MASTER'S THESIS

Evoking Soviet Dreamworlds:
The Sovexport Documentaries at the
EYE Filmmuseum

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AUGUST 2020

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Research Master's Thesis

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RMA Media, Art & Performance Studies

Department of Media and Culture Studies

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August 2020

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CONTEMPORARY DOCUMENTARY FILM AND THE REBIRTH OF NOSTALGIA
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ABSTRACT

The present study aims to contextualize Soviet propaganda films from the so-called Era of Stagnation (1964–1980), based on evidence retrieved during original archival research at the EYE Filmmuseum in Amsterdam. The undertaken discovery on the Sovexport Collection brings its content to the scholarly attention by revealing a number of paradoxes in the representation of the Soviet utopia. Pursuing an extensive empirical and theoretical study of the Sovexport films with the aim to throw light at their semi-fictional features, my methodology evolves within the broader framework of the semio-pragmatic approach to documentaries, which demonstrates when films can be considered as non-fiction. After having searched for the authentication tools used by filmmakers to produce the documentaries' meaning, I bring to the fore the visions of space, nature, and technology seen as part of the utopian Communist grand narrative documented in the Sovexport films. As a result, I delineate two types of nostalgia nurtured by the dreamworlds of the examined documentaries. The first prevails in today's Russia where nostalgia is of a reflective kind, and filmmakers emphasize that mostly individuals alien to the Soviet era and its realities are fascinated by the Communist utopia. In turn, non-fictional films created in the West display an evoked enchantment with the Soviet utopian model, which goes beyond the mere symbols of "Sovietness". The unveiled evidence shows that Soviet ideology is depicted as holding transformative power for the future. This can be further observed when comparing the Sovexport films with contemporary documentaries produced in the West, as the latter follow a similar strategy of blurring fiction and reality. Filling a gap in the study of Soviet cinema, the thesis thus provides a new impetus for making, viewing, and analyzing documentary films in accord with history and its complexities.

Keywords: Soviet cinema, Sovietness, documentary, dreamworld, utopia, nostalgia, Soviet Era of Stagnation, EYE Filmmuseum

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

I use the following spelling and transliteration from Cyrillic to Latin script when referring to Russian sources and terms:

а – a	з – z	п – p	ч – ch
б – b	и – i	р – r	ш – sh
в – v	й – y	с – s	щ – sht
г – g	к – k	т – t	ы – y
д – d	л – l	у – u	ь – '
е – e	м – m	ф – f	э – è
ё – yo	н – n	х – h	ю – yu
ж – zh	о – o	ц – ts	я – ya

INTRODUCTION

The interest in Russian cinema and its developments has been growing rapidly in Western academia[1], especially since the fall of the Soviet Union[2]. Moreover, most recently, contemporary media and art practices have witnessed a "documentary turn" and an increasing fascination in the past of the Soviet Union and its utopias[3]. There is a rising nostalgia not only for the Soviet aesthetic, but also for the Communist ideology evoked differently by contemporary Russian and Western artists and researchers. This nostalgia is worth investigating, as it can under certain circumstances be extremely powerful by "breeding monsters" through the imaginary "phantom homeland"[4] it creates.

At the heart of the present study is an analysis of the films from the Sovexport Collection at the EYE Filmmuseum in Amsterdam that has never been previously identified and categorized. My research project thus not simply addresses a lacuna in earlier film studies but tackles empirical evidence which is a completely blank area – not only due to the insufficiently known contents of all the collection, but also because of the uneven research on Soviet cinema, rarely tackling the time-period in which the Sovexport films were produced (1960–1985) and the specific features of their genre, i.e., documentaries and newsreels.

Objective

The overall aim of my research is to closely analyze the Sovexport collection films at the EYE Filmmuseum revealing how their "dreamworlds"[5] built an utopian and semi-fictional image of "Sovietness"[6] and exploring why such an investigation matters to today's phenomenon of rising nostalgia for this Soviet utopia, comparable with German *Ostalgie* of former GDR

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[1] Jay Leyda, *Kino: A History of the Russian and Soviet Film* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983).

[2] Neya Zorkaya, *The Illustrated History of the Soviet Cinema* (New York: Hippocrene Books, 1991); David C. Gillespie, "The Sounds of Music: Soundtrack and Song in Soviet Film," *Slavic Review* 62, no. 3 (2003): 473–90; Birgit Beumers, *A History of Russian Cinema* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2009).

[3] Paolo Magagnoli, *Documents of Utopia: the Politics of Experimental Documentary* (London and New York: Wallflower Press, 2015).

[4] Svetlana Boym, "Nostalgia and its Discontents," in *The Collective Memory Reader*, ed. Jeffrey K. Olick, Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi and Daniel Levy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 453.

[5] Susan Buck-Morss, *Dreamworld and Catastrophe: the Passing of Mass Utopia in East and West* (Cambridge, MA and London: MIT Press, 2002).

[6] Emma Widdis, *Visions of a New Land: Soviet Film from the Revolution to the Second World War* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003).

citizens clearly revived in documentary films not only in Russia but also in the West. The contemporary work of artists such as Hito Steyerl, Anri Sala, Ilya and Emilia Kabakov shows an identifiable collective trend of constructing documentaries by blending reality and fiction to propose a re-reading and potential rebirth of the Soviet ideology. The fascination with Sovietness can take various forms in post-Soviet Russia and the West shaped by the cultural background and the historical experience of the commoners, artists, and scholars. As we shall see, some leading Russian scholars today do not share the "postmodernist" enthusiasm with the multiplicity of interpretations promoted by some Western researchers, as in Russia they share a different historical memory. By bringing to the fore Sovexport Collection, the present study brings to the fore various types of evoking Soviet dreamworlds – both critical and romanticizing.

The examination of the multiple paradoxes of the Sovexport propaganda reels, which are on the verge of actuality and fiction having concealed the horrendous realities of the Soviet era can ideally give a new impetus on how new documentary films are made, viewed, and most importantly, further critically analyzed. This task corresponds to **two major interrelated research questions**. *First*, what does a close analysis of the Sovexport Collection at the EYE Filmmuseum reveal about the mechanisms of constructing the utopia of Sovietness? *Second*, how can an analysis of the Sovexport films contribute to the ongoing discussions on documentary films and their truth claims?

The fascinating accounts on the beginnings of Soviet cinema[7] notwithstanding, the scope the present study takes is mainly the period of the Soviet cinema's history in the so-called Stagnation Period or Stagnation Era.[8] Given the limited literature on the subject in English, the study of the Sovexport collection will also fill a gap by providing detailed information about the contents, themes and patterns of these propaganda reels. However, a limitation of the thus undertaken research was the three-month duration of my internship at EYE, which was not enough for examining the 2000 cans preserving the collection's analogue films. Due to the COVID-19 outbreak and the subsequent temporary closing of the Museum, the plans for continuing work on the collection with internship supervisor Mark Paul Meyer were by necessity put to a halt. Nevertheless, during my work at the Collection Center, I have watched and categorized over two hundred reels from the Sovexport 293-96 collection.

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[7] Bill Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary* (Bloomington, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2001).
[8] See, for example, Marina Kosinova, "Ėksportno-importnye otnosheniya sovetskoy kinematografii v gody 'zastoya'" [Export-Import Relations of Soviet Cinema during the Years of 'Stagnation'], *Vestnik Universiteta* 12, (2016): 213–18.

Literature Review and State of the Research

The state-of-the-art in the field of film studies indicates that the study of Soviet cinema in the Stagnation Period is crucial for grasping the multifaceted functions of utopian and semi-fictional images of Sovietness. Understanding the Sovexport films at the EYE Filmmuseum is closely related to grasping the Soviet realities of their time. The films, which I have categorized for the Collection Center, were produced between 1960 and 1985, mostly in the 1970s. This period is often neglected in academic literature, as Soviet cinema has been researched unevenly due to limited access to the films themselves and, also, due to the larger availability of avant-garde pictures through clubs and film societies at the time of their making in the 1930s. Therefore, a large part of scholarship about Soviet cinema deals with the early cinematic achievements of Soviet filmmakers.[9]

In Western scholarship – at least as far as publications in English are concerned, the main reference for almost half a century was *Kino*,[10] for it presents a historical account on the Russian and Soviet cinematic art. This has changed after the collapse of the USSR[11] also with the proliferation of texts proposing more in-depth approaches to the topic.[12] Peter Kenez's *Cinema and Soviet Society: From the Revolution to the Death of Stalin* (2001) is significant for the field by delving into great details and serving as a tool for reference to how Soviet cinema came to be tied to the Bolshevik regime and its propaganda machine, but as most research on Soviet cinema, it covers a limited time-period.[13]

A growing body of work, which is of crucial importance to the present study, has been dealing with the challenging importance of the Late-Soviet Era starting from the 1970s. A more updated account can be read in Beumer's *A History of Russian Cinema*[14] which tackles Russian films from the beginnings to the contemporary period by foregrounding key motion pictures and engaging them with the socio-political context of the Soviet Union. Beumers suggests that

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[9] Yuri Tsivian, *Early Cinema in Russia and Its Cultural Reception*, translation Alan Bodger (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1998).

[10] Leyda, *Kino: A History of the Russian and Soviet Film* (originally published in 1960).

[11] Zorkaya, *The Illustrated History of the Soviet Cinema* (1991); Catriona Kelly and David G. Shepherd, *Constructing Russian Culture in the Age of Revolution, 1881–1940* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

[12] Gillespie, "The Sounds of Music: Soundtrack and Song in Soviet Film," 473–90; Birgit Beumers, ed. *The Cinema of Russia and the Former Soviet Union: 24 Frames* (London and New York: Wallflower Press, 2007).

[13] For example, Cristina Vatulescu, *Police Aesthetics: Literature, Film, and the Secret Police in Soviet Times* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010).

[14] Birgit Beumers, *A History of Russian Cinema* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2009). Beumer's book, however, was not a part of Utrecht University's archive. Because of the COVID-19 outbreak, there was no opportunity to reach out to other European libraries. Equally as important to this project was the available Beumer's volume *A Companion to Russian Cinema*. *Wiley Blackwell Companions to National Cinemas* (Chichester and Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell, 2016).

the Cold War Era movies forced a return to political topics in their representation of the "enemy", as well as that the 1960s and the 1970s saw a growing interest of art-house films. Another focused report of late Soviet pictures is Rimgaila Salys's *The Russian Cinema Reader. Vol. 2*: *The Thaw to The Present*[15] which includes a chapter by Elena Prokhorova on "Cinema of Stagnation: Late 1960s–1985"[16]. *The Russian Cinema Reader* is preoccupied with the more popular fiction films from each time-period. For example, it includes in-depth analyses of *Solaris*, *Stalker*, and *Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears*. Although they are extensive contributions to the field useful to the present study in informing it about the general historical context, these volumes do not seem to have covered the films predominating in the Sovexport collection – propaganda newsreels and documentaries about the history of the Soviet Union, its scientific progress, "Soviet heroes", art and overall achievements.

A crucial book providing further insights into the Stagnation Period, as well as specific information more closely related to the themes covered in the Sovexport Collection, is *The Red Screen: Politics, Society, Art in Soviet Cinema* edited by Anna Lawton,[17] and in particular two of its chapters – John B. Dunlop's "Russian Nationalist Themes in Soviet Film of the 1970s"[18] and Val Golovskoy's "Art and Propaganda in the Soviet Union, 1980–5".[19] Besides adding some details for the Soviet context during the Era of Stagnation, Dunlop's work provides insights into the popular and "dissident" films of the time (for example, *Mirror* and *Moscow Does not Believe in Tears*), fostering our understanding of the ideological oppression over the arts and the complex ways in which artists were coping with it.

A source of great importance for understanding significant details about the thematic developments in the films from the Sovexport collection is *Film and Television Genres of the Late Soviet Era* by Alexander Prokhorov and Elena Prokhorova.[20] Their study is important to my research due to its multiple approaches to television and cinema, as they explain the genre developments of Soviet film from its beginnings onwards, providing a clear connection between the politics of the Cold War and the late genres of Socialist realism, which according to Prokhorov and Prokhorova are reflected in contemporary Russian films. They touch upon

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[15] Rimgaila Salys, *The Russian Cinema Reader. Vol. 2: The Thaw to the Present* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2013).
[16] *Ibid.*, 104–13.
[17] Anna Lawton, ed. *The Red Screen: Politics, Society, Art in Soviet Cinema* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992).
[18] *Ibid.*, 231–46.
[19] *Ibid.*, 264–82.
[20] Alexander Prokhorov and Elena Prokhorova, *Film and Television Genres of the Late Soviet Era* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016).

the connection between documentary, truth and authenticity which corresponds directly with my thesis' subject through an in-depth analysis of specific popular films, such as Yuri Ozerov's film series *Liberation* as well as his propagandistic documentary *Oh, Sport, You Are – Peace!* Although these works are not in the list of seen films from the Sovexport collection, Ozerov's *Olimpiyskiy Prazdnik* (1980) is present in it. This points to Prokhorov and Prokhorova's research providing useful insights about the specific films in the Sovexport collection. In a thorough article, Kosinova gives a detailed account of the complex export and import relations of Soviet cinema with the "Western Block" during the 1970s and 1980s thus delineating the role of the Cold War context.[21]

After pin-pointing the boundaries of the Stagnation Period, it is essential to grasp the manner in which meaning is constructed in documentary films. Recent literature has developed tremendously from the 1898 claim by Boleslas Matuszewski that cinematographic images are "the most valuable witnesses of the past"[22] because of their resistance to manipulation. Nowadays it is common knowledge that both analogue and digital media can be manipulated and used in accordance with its author's motivations. Although discussing early Soviet film, Nichols emphasizes that any creative treatment of reality moves us away from the indexical image of what is preexisting fact towards the "semiotics of constructed meaning and the address of the authorial I."[23]

Crucially important for the present thesis is a study by Louise Spence and Vinicius Navarro[24] exploring in its entirety the manner in which documentary filmmakers construct their "dreamworld" and make sense of reality. They examine the notion of evidence and the aural and visual proof offered by documentary films in favour of their "claims of truth", as well as map out the exact formal ways in which documentaries "speak to us" and construct meaning (editing, camerawork, soundtrack etc.). Another perspective, which refuses the old view of documentary-as-representation-of-reality, is outlined by Ilona Hongisto who contributes to the discussion through the lens of new materialism.[25] Engaging concepts by Deleuze and Guattati, the author proposes that documentaries are not distinct from reality but on a par with it, they are entangled with the reality they reproduce and thus have the power to change it. Hongisto

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[21] Kosinova, "Èksportno-importnye otnosheniya," 213–8.

[22] Boleslas Matuszewski, "A New Source of History," *Film History* 7, no.3 (1995): 323.

[23] Bill Nichols, "Documentary Film and the Modernist Avant-Garde," *Critical Inquiry* 27, no. 4 (2001): 593.

[24] Louise Spence and Vinicius Navarro, *Crafting Truth: Documentary Form and Meaning* (New Brunswick, New Jersey, and London: Rutgers University Press, 2011).

[25] Ilona Hongisto, *Soul of the Documentary: Framing, Expression, Ethics* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2015).

writes that films interest viewers not so much because of the claims they propose, but because of their constant reminder that the real transcends what is directly perceivable in images.

By analyzing two postmodern documentaries, Linda Williams suggests that scholars' difficulty in thinking about the truth in documentary comes from an "oversimplified dichotomy between truth in fiction", and that often documentary is interrogated by means of the same tools as fiction.[26] On the same note, Garnet C. Butchart argues through a psychoanalytic approach and by drawing on Alain Badious's philosophical notion of an ethics of truths that by showing the phenomenality of the perceptual mode of address, one can secure "philosophically the common sense idea that truth in documentary is always a matter of perspective."[27] In a similar manner, after a fruitful discussion on the development of the "claim on the real" of documentaries and its status today, Frank Kessler claims that the concepts of the *profilmic* and *afilmic* can be used to clarify the problematic relationship between the indexical image and "the real".[28] His crucial conclusion is that the future of documentary film holds an urgent need for the development of a general level of media literacy, which would make possible a critical reflection of the digital image and its "claim on the real".

Drawing on such insights from earlier research, I contextualize the Sovexport collection and discuss how the crafting of meaning in documentaries has been established to tackle the question of how Soviet art, and particularly Soviet films, construct a utopian "dreamworld". The concept of the dreamworld has been inspired by a complex and comprehensive book of Susan Buck-Morss.[29] The main argument of Buck-Morss is that the ideologies of the USA and the USSR had common ideological roots in the French Revolution.[30] While the United States and its visions of the nation-state was conceptualized in terms of space, the Soviet Union's revolutionary spirit was conceptualized in terms of *time*. Although Buck-Morss suggests fascinating connections and offers interesting conclusions that have influenced other studies to delve into the dreamworlds seeking to explore why they came to be and came to an end,[31] the

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[26] Linda Williams, "Mirrors without Memories: Truth, History, and the New Documentary," *Film Quarterly* 46, no.3 (1993): 13–4.

[27] Garnet C. Butchart, "On Ethics and Documentary: A Real and Actual Truth," *Communication Theory* 16, no. 4 (2006): 428.

[28] Frank E. Kessler, "What You Get is What You See: Digital Images and the Claim on the Real," in *Digital Material: Tracing New Media in Everyday Life and Technology,* ed. Marianne van den Boomen, Sybille Lammes, Ann-Sophie Lehmann, Joost Raessens and Mirko Tobias Schäfer (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009), 187–97, esp. 192.

[29] Susan Buck-Morss, *Dreamworld and Catastrophe: the Passing of Mass Utopia in East and West*, (Cambridge, MA and London: MIT Press, 2002).

[30] *Ibid*., 14.

[31] Peter Romijn, Giles Scott-Smith and Joes Segal, *Divided Dreamworlds? The Cultural Cold War in East and West* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2012).

common discourse in academic research regarding Soviet films puts an emphasis on the conceptualization of the utopian spirit through representation of time, but *also,* space. Theories of space and movement have been central in Russian studies of the past decade[32] and continue drawing the scholarly attention.

A volume edited by the Russian historian Evgeny Dobrenko and Erik Naiman[33] is particularly important for analyzing the documentaries at the Sovexport collection, for it deals namely with the role of space in the construction of the Soviet dreamworld through Soviet art, including music, painting, and film. Similar ideas are highlighted in the volume *National Identity in Russian Culture: An Introduction* who present a valuable contribution by discussing the formation of national identity through the representation of both time and space.[34]

The discussion of creating dreamworlds through a representation of space in Soviet art and cinema provides a transition to the case major case study of the present thesis – the Sovexport collection at the EYE Filmmuseum. In order to exemplify a number of paradoxes in the way these particular documentaries created the image of Sovietness through their particular dreamworld, I draw upon the useful book of Emma Widdis *Visions of a New Land: Soviet Film from the Revolution to the Second World War*, and in particular her discussion about the concepts of *razvedka* and *osvoenie*[35]. Widdis' analysis, however, begins and ends with films in the period from 1917 to 1945, which leaves a gap that can be productively filled by undertaking an in-depth study of the numerous reels at the Collection Center.

After having discussed the Sovexport Collection as a core case study, I examine the contemporary state of documentary discourse – in the West and in Russia alike. The need of such a level of critical attention and media literacy is illustrated by a recent Magagnoli's recent monograph on the politics of experimental documentary[36] that is preoccupied with recent work by some of the most significant artists today, such as Hito Steyerl and Joackim Koester. The authors observe a redirected attention to the past and a rebirth of nostalgia for the dreamworld of previous failed utopias in the films, paintings and installations of these artists along the political significance of such work. Thus, the volume acts as one of the first critical reflections

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[32] For example, Edith W. Clowes, *Russia on the Edge: Imagined Geographies and Post-Soviet Identity* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2011); Lida Oukaderova, "The Sense of Movement in Georgii Daneliia's *Walking the Streets of Moscow*," *Studies in Russian and Soviet Cinema* 4, no.1 (2010): 5–21.

[33] Evgeny Dobrenko and Erik Naiman, eds. *The Landscape of Stalinism: The Art and Ideology of Soviet Space* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003).

[34] Simon Franklin and Emma Widdis, eds. *National Identity in Russian Culture: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

[35] Widdis, *Visions of a New Land*, 104, 153.

[36] Magagnoli, *Documents of Utopia*.

of the recent developments of contemporary art scene and its documentary turn. The phenomenon described in this book is further examined through the lens of a fascinating text on nostalgia by cultural historian Svetlana Boym who sees nostalgia as a symptom of our modern times and as a historical emotion. This is how Boym elaborates on the already mentioned notion of nostalgia as creating a "phantom homeland" that "breed monsters" of negative desires coming from utopian ideas and memories unreflective of reality.[37]

Methodology

The present study addresses the aforementioned major research questions through a multifaceted approach that I pursue within the state-of-the-art to achieve my objective. Working with the source material preserved at the EYE archives, my conceptualization within the area of film studies is not restricted by disciplinary boundaries. Given the literature review and considering the state of research, I have drawn inspiration also from the fields of social anthropology, history, politics, and cultural studies, which enabled me to construct a theoretical framework for a productive analysis of the Sovexport films.

During the preparation of the present thesis, I initially conducted an in-depth archival research at the EYE Filmmuseum where I conducted my internship under the supervision of Senior Curator Mark Paul Meyer for three months (September – November 2019), with an extension of one month. Through this beneficial experience, my expertise in the Russian language facilitated my work with the previously uncategorized films at the Collection Center. Discovering the films was the "enigmatic component" of my project, as I was not aware of their contents and did not assume to what specific research directions they might take me. This experience was an incredible opportunity to work "behind the scenes" in one of the major museum institutions in the Netherlands.

During the internship, I faced a previously unexplored area, namely film handling, film preservation, as well as EYE categorization of the archive material. Highlighting the urgency of combining theory with practice in a transforming media landscape, Giovanna Fossati writes that researchers must "get their hands dirty"[38]. Initially, I was familiarized by Mark Paul Meyer with the process of investigating film cans in order to recognize their basic information, such as title and year of production, as well as to get a good grasp of when a film is complete or

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[37] Boym, "Nostalgia and its Discontents," 452–8.
[38] Giovanna Fossati, *From Grain to Pixel: The Archival Life of Film in Transition* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018), 327.

incomplete. I had the chance to begin learning handling both 16mm and 35mm films, each of which has its own specificities regarding the projecting process on the viewing tables. When concluding that most 35mm films from the collection were dispersed among different cans in the collection and thus incomplete in their majority, my work throughout the internship was mostly dedicated to the 16mm reels, also occasionally disorganized. The viewing process of the films was both challenging and rewarding, as a great deal of precision is needed when working with analogue film copies, especially being so fragile and damaged as the Sovexport collection, held in damp and improperly acclimatized spaces prior to the Collection Center.

When watching the films, my routine consisted of noting down all crucial themes, quotes, and particularities with my research in mind, as well as keeping a record of each film on a Viewing rapport. This included marking the film's format, colour, damage level, language, length of the reel and others. In addition, the categorization of the films required a special attention to noting down five mandatory elements – the title of the film, the production company, identified year of production or distribution, the director of the film, as well as whether the film has sound or not. When available, I complied further the names of the actors, cameraman, scriptwriters and others. For every film, a description of its contents was a vital part for the catalogue. Oftentimes, the film copy did not include the mandatory elements for its categorization, which is why I researched further in the online Russian Archive of Documentary Films and Newsreels.[39]

This was namely the challenge of this first stage of my thesis project, as I had the opportunity to intertwine my daily practice at the viewing tables with attending lectures conducted for the Dual Master's Program in *Preservation and Presentation of the Moving Image* from the University of Amsterdam at the Collection Center. Key historical moments and theories regarding analogue film were thus discussed and clarified.

Paul Read and Mark Paul Meyer write that choosing which films to restore and preserve is an incredibly difficult and responsible task, for an estimation shows that around 80 percent of early films created before 1930 have been lost.[40] Although the number of lost films in the following decades is lower, the Sovexport collection at the EYE Filmmuseum is a valuable piece of cinema deserving proper attention not only for its aesthetic value, but also for its historical significance and potential to help us navigate the contemporary field of documentary

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[39] *Russian Archive of Documentary Films and Newsreels*. The archive has a website accessible online at www.net-film.ru/en/ (Accessed May 10, 2020).

[40] Paul Read and Mark-Paul Meyer, *Restoration of Motion Picture Film* (Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann, 2000), 2.

cinema. I have outlined three patterns evident in the Sovexport collection – the image of the Soviet hero/Soviet New Man, the Soviet New Woman, and the representation of Soviet space and its vastness (the imagined geography of Sovietness). An in-depth analysis of the third pattern is the major case study in the present thesis.

The second stage of this Master thesis involved an interpretative approach of the proposed literature in combination with a close analysis of the Sovexport films based on the qualitative analysis conducted through the cataloguing process. Based on relevant earlier and recent literature, I have contextualized the period in which the films were produced and distributed by further analyzing the trends and patterns in the Sovexport Collection documentaries. Thus, I have engaged them in a broader framework demonstrating how documentaries construct meaning and truth in their dreamworlds, as well as why it is relevant to study them with regard to the contemporary trend of exploring Sovietness in documentary filmmaking.

The thesis is structured in four main chapters corresponding with the manner in which I have outlined the literature review. In the first chapter, the historical context of the Sovexport films is presented to frame the patterns of the realities created in them. Despite the limited literature on Soviet cinema in the Stagnation Period, this section prepares the understanding of the further theoretical framework. The second chapter deals with the question of how documentary films create meaning mainly based on the work by Spence and Navarro who take a close-up at the formal techniques of non-fiction motion pictures. The third chapter presents the findings from the Sovexport films as a case study, the theoretical framework for which are the two concepts of "razvedka" and "osvoenie" proposed by Widdis in an analysis of the Soviet cinema.[41] My choice to focus on these two concepts in the in-depth analysis of the Sovexport Collection is based on the existing fundamental agreement among scholars of Soviet cinema of the importance representation of space plays in the construction of the Soviet ideology and utopia. Comparing and contrasting the concepts highlighted by Widdis make visible a number of paradoxes in the imagined dreamworlds of the films.

The thus foregrounded major case study sets the ground for the last fourth chapter centered around the topic of why it is essential to discuss these older dreamworlds of cinematic utopias in the context of today's art scene and rising nostalgia for the past, and particularly the Communist ideology. By resorting to the evidence retrieved by Paolo Magagnoli[42] as a main

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[41] Widdis, *Visions of a New Land*, 10–12.
[42] Magagnoli, *Documents of Utopia,* 23–51.

source for the contemporary films, unavailable for streaming online (unlike the Russian documentaries discussed in the chapter), my study reveals the commonalities in their inner logic to those of the Sovexport collection. This final chapter tackles mostly with the second main research question of the thesis seeking to outline how the Sovexport films enrich the ongoing discussions on documentaries and truth claims. My overall research thus is concerned also with the historical development of the discourses on documentary films and the so-called truth-claim they propose, as the course of this discussion has changed fundamentally from the beginnings of scholarship on cinema.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE SOVEXPORT COLLECTION

1.1. The Stagnation Period (1964-1980)

The analysis of the Sovexport films at the EYE FilmMuseum requires an elucidation of the historical context in which the works of the collection were produced. The films categorized by me for the Collection Center were made between 1964 and 1985, most of them in the 1970s. In the parlance of Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's parlance, this period is known as the Era of Stagnation[1] in terms of the socio-economic development of the USSR.

The Era of Stagnation began under the rule of Leonid Brezhnev (1964–1982), the fifth leader of the Soviet Union, and continued shortly under Yuri Andropov and Konstantin Chernenko. Brezhnev's administration was preceded by the period of the so-called "de-Stalinization", or "Thaw" in the years of Nikita Khrushchev's leadership marked by a relaxation of the censorship and repression. Khrushchev's reforms towards a liberalization of the Communist dictatorship and disagreements with Stalin's brutal ways also extended into the strict control over Soviet art by his predecessor. Nevertheless, "[Khrushchev] was a complex leader. At once he was a *Stalinist and anti-Stalinist* [author's emphasis], a communist believer and cynic, a self-publicizing poltroon and a crusty philanthropist, a trouble-maker and a peacemaker, a stimulating colleague and domineering bore, a statesman and a politicker who was out of his intellectual depth."[2]

An important example for this paradox was the Manège Affair in 1962, which marked the end of the Cultural Thaw. On 1 December, Khrushchev visited the Manège (Moschow's Central Exhibition Hall) and the art exhibit called *30 Years of the Moscow Artists' Union*, where the party leader proclaimed: "Gentlemen, we are waging war on you,"[3] provoked by

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[1] Edwin Bacon, "Reconsidering Brezhnev," in *Brezhnev Reconsidered*, ed. Edwin Bacon and Markan Sandle (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 1.
[2] Robert Service, *A History of Modern Russia: From Tsarism to the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 379.
[3] Susan Emily Reid. "In the Name of the People: The Manège Affair Revisited," in *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 6, no. 4 (2005), 673.

what he deemed to be decadent and deviant art. The art exhibition was followed by a number of meetings between the Central Committee Ideological Commissions and the artistic intelligentsia kindled by an ambition to uphold the main Soviet artistic principles of Socialist Realism: *partiynost* (party loyalty that assumed the embracing of Marxist-Leninism as the only legitimate doctrine) and *narodnost*[4] (people's aspirations and demands). This campaign re-centered the focus of Soviet art because "art belonged to the people and must be understood by the people"[5], or as Khrushchev declared: "My opinion is the same as that of the people. I don't understand, and they won't understand."[6] Despite the Khrushchev's course towards a liberalization of the Communist rule, he was still maintaining the founding myth of a fundamental alignment between the Communist party and the Soviet people. Susan Emily Reid explores the original visitor's books for the Manège exhibition concluding that people's tastes were, in fact, not in accord with Khrushchev's criticism and thus the party's opinions, if this was ever the case. This was not unique to Nikita Khrushchev. Although every Soviet leader claimed that their societies had to be built under tight control and that brutalities were necessary and embodied true Marxism, the society itself has often had its doubts. Critique from within "has been a continuing fact of Soviet life for decades."[7]

The end of the "Thaw" was followed by Brezhnev's rise to power in 1964, and his agenda was a rehabilitation of numerous previously rejected Stalinist ideas. There are multiple versions explaining the deepening of the economic and social stagnation, such as the policy of gerontocracy, which continued well into the 1980s, as the Politburo's average age was increasing, as well as a lack of reforms from Brezhnev's administration. Vastly known as the Stagnation Era, this period was proclaimed by the propagandists of the regime as "developed socialism."[8] Brezhnev used this term in his speech in the 24th Party Congress in March 1971,

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[4] The term *narodnost* could be translated as "nation", "nationhood" or "national ethos" and denotes the connection of the people to the Russian cultural heritage. However, the leaders of the Soviet Union wanted to build a sense of community not around a nationhood and a belonging to Russia but to the Communist Party and its ideology. Therefore, *narodnost* can be rather understood as the author's responsibility to "correctly" portray the aspirations of the Soviet people, but also to create art accessible to this *narod* (the people, the masses) as opposed to the elite. For an extensive analysis of *narodnost* see Dimitry Badalyan, "Ponyatie 'narodnost' v Russkoy Kul'ture XIX veka" ["The Concept of *narodnost* in 20th-Century Russian Culture"], in *Istoricheskie Ponyatiya i Politicheskie Idei XVI–XX veka* [*Historical Concepts and Political Ideas, 16th–20th Centuries*], Collected papers, Issue 5 (Saint Petersburg: EUSP Press ALETHEIA, 2006), 108–122.

[5] Reid, "In the Name of the People: The Manège Affair Revisited", 673.

[6] *Ibid.*, 674.

[7] James Patrick Scanlan, "From Samizdat to Perestroika: The Soviet Marxist Critique of Soviet Society," in *The Road to Disillusion: From Critical Marxism to Postcommunism in Eastern Europe*, ed. Raymond Taras (London: Armonk, 1992), 19.

[8] Service, *A History of Modern Russia*, 397.

which aimed at acknowledging improvements of living standards of the Soviet people, social integration throughout the Soviet Union, as well as a "scientific-technical revolution."[9]

A part of Brezhnev's strategy to stabilize the USSR's political scene was fastening the party's grip on artistic expression, including films. Soviet scholarship often reminds that cinema became a powerful weapon in the hands of the Bolsheviks – not just as a new face of developing technologies but also as a new art form through which people could find new ways of engagement.[10] Back in the time of Lenin, the leader and his supporters saw multiple crucial implications of cinema, which was naturally simply one way to bring their beliefs closer to the Soviet people. Presenting the implications of Soviet cinema, Jamie Miller claims that it acted not just as a remedy for illiteracy but also as a tool for redirecting the peasants' minds towards the spirit of the Revolution and the new world order which would come with it. Ideally, Soviet films would present its audience with the character of the New Soviet Man and the New Soviet Woman – "a highly moral, socialist paragon of virtue, dedicated to the final goal of communism."[11]

Cinema thus had the role of legitimizing and defending Bolshevik ideology. The communists had to find a manner of reconciliation between their rhetoric of the workers' emancipation and the harsh Soviet reality with its unbearable standard of living accompanying the metamorphosis towards a communist society. This was only possible with mass cooperation in the eyes of party leaders who pushed their followers for active participation in building a new world to achieve the "communist paradise." After all, as Anatoly Khazanov demonstrates, Marxism-Leninism can well be conceptualized as a "secular religion" with its own sacred order in which the future Communist society is comparable to the Judeo-Christian notion of the return to Paradise.[12] This picture, which cinema presented along with the other arts was a mere utopia pointing to an "ideal place", a "better time and more satisfying social relationships and identifications"[13] that did not correspond to what was happening in the real Soviet world.

Because of the tight control over the arts, many Soviet artists and writers would gather in small circles and exchange poems, novels and manifestos, which were most likely to meet

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[9] *Ibid.*, 406.

[10] For a detailed account on Soviet cinema and its connection to politics, see Peter Kenez, *Cinema and Soviet Society: From the Revolution to the Death of Stalin* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2001).

[11] Jamie Miller, *Soviet Cinema: Politics and Persuasion under Stalin* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2009), 19.

[12] Anatoly M. Khazanov, "Marxism–Leninism as a Secular Religion," in *The Sacred in Twentieth-Century Politics: Essays in Honour of Professor Stanley G. Payne*, ed. Roger Griffin, Robert Mallett, and John Tortorice (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 123.

[13] Charles Price, Donald Nonini and Erich Fox Tree, "Grounded Utopian Movements: Subjects of Neglect," *Anthropological Quarterly* 81, no. 1 (2008): 127–59.

with disapproval and refusal for publishing. This phenomenon was known as *samizdat* (lit. "self-publishing") – a term denoting "the system of underground publishing in the post-Stalinist Soviet Union."[14] Examples of such dissidents were Roy Medvedev and his *Great Terror*, describing Stalin's brutalities, which was censored by the authorities, as well as Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *The First Circle* and *Cancer Ward* – both banned by the KGB. It was clear that the loosening of power over the arts under Khrushchev was over. As Robert Service describes it: "The cultural spring turned to autumn without an intermediate summer. And a chilly winter was imminent."[15]

In such a winter, the rise of dissidents played a specific role. The etymology of "dissident" is derived from the Latin *dis* (apart) and *sedere* (to sit), which means to be separated from the rest and in the context of the Communist dissidents it is interpreted as the people who strayed away from the regime.[16] Roy Medvedev gives this definition of a "dissident":

> A dissident is someone who disagrees in some measure with the ideological, political, economic, or moral foundation that every society rests on. [...] But he does more than simply disagree and think differently; he openly proclaims his or her dissent and demonstrates it in one way or another to compatriots and the state. In other words, he doesn't just complain in private to his partner or close friends.[17]

It was not simply literature or films, which were under the danger to be stopped in their tracks. The artists and filmmakers were facing the risk of following the fate of the two writers Andrei Sinyavski and Yuli Deniel in 1965, who dared to share their satirical views of the Soviet system. Because of their dissident tendencies, they were charged for engaging in "anti-Soviet propaganda"[18] and were convicted with forced labor in the Gulag. Nevertheless, they called themselves *inakomyshlyashchie* ("the other-thinkers"), as their fundamental beliefs differed from the dominant ideology of the time. Therefore, the Russian definition of *inakomyshlyashchie* comes closer to describe the identity of this group of people – they were not "sitting apart" from society, but rather shared the living standards and conditions with the

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[14] Ann Komaromi, "The Material Existence of Soviet Samizdat," *Slavic Review* 63, no. 3 (2004): 597–618.
[15] Service, *A History of Modern Russia*, 381.
[16] Leslie Holmes, "The Significance of Marxist Dissent to the Emergence of Postcommunism in the GDR," in *The Road to Disillusion: From Critical Marxism to Postcommunism in Eastern Europe*, ed. Raymond Taras (London: Armonk, 1992), 59–60.
[17] Holmes, "The Significance of Marxist Dissent," 60.
[18] Peter B. Fitzpatrick, "Soviet Trial of Daniel and Sinyavsky: The Case History of a Transgression of Substantive International Human Rights without Procedural Remedy", *Virginia Journal of International Law* 390 (1972): 390–412.

rest searching for ways how to be a part of it despite their disagreements with the ideology.[19].
The dissidents – scholars, writers, artists, and public intellectuals – distinguished themselves
as determined people openly challenging the Communist regime.

1.2. The Stagnation Period and Its Cinema

The Era of Stagnation provokes various opinions in Russian cinema scholars. On one hand,
some authors claim that this was a "troubled and complex period for the Soviet film industry,"[20]
whereas others see it as immensely transformative in a positive direction – as changing "Soviet
cinema so fundamentally that no subsequent 'freeze' could return it to the conditions that
prevailed during the Stalin era."[21] Although the production value of Soviet films did not
improve much throughout these years in terms of their aesthetical presentation and technical
skills, all scholars agree that this "challenging and important"[22] period brought the rise of
talented screenwriters, actors, and most importantly, auteur filmmakers such as Andrei
Tarkovsky, Andrei Konchalovskii, Kira Muratova, Elem Klimov, and others[23]. Masterpieces
such as Tarkovsky's *Mirror* (1974) and Menshov's *Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears* (1980)
were created in those years. In fact, the annual production of feature films reached 150.
Especially popular were children's films and animation, but the greatest attention of production
quantity was given to documentaries, which were a crucial tool for ideological messages,
reaching around 400 per year.[24]

    The movie theatres were a primary source of entertainment in Soviet society, including
in the Brezhnev era,[25] due to a scarcity of other leisure activities. Movie theaters were seen as
essential propaganda vehicles, but the vast proliferation of TV sets in the Soviet households
"relieved" the main function of films as ideological tools and allowed for a diversification of
genres and themes. The critique of cinema as commercial was re-thought, and was instead
considered beneficial for the masses, as it would juxtapose the "highbrow art for the elite."[26]
The last years of Brezhnev's rule and the sense of stagnation and crisis of the Marxist-Leninist

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[19] Service, *A History of Modern Russia*, 381.
[20] Eugénie Zvonkine, "*Auteur* Cinema during the Thaw and Stagnation," in *A Companion to Russian Cinema,* ed.
Birgit Beumers (Malden, Willey-Blackwell, 2016), 178.
[21] Val Golovskoy, "Art and Propaganda in the Soviet Union, 1980-5," in *The Red Screen: Politics, Society, Art in
Soviet Cinema*, ed. Anna Lawton (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), 264.
[22] Prokhorov and Prokhorova, *Film and Television Genres of the Late Soviet Era*, 1.
[23] Discussed also in Zvonkine's "*Auteur* Cinema during the Thaw and Stagnation", 2016.
[24] Golovskoy, "Art and Propaganda," 265.
[25] Richard Stites, *Russian Popular Culture: Entertainment and Society since 1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge
University Press, 1992), 174–9.
[26] Golovskoy, "Art and Propaganda," 264.

ideology and the Soviet economic structure, which came with it, was inevitably mirrored in cinematic production. By the 1970s, these developments slowed down the artistic expression of filmmakers, as every work was scrutinized and suspected of opposing the regime. According to Val Golovskoy, this had clear consequences for the quality of the films produced in these years (1980s), leading the produced quality films to be only four – 2.5 percent of the total annual output which is considerably less than during the 1970s.[27] The main portion of these movies were made at *Mosfilm* and *Lenfilm*, which are also the production companies of most Sovexport films at the EYE FilmMuseum.

After 1983, Yuri Andropov described as an enigmatic and ascetic man sought to renew the Party and passionately fought against alcoholism, corruption and petty theft[28], which was illustrated in films of this period. Their protagonists, however, were ordinary Soviet people to whom one could hardly attribute the collapse of Soviet economy. Such a film was Rolan Bykov's *Scarecrow* which discusses children's cruelty by depicting a minor accident "in contrast to the terrifying facts that find their way into the Soviet press."[29] Another popular motif in the films from this period was the railroad station used as a symbol for the multiple issues that the modern Soviet society was dealing with, e.g., Ryazanov's *Station for Two*, Mikhalkov's *Kinofolk*.

A series of movies planned to be released for the 40th anniversary of the victory over Nazi Germany in 1985 portray Stalin's contribution in a historically exaggerated manner, for example *The Battle of Moscow* or *Victory*. Despite having a clear ideological agenda, "counter propaganda" (anti-American) Soviet films achieved big success, as a directive was issued targeted at a high production of such films. It ordered the production of motion pictures which "promote Leninist foreign policy, actively expose the aggressive designs of imperialism […] take into account the specific character of the current ideological struggle in the international arena, and heighten the vigilance of the Soviet people and their armed forces."[30] The subsequent five-year plan was constructed around this discourse. Anti-American propaganda was a centerpiece not only in cinema, but also on Soviet television programs. The very first film to come from this order was Tumanishvili's *Incident on Grid 36-80*, the main theme of which was the nuclear threat from America's side, aiming to depict the Soviet army as powerful but striving for peace at the same time. A crucial point to address is that every five-year plan

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[27] *Ibid.*, 264.
[28] Anna Lawton, *Kinoglasnost: Soviet Cinema in Our Time* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 37.
[29] Golovskoy, "Art and Propaganda," 265.
[30] *Ibid.*, 267.

prescribed a certain number of films to be produced per year.[31] Thus, the production quality of the films and the scripts was often technically incredibly low. In the Stagnation Period, Moscow created the Experimental Production Studio (1965–1975), the artistic director of which was Grigori Chukhrai. The "experiment" entailed that the Studio would be self-supporting. Despite some successes, in 1972 the Experimental Studio was merged into *Mosfilm*, which put an end to the period of experimentation.[32]

The post-Brezhnev years saw important transformations of the Soviet cultural scene, which had to be put under an even tighter ideological control. This was expressed by Konstantin Chernenko at the 1983 Central Committee's plenary session on ideology, as he required a greater effort for the cultural sphere a higher degree of adherence to the Communist agenda. In the next year, a further endeavor to fix the crisis of Soviet cinema was set forth through a directive called "How to raise further the artistic and ideological level of films and to strengthen the material and technical basis of cinematography" sticking to the "traditional tributes to the clichés of propaganda"[33]. Thus, 1985 and 1986 were marked by an increasing criticism received by *Goskino* regarding the system of the multi-stage editing process, a stage of the production which all films had to pass, and a plea for loosening the tight grip of cultural pressure to adhere to a certain mold of cinematic production.

Filmmakers were accusing *Goskino* of faking the cinema attendance data, as the distinguished actress Nonna Mordiukova claims: "As long as our cinema fears the truth, acting with needless timidity and circumspection, it will not be of interest to the people."[34] These developments in the aftermath of the Stagnation Period signal that despite its end there is a lack of freedom in cinema – just as the other spheres of art and intellectual activity. The notion of freedom was otherwise central to some of the most important Soviet filmmakers despite the attempts of the authorities to lead the way of cinematic expression. The *inakomyshlyashchie* group was, however, also a phenomenon in the cinematic realm of the USSR. Some directors expressed hidden sentiments from the system in an "Aesopian manner"[35] discussing religion and national sentiments – taboo topics strongly condemned by the Communist regime.

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[31] Cinema's communication potential was crucially important for Soviet propaganda from the time of the First Five-Year Plan. At a Party conference in 1928, cinema was defined as "one of the most powerful instruments" for the Bolshevik "cultural revolution". See Paul E. Burns, "Cultural Revolution, Collectivization, and Soviet Cinema: Eisenstein's *Old and New* and Dovzhenko's *Earth*", *Film & History* 11, no.4 (1981): 85.

[32] Golovskoy, "Art and Propaganda," 273.

[33] *Ibid.*, 269.

[34] As quoted by Golovskoy, *op. cit.*, 270.

[35] John B. Dunlop, "Russian Nationalist Themes in Soviet Film of the 1970s." In *The Red Screen: Politics, Society, Art in Soviet Cinema*, ed. Anna Lawton (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), 231–46.

1.3. The Popular Films of the Stagnation Period and Their "Aesopian" Meanings

According to Dunlop, the 1970s and the early 1980s were a period permeated with nationalist sentiments amongst Soviet people marked by opposing trends – Russian nationalists sought to benefit more from the dominant position of their group whereas other groups signaled separatist tendencies.[36] John Dunlop dedicated two extensive works[37] to the nationalist tendency and the cultural preservation efforts in these two decades. The tendency was characterized by seeking to protect Russian people from sociodemographic attrition and to conserve Russian cultural monuments, churches and the memory of Orthodox Christianity, as well as to save nature from the pollution of the newly arisen industries.

Especially important for the Soviet people was preserving the rich literary tradition of the nineteenth century and the classic works of Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Chekhov and other canonical writers and artists. Because of this instinct for cultural and historical self-preservation, a mass suspicion was born regarding the imposed Communist urbanization, modernization and the scientific-technical revolution guided by the Party. The urgency of these concerns led Russian nationalists to oppose the ideological Marxist-Leninist agenda of the Soviet regime. Since Stalinist times the regime has attempted to appropriate a discourse of nationalism in a rather unsuccessful way. As most media, and therefore film, were subordinate to the regime's ideology and the danger of censorship, filmmakers had to express their artistic and nationalistic concerns in a "quasi-Aesopian"[38] language, especially when dealing with taboo topics like religion. With such a connotation, the term *ezopovski* (Aesopian) spread in Russia to describe the hidden meanings and motivations incorporated in works of art, in order to avoid censorship.[39] A deep sense of nationalism in the Soviet society in the 1970s and 1980s can be observed in the most popular films at the time, around which Dunlop centers his argument – *Snowball Berry Red* (*Kalina krasnaya*, 1974), *Siberiade* (1979), *Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears* (1980), *The Mirror* (1974) and *Agony* (1975). These works paint the landscape

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[36] Mark R. Beissinger, *Nationalist Mobilization and the Collapse of the Soviet State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 54.

[37] John B. Dunlop, *The Faces of Contemporary Russian Nationalism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983); Idem, *The New Russian Nationalism* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1985).

[38] Dunlop, "Russian Nationalist Themes," 230.

[39] "Aesopian", *Merriam-Webster.com,* <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Aesopian>, Merriam-Webster, 2011, retrieved July 7, 2020.

of nationalist discourse in the arts, and it is meaningful to juxtapose the issues they raise to the concerns of the Sovexport Collection films, which followed the regime's directive.

Vasiliy Shukshin's *Kalina krasnaia*'s plot centers around a thief-recidivist Yegor Prokudin, whose journey leads him to leave his dark past behind and rediscover the beauty of life in a remote village where his love interest Lyuba lives. The core motivation behind Shukshin's film, a favorite of the Soviet public at the time[40], is the resentment toward the Marxist-Leninist worldview, the dissatisfaction with the city and praise for the peripheries and the rural areas. According to the director, the developing technologies and the ongoing modernization deprived the Soviet people of living peacefully and joyfully. These negative sentiments were provoked by the life of the director Shukshin whose father was arrested by the Joint State Political Directorate, or Obyedinyonnoye gosudarstvennoye politicheskoye upravleniye (OGPU) and died in prison. Although the film received a number of negative reviews that it strayed away from the Marxist-Leninist narratives, *Kalina krasnaya* fascinated Soviet audiences.[41]

The events in Andrei Mikhalkov-Konchalovsky's *Siberiade* also develop in a small village located in the Siberian Elan where the lives of three generations of the Ustuzhanin family are followed. The main problématique in the four-part epic film resembles closely the one of *Kalina krasnaya*, for the peaceful life in the village is constantly contrasted with the terror brought from the industrial revolution, the machine and the mechanical engines of destruction, and the tragedy of war. One of the main characters, the grandfather Afanasiy Ustuzhanin has the great ambition to build a road through the almost impenetrable and muddy taiga around the village. He "embodies man's innate Promethean impulses; the forest moans as his skilled axe topples huge trees (...). [Afanasiy] is not an evil man, but he is driven by a compulsion to remake the earth in his own image."[42] His son Kolya belongs to the generation that witnessed and commenced the Revolution, and after he and his love interest flee from the village during the Civil War, he returns to their homelands with a burning spirit of renewal and destruction of the Old. When Kolya comes back to Elan, his wife has died in the war, and he brings his son Alesha, whose heart is filled with love for the revolution. Their return causes a mass chaos in the otherwise calm village. In the core of Mikhalkov-Konchalovsky's *Siberiade* is the message that ideology contaminates life, it "poisons human relations, which are difficult

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[40] A bigger percentage of readers of the well-known cinema magazine *Sovetskiy ekran* had chosen it as the best film of the year and Shukshin's acting was voted best performance.
[41] Dunlop, *op. cit.*, 232.
[42] *Ibid.*, 233.

enough without it". The film proposes an inherent poisoning of the human relations and identity in modern society suggesting that basic truths about the human condition have been neglected.

Russian researcher Vladimir Menshov discusses the popularity of his film *Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears* (1980) by claiming that he had "in view a clear-cut audience: the mass viewer."[43] Although the film was perceived as a soap opera, it received an Academy Award (1981) and gained recognition for its intricate social critique. The plot revolves around the life of Katerina, Antonia and Lyudmila, three girls from small towns who decided to start a life in the big city, Moscow, where they live in a workers' dorm. The theme in the heart of the film deals with the threatened state of the Russian family, as the female characters struggle with their love lives throughout. As an example, in one of the scenes the main character Katerina discusses with a director of a dating bureau, whose profession is to introduce lonely Soviet men and women to each other, that relationships in the modern Soviet society are troubled by lowered birth rate, alcoholism and other issues. A nationalist tendency flows throughout the entire film, as one of the main problems raised in its narrative is the fascination of the Soviet Union with the West, more specifically the "superficial aspects of its culture."[44]

What critics seem to agree on is the incredible truth about the Soviet modern human condition hiding behind the soap-opera facade of *Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears.* As Raisa Lifanova, Head of a section at the Central Telegraph Office, claims: "This film is life itself, and the heroes are we ourselves."[45] This sentiment imbued Menshov's words regarding the film as well: "I think that in this film I caught the Russian national character. It is sensed both in the situations and in the actions and in the manner of acting."[46] Dunlop emphasizes the director's usage of "Russian" instead of "Soviet" – as it has "nothing in common with the senescent official ideology."[47] Despite the attempt of the Communist Party to co-opt Menshov's creation and to appropriate his great success as "permeated with our Soviet Communist Spirit,"[48] as Boris Gryaznov claimed, the picture is certainly aimed at a Russian nationalist ideological framework as opposed to a Marxist one.

In turn, Tarkovsky's *Mirror* (1975), which is difficult to present briefly being the director's most autobiographical work spanning across multiple temporal planes, creates

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[43] Kruglyi Stol *IK*: "Pochemu tak Vzvolnovany Zriteli?" [Roundtable Discussion *IK*: "Why are the Viewers so Excited?"], *Iskusstvo Kino*, no. 9 (1980): 28.
[44] Dunlop, "Russian Nationalist Themes," 237.
[45] Kruglyi Stol *IK*, 24.
[46] Kruglyi Stol *IK*, 30.
[47] Dunlop, "Russian Nationalist Themes," 238.
[48] Kruglyi Stol *IK*, 31.

intricate references derived from *The Bible*, Dante's *The Inferno*, Doestoevsky's *The Devils*, and Pushkin's "Letter to Chaadaev". These references provide the film's deep symbolic layers that are at odds with the Marxist-Leninst ideology and realities. *Mirror* has been subject to a great deal of controversy in the Soviet Union, as Tarkovsky went through numerous hardships before the film even received permission to be produced. Upon its completion, the movie received heavy criticism for its complexity, "elitism" and "non-receptivity" by Soviet people.[49] Although in the necessary Aesopian language, *Mirror* presents an analysis of modern Russia and its socio-cultural fate. An interesting detail in *Mirror* is that the connotation of the city, similarly to the previous films, is a negative one, one of control and anxiety, imbued with the director's resentment towards the intense industrialization of the 1970s Soviet Union: "I don't like big cities and feel perfectly happy when I'm away from the paraphernalia of modern civilization", wrote Tarkovsky.[50]

As to Elem Klimov's *Agony*, which centers on the final year of Imperial Russia depicting Grigori Rasputin and the Imperial Family. The movie was produced in 1975, but its release was put to a halt until ten years later in 1985. *Agony* reflected the fascination of Nicholas II's reign among the Soviet intellectuals at the time, and the positive portrayal of his character is certainly the main reason for the ten-year resistance by the authorities to make the film available. The agony of Nicholas, as well as that of Rasputin is one of the main themes scrutinized in the motion picture. Most importantly, however, a centerpiece of the film is the agony of Soviet society treated as a third protagonist of the story depicted through black and white images juxtaposed to the saturated look of the dying regime. As the previously discussed films, *Agony* also uses Aesopian language to hide a certain agenda – in this case the religious dimension of its narrative so well masked that "if one were to remain on the film's surface, one could argue that *Agony* is anti-religious."[51] In fact, the title of the film itself alludes to the fundamental message that the director alluded to – the suffering of Christ and His crucifixion, as He knows He must endure the pain of the Cross and accept God's will. This concealed religious message characterizes the film by Klimov.

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[49] Dunlop, "Russian Nationalist Themes," 239.
[50] Andrey Tarkovsky, *Sculpting in Time: Reflections on the Cinema*, translation Kitty Hunter-Blair (London: Faber & Faber, 1989), 212.
[51] Dunlop, "Russian Nationalist Themes," 242.

1.4. The Cold War: Soviet Union, the West, and Their Import/Export Relations

The fact that the Sovexport Collection resides in the Dutch archives necessitates a consideration of the relations between the so-called Eastern and Western blocs during the Era of Stagnation, as well as the impact of the Cold War circumstances on the cinematic production and distribution. Robert Service writes that despite the growing difficulties, the USSR was still considered as a vital and stable part of the international landscape. [52] This period coincided with the Cold War and increasing tension between the Soviet Union and the West, thus with the idea of a looming nuclear threat. These sentiments were also mirrored in the hostile view, which the Western bloc adopted over the art and cinema of the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries of the Eastern Block. Shubin writes that in the end of 1970s Soviet leaders were satisfied with the position which the Soviet Union had taken up in the world, and did not seek geopolitical rivals. Instead, the position of the USSR was rather defensive, for it was crucial not to let the state be struck by a blow such as the one of 1941. The aggressive means of nuclear power was the primary tool of deterrence against the Western Bloc. An essential goal of the USSR was to show the West that the Soviet Union was the winner nevertheless[53] and this had an enormous impact on film production.

The strength of the Soviet military seemed to have reached that of the United States, and the Soviet economy was peaking. However, in these later years of the USSR, a very small number of people in the West approached the Soviet Union with support and approval. Too much information had been exposed about the brutality of the Communist regime and it appeared that the USSR does not implement the ideals of freedom and social justice. Even the advocates of the Communist ideology from Italy and Spain did not remain loyal to Moscow. Despite some optimistic views for the future of the USSR and its ideology, the fascination with the Communist utopia had been weakened by the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia, and the fact that capitalism had successfully tackled poverty in Western Europe. Brezhnev attempted to strengthen the Soviet-American bond by exchanging visits with presidents of the United States. Therefore, in the mid-1970s the new phrase was formulated – détente (*razryadka*), which defines the easing of the hostility between the West and East in the Cold War. However

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[52] Service, *A History of Modern Russia*, 397.
[53] Alexandr Shubin, *Zolotaya Osen, ili Period Zastoya: SSSR v 1975–1985 gg.* [*Golden Autumn, or Stagnation Period: USSR in 1975-1985*] (Moscow: Veche, 2008).

hard as two blocs attempted to escape the nuclear threat, they continued to be rivals, and the production of weaponry was accelerating.[54]

Kosinova tackles the complex export and import relations between the Eastern and Western blocs during the 1970s and the 1980s in the context of the Cold War. She writes that during the Stagnation Period rental of Soviet films came with many difficulties of a political and economic character. Kosinova indicates that the Cold War rivalry was a main concern for the cultural development of Soviet art and its perception abroad. These concerns were also reflected in the cinematic works themselves. The Cold War waged by the USSR against the United States and its Western European allies led the Western Bloc to take a hostile view over the art and cinema of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. Countries, such as Switzerland, Turkey, Iran or Thailand, succumbed to the pressure of the United States to censor most of the art produced in the USSR. The United States had the agenda to disrupt the distribution of Soviet films, which is why in September 1974 the Chairman of Sovexportfilm Viktor Volodin held a talk with the Chair of the American company *Satra Corporation* Ara Oztemel, in order to improve the international cooperation of Soviet cinematography with the Western Bloc. Upon agreement, the two sides carried out a reciprocal purchase of films in a ratio of 2:1 in favor of *Satra* in value of 895 000 US dollars.[55]

The Soviet discourse emphasized the success of its films abroad, as the reforms of the 1960s proved beneficial for the spreading of numerous reels internationally.[56] This illusion of success persisted because of some selected Soviet masterpieces, which managed to win international festival prizes abroad, including in the Netherlands. Vladimir Baskakov claims that these prizes were a consolation that sometimes the jury of international festivals would give an award to Soviet filmmakers out of respect for the cinematography of the masters like Eisenstein, Pudovkin, and Dovzhenko. In reality, quality Soviet films rarely appeared on international screens for decades. Foreign distributors had economic and ideological concerns about films produced under the strict regime of the Soviet Union and in the big capitalist countries like the United States, the United Kingdom and France the number of purchased Soviet films were usually negligible and were shown in very small cinemas.[57] Similar was the

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[54] Service, *A History of Modern Russia*, 397–400.
[55] Marina Kosinova, "Èksportno-importnye Otnosheniya Sovetskoy Kinematografii v Gody 'Zastoya'" ["Export-Import Relations of Soviet Cinema during the Years of 'Stagnation'"], *Vestnik Universiteta* 12, (2016): 214.
[56] Golovskoy, "Art and Propaganda," 263.
[57] I am indebted to Professor Frank Kessler for his note that from his experience in Paris, the film *Moscow Doesn't Believe in Tears* was distributed commercially, as it had received an Academy Award. However, one could see films by Tarkovsky, Klimov and others, but these were considered "oppositional" films.

situation in the Netherlands, where the Sovexport films were distributed around small-scale theatres and sometimes given on loan to individuals. This led to the current state of the Sovexport Collection films, which are scattered around in cans labeled incorrectly and with often missing parts.

The study conducted in Chapter One indicates that the in-depth analysis of the Sovexport collection at the EYE Filmmuseum dating from the Stagnation Period requires a contextualization, as its understanding is part of the politics of the "developed socialism" coinciding with a phase of the Cold War in which the USSR tightened the grip both internationally and on the other countries of the Eastern Bloc. Brezhnev's leadership, following the de-Stalinization reforms of Khrushchev's Thaw, was partly characterized by an attempt to fasten the grip on artistic expression, as multiple directives were issued in order to keep the focus of cinematic production intact with the Marxist-Leninst ideology. However, many writers, directors and artists at the time, known as the dissidents (*inakomyshlyashchie)*, were creating works imbued with critique towards the communist paradise that the authorities wished to see on the Soviet screens and read in Soviet books.

A number of prominent filmmakers, such as Tarkovsky and Klimov, developed a manner of communicating in an Aesopian language with the Soviet audiences in order to express their view of the Soviet realities, risking to be sentenced in the Gulags or for their works to be censored by the regime. The analysis of the films I discussed in this chapter – *Kalina krasnaya* (1974), *Siberiade* (1979), *Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears* (1980), *The Mirror* (1974), and *Agony* (1975) – indicates a number of patterns which their directors aimed to emphasize. Among the most important patters I have outlined can be defined as a *deepening sense of belonging* – a term I suggest to describe the multiple aspects of the nationalist tendencies during the 1970s and the 1980s accompanied by a desire for protecting the Russian heritage, the canonical literary works of writers like Dostoevsky and Chekhov as well as the role of Orthodox Church against the backdrop of an increasing suspicion towards the modernization after the Industrial Revolution. These analyzed films are thus directly relevant to the analysis of the particular works in the Sovexport collection in the next chapters.

CHAPTER TWO

CRAFTING MEANING AND TRUTH
IN DOCUMENTARY CINEMA

2.1. Defining the Documentary and Its "Truth Claim"

The analysis of the Sovexport requires an elucidation of the tools filmmakers utilize to create meaning through their documentaries, which is related to the question of how non-fictional films differ from their fictional counterparts. The issue of what constitutes a documentary has proved a vexed one to tackle in recent film studies. It seems as though there are more open questions than definitive answers when it comes to this film genre. Documentary film has been tackled as "a dramatized presentation of man's reaction to his institutional life,"[1] as a "film with a message,"[2] as "the communication, not of imagined things, but of real things only."[3] However, the first usage of the term itself can be traced a century back to the Scottish filmmaker and theorist John Grierson, who defined documentary in a popular phrase as "creative treatment of actuality."[4] Media scholar and film producer Dirk Eitzen emphasizes that articulating what "actuality" means is not always an easy task – each attempt to create a representation of reality becomes fiction, he argues, in its way of being an "artificial construct"[5], as it inevitably follows the ontological beliefs of its author.

Actuality is endless and it can thus never be represented in its entirety. When filmmakers capture their actuality in documentaries, they must choose what to leave in and what to leave out, they must determine which truth to subscribe to as their belief system. As Spence and Navarro emphasize, "any representation is a selective view of the world,"[6] which is why Eitzen goes as far as to claim that coming up with an accurate definition of

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[1] Raymond Spottiswoode, *A Grammar of the Film: An Analysis of Film Technique* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1951), 289.

[2] William Stott, *Documentary Expression and Thirties America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), xi.

[3] Robert C. Allen and Douglas Gomery, *Film History: Theory and Practice* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), 216.

[4] John Grierson, "The First Principles of Documentary," in *Grierson on Documentary*, ed. Forsythe Hardy (London: Faber & Faber, 1966), 147.

[5] Dirk Eitzen, "When is a Documentary? Documentary as a Mode of Reception," *Cinema Journal* 35, no.1 (1995): 82.

[6] Spence and Navarro, *Crafting Truth: Documentary Form and Meaning*, 2.

documentaries is theoretically "impossible."[7] Documentary films are just as much images as they are texts, structured from their maker's conception of reality, or as Stella Bruzzi puts it, they are the "negotiation between filmmaker and reality."[8]

Therefore, the central question becomes not whether a documentary is true or false, but instead "[h]ow is actuality treated in order to sanction the documentary's claims to be telling the truth?"[9] Kessler reaches a similar conclusion when examining documentary in relation to the concepts of the *profilmic* and the *afilmic*. His main argument concerns the issue that non-fictional film and photography are seen as faithful representations of the afilmic reality rather than analyzing them as different discourses on it. When we consider documentaries as different discourses on the real, we can "deflate the idea of documentary's "truth claim", as this does not mean that the utterance has to be true – it just is possible to ask the question of whether it is, or whether it could be a lie."[10] Such inquiries would be illogical in the context of fictional film. Following this reasoning on the afilmic real, images can be used in numerous ways: "Being contextualised, arranged, oriented, discursively framed, no picture "speaks for itself,"[11] which is why it is up to the viewer to develop a sense of literacy in deciding whether the proposed discourse is telling the truth, or perhaps there is a different interpretation. The importance, it seems, is to keep asking the question, which remains relevant in the context of documentary film, as Eitzen, notes: "Might the text be lying?"[12] The possibility itself to investigate this question would indicate whether a cinematic piece is a documentary or not.

This is best described through the lens of Roger Odin's semio-pragmatic approach, which is one of the most productive when tackling the issue of representation of reality in documentary film. The aim of the semio-pragmatic approach of film is to grasp how documentary films function in the social space created between the filmmaker and the spectator of the work. One could claim that what makes a film a documentary is not simply its connection to actuality, but also "the pact of confidence between the author and audience."[13] The semio-pragmatic approach determines documentary films as such when the work commits to an explicit documentary mode of reading. This mode is defined by the manifestation of three

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[7] Eitzen, "When is a Documentary," 82.

[8] Stella Bruzzi, *New Documentary* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 186.

[9] Spence and Navarro, *Crafting Truth: Documentary Form and Meaning*, 2.

[10] Kessler, "What You Get is What You See," 192.

[11] *Ibidem*.

[12] Eitzen, "When is a Documentary," 94.

[13] Stefano Odorico, "Between Interactivity, Reality and Participation: The Interactive Documentary Form," in *Le levain des médias: Forme, format, media*, ed. Guillaume Soulez and Kira Kitsopanidou (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2015), 221.

communicative processes: the development of a real enunciator,[14] the possibility to interrogate the enunciator in terms of truth,[15] as well as the assessment of the educational value of what the film has presented. To describe the semio-pragmatic approach, Odin writes:

> Meaning is not everything: affect and the interactions during production and reception must be analysed. The semio-pragmatic model involves two levels. The first level concerns the modes of producing meaning and affect. What types of spaces will this text permit the spectator to build? Which discursive impositions will it accept? Which affective relationships are established with the spectator? Which enunciative structure will it authorise the spectator to produce? The second level is the contextual. The semio-pragmatic model emphasises the institutional frame, pointing out the main determinations ruling the production of meaning and affect.[16]

Highlighting the question proposed by Eitzen is crucial to this thesis, as many spectators view documentaries through a rather naive lens of what constitutes *truth* and *reality*. Most tackle non-fiction films as "innocent sources of information."[17] Somehow, contemporary audiences still adopt Matuszewski's claim that the cinematograph is the "ocular evidence that is truthful and infallible par excellence.[18] This manner of approaching documentaries leaves the risk danger of audiences often remaining unaware or uncritical to the information, which the filmmaker has chosen to leave out. Thus, it is vital to look into the expectations that one brings to the process of viewing non-fiction films because as an audience we are always affected by their power to create order and purpose out of the otherwise chaotic reality, or by their so-called *truth claims*.

2.2. How do Documentaries Craft Truth

Asking the question "Might the text be lying?" and accepting a documentary film as such is not an arbitrary act. There are a number of indicating elements, which point the viewers to the

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[14] As opposed to a fictional one. Roger Odin specifies that the real enunciator could be the cinema, the society in which the documentary is made, the cameraman, or the director. See Odin, "A Semio-Pragmatic Approach to The Documentary Film," in *The Film Spectator. From Sign to Mind*, ed. Warren Buckland (Amsterdam, Netherlands: Amsterdam University Press, 1995), 227-235.

[15] Odorico ("Between Interactivity, Reality and Participation," 221–222) emphasizes that the "filmic text is not a documentary because it tells the truth, but because we, the audience, interrogate it about the truth (diegetic process)".

[16] *Ibid*., 222.

[17] Spence and Navarro, *Crafting Truth: Documentary Form and Meaning*, 4.

[18] Matuszewski, "A New Source of History," 323.

perception of a cinematic work as a documentary. These indicators are discussed by Spence and Navarro who distinguish them to be constructed at a macro and micro level – for example, the film's desire to appear authentic, and the specificities of editing, sound, etc. Particularly significant for grasping Sovexport films are two concepts that we have already partially touched upon – authenticity and evidence, as well as the techniques formally constructing documentaries.

2.2.1. *Authenticity*

Early film theorists were convinced of photography and film's intrinsic truthfulness, such as Roland Barthes who famously claimed that the image is "never distinguished from its referent."[19] With the development of the cinematograph by the Lumière Brothers, this legacy remained firmly ingrained in the understanding of the inner workings of the indexical image even to this day. Documentaries are strictly related to the idea of authenticity because they "speak about actualities and show us people who in some sense share – or once shared – the world we live in."[20] If we have to shortly answer the question of why we watch documentaries, it must be to learn about our surrounding world, and it would be paradoxical if we did not have some sort of faith in the indexical image, albeit critically dissecting it.

After establishing that we are able to ask the question of "might the text be lying", and thus accepting a cinematic work as non-fictional, we must understand what authentication strategies filmmakers adopt. Spence and Navarro propose that the question of whether non-fictional films are committed to representing a truthful reality is overshadowed by the quest of understanding what makes a documentary worthy of our trust – what legitimizes their authenticity? Namely, the fact that documentaries are representations of reality can make this question difficult. The etymology of the world *representation* itself connotes an absence through the prefix *re*.[21] The very idea of authenticity has been challenged by filmmakers since the initial developments of the cinematic medium. Godard's protagonist of *Le Petit Soldat* (1960) famously proclaimed the art of cinema as "truth 24 times per second".

However, not only Godard himself but also his contemporaries from the early Soviet art scene recognized the transformative quality which the camera exercises onto the visible reality, and the "careful manipulation of both technical and psychological conditions of visual

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[19] Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), 5.
[20] Spence and Navarro, *Crafting Truth: Documentary Form and Meaning*, 13.
[21] *Ibid.*, 14.

representation,"[22] which proceed the indexical image. In fact, in the core philosophy of Dziga Vertov, a filmmaker who was a part of the formalist movement and is recognized for building the canon of documentary filmmaking in and beyond the Soviet Union, was deconstructing the modern Soviet society and building a brand-new space in accord with the revolutionary culture. He proclaimed:

> I am kino-eye, I am a mechanical eye. I, a machine, show you the world as only I can see it. (...) My path leads to the creation of a fresh perception of the world. I decipher in a new way a world unknown to you.[23]

Vertov recognized cinema's ability to reorganize reality in a way which conforms to his own truth, and as Petric notes, he was not seeking to truthfully record reality as such but rather "insisted that authentic film material ('life facts') be reorganized into cinematic structures ('film-things'), a new unity with a particular ideological meaning."[24]

2.2.2. *Evidence and Authority*

The concept of authenticity in documentary films goes hand in hand with the *evidence* they present to their audience. Evidence "helps authenticate the reality represented".[25] How do non-fiction motion pictures convince us that the actions on the screen have actually happened? Why does the audience even believe them? The idea of truth and its evidence has puzzled philosophical thinkers centuries before the creation of the cinematograph. According to the OED, the etymology of the English word for *true* is derived from Germanic, for example the Old High German root *triuwida*, which forms the word *gitriuwida* (trust, loyalty). The same is recognized in the Old Icelandic *tryggð* (faithfulness) or Old Swedish *trygþ* (protection, security, safety).[26] This suggests that in its first uses, now obsolete, *truth* was more connected to *belief* of the righteousness of something rather than the evidence that a thing or a statement conforms with reality in an empirical way as a verified fact.

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[22] Ramona Fotiade, "Spectres of Dada: From Man Ray to Marker and Godard," in *Dada and Beyond. Volume 2*: *Dada and Its Legacies (Avant-Garde Critical Studies)*, ed. Elza Adamovicz and Eric Robertson (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2012), 89.

[23] Dziga Vertov, *Kino-Eye: The Writings of Dziga Vertov* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984), 17.

[24] Vlada Petric, "Dziga Vertov as Theorist," *Cinema Journal* 18, no.1 (1978): 30.

[25] Spence and Navarro, *Crafting Truth: Documentary Form and Meaning*, 38.

[26] "True", *Oxford English Dictionary*, available online at: <www-oed-com.proxy.library.uu.nl/view/Entry/207026?rskey=o8EbfP&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid> (Accessed July 10 2020).

How do filmmakers achieve a credible verisimilitude of truth? Spence and Navarro distinguish a number of different kinds of evidence. Firstly, in the example of the film *The Life and Times of Rosie the Rivete*r (Connie Field, 1980), the audience is presented with two of them: firsthand testimony and archival footage gathered by the director. These personal interviews contribute with a particular significance to the evidence of the film, as they often bring the value of knowing events which are usually missing from written records or mainstream media accounts. In addition, they are often imbued with additional personal meanings, feelings and beliefs of the interviewed individual. In certain cases, problems arise because of the manner the evidence is presented, as it is in Connie Field's film where the interviews are juxtaposed to the archival footage, in order to contradict them. Determining something as a fact means leaving out another experience as "irrelevant"[27] to the story. This act, although crucial for the creation of any documentary, can prove rather confusing when considering the films from the Sovexport collection, as we shall see in the next chapter. Analyzing the Sovexport collection as a whole and contrasting the films from it enables one to pinpoint multiple paradoxes, which would otherwise remain undiscussed.

Furthermore, documentaries must bring a sense of *authority*, in order to be understood as relevant to the world they are referring to. Spence and Navarro claim that in cases, in which documentaries accompanied by a voiceover authority comes from this "disembodied voice of an unseen narrator or with a visible entity"[28], for example in Michael Moore's film *Bowling for Columbine* (2002). In it, the filmmaker provides additional information about what is happening on the screen, unclear from the images alone, which often reveals the process of filmmaking itself. Other authority sources are expert interviews or credible written sources, which support the truth claim of the documentary. Documentaries are not history books in their tendency of not privileging written sources and creating the feeling that history "is not constructed but merely recorded by the filmmaker."[29] However, non-fiction films can operate on a similar trajectory as a historical source in using primary sources (e.g., by using footage by a witness), as well as secondary sources (e.g., interview with an expert).

Viewers and readers alike examine primary and secondary sources differently, with primary ones being given more credibility and trust. The combination of *evidence* and *authority*, as well as primary and secondary sources, brings value and coherence to a

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[27] Spence and Navarro, *Crafting Truth: Documentary Form and Meaning*, 44.
[28] *Ibid*., 59.
[29] *Ibid*., 61.

documentary film.[30] When this happens, the spectator has the opportunity to analyze a meaningful entity, a cinematic work that presents an argument through those elements. Bill Nichols names this "the voice of documentary" describing "that which conveys to us a sense of the text's social point of view, of how it is speaking to us and how it is organizing the materials it is presenting to us."[31] Through this "voice", documentaries arrange the socio-historical reality, otherwise chaotic, disorganized, and often paradoxical. Documentaries "organize knowledge and give shape to what might have otherwise lacked a specific plan or design."[32]

Therefore, the way authority and evidence are used to structure a cohesive whole as a documentary motion picture also includes a moment of persuasion, a desire to convince, and perhaps in some cases – to enlighten or provoke. This phenomenon is even more relevant to propaganda films, which are especially partial in their representation of the world. They are committed to promoting a specific agenda and are likely to offer an exceedingly limited perspective on the events they represent."[33] An important element of propaganda pictures is their immediacy in educating and affecting the audience due to their convinced tone and seemingly effortlessly formulated imagery. Despite being more obviously persuasive and carefully arranged, propaganda films are not merely false. Spence and Navarro argue that instead of dismissing propaganda films as "biased"[34], and thus unsuitable for proper analysis, we must instead recognize their ability to transmit knowledge about how non-fictional films are made through their particularities.

However, there seems to be a need for a bigger amount of critical attention to documentaries and their truth claims, as leaving out certain elements of reality and picking up others as evidence, in order to *build up* a coherent whole as a film inevitably differs from creating a coherent whole *around* a certain ideological purpose. Bill Nichols invites us to consider the following strategy of dealing with propaganda films:

> Style, form, and voice are the heart and soul of persuasive engagement, and persuasive engagement is at the core of political discourses and social practices, whatever their ideological underpinnings. We inhabit an arena that remains fully within the shadow of ideology. *There is no exit, only the constant effort to pose questions, present evidence,*

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[30] *Ibid.*, 62.
[31] Bill Nichols, "The Voice of Documentary," in *New Challenges for Documentary*, ed. Alan Rosenthal and John Corner (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2005), 25.
[32] Spence and Navarro, *Crafting Truth: Documentary Form and Meaning*, 113.
[33] *Ibid.*, 144.
[34] *Ibid.*, 115.

> *and make arguments that move us beyond what has come before* [author's emphasis]. Leaving certitude behind moves us into an arena of radical doubt that cannot be dispelled so much as deferred, suspended, and, ultimately, embraced as part and parcel of a movement whose direction and intensity remain open to all the vicissitudes of history.[35]

"Posing questions" and "making arguments", however, requires an examination of how documentaries are technically constructed.

2.3. The Formal Techniques of Creating a Documentary

Documentaries are crafted through four main formal techniques – editing, camerawork, the profilmic, and the usage of sounds. Despite the rather bland style of the Sovexport collection, these techniques are also relevant.

First, Soviet filmmakers like Dziga Vertov have built the canon of the editing process and its quality to manipulate reality. His plea to separate cinema as the only art which succeeds at constructing interpretations of reality is mirrored in Erwin Panofsky's 1934 words that "it is the movies, and only the movies, that do justice to that materialistic interpretation of the universe which, whether we like it or not, pervades contemporary civilization."[36] This would, as Béla Balázs writes, "reveal the mainsprings of life"[37]. Such powerful ideas led Vertov to build a vision geared toward a new cinematic language, which would later be considered as part of the great montage legacy, including the work of Kuleshov, Eisenstein, and Pudovkin. These key filmmakers analyzed cinematic truth as strictly connected to the power of editing. Investigating montage uncovered a new potential for molding not only time but also space, as Kuleshov illustrates with his *tvorimaya geografiya* and experimenting with montages of fabricating brand new locations through shots of different cities. Shortly after, Vertov presented his own interpretation of Kuleshov's experiment, in which he spliced shots together of different women, in order to create brand new characters. Vertov's kino-eye not only attempted to see but "to see without limits and without distance."[38]

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[35] Bill Nichols, *Speaking Truths with Film. Evidence, Ethics, Politics in Documentary* (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2016), 110.
[36] Widdis, *Visions of a New Land*, 61.
[37] *Ibidem*.
[38] Petric, "Dziga Vertov as Theorist," 34.

Film scholar Emma Widdis proposes that these experiments investigating the phenomenon of montage were connected to the French cinematic traditions and the theory of *la photogénie* coined by Louis Delluc and extended by Jean Epstein at the time in which Dziga Vertov was developing his ideas about cinema. The notion of *la photogénie* explored the possibilities of cinema to provide an understanding of reality, which proves to be more than real, pointing to the specific form of knowledge created by film. By allowing the spectator to learn to apprehend reality through a new perspective, cinema becomes a way of thinking – a mediator between actuality and the mind of the spectator, according to Epstein. This understanding of cinema was mirrored in their Soviet counterparts, as the poet Vladimir Mayakovsky, one of Vertov's biggest inspirations, wrote that to him films are "a way of looking at the world"[39], a new *mirosozertsanie* (contemplation of the world) created through a juxtaposition of movements of the consecutive shots. Vertov's montage theory was built around a "theory of intervals"[40] and differed from Eisenstein's theory in that it was not meant to evoke an intellectual response, but rather a sensory experience of the constructed whole from the raw material. These beginnings of cinematic editing are essential to mention, as Spence and Navarro claim that stories seem "cinematic"[41] to us not simply when they are told in a vivid manner but namely because of their structure, which would resemble the way narrative is edited in filmmaking.

The purpose of editing is to give the material at hand structure, to enable the process of *worlding* in Heideggerian terms, namely by setting order in the seemingly chaotic state of raw footage. With other words, it is the joining of related shots in order to create a scene, a meaningful sequence, which in turn enables the joining of those sequences in a coherent whole. However, when the material is filmed for a documentary project, editing creates a new shape for the sociohistorical world, as Kuleshov's canonical experiments illustrated. David MacDougall writes that "by isolating observations, it reveals commonalities and connections that might have gone unnoticed before."[42] However, concluding that editing as selection is framing which also distills and concentrates experience, we can also claim that it can "reveal commonalities and connections" or to amplify realities which are not visible in the real world itself. This is valid also for films created in the very beginning of film history, when films had

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[39] Widdis, *Visions of a New Land*, 73.

[40] Simon Cook, "Our Eyes, Spinning like Propellers": Wheel of Life, Curve of Velocities, and Dziga Vertov's "Theory of the Interval," *October* 121 (2007): 79–91.

[41] Spence and Navarro, *Crafting Truth: Documentary Form and Meaning*, 161.

[42] David MacDougall, *The Corporeal Image: Film, Ethnography, and the Senses* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 4.

the limit of only one shot, but presented consecutively created the illusion of an integral experience. The order of these independent clips belongs to the meaning-making system, and searching for a more authentic experience, some non-fictional films adopt a more simplistic usage of editing, constructed by shots of long duration, creating a realistic impression of how we would have seen the images in real life, e.g., Abraham Ravett's 2005 *Lunch with Fela*.[43]

There are a few strategies for editing sequences together: (a.) in order to create continuity; (b.) to control the tempo and rhythm; as well as (c.) the development of the plot; (d.) to point out certain contradictions; or (e.) to clarify the content, and lastly, (f.) montage, the editing approach of taking completely separate shots filmed in different times and spaces and creating new connotations from it, e.g., the Kuleshov experiment. Although continuity is more expected from a fictional film because documentaries are perceived as a less manipulated representation of reality, in order for one to follow the film there must be a sense of flow throughout. However, it is also the tempo – the editing pattern, which creates meaning by setting the order, in which the filmmaker decides to present the filmed footage. Most often, documentaries construct a narrative in a linear way, for their editors work to produce a clear development of the plot. However, some stories benefit from being told simultaneously with other stories, or in a fragmented manner revealing the action in a non-linear way, producing meaning through filling gaps in the timeline that forces the spectators to build "their own spatial and temporal coherence."[44] Building contrast and contradiction is crucial for the editing of a documentary, which deals with a subject suitable for a discussion of debate. Showing more than one perspective allows the audience to explore different versions of the real and critically assess their verisimilitude. This is particularly striking in relation to the Sovexport collection and its propaganda films, which rarely if ever allow for another point of view.

The second method of creating meaning outlined by Spence and Navarro pinpoint is the way filmmakers utilize the camera. How and what the camera the camera frames constitutes the limit of what the audience can see regardless of the editing. This, in turn, influences the perception of the subject at hand, as it emphasizes where the important action happens or who the important figures are. There are numerous factors of representation, which may affect our perception. For example, the more space a figure takes up in a space, the more importance we are likely to assign to it. In addition, the camera angle is a crucial aspect to consider in every frame, as the words "angle" and "perspective" are being utilized as synonyms, which connotes

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[43] Spence and Navarro, *Crafting Truth: Documentary Form and Meaning*, 163.
[44] *Ibid.*, 172.

that adopting a certain angle favours a specific point of view.[45] Documentaries employ mostly eye-level shots, in order to present a more true-to-life viewing experience, which makes the usage of more unconventional camera angles (e.g. from below, portraying the figure as more powerful) to have an even more powerful impression on the spectator.

Apart from the positioning of the camera, its movements are also decisive by guiding us toward the space, which is of the greatest importance for the film's argument. The flow of the camera is often influenced by the action "within or around the profilmic space,"[46] as well as by the spatial conditions surrounding the camera, and there are two way to approach it. Careful planning of each scene or improvisation of the footage, each more suitable for different cinematic purposes and communicating different world-views toward the sociohistorical world to the audience. Camera movement comes in different forms – zooms, dolly-in or -out, tilts, tracking shots, etc.. each of which explores space in a very different way. Oftentimes documentaries adopt a handheld approach, which imbues the scenes with immediacy and is therefore associated with the genre. For example, the film *The Battle of Algiers* appropriates this technique, and although staged it appears to have the "documentary look."[47] The camera movement can be static or unnoticeable, allowing the action to happen, or expressive, such as Vertov's camera which had the ambitious task to build a new world.

The other two aspects, which Spence and Navarro outline as key to creating cinematic meaning are the *profilmic* and the *sound* of the films. Etienne Souriau[48] defines the concept of the *profilmic* as everything, which has been in front of the lens and thus recorded – in contrast to the *afilmic* that points to the world as it is. Thus, the profilmic is crucial to the representation of reality, and is often referred to as *mise-en-scène*, which translates literally to "put into the scene"[49] and is most commonly translated as "staging". In fiction cinema, the filmed environment is often carefully crafted through lighting, props, and the general composition of each scene. The situation is not drastically different in non-fiction films, although as Nichols suggests, the profilmic is assumed to be more closely connected to its historical referent.[50] This is often because of an absence of an explicit aesthetic style of many films from the genre, which

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[45] *Ibid.*, 190.
[46] *Ibid.*, 192.
[47] *Ibid.*, 193.
[48] Etienne Souriau, "Préface", in *L'Univers filmique*, ed. Etienne Souriau, 5-10 (Paris: Flammarion, 1953), 8 – as cited in Kessler, "What You Get is What You See," 192.
[49] Spence and Navarro, *Crafting Truth: Documentary Form and Meaning*, 213.
[50] Bill Nichols, *Representing Reality: Issues and Concepts in Documentary* (Bloomington, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991).

often increases our perception of the documentaries as more credible.[51] However, the "creative treatment of actuality"[52] is an important task of documentary meaning making, and as previously acknowledged, the statement that non-fictional films capture reality as it is often deemed problematic. There are numerous strategies of treating the profilmic in documentary films – through reenactments, through the settings that they choose (and its relationship to the main figures represented), through manipulating the lighting and quite literally creating meaning through shape in the scene, or through interviews and performances. All of these strategies require a sense of disciplining the body and the environment to fit with the overall cinematic argument.

Last but not least, documentary meaning is born in the usage of sound which oftentimes remains unnoticed when privileging the visual composition of a film, but it hides a great power to affect the audience. Recognizing how sound relates to the understanding of space can further expand our understanding of documentary making. A typical tool for documentary filmmakers is the voiceover commentary, which serves an organizational function and aids in creating order from the gathered material. However, apart from speech, sounds in documentaries can be found as music, effects or ambient sounds. This mixture of of visual, verbal, and sonic discourses shapes the film as a coherent whole.[53]

Nichols distinguishes six modes of representation in documentary filmmaking dependent on the various usages of these filmic strategies: poetic, expository, participatory, observational, reflexive and performative. These modes outline a framework, which any filmmaker can adopt and follow, and each of them presents specific outcomes expected by the audience. Nichols suggests to think of these distinctions as "prototypes"[54] serving for future films. The six modes are presented as building up on each other and arising because of a need for a different representation of the world than the previous styles, and can thus serve as a historical outline of documentary cinema. However, defining the mode of a film indicates its leading mode, but does not limit the work to also contain elements from the other five – for example, a reflexive documentary can incorporate observational or participatory elements.

The films from the Sovexport Collection, analyzed in the following chapter could almost entirely be identified with the expository mode, which Nichols characterizes as constructing elements of "the historical world into a more rhetorical or argumentative frame

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[51] Spence and Navarro, *Crafting Truth: Documentary Form and Meaning*, 214.
[52] Grierson, "The First Principles of Documentary," 147.
[53] Spence and Navarro, *Crafting Truth: Documentary Form and Meaning*, 239.
[54] Bill Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary* (Bloomington, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2001), 99.

than an aesthetic or poetic one."[55] The viewer is addressed in a direct manner with the help of titles or voices, by oftentimes adopting a voice-of-God commentary (a voiceover of an unknown person who is not shown on camera himself). This voice-over approach is taken by the directors of most films from the Sovexport collection, for example *Uroki Istorii* (Lessons of History) by L. Cherentsov, which discusses the importance of May 9, or the Victory Day and the commemoration of the defeat of Nazi Germany. In its entirety, the Sovexport collection is narrated by deep male voiceovers with the exception of films including interviews. In addition, not only is the voice-of-God commentary characteristic of the expository documentaries, but it also loaded with more information that the images themselves – contrary to the classic cinematic logic. The visual elements in this type of films play the role to support and illustrate the point made by the omniscient voiceover, which in turn creates a specific order out of them. The omnipresence and professional tone of the commentator creates the feeling of higher authority and credibility of the voiceover, as it is presented from a seemingly well-argued, neutral and objective perspective.

The editing style of the expository documentaries is also intact with the voiceover, in order to sustain the continuity of the storyline. Nichols names this "evidentiary editing", which "may sacrifice spatial and temporal continuity to rope in images from far-flung places if they help advance the argument."[56] This is the case for almost all Sovexport films which are almost always encompassing of a great volume of Soviet heroes or an attempt to present all of the highlights of Soviet history in a very short time-span. This can oftentimes lead to generalization of the argument. A final and crucial trait of the expository documentary is that it often serves the purpose of promoting a framework, which exists prior to the production of the film itself, by adding to a pre-existing body of knowledge without challenging it.[57]

The analysis in Chapter two allow for concluding that the nature of documentary cinema with its inherent subjectivity can be defined as heavily contested, as any attempt by filmmakers to capture reality contributes to a depiction of their own version of the world. The crucial question becomes one of identifying the non-fictional nature of a film by confirming the possibility of asking whether its text is telling the truth or not. After establishing a documentary as such by deploying Odin's semio-pragmatic approach, one can analyze the authentication strategies utilized by filmmakers to "craft" meaning in their cinematic works. They can be analyzed on a macro- and micro-level alike. First are the filmmaker's ways of

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[55] *Ibid*., 105.
[56] *Ibid*., 105.
[57] *Ibid*., 109.

tackling with the concepts of authenticity, evidence, and authority, necessary for the verisimilitude of any documentary. Although challenged by filmmakers since cinema's beginnings, documentary's authenticity is still a crucial aspect, made possible by the sense of authority of the film and the evidence presented, such as interviews and historical footage. Second, any documentary is based on formal techniques constructing its narrative and contributing to its verisimilitude:

- editing (for creating continuity, controlling the tempo, developing the plot, as well as pointing different contradictions in the narrative, and clarifying the content);
- camerawork (the camera placement, angles and movement);
- *profilmic* (the *mise-en-scène*);
- sound (music, voiceovers).

The investigation of these filmic techniques is vital toolkit for grasping documentary films as constructed entities of their own, and therefore for their proper and critical understanding. These strategies are also important for the distinguishing of the six documentary modes – poetic, expository, participatory, observational, reflexive and performative. Based on their filmic intentions and strategies, the Sovexport films discussed in the following chapter can be categorized as expository.

CHAPTER THREE

DISCOVERING THE SOVEXPORT COLLECTION
AND ITS DREAMWORLDS

Several patterns in the cinematic works from the EYE Sovexport Collection are to be outlined in grasping the dreamworlds it entails. Having already touched upon three of them briefly – the Soviet New Man, the Soviet New Woman, and most importantly – the Imagined Geography of Sovietness, I hereby focus on revealing the Sovexport films by resorting to some insights by Emma Widdis. In her extensive study, she explores how the Soviet state was imagined in terms of cultural productions, and more specifically cinema, in an attempt to map the "space and spaces of the Soviet utopia."[1] As to the art of cinema, Widdis emphasizes that "film played a unique role in the creation of Soviet identity: it both represented the new national map and, perhaps more interestingly, was seen as a means of creating a new relationship between Soviet man and woman and the physical world."[2]

Widdis' work concerns Soviet films and their thematic development in the period from 1917 until the beginning of World War II, particularly up to 1941 thus covering the rule of Lenin and most of the time in which Stalin was the man in power. She suggests an understanding of the cinematic works from this period through a set of concepts, such as "the boundless space" (*neobyatniy prostor*) or "exploration of space" (*razvedka*). Applying those concepts to the films of the Sovexport Collection has a twofold result – it will expand Widdis' argument by simultaneously contextualizing the Sovexport films within the Cold War and the Soviet Stagnation Era.

In this chapter, I am primarily concerned with the question of how did the films from the Sovexport collection create the utopian spaces of Sovietness. The pursuit of its answer will also clarify how Soviet leaders used film as a tool to bridge their ideology with reality. Thus, the analysis falls along the lines of the issue how the gap between utopia and reality, between storytelling and truth, was the reason for the imposed rationalist ideology to fail leading to the decline of a major totalitarian society. Although the Sovexport collection allows for penetrating the network of the propaganda itself, the present analysis is focused on the central concept of *razvedka* ("exploration of space") versus *osvoenie* ("mastery or conquest of space").

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[1] Widdis, *Visions of a New Land*, x.
[2] *Ibid.*, 13.

In so doing, I firstly introduce the discussion of Soviet space and its role for Soviet identity. When discussing the Bakhtinian concept of chronotope, Mikhail Epstein claims that one realizes "chronos is consistently displaced and swallowed up by topos. Chronos tends towards zero, toward the suddenness of miracle, toward the instantaneousness of revolutionary or eschatological transformation. Topos, correspondingly, tends toward infinity, striving to encompass an enormous land mass and even the earth itself."[3] I then connect this discussion of utopia's topography to Widdis' concepts of Soviet cinema and her explanation of *razvedka* vis-à-vis *osvoenie* in the context of films produced between 1917 and 1941. This allows me to bridge the overarching discussion of Soviet space, as well as the particular concepts to films seen at the EYE Filmmuseum as my major exemplar. Examining the topoi of Sovietness in the Sovexport films emphasizes the question of why it is still an existing phenomenon, a significant world-view in the twenty first century, and one that fascinates many in the West to this day.

3.1. Soviet Space and its Importance for Constructing Soviet Identity

A common denominator amongst all art forms identified as *socialist realism*, along with others, was the creation of multiple "spatial myths" resulting in the sacralizing of space. The Soviet "sacred order" was divided into a hierarchy evolving around realms of relative sacredness. Drawing on this "cartography of power" and by visually examining the greatness and scale of space, Soviet artists were able to put an emphasis on the greatness of time and of documenting, or rather building, history.[4] Already in Stalinist times, films have privileged spatial representation in all forms of art, as even the *Pesnia o Rodine* (Song of the Motherland), which functioned as an anthem, started with the lines:

> Broad is my Motherland
> Many are her forests, fields, and rivers!
> I know no other such land,
> Where so freely does a man breathe.[5]

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[3] Mikhail Epstein, "Russo-Soviet Topoi," in *The Landscape of Stalinism: The Art and Ideology of Soviet Space*, ed. Evgeny Dobrenko and Eric Naiman (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003), 277.
[4] Katerina Clark, "Socialist Realism and the Sacralizing of Space," in *The Landscape of Stalinism*, 3–9.
[5] Hans Günter, "Broad is My Motherland": The Mother Archetype and Space in the Soviet Mass Song," in *The Landscape of Stalinism*, 77.

Presenting the Motherland as "broad" epitomized the power of USSR's sweeping "imperial might", which in turn divided the land in two realms of space-time: the center and its periphery – Moscow, and the rest.[6]

Most of socialist realist narratives are set in the periphery of the state, as that is where the masses reside, trying to reach the "sacred" center. In the 1920's and most evidently in the 1930s, this phenomenon was due the reconfiguration of Soviet space in Stalin's personality cult, as all arts aimed at portraying him as a great leader and teacher of mankind. Plamper adds that "the person placed closest to the center of society embodies the sacred most powerfully"[7]. This concept, however, was not foreign to the Soviet public, as centralized authority had a long tradition since the Christianization of Russia in 988. Stalin's motivation was to become the signifier of Sovietness. In famous portraits of the leader, his gaze is directed into the "broad Motherland", into the vastness, no particular time or space, into the *utopia*. "Stalin and the Soviet Union – its nature, its topography – were locked in a loop of mutual signification", writes Plamper.[8] Many created for Stalin and about Stalin, as Katsman wrote to Voroshilov: "Stalin has enchanted us all. What a colossal man! To me, he seems as huge and beautiful as nature". The leader's physical body functioned as a signifier for nature, and his gaze – pointing to the utopia.[9]

Constructing this utopia through cinematic experience, the most prominent Russian directors who set the canon for the art of editing – Kuleshov, Vertov, and Eisenstein – started a new tradition of spatial representation. Writing about the shift in cinematic rules of the times, Oksana Bulgakowa notes that there was a transition from the 1920s, in which "cinematic space was understood first and foremost as virtual, constructed space", but towards the 1930s "professional decisions" were producing the brand new systems of ideology, expressing a shift in cultural paradigms.[10] The artists of the avant-garde movement in that period articulated the transforming anthropology of modernity in forms and rhythms that declared the perceptual apparatus of the Old as left behind and the New as the Ideal. As Susan Buck-Morss emphasizes, the Great October Revolution adopted these utopian impulses and affirmed them by directing them to the Communist doctrine and its implementation. In the arena of the artistic avant-garde,

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[6] Clark, "Socialist Realism," 9.

[7] Jan Plamper, "The Spatial Poetics of the Personality Cult: Circles around Stalin," in *The Landscape of Stalinism*, 21.

[8] *Ibid.*, 24.

[9] *Ibid.*, 25.

[10] Oksana Bulgakowa, "Spatial Figures in Soviet Cinema of the 1930s," in *The Landscape of Stalinism*, 52.

"the political and cultural definitions of revolution became most visibly if problematically, intertwined."[11]

The Revolution of 1917 declared a "world remade", and the coordinates of this brand new world were a difficult and evolving issue, which manifested in a multifold way. Initially through the rigorous production of maps, as Walter Benjamin writes in his *Moscow Diary*, "on the street, in the snow, lie maps of the RSFSR piled up by street vendors who offer them for sale."[12] However, they were signifiers of a more complex phenomenon. The creation of maps helped materialize the "imaginary geography" for this "boundless space" of the USSR, in order to pin-point the borders of power. Widdis brings this to the fore as the "uniqueness of the Soviet project", which extended to recruit artistic spheres to the idea of building a new *imaginary* territory, a territory "explicitly differentiated from the Imperial regime."[13] Her main claim entails that the success of the newly born ideology was strongly dependent on the success of the new state demolishing these great distances, which separated the *center* from the *periphery*, in order to paint the picture of a well-unified society. This would reposition the workers/citizens/individual within a broader framework of a nation and would construct a connection in-between the circular model of space.

3.2. Exploring and Conquering Space: *razvedka* versus *osvoenie*

Analyzing films from the pre-revolutionary period until World War II, in which Soviet filmmakers created a new model of identity thorough an "obsessive process of the self-representation"[14], Emma Widdis foregrounds two intersecting concepts that build the imaginary geography of Sovietness – *razvedka* (exploration of space) and *osvoenie* (mastery or conquest of space). While *razvedka* is evident in the works from the period 1920–1935, transforming into a more repressive mode of the *osvoenie* – the radial model of Soviet space was predominant during the second half of the 1930s.[15] Contrasting to its later manifested counterpart of the "mastery of space", the "assimilative dominating attitude to the periphery"[16], resulting in the control being held by the center, *razvedka* emphasizes a "nonhierarchical vision of space", where educating has greater value than controlling. Instead, it creates a contrasted

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[11] Buck-Morss, *Dreamworld and Catastrophe*, 45.
[12] Walter Benjamin, *Moscow Diary* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986), 51.
[13] Widdis, *Visions of a New Land*, 6.
[14] *Ibid.*, 3.
[15] *Ibid.*, 9.
[16] *Ibid.*, 10.

version of space which Widdis compares to a "grid" or "network", as all points of the imaginary geography are equalized instead of ordered in a radial spherical arrangement. "The experience of movement is offered to everybody. The put[17] is a perpetual movement forward into the future, and the present moment is the key point of focus. The exploration of space is dynamic, a continual act of appropriation and creation"[18]. The image of exploration was strictly connected to the industrialization of Russia, to the modernization and the focus of the national attention on the exploration and renewal of the periphery, of the whole of the Soviet space. The discourse of the process of modernization was characterized by the image of equalization and the task to build a Socialist regime all over the geographical borders of the USSR,[19] the entire Soviet geography had to be reconfigured.

A main theme connected to the concept is *otkrytie* (discovery) of the ordinary heroes of the Soviet Union inspired by the spirit of industrialization, as "the travel and mobility offered by the new vision of Soviet space were accessible to all."[20] Namely through "discovery" of space the Russian Empire could transform into a new socialist state. The Communist ideology had a firm requirement that the understanding of space had to be shared by the people, who would thus both feel belonging to and be devoted to this modified new utopia. In order for the target audience to identify themselves with, and take on that goal, the main character in most films was the "ordinary" and yet heroic Soviet man or woman with a desire to discover his or her homeland, as one could read in the journal *Around the World*, "we do not have to dream up adventures and heroes: they are all around us." *Razvedka* explains the newly born but crucial genre of "official adventures", in which the act of *nayti* (finding out) this uncharted territory was central. Therefore, a core myth of the *rodnaya zemlya* full of wealth and hidden treasures was appropriated to serve the discourse of discovery.[21] The notion of *razvedka* is also imbued in the work of key figures for Soviet cinema such as Vertov and his seventh *Kino Pravda* that showed geologists examining Lake Baikal and its rock composition.

This phenomenon opened up the need for films which explore the most essential scientific skills and "technological miracles" such as oil mining, development of hydroelectric power stations, the variety of fuels. This led to the expansion of the "official adventure" genre into the documentary realm and the creation of the *nauchno-populyarnyi* (popular scientific)

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[17] *Put* (Russian) – "road".
[18] *Ibid.*, 12.
[19] *Ibid.*, 98.
[20] *Ibid.*, 99.
[21] *Ibid.*, 100.

documentary films, which simplified the more complex topics and targeted a wider audience.[22] Obtaining information about one's piece of land served as key knowledge to become an exemplary citizen, and the image of "local space began to emerge as an autonomous mark on the bigger national map". The periphery of the Soviet Union became the "principal signifying space."[23] A crucial element of the "discovery" through *razvedka* is the link with *izobretenie* (invention) as a newly available phenomenon to all Soviet citizens in the age of the celebrated Communist modernization. Susan Buck-Morss points out that "[i]t was, then as now, the turn of a century and the pulse of culture was an alternating current of imagined endings and new beginnings. In a country still inadequately connected by rail, flying machines real and imagined were invested with transformative social meaning."[24]

Along with *izobretenie* came *puti soobshcheniy*a (the roads of communication) – the "skeleton of the nation."[25] Their creation was vital for connecting the periphery to the centre, for the image of Sovietness itself. However, in these documentaries technology becomes unified with nature – it is a discourse of transformation, rather than conquest. In Widdis' example of the documentary film produced for the 16th Party Congress in 1930 *Giganty raportuiut* ("The Giants Report"), which shows the creation of the railways and thus the complete transformation of Kazakhstan, the relationship between nature and technology is conveyed through shots of compelling sights of the land merged with the newly introduced industry and agriculture.

This leads to the interpretation that modernization "is tied to a heightened sensual relationship with the natural resources of the territory."[26] The practical knowledge of this development brings with itself an essential symbolism – the railway does not pass through Moscow, inevitably connecting the periphery in a separate independent net from that of the centre. Other accounts of *razvedka* are Vladimir Shneiderov's travel film *Po Uzbekistanu* ("Around Uzbekistan"), which aims at showing the unique land of that Soviet Republic, or the documentary *Po sovetskim granitsam* ("Along the Soviet Borders"), which not only introduces the notion of exploring the non-Russian Soviet states but also highlights the idea of a *border* as a dissolved entity by the power of Communism.[27]

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[22] *Ibid.*, 101.
[23] *Ibid.*, 103.
[24] Buck-Morss, *Dreamworld and Catastrophe*, 45.
[25] Widdis, *Visions of a New Land*, 104.
[26] *Ibid.*, 105.
[27] *Ibid.*, 113.

The counterpart of the concept of *razvedka* is *osvonie* as conquest. Widdis observes a paradox in its characteristic of reproducing the center–periphery binary relations that Marxist ideology dubs as the core of capitalist faults. *Osvoenie* obtains a "radial model of space, controlled from the center and hierarchically organized."[28] The concept "embodies a duality of knowledge and control,"[29] especially during the High Stalinist Period linked to a notion of immobility in space, as the lens was centered in Moscow itself, the city becoming the viewing point "from which the whole territory could metaphorically be "seen", and hence controlled."[30]

According to Widdis, the symbolic conflict between *adventure* and *conquest* came with the reintroduction of the *propiska* in 1932, which demanded the registration of every Soviet citizen to a particular place of residence.[31] This ended the adventurous spirit of discovery and introduced the concept of "reeducation", in order for the New Ideal Soviet Man and Woman to be created out of the "raw material" of the ordinary Soviet citizen. A famous example for this trend is the film by Grigory Koznitsev and Leonid Trauberg *Maksim*, which follows the development of the main character, the writer Maxim Gorki, who comes into greatness, transforming into a revolutionary hero as the plot develops.[32]

Another difference from the films that can be described through the concept *razvedka*, characterized by the symbiosis between nature and technology, is the dominance of infrastructure/technology over nature. Instead of discovering, the Soviet man was to conquer and "tame the natural world, inhabiting the uninhabitable spaces". This is in accord with the nature-culture duality, and more particularly the domination over nature, which, as Katerina Clark wrote, was at the heart of Stalinist representations of progress.[33] A theme, which was often prominent, was the "conquest of the Arctic" – a land symbolizing new, undiscovered territory, as well as turning the wilderness into a domesticated entity that is crucial to the project of *osvoenie*.[34]

The discourse of *osvoenie* also had a different interpretation of the relationship between humans and technology, as the machine was domesticated, it "served the body" of the Soviet man, rather than being its own separate miracle of modernization.[35] Along with taming the technology, the particular viewpoint of the camera was also "tamed" in its expression.

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[28] *Ibid*., 12.
[29] *Ibid*., 18.
[30] *Ibid*., 8.
[31] *Ibid*., 144.
[32] *Ibid*., 145.
[33] Clark, "Socialist Realism," 9.
[34] Widdis, *Visions of a New Land*, 151.
[35] *Ibid*., 157.

Examples for this phenomenon are the oeuvres of Rodchenko, as well as of Vertov. In their earlier works, the camera created new geographies, new fragmented and imaginary spaces, whereas during this period "the world was pictured as static and eternal", clearly to be seen, Widdis argues, in Vertov's *Tri pesni o Lenine* ("Three Songs of Lenin").[36] The film shows what it claims to be in the title – three different songs joined into a whole visual elegy for the anniversary of Lenin's death. Widdis highlights that time seems to be halted in the film, contrasting with Vertov's canonical obsession with movement in earlier films. The three songs trace a line from the past through the present to the future, in order to reach the "upward gaze, life has become cheerful and joyful": "The vertical axis thus articulates the end of time as movement forward and replaces it with a vertical movement that endows the present with almost mythical grandeur."[37]

3.3. The Films from the Sovexport Collection

Following Widdis' method of analyzing films from the period 1917–1941, the question of how did the films from the Sovexport Collection create the utopian spaces of Sovietness can be tackled resorting to the concepts of *razvedka* and *osvoenie* as toolkits within the process of mapping. The period in which the films studied by me during my internship at EYE Museum were produced between the 1960s and the 1980s. Thus, they mostly overlap with the Stagnation Period of Brezhnev's leadership at the core of the Cold War. The tensions born out of a possibility of a World War Three and the nuclear threat inevitably left their ideological mark on the cinematic production of the Soviet Union.

As mentioned in Chapter One's presentation of the context, by the end of the 1970s Soviet leaders were satisfied with the position taken by the Soviet Union in the world, and did not seek geopolitical rivals. The position of the USSR was instead one of peace, as it was crucial not to let the state follow the fate of 1941. Paradoxically, the main tool of deterrence against the West was nuclear armament – aggressive by nature. It was necessary pointing to the West that the Soviet Union was the winner. This was the meaning of the sincere Brezhnev's statement that there will be no winners in a nuclear war. "We do not aim at victory, you will not get it either, everybody loses."[38]

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[36] *Ibid.*, 160–3.
[37] Ibid, 163.
[38] Shubin, *Zolotaya Osen, ili Period Zastoya*, 6.

This was the predominant discourse in the Sovexport collection at the EYE Filmmuseum – a discourse emphasizing peace and togetherness despite charting a Soviet space clearly separate from that of the United States and its contrasting ideology. Almost all the films which I have seen during my internship, as well as in the few times when I continued to visit the EYE Collection Center, were those previously described under *razvedka*, i.e., "popular-scientific" (*nauchno-populiarnyi*) documentary films with educational purposes intending to reveal the "reality" in Soviet Union. Very often, the documentaries were propaganda reels dedicated to "the 60th/70th anniversary of the Great October Revolution". Can we analyze the Sovexport films easier through the lens of Widdis' concepts of *razvedka* and *osvoenie*? When having a broad overview of the collection, one can deduct that the films intertwine *both* concepts, as their aim was to not only to demonstrate the already established notion of Sovietness but also to target and address a new territory – that of the opposing ideology in the West. Many of the films are a *rasskaz* or *povest* (story) about a certain subject, e.g., the film *Povest o komuniste* ("The Story of a Communist"), the connotation of which combines a desire to describe reality as it is with the aim to create a new mythology of Sovietness.[39]

3.3.1. *The Combination of Nonhierarchical and Circular Vision of Space*

Razvedka's "nonhierarchical vision of space" in some of the films co-exists in the Collection with the "radial model of space" typical for *osvoenie*. Most films have clear propaganda purposes and share the intention to educate about the Soviet Union through plots that often go on tangents about seemingly unrelated issues, aiming to cover as many subjects as possible.

Uroki istorii ("Lessons from History") directed by L. Chernetsov, which describes a broad overview of Soviet history and the Second World War with an emphasis on the vastness of the land and their *mnogonatsionalnyh narod* (multinational people). In turn, *Rasskaz o sovetskoy arhitekture* ("A Story about Soviet Architecture", 1983) directed by Vladimir Tomberg emphasizes a few times the "15 Republics in the USSR and over a hundred nationalities" and the fact that "one movie cannot cover them all". *Narody hotyat mira* ("People Want Peace, 1984) directed by N. Solovyaova is centered around the peace-loving foreign policy of the USSR and aimed at mutual understanding and cooperation with other countries.

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[39] For further detail and examples from the archival reels discussed below that I have worked with and categorized during my internship at the EYE Museum in Amsterdam, see Appendix. Here, the original Russian titles of the documentaries are given in Latin transliteration followed by a translation in English. The years of some films, as well as the full names of the directors are cited as found on the analog films. However, oftentimes the full name of the director is missing, and occasionally this crucial information is not present in its entirety from the titles, which is why these could not be provided in the overall analysis.

As most of the films from the Sovexport Collection, it shows previously recorded military and Soviet newsreels of the construction of a hydroelectric power station, footage from the Moscow Olympic Games in 1980, portraits of the astronaut Yuri Gagarin, footage of the liberation of Prague by the Soviet troops during World War II, the celebrations of May 9th, *Den pobedy* (Victory Day), and many more clips showcasing the progressive nature of the Soviet people and state.

Another good example is the series *Po Sovetskomu Soyuzu* ("Around the Soviet Union", 1982) created by two studios: Tsentralnaya Ordena Lenina and Ordena Krasnogo Znameni. Each film in the series starts with its title in numerous different languages – from Russian to Arabic, mapping the importance of the Soviet Union beyond its own borders. The aim of the film is to describe the political relations established with states from "different social systems" (capitalist and communist alike), as well as foreign trade and scientific cooperation. The postwar history of the USSR is told in a manner, which highlights the incredible achievements of the Soviet heroes, emphasizing the role of its leader at the time – Brezhnev. The history of the Soviet Union before and after World War II is crammed in a reel of about 40 minutes, but the film also goes on to explain sports, the energy systems, and the role of Russia in the space race. Sovietness seems to be penetrating everywhere, all realms of life, sometimes rather chaotically, in a search to *nayti* (find out) and show the territory to the Western world in the most pragmatic way.

After all, "the Soviet Union is a land of over one hundred nationalities", as proclaimed by a number of films, such as *Zhelaem schast'ya* ("We Wish Happiness|") which tells its spectator about the multinational arts of the Soviet Union, presenting folk arts from five of its republics, as well (seemingly without any connection) five wedding ceremonies in Latvia, Ukraine, Georgia, Uzbekistan, as well as the Russian Federation. The film declares "multiculturalism" along the vast territories of the USSR as one of its most crucial qualities, and space is charted non-hierarchically and randomly. The film *Karta velikoy rodiny* ("Map of the Great Motherland") created for the 70th anniversary of the October Revolution also emphasizes the "five alphabets and the hundred languages" by quite literally educating the audience about where the borders of the Soviet Union lie and about the customs in various republics in that space. Just as Epstein writes: "Topos, correspondingly, tends toward infinity, striving to encompass an enormous landmass and even the earth itself."[40]

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[40] Epstein, "Russo-Soviet Topoi," 277.

On the other hand, many of the reels show the good cooperation of the Soviet Union with one specific state, such as the film *Dobrye sosedy* ("Good Neighbours") directed by Yuri Zanin. Central to the narrative of the piece is that "the good trust and friendship are the hallmarks of the Soviet-Finnish relations". A reason for the claim to be made is also the fact that Lenin spent some years of his life prior to the October revolution in Finland. The case is similar for the film *Lenin: Sem' let v Shveytsariy* ("Lenin: Seven Years in Switzerland") which highlights Lenin's immigration years in the country and his firm "grip on the idea of brotherhood of nations". *V druzhbe s gorodami mira* ("In Friendship with the Cities of the World") directed by Yuri Zanin explains the phenomenon of "twin cities" or "sister cities", such as Moscow and Prague. The "brotherhood" between two cities in various Soviet countries, which ensured cooperation between places, otherwise far away on the map, with the goal to promote peace and mutual understanding. Space shifts in between a non-hierarchical representation of Sovietness divided in a hierarchy of realms of relative sacredness in a "cartography of power."[41]

The 3000 km long oil pipeline *Friendship* mentioned in the film *Sotsialisticheskoe sodruzhestvo* ("The Socialist Community") is symbolic for the intertwining of the concept of *osvoenie*, i.e., the appropriation of space, and the theme of "technological miracles" for the concept of *razvedka*. The film itself shows the dependency of all USSR states, as well as other socialist states from the Eastern Block at the time, with one another. For example, it shows the socialist democracy in countries, such as Mongolia – an industrial state where illiteracy fall into oblivion thanks to the USSR. Here, the biggest footwear factory exists in the whole of Asia built by Czechoslovakia with the help of Bulgarian workers, as well as the state's connection to the German meat food production, or the rich coal fields developed through Soviet machinery. This is meant to show "the real and tangible fruits from friendship among nations".

Some films center on Moscow itself, such as *Moskva: vremena goda* ("Moscow: Times of the Year"), showing how the four seasons look like in the Russian capital. Other documentaries like *Leningrad* portray the city as "a center of culture and science", which is typical for *osvoenie*. Nevertheless, most films expand the territory they map out either by highlighting different capitals, such as *Krakov pomnit' Lenina* ("Cracow Remembers Lenin") and *Riga – stolitsa sovetskoy Latvii* ("Riga, Capital of Soviet Latvia", 1972), or by creating a non-hierarchical vision of space among the territory of the Soviet Union and its connection to other nations.

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[41] In the sense of Clark, "Socialist Realism," 9.

The film *Gruziya – legendy i nastoyashtee* ("Georgia – Legends and Present", 1982) shows a brief history of Georgia and the importance of preserving its traditions. The same goes for *Sovetskaya Gruziya* (Soviet Georgia) or *Tajikskaya SSR* ("Soviet Socialist Republic of Tajikistan"). The film *Verny syn partii i naroda* ("Faithful Son of the Party and People", 1982), produced during the time of the Soviet War in Afghanistan (1979–1989), focuses on the "friendship between the people of Afghanistan and the USSR", as well as on the cooperation between the Soviet Union and Bulgaria, Mongolia, Romania, Czechoslovakia. This discourse peaks in films like *Soyuz nerushimy* ("Unbreakable Union", 1982) showing the seemingly utopian union between all nations with the USSR – "peace in the world, freedom to all, in the USSR, every religion can find its place and all people are free to do as they like" across all republics.

3.3.2. *The Space of Nature*

The Sovexport Collection films portray a paradoxical space of nature. It is at once influenced by the concept of *razvedka* in the documentaries exploring the beauty of the various Soviet countries' landscape, as well as in the idea of the symbiosis between nature and human. However, other films privilege the concept of *osvoenie*, so in their stories the mastery of men over nature prevails.

Films, such as *Malen'kie chudesa bol'shoy prirody* ("The Small Wonders of the Great Nature") are completely dedicated to showing aesthetic shots from all over the Soviet Union, from unnamed locations which could be anywhere in time and space, utopian visions the goal of which is to portray the vast land as unified and most of all beautiful. Most films dealing with the topic of nature also emphasize the importance of preserving the environment. The film *Moya zemlya – volshebnyy mir lyubvi* ("My Earth – a Magical World of Love") proclaims that "we will never forget where we came from". *Yunye druz'ya prirody* ("Young Friends of Nature"), directed by R. Elksnis asks the questions: "What world will our children live in? It is necessary that we educate our children to love nature!" The film *Zashtita okruzhayushtey sredy* ("Protection of the Environment") criticizes the level of pollution in that period and proclaims that "the time has come to pause, reflect and protect our future", for in the USSR environmental protection "has become a matter of national concern". It shows the Committee for Environmental Protection (including scientists, workers, and farmers) discussing the Improvement Program and the first steps for protection from the "dangerous and harmful industrial enterprises in the Soviet Union": "The Earth's protection is our common concern as

human beings". This theme is continued in the film *Chelovek i priroda* ("Man and Nature") highlighting man's intervention in the process of nature as destructive and describing the measures taken by the USSR for keeping nature as clean as possible.

The topic of environmental pollution is also explored in films, such as *Zemlya u nas odna* ("Our Earth Is Only One", 1986), a quote in which comes back time after time in the Sovexport films: "What shall we leave for the ones after us?" The same quote is repeated in a film produced by the Ukrainian Documentary Film Studios called *Molodyozh na stroykah strany* ("Youth at the Construction Sites of the Country") showing the construction sites in Siberia where young students from twelve different nationalities are helping build the New Transsiberia Railway, as well as new electrical facilities all over the Soviet lands.

It is worth mentioning that in all of the films concerning nature there is a double directive that at once presents the land as "pure" and guides the Soviet people towards diligent care towards it, and yet portrays the numerous industries, which contribute to its pollution and harm as "progressive". The same discourse prevails in films, such as *Rasskazy o Sibiri: vse dal'she na sever* ("Tales of Siberia: Farther North"), which examines the "discoveries that the world called the Siberian wonder" (a lake in the Siberian region), as well as the oil and gas which could be extracted there. The domination over nature here is a representation of progress – *exploration* and *conquest* coincide and create a paradox at once. We can observe the same phenomenon in the documentary *Po reka Lene* ("Along the Lena River") which traces the lives of the people who live along the Lena River but also highlights mainly the way the USSR produces fossils and oil around its land. Just as the film *Novy rubezh – novaya vysota* ("A New Frontier – a New Height", 1980) focuses on the oil fields in Siberia bringing to the fore the importance of the working people and their achievements.

3.3.3. *Technology, Infrastructure, Space*

The technological development of the Soviet Union is a prevailing theme in the Sovexport Collection. However, the concept of *razvedka* and *osvoenie* clash once again in the representation of space, as the creation of the roads of communication is presented both as beneficial to the periphery of the USSR in some films, but in other it serves the discourse of *osvoenie* – technology and infrastructure serves man.

The film *Sovetskiy Soyuz: stranitsi nauki i techniki* ("Soviet Union: Pages of Science and Technology") is a very typical example of the *nauchno-populiarnyi* (popular-scientific) documentary films which expand on as many topics as their timelines can cover – mentioning

multiple important Soviet scientists and their inventions, and proceeding to cover the vast topic of the land of the USSR, reaching specificities such as its fertility and its floral variety. The film *Stal'nye magistrali* ("Highways of Steel") describes the process of building the Soviet Railways, claiming that "it's hard to imagine the life of two hundred million people in this vast land without its transport", these railways "shape the country's destiny". In addition, the newsreel *Magistral'* ("Highway") provides information about the BAM (The Baikal–Amur Mainline), just as the short film *BAM: vchera, segodnya, zavtra* ("BAM: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow") briefly informs about the highway.

On the other hand, films like *Lyudi odnogo zavoda* ("The People of a Factory", in multiple copies watched at the Sovexport Collection) display the common work of factory workers in a ball-bearing factory, emphasizing the individuals and their role in the progress of the Soviet Union. This notion is expressed also in *Yunye tehniki* ("Young Innovators") – a film about young people conducting experiments and dreaming about a future with cars that do not emit exhaust gases.

Numerous reels of the Sovexport Collection emphasize the relation between human and technology even further through films about the space race or space exploration, and the deep fascination with the life of Yuri Gagarin, the first man in space, mentioned in every reel which deals with Soviet history in one way or another, such as *Soyuz Nerushimyy* ("Unbreakable Union", 1982), which touches upon the role of the USSR in the development of space technology. As Widdis observes when elaborating on the concept of *osvoenie* (in her case in relation to Dziga Vertov's films), the horizontal axis merges with the vertical spatial axis, as the gaze is pointed towards mapping what is yet to be conquered.[42]

In the aforementioned film *Narody hotyat mira* ("People Want Peace, 1984) foregrounding peacekeeping on Earth, a key sentence is pronounced in the sixth minute of the voiceover: "*Kosmos dolzhen sluzhit' cheloveku* (The cosmos must serve Man)". A similar narrative is followed in the film *Kosmos sluzhit' cheloveku* ("Cosmos serves Man") directed by G. Ivanova. It tells about the first space flight by a human in 1961, Yuri Gagarin, naming it "*simvol podviga neimeshtiy ravnogo v istorii chelovechestva* (the symbol of heroic deeds with no rival in the history of mankind)", and describing the progressive development of the space technologies in the Soviet Union. The documentary claims that one day "*kosmos budet' zaselyat'sya* (space/the cosmos is going to be populated one day)". Another example is provided by the film *Pokoriteli vselenoy* ("Conquerors of the Universe", 1980) directed by

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[42] Widdis, *Visions of a New Land*, 163.

Nikolay Makarov, which goes into detail about the creation and testing of complex rockets, as well as the biography of Yuri Gagarin, the first man in space in the Era of Space Conquest.

3.4. A Utopia Reborn

Grasping the revealed paradoxes of the Sovexport films and the accomplishments of Soviet propaganda can be further enriched by Widdis' observation that we must "appreciate the creative power of culture imagery and the extent to which visions of utopia were a real, creative force in the construction of a new society."[43] The emphasis on the creation of utopia in constructing the "imaginary Sovietness" is evident also in the Sovexport films through the seemingly peaceful space of social equality where hundreds of nationalities and all races reside together unified by a mutual desire for progress.

Discussing the grand narrative of this utopia through cinema contributes to the greater problematic of the bigger scheme of utopia versus reality in today's dreamworld and the evoking of "the Soviet project" in the West. The revived interest in the socialist agenda called by the *Economist* "Millennial Socialism"[44] is also echoed in a number of academic papers, such as Nancy Fraser's plea for a "revolution" in her article *"From Redistribution to Recognition? Dilemmas of Justice in a 'Post-Socialist' Age."* Fraser writes from the perspective of cultural studies and analyzes different modes of injustice in a defense of the socialist project, claiming that "only by looking to alternative conceptions of redistribution and recognition can we meet the requirements of justice for all."[45]

A deeper analysis of the documentary films from the Sovexport collection and their link to the grand scheme of Soviet cinema provides us with "the behind the scenes" of how the skeleton of a mass utopia gets constructed, and perhaps could warn us about its "catastrophes". As Susan Buck-Morss frames it:

> The Construction of mass utopia was the dream of the twentieth century. It was the driving ideological force of industrial modernization in both its capitalist and socialist forms. The dream was itself an immense material power that transformed the natural world, investing industrially produced objects and built environments with collective,

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[43] *Ibid*, 39.

[44] Editorial, "The Resurgent left: Millennial Socialism," *The Economist*, February 14, 2019. <www.economist.com/leaders/2019/02/14/millennial-socialism≥ (Accessed June 21, 2020).

[45] Nancy Fraser, "From Redistribution to Recognition? Dilemmas of Justice in a 'Post-Socialist' Age," *New Left Review* 212 (1995): 93.

political desire. Whereas the night dreams of individuals express desires thwarted by the social order and pushed backward into regressive childhood forms, this collective dream dared to imagine a social world in alliance with personal happiness, and promised to adults that its realization would be in harmony with the overcoming of scarcity for all.[46]

Defining the project of imaginary Sovietness through the notion of "dreamworld" articulates the conceptual paradoxes in the content of the documentary Sovexport films, as they highlight the gaps of the Soviet socialist ideology. Susan Buck-Morss borrows the concept of dreamworld from Walter Benjamin's interpretation of a collective mental state at the core of his theory of modernity as the re-enchantment of the world, about the expressions of a utopian desire for social arrangements that exceed existing forms. She observes that "dreamworlds become dangerous when their enormous energy is used instrumentally by structures of power, mobilized as an instrument of force that turns against the very masses who were supposed to benefit."[47]

The *utopian* dreamworld of the "imaginary Sovietness" which Widdis charts becomes a catastrophe in the *reality* of *The Gulag Archipelago* by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. His account of the brutal Soviet prison system describes how the terrifying phantasmagoria of Soviet dreams plays out in the real world. The author's book is of great importance for understanding what was truly happening in Soviet society, as his suffering in the Gulags for criticizing the Communist ideology made him proclaim the Communist system as a "disease". The main purpose of *The Gulag Archipelago* was to uncover to the world the true horrors, which happened as the USSR, attempted to undergo the transformation into a brand new society organized under communist principles. After the Communist Era, Solzhenitsyn argued that the poisonous ideology is a "dead dog" for Russians, and yet "for many people in the West, it is still a living lion". He compared the imaginary Sovietness to a "lie": "And the lie has led us so far away from a normal society that you cannot even orient any longer, in its dense, gray fog not even one pillar can be seen."[48]

In conclusion, this chapter extended the concepts of *osvoenie* and *razvedka* suggested by Emma Widdis in order to explore in what way Soviet filmmakers chart the borders of Sovietness in their films from the Stagnation Period, and more specifically in the films from

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[46] Buck-Morss, *Dreamworld and Catastrophe*, ix.
[47] *Ibid*., 277.
[48] Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago 1918-1956: An Experiment in Literary Investigation* (New York: Harper&Row Publishers, 1973), Vol. I, 649.

the Sovexport Collection that I have categorized and analyzed from September to November 2019 at the EYE Filmmuseum. On one hand, the elements which Widdis claims are characteristic for the representation of space through *razvedka* are the non-hierarchical exploration of the Soviet land, the technological miracles, the importance of inventions and roads of communications, as well as the symbiosis between nature and man. On the other hand, *osvoenie* explains the next stage of mastery of space – a radial representation of space, which exceeds the notion of *razvedka* through elements such as domination of man and infrastructure over nature, of Man over machine. By synthesizing Widdis' manner of analyzing the representation of space in Soviet films in the period 1917–1941, the present study sought to expand her ideas by testing their relevance to specific films from the Stagnation Period. In so doing, a number of paradoxes in the discourse of Sovietness in the Sovexport films have been highlighted, namely the cohabitation of the two concepts throughout the whole collection. This can serve to a further inquiry whether the revealed gap between utopia and reality, dreamworld and catastrophe evident throughout Soviet history lies in the future of the newly emerging dreamworlds in the West.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONTEMPORARY DOCUMENTARY FILM AND THE REBIRTH
OF NOSTALGIA FOR THE COMMUNIST IDEOLOGY

Perhaps dreams of imagined homelands cannot and should not come to life. Sometimes it is preferable (at least in the view of this nostalgic author) to leave dreams alone, let them be no more and no less than dreams, not guidelines for the future.

Svetlana Boym[1]

4.1. The Documentary as an Active Agent in Shaping Reality

The revealed formal techniques adopted by documentary filmmakers for the construction of their works and the numerous paradoxes outlined through the in-depth analysis of the EYE Sovexport Collection raise the question of why the discussed features are relevant to the contemporary documentary film scene. According to Spence and Navarro, dissecting the cinematic techniques of documentaries is strictly connected to the filmmaker's *responsibility*. Their stance that "documentary makers bear responsibility for what they represent"[2] stems from the idea that films, as a part of culture, help make sense of our surrounding world and guide our perception of our socio-historical reality. Therefore, non-fictional films have a particular power to affect our grasp of politics, people's everyday lives and other key problems of today. The issue of authenticity in documentaries is thus set aside while discussions foreground the more relevant question of what and whose interest does a documentary serve and how does that affect the viewer. Recent works by scholars, such as Michael Renov,[3] Sarah Cooper[4] or Elizabeth Cowie,[5] step back from the traditional discourse of analyzing the filmmaker's responsibility to the subject as a main concern and instead emphasize the role of

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[1] Boym, "Nostalgia and its Discontents," 457.
[2] Spence and Navarro, *Crafting Truth: Documentary Form and Meaning*, 83.
[3] Michael Renov, *The Subject of Documentary* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2004).
[4] Sarah Cooper, *The Soul of Film Theory* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).
[5] Elizabeth Cowie, *Recording Reality, Desiring the Real* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2011).

documentary in *shaping* reality, being an active agent in the becoming of the world instead of simply a representation.

In her recent monograph, Illona Hongisto expands this approach by connecting it to a new materialist perspective interpreting matter as having agency in its own right. Documentaries are thus seen not mere as witnesses of history from a particular angle but rather as engaging "in a productive dialogue with the world and its becoming,"[6] through which they partake in the happening of history. Hongisto proposes the phrase "an aesthetic of the frame" to conceptualize non-fictional films in their relation to the world as constantly transforming, and deviates from Grierson's "aesthetic of the document"[7] that has largely shaped the scholarly canon of analyzing documentary making. The concept of soul, as Hongisto theorizes it, is derived from the Aristotelian notion of soul as "inseparable from the body."[8] By establishing documentary practices as the processes of reframing documentations, observing/witnessing and documentary capacities as the act of imagining, fabulating and affecting, she conducts a careful analysis of the audiovisual aspects of documentaries with the aim to examine their capacities of becoming in the real world.

The engagement of the visual images with the spectator is, according to Hongisto, twofold. At once, they evoke a sense of certainty by acting as an indexical trace of actuality and a sense of uncertainty by suggesting a world existing beyond their own borders. A fascinating point of Hongisto is that the latter provokes the *imagination* of the spectators by forcing them to fill the gap between the indexical image and its referent, which would then lead to contemplating prospective social change. Apart from imagination, Hongisto explores the term *fabulation*, introduced by Bergson and taken up by the Deleuzian interpretation, which refers to a character's self-invention in the unraveling plot, by pointing to the connections between the filmmaker, the camera, and the real characters.[9] Hongisto's argument thus entails that it is not only the filmmaker who creates meaning through his or her work, but it is also the filmed characters who cooperate to create the story by being captured on camera, for example in Albert and David Maysles' film *Grey Gardens* (1975).

The last theoretical toolkit proposed by Hongisto is *affection* seen as a key function of framing in documentary film: "Common faith in the documentary's capabilities to inspire political action and to produce social change has, in recent years, crossed paths with the

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[6] Hongisto, *Soul of the Documentary*, 12.
[7] *Ibid.*, 14.
[8] Mirna Gabbe, "Aristotle on the Metaphysics of Emotions," *Apeiron* 49, 1 (2015): 33.
[9] Hongisto, *Soul of the Documentary*, 67.

neoliberal program of impact measurement."[10] One of the fundamental purposes of documentaries therefore is their power to inspire the spectator to political contemplation and action. The three conceptual toolkits – inspiration, fabulation, and affection – provide an answer to the question of what films can do and how they partake in reality's becoming.

4.2. The Contemporary Trends of Western Art Scene and Documentary Film

Hongisto's claims about the ethical responsibilities of non-fictional films, which reside to a lesser extent into telling the truth and a bigger extent into raising awareness for social change, pose also the question of whether documentaries are meant to be activist. Such sentiments are well supported by Thomas Waugh who argues for participating in any sort of social change, and therefore films "must be made not only *about* people directly implicated in change but *with* and *for* those people as well."[11] Nowadays, this plea for social justice in documentary cinema is widely discussed. In the context of these contemporary trends that evoke the utopia of Communism in documentary art, revealing sources from the USSR, such as the Sovexport films, that has been so far unknown becomes increasingly relevant and important.

"Nostalgic memories are histories of the future", as art historian Paolo Magagnoli writes in his *Documents of Utopia*.[12] This is the first monograph critically foregrounding the urgency of examining the documentary turn in contemporary art, which also illustrates a nostalgia to the utopias of the past. From the outset, the book tackles the "ruins of utopia" through the short film *Bubble House* (1999) by Tacita Dean who explores the big question of thinking about utopias after the twentieth century. The 16 mm film centers around the ruins of a strange and unfinished house, which Dean found at the Caribbean island Cayman Brac. According to Magagnoli, the filmmaker presents this construction dating from the 1960s as a symbol of "the breakdown of the utopian impulse in the twentieth century and its stubborn persistence in spite of its disastrous history",[13] as the cinematography presents the place as one of "difference, flux and becoming."[14]

Dean is not the only artist fascinated with the ruins of yesterday's failed utopias. In the period between 1998 and 2008, many filmmakers explored this theme in their documentary

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[10] *Ibid.*, 101.
[11] Thomas Waugh, "Why Documentary Filmmakers Keep Trying to Change the World, or Why People Changing the World Keep Making Documentaries," in *"Show Us Life": Toward a History and Aesthetics of Committed Documentary*, ed. Thomas Waugh (Metuchen, NJ.: Scarecrow Press, 1984), xi.
[12] Magagnoli, *Documents of Utopia*, 1.
[13] *Ibid.*, 23.
[14] *Ibid.*, 25.

works.[15] Magagnoli outlines the analysis of contemporary documentaries with the work of two filmmakers – Matthew Buckingham and Joachim Koester, the projects of whom investigate the utopias of the nineteenth and twentieth century, similarly to Tacita Dean. Joachim Koester's films and photographs are the manifestations of a search to represent the past and what we could take away from it. For instance, in *Row Housing* (1999) the filmmaker captured the utopian city Resolute envisioned by the architect Ralph Erskine – one of the many failed social utopias of the 1970s. Thus, the artist himself characterizes his work as "ghost hunting."[16] Three motifs are followed in Koester's cinematic works. Firstly, in an attempt to "conjure up the past and to fictionalize the present,"[17] the artist appropriates or imitates films and photographs from the past, such as the quoting of Godard's classic films in Koester's *Weekend* (1993) and *Anna Karina* (2001). Second, Koester's films include elements of re-enactment through which he attempts to re-create specific folklore traditions, such as those of Italy or Central America in *Tarantism* (2007). Lastly, his projects focus on the depiction of architectural ruins, such as his photographs in Kaliningrad from *The Kant Walks* (2005).

On the other hand, Matthew Buckingham's films illustrate cinema's ability to create "alternative, democratic public sphere,"[18] for example *Situation Leading to a Story* (1999), *One Side of Broadway* (2005), and *False Future* (2007) which deal with early film history. *Situation Leading to a Story* seems particularly fascinating, as Buckingham stumbles upon four short films on the ground in New York, depicting seemingly random moments – a family resting at home, a tram being constructing in the Andes, and a bullfight in Mexico. The artist attempts to look for the story of these moments by searching for their creator in an old phone book. Despite reaching him, the owner of the shots by the name of Harrison Dennis hangs up on the filmmaker. Due to that development of events and the open incomplete ending of the film, writes Magagnoli, this mysterious home-movie "epitomizes the utopian idea of an active, "emancipated"[19] spectator who is capable of appropriating previously inaccessible documents and producing her own history against the authority of the narrator as well as official and professional historians."[20]

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[15] Julia Hell and Andreas Schönle, "Introduction," in *Ruins of Modernity*, ed. Julia Hell and Andreas Schönle, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 7.

[16] Joachim Koester as quoted in Hal Foster, "Blind Spots: The Art of Joachim Koester." *Artforum* 44, no. 8, (2006): 213.

[17] Magagnoli, *Documents of Utopia*, 30.

[18] *Ibid*., 37.

[19] On the aesthetic theory of Jacques Rancière, see his *The Emancipated Spectator* (London: Verso, 2009).

[20] Magagnoli, *op. cit.*, 38.

These films exemplify contemporary documentary practice and what Nichols would designate as his last mode of the *performative* documentary that brings to the fore the subjective nature of the filmmaker's truth, his engagement with the subject and the audience's understanding to this engagement.[21] Nichols emphasizes that the performative mode challenges the very notion of knowledge – be it based on the Western tradition of dealing with it or representing a specific personal experience by stressing "the emotional complexity of experience from the perspective of the filmmaker him-or herself."[22] Both Koester and Buckingham have never offered a specific answer to the question whether the represented subjects in their films are failed utopias, e.g., Buckingam's film *Sandra of the Tulip House* depicting Free-Town Christiana and its community of squatters located in Copenhagen.

It is worth mentioning the manner in which Magagnoli deals with these films, analyzing them through Foucault's concept of *heterotopia*, as its etymology (*hetero* meaning "another" and *topos* meaning "place") indicates a notion of "radical difference."[23] In the sense of Foucault, heterotopias are those spaces that are disturbing and contradictory being fascinating in their way of interrupting the banality and normality of everyday spaces: the prisons, the brothels, or the cemeteries.[24] While utopias can be understood simply as spaces of the imagination, heterotopias lie at the boundary of the real and the imaginary – at once they exist in the actual world but "although real, somehow encapsulate the dreams and desires of a society."[25]

However, the concept of heterotopia remains contradictory and vague which opens up the possibilities of its multiple readings and interpretations. According to Magagnoli, choosing one particular approach when dissecting the concept of heterotopia is not needed (e.g. whether they are marginal spaces of transformation and emancipation or the concept is simply describing an elusive element of inclusivity by gated communities), as the productive implementation of the notion comes from its ambiguous quality. Foucault's concept represents the model of nostalgia prominent in these contemporary documentaries because just like these various heterotopias (prison, brothel, etc.), the ruins in these films are on the verge of two binary categories: "the imaginary and the real, the banal and the extraordinary, the different and the homogenous, and the ordered and the disordered."[26]

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[21] Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary*, 34.
[22] *Ibid.*, 131.
[23] Magagnoli, *Documents of Utopia*, 43.
[24] Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," *Diacritics* 16, no.1 (1986): 22–7.
[25] Magagnoli, *op. cit.*, 28.
[26] *Ibid.*, 29.

Despite proposing the concept of heterotopia through which one could understand the contemporary documentary trends, Paolo Magagnoli intertwines his analysis to the one of utopia and its critics, such as George Perec who suggests that utopian visions are the dream of a portion of society who impose their ideals and notions for an alternative world, and thus become dystopia for others. Although this argument is supported by historical evidence, Magagnoli deems this a negative understanding of the concept, which the aforementioned artists attempt to break by seeking such ruins of the past – places representing the failed utopias and yet "turn them into spaces of contingency that anticipate the becoming of new forms and orderings".[27]

Magagnoli's wishful impetus towards a modern reading of utopian fantasies is continued through a discussion of the films of Anri Sala, Hito Steyerls, and Ilya and Emilia Kabakov. Their works evoke "the ghost of Communism", reviving a nostalgia for its ideology, and thus display the phenomenon of *Ostalgie*, meaning "nostalgia for the East" in German and used to connote the shared mourning of the Soviet utopia.[28] To do so, the filmmakers appropriate the genre of propaganda documentaries from Yugoslavia, Albania and the Soviet Union. The archival materials used in their films are depicted not as ones of telling lies and manipulating the uneducated massed but instead as a device through which one can explore nostalgic utopian dreams of Communism and re-generate a renewed energy of the past with a transformative political power. Sala's *Intervista* (1999), Hito Steyerl's *Journal No.1: An Artist's Impression* (2007), and Ilya and Emilia Kabakov's *The Happiest Man in the World* (2014) take the crushing failure of the Communist ideology into material for creating works which hint at a possible transformation and becoming of these old ideas.

These films deconstruct the boundaries between fact and fiction, which is why Magagnoli takes Ernst Bloch's *open ontology* as a central framework of his analysis. While for Buckingham utopias are imaginary spaces or constructs: "I think it is important to look at Utopia not as something that is intended to succeed, but as a fiction that is meant as a critique of the present moment,"[29] Bloch's theory sees utopia as part of reality. In fact, he emphasizes utopian visions can give an impulse to social transformation.

As a first example might be taken the work of Anri Sala – a contemporary Albanian artist and filmmaker. His work is fluid and not bound to any categories, often being comprised of various media and depict multiple subject matters – from empty billboards in *Blindfold*

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[27] *Ibid.*, 43.
[28] *Ibid.*, 15.
[29] Matthew Buckingham, "Round Table: The Projected Image in Contemporary Art," *October*, 104 (2003): 71.

(2002) to capturing Tirana's architecture in *Dammi i Colori* (2003) in an attempt to push the boundaries of what constitutes a documentary.[30] Through his films, the artist wants to acknowledge the fact that cinema as an art form is not a witness of reality as it is – it is always mediated and shown from the perspective from its author. One of the most illustrating examples of his oeuvre is his first film *Intervista* (1998) which centers around his homeland Albania and its heritage. Albania, as most Eastern European countries, was under a Communist dictatorship until 1991. After a transitional period, Albania and the other countries in a similar condition went through a period of "deep historical amnesia,"[31] a phenomenon first attempted to be challenged by Sala. Similarly to *Situation Leading to a Story* by Buckingham, *Intervista* starts with Sala finding a film, in his case in his own apartment in Tirana, the Albanian capital. This video appears to be an interview with his mother at the Communist Youth Alliance two decades prior to the creation of the documentary.

The fascinating twist of the film is the missing audio that the filmmaker ends up consulting about with locals from the deaf institute. The results surprise the filmmaker, as well as his mother, who appears to have been talking in the classic propagandistic manner of the times in praise of the Marxist-Leninst Party. Although Sala's mother is in disbelief of her saying these words, she takes this reading as the truthful one and even starts to claim with pride that she strongly held onto the Communist ideals. Challenging the original evidence he found and by reconstructing and filling the gaps of the film, Sala handles the medium of film as a tool of blending the boundary between fact and fiction. *Intervista* becomes a documentary told by many voices – not just through the voice of Sala's mother Valdet, but also through the information by the people from the deaf institute, confronting the interview as a transparent source.[32]

Anri Sala's attempt to re-shape this lost story is done in a number of ways. The filmmaker re-filmed the footage once again, focusing and cutting closer to Valdet's lips and then enlarging this scene when projecting it, so the deaf people can recognize her words. As a result, the gestures of the deaf people become a main evidence for Sala, as his mother's worlds are led by other bodies and their version of the reality captured in the original interview video. Sala's decision to collaborate with deaf people and to re-invent the narrative from the old video is meant to show the fictive quality of the reality in Communist Albania. In a following scene,

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[30] See Liam Gillick, "Now I See: One Work by Anri Sala," in *Anri Sala*, ed. Mark Godfrey, Liam Gillick and Hans Ulrich Obrist (London: Phaidon Press, 2006), 103–10.
[31] Magagnoli, *Documents of Utopia*, 58.
[32] *Ibid.*, 59.

the journalist Pushkin Lubonja reminisces on the manner in which such television interviews were in fact stages and the answer planned ahead of time. Therefore, the filmmaker portrays the reality of public life in his home country as "a performance staged according to an invented script that did not correspond to the real situation of the country."[33] In a similar manner to most propaganda films from the Sovexport collection, footage of the people in Albania depicts the idyllic life of Communist Albania, as people cheer revolutionary songs. However, in *Intervista*, they play the role of re-invented propaganda footage, which symbolize the lost utopian ideals of a post-communist country. The Western idea of truth is transformed to be accepted not only in the events that have happened historically but also in the ideals of the grand narrative inspiring people.

As a second example may serve Hito Steyerl – another contemporary artist and filmmaker adopting the style of the video essay throughout her work, which means that the video is often overlaid with additional text and voiceovers. Steyerl's hybrid form of documentary often depicts the subjective experience of the artist as her films *In November* and *Lovely Andrea*. The piece *Journal No. 1: An Artist's Impression*, like the examples of the aforementioned artists, centers around the attempts of Steyerl to look for a missing document, namely the very first newsreel capturing Bosnia post World War II, which was destroyed in the 1992–1995 Civil War separating Bosnia and Herzegovina from Serbia. To look for the contents of the lost reel, Steyerl bases her film on the recollection of two people from Sarajevo's Film Museum – the director and the projectionist. Their memories of a scene from Journal No. 1 in a classroom with the Communist leader Tito's portrait hanging on the wall, is reconstructed with the help of a graphic artist. When recording both recollections of the very same moment, what stands out is that the director and the projectionist have different ideas of how it went, confusing the scene with others from famous Yugoslav feature films and contradicting themselves about various details. In the final scenes of the documentary, the filmmaker conducts an interview with the graphic designer who comes from within a Muslim background and had to flee his home and leave school because of the war, which in turn points out the different points of view and the complex history of the country.[34]

By looking into the personal and subjective experiences of the characters in *Journal No. 1. An Artist's Impression*, Hito Steyerl tries to connect these effects of the war with the contemporary condition of Bosnian people. In her own words, she attempted a "creative

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[33] *Ibid.*, 60.
[34] *Ibid.*, 66.

fictionalization"[35] of the destroyed film reel. Without attempting to question the truthfulness of the presented images and facts from her interviewees, *Journal No. 1: An Artist's Impression* is the artist's attempt "to represent documentary images as afterimages that are imbricated with collective fantasies and private memories."[36] The technical tools which Steyerl adopts to blend fact and fiction are three – split-screen, appropriating images from Yugoslavian feature films (e.g., *The Battle of Neretva*), and resorting to the images created by the graphic designer to reconstruct the scene from the newsreel. All of them act in a way creating numerous layers of contrasts between the different elements. The split-screen points out the difference between the views of the projectionist and the director, further juxtaposed by the story of the graphic designer, with the films adding a new fictive dimension to the documents. Thus, Steyerl's manner of conceptualizing film history as "a reservoir of memories, dreams and premonitions to be taken as true"[37] is acted out in her complex cinematic works in her ability to express hope for a better future through these individual story of Bosnian individuals. Steyerl suggests that "the reconstruction process becomes interesting because it is no longer about uncovering a lost truth from the past, but about inventing a new truth from the future."[38] In such a paradigm, entail a potential to not just educate about what has happened but also to construct the image of a better future.

A third example of contemporary artists, heavily occupied with the idea of taking the ideals of the past and indicating their transformative qualities are Ilya and Emilia Kabokov, originally coming from the Soviet Union. Their installation *The Happiest Man in the World* continues the trends shaped in Anri Sala's work, such as the usage of unreliable witnesses in the film. In this way, a fictional side of the documentary was established, and Hito Steyerl's pieces builds on it, particularly on the appropriation of old propagandistic films, by extending them in a rather extreme fashion.

Magagnoli emphasizes that Sala and Steyerl represent a rather fluid truth, as they mix the Communist regime with both its lived reality and the dreams of its utopia, however the Kabokov's aim at portraying the Communist paradise "present and palpable, eliciting immediate identification and awe". [39] In *The Happiest Man in the World*, the artists include multiple Soviet musicals from 1940s without explaining their contexts, and thus emphasizing

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[35] Hito Steyerl, "From Ethnicity to Ethics," in *A Fiesta of Tough Choices: Contemporary Art in the Wake of Cultural Policies*, ed. Maria Lind and Tirdad Zolghadr (Oslo: Torpedo Press, 2007), p. 69.
[36] Magagnoli, *Documents of Utopia*, 64.
[37] *Ibid.,* 67.
[38] Steyerl, "From Ethnicity to Ethics," 63.
[39] Magagnoli, *op. cit.*, 68.

their aesthetic qualities. By straying from a typical documentary manner of representation, the Kabokov's installation because it takes for a given the proper understanding of the reel from the audience's side, as it immerses it in an ideal Soviet utopia. The walls are decorated with typical socialist realist paintings such as idyllic views of the Soviet lands, the bed is made surrounded with old books, and the window-pane redirects the viewer's looks toward the filmic element. This utopian imaginaries are a big part of Kabakov's oeuvre, also present for example in *The Man Who Flew in Space from His Apartment* (1988),[40] which contained small apartments full of Soviet images with the aim to convey a feeling of optimism toward the Soviet ideology.

Reality and utopia are not meant to intersect like in the works of the aforementioned artists. Rather, *The Happiest Man in the World* depict "the flight from reality into a perfect world."[41] It is about creating a capsule-like world separating the "happiest man" from the rest of reality, surrounded by beautiful musical clips and art. Paolo Magagnoli interprets the installation as a plea to recognize the important role cinema played in constructing the perception of the Soviet reality for its viewers.[42] In a contradiction of the given installation description, Magagnoli continues to claim that much like the Sala and Steyerl's films, Kabokov's piece blurs the boundaries between reality and fiction, and between imagination and truth by its way of portraying daily life through an almost dream state. On the other hand, Svetlana Boym writes about *The Happiest Man in the World* as "revealing a nostalgia for utopia, but they return utopia to its origins – not in life, but in art"[43]. However, Magagnoli highlights the fact that the installation as such brings "the dream world of the screen into close proximity with the space of the spectator."[44]

4.3. Soviet Dreamworlds in Contemporary Russian and Western Documentaries

Having adduced key examples of the trends in the documentary turn of contemporary art and filmmaking apparent in the art scene of the West, we shall compare them with the ways in which nostalgia of the past Soviet Era is revived in post-Soviet Russian works. Even though the youngest generation in Russia today does not have any Soviet socio-political experience, for a large part of Russia's society this was a once-lived reality. Thus, it is fascinating to reveal

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[40] See also *The Palace of Project* (1998)
[41] Magagnoli, *op. cit.*, 69.
[42] *Ibid.*, 70.
[43] Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 324.
[44] Magagnoli, *op. cit.*, 75.

the different ways in which they reimagine the Soviet utopia through examples of contemporary Russian documentaries.

One striking example is the two-series of documentaries called *Sdelano v SSSR* ("Made in the USSR") produced in 2012. The first one, directed by Andrey Kulyasov and Aleksey Polyakov, focuses on the history of the USSR between 1994 and 1991 and includs 40 episodes of 25 minutes[45]. The second part of the series is devoted to the Soviet aesthetics and is directed by Lilia Samoylova[46]. As a description of these series one can read: "Some are still nostalgic for their Soviet childhood at the pioneer camp. Some still have collections of stamps with the portrait of Gagarin at their home, pages from the magazine Krokodil. Others re-watch entertaining comedies from the 1930s with Lyubov Orlova and the post-World War II stories of Alexander Rowe. Everyone will find something fascinating for them from the Soviet period. *Made in the USSR* is a series of documentaries dedicated to Soviet aesthetics and culture, everyday life of people and the backstage life of idols, high art and the fashion of the arts.[47] However, while these documentary films deal with the appeal of the Soviet aesthetic and Soviet era as a whole by pursuing educational and entertainment objectives, a critical perspective persists in most which also interrogates the problematic side of fetishizing the Communist ideology as attractive.

From the wide variety of documentary films which deal with this issue, some of the most noteworthy examples are those which indicate the problématique even in their title – for instance, the reportage by Vera Kuzmina *Nazad v SSSR* ("Back to the USSR", 2013), directed by Alexander Goryanov,[48] as well as the documentary *Poteryanniy Rai. Nostal'giya po Soyuzu* ("The Lost Paradise: A Nostalgia for the Union", 2014) directed by Aleksey Smaglyuk.[49] The two films deal with the question of what is so attractive about the Soviet era for the contemporary Russian people and why would one think of those times with a sense of nostalgia. At first, it is unclear how the younger generation perceives the past period of Russian history, but the young interviewees of *Back to the USSR* make the picture clear. At a museum exhibit of Soviet history, a young girl shares that these objects and stories are not alien to her, and that, in fact, there is a small museum of this sort in her own home. The painter Andrey Loevsky shares that he has been collecting socialist realist works for a long time but emphasizes that the

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[45] Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UsCS8IzPFoc (Accessed June19, 2020)>.
[46] Available at: <https://kino-ussr.ru/1351-sdelano-v-sssr-yurmala-2012.html (Accessed June 23, 2020)>.
[47] Translated by author, available at: <https://tatcenter.ru/multimedia/videos/sdelano-v-sssr-moda-ot-57-go-do-raspada-sssr/ (Accessed June 2, 2020)>.
[48] Available at: <http://1kino.com/documental/27305-specialnyj-reportazh-nazad-v-sssr.html> (Accessed August 1, 2020).
[49] Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oE1EmIWwOSw> (Accessed August 2, 2020).

reason is "not for the money, not because of the [Communist] Party's or the government's order but because they [the little objects] are *imbued with the Soviet atmosphere* [emphasis added]."[50] Lastly, representatives of the schoolchildren and students interviewed in the film are unanimous of the fact that in the Soviet times people did not feel so alone because of the confidence they had that the future will be better.

The school children are interviewed about who they consider successful, providing a wide variety of answers such as the singer Elena Vaenga, model and gymnast Alina Kabaeva and figure-scater Evgeny Plushenko, yet nobody discusses Nobel laureates, teachers, doctors cosmonauts. According to the filmmakers, this is due to the tragedy of the creative intelligentsia – while before they were oppressed by the Soviet government as discussed in the first chapter of this thesis, nowadays they refuse to watch, read, listen. The filmmakers' conclusion sounds clear: for the contemporary socio-cultural situation, Soviet symbolism is valuable without its ideological tinge because of its initially human-oriented essence.

Furthermore, "The Lost Paradise: Nostalgia for the Union" covers various opinions regarding the topic of nostalgia for the Soviet Union and showcase that the Soviet experience is strongly subjective, such as the memories which the radio host Semyon Chaika recalls of the tomato sherbet ice cream – a taste lost after the transitional period. However, for others nostalgia for these times is not in the question. Some, such as Stas Namin, claim that he does not remember the Soviet era with pleasant memories. A major conclusion made by the scriptwriters and director states that most people nostalgic for the Soviet culture are the young ones who did not experience its reality at all, or are representatives of another cultural tradition with no background in the USSR. Thus, the old images and objects left behind from the Soviet era become exotic symbols of a mysterious country and times. Examples of such are the Italian admirers of the *Niva* car, which claim that they have become fans not because of the particular brand but because of the culture of the Soviet Union. Or Pavel Bondarchuk who is an Israeli taxi driver loving his Soviet Volga, as well as Gian Piero Piretto – a Professor of the Department of Russian Culture at the University of Milan. Piretto was captured drinking juice on his Italian balcony while singing an old Soviet song *Zabota u nas takaya* ("This Is Our Concern").[51] These people portrayed in the documentary seem to feel a sense of nostalgia towards a place and time they have not witnessed, and yet mourn as their own culture.

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[50] *Nazad v SSSR* ("Back to the USSR," 2013), <1kino.com/documental/27305-specialnyj-reportazh-nazad-v-sssr.html>.

[51] *Poteryanniy Rai. Nostal'giya po Soyuzu* ("The Lost Paradise. Nostalgia for the Union," 2014), <www.youtube.com/watch?v=oE1EmIWwOSw>.

Although Russian scholars, such as Novikova, criticize these developments and condemn them as "pseudo-nostalgia for the past,"[52] there appears to be an emerging wave of evoking and even fetishizing Sovietness in the West, leading to the discovery of Eastern talents on a wider scale. Patrick Dooley reflects on this sudden revival of the Soviet past, claiming that all forms of art have been influenced by Soviet culture, including design, art, literature and film. Dooley suggests that this phenomenon, established as "New East,"[53] has permeated the Western attention because of the developments of social media, which created a platform for Eastern artists to be reached by those in the West. Evoking Soviet realities, the New East authority Anastasia Federova states that this occurrence "in contemporary visual culture is not a reflection of a real space but more a multi-layered myth."[54]

Despite being mostly associated with fashion, the New East trend is an extension of a deep fascination not just fetishizing the aesthetics and history of the Soviet era but also forming desire to revive the *ideology* and *utopian thinking* of Marxism-Leninism. Namely, this interest in the transformative power of the Soviet utopias permeate the oeuvre of filmmakers, such as Hito Steyerl and others. Petrova finds the reason of this fascination in the fact that most of these individuals have grown up outside the socio-cultural and political circumstances of Soviet reality. Instead, "this generation perceives the Soviet system through a set of symbols, images, stamps, and clichés, through which mythological perception is formed."[55] She emphasizes that myths about these times often "replace historical reality so convincingly that they are perceived as the only true and entitled to exist, because they exist according to their laws of memory and perception."[56]

Although Birgit Beumers and Mark Lipovetsky suggest that contemporary Russian documentary discourse is following the trend of subjectivity and exploring the world beyond the conception of one absolute Truth,[57] drawing on the example of the Sovexport Collection we can make a distinction between the Russian type of Soviet nostalgia, or as previously mentioned *Ostalgie*, and the Western version of the phenomenon. The Sovexport collection is

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[52] Anna Novikova, "Mify o Sovetskih Tsennostyah na Sovremennom Rossiyskom Televidenie" ["Myths about Soviet Values and Contemporary Russian Television"], *Teoriya hudojestvennoy kul'tury* 14, (2012): 340–58.

[53] Patrick Dooley, "What is the 'New' in the 'New East'?: The New East and the Western Gaze," *Postpravda*, 5 November 2017, <www.postpravdamagazine.com/what-is-new-in-new-east/> (Accessed May 11, 2020).

[54] As cited in Dooley, *op. cit.*

[55] Marina Petrova, "Kul'turniy Fenomen Nostal'gii po SSSR na Rossiyskom Televidenii" ["Nostalgia for the Soviet Union as a Cultural Phenomenon on Russian Television"], *Yaroslavskiy pedagogicheskiy vestnik* 1, no.1 (2015): 51–5.

[56] *Ibid.*

[57] Birgit Beumers and Mark Lipovetsky, "The Desire for the Real: Documentary Trends in Contemporary Russian Culture: Introduction," *The Russian Review* 69, no. 4 (2010): 559–62.

comprised of hundreds of films, which construct the anti-Western propagandistic agenda and educate the Soviet people about how their new world order must be created. As already explained, there are many paradoxes in the almost diegetic Soviet world portrayed in the Sovexport films. Constructing these paradoxes as blurring the line between fiction and reality is an approach that, as I have argued, can be rather dangerous when contextualized with the horrendous events and consequences from the Marxist-Leninist Party.

This blend of fiction and reality in contemporary documentary discourse of the West, as observed by Magagnoli when analyzing Sala's, Steyerl's and Kabokov's films and artworks in a rather positive light, must be put under a more critical lens in further research. It is fascinating to observe that although the Sovexport collection had a purpose of being *contra* the Western Bloc, many Russian people today, even those reminiscing with nostalgia of the Soviet times, see the past through a more analytical prism with the clear understanding of the complexity of this era. This analytical thinking is bent in both Western academia and documentary making, still compelled by the alluring image of the promised utopia. We could suppose that this happens because of the postmodern perceptions of history typical for some contemporary filmmakers.

Magagnoli goes even further by claiming that historians often have a "one-sided view" of reality.[58] Instead, we are invited to think of history as based on interpretation and subjective bias. However, such views of history are limited, and as evident from Magagnoli's text, rather naïve and vague. As emphasized in the previous chapter, fetishizing only certain aspects of the Marxist-Leninist ideology neglects a crucial and horrendous part of Soviet history, which, although in the past, goes hand in hand with utopian society portrayed in a "fictionalized" way in the Sovexport Collection and in the work of the filmmakers analyzed in this chapter. Therefore, I argue that we must take a closer look at the discussed manner of creating and analyzing documentary films by "fictionalizing" the genre.[59] In a similar vein, we need to be critical to Hongisto's approach with its new materialist perspective suggesting that documentaries are not mere products of history and of a specific worldview, but they have a direct engagement in the becoming of the world, presenting only a limited side of a once-passed ideological framework without its consequences can create a large and dangerous discrepancy between what has been and what could be.

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[58] Magagnoli, *Documents of Utopia*, 53.
[59] *Ibid.*, 55.

The Russian cultural historian Svetlana Boym has a particularly sharp argument, identifying nostalgia as the "symptom of our time, a historical emotion."[60] She warns about the danger of this sentiment that is the tendency to mistake the home with the imaginary home, or in our case the utopian fantasies in the documentary works. Boym writes:

> The danger of nostalgia is that it tends to confuse the actual home and the imaginary one. In extreme cases it can create a phantom homeland, for the sake of which one is ready to die or kill. Unreflective nostalgia can breed monsters. Yet the sentiment itself, the mourning of displacement and temporal irreversibility, is at the very core of the modern condition. While claiming a pure and clean homeland, nostalgic politics often produces a "glocal" hybrid of capitalism and religious fundamentalism, or of corporate state and Eurasian patriotism. The mix of nostalgia and politics can be explosive.[61]

Boym's plea for an in-depth analysis of these nostalgic tendencies and their historical timeline points to two main kinds of nostalgia and helps creating a more clear outline when dissecting the emergence of such "imaginary homelands", as they tell different stories about the same exact symbols. The first kind of nostalgia is the *restorative* identified by "collective pictorial symbols and oral culture", while the *reflective* nostalgia is related to more personal narrative which puts an emphasis on details and memorial signs. A crucial difference, Boym claims, is that restorative nostalgia "takes itself dead seriously", it is fixated, whereas the reflective kind is imbued with critical thinking, it can approach the past from an ironic or humorous perspective despite the feeling of longing. People who are nostalgic of this second kind are aware of the discrepancy between reality and the dreamworld.

When relating these notions to our previous analysis, we can notice that the nostalgia that can be found in some contemporary Western documentaries is one of the restorative kind. It dreams of rebuilding the dreamworld with a "paranoic determination", whereas the Russian films adhere to a more reflexive mode of nostalgia defined by Boym with its fear of returning to this same past. Nevertheless, Boym concludes that, after all, the only antidote for the condition of nostalgia is nostalgic dissidence, asserting that there is the possibility "dreams of imagined homelands cannot and should not come to life"[62]. It is with this same suggestion we can fantasize about the Soviet past through cinema and through our future analysis of the failed

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[60] Boym, Svetlana. "Nostalgia and its Discontents," 453.
[61] *Ibid*.
[62] *Ibid*., 456–7.

utopian past of this era. We can take the unrealized Soviet project not as a guideline for the transformative process of the future but rather as a critical lens through which to inform the documentaries of the future. In so doing, we must be clear that they, too, have a power in affecting the world, as we know it – in such a way, which the world has experienced in a multifold but predominantly destructive manner.

CONCLUSION

The investigation of the previously undiscovered, uncategorized and unstudied Sovexport 298–96 films at the Collection Center of the EYE Filmmuseum allows for establishing a number of paradoxes in their representation of Soviet utopia. Increasingly evoked, this utopia is related to the re-emerging interest in the Soviet heritage in Russia and in the West. This tendency is heavily mirrored in contemporary documentaries. The specific contribution and the main outcomes of my analysis of these propaganda films from the EYE Collection fall along several tracks.

The undertaken contextualization of the Sovexport Collection, the production period of which coincides with the Era of Stagnation, characterized by tightening the control over the artistic expression by the Communist Party in the Soviet Union, points out the clash between reality and the propagandized Soviet utopia. This discrepancy is particularly highlighted in the popular films of this Stagnation Period attempting to display the nationalist tendencies of the time through an Aesopian language. The analysis of cinematic works like *Kalina krasnaya* (1974), *Siberiade* (1979), *Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears* (1980), *The Mirror* (1974), and *Agony* (1975) shows the suppressed underground social and cultural problems across the USSR. The observed deepening sense of belonging to Russia clashes with the major "globalist" cornerstones of Communist ideology of diversity and internationality, as well as the manner of representing the Soviet utopia as the Paradise on Earth.

In order to facilitate a deeper understanding of when one analyzes a film as a documentary, I have utilized a semio-pragmatic approach toward documentaries, thus pointing to the fact that the possibility to respond to the question of whether the text might be lying acts as an indicator of non-fictionality. Once a documentary film is understood as such, a coherent comprehension of the authentication strategies, which filmmakers utilize to create the narratives of their works, is crucial for the critical navigation through the meanings imputed to a documentary by its audience. The synergy of these methods on a macro-level (the film's authenticity, authority, and presentation of evidence) and micro-level, the formal techniques such as editing, camera-work and sound-design, all contribute to the verisimilitude of documentaries. The filmmaker's method of handling these strategies contributes to the differentiation of six documentary modes – poetic, expository, participatory, observational, reflexive, and performative.

The culmination of this thesis – the examination of a myriad of uncategorized and almost-forgotten Soviet documentaries from the Sovexport collection at the archive of EYE Filmmuseum – has revealed the necessity of dealing with the construction of their dreamworlds. Resorting to the concepts of *razvedka* and *osvoenie* to expand them as conceptual toolkits for tracing the representation of space in the Sovexport films points to a number of delineated paradoxes. On one hand, *razvedka* is formulated to encapsulate the non-hierarchical exploration of Sovietness, the technological advances, the vital importance of inventions and improvement of the infrastructure, as well as a symbiotical relationship between man and nature. On the other hand, *osvoenie* designates the action of mastery of land depicting a radial representation of space and pointing to tropes, such as the control of man and people's supremacy over nature. The unexpected conclusion stemming from a thorough observation of the Sovexport Collection unveils the inconsistencies of the representation of Sovietness through the coexistence of concepts in the propaganda reels.

These outcomes of the conducted research on the Sovexport Collection as historically and culturally contextualized phenomenon point to a growing urgency of relating the Soviet propaganda films from the 1970s and the 1980s to the contemporary discourses on documentary films. Throughout the analysis, a clear re-emergence of nostalgia for the Soviet heritage, also outside of the realm of cinema, has been established. This phenomenon is observable in the work of filmmakers in East and West alike, but there is a distinct difference in the type of nostalgia for the Sovietness. Russian documentaries of today, such as *The Lost Paradise: A Nostalgia for the Union* present the complexity of the Soviet past, emphasizing that its utopian thinking is fascinating to the young generation or to foreigners who have not experienced the socio-political Soviet reality, but instead are learning about it through fetishized images and symbols. On the other hand, the Russian filmmaker's hypothesis is confirmed by the evoking of the Soviet dreamworlds in the documentaries of artists and directors working in Western countries, such as Hito Steyerl and Anri Sala. Their vision of the Soviet utopia is one not simply reminiscing the past. Instead, it tackles Soviet ideology, looking for its potential to lead a transformative process of the future. By following a postmodern notion of understanding history as a matter of subjective choice, such ideas are manifested through a filmic approach blurring reality and fiction – similarly to the paradoxical narratives of the Sovexport collection. However, when a cinematic work is fictionalized, one can no longer ask the crucial question of whether the film's text is telling the truth. Therefore, the authentication strategies of theses documentaries are devaluated.

Examining the Sovexport Collection from the perspective of its paradoxes and context must serve as a historical example of the pitfalls that "unreflective" nostalgia entails, especially when tackled through the lens of a new materialist approach considering films as engaging in the becoming of the world and as having agency in their own right. The propaganda films at the EYE archives inform about the clash of *dreamworld* and *catastrophe* in the representation of the Soviet past potentially mirrored in the future development of Western culture and its awakening dreamworlds. Therefore, through its multilayered approach drawing on interdisciplinary methodology, the present study can underlie further research based on the already categorized and described Sovexport Collection and its further discovery in terms of content and context. The possibilities of utilizing these Soviet propaganda films range from in-depth studies of the various propaganda vehicles through Soviet aesthetics and cinema from the Stagnation Period to their sophisticated integration in different museum exhibitions of cinematic works.

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sites.google.com/site/zurnalysssr/home/iskusstvo-kino/-iskusstvo-kino-za-1980-god

Catalogue of the EYE Film Institute
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http://1kino.com/documental/27305-specialnyj-reportazh-nazad-v-sssr.html

Poteryanniy Rai. Nostal'giya po Soyuzu [*The Lost Paradise. Nostalgia for the Union*], 2014, directed by Aleksey Smaglyuk,

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oE1EmIWwOSw

Sdelano v SSSR [*Made in USSR*], 2012, directed by Andrey Kulyasov and Aleksey Polyakov, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UsCS8IzPFoc

Sdelano v SSSR [*Made in USSR*], 2012, directed by Lilia Samoylova,

https://kino-ussr.ru/1351-sdelano-v-sssr-yurmala-2012.html

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APPENDIX

SAMPLES OF CATEGORIZED REELS FROM THE SOVEXPORT
298–96 COLLECTION AT THE EYE FILMMUSEUM

A.) Extended Sample of a Categorized "Filmwerk" (Filmwork) from the Sovexport 298–96 Collection.

Geëxporteerd	20-05-2020 door Bezoeker
Filmwerken Narody hotyat mira (SUHH, N. Soloveva, 1984)	
Veld	Waarde
Identificatie	
ID	FLM214759
Authority heading	Narody hotyat mira (SUHH, N. Soloveva, 1984)
Kopieën in eigen beheer	3
Typering	
Categorie	Non-fictie
Genre	documentaire
Titels	
Originele titel	Narody hotyat mira
Regie	
Regie	N. Soloveva
Productie	
Productieland	Sovjet-Unie
Productiemaatschappij	Centralnaja Ordena Lenina I Ordena Krasnogo Znameni Studija Dokumentalnih Filmov (Sovjetunie)
Jaar	
Jaar (identificerend)	1984
Distributie	
Releasedatum	1984
Camera / licht	
Camera	V. Lovkov
Montage	
Montage	S. Pluysnina
Geluid	
Geluid	V. Brus
Scenario / bron	

Scenarioschrijver	A. Saakov
Inhoudelijke ontsluiting	
Engelstalige beschrijving	The film tells about the peace-loving foreign policy of the USSR, aimed at detente, mutual understanding and cooperation with other countries, about the creative work of Soviet people. It shows the begging of WWII - Hitler's Invasion known as Operation Barbarossa, and proceeds to describe how the Soviet Union is coming out the war - constantly developing and looking for peace with other countries.
Fysieke kenmerken (eerste release)	
Geluid (eerste release)	Geluid
Kopieën	
Kopie	KOP1244362 FK 6769-0: Narody hotyat mira [Beschikbaar, Bruikbaar, 16mm, Positief, 300,00mtr., B/G] KOP1244687 FK 6802-0: Narody hotyat mira [Beschikbaar, Bruikbaar, 16mm, Positief, 311,00mtr., B/G] KOP1249295 FK 7049-0: Narody hotyat mira [Beschikbaar, Bruikbaar, 16mm, Positief, 311,00mtr., B/G]
Recordbeheer	
Bronnen internet	https://csdfmuseum.ru/films/184

B.) Shortened Samples of the Categorized "Filmwerken" (Filmworks) from the
Sovexport 298–96 Collection (referred to also in Chapter Three of this thesis).

This is only a small portion of the categorized reels, available for further research on the Catalogue of the EYE Filmmuseum.[1]

ID	Authority heading	Filmwork	Title of the Copy
KOP1244689	KOP1244689 FK 6803-0: Povest o kommuniste [Beschikbaar, Bruikbaar, 16mm, Positief, 300,00mtr., B/G]	Povest o kommuniste (SUHH, I. Bessarabov, 1976)	Povest o kommuniste (Kopietitel)
KOP1244360	KOP1244360 FK 6767-0: Uroki istorii [Beschikbaar, Bruikbaar, 16mm, Positief, 339,00mtr., B/G]	Uroki istorii (SUHH, L. Cherntsov, 1980)	Uroki istorii (Kopietitel)
KOP1244683	KOP1244683 FK 6800-0: Rasskaz o sovetskoy arkhitekture [Beschikbaar, Bruikbaar, 16mm, Positief, 294,00mtr., B/G]	Rasskaz o sovetskoy arkhitekture (SUHH, V. Tomberg, 1983)	Rasskaz o sovetskoy arkhitekture (Kopietitel)
KOP1244687	KOP1244687 FK 6802-0: Narody hotyat mira [Beschikbaar, Bruikbaar, 16mm, Positief, 311,00mtr., B/G]	Narody hotyat mira (SUHH, N. Soloveva, 1984)	Narody hotyat mira (Kopietitel)
KOP1248591	KOP1248591 FK 7017-0: Po Sovetskomu soyuzu n. 170 [Beschikbaar, Bruikbaar, 16mm, Positief, 109,00mtr., B/G]	Po Sovetskomu soyuzu n. 170 (SUHH, Onbekend, 1971 - 1975)	Po Sovetskomu soyuzu n. 170 (Kopietitel)
KOP1244357	KOP1244357 FK 6764-0: Zhelaem schatsya [Beschikbaar, Bruikbaar, 16mm, Positief, 493,00mtr., B/G]	Zhelaem schatsya (SUHH, Aleksandr	Zhelaem schatsya (Kopietitel)

[1] *Catalogue of the EYE Film Institute*. The website of the Collection Center Catalogue is located at http://catalogue.eyefilm.nl/ce/ (Accessed May 20, 2020).

		Rodchenko, 1986)	
KOP1244177	KOP1244177 FK 6752-0: Karta velikoy rodiny [Beschikbaar, Bruikbaar, 16mm, Positief, 563,00mtr., B/G]	Karta velikoy rodiny (SUHH, Onbekend, 1980)	Karta velikoy rodiny (Kopietitel)
KOP1251237	KOP1251237 FK 7107-0: Dobrye sosedi [Beschikbaar, Bruikbaar, 16mm, Positief, 322,00mtr., B/G]	Dobrye sosedi (SUHH, Yu. Zanin, 1980)	Dobrye sosedi (Kopietitel)
KOP1244345	KOP1244345 FK 6759-0: Lenin, sem let v shveytsarii [Beschikbaar, Bruikbaar, 16mm, Positief, 341,00mtr., B/G]	Lenin, sem let v shveytsarii (SUHH, B. Rychkov, 1980)	Lenin, sem let v shveytsarii (Kopietitel)
KOP1244183	KOP1244183 FK 6757-0: V druzhbe s gorodami mira [Beschikbaar, Bruikbaar, 16mm, Positief, 342,00mtr., B/G]	V druzhbe s gorodami mira (SUHH, Yu. Zanin, 1985)	V druzhbe s gorodami mira (Kopietitel)
KOP1251224	KOP1251224 FK 7102-0: Sotsialisticheskoe sodruzhestvo [Beschikbaar, Bruikbaar, 16mm, Positief, 284,00mtr., B/G]	Sotsialisticheskoe sodruzhestvo (SUHH, A. Opryshko, 1985)	Sotsialisticheskoe sodruzhestvo (Kopietitel)
KOP1244414	KOP1244414 FK 6771-0: Moskva - Vremena Goda [Beschikbaar, Bruikbaar, 16mm, Positief, 368,00mtr., B/G]	Moskva - Vremena Goda (SUHH, Ye Kryakvin, 1975)	Moskva - Vremena Goda (Kopietitel)
KOP1245142	KOP1245142 FK 6894-0: Leningrad [Beschikbaar, Bruikbaar, 16mm, Positief, 321,00mtr., B/G]	Leningrad (SUHH, Onbekend, 1980)	Leningrad (Kopietitel)
KOP1244430	KOP1244430 FK 6787-0: Krakov pomnit lenina [Beschikbaar, Bruikbaar, 16mm, Positief, 332,00mtr., B/G]	Krakov pomnit lenina (SUHH, Semiramide Pumpyanskaya, 1979)	Krakov pomnit lenina (Kopietitel)
KOP1245611	KOP1245611 FK 6899-0: Riga - stolitsa sovetskoy Latvii [Beschikbaar,	Riga - stolitsa sovetskoy Latvii	Riga - stolitsa sovetskoy Latvii (Kopietitel)

	Bruikbaar, 16mm, Positief, 210,00mtr., B/G]	(SUHH, Layma Zhurgina, 1976)	
KOP1251218	KOP1251218 FK 7097-0: Gruziya - legendy i nastoyashtee [Beschikbaar, Bruikbaar, 16mm, Positief, 309,00mtr., B/G]	Gruziya - legendy i nastoyashtee (SUHH, Sh. Shoniya, 1982)	Gruziya - legendy i nastoyashtee (Kopietitel)
KOP1244966	KOP1244966 FK 6821-0: Sovetskaya Gruziya [Beschikbaar, Bruikbaar, 16mm, Positief, 169,00mtr., B/G]	Sovetskaya Gruziya (SUHH, Onbekend, 1980)	Sovetskaya Gruziya (Kopietitel)
KOP1244970	KOP1244970 FK 6822-0: Tadzhikskaya SSR [Beschikbaar, Bruikbaar, 16mm, Positief, 167,00mtr., B/G]	Tadzhikskaya SSR (SUHH, Onbekend, 1965)	Tadzhikskaya SSR (Kopietitel)
KOP1251219	KOP1251219 FK 7098-0: Vernyi syn partii i naroda (spetsialnyi vypusk) [Beschikbaar, Bruikbaar, 16mm, Positief, 304,00mtr., B/G]	Vernyi syn partii i naroda (spetsialnyi vypusk) (SUHH, Onbekend, 1982)	Vernyi syn partii i naroda (spetsialnyi vypusk) (Kopietitel)
KOP1247786	KOP1247786 FK 6964-0: Souyz nerushimy [Beschikbaar, Bruikbaar, 16mm, Positief, 340,00mtr., B/G]	Souyz nerushimy (SUHH, Onbekend, 1982)	Souyz nerushimy (Kopietitel)
KOP1249319	KOP1249319 F 7841-0: Moya zemlya - volshebny mir lyubvi [Beschikbaar, Bruikbaar, 16mm, Positief, 343,00mtr., B/G]	Moya zemlya - volshebny mir lyubvi (SUHH, Uldis Brauns , 1982)	Moya zemlya - volshebny mir lyubvi (Kopietitel)
KOP1245883	KOP1245883 FK 6919-0: Yunye druzya prirody [Beschikbaar, Bruikbaar, 16mm, Positief, 266,00mtr., B/G]	Yunye druzya prirody (SUHH, R. Elksnis, 1978)	Yunye druzya prirody (Kopietitel)
KOP1245632	KOP1245632 FK 6902-0: Zashtita okruzhayushtey sredy [Beschikbaar,	Zashtita okruzhayushtey sredy (SUHH,	Zashtita okruzhayushtey sredy (Kopietitel)

	Bruikbaar, 16mm, Positief, 268,00mtr., B/G]	Mihail Karostin, 1975)	
KOP1244355	KOP1244355 FK 6763-0: Prirodnaya sreda: sostoyanie i kontrol [Beschikbaar, Bruikbaar, 16mm, Positief, 667,00mtr., B/G]	Prirodnaya sreda: sostoyanie i kontrol (SUHH, I. Voytenko, 1985)	Prirodnaya sreda: sostoyanie i kontrol (Kopietitel)
KOP1251226	KOP1251226 FK 7103-0: Zemlya u nas odna [Beschikbaar, Bruikbaar, 16mm, Positief, 293,00mtr., B/G]	Zemlya u nas odna (SUHH, Vera Fedorchenko, 1986)	Zemlya u nas odna (Kopietitel)
KOP1244353	KOP1244353 FK 6761-0: Molodezhy na stroykakh strany [Beschikbaar, Bruikbaar, 16mm, Positief, 334,00mtr., B/G]	Molodezhy na stroykakh strany (SUHH, V. Grekov, 1978)	Molodezhy na stroykakh strany (Kopietitel)
KOP1242737	KOP1242737 FK 6730-0: Rasskazy o Sibiri. Vse dalshe na sever [Beschikbaar, Bruikbaar, 16mm, Positief, 220,00mtr., B/G]	Rasskazy o Sibiri. Vse dalshe na sever (SUHH, A. Menitskaya, 1982)	Rasskazy o Sibiri. Vse dalshe na sever (Kopietitel)
KOP1249291	KOP1249291 FK 7046-0: Po reke Lene [Beschikbaar, Bruikbaar, 16mm, Positief, 316,00mtr., B/G]	Po reke Lene (SUHH, V. Vasilienko, 1979)	Po reke Lene (Kopietitel)
KOP1249297	KOP1249297 FK 7051-0: Novyy rubezh - novaya vysota [Beschikbaar, Bruikbaar, 16mm, Positief, 261,00mtr., B/G]	Novyy rubezh - novaya vysota (SUHH, A. Solovyova, 1980)	Novyy rubezh - novaya vysota (Kopietitel)
KOP1244182	KOP1244182 FK 6756-0: Sovetskyi soyuz. Stranitsy nauki i tekhniki [Beschikbaar, Bruikbaar, 16mm, Positief, 338,00mtr., B/G]	Sovetskyi soyuz. Stranitsy nauki i tekhniki (SUHH, A. Shtaden, 1984)	Sovetskyi soyuz. Stranitsy nauki i tekhniki (Kopietitel)

KOP1244959	KOP1244959 FK 6817-0: Stalnye magistrali SSSR [Beschikbaar, Bruikbaar, 16mm, Positief, 207,00mtr., B/G]	Stalnye magistrali SSSR (SUHH, Eduard Dargolts, 1976)	Stalnye magistrali SSSR (Kopietitel)
KOP1244425	KOP1244425 FK 6782-0: Magistral [Beschikbaar, Bruikbaar, 16mm, Positief, 260,00mtr., B/G]	Magistral (SUHH, K. Osoyanu, 1980)	Magistral (Kopietitel)
KOP1245610	KOP1245610 FK 6898-0: BAM. Vchera. Segodnya. Zavtra [Beschikbaar, Bruikbaar, 16mm, Positief, 218,00mtr., B/G]	BAM. Vchera. Segodnya. Zavtra (SUHH, V. Klabukov, 1980)	BAM. Vchera. Segodnya. Zavtra (Kopietitel)
KOP1245636	KOP1245636 FK 6906-0: Lyudi odnogo zavoda [Beschikbaar, Bruikbaar, 16mm, Positief, 275,00mtr., B/G]	Lyudi odnogo zavoda (SUHH, Nikolay Gulchuk, 1980)	Lyudi odnogo zavoda (Kopietitel)
KOP1247791	KOP1247791 FK 6968-0: Yunye tekhniki [Beschikbaar, Bruikbaar, 16mm, Positief, 326,00mtr., B/G]	Yunye tekhniki (SUHH, Onbekend, 1975)	Yunye tekhniki (Kopietitel)
KOP1251222	KOP1251222 FK 7100-0: Kosmos sluzhit cheloveku [Beschikbaar, Bruikbaar, 16mm, Positief, 274,00mtr., B/G]	Kosmos sluzhit cheloveku (SUHH, G. Ivanova, 1980)	Kosmos sluzhit cheloveku (Kopietitel)
KOP1244419	KOP1244419 FK 6776-0: Pokoriteli vselenoy [Beschikbaar, Bruikbaar, 16mm, Positief, 533,00mtr., B/G]	Pokoriteli vselenoy (SUHH, Nikolai Makarov, 1980)	Pokoriteli vselenoy (Kopietitel)