus* released in the same year. This suggests another cinematic motive of anti-German sentiment, which is discussed more in Chapters 1.1 and 2.2 among others. Nevsky rallies the people of Novgorod and in the decisive Battle of the Ice, they defeat the Teutonic knights in testament to the Russian courage inferably central to the film's objectives. The story ends in the retaken Pskov, where the soldiers are set free, the surviving Teutonic knights are to

[5] S. Eisenstein, *Que Viva Mexico!*, p. 8.
[6] *Ibid.*

be held for ransom and the traitor Tverdilo is swarmed over by the people. This shows what comes to invaders as well as traitors, who are effectively treated as synonymous with the former by becoming hostile strangers to their own people.

Brother 2

Brother 2 is a crime film directed by Aleksei Balabanov. Balabanov was a hugely controversial figure accused of Russophobia as well as Russian nationalism, the latter partially from *Brother 2*, as well as general misanthropy.[7] This makes Balabanov all the more important to study, as there was not much room for controversy in the Stalinist period, let alone for Russophobia - the blend of Russophobia and Russian nationalism in his work makes it more interesting that *Brother 2* seems more focused on the latter.

The background to this film's release in 2000 was the so-called "Wild 90s" where a sudden transition from socialism to capitalism caused economic upheaval and lots of confusion as people adjusted to their new reality. Previously inexpressible negativity was suddenly released in the arts but had started to settle by the turn of the century with a Russian reawakening of patriotism. *Brother 2*'s example of being a more nationalist post-Soviet film comes in the form of the protagonists' typical "Russianness" during a trip to the United States, where American racism and obsession with money are derided throughout. This film shows how the Russian-American rivalry transcends time and mocking American racism is not exclusive to the Stalinist period, even if the latter is not central to *Brother 2*'s story like in *Circus*.

The hero Danila is an army veteran, immediately alluding to the strength the Russian protagonist must show in the face of American opposition. The American businessman Richard Mennis and an African-American pimp gang are foreign antagonists, painting foreigners in a negative light according to both race and nationality. Danila and Mennis have a revealing conversation about power, Danila asking him

[7] BBC News, Russian cult film director Alexei Balabanov dies, https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-22584524, 18th May 2013.

if power comes from money whilst believing it lies in the truth. Mennis could be rich but not strong, as the money was stolen from someone else. This opens questions about whether Balabanov intended to relate this to the American Dream and the origins of American prosperity, as well as to rich Russian oligarchs moving to the West and where their wealth originated. This is juxtaposed with the Russian character Dasha's failed American Dream that forced her to become a prostitute. However, the apparent admission of an overall higher quality of life in the West sets the film apart from the Stalinist period.

Taras Bulba

Taras Bulba is a historical drama film directed by Vladimir Bortko and based on Nikolai Gogol's novel, specifically the 1842 edition which was considered to be more Russian.[8] Gogol's politics became more nationalistic over time like his protagonist Taras Bulba, who kills his son Andriy for running away with a Polish princess and betraying his people that were fighting the Poles.[9] The Poles are deliberately depicted as brutally violent and later burn Taras at the stake, thus suppressing the historical truth of Taras Bulba's army's own brutality. There even exists a more extreme and in many ways problematic point of view, that Andriy's fate warns of the dangers of betraying the Slavic brotherhood and turning West.[10] This compares to Tverdilo's betrayal in *Alexander Nevsky* by showing how traitors are treated like foreign invaders.

This film was significantly more controversial than *Brother 2,* as the film was partly financed by the Russian Ministry of Culture and has been criticised in Ukraine for being propaganda "resembling leaflets for Putin".[11] The context of the film's production therefore seems to be mired in promoting the political line sustained by Russian propaganda that Russia and Ukraine are one country against the West. This is made more pertinent by the fact that *Taras Bulba* was re-released to Russian cinemas in

[8] E. Barry, New York Times, *A Wild Cossack Rides Into a Cultural Battle*, 12th April 2009.
[9] *The Economist*, "Taras Bulba" and the tragedy of Russia and Ukraine, 5th February 2022.
[10] *Ibid.*
[11] E. Barry, New York Times, *A Wild Cossack…,* 12th April 2009.

April 2022 after the Russian invasion of Ukraine two months earlier. Furthermore, Bortko has stated that the movie aimed to show that "there is no separate Ukraine": “The Russians and Ukrainians are the same people… They cannot exist without us and we cannot without them. Gogol understood that well and always spoke of it.”[12] Indeed, Gogol was once asked whether he had a Russian or Ukrainian soul, and only after two months could reply that he did not know, for he would “grant primacy [to] neither… each of them in its own way includes… that which the other lacks - a clear sign that they are meant to complement each other.”[13]

This shows that Bortko politicised *Taras Bulba* by using it to present his view of Ukraine and Russia, fighting as one against Polish foreigners, aided by the fact that the Ukrainians speak Russian in the film despite Poles speaking Polish.[14] Bortko is also a Communist politician in Russia. Although this political career started after directing Taras Bulba, this corroborates the politicisation of the film, with Bortko having supported the Russian President Vladimir Putin’s position on Russian accession of Crimea by signing a letter in 2014.[15] Despite this, his 1991 film *Afghan Breakdown* criticised Soviet military activity, showing that he was not wholly sympathetic to the USSR despite his Communist affiliations.[16] These political aspects to Bortko’s personality as a director make *Taras Bulba* provide discussion points as well as comparative possibilities to the heavily politicised Soviet cinema of the Stalinist period.

The Cuckoo

The Cuckoo is a historical comedy drama film directed by Aleksandr Rogozhkin, a prolific director who won Best Director for this film at the 24th Moscow International Film Festival, as well as the Golden

[12] *Ibid.*
[13] S. Norris, Vladimir Bortko: Taras Bul’ba, *Kinokultura*, Issue 26, http://www.kinokultura.com/2009/26r-bulba-sn.shtml
[14] P. D’Anieri, Economic Interdependence in Ukrainian-Russian Relations, p. 22.
[15] Ministry for Culture of Russian Federation, *Cultural Figures of Russia – in support of the President’s position on Ukraine and Crimea,* 11th March 2014 https://archive.is/20140311194202/mkrf.ru/press-tsentr/novosti/ministerstvo/deyateli-kultury-rossii-v-podderzhku-pozitsii-prezidenta-po-ukraine-i-krymu
[16] A. Zayatc, *10 National Films with Foreign Stars*, Film.ru online magazine, 15th September 2014, https://www.film.ru/articles/gastarbaytery?page=6

Eagle Award for Best Picture.[17] The film takes place during the Second World War in September 1944, several days before Finland pulled out of the Continuation War it fought with Nazi Germany against the USSR. It focuses on the multi-faceted wartime relationship between a Soviet soldier and Finnish soldier, who are stranded at the farmhouse of a Sami woman called Anni. The Finnish soldier Veikko is a foreign protagonist, turned in by his compatriots for being a pacifist and a would-be deserter in their eyes, adding to the recurrent theme of betrayal in these films. The film further amplifies this with the Red Army captain Ivan being accused of anti-Soviet correspondence and arrested by secret police. A three-way relationship soon ensues between them and Anni at her farm where they stay together. Ultimately, Ivan is convinced that Veikko is a German soldier because of his uniform he was forced to wear. Because of their lack of ability to communicate, a misunderstanding then leads to Ivan shooting Veikko despite the war being over.

Veikko is an unusual foreign protagonist for Russian cinema in that he is given the positive traits that would in most cases be attributed to a Russian protagonist: courage, friendliness, attractiveness and morality. Instead the other main character Ivan is actually shown to be largely devoid of these, despite being Russian. This juxtaposition and clash of their personalities is shown throughout and is elaborated on in Chapter 2.1, but the two ultimately become friends at the end. This type of portrayal with the inferiority of the Russian to the Finn was enabled by the artistic freedom of the post-Soviet period; it would certainly not have been permitted under Stalinism.

After strict control of Russian characters' appearances compared to foreigners during the Soviet period, in the context it is fair to say that Rogozhkin took advantage of the new ability to depict Russians negatively. The film was well-received in Russia as well as abroad, as there was a great amount of dissatisfaction with the previous polished portrayal of reality and one-dimensional Russian characters. This negative portrayal of Ivan against the background of the positively portrayed enemy

[17] Moscow International Film Festival, *2002 Year*, https://web.archive.org/web/20130328141921/http://moscowfilmfestival.ru/miff34/eng/archives/?year=2002, 28th March 2013.

soldier was therefore not received with protest. The comedy element of the film would also have drawn attention away from this, with Rogozhkin having directed a series of other successful comedies. The presentation of the hostile Finnish-Soviet relations, clashing with the hospitality of Anni to both her guests, makes for an intriguing study of Soviet behaviour and culture towards a wartime enemy in a peacetime context.

Literature Review

In this chapter, five areas of research key to analysing foreigners' portrayal in Russian film are reviewed: History of Russian Film, Film Theory and Authorship, Cultural Studies, Russian Identity and studies on Russia vs Western Europe.

Overviewing key works on History of Russian Film is of critical importance in order to establish the social, political and production contexts within which the constructions of foreigners in Russian film need to be understood. Birgit Beumers makes a strong contribution with the analysis in *A Companion to Russian Cinema* (2016) and *Russia on Reels: The Russian Idea in Post-Soviet Cinema* (1999). In the former she focuses on five sets of studies – of films, periods, production mechanisms, cultural and historical contexts, and filmmakers in Russia and the Soviet Union; but rather than a comprehensive account of Russian cinema she focuses on different histories of it.[18] She also has to avoid an overarching chronological approach for this reason while presenting a topological overview of many aspects of Russian cinema, from pre-Revolutionary Russia, the Soviet era and the post-Soviet period. This overview is based on various concepts and movements, such as *Socialist Realism and Revolutionary Romanticism in Stalinist Musicals*, but without any dedicated section to foreign characters.[19] This chapter on socialist realism and Stalinist musicals analyses directors such as Grigori

[18] B. Beumers (ed.) A Companion to Russian Cinema, p. 1.
[19] *Ibid.*

Aleksandrov and socialist realism's aim in cinema to convince the audience that life could become as depicted on the screen.[20]

Seckler and Norris claim that the Hollywood-inspired Russian blockbuster era only started in the late 1990s.[21] They argue that the blockbuster concept only applies to the Soviet period in terms of film popularity being strengthened by genre conventions that convey a sense of familiarity and political stability, expanded on with analysis of these conventions in post-Soviet films.[22] Bezenkova and Leontyeva helpfully detail the early post-Soviet destruction of the economy of film production and a loss of audience trust in the works of filmmakers.[23] They also describe the recovery that followed later in the 1990s, while linking global and ideological tropes such as existentialism and nihilism to contemporary Russian cinema's pessimistic outlook on mankind.[24] This helps to show why post-Soviet films were made in the style that they were with their depiction of foreigners, also aiding the study's analysis of the motivations for making films and hence for certain foreigners' portrayals.

Beumers (1999) also discusses the economic transformation of the Russian film industry following the collapse of state-financed film studios and the crucialness of audience considerations for funding.[25] It is also particularly useful due to Kovalov's analysis of how the "Russian Idea" of Russian identity carried over from the Soviet era, its alleged "golden age" in cinema and beyond into the post-Soviet period of films,[26] where Taylor claims that "money, hunger and sex became the building blocks of art".[27] The analysis of the "Russian Idea" and whether Russian cinema can be distinguished from Soviet cinema is also very useful, stating that the "Russian Idea" is not the same as the "idea of the Russias".[28] This

[20] R. Taylor, The Stalinist Musical: Socialist Realism and Revolutionary Romanticism, in B. Beumers, A Companion, p. 142.
[21] *Ibid.*, pp. 202-203.
[22] *Ibid.*
[23] M. Bezenkova and X. Leontyeva, The Global and the National in Post-Soviet Russian Cinema, in B. Beumers, A Companion, p. 229.
[24] *Ibid.*
[25] B. Beumers (ed.), Russia on Reels: The Russian Idea in Post-Soviet Cinema, p. 2.
[26] R. Taylor, Now that the Party's Over: Soviet Cinema and Its Legacy., in B. Beumers, Russia on Reels, pp. 41-42.
[27] S. Selianov, Cinema and Life Speech, in B. Beumers, Russia on Reels, pp. 43-45.
[28] R. Taylor, Now that the Party's Over, in B. Beumers, Russia on Reels, pp. 41-42.

helps inform how Soviet cinema would be promoting Russian values through the "Russian Idea" and potentially using foreign characters on the screen to emphasise positive differences.

The subject of music in cinema was a respected aspect of the "high culture" film in the Stalinist period, particularly applicable in the sense of its associated Russian identity through the "Russian Idea" promoting patriotic lyrics and playing positive music for protagonists and negative music for antagonists, having the effect of prompting certain views of foreigners. The relevance of sound and music to film is best described by Lilya Kaganovsky's and Masha Salazkina's *Sound, Speech, Music in Soviet and Post-Soviet Cinema* (2014). They provide a detailed overview of every aspect of sound relevant to the study as well as clarifying that sound has received very little scholarly attention in any genre and period, except the Stalinist musicals by Grigori Aleksandrov and to a lesser degree Ivan Pyriev.[29] This shows how even non-extensive analysis of music's role in representation of foreigners is contributing to an unexplored avenue of research, as it has not been analysed much in general let alone its impact on foreigners' portrayal.

Bartig also usefully discusses the wide consensus among Soviet composers and musicologists that "venerable genres such as opera possessed expressive powers that should not be discarded", showing how pertinent music could be in stirring sentiment among the audience towards cinematic characters.[30] The views of the musicologist Alexander Ivashkin on creativity and political freedom in Russia being inversely proportional are also informative, as discussed by Tabachnikova (2019). She points out the significance to creativity of the new economic order as a result of the changes in Russian society and not only political freedom.[31] This viewpoint runs parallel with Selianov's that "now that things are fine in Russia there are no longer any great films", with money, hunger and sex being art's

[29] L. Kaganovsky and M. Salazkina (eds.), Sound, Speech, Music in Soviet and Post-Soviet Cinema, p. 2.
[30] K. Bartig, Kinomuzyka: Theorizing Soviet Film Music in the 1930s, in L. Kaganovsky and M. Salazkina, Sound, pp. 181-182.
[31] O. Tabachnikova, Russia and the West: Irrationalism in Music and Beyond.
Creative Thought of Alexander Ivashkin, Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research, Volume 368, p. 810.

new building blocks.[32] In turn, this informs the study on how Russia's societal landscape changed how art is created and hence how foreigners would be portrayed, no longer through the lens of hidden suffering behind the camera.

Loshitzky (2010) was useful for establishing cinematic parameters on genre in the study, with Connolly describing three evolving genres of immigration films: "Journeys of Hope" that are abroad, "In the Promised Land" at home and the second generation of immigrants, the latter being less prominent in the study due to fewer permanent immigrants in Russian film.[33] However, the first two genres' application to the study's films is a significant consideration as part of a collective means of identifying different trends in the films as according to the period and background context, despite Connolly defining these genres with reference to the modern age of mostly Western filmmaking. The "Journeys of Hope" are applied to foreign characters' nations being portrayed in the film with the desired depiction of Russians' perception of foreigners, whereas "In the Promised Land" applies to foreigners in Russia where their behaviour is different and overlaps with how the "author" wants to depict foreigners' perceptions of Russia. Summarily, Connolly outlines the parameters of foreign characters as guests and hosts.

This also brings into focus how Russian filmmaking and hence representation of characters may differ or be similar to Western trends, an aspect to be considered with regards to other analysed literature on Film Theory but not expanded on due to the study's focus on specifically Russian films. This shows why the analysis of specifically Russian films and these genres' prominence in them is important, opening a new avenue for potential further research into how they differ from Western portrayals of these immigrant genres. The prevalence of "Journeys of Hope" and "In the Promised Land" elements in films of both the Stalinist period and the post-Soviet period is testament to the accuracy of

[32] S. Selianov, Cinema and Life Speech, in B. Beumers, Russia on Reels, pp. 45-46.
[33] K. Connolly, Journeys of Hope to Fortress Europe: Cross-Border and Migratory Films, in Y. Loshitzky (ed.), Screening Strangers: Migration and Diaspora in Contemporary European Cinema, p. 15.

Connolly's analysis, but also underlines the importance of noting the differences or similarities between immigrant or traveller characters in the Stalinist period and the post-Soviet period.

Cultural Studies is a particularly important theoretical area of literature for this cultural film study on foreigners' portrayals, as it needs to be applied in the analysis of many cultural aspects of the Soviet Union and Russia in the Stalinist period and post-Soviet period, including those of nationalism and race. Anderson tackles the concept of 'nation', specifically three paradoxes and three traits, to explore its application to the Stalinist and post-Soviet periods and their depictions of foreigners. These three paradoxes are the objective modernity of nations to the historian's eye versus their subjective antiquity in nationalists' eyes, the formal universality of nationality as a socio-cultural concept and the 'political' power of nationalisms versus their philosophical poverty.[34] These paradoxes and the traits of the nation being imagined as limited to the nation itself, as sovereign and as a community are all vital considerations when analysing both periods of Russian film and the extent of nationalism's impact on representation.[35]

Gilroy's chapter on race is particularly useful for analysing the representation of race, where he argues that some political interests have constructed opportunistic connections in the name of ethnic purity and the related demand that unbridgeable cultural difference be identified and respected.[36] He also explains that consciousness of "race" was beginning to be seen as closely linked to the idea of nationality rather than biology, with conflict being most visible along cultural lines.[37] This point is important for the consideration of bias against not only ethnic minorities but foreign characters in general.

Further to this is Hall (1997) showing how any artist can paint a picture of a character or culture while the latter provides a strong model of representation of people who are "different" through three

[34] B. Anderson, Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism, pp. 254-256.
[35] *Ibid.*
[36] P. Gilroy, The Crisis of 'Race' and Raciology, in S. During (ed.), The Cultural Studies Reader, pp. 278-280.
[37] *Ibid.*

theoretical categories of approaches to representation: reflective, intentional and constructionist.[38] The application of these categories to the study's focused periods is outlined in the Methodology, but a key difference between the chapter on the "Other" and the study is that this chapter focuses almost exclusively on race, despite its findings and analysis being very much applicable to the representation of other foreigners in film. Both chapters do not relate to film but rather representation in general, so applying this model and analysis to foreigners' depictions in Russian film shows the uniqueness of the study's research. This is especially demonstrated with such elements as the binary extremes in depicting the "Other" as enemies and either hosts or guests depending on the period, or Hall's reflective, intentional and constructionist categories of approaches to representation. While Hall intimately explores these different approaches and the theoretical framework behind them, it is noted in this study how these approaches apply to the Stalinist and post-Soviet periods of Russian film, expanding on their differences according to period and the background context of the films.

Graham also presents an analysis of the construction of the "Other", particularly the American characters who are the most commonly depicted foreigners in non-war Russian films, with added detail on commercial aspects of post-Soviet filmmaking. He focuses on two forms of engagement with Americans in recent Russian film that are explored in the study: the use of American characters, settings and thematic references, and depictions of the influence of American and especially capitalist values on Russian society.[39] His claim that anti-American sentiment in Russia has found consistent expression in the post-Soviet period is corroborated in the study, which addresses the symbolism behind characters' motives and behaviour that Graham details in this chapter.[40] My research covers a large gap in Hutchings' tome, as he focuses almost entirely on post-war cinema and over half the book is dedicated to Russians' depiction abroad. However, it has wide-ranging chapters on construction of

[38] S. Hall, The Work of Representation, in S. Hall (ed.), Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices, p. 15.
[39] S. Graham, The New American Other in Post-Soviet Russian Cinema, in S. Hutchings (ed.), Russia and its Other(s) on Film: Screening Intercultural Dialogue, p. 96.
[40] *Ibid.*, pp. 102-103.

nation and the "Other" with the cultural background to cinematic depictions of foreigners, so its coverage of these concepts is invaluable to a film study of this cultural nature.

The important subject of national identity relates both to Russia vs Western Europe as the "far abroad" and less significantly the former Soviet republics as the "close abroad". This requires Hughes and Sasse as well as Neumann to provide key knowledge and a background context to the development of foreign relations with Western European countries. Hughes and Sasse discuss the so-called "institutionalised multinationality" legacy of the Soviet Union after its fall and the causation of post-Soviet conflicts, informing the study's need to focus on the "far abroad" rather than "close abroad" due to the huge separate debate involved with the latter.[41]

However, Neumann's analysis of the debate between Slavophiles and Westernisers is particularly informative and useful in pursuing the debate's history from the 1840s going into the twentieth century and beyond. He explains how Romantic nationalists gathered under the "Slavophilism" banner while those who looked to Europe for political and economic models became known as "Westernisers".[42] This wide-ranging debate is key to consider for the post-Soviet period when Westerniser ideology became socially acceptable again and is the study's focus for post-Soviet national identity rather than the "close abroad" against the "far abroad". This study's contribution to the Westerniser and Slavophile debate is significant due to limited research into it among post-Soviet directors.

Gillespie provides an even more useful tool for analysing Russian identity specifically in filmmaking due to his explanation of how socialist realism was the only acceptable artistic method in Soviet culture for decades and how nationalism filled the post-Soviet gap left by the collapse of ideology.[43] The importance of socialist realism to understanding foreigners' portrayals in Stalinist films is crucial

[41] J. Hughes and G. Sasse, Ethnicity and Territory in the Former Soviet Union, p. 3.
[42] I. Neumann, Russia and the Idea of Europe, p. 28.
[43] David Gillespie, Identity and the Past in Recent Russian Cinema, in W. Everett (ed.), European Identity in Cinema, p. 59.

– artists were required to show how all conflicts can be resolved with the aid of the Party and this was especially enforced under Stalin.[44] Gillespie helps the study explain how, with the release of pent-up shelved films previously deemed unsuitable and new creative freedoms, the opposite of socialist realism happened in the post-Soviet period with a focus on the negativity of real life that could never be shown before.[45]

Articles from newspapers and journals such as *The Slavic Review* and *The Russian Review* are also particularly useful, including one by Richard Taylor, which provides an overview of illusionism and cinematic culture in *Circus*. His concept of "revolutionary Romanticism", where the state creates a new Soviet man who accepts Stalinist reality, ties in with analysis of the "Russian Idea" which is expanded on thoroughly.[46]

The aforementioned books and articles provide a variety of ideological analysis and views whilst focusing on many different research areas of Russian film. However, a comparative study of how foreigners are portrayed in Russian film in the Stalinist and post-Soviet periods, with reference to film case studies, is a unique research task that previous literature has only covered individual elements of at a time. My research is important because little scholarly attention has been paid to how foreigners are portrayed in Russian film, with the analysis of foreign characters in the Stalinist period and post-Soviet period offering the most contrast and a unique study into Russian cinema. By considering History of Russian Film, Film Theory and Authorship, Cultural Studies, Russian Identity and studies on Russia vs Western Europe, this study encompasses multiple research topics to achieve an explanation of how foreigners are portrayed in Russian film for these periods.

[44] *Ibid.*
[45] *Ibid.*
[46] R. Taylor, The Illusion of Happiness and the Happiness of Illusion: Grigorii Aleksandrov's The Circus, The Slavonic and East European Review, Vol. 74, No. 4, pp. 601-602.

Methodology

The methodology is based on the overarching research question “How are foreigners portrayed in Russian Film in the Stalinist period 1924-53 and the post-Soviet period 1991-present day?”. I selected five films for the cultural study, two from the Stalinist period and three from the post-Soviet period. I primarily researched the social, cultural, political and economic contexts of their production, also formally analysing the films, paying attention to narrative, music and mise-en-scène. As this is a cultural study, I focused on cultural concepts and research as opposed to a film study dedicated to film theory and authorship. I analysed the films thematically by drawing on theoretical concepts including cultural studies approaches to construction of the foreigner, race, mythology, authorship and ideas of Russian nationalism. I then compared the films looking for patterns of foreigners’ representation through their speech and behaviour, including that as opposed to their Russian counterparts, seeing if these patterns repeated or differed across the periods.

To analyse the films, I watched them once for the story, then again for the themes, identifying key scenes for further investigation. I compared images of Russians and foreigners for key cultural aspects like narrative character constructions and music, as well as lighting and costume. I applied theories using these methods as discussed in this chapter, including Hall’s Representation, Barthes’ Mythology and Bakhtin’s Dialogical Theory. The patterns identified included generally negative portrayals of foreigners in the Stalinist period and especially as compared to Russians, while the post-Soviet period had mixed portrayals of foreigners and humanised them more than in the Stalinist period. American and German characters were particularly negatively portrayed as a general trend. I related these patterns to the context of the film’s production and the issues discussed by authors.

My selection of these periods is in recognition of the restriction that the study would need to be far longer to sufficiently encompass all the periods of Russian cinema. These two periods show the largest amount of contrast out of the cinematic periods, the former symbolising a total lack of freedom with the latter contrarily symbolising a total removal of any restrictions and control, a total freedom.

Therefore, for a concise and focused approach it makes most sense to compare and contrast these polar opposite extremes as two sides of the same coin. The repressed Stalinist cinema and the newly liberated post-Soviet cinema individually also have many points of analysis to explore about foreigners' portrayal. As such, I choose to focus specifically on the case studies of five films: *Circus* from 1936 and *Alexander Nevsky* from 1938 as the Stalinist films, while *Brother 2* from 2000, *The Cuckoo* from 2002 and *Taras Bulba* from 2009 are the focused films of the post-Soviet period. These films are excellent representatives of their periods because of their accomplished directors, large audiences and focus on foreign characters. Not analysing too many in full allows for better analysis of the existing topics and characters and discussion of the background context for nationality, the directors and music used in the films.

The methodology behind this research involves finding clear examples in the characterisation, music and relationships between characters in these films that demonstrate the directors' and Stalin's aims behind the making of them as well as the aims and influences for a certain portrayal of the foreign characters. They are paradigmatic of their periods because the Stalinist films show how the content could not diverge from promoting the Soviet state and portraying the false reality of flawless Russian characters, who fight for their nation when threatened but are also fully welcoming to foreign guests of all different ethnicities.

It is indeed clear that in generalised terms, foreign characters are portrayed binarily as either heroes or villains. This is especially the case in the Stalinist period with the hero being someone who recognises the Soviet Union as better and villains being either enemies of the state or morally bankrupt characters, but also in the post-Soviet period with heroes being humanised and ethically admirable characters, while villains are also enemies of the state or lacking morality. This further extends into the classification of Stalinist period foreigners as either enemies or guests, with enemies being enemies of the state or immoral visitors while guests are visitors to the Soviet Union that admire it and are more morally astute. Regarding the post-Soviet period foreigners, the classifications are

instead enemies and hosts. The enemies are enemies of the state or morally bankrupt characters in another country, while the hosts are also in another country but much more positively receptive of Russian visitors and have stronger humanised ethics.

Stuart Hall's theory of representation of the Other is key to understanding this binary aspect and applying it to the study. He explains how people who differ from the majority are often represented binarily through extremes, differentiating "them" from "us".[47] This binary aspect of "otherness" is expanded on in Chapter 1.3, along with Bakhtin's dialogical theory that meaning is produced through dialogue and difference rather than belonging to an individual.[48] With difference being explained through dialogue, the study elaborates on how foreigners are better understood in the post-Soviet period where this dialogue is not constrained by the false Stalinist "socialist realism".

The research also draws on Roland Barthes' theory of mythology, where reality is emptied of history and filled with nature.[49] Barthes' left-wing and Stalinist myth help explain this socialist realism and Chapter 1.3 discusses how myth impacts on both Stalinist and post-Soviet films' representation of foreigners. It also develops Barthes' argument that an image's meaning can be "fixed" through a caption by applying this to films "fixing" the characterisation of a foreigner.[50]

It is necessary to state that the researcher's position on the authorship debate is that meaning can be produced in a variety of ways depending on the film and the period. The individual such as the director and screenplay writer has more of an impact in the post-Soviet period where there is far more cultural freedom, but in both periods the wider socio-political background has a great influence. In the Stalinist period this was because of political pressure to meet Stalin's desired image of socialist realism, whereas in the post-Soviet period it was due to financial incentives for a larger audience making directors appeal to the existing cultural context and ideological aspects.

[47] S. Hall, The Spectacle of the "Other", in S. Hall (ed.), Representation, p. 229.
[48] M. Bakhtin, The Dialogic Imagination, pp. 293-94.
[49] R. Barthes, Mythologies, p. 142.
[50] S. Hall, The Spectacle of the "Other", in S. Hall (ed.), Representation, p. 228.

It is clear that as Barry Grant has said, a critic cannot assume that the director's contribution is "automatically of major significance",[51] with Paul Sellors correct in saying that writers often have no control over the interpretation of their story.[52] This is not to say that the director and writer never have an important role at all. In many cases it is evident that Sellors' collaborative theory prevails where common authorship comes from group intentionality moving towards a common goal, with the intention behind the communication of the media not being exclusive to a single person.[53] Sellors believes that an intentional party will exert control in a production, with control therefore being implied in authorship's definition without the need to be explicitly stated; however, he concedes an inability to add mechanisms to evaluate the extent of lost control.[54]

The researcher's belief is that while this cannot be distinctly measured, the reason for lost control is the background cultural and political context providing meaning. This was either blatantly doctored in the Stalinist period or appealed more to the existing mindsets of the audience in the post-Soviet period due to a Hollywood-type focus on entertainment. Some directors had a notable impact on stylistic elements, with an element of proto-auteurism evident with Eisenstein despite lacking auteurism's later polemic thrust.[55] However, Stalin's strong influence on films made during his time in power is testament to there being greater control attached to the writer than the director. Nor is writer theory the dominant case, as directors can always influence an interpretation even if only subtly in the Stalinist period. More potential certainly arises for collaborative authorship and directorial influence in the post-Soviet period, where the director becomes the one with the final say on how a film is filmed and having more influence on any subliminal messaging. The question of who provides meaning to a film therefore depends on the film and the time period. The study follows Stephen Crofts'

[51] B. Grant, Auteurs and Authorship: A Film Reader, p. 11.
[52] P. Sellors, Collective Authorship in Film, The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, Vol. 65, Issue 3, p. 266.
[53] *Ibid*., p. 268.
[54] *Ibid.*, p. 266.
[55] S. Crofts, Authorship and Hollywood, in J. Hill and P. Gibson (eds.), The Oxford Guide to Film Studies, p. 312.

determination that the author, the text and the reading must be seen as historically and culturally shaped.[56]

This also emphasises the importance of the classification of post-Soviet directors as Westernisers or Slavophiles, which influences how nationalistic the film appears to be and how differently countries and foreigners are portrayed. These two schools of thought can be traced to the Slavophile Danilevskiy publishing his famous work on Russia and Europe in 1869, after Peter the Great initiated the drastic turn towards Westernisation in the 18th century and Chaadaev wrote eight philosophical letters between 1826-1831 criticising the lag behind Western civilisation. These were the major catalysts but both schools mutated a lot, resulting in contemporary Russia, where Westernisers can now be viewed as economically, politically or culturally liberal as against economically, politically or culturally conservative Slavophiles.[57] The fact that the "Westerniser" school of thought was completely stifled in the Soviet period and especially so during the Stalinist period meant that the repressed feelings were explosively released in the 1990s. Post-Soviet period directors at last had an opportunity to depict foreigners and foreign countries in the way they wanted to, as well as Russian characters.

As a part of the Cultural Studies research, it is vital to explore forms of cultural analysis such as construction of the nation and construction of other nationalities and ethnicities, as these are the most closely related to the study. Central to this is Hall's categorised theory on representation, three theoretical categories where language is concerned: reflective, where language simply reflects a meaning which already exists out there in the world of objects, people and events; intentional, where language expresses only what the speaker or writer or painter wants to say, his or her personally intended meaning; and constructionist, where meaning is constructed in and through language.[58] I have applied Hall's model to the study and its films because these categories are not limited to language but apply to representation in general.

[56] *Ibid.*, p. 322.
[57] O. Tabachnikova, A Culture of Discontinuity? Russian Cultural Debates in Historical Perspective, in press.
[58] S. Hall, The Work of Representation, in S. Hall (ed.), Representation, p. 15.

The reflective approach is very applicable to the commercialised post-Soviet films, where they try to appeal to the viewers' existing mindsets and thus receive their custom and high ratings. In the Stalinist period the intentional approach is vastly more evident however, as the state imposes particular messages and meaning onto its people through the films. With the prevalence of "high society" promoting the artistic intelligentsia in the Stalinist period and the mark of status associated with being cultured, the constructionist element was also far more prevalent than in the post-Soviet period, as much importance was attached to the meaning and messaging. Films were designed to intellectually stimulate the audience rather than appeal to raw and "rough" human desires.[59]

The theory used to inform the construction of the nation indeed centres on the prevalence of this constructionist element, with state support of films being the most common way to create and preserve a national cinema culture and hence a national identity.[60] The methods used to analyse this prevalence hence depend on analysing the extent of state support. Although the post-Soviet era no longer financed, produced, distributed and promoted films in an abrupt transformation to a market-based industry, the nationalising potential of cinema was still recognised by both filmmakers and the government.[61] The distinction between the reflective, intentional and constructionist categories of representation and their reflection in the two periods is therefore key to how the analysis of foreign characters is conducted.

Another important aspect of film theory is the three evolving genres of films about immigration as described by Kate Connolly: the so-called "Journeys of Hope" and "In the Promised Land" genres with the third dealing with the second generation and beyond.[62] The task of the genre theorist is to construct a model revealing the relationship between differing critical claims and their function within a broader cultural context.[63] As such, it is important to note how these genres relate to both the

[59] Slavic Review Vol. 35, No. 2, p. 222.
[60] T. Elsaesser, New German Cinema: A History, p. 3.
[61] J. Van Gorp, Inverting film policy: film as nation builder in post-Soviet Russia, 1991-2005, Media, Culture & Society, Vol. 33, Issue 2, pp. 248-249.
[62] K. Connolly, Journeys of Hope, in Y. Loshitzky (ed.), Screening Strangers, p. 15.
[63] R. Altman, A Semantic/Syntactic Approach To Film Genre, in Cinema Journal 23, No. 3, p. 6.

Stalinist and post-Soviet periods, with the distinction between the "Journey of Hope" abroad and the "In the Promised Land" at home particularly significant when analysing the portrayal of foreign characters.

Bakhtin's model of *poshlost* also relates to these genres by "[transforming] things that defy every trait of eternity into eternal", denying any historical change.[64] In this idyll the subject is represented as connected both with other subjects and with nature, which also draws on Barthes' theory of mythology.[65] However, with the provincial chronotope, or the Chekhovian subject, the subject contrastingly feels alien to his or her surroundings and wishes to escape from them.[66] This theory is used to apply the idyll and the provincial chronotope to Russian films involving immigration or travelling, with the *poshlost* model applying more broadly to Stalinism.

To analyse race and its role in Russian films' portrayals of foreigners, Richard Dyer's theory of the invisibility of whiteness is used to methodise analysis of how much attention is brought to the fact that the foreign character is black. He uses Hazel Carby's view that we should consider whiteness as well as blackness, "the (white) point in space from which we tend to identify difference".[67] Dyer's theory is that because whites are everywhere in representation, they are not represented as whites but just the human race.[68] This is certainly reflected in Russian films from both periods and the rarity of black characters means they are more easily categorised with stereotypes; the extent of this invisibility of whiteness is therefore a significant analytical tool in the study.

The analysis of the stereotype is further informed by Eugene Wong's interpretation, as described by Robyn Wiegman. Wong sees the stereotype as a form of representation that produces non-white cultures and characters as static and one-dimensional, making acting less performatively complex and

[64] L. Steinby & T. Klapuri (eds.), Bakhtin, pp. 130-134.
[65] *Ibid.*
[66] *Ibid.*
[67] H. Carby, The Multicultural Wars, in G. Dent (ed.) Black Popular Culture, in R. Dyer, The Matter of Whiteness, in P. Rothenberg, White Privilege: Essential Readings on the other Side of Racism, p. 11
[68] *Ibid.*

more about the cliché than emotional range.[69] Wong's analysis of the stereotype ties in with Hall's theory on the binary aspect of representing the Other, so this informs that black characters should be analysed according to how a binary or one-dimensional aspect forms a stereotype.

Studying film theory on the representation of nationality and race will help to conceptualise how foreigners are reflected in Russian cinema and show the relevance of Western approaches to this film theory and foreigners' portrayals. By broaching these topics in separate sections whilst cross-referencing where relevant, I will provide a fully balanced account of factors in the portrayal of foreigners in Russian films from the Stalinist and post-Soviet periods, reflecting each section's importance.

Chapter 1: Character, Personality and Representation

1.1. *Variety of Personalities*

There is a broad spectrum of personalities among foreign characters, particularly between periods; as such, the extent of each period's variety as well as the variety in individual films would be a significant point of comparison. Aleksei Balabanov's 2000 comedy, *Brother 2* is a film where a diverse set of foreign personalities can be identified. An American trucker drives the hero when the latter is sold a faulty car by a Jewish man upon arrival in the USA, shows him aspects of American life and is very friendly. In the same film, however, there is a theme of American obsession with money and whether money means power. Scenes with the main antagonist focus on this and juxtapose the trucker's friendly American vibe with the negative aspects of taking the American Dream too seriously and becoming obsessed with money. Beumers' reflection on the identity crisis confronting the post-Soviet Russian film industry suggests that these multifaceted foreign characters resulted from a painful transition from a closed, state-subsidised market to a "free" one in principle.[70] This shaped the story

[69] R. Wiegman, Race, ethnicity, and film, in J. Hill and P. Gibson (eds.), Oxford Guide, p. 161.
[70] S. Larsen, National Identity, Cultural Authority, and the Post-Soviet Blockbuster: Nikita Mikhalkov and Aleksei Balabanov, Slavic Review, Vol. 62, No. 3, p. 492.

lines, aesthetic choices, and marketing strategies of Balabanov and Nikita Mikhalkov, the two most commercially successful directors of the post-Soviet decade.[71]

In the 1938 historical drama *Alexander Nevsky*, the variation of characters' portrayals by film and period is clear as Nevsky is fighting against the Germans, who are shown as unsparing enemies that even kill children. The widely researched historical context is key to consider for this point and illuminates how much the period in question can influence foreigners' portrayal in Russian cinema. An example of this is *Alexander Nevsky* being ordered and supported by Stalin, drawing attention to the pressing Mongol concern being overridden by the German one.[72] Nevsky says in one of the film's key lines, "There is an enemy more dangerous than the Tatar... Closer, more vicious. One you can't buy off by paying tribute – the German." The point is emphasised by these invaders wearing helmets intended to closely resemble those of the German army.[73]

In the instance of these two films, the obvious nature of the Germans' portrayal in *Alexander Nevsky* against the philosophical conversations about American power and money in *Brother 2* serves as a good example of how subtlety has been used more since 1991 as a tool for a negative idea or message. In the Stalinist period a more straightforward approach could often be expected, such as the Germans mounting Pskov's women and children on pikes, or the German manager von Kneishitz in *Circus* blackmailing the dancer Marion Dixon to leave Moscow. As Tabachnikova put it: "The Russian attitude to foreigners, which Russian culture reflects, has been traditionally ambiguous, often hostile, and almost invariably condescending."[74]

This hostility is evidently reflected in Russian film, particularly in the Stalinist period. The post-Soviet period leans closer to being "almost invariably condescending" such as with the attitude to American

[71] *Ibid*.
[72] J. Wertsch, National narratives and the conservative nature of collective memory, *Neohelicon*, Vol. 32, Issue 2, p. 26.
[73] *Ibid.*
[74] O. Tabachnikova, Russia and the West: Foreign opinions of Russian culture through the Russian eyes, in *Russian Heritage in the Contemporary World*, p. 152.

life and peculiarities in *Brother 2*. Tabachnikova goes on to say that "easily the most dominant and lasting paradigm is the perception of foreigners as barbarians, full of malicious mockery and arrogance, and capable of a sacrilegious attitude to Russian national sanctities".[75] This is also seen in Stalinist films such as *Alexander Nevsky*, showing the barbarity of the German knights during their invasion. In post-Soviet films there is more balance; some characters in *Brother 2* display this arrogance such as the American kingpin Richard Mennis, while others such as the American trucker Ben Johnson are welcoming and show no arrogance.

This is also reflected in mise-en-scène, with the lighting showing Mennis' face in shadow with a well-lit baggy creased shirt during his conversation with Danila while the latter glows beside the window, whereas Johnson has similar lighting and casual clothing to Danila throughout. However, in the Stalinist period the mise-en-scène shows most foreigners such as von Kneishitz and the German knights with a shadowed face and baggy clothes, or helmets and capes in the knights' case, while the Russian protagonists wear slim-fitting clothes and armour. Not showing the knights' faces portrays a menacing lack of humanity.

Another important character trait seen in Russian cinema including the study's films is treachery. This applies more to the Russian characters than the foreign ones, but achieves a dual effect of the audience viewing negatively both the traitor to Russian values and the opponent that the traitor is helping, usually a foreigner in these films' cases. The influences that these betrayals have on the films' development often overlap across the films, a good comparative example being *Alexander Nevsky* from the Stalinist period and Vladimir Bortko's *Taras Bulba* from the post-Soviet period. In the former, the mayor Tverdilo of Pskov gives the city away to the invading Teutonic Knights, allowing them to slaughter the population and culminating in the people swarming him at the end of the film, supposedly butchering him. In *Taras Bulba,* on the other hand, the protagonist's own son Andriy betrays him and his people for his Polish love, while the two factions are fighting each other. During

[75] *Ibid.*, p. 153.

one of the final battles, *Taras Bulba* finds his son and after accusing Andriy of betraying his Motherland as well as him, he dramatically says “I gave you life, I will take it” before killing him.

In both films the traitor faces brutal recompense for his actions, despite high status, and it is shown how costly betrayal is both to one’s people and his own life. Both traitors are also juxtaposed with the heroic protagonist who has no problem endangering and sacrificing himself for his people, in Bulba’s case feeling a greater duty of care to his people and Motherland than to even his own family. He is presented as the ideal war-time folk hero, who stops at nothing to do what is right by his country and is respected by everyone.

This portrayal of Bulba is reminiscent of many Russian films which often glorify the main protagonist as much as possible, particularly the Stalinist period with legends such as Alexander Nevsky and Peter the Great memorialised in film. *Taras Bulba* also taps into what the audience interprets Russian identity as, because Ukrainian characters speak Russian rather than Ukrainian, while the director himself has made clear that the movie aimed to show that "there is no separate Ukraine… The Russians and Ukrainians are the same people…”[76] These characters with Bulba in particular, also appear to embody the traditional image of a courageous Russian partisan, promoting the close alignment between Russian and Ukrainian heritage.

1.2. *Meaning of a Foreigner?*

This leads to the question of what a foreigner actually means, as there can be multiple interpretations. After the fall of the Soviet Union, Russia found itself on its own, with lots of bordering nations and is on the mainland; as such it could be said to view foreign countries as the “close abroad” or “far abroad”. The “close abroad” has more meaning in the post-Soviet era than in the Soviet Union, as the latter mostly encompassed this “close abroad” of Eastern Europe. The “far abroad” is more relating to Western Europe, the United States and others. It has been argued that it was inevitable the Soviet

[76] E. Barry, New York Times, A Wild Cossack Rides Into a Cultural Battle, 12th April 2009.

Union's fall would refocus attention on the institutional dimension of the Soviet settlement of the nationalities question, due to the combination of control and quasi-federal institutional constraints that had managed historical antagonisms in the Soviet Union.[77] It is therefore important that when considering the meaning of a foreigner, one ought to look at historic interpretations and how they may have evolved.

In Scripture there are two expressions for the "stranger"; one is "the real stranger who is only temporarily in the country; the foreigner who has not given up his original home".[78] This expression is defined in Solomon's prayer (1 Kings 8:41-43): "Moreover concerning the stranger that is not of Thy people Israel, when he shall come out of a far country for Thy name's sake… Hear Thou… that all the peoples of the earth may know Thy name."[79] With religious reference, this is a positive view of the foreigner's character; he has performed the noble action of travelling from afar, his native country with his faith in mind. This alludes also to his attachment to his country of origin, as he is making a sacrifice to "come out of a far country for Thy name's sake", which relates to "the foreigner who has not given up his original home". In the other Scripture expression, the "stranger" has also travelled a long way but the connection to his former country has been severed, leading him to aim for joining the new community; the alternative expression follows that the "stranger" makes to retain his former status both politically and socially.[80]

The former expression could relate to a minor character in *Circus*; at the end of the film, a lullaby is sung and "peoples of the earth" from multiple ethnicities join in including a black person singing in Russian. The audience are not informed of his background but the highly unusual case would point to him learning Russian as part of seeking to join a new community, with integration being a key theme of the film that centres on an American dancer and her black child in the USSR. Indeed, the dancer Marion Dixon herself could initially be seen through the first expression if the religious context is

[77] J. Hughes and G. Sasse, Ethnicity and Territory in the Former Soviet Union, p. 3.
[78] M. Guttmann, The Term "Foreigner" Historically Considered, Hebrew Union College Annual, Vol. 3, p. 1.
[79] *Ibid.*
[80] *Ibid.*

removed. When she initially gives birth she experiences racism but wants to remain in the USSR for the Soviet engineer she falls in love with, in this case “Thy name’s sake” for whom she “comes out of a far country” since her German manager blackmails her to leave Moscow. By the end, however, when she and her black son have been embraced by local Soviets, she could feasibly have switched to the other expression’s position of someone embracing the community. These historical meanings of a foreigner are therefore applicable also to modern history, and specifically the films in this study where the backgrounds of characters fit the analogies.

In line with the meaning of a foreigner is the impression of one to local citizens. An experimental study of the process that is called "the formation of first impression” drew the general hypothesis that “if objects that are alike in all respects save one are considered together, their difference in this one respect will be more critical in the impression one forms of the objects”.[81] The study found that three identical triplets, whose difference is only the colour of the tie they are wearing, will be seen and interpreted more in terms of their tie-wearing habits than would be the case if each one were encountered on their own and without the possibility of a simultaneous comparison.[82] Most significantly, they formed an extension to the hypothesis that “if in forming impressions of foreigners and compatriots one is thinking in a comparative context, with the different nationalities in mind while forming one's impression, then the degree to which nationality will influence the impressions formed will be increased”.[83]

The significance of this is in that foreigners who may act a certain way are judged for it in relation to their nationality rather than themselves as a person, when in direct comparison with a fellow citizen. The hypothesis would hold that if we were unaware of the foreigner’s foreign nationality, then views would be unaffected by this innate biased thinking. The name itself of the process that forms the basis

[81] J. Bruner and H. Perlmutter, Compatriot and foreigner: A study of impression formation in three countries, The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, Vol. 55, Issue 2, p. 253.
[82] *Ibid.*
[83] *Ibid.*

of the study, “the formation of first impression”, is particularly relevant to a study on foreigners in film, as the audience is inherently judging characters based on first impressions.

Furthermore, this is appropriate to most of the foreigners in my study’s films as they are interacting with Russians, such as in *Brother 2,* where construable negative stereotyping is used to portray black people in a violent prostitution gang and as homeless people. By the study’s hypothesis, the audience makes associations based on foreignness as they are aggressive towards the Russian hero, later fighting him. The experimental study’s hypothesis is also significant to the case of *Taras Bulba*; the aforementioned similarities between Bulba and Russian folk heroes, as well as the Ukrainians speaking Russian, imply a lack of differences between the two nationalities. Going by the hypothesis, their actions are therefore judged differently by the audience to those of a more perceived foreigner, when compared to a Russian. This also ties in with claims that the director Bortko politicised the film to present his view of the Ukraine-Russia relationship.[84]

Perlmutter points out in relation to this that there are a number of studies of national stereotypes, which provide interesting summaries of traits that different individuals agree typify nationalities such as Germans, English and Russians.[85] However, it is difficult to establish the extent of significance these characterisations hold for each individual. If a term used is as unclear as the “typical German” or the “typical Italian,” it could be expected that the individual’s projective mechanisms have influenced the image formed.[86]

Furthermore, Perlmutter claims “the image of the foreigner under some conditions mirrors the image of the self”.[87] This notion is especially interesting, as it could be inferred that people reflect their own insecurities about themselves onto their perception of foreigners. On the other hand, Perlmutter himself conducted an experiment based on “trait summaries” of nationalities and upheld his two

[84] E. Barry, New York Times, A Wild Cossack.
[85] H. Perlmutter, Relations Between the Self-Image, the Image
of the Foreigner, and the Desire to Live Abroad, The Journal of Psychology, Vol. 38, Issue 1, pp. 131-137.
[86] *Ibid.*
[87] *Ibid.*

hypotheses that firstly, the greater the relative desire to live in a foreign country, the more likely that the image of the "typical member" of that country will correspond to the individual's self-image.[88] This is based on the notion that individuals tend to prefer contact with those who are similar in most respects.[89] Secondly, the greater the relative desire to live in a foreign country, the more likely that the image of the "typical member" of that country will correspond to the individual's ideal-self-image, based on the notion that people tend to prefer contact with individuals they admire.[90]

The experiment is relevant in that Russians would see the afore-mentioned "close abroad" and "far abroad" foreigners differently. However, it is likely that Russians would prefer to live in a "far abroad" foreign country than "close abroad" during the Stalinist period, as a similar thing to them was a prison. Despite this, it stands to reason that in post-Soviet Russia this attitude to living in a "close abroad" country as opposed to "far abroad" would have changed significantly, due to the switch to capitalism and the otherworldly freedom enjoyed by citizens compared to the Stalinist days. Going by the study, the greater the relative desire to live in a foreign country, the more likely that the image of the "typical member" of that country will correspond to the individual's ideal-self-image.

The capitalism that Russia had switched to in the post-Soviet period can be said to correspond more to the individual's ideal-self-image than the communist reality. The individual has material ambitions that are seldom realised in the nature of communist society. While the Iron Curtain existed Russians could only look at Western capitalism as forbidden fruit; surely all the sweeter because of the authorities' determination to restrict travel and not show them what it was really like. The reality of capitalism is of course not as it may have seemed to Russians starved of outside information, since only few are able to reap its best benefits. As a result, Russians may not have been as envious of the West in the post-Soviet period; they discovered in grave circumstances what the worst of capitalism

[88] *Ibid.*
[89] *Ibid.*
[90] *Ibid.*

can bring during the "Wild 90s" with its "wild capitalism". Hence, the study is more applicable to Russians' views of foreigners in the post-Soviet period as opposed to those in the Stalinist period.

1.3. *Theories of Representation*

As discussed in the Methodology, it is clear that the films' foreigners are generally portrayed binarily as either heroes or villains. The heroes are more specifically guests in the Stalinist period or hosts in the post-Soviet period. In the Stalinist period *Circus*'s Marion is the hero who recognises the Soviet Union as better and the villains are *Alexander Nevsky*'s German knights as enemies of the state or *Circus*'s morally bankrupt German von Kneishitz. In the post-Soviet period heroes such as *The Cuckoo*'s Veikko and *Brother 2*'s American trucker are humanised and ethically admirable characters, while villains are also enemies of the state such as *Taras Bulba*'s Polish army or lacking morality such as *Brother 2*'s Mennis.

Hall's theory of representation of the Other is key to understanding and applying this binary aspect: "People who are in any way significantly different from the majority - 'them' rather than 'us' - are frequently exposed to this binary form of representation [and] seem to be represented through sharply opposed, polarized, binary extremes".[91] It is therefore understandable why these tropes of representation would be more pronounced in the Stalinist period when foreigners were almost an alien concept to a closed-off society, with very significant differences retained between Russians and foreigners in the post-Soviet period. However, it is also notable in the post-Soviet period how Western culture and characters are portrayed so differently to Russian counterparts, so this binary aspect of "otherness" is a lens for analysing the differences between foreign characters as well as their differences with Russian characters, helping to demonstrate foreigners' actual portrayals.

Hall indeed presents the argument that "we need 'difference' because we can only construct meaning through a dialogue with the 'Other'", with Mikhail Bakhtin, a Russian linguist and critic who ran into

[91] S. Hall, The Spectacle of the "Other", in S. Hall (ed.), Representation, p. 229.

trouble with the Stalinist regime in the 1940s, arguing that meaning does not belong to any one speaker but arises in the give-and-take between different speakers.[92] Bakhtin's dialogical theory informs how authorship can dictate the portrayal of foreigners, in this specific case through language but also in a general sense: "The word in language is half someone else's. It becomes 'one's own' only when the speaker appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic expressive intention. Prior to this, the word does not exist in a neutral or impersonal language, rather it exists in other people's mouths, serving other people's intentions: it is from there that one must take the word and make it one's own".[93]

As Steinby and Klapuri explain, the "Other" is not primarily the object of our objectifying gaze for Bakhtin, but a co-subject: one to whom we listen when they speak, whom we speak to.[94] We hence do not recognise the other's human dignity and our moral obligation to them in an abstract way; we are involved in a real encounter with the other person in terms of their own self-understanding and understanding of the world, as expressed through their words and acts.[95]

When applied to the study, the viewer can only understand the "Other" through the prism of their words and acts which can be engineered to show a particular meaning or depiction of foreigners. It also helps explain why foreigners are perceived with so much hostility in war films where there is no dialogue with foreigners. Their self-understanding and understanding of the world is expanded on significantly in the post-Soviet period, with *Brother 2's* Danila philosophising about Russian and American characteristics and *The Cuckoo* being a constant philosophical exercise in how two characters at war can live with each other. In the Stalinist period the false "socialist realism" was a significant limitation that sought to control and define the audience's and foreigners' self-understanding and understanding of the world. This was done through one-dimensional characters

[92] *Ibid.*, p. 235.
[93] M. Bakhtin, The Dialogic Imagination, pp. 293-94.
[94] L. Steinby & T. Klapuri (eds.), Bakhtin and His Others: (Inter)subjectivity, Chronotope, Dialogism, p. 21.
[95] *Ibid.*

that are either loyal to the Soviet Union's values or not, rather than use existing socio-cultural evidence as the post-Soviet period tended towards.

Roland Barthes' theory of mythology also applies, where myth is depoliticised speech that is constituted by the loss of the historical quality of things; reality is emptied of history and filled with nature, turned inside out.[96] Barthes' left-wing myth "supervenes precisely at the moment when revolution changes itself into 'the Left', that is, when it accepts to wear a mask, to hide its name, to generate an innocent metalanguage and to distort itself into 'Nature'".[97] This is particularly appropriate for the Stalinist period of films, where Stalinist myth was defined by socialism.[98]

The presence of Barthes' constituent characters of mythical speech, such as "the inevitable character of the 'natural' epithets with which his name was surrounded" and "a signification, which was a sanctified Stalin, whose historical determinants found themselves grounded in nature, sublimated under the name of Genius, that is, something irrational and inexpressible", meant that depoliticisation was evident and fully revealed the presence of a myth.[99] The "barrenness" of the Stalinist myth is used to analyse the films' quasi-inability to lie about socialist realism and how the Left defines itself in relation to the oppressed in these films.[100] This is apparent with the unlikely exemplary treatment of Marion and Jimmy in *Circus* and the oppressed Russians mightily triumphing in *Aleksandr Nevsky*, the former revealing a form of dramatic irony where the viewer knows more than the characters, but is gradually influenced by the socialist realism.

On the other hand, the analysis of post-Soviet period films is informed through Barthes' idea that the bourgeoisie wants to keep reality without keeping the appearances: the very negativity of bourgeois appearance, infinite like every negativity, solicits myth infinitely.[101] This is seen clearly in the post-

[96] R. Barthes, Mythologies, p. 142.
[97] *Ibid.*, pp. 147-148
[98] *Ibid.*
[99] *Ibid.*
[100] *Ibid.*
[101] *Ibid.*, p. 150.

Soviet period, where there was an explosion of negativity due to its inability to be expressed or represented in the Soviet period. Barthes' argument that the caption for an image selects one of its many possible meanings and anchors it is also useful, with written language and photography both required to produce and "fix" the meaning of an image.[102] The same principle can be applied to non-silent films, with characters' appearance on screen being reinforced by the speech chosen for them. In this way, the director can fully control and fix the representation of a foreigner, emphasising the important difference between state-controlled directors in the Stalinist period and the more independent commercially-driven post-Soviet directors.

This is demonstrated by Barthes' explanation of Eastern exoticism: "faced with anything foreign, the Established Order knows only two [mutilating] types of behaviour: either to acknowledge it as a Punch and Judy show, or to defuse it as a pure reflection of the West. In any case, the main thing is to deprive it of its history."[103] This applies to the black pimps and homeless people in *Brother 2*. The initial negative representation of pimps and homeless people existing in the United States, and of black people in American society is reinforced. Their image is "fixed" by their slang speech and the pimps' criminal behaviour in their treatment of women and selling arms, also not showing other black characters. Meanwhile the solitary positively portrayed American character, the trucker Ben, is dismissed from his brief appearance after dropping off the protagonist.

Bakhtin's dialogical theory similarly argues that modern prose can "represent" discourses by contextualising their use and endowing them with a kind of force they might otherwise not have; however, Hirschkop significantly believes that hostility to immigrants is the exception, not being ironic or "dialogic".[104] Therefore there is a need to recognise where foreign behaviour is being actively mocked or casually dismissed as a Western eccentricity, as well as what constitutes hostility to immigrants in the context of being excluded from Bakhtin's dialogical theory. This is seen with the

[102] S. Hall, The Spectacle of the "Other", in S. Hall (ed.), Representation, p. 228.
[103] R. Barthes, Mythologies, p. 96.
[104] Y. Gradskova & P. Chakrabarti (eds.), Bakhtin Circle, Baltic Worlds, Issue 1-2 2017, p. 50.

mockery of western racism in *Circus* as von Kneishitz is laughed at for thinking there is any problem with Marion's black child, as well as in *Brother 2* where Danila is released by a sympathetic racist policeman after fighting the black pimps.

Furthermore, the dialogical theory informs the research through the impact of a lack of dialogical understanding. Bakhtin's dialogism needs to be a multiplicity of contesting voices, an antidote to monologism that decentres authoritarian discourses to generate the idea of difference, of plurality, of talking back.[105] Bakhtin's theory states that there is no dialogism if there is no response, with every utterance becoming interpreted only through the articulation of a response, defining context and forming new social realities.[106]

There is an authoritarian background to the representation of difference in the Stalinist period and an aspect of inferiority assigned to foreign nations and characters, unless they accept the Soviet Union as better like Marion in *Circus.* This shows how it is not an "antidote to monologism" and rather an authoritarian attempt to maintain the desired social reality. The greater prevalence of dialogism is recognised in the post-Soviet period's films, but a lack of coherent response is seen many times in *Brother 2* and especially *The* Cuckoo, where the characters do not understand each other and often in comical fashion when they get angry with each other without knowing why. This underlines how the lack of dialogism represents a general lack of understanding between Russians and foreigners, with an ongoing strongly perceived uniqueness of Russians from other apparently unintelligible nations.

Chapter 2: Nationality

Nationality is a key theme in this project because every country has different relationships with other states, Russia and the former Soviet Union being no different. These relationships' differences are pronounced in many aspects of the films both in the Stalinist era and post-Soviet era.

[105] P. Chakrabarti, Crisis of the responsible word: Bakhtin, dialogism & the postcolonial memoir, Baltic Worlds, Issue 1-2, 2017, p. 84.
[106] *Ibid.*

2.1. *Nationality and Behaviour in The Cuckoo*

In Aleksandr Rogozhkin's 2002 film *The Cuckoo*, the focus is on three characters of different nationalities, a Sami woman called Anni, a Finnish soldier named Veikko and Ivan or "Psholti" the Soviet soldier. These characters show not only how important it is to be able to speak the same language but also how pre-judgement of a person's character based on nationality can have such an impact on decision-making, communication and relationships, as Psholti sees Veikko wearing a Nazi uniform which is the prelude to their many misunderstandings. There are many aspects of the film that feel very different to a Stalinist era film, showing the difference in character development of foreigners between the time periods. From the beginning, Veikko, who is accused by his compatriots of pacifism and being a would-be deserter, is portrayed as intelligent and resourceful when he escapes from his chains, a first indicator of positive imagery of an enemy soldier that one would struggle to find in any Stalinist era film.

Meanwhile, "Psholti" is also branded a traitor, accused of anti-Soviet correspondence due to his "wrong" poetry verses, which paints an image of initial parity of the two characters, with similar journeys to the same point where the film takes place. It is significant that the soldier Veikko is Finnish rather than German, as implying social equality between a German soldier and a Soviet one would garner more controversy than a Finnish soldier even in the post-Soviet period, although the premise was a risky one for a Russian audience regardless. Indeed, asked if he would say that "The Cuckoo" is a national film, its director Rogozhkin replied, "I don't know. A lot of people say that it is not like Russian film-- maybe because there are Finnish actors speaking their language."[107] This argument would be even more poignant if the language was German.

Psholti being shown as one of the victims of the Stalinist police state due to his poetry is also interesting to bear in mind as another departure from the state's self-glorification in the Stalinist era.

[107] Sony Pictures Classics, The Cuckoo: Interview with Aleksandr Rogozhkin, http://cinema.com/articles/2118/cuckoo-the-interview-with-alexander-rogozhkin.phtml

This is demonstrated when the car he's transported in needs to be pushed up the hill by the other soldiers, before the car is accidentally bombed by Soviet planes leaving only the prisoner alive. Showing such an element of incompetence from the Soviet military would not have appealed to Stalin and many in the arts were purged for such misdemeanours. This ironic comedy is also a reflection of the director's pacifist stance in showing that both sides were capable of wrongdoing. When asked, "Why did you decide to make a pacifist movie, when the mood is so different in Russia now?", he replied that, "The war is madness for me… So my heroine says that war is a foolish game of adult people..."[108]

Rogozhkin's view on pacifism is reflected far more in Veikko and Sami, the foreigners, than Psholti which is interesting yet reflective of the stereotypical Soviet soldier in the Second World War. When comparing this to the Stalinist era of films, the Soviet soldier would likely be portrayed with a similar attitude to war as opposed to the enemy, but with the key difference being that the pacifist ideology is shown positively in this film while blindly resorting to violence never ends well. This is most keenly felt at the end of the film when Psholti shoots Veikko because of a misunderstanding, thinking that the latter wanted to attack him. This aggressive foolishness almost costs Veikko's life, but when Veikko shows Psholti that Finland have surrendered he instantly regrets the shot, carrying Veikko back to the hut where he is healed by Anni's ability to bring people back "from the path to death", using visions and rituals. This respect for spirituality and superstition of another country is also a point on nationality that would unlikely be seen in Stalinist films.

It is most curious how the dynamics develop between the Sami woman and the two soldiers. Despite none of the characters completely understanding each other, Veikko and Anni can to at least a limited extent, which perhaps contributes to them being shown as more friendly than the Soviet soldier "Psholti". Stephen Norris describes Danila from the aforementioned *Brother* films as "an embodiment of the crime, racism, excitement, and ambiguities of post-Soviet Russia", but says he is not the only

[108] *Ibid.*

outsider that stands as a symbol for post-Soviet culture and rather the most convenient one, claiming that the use of outsiders in contemporary Russian cinema is such a prevalent theme that it qualifies as a cult.[109]

Danila's excitement and charisma in his interactions with foreigners goes completely at odds with the closed-off attitude of Psholti, perhaps a reflection of changing stereotypes – indeed, Veikko says in *The Cuckoo* that Psholti is shy like all Russians but that the Sami does not understand this shyness, they have a simple life and Anni is looking after them despite not having much for herself. This is not understood by Psholti as with anything Veikko says in the film, which shapes the almost self-deprecating comedy of misunderstandings and stereotypes seen in *The Cuckoo*. One of the most notable is when Veikko asks Psholti's name at the beginning of the film, to which he replies "Go away" or "Psholti", with Veikko henceforth thinking this was his name. Having initially guessed at his name being Ivan because "all Russians are called Ivan" but not being understood, Psholti reveals at the end of the film that his name is indeed Ivan.

Julian Graffy described Danila as "a representative of a post-Soviet generation unexpectedly released from the cage of moral and social certainties."[110] Taking this as the case, it can be argued that Psholti is a representative of a Stalinist generation that was taught fear and constant suspicion in the Soviet police state. The way that Russians view themselves is inevitably linked to the way that they view foreigners, especially to how those foreigners view them and this is reflected in film. Perhaps something more commonplace in a Stalin film would be Veikko's references to Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy, figures of fierce national pride in Russia. However, he also mentions Hemingway and a Stalinist film would more likely show the Soviet to be well-read than the Finn.

It may similarly be unlikely in a Stalinist film for Anni to choose Veikko first to take to bed rather than the Soviet soldier, but the fact that she also sleeps later with Psholti, while Veikko is injured, suggests

[109] S. Norris, Fools and Cuckoos: The Outsider as Insider in post-Soviet War Films, Miami University 2008, p. 1.
[110] J. Graffy, "Brother" Sight and Sound 10th May 2000, p. 44., in Stephen Norris, Fools and Cuckoos: The Outsider as Insider in post-Soviet War Films, Miami University 2008, p. 1.

negative imagery. Asked, "How is she then then an example of 'human values'?", Rogozhkin replied, "It is natural for her in that she is a being of nature. To survive in the North, to feed yourself, it is necessary to work indefatigably. There is no place here for the games of the mind, for wit… This is love, true love, but she will never see them again… Why will they not give a piece of happiness to each other?".[111] Hence, she perhaps represents not the Sami culture with this polyamory, but the feeling of loneliness felt by individuals of all nationalities as a result of the Second World War.

2.2. *Race and anti-German sentiment in Circus*

This theme of foreigners' polyamory or polygamy in Russian films is also seen in the 1936 film *Circus,* by Grigori Aleksandrov and Isidor Simkov. The American dancer has a mixed-race child with no father shown on screen; she takes the child Jimmy with her to the USSR, where she quickly falls for the Soviet performance director Ivan Petrovich Martynov. This could be interpreted as showing a degree of faithlessness among non-Soviet characters, especially as compared to the ever-present loyalty to the Motherland shown among particularly military Soviet characters. Added to this is the headline "Sensational Scandal" shown in the "Sunnyville Courier" at the beginning of the film.

After she is chased onto a train with baby Jimmy by a mob, Marion finds herself in the circus in the USSR, where first shown is a globe showing the USSR in huge letters, inferring how she has moved to a better and more secure place. Indeed, when a director asks what she is singing about in the circus in Soviet Russia, he is told it is about things being good on the moon, to which he replies that on such a salary everywhere is happy. This harks back to the theme of Americans and money, the American dancer is the one earning a lot and singing about happiness driven by money. She is thrown pink roses as she glides through the air in her hoop, adding to the image of beauty as she tosses one to the lucky Ivan who wears it on his jacket.

[111] Sony Pictures Classics, The Cuckoo, http://cinema.com/articles/2118/cuckoo-the-interview-with-alexander-rogozhkin.phtml

Marion's German theatrical agent, Franz von Kneishitz, is from the outset depicted very negatively and physically seems to resemble Hitler, particularly his moustache. He claims to love her, yet he abuses her and uses blackmail to bully her into doing his bidding, "You forget your past Miss Dixon…", inferably due to jealousy of her love for Ivan. He shows various presents he bought for her by throwing them at her, but this jealousy is most apparent when she wants to stay with the injured Ivan. After von Kneishitz threatens to reveal the truth about Jimmy's existence and mixed race, she changes her mind to leave with him. This paranoia of the truth being revealed seems to reflect how American and German society would react to such a situation, rather than accepting it as normal and confronting the aggressor. In the director of *Circus*'s own words, the film is an "eccentric comedy… a real side-splitter"[112], but there is clearly a deeper political message behind the racial and national undertones of this film.

Salys sees the circus as the most independent of the popular arts at a time when cultural uniformity – socialist "unified performance"—was rising in influence, thereby allowing the director Aleksandrov a certain artistic license in creating his circus world.[113] According to Salys, however, Aleksandrov saw the circus setting not only as a means of exploiting its aesthetic freedom but also to further a specific political agenda.[114] By locating *Circus* in this multi-faceted comedic world, which he apparently knew and liked, Aleksandrov could infuse Soviet reality with the Western glamour and showmanship he admired, whilst simultaneously immersing this setting with ideology.[115]

At the end of the film, von Kneishitz bursts into the circus with Jimmy to reveal her secret mid-performance, that Jimmy is a result of Marion being a "mistress of a Negro", saying this is wrong and has no place in society. However, the audience responds with laughter and passes Jimmy around to avoid von Kneishitz' grasp, singing a lullaby as they go including a black man singing in Russian. The director explains to an upset Marion that "in this country, children are welcome whether they are

[112] R. Salys, The Musical Comedy Films of Grigorii Aleksandrov: Laughing Matters, p. 128.
[113] R. Salys, Art Deco Aesthetics in Grigorii Aleksandrov's *The Circus*, The Russian Review, 2007, p. 23.
[114] *Ibid.*
[115] *Ibid.*

white, black or red". This is followed by the film's final scene where the protagonists are all marching in a parade complete with Stalin's image being carried, celebrating the Soviet Union's glory and equal society whilst singing "Shiroka strana moya rodnaya", one of the instant classic songs from this film that means "Wide is my native country".

The ideology behind this film presents the Soviet Union as a much more progressive country than Germany and the United States in particular as Marion's origin, with unsubtle critiques of the problems with racial discrimination that were so prevalent there at the time. Shortly after the film's release, Aleksandrov and cinematographer Vladimir Nilsen explained the idea behind their design: "From our point of view the film The Circus is above all a Soviet film in which today's environment, saturated with energy and optimism, plays a large role. Every detail of the film, even one that is perhaps insignificant by itself, must to some degree reflect the present day of our Soviet land."[116]

Salys argues that the official discourse of High Stalinism was reflected explicitly through the script and implicitly in the mise-en-scène, presenting a comprehensive inventory of Soviet beliefs, initiatives, achievements and hopes, as well as quotation of American and European models all coded as Art Deco.[117] The mise-en-scène in *Circus* indeed shows von Kneishitz in dark baggy clothing compared to Ivan's slimmer fitting lighter clothing. Ivan also has better lighting, demonstrated by a glowing effect when he's helping Marion while von Kneishitz is darkened; particularly as he approaches the window with a looming shadow to observe Marion and Ivan. Hence even in this celebration of Soviet strength, foreigners are required as a point of comparison and a show of Soviet world standing, despite a partial mimicking of Western film culture.

Indeed, in his 1936 review of The Circus, film critic Béla Balázs defended Aleksandrov's extravagant concluding circus performance scene, where Marion tops a rotating wedding cake of actresses: "We have no reason to develop ascetic tastes. We don't intend to let bourgeois art have a monopoly on

[116] G. Aleksandrov and V. Nilsen, "How we filmed 'Tsirk'", Komsomolskaya pravda, June 21, 1936, in R. Salys, Art Deco Aesthetics in Grigorii Aleksandrov's *The Circus*, The Russian Review, 2007, pp. 23-24.
[117] *Ibid.*

glitter and beauty."[118] This suggests that Aleksandrov pushed the boundaries of tapping into Western film culture, despite simultaneously criticising American society as the times dictated.

2.3. *Ethnicities in the population of Russia and the Soviet Union*

On the topic of multicultural acceptance, it is also important to clarify that the Soviet Union was not exclusively home to ethnic, white, East Europeans, contrary to possible assumptions. For example, from 1937 to 1959, the Assyrian population in the USSR grew by 587.3 percent to 21,083 people.[119] However, despite fluctuations in different ethnic populations, it is interesting to note that the Slavic group of peoples' share of Russia's population barely changed between 1937 and 1989, from 85.55 percent to 85.38 percent.[120]

What this suggests is that whilst there was always some movement of people throughout the Soviet era, there was no huge exodus or influx of migrants from non-Slavic ethnicities as a whole in this period. It can be inferred that cultural assimilation could be more gradual and stable because of this, without particular prejudice caused by sudden differences in population and the xenophobia that this often brings, even now. On the other hand, this could also be considered to show that Soviet Russians did not have a period of being pushed into accepting and assimilating non-Slavic cultures, because proportions remained roughly the same and reflected an ongoing ethnic dominance of Slavic people.

2.4. *How individuals, society and leading figures view the foreigner through the prism of their own national identity*

In 1950, Adorno *et al* developed their famous F scale to identify individuals' authoritarian personalities based on nine "traits", including power and toughness, conventionalism and projectivity.[121] These are

[118] *Ibid.*
[119] T. Mastyugina, L. Perepelkin, V. Naumkin, I. Zviagelskaia, An Ethnic History of Russia Pre-revolutionary Times to the Present, p. 83.
[120] *Ibid.*
[121] The other traits are either similar or not as related to the films, these are: authoritarian submission, authoritarian aggression, anti-intraception, superstition and stereotypy, destructiveness and cynicism, and sex. J. Duckitt, Authoritarian Personality, International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences, 2nd edition, Vol 2, pp. 255-256.

seen in Stalinist films such as the powerful Russian army's triumph in *Alexander Nevsky*, the conventionalism in all the Russian characters accepting Marion and Jimmy in *Circus*, as well as the projectivity in Marion being chased away from the United States because of her black child. This shows how these traits could be emphasised in Russian film, at the expense of foreign characters, to promote the dominance of authoritarianism.

The theoretical explanation for the origin of this authoritarian personality drew heavily on psychodynamic theory, suggesting that overstrict and punitive parental socialisation causes an enduring conflict within the individual, which would certainly apply in the Stalinist period.[122] In this conflict, parental punitiveness generates resentment and hostility towards parental authority, but cannot be expressed due to fear and dependence on the all-powerful parents.[123] The anger and hostility are therefore repressed and replaced by an uncritical idealisation of the parents and conventional authority and submission to them.[124] This repressed anger and hostility towards authority is instead directed towards substitute targets, notably those seen as being sanctioned by conventional authority.[125] In the context of Stalinism, these would include "far abroad" foreigners that Soviets would have barely come across.

It is worth noting that Adorno dismissed revolutionary Marxism as unrealistic and potentially authoritarian whilst having a rather pro-American attitude,[126] raising a potential issue of bias, but even most critics felt that the theory's two most basic principles were valid.[127] These were the assumptions that social attitudes and beliefs were meaningfully organised along a single broad ideological dimension and that these attitudes directly expressed personality. [128] This helps explain why Stalin-

[122] *Ibid.*
[123] *Ibid.*
[124] *Ibid.*
[125] *Ibid.*
[126] E. Hammer, Adorno and the Political, p. 22.
[127] J. Duckitt, Authoritarian Personality, p. 256.
[128] *Ibid.*

controlled cinema was successful in always glorifying the state and having foreigners such as von Kneishitz in *Circus* or the German army in *Alexander Nevsky* as the antagonists.

Perlmutter observes Adorno's authoritarian studies with interest, particularly data concerning the Hi-F scale individual's predisposition to see foreigners, or more precisely, minority group members, as "disreputable and undesirable".[129] Perlmutter also links this to "the Hi-Authoritarians' tendency to assign disliked characteristics to others, which he himself possesses but cannot accept."[130] This corroborates the point on Stalinist films targeting foreigners with negative characteristics such as von Kneishitz' and the American people's hostility towards Marion and Jimmy. American racism is also shown with the aforementioned policeman and portrayals of black people in *Brother 2*, conceivably an assigned disliked characteristic with Danila saying he was taught in school to call them negros.

Perlmutter also adds that "the particular individual's image of the typical foreigner depends… on a variety of vicarious contacts with foreigners, in caricatures in movies… as well as on direct observation of foreigners here and abroad. This information… must be assimilated by selection and learning, in accordance with principles not different from other everyday experiences concerning individuals, direct contact with whom is limited."[131] This reinforces the importance of the fact that the Stalinist period did not see much direct observation of "far abroad" foreigners at all, of the factors listed by Perlmutter the only ones applicable to Soviets were state-controlled movies, radio and television. This is what the public's idea of foreigners was built on, and what a generation of Stalinism reiterated as the undoubted reality.

Perlmutter goes on to say that "the individual, in improving or at least adding to his description of himself and others, can categorize the foreigner with familiar, personally meaningful concepts that must be in some respects similar to and different from himself, as he sees himself."[132] This reiterates

[129] H. Perlmutter, Relations between the Self-Image, pp. 131-132.
[130] *Ibid.*
[131] *Ibid.*
[132] *Ibid.*

the significance of the point that growing up under Stalinism, the state-controlled media was the only access to images of a foreigner that people had, shaping them to normalise the ideology of foreigners enforced in undertones. From this it would be clear how important the distinction is of Stalinist films influencing the Russians' views of foreigners compared to post-Soviet films reflecting the views of Russians on foreigners, views influenced at this point by a mass proliferation of media both in printed form and online. Online interactions of course bring far greater potential for an independently formulated view on foreigners, which would not have been conceivable under Stalinism.

An independently formulated view on foreigners was close to impossible living under Stalin and in 1933, Anatoly Lunacharskii, the former People's Commissar for Popular Enlightenment, defined a socialist realist as one who "does not accept reality as it really is. He accepts it as it will be".[133] This shows the state's view of reality as something that should not be depicted negatively in art and culture such as film, as it will stay the same anyway. Taylor calls this "revolutionary Romanticism" which was an essential part of the process of creating the new *homo sovieticus*.[134] This state creation of the new Soviet man, one who accepts Stalinist reality for what it will be, serves as evidence that the state's aim was mass control of the people by convincing them of a fake reality. Indeed, Taylor said that "there can be no better example of Stalin's 'illusion' than the escapist world of the film musical and, in particular, of the three musical comedies… by Grigorii Aleksandrov", showing that *Circus* is evidence of Stalin's illusion by means of cinema.[135]

Music's propagandic impact in *Circus* should be pointed out, as Salazkina says: "The only genre and period to receive significant scholarly attention in relation to sound has been the Stalinist musical. However, even here scholars have not gone far beyond the films directed by Grigori Alexandrov…"[136] *Circus* provided many famous songs such as the patriotic and easily memorable "Song of the

[133] R. Taylor, The Illusion of Happiness and the Happiness of Illusion: Grigorii Aleksandrov's *The Circus*, The Slavonic and East European Review, Vol. 74, No. 4, pp. 601-602.
[134] *Ibid.*
[135] *Ibid.*
[136] L. Kaganovsky and M. Salazkina (eds.), Sound, Speech, Music in Soviet and Post-Soviet Cinema, p. 2.

Motherland". It is sung at the end of the film by the American protagonist Marion, which emphasises her full integration into the Soviet Union from the United States. In the literal translation of this song's Russian title it is referencing how wide the country is, inferably a comparison to the United States when sung by an American character.

This clearly shows how much more thought was put into music during the Stalinist period, for its potential to shape the audience's mindsets and inspire patriotism. The Stalinist period's precedence in terms of notable music was an element of "high culture"; in the post-Soviet period more focus was driven on making the films entertaining and appealing to people. For this reason post-Stalinist directors might select music based on the artist's popularity, rather than the appropriateness of the music for a particular desired image.

Music was even more significant for the depiction of foreigners in *Alexander Nevsky*. *Alexander Nevsky* is another example of a Stalinist film using patriotic songs to inspire nationalist feeling and loyalty to the state, yet there is the added dimension of the German knights as the enemy. "Arise, Russian people!", includes the lyric "Arise, free people, for our honest land!" as the Russians need to prepare for invasion, simultaneously evoking the notion that Russians under Stalinism are free and the need to unite as a state against the foreign enemy. Indeed, the composer Sergei Prokofiev impacts on foreigners' portrayal in more ways than just its lyrics, written by Vladimir Lugovskoy; "Battle on the Ice" is introduced as the Germans enter the screen for battle, using particularly menacing music when they appear and uplifting patriotic music as the Russians fight and eventually win. Prokofiev also makes use of ancient Russian motifs and evokes sounds of traditional Russian musical instruments.[137] This shows how Stalinist films shaped audiences' views of foreigners and Soviet life generally, by using and manipulating associations with national identity to bring a desired emotional response.

[137] Y. Klitsenko, The film *Alexander Nevsky*: sound-visual symbolism, Pravda.Ru, https://www.pravda.ru/world/31679-nevskiy/, 5th June 2003.

In a discussion with Sergei Eisenstein about his film *Ivan the Terrible*, Stalin reveals how he relates previous Russian rulers with views on foreigners, perhaps thereby also influencing foreigners' portrayal in other Stalinist films. Stalin asks, "Have you studied History?" to which Eisenstein replies, "More or less." [138] Stalin's previously mentioned response was: "You have shown this oprichnina to be like the Ku-Klux-Klan."[139] This shows that Stalin was averse to racism and this is reflected in Stalinist films not negatively focusing on people of colour. Not conforming to racial prejudice also allowed Stalin another angle to condemn the United States from, especially with the popularity of the Ku Klux Klan at this time there. Stalin goes on, "Peter I was… a great ruler, but he was extremely liberal towards foreigners, he opened the gate wide to them and allowed foreign influence into the country and permitted the Germanization of Russia. Catherine allowed it even more... Was the court of Alexander I really a Russian court? Was the Court of Nikolai I…? No, they were German courts."[140]

This is further evidence for why Stalinist films would have an anti-German character to them even before the Second World War. Stalin later reiterated that Ivan the Terrible was a more nationalist tsar, more foresighted, he did not allow foreign influence in Russia.[141] This would imply that if Stalin wanted to follow Ivan the Terrible in not allowing any foreign influence, then the presumed result on screen would be for all foreigners to be portrayed negatively, reinforcing the notion of no foreign influence or risk of Soviet citizens wanting to live elsewhere. This point is made more interesting by the fact that as late as 1924, 80 per cent of the foreign films playing in the Soviet Union were made in Germany; perhaps the reason for so much anti-German sentiment in Stalinist films was Stalin's fear that this foreign influence had taken a foothold in the Soviet Union.[142]

In reality, however, as seen in films such as *Circus* with the American dancer and her black child, there are foreigners that are shown positively with the Soviet citizens welcoming them with open arms. The

[138] J. Stalin, Discussion with Sergei Eisenstein on the film Ivan the Terrible, February 1947, in G. Maryamov, Kremlevskii tsenzor, pp. 84-92.
[139] *Ibid.*
[140] *Ibid.*
[141] *Ibid.*
[142] P. Kenez, Cinema and Soviet Society from the Revolution to the Death of Stalin, p. 63.

context is naturally key to understanding this and with *Circus* the aim appears to be inextricably linked to proving a point against the United States' perceived racism, that the Soviet Union was better and more progressive. Poignantly, Stalin also said: "One of the mistakes of Ivan the Terrible was that… If he had destroyed these five families then there would not have been the Time of Troubles... God disturbed him on these matters… It was necessary to be decisive."[143]

This suggests Stalin would have wanted to justify cruelty in a sense, which is interesting in the sense of applying it to Stalinist films where one would more likely see clemency from Soviet citizens or at least the minimum-needed force against foreigners, such as that seen in *Alexander Nevsky*. However, it also shows how he felt religion got in the way of Ivan the Terrible's decisiveness. Stalin also says, "Of course, we are not good Christians but to deny the progressive role of Christianity at that particular stage is impossible. [The drama of Demian Bednyi's Bogatyr] had a very great importance because this turned the Russian state to contacts with the West, and not to an orientation towards the East."[144] Hence it seems clear from this that Stalin is not particularly pro-religion or anti-religion at least in terms of Christianity, which suggests why religion does not seem to be a focus in the depiction of foreign film characters.

It is also significant how Stalin brings attention to orientation towards the West as opposed to East. This led to the more typical foreigner for Soviet citizens having their same light colour skin, as opposed to the darker Eastern foreigner. This in turn seems to be reflected in Stalinist films where most of the main foreign characters, positive or negative in imagery, are white Europeans. Eisenstein asked whether there were more instructions regarding the film, with Stalin saying: "I am not giving you instructions but expressing the viewer's opinion. It is necessary that historical characters are reflected correctly… It is necessary to show historical figures correctly and strongly. You directed Alexander Nevskii. It came out very well. The most important thing is to maintain the style of the historical period.

[143] J. Stalin, Discussion with Eisenstein, in G. Maryamov, Kremlevskii, pp. 84-92.
[144] *Ibid.*

The director may deviate from history; it is not correct if he simply copies from the historical materials, he must work on his ideas but within the boundary of style. The director may vary within the style of that historical period."[145]

Here it is significant that Stalin advises against necessarily maintaining full historical accuracy, as long as what he refers to as the style remains consistent. In the same vein, one could argue foreign characters in Stalinist films are not necessarily even reflective of Russian views of foreigners, so long as they fit in with the rest of the film's historical style. This shows further how Stalinist films were an extension of his foreign and domestic policy, normalising whichever opinions of certain foreigners he wanted Soviet citizens to have.

Interestingly, in an interview Russia's President, Vladimir Putin discussed the suggestion that Russia has the biggest Muslim population in Europe.[146] This is significant because of what Putin goes on to say: "Inter-ethnic relations [have] always been a delicate issue… But Russia has certain advantages in this regard. For example, take Europe and the United States of today and you'll see that people with other religions are mostly immigrants. Russia is different. Those people with other religions are Russians, Russia is their homeland and they have none other."

This suggests why national differences play far more of a role in Russian cinema than religious differences when it comes to negative portrayals of foreigners, even in the Stalinist period when religion was disregarded. Putin also explains that: "From its very beginning, Russia was emerging as a multi-religious and multi-ethnic country… there are very many situations when people together celebrate both Muslim and Christian traditional holidays. And I think that based on this huge historical positive, we will be able to surmount quite easily all those… issues of inter-ethnic and inter-religious

[145] *Ibid.*
[146] O. Stone, The Putin Interviews, pp. 111-112.

interactions."[147] This further supports the idea that in this multi-religious and religiously tolerant state, foreignness is attached much more to nationality than religion.

Nationality's importance in assessing foreigners in Russian film is underpinned by Russia's view on Europe. Indeed, debate about Europe is a traditional staple of Russian intellectual life, which is inevitably intertwined with directing; indeed as Neumann puts it, the idea of Europe is the main "Other" in relation to which the idea of Russia is defined.[148] He goes on to recognise that Russians also discuss themselves when discussing Europe; "identity does not reside in essential and readily identifiable cultural traits but in relations", which makes crucial the question of how and where to draw borders towards "the Other".[149] The idea that identity resides in relations rather than readily identifiable cultural traits is particularly poignant for this study's research aims, as it provides further clues as to how foreigners are portrayed and why they are portrayed in this way, depending on the foreign relations with the specific country.

Chapter 3: Directors and Ideology

An underpinning element of understanding Russian films and any study on foreigners that derives from them is the directors of these films. These directors' influences and how they portray the foreign characters are key to the study for both periods. Nationality is naturally part of understanding their aims and influences as well as perhaps a degree of individuality. Attitudes towards the West are one of the important areas of discussion. This can be partially broached from a historical perspective to understand popular movements in Russian attitudes towards Europe and their evolution by the time of adaptation to film characters.

It is also important to mention the position on authorship. Petrie argues that the director's contribution cannot automatically be assumed to be of major significance and that auteur theory's

[147] *Ibid*.
[148] I. Neumann, Russia and the Idea of Europe: A Study in Identity and International Relations, p. 1.
[149] *Ibid.*

flaw is the "naïve and often arrogant corollary that it is only the director who matters", suggesting a reassessment of cinema as a cooperative art.[150] This provides a basis for the study to work on the premise of Russian cinema being historically and culturally shaped, corroborated by Paul Sellors' 2007 article *Collective Authorship in Film* that explains his collaborative theory and the idea that an intentional party will exert control in a production, which is explored in the study through the motivation behind certain portrayals of foreigners, particularly in the Stalinist period.[151]

3.1. *Marxist Socialism's roots and the ideological split of Slavophiles and Westernisers*

Nikolay Danilevskiy's very popular nationalist book on Russia and Europe is particularly against Europe; writing towards the end of the 19th century, his assessment of the events of the second half of it lead him to regard the "ongoing Westernising thrust of Russian policy" as indefensible.[152] Neumann draws from it that it is indeed impossible to adapt European models to Russian conditions due to Russia and Europe being two different cultural-historical types.[153] Danilevskiy writes: "Europe is not only foreign to us, it is indeed hostile… That does not yet mean that we could or should break off all our dealings with Europe… that would actually have been positively harmful. Dealings will have to be close, yet they must not be intimate…".[154]

This is representative of how Russian feelings towards Europe felt going into the twentieth century and arguably all the way up to present day, as state-directed culture and long-term influence has driven these feelings considerably in such a way. It is particularly important to consider how directors might portray foreign European characters in light of this. Danilevskiy shows how this might impact Russian film audiences: "Yet even if it is impossible to cut ourselves off from European affairs, it is… obligatory to relate them from our specific, Russian point of view."[155] This reiterates that Russians'

[150] G. Petrie, Alternatives to Auteurs, in B. Grant, Auteurs and Authorship: A Film Reader, pp.. 111-112.
[151] P. Sellors, Collective Authorship in Film, The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, Vol. 65, Issue 3, p. 266.
[152] I. Neumann, Russia, p. 57.
[153] *Ibid.*
[154] N. Danilevskiy, Russia and Europe: A Look at the Cultural and Political Relations of the Slavic World to the Romano-German World, pp. 480-481.
[155] *Ibid.*

natural perceptions of foreigners are at least loosely based on how they view themselves and their own culture. He then brings significance to every "this or that thought, this or that important personality" and how it would benefit or hurt their "specific Russo-Slav goals", which can be related to every character and idea shown in Russian films using foreign characters.

Following this evidence, it is important to distinguish the two schools of ideological thought that have applied to directors in the post-Soviet period, the Slavophiles and the Westernisers, influencing their portrayal of foreign characters. These two schools have long shaped the history of Russian thought, with the evident Slavophile Danilevskiy initially publishing his famous work on Russia and Europe in 1869. Having emerged during the drastic turn towards Westernisation initiated by Peter the Great, these two schools had then become very prominent for Russian history in the first half of the nineteenth century, with Petr Chaadaev's famous philosophical letters that criticised the lag behind Western civilisation. Since then, these two opposing ideologies have informed the development of Russian social, political and intellectual life, surviving to this day having undergone multiple mutations. The debate between them was not active during the Soviet period for obvious reasons, but re-emerged with a new vigour after the collapse of the Soviet system.

This is a crude division and there would need to be a separate exhaustive study to determine which directors are Slavophiles or Westernisers, to what extent, as well as all their hidden agendas. However, these schools of thought have invariably shaped foreigners' portrayal in film in different ways. After an ideological vacuum was created following the Soviet Union's collapse in 1991, a huge void of political and economic power led to the "wild capitalism" of the 1990s.[156] Indeed, the reduced spending power combined with new freedom of expression meant an explosion of negativity. Crudely speaking, the Slavophiles, who famously include the director Nikita Mikhalkov, perceive Russia to be the best and believe there is no need to learn any lessons from the West, because of Russia's superior culture and character. The Westernisers on the other hand, also the liberal intelligentsia, see them as

[156] P. Rutland, Putin and the Oligarchs, in D. Herspring, Putin's Russia: Past Imperfect, Future Uncertain, p. 161.

traitors for this and constantly criticise the social reality of Russia compared to the West, seeing the West as a utopian ideal to look up to.

During Boris Yeltsin's era there was a strong notion that Russia had failed in comparison to the West; people felt this was their inheritance from the Soviet period, responding by portraying the darkest of reality in their art. People could suddenly broach all the topics they wanted by means of artistic expression, so there was a proliferation of "mass culture" as films focused on the negative aspects of society that eluded the screen before. During this initial period of "wild capitalism" in the 1990s, against the idealised backdrop of the Western world, many Russian people felt like losers as a consequence of what Soviet life did to them. At the same time many felt they had something against the West in their Russian character, but generally most would have felt they deserved to live better than the circumstances of the 1990s.

The Soviet Union's collapse brought back questions about the political and economic organisation of society, as part of this much broader debate about the country's global position and meaning of being Russian. These attempts to rearticulate Russia's identity were part of a centuries-old identity crisis and search for Russia's self-definition.[157] As Vladimir Baranovsky put it, Russia could be seen as either "a part of Europe or apart from Europe", while William Zimmerman agrees that there had been "a reprise of the Westerniser-Slavophile divide", showing the importance of acknowledging the existence of this difference that can be recognised in post-Soviet directors.[158]

As a result of the collapse, Westernisers were the more influential school in the 1990s, with some seeing Russians as having an intrinsic slave mentality as a result of oppressive autocratic rule in Imperial Russia and then the Soviet Union. By the time Vladimir Putin came to power in 2000, however, there was greater economic prosperity and social calm as capitalism became less wild; with the political chorus changed, national pride came back despite a return of autocratic rule. This return

[157] S. White & V. Feklyunina, Identities and Foreign Policies in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus, p. 99.
[158] *Ibid.*, p. 100.

of autocratic rule under Putin included a return to Soviet-type rhetoric in terms of patriotism, militarism and superiority, with the autocratic ideology appearing to fill the ideological vacuum of the 1990s because of the restoration of national pride. The pendulum of the argument appeared to swing back towards the Slavophiles. Despite the liberal intelligentsia being very critical of Putin's rule, people became very antagonistic to the West compared to the early 1990s and this was reflected in films such as *Brother 2*, with the bad aspects shown of Americans' lives inherently intended to be compared to Russian life.

In such a context there seems to be a message of pride in being Russian despite "losing" to the West economically, possibly compounded by the aftermath of Chernobyl in 1986 and the Kursk submarine disaster of 2000. A renewed focus in the Putin era on spiritual superiority was also reflected in post-Soviet films, such as *Taras Bulba* with the main character having the spiritual strength to kill his son for treachery. This is of course a screen adaptation of the 19th century novel by Nikolai Gogol, but turning to this theme and literary source at this time in history is highly symptomatic of the novel's relevance to today's society. This film also demonstrates the renewed value of patriotism and militarism under Putin.

Most Russians support the Slavophile argument, so some directors have made use of this, but Slavophile directors such as Mikhalkov are seen by the liberal intelligentsia as traitors and slaves of Putin's regime. However, there are many examples of foreigners being portrayed positively in the post-Soviet period, such as the Finn Veikko in *The Cuckoo*, who is indeed depicted better than the Russian soldier he lives with in the film. The examples of foreigners being positively portrayed are particularly plentiful and genuine compared to those in the Stalinist period, so this resentful Westerniser school of thought's existence in the post-Soviet period makes these examples less surprising.

What Neumann refers to as the Romantic nationalist position against Europe was taken by Slavophiles and strengthened following the 1848 European Revolutions. However, after they tried to shift the

ground of comparison between Russia and Europe from the technical to the spiritual arena, the Crimean War defeat pushed them back to the margins of the debate.[159] The humiliation of this military defeat was at odds with the notion of spiritual superiority, so the Romantic nationalist reaction to the defeat was to turn towards a revanchist programme of regaining losses as opposed to a spiritual one.[160] Indeed, this humiliation seemed to repeat itself after the First World War "set the nationalist cat among the social democratic pigeons". When the Romantic nationalist position was the last non-Bolshevik one to lose its foothold in the early 1920s, the Russian debate about Europe was reduced to the Bolsheviks about the position of the state, whether Russia's relationship with Europe should be one of economic integration or isolation.[161]

It is clear that Stalin did not choose the path of economic integration with Europe but rather the infamous Iron Curtain. Spirituality is something notably absent in Stalinist films, whereas the extent of the Soviets' territorial dominance is often alluded to on screen or in song such as in *Circus*. Therefore this background to Russian feelings on Europe is acutely relevant to understanding directors' mindset for their ideas behind the films. The aforementioned revanchism was reflected in Russia's mission to gather the Slav and Orthodox lands under its tutelage; "the inevitable confrontation with Europe which this programme would entail," as Neumann puts it, "would not necessarily deflect Russia from the path history had drawn up for it."[162] In this sense it shows that any negative feelings towards Europe were almost inevitable historically and by means of expansionism. This was reflected in the upbringing and cultural background of the film directors; the Slavophile and Westerniser schools of thought were at the roots of the *intelligentsia* that they were part of. This is key to understanding the context of Russian ideology towards Europeans as reflected in Russian films' foreign characters.

The ideology reflected in Stalinist film's foreign characters merges these long-term trends in Slavophile and Westerniser thought with directors' and Stalin's outlooks, which were in turn shaped at least to

[159] I. Neumann, Russia, p. 59.
[160] *Ibid.*
[161] *Ibid.,* pp. 95-96.
[162] *Ibid.,* pp. 59-60.

some extent by these trends. The liberals and the socialists did not share much more than an aversion to autocracy, which is inapplicable to Stalin's undoubted autocracy but their differences are of more relevance to him.[163] The difference in views of Russia's relationship to Europe between the liberal and the "Russian socialist" was shown in an exchange of letters between Herzen and the famous novelist Ivan Turgenev. Herzen argued that Russia was a cousin of Europe, who had taken little part in the family chronicle, but whose "rustic charms were fresher and more commendable than her cousins'", while Turgenev held that "Russia is not a maltreated and bonded Venus of Milo, she is a girl just like her older sisters – only a little broader in the beam".[164] Both see the relationship in terms of family metaphors, but they see differently when it comes to degree of kinship and relative desirability.[165]

This can also be related back to Stalinist filmmaking, where a key component was the promotion of family values against foreign barbarity. This is shown in Grigori Aleksandrov's *Circus*, where Marion sacrifices her former life and dignity to escape American racism and look after her child which she is able to do in the Soviet Union. Similarly in Sergei Eisenstein's *Alexander Nevsky*, Russian characters heroically defend and sacrifice themselves for their loved ones against foreign invaders. However, in the post-Soviet example of Vladimir Bortko's *Taras Bulba* it is different, where as previously mentioned Andriy betrays his country for a Polish lover and is killed by his father for it. One could therefore say that traditional family values are not so prioritised, albeit in the context of family against motherland.

This naturally does not prove that this is systemic in the post-Soviet period of filmmaking, but it can be inferred that upholding the traditional values of family is not necessarily strictly enforced. On the other hand, the context of family against motherland with the protagonist choosing the latter gives rise to the idea that perhaps this would be an exception among generally pro-family Stalinist films for promoting the utmost loyalty to the state, had it been released then. Indeed, in Vladimir Petrov's 1937

[163] *Ibid.*
[164] *Ibid.*
[165] *Ibid.*

film *Peter the Great* the tsar arrests his own son, with all Russians knowing that he eventually killed him. In Aleksei Balabanov's *Brother 2* the two brothers are like best friends and perform similar heroics to the *Alexander Nevsky* characters for each other. In both periods one could therefore argue that whilst a strong sense of family bonds is promoted as is Russian culture, there is also no shying away from portraying loyalty to the state as even more important.

Both Turgenev and Herzen used these specific family bonds to show their message, as Russian directors did some decades later to convey the messages of their films. The early Marxist socialists' view was that the liberals could not grasp how social relations were pivotal to historical development, that the bourgeois society existing in Europe and which the Russian liberals desired to copy, was bound to only be a stepping stone on the way to socialism.[166] This prediction was realised in history and thus it is important to stress how this influential early Marxism shaped Russian thoughts on Europe and hence foreign characters in Russian films. Stalin's desire to quell any contradictory ideology on Europe was entwined in his Soviet society, with any opposition being brutally shut down. His ideology was reflected in European characters such as Franz von Kneishitz and the portrayal of Soviet superiority in films, such as showing the Soviet Union's size on the map compared to Europe at the start of *Circus*.

3.2. *The "Russian Idea", "high culture" vs "mass culture" and the portrayal of reality*

Oleg Kovalov's presentation of the "Russian Idea" and its reflection in film is also important to analyse. He draws attention to the argument that "throughout Russian history it has proved impossible to reconcile and unite in a harmonious whole the mutually exclusive components which form the face of the nation – here, now, at the present instant."[167] This is evidence for why Stalin was so conspicuous in his efforts to promote his ideology through film, controlling key aspects of film production out of his known paranoia and desire to promote purely pro-Soviet values. Indeed, Kovalov continues that when this reconciliatory challenge fails, the minds of politicians "turned towards the world of the past

[166] *Ibid.*
[167] O. Kovalov, The Russian Idea, in B. Beumers (ed.), Russia on Reels, p. 12.

or, more often, to the promised future; there, it seemed, a radiant paradise had already been created for souls torn from the prison of a dirty, agonisingly imperfect reality."[168]

This can be seen in Stalinist films such as Eisenstein's *Alexander Nevsky*. Despite being released in 1938, it depicted an eerie resemblance to the situation the Soviet Union found itself in three years later; the "promised future" in this case being the eventual defeat of the German invaders at the hands of the morally and tactically superior Russians. Horrific scenes were shown prior to the Germans' defeat in *Alexander Nevsky*, demonstrating the need for vengeance. This can be seen as a case of distracting people from the failure of reconciling the "mutually exclusive components which form the face of the nation" and indeed from the "prison of a dirty, agonisingly imperfect reality", a repressive and rapidly industrialising Soviet Union that was also gearing up for potential war. When foreign travel was close to impossible, the "agonising imperfection" of reality can also be said to embody the natural human feeling that the grass could be greener where one is banned from going. The reminder through film of the negative aspects of foreigners certainly served as a means for Stalin and directors of the period to help qualm people's suspicions, also satisfying their curiosity through a means ultimately controlled by Stalin.

In order to describe the "Russian Idea" Kovalov refers to Nikolai Berdiaev, who wrote about diametrically opposed characteristics residing organically in the Russian people: "despotism, the hypertrophy of the State, and on the other hand anarchism and licence; cruelty, a disposition to violence, and yet also kindliness, humanity and gentleness; a belief in rites and ceremonies but also a quest for truth; individualism, a heightened consciousness of personality together with an impersonal collectivism; nationalism, self-glorification, alongside universalism and the ideal of the universal man; an eschatological messianic spirit of religion, and an external religiosity; a search for God and a militant godlessness; humility and arrogance; slavery and revolt".[169]

[168] *Ibid.*
[169] *Ibid.*

These diametrically opposed characteristics can also be seen in Russian films, including with the aforementioned loyalties towards family and state. From the examples of Peter the Great arresting his son in a Stalinist film and of Taras Bulba killing his son in a post-Soviet film, it can be seen that despite strong family values, loyalty to the state is shown to take precedence. The directors of both the Stalinist and post-Soviet films reflect many of these traits in their characters, often differentiating Russian characters from foreign ones with their opposite characteristics. This also demonstrates Hall's theory of binary representation of the Other as discussed in Chapter 1.3. In this way one could say the Russian audience may reflect their prejudices on foreigners according to the more undesirable of these diametrically opposed characteristics which they see in themselves.

Perlmutter's earlier discussed study on the prevalence of national stereotypes is particularly relevant to prejudice with his corroboration that "the image of the foreigner under some conditions mirrors the image of the self".[170] This shows how significant it is that Stalin and the directors, both from the Stalinist and to a lesser extent the post-Soviet period, could decide which of the opposed characteristics to assign to the foreign characters and Russian characters. In this way they could help shape public opinion. The aforementioned concept of "revolutionary Romanticism" and new Soviet man under Stalinism ties into this, helping with the aim to convince people of a fake reality and to define the "Russian Idea".

A Stalinist example of the opposed characteristics could include the American Marion Dixon from *Circus* and her individualism. She flees the United States for the Soviet Union in pursuit of a new life with her child and career as a dancer, robustly refusing all advances by the cruelly portrayed German manager and taking a centre stage role at the circus. This is in contrast to the Russian characters who are shown to work collectively and always chatting with humour to one another, including the theatre directors. Marion's dialogue is mostly restricted to arguments with the German manager until she is

[170] H. Perlmutter, Relations Between the Self-Image, pp. 131-137.

welcomed by the Russian people as one of their own, signifying their opposing trait of "heightened consciousness of personality together with an impersonal collectivism".[171]

Similarly with a post-Soviet example of *Brother 2*, the Russian characters such as the protagonist Danila are collectivist in their motives and their preparedness to fight and die for one another, whereas the American kingpin Richard Mennis is individualistic and their opposite world views clash at the end of the film. On the other hand, the Russian characters in this film also display both of some of the diametrically opposed characteristics listed by Berdiaev. In the aforementioned philosophical argument Danila argued against the individualistic greed that drove Mennis, representing in a way the ideal of the universal man and universalism as well as collectivism, but simultaneously in the film his and others' violent action scenes represent self-glorification. This disposition to violence they show is itself diametrically opposed to the kindliness, humanity and gentleness shown by Danila to an American trucker and Russian sex worker called Dasha.

Kovalov uses another Berdiaev quotation to illustrate the "Russian Idea": "Reality, which with its grimaces obscures this utterly beautiful mirage, must be repealed, rejected, detonated."[172] The idealists' seemingly fanciful and innocent desire to "leap out" of historical time in reality led to a series of conflicts for the country, ultimately shaping the climate behind the Stalinist films and beyond. In this way Kovalov argues that "the 'Russian Idea' - though undoubtedly disastrous for the state, the individual and the world - turned out to be unexpectedly fertile for culture, giving humanity the great literature and music of the nineteenth century, and the audacious impulses of the avant-garde."[173]

The "Russian Idea" was indeed somewhat reflected in twentieth century Russian film as a result of these makings of the avant-garde movement, with great literature and music continuing to be produced in significant quantities into the Stalinist period. Their artistic partner of filmmaking would in a sense be no less of a beneficiary going into influences on twentieth century artistic trends and

[171] O. Kovalov, The Russian Idea, in B. Beumers (ed.): Russia on Reels, p. 12.
[172] *Ibid.*
[173] *Ibid.*

movements. However, for the Stalinist period rather than the post-Soviet period, this does not account for Stalin's control over the production and content of Russian films behind the scenes. Whilst an audience in general could react more positively to a particular ideological approach, or a director could desire to implement a different interpretation of cultural history, this could all be much more easily corrected and controlled by Stalin as opposed to music composition or literature.

Kovalov also claims that "the actual concept of the 'Russian Idea', which is integral to an analysis of our literature and philosophy, appears to be quite inapplicable to cinema". He then contradicts this statement by calling the Soviet period the "Golden Age of the 'Russian Idea'" and detailing numerous examples of films with its influence.[174] Interestingly, he justifies his stance by differentiating Russian cinema from that of other countries: "The film-image is called upon to express the poetry of reality, of the terrestrial space which surrounds us, something that is evident in the achievements of American, Italian, Czech, Georgian and other prominent film schools. But the world of Russian culture is the world of the spirit, and it attempts to embody the non-material. The sensual nature of cinema is opposed to that; the true director deifies the rough matter of life."[175] By differentiating Russian cinema so much from many foreign film schools, it can be inferred how differently foreigners would be portrayed in Russian film, especially when one considers any "non-material" or "world of the spirit" aspect.

The portrayal of reality or "rough matter of life" can be found much more in post-Soviet cinema than in Stalinist films, with a conflicting example to Kovalov's stance being Balabanov's *Brother 2* released in 2000. Whilst showing both positive and negative relations with various foreign characters, the philosophical clash of ideologies came at the end after a very realistic depiction of Russian machomen humorously going on their mission in the United States. Stalinist films are generally more focused on the promotion of traditional and fixed values than "deifying the rough matter of life", tending to have

[174] *Ibid.*, p. 13.
[175] *Ibid.*

a classic formulaic story and emphasise a happy ending. By often splitting the diametrically opposed traits according to characters' nationality and class, the latter seen particularly with characters such as von Kneishitz in *Circus* to portray exploitation, the director Aleksandrov shows his bullying attitude but crucially also his comeuppance at the end. Meanwhile the "good" foreigner Marion, who escaped the USA and accepted the USSR as a better place, was friendly with other characters; there was little room for spirituality and other ideologies in the Stalinist period except Marxist-Leninism.

The Stalinist period was hence arguably closed off to true artistic development with the many rules in place, whereas the problem of the post-Soviet period compared to this selective "high culture" was almost the opposite with a proliferation of "mass culture". This decreased the average level of quality; as the typical boundaries for filmmaking and art itself reset, a new sense of identity fuelled by freedom has gradually been reconstructed since 1991 to bring the "Russian Idea" back in earnest, with no more limits on its reflection in ideological expression.

"High culture" further raised the cultural value of Stalinist films, with cinema being a rare means of contemporary entertainment; when the post-Soviet period came, the outpouring of long-held resentment coincided with a path towards following the West. With post-Soviet cinema now having the same profit-based aim as Western cinema, the "borrowed culture" became a reality for film as well as music. *Brother 2* with its many action scenes, outlandish humour and attention to sexual relations is a classic example of "borrowing" the Hollywood template to make a blockbuster. Balabanov indeed amends it with his own approach of Russian military men with typically humorous personalities finding trouble in America, alluding to negative imagery about the American Dream. *The Cuckoo* similarly uses humour and sexual relations for both Russian and foreign characters to appeal to raw human desires in film. Making the films more appealing in this way, rather than intellectually stimulating the viewer, demonstrates a post-Soviet transition to the prioritisation of profit over the propagandic depiction of Russians and foreigners.

Ivashkin writes, “It is, paradoxically, that music was more profound and interesting in an atmosphere of harsh political pressure and social discomfort than today, when Russians have the freedom to travel, to bargain, and to sell. In other words, less freedom, more creativity; more freedom, less creativity. Russian art does not flourish under conditions of total freedom…”.[176] This is reflected in cinema, with “high culture” promoting greater engagement with cinema. When there was suddenly the ability to make any film desired in the post-Soviet period as long as it was financed, there was a proliferation of “mass culture” and of films that were often focusing on the same negative aspects of society as each other, having not been able to broach them before. As the post-Soviet period carried on, so did the trend towards Westernised films with the “Hollywood blockbuster” template, as well as the trend of less inspiring music compared to the culturally rich patriotic songs of Stalinist films that were designed to evoke strong Russian emotions and live on to this day.

There is also a broader discussion regarding Ivashkin’s writings on music, due to its application to wider Russian cultural representation and the Russian Idea. He wrote that, in contrast to the Russian conception, the western “conception of art is different… a competition of rational forces. Russian music is much more irrational… A work of Russian art is a confession… Everything is extreme... We treat music as something more than just music… The Russian style is… a metaphysical one”.[177]

This relates to Russian film as an irrationality of extremes applies both to the Stalinist period and the post-Soviet period. One-dimensional foreign villains are compared to one-dimensional Russian protagonists and the American protagonist Marion in the Stalinist period. Everything is shown to be perfect in the Stalinist era, whilst the post-Soviet era brought the outpouring of long-held but unexpressed negative emotions. Irrationalism emphasises the non-rational dimension of human life and this is clearly seen in Russian film as well as music. It is shown by the false perfection in *Circus* and

[176] O. Tabachnikova, Russia and the West, p. 810.
[177] O. Tabachnikova, Russia and the West, p. 810.

the negative aspects of life in the United States shown in *Brother 2,* as well as the protagonist's self-imposed duty to kill his own son in *Taras Bulba*.

Tabachnikova comments on Ivashkin that "while in Western Europe culture was respectively an academic discipline… for Russians it became a substitute for life itself, with all the seriousness (almost fatefulness) that this implied… Although Russians borrowed culture… from the West, they substantially 'amended' it, enriched with their own meaning and approach, which has often regarded art as being larger than life."[178] This emphasis on culture as a substitute for life itself is particularly significant, as it reflects how different life under Stalinism was compared to the post-Soviet period.

Indeed, the easy access to entertainment and art that cinema provided was felt keenly even in 1917, with a contributor to *The Cinema Journal* writing: "The spectator goes to the cinema with… cynicism… but still he goes… because he has to have this pantomime."[179] This shows the prevalence of cinema as a popular art form and novelty, allowing for easier manipulation of the masses by Stalin when he came to power. The first Party Conference on Cinema in March 1928 reflects this as it called upon Soviet filmmakers to produce films that were 'intelligible to the millions', showing the keenness of the Soviet state to use cinema as a mass communication device.[180] When Boris Shumiatskii was appointed head of the Soviet film industry in October 1930, he set himself the task of achieving this goal whilst simultaneously combining ideology and entertainment for the mass audience after the Hollywood model.[181]

This Hollywood model was evidently not taken to in the Stalinist period as much as it was in the post-Soviet period with films such as *Brother 2*. However, the goal reinforces how important Stalinist cinema and consequently its portrayal of foreigners was to maintaining socialist realism for the masses. When cinematic expression was liberated in the post-Soviet period and the transition from

[178] *Ibid.*
[179] Y. Tsivian, trans. A. Bodger, R. Taylor (ed.), Early Cinema in Russia and its Cultural Reception, p. 37.
[180] R. Taylor, The Illusion, p. 601.
[181] *Ibid.*

"high culture" to "mass culture" was complete, cinema had long been widely available but it was Hollywood's profit-incentivised raw entertainment that had not.

There was significantly more spirituality in the post-Soviet period of filmmaking than the Stalinist period, yet it tends to be spirituality reflective of Russian society with a much more Hollywood-centric aspect to the storytelling. It shows multi-dimensional characters that feel less designed for propaganda and more indicative of the "rough matter of life" that affects us all. With many Russian films having a military aspect in both the Stalinist period and the post-Soviet period, the rough matter of life is shown clearly and usually without much philosophising, as the remaining characters carry on out of loyalty to the state and their "typically Russian" strength of character. This emphasis on strong Russian character was made customary by Stalin in his propaganda and morale-boosting efforts, not only through the means of cinema such as in *Alexander Nevsky*, but its influence on cinema has certainly lasted long afterwards into the post-Soviet period.

Despite also having a gritty and realistic military context to it, Rogozhkin's 2002 film *The Cuckoo* has more of a spiritual aspect. This is a by-product of three different nationalities barely understanding each other, with the characters often communicating to the audience through their silence or philosophical monologues. In showing the Russian character Ivan as a flawed personality who is less preferred sexually by the Sami woman, this does not reflect the classic "Russian Idea" initially explained by Kovalov, but it demonstrates that Russian cinema is indeed capable of presenting unbiased Russian characters with natural human flaws. Furthermore, it is evidence of the director "deifying the rough matter of life" and contradicting Kovalov's claim in as much as showing that Russian cinema is also capable of "expressing the poetry of reality" through the film-image. Despite this, however, it must be emphasised that in the Stalinist period it was very difficult to display "true" art. The amount of interference from Stalin forced a "fake real" to at least some extent, in order to be approved for release.

When compared to the post-Soviet era, the "Russian Idea" cannot be expressed as freely or judged as genuinely, for this reason of being stifled of the opportunity to show every aspect of their Soviet reality. Indeed, this is shown by the sombre example of Solomon Mikhoels, a Yiddish singer in the lullaby at the end of *Circus*. After Stalin's increasingly anti-Semitic stance following the Second World War, he had Mikhoels killed and the singer's verses were removed from the film in early 1953 until after Stalin's death.[182] This is in stark contrast to the lullaby's message and the welcoming nature of the Soviet Union aimed at in the film, demonstrating the fake reality in Stalinist cinema.

Indeed, Stalin is said to have made a comment in 1924 that reflects his intent with the forthcoming Stalinist filmmaking: "Cinema is an illusion, but it dictates its own laws to life itself."[183] From the 1920s, the authorities were quick in proclaiming cinema as "the most important art". Every complex work of art that hit the screen began to be interpreted as "exclusively Soviet" and "in line with party policy", a monotonous lie that resulted in entire Soviet generations perceiving cinema as "the worthy offspring of socialist realism".[184] This explains why the Stalinist period cannot be characterised by the "Russian Idea", as the people were deceived and shown a false real.

The Soviet authorities sought to appropriate the works of every great artist including Eisenstein; this "formalist" director hence became the semi-official critics' favourite target.[185] Having then become the "banner of Russian cinema" during the "Thaw", he was transformed again for the "children of *perestroika*" into a symbol of the totalitarian era's coarse kitsch, or low-brow art.[186] This is a reflection of the changes in Russian society and its ideals over the course of cinema's existence, showing how people from separate periods interpreted Russian cinema so differently as a result of their respective political context.

[182] J. Veidlinger, Solomon Mikhailovich Mikhoels, https://yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Mikhoels_Solomon_Mikhailovich
[183] D. Volkogonov, Stalin: Triumph and Tragedy, p. 87.
[184] O. Kovalov, The Russian Idea, in B. Beumers (ed.): Russia on Reels, p. 14.
[185] *Ibid.*
[186] *Ibid.*

For the West, however, Eisenstein's popularity there is due to him being seen as a quintessentially Russian director; Kovalov holds that Eisenstein was able to express to them the metaphysical immutability of the "Russian Idea", not subject to the flow of historical time.[187] This was reflected in *Alexander Nevsky* by the Russians' courageous loyalty to each other and the state, but the "Russian Idea" could not be fully expressed even by Eisenstein because of the extent of suppression. Every Stalinist director knew not to risk testing Stalin's boundaries of tolerance.

Conclusion

It can be concluded from this cultural study that there are many aspects to consider with regards to foreigners in Russian film, mainly revolving around the key areas of Character, Personality and Representation, Nationality, Directors and Ideology whilst also noting the impact of Music. We have seen how much those areas overlap, particularly with the discussions of ideology and its influence on foreigners' portrayal. Using specific analysis of films from the Stalinist period and the post-Soviet period, the periods with the most contrast, to reflect the contemporary trends was the most important way to demonstrate evidence. The Stalinist period's *Circus* and *Alexander Nevsky*, with the post-Soviet period's *Brother 2*, *Taras Bulba* and *The Cuckoo* were chosen after reaching the same conclusion as Beumers that to provide a comprehensive account of Russian cinema is to "ambitiously aim at the impossible".[188]

All the films demonstrated variety and key characteristics of their filmmaking periods and provided many points of comparison and analysis. When coupled with the ideological background context provided by literature, a comprehensive picture becomes clear of foreigners' portrayal in Russian films. The amount of background control exercised by the Stalinist state was always evident and reflected in German antagonists, such as Franz von Kneishitz in *Circus* and the barbaric German knights in *Alexander Nevsky*. Stalin instilled core traditional values and used films as propaganda to push his

[187] *Ibid.*
[188] B. Beumers (ed.) A Companion to Russian Cinema, p. 1.

own agenda. Any director knew they were in mortal danger if they did not abide by Stalin's rules, which prevented potential auteur directors from true expression of their desired character depictions.

This "false real" was part of Stalin's illusion to control the people, using this early means of mass communication as a propaganda tool; he indeed reportedly commented in 1924, "Cinema is an illusion, but it dictates its own laws to life itself."[189] This inherently meant that directors could not express their ideas and perceptions of Soviet life and people of all nationalities. As such, foreigners' depictions in Stalinist films were more a reflection of his designed reality for the people than a true reality reflecting foreigners' genuine characteristics and peculiarities. These films were the only images many Soviets had of a foreign national, making it straightforward to paint any desired personality of a foreigner.

This is well illustrated by von Kneishitz' moustache in *Circus* resembling Hitler's, and seemingly his appearance generally. The main image most contemporary Soviets would have of a German was Hitler, so arguably this was to promote an association of von Kneishitz' abusive and exploitative character with Hitler and other Germans. This attempt at association was similarly apparent in *Alexander Nevsky*, with the German knights murdering children and indeed entire villages until the Russians outmanoeuvre them thanks to Nevsky's strong leadership in a role seemingly representative of Stalin's, then receiving heroes' welcomes at home with the moral and tactical victory.

In contrast, the American dancer Marion Dixon in *Circus* demonstrates an alternative depiction of a foreigner: talented yet undermined by the corrupt and draconian capitalist system in the United States for having a black child. She finds the Soviet Union a more attractive prospect and is welcomed with open arms regardless of her child being black. Both *Circus* and *Brother 2* openly mock American racism, with *Circus* focusing on the Soviet Union being more accepting of Jimmy while *Brother 2* shows negative roles of black characters in American society and a racist policeman.

[189] D. Volkogonov, Stalin: Triumph and Tragedy, p. 87.

It is also notable how both *Brother 2 and Circus* involve leaving the homeland for a foreign country in line with Connolly's "In the Promised Land" genre. The key difference between them is that in *Circus*, a white American woman arrives in the Soviet Union with her black son and needs to assimilate, whereas in *Brother 2*, the main characters are Russians that go to the United States as "tourists". Although the latter also shows the perilous journey to find Mennis in the United States as with the "Journeys of Hope" genre, this demonstrates how immigration genre can be similar across the Stalinist and post-Soviet periods. There are enemy foreigners in both periods' films, particularly military opponents, but the post-Soviet period indeed saw a new classification of "host" foreigners as exemplified by the Americans in *Brother 2*, reflecting the greater ability of Russians to travel. With travel not being possible for ordinary citizens under Stalinism, there was a classification of "guest" foreigners instead such as Marion in *Circus.*

It was shown how people's opinion of foreigners can often derive from what traits they see in themselves, with The "Russian Idea" of diametrically opposed characteristics evidencing Hall's theory of binary representation of the Other. The foreigner portrayed in a good way is a friendly working-class dancer seeking to live well, respecting the Soviet culture and preferring it to her own country, whereas the negatively portrayed foreigner is shown to be an exploitative and controlling bourgeois who is undermined by the united and welcoming Soviet society.

The "Russian Idea" is only partially applicable to the Stalinist films because of the directors' inability to fully portray the "rough matter of life", but the diametrically opposed characteristics are reflected in the sense that the Russian characters and some foreigners are in a sense treated as only good whereas the other foreigners are portrayed as only bad. The Stalinist period of cinema can hence be seen to be strongly characterised by the films attempting to influence the audience's view of foreigners, planting positive or negative imagery according to the ruling Soviet ideology. Stalinist films did not serve to make profit but rather to represent Soviet "high culture", with the glorification of the Soviet state, traditional family values and the superior working class Soviet spirit intrinsically

preventing a genuine microcosm of Soviet society and views on foreigners, such as those which can be found in the post-Soviet period.

In this way the Stalinist period evidently contrasts heavily with the post-Soviet period; after comparative political freedom came with the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, national identity and views of foreign nationalities were reset in a way due to the drastic changes in the daily lives of people. They could now travel more and access to information was far less restricted than before. New details of their own past and that of other nationalities informed their mindset differently as well as greater access to current affairs abroad.

As the "Russian Idea" of diametrically opposed characteristics in Russians was suddenly allowed to be fully developed in cinema, less glamorous traits were shown in Russian characters such as the quarrelsome, shy and less sexually preferred Ivan in *The Cuckoo,* or Dasha being a sex worker in the USA in *Brother 2.* This evidence of a less biased approach to portraying Russian characters and the reality of life is indicative of a greater trustworthiness, an authenticity in post-Soviet films' depictions of foreigners as according to greater Russian perceptions and stereotypes. This was a drastic change from Stalinism's ideologically and politically motivated depictions.

As a result of the proliferation of "mass culture" in Russian cinema, a new overload of choice was now available to the people as with most other aspects of their lives; films released now had a challenge to achieve high viewing figures. Achieving these figures was the key aim of post-Soviet films which resulted in greater profits, in strong contrast to the Stalinist period's films whose aim was a propagandic illusion. As such, the post-Soviet period's films seek to present the foreigner through characteristics that can be most related to by the most people possible, driving more people to watch the film and pay for it. The films of the post-Soviet period are hence characterised by the Russian people's existing ideas of national identity and of foreigners, as opposed to the films of the Stalinist period seeking to influence the people's idea of national identity and of foreigners. This crucial distinction is what most separates the Stalinist period from the post-Soviet period in this study, as it

explains the much more authentic characters in the post-Soviet period compared to the more one-dimensional Stalinist characters, whose purpose seems too often to be the displayer of a nationalistic message rather than to relate to the audience in an honest way.

The result of the 1990s' "wild capitalism" clearly impacted the depiction of foreigners in Russian film towards greater authenticity. Characters such as the Finn Veikko in *The Cuckoo* cannot be imagined in a Stalinist film, being the more confident, well-natured and sexually preferred compared to the Russian Ivan, especially with them being at war. However, it is also evident that these tendencies changed depending on whether the film came before or after Putin's rise to power in 2000; the 1990s' wild capitalism saw criminalisation of power as well as the rise in wealth and influence of oligarchs. This led to major tension in society due to social injustice and inequality, which was inevitably reflected in film. Putin brought relatively more stability following this turbulent decade. There could be greater discussion again of a collective Russian identity. Putin aided this by bringing more focus to militarism and patriotism, promoting cultural continuity as a result.

The post-Soviet period focused on the negative after the long quest for truth, in contrast to the Stalinist period that characteristically polished reality, using socialist realism as the only artistic method; this was the effect of artists and society being tired of the hypocrisy and restrictions. They now overly focused on what they could barely touch on before. Directors and other artists were portraying the very worst of reality, effectively a protest and the result of almost a century of stifled ideas. Going too far in this direction in the post-Soviet period became a danger of losing the Russian moral compass again, this time by appealing to the lowest of the human being. Stalin's abandonment of the moral compass instead came with his ideological and cultural illusion of reality, instead depicting characters and the Soviet reality as "black and white", good or bad, constructing a myth of a perfectionist Soviet state directly as a product of political terror.

The post-Soviet period's pursuit of a "darkened reality" merged with the profit-based aim as that is what people wanted to watch, with films appealing to the worst they saw in life and society, since it

could not be depicted before. Directors wanting a high-profit blockbuster were now aiming at people's shallowness and raw instincts rather than cultural enlightenment. The Stalinist and post-Soviet periods hence represent both extremes in the sense of depicting reality. These include the authenticity of foreign characters, yet a duality of oversimplification comes as a result of different contextual reasons. This is particularly interesting to consider in light of the fact that these two periods are such polar opposites, with the post-Soviet period's unrestrained ideological freedom comparing to Stalinism's lack of freedom at all.

Ideologically, Stalinist directors were slaves to the state whereas economically, post-Soviet directors have been relative slaves to economic prosperity. This strongly supports my initial choice of focusing on the Stalinist and post-Soviet periods in that the two are still connected despite all their differences, through this mirror image of duality. Cultural continuity from the Stalinist period did remain in other aspects, including Putin's renewed emphasis on militarism and patriotism. It was the commercialisation of cinema brought by "wild capitalism" that prompted this distortion of simplifying negative imagery through "mass culture".

Putin's rise to power indeed lessened the darkening of reality, due to more economic prosperity and his consequent re-raising of Russia's profile against the West. The 1990s saw the simplification of negative imagery because of commercial pressures and the desire to steer as far away as possible from the hypocrisy of the Soviet state since Perestroika. When Putin took charge, the economic prosperity allowed a slowing of this trend of focusing on the bleakest parts of human life, almost to the point that it stops being art as everything is portrayed in a dark light. Instead of this simplification or that of Stalinism's "polished reality", there was cultural continuity from the Soviet period in the sense of a strong moral compass linked with spiritual obligations, but also a renewed exploration of the "Russian Idea". Under Stalin it was integrated into loyalty to the state, while in the post-Soviet period and going into Putin's era, this was reflected more in people's pride of being Russian. Indeed,

the cultural continuity but with a new freer society is alluded to by Putin's famous comment in 2010: "Whoever does not miss the Soviet Union has no heart. Whoever wants it back has no brain."[190]

Foreigners' portrayals in both Stalinist films and post-Soviet films often reflected the aforementioned Russian pride. This is seen clearly by fighting back against the Germans in *Alexander Nevsky* to defend the Motherland, as well as with the image of perfection in the Soviet Union with *Circus*, rebuking the abusive German manager and welcoming the victimised escapee from the United States. This pride is also seen in films from the post-Soviet period such as *Brother 2* with the military characters going about their mission with humour and light mockery of life in the United States where they travelled to, as well as in *Taras Bulba* with the lead character executing his son for betraying the state for a foreign lady.

However, the lesser darkening of reality as the post-Soviet period continued under Putin is shown by *The Cuckoo*, where Veikko the Finn and Ivan the Russian are both well-balanced characters, with Veikko actually showing himself to be the more measured of the two. The film shows how three people on different sides of a global conflict can live together, albeit with some difficulties, until the war ends at the end of the film. It is also evident that *Brother 2* and *Taras Bulba* with their many action scenes are representatives of a wider post-Soviet trend, that of culture in Russia obtaining a similar role to the West. It is a role of entertainment and an intellectual game, rather than searching for the meaning of life and always focusing on negative aspects as in the 1990s. This meant more hedonism was seen in post-Soviet films as a result of this Putin-era economic prosperity, following the exhaustive negativity.

Indeed it is almost paradoxical how in the post-Soviet period, whilst trying to steer away from the West and become independent economically and politically, their own customs became more aligned with those of the West. Films like *Brother 2* were mocking Western customs while this happened and

[190] C. Miller, Why Putin's Economy Survives, The Wall Street Journal, 29th December 2016, https://www.wsj.com/articles/why-putins-economy-survives-1483020001

the role of art began reflecting the Western aim for profit through hedonistic entertainment, rather than searching for the meaning of existence and culture being aimed at spiritual or intellectual enlightenment. It is hence clear how the "Russian Idea" cannot be consistently applied to Russian cinema and its portrayal of foreign characters. The "Russian Idea" is about life's balance and meaning, with physical reality needing to be defined by metaphysical reality, as implied by Ivashkin's argument that "the Russian style is, first of all, a metaphysical one".[191] Without that spiritual sense of reality there is meaninglessness in life, which is the worst fear in Russian culture. The spiritual aspect of the "Russian Idea" is related to people's morality, such as a welcoming nature to those struggling.

This is shown with Marion in *Circus* and Dasha in *Brother 2* being supported by Russian characters. In both the Stalinist period and the post-Soviet period, military-related films also reflect the "Russian Idea" in its people rising again from suffering to carry on, showing the strength of Russian character and stoicism compared to that of other nations. This is the clearest source of evidence for cultural continuity between the Stalinist period and the post-Soviet period, in terms of foreigners' portrayal in Russian film. This all reinforces the duality of the ideological and cultural oppression enforced in the Stalinist period with the materialist proliferation of culture in the post-Soviet period.

Furthermore, it is evident that both periods' films portray foreign characters with an extent of a hidden agenda, one that is not committed to the genuine portrayal of a foreigner. The Stalinist period used mostly negative imagery to further Stalin's purpose of propaganda and make the public distrust Germans and capitalism whilst believing in their own superiority, whereas the post-Soviet period's films were designed to appeal to as many potential audience members as possible. Whether the post-Soviet portrayal of the foreigner was positive or negative, in most cases balanced, the priority with creating a foreign character was to make them interesting rather than a true reflection of the character's nationality and culture.

[191] O. Tabachnikova, Russia and the West, p. 810.

However, one can still argue that ideology has played a significant role in the post-Soviet period, but it considerably depends on how much the director leans one way or another in the Slavophiles and Westernisers debate. This debate did not apply to the Stalinist period because there was no ideological variety whatsoever, but the two schools of thought have thrived in different mutated forms throughout the post-Soviet period. The Slavophiles were represented in Vladimir Bortko's *Taras Bulba* with militarism and the strong duty of patriotism leading Taras Bulba to kill his son, while the Westernisers were represented in Aleksandr Rogozhkin's *The Cuckoo*, with the Russian Ivan's distinct lack of superiority over the Finn Veikko.

These examples reflect the overarching idea that in the post-Soviet period, particularly after the "Wild 90s", there has been a much greater balance in displayed ideology and personalities than in the Stalinist period. While there was a one-dimensional fake reality, there are some undeniable, perhaps paradoxical similarities between these two diametrically opposite periods in terms of foreigners' portrayal in film, as this study has shown.

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