

Animation and the National Ethos: the American Dream,
Socialist Realism, and Russian *émigrés* in France

by

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Abstract

Animation is seen as the innocent child of contemporary media and is often considered innocuous and juvenile in general popular culture. This might explain why it is still a marginal field. Perhaps this perception is influenced by the mass media of animation being mostly aimed at children, or at least perceived as such. This thesis specifically focuses on animated films' aesthetic and content in relation to their particular cultural context and ethos, or national ideology. I investigate the American Dream, Soviet Socialism, and a Russian *émigré* ethos in France to show how seemingly similar content can carry unique ideological messages in different cultural contexts. Therefore, my film analyses examine the way animation is used as a medium to carry specific meaning on the screen, expressing this ethos.

The national ethos is manifest in beliefs and aspirations of a community, culture, and era, and it promotes a certain cultural unity and order. It is a form of nationalism oriented towards utopian values rather than clear civic or political engagement. It can be politicised as well as individualised. This idealised ethos remains a largely constructed paradigm on which the regular citizen (and the audience) should model his behaviour. In this thesis, I propose that animation is not only a form of entertainment, but also a possible mechanism of social control through national ideas, responding to prevailing cultural and social conditions. In some cases, as in the American Dream and the Soviet national models, the

national ethos is clearly articulated by ideology. In contrast, the Russian *émigré* animators' films display a fragmented ethos because the collective, the individual, and the nation coexist confusedly within the same model. Nevertheless, this last ethos still expresses the identity of the artist and his relationship with the nation. The three settings I investigate demonstrate how the national ethos' nature is a dynamic aspect of identity, constantly remodelled and renegotiated depending on the cultural group, the socio-political changes, and the individual perception of the ethos.

The methodology I utilise merges film criticism and analysis, with anthropology and cultural studies. My aim is to examine the way in which the content and aesthetics of animated films play a role in building the national identity and shape how we perceive ourselves, our community, and the rest of the world. Anthropology and cultural studies' contribution is that they do not see nationalism as an essentially political phenomenon. Instead, anthropologists and cultural theorists perceive nationalism, nation, and tradition as cultural practices and social phenomena, largely constructed, imagined, or invented. Implying that the social world and its institutions, which we inhabit, are largely produced through and by imagination. Animation's diegesis represent an imaginary world and the national ethos is equally imaginary.

This research is an exploration of how ideological discourses are expressed through animated films' content and aesthetics. It makes the films displaying the ethos a cultural reminiscence of a specific socio-political group and

a specific era of history. In this sense, understanding how ideological discourse functions and is expressed in animated films is of great significance to the study of film and to the study of a society because the media culture constitutes a part of the cultural memory of a collective and helps us to comprehend how it is structured.

For Jane and for Lynnien

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Introduction

Media have never been more present than in twenty-first century society. From home computers, to numerous portable apparatuses, smart phones, smart watches, iPods, and several other digital devices aimed at bettering human communication, as well as delivering messages and ideas, a normal human being is completely immersed in a world overloaded by images. Mass media has become our modern rhetoric, and its prominent role in our lives makes us potential accomplices to—or victims of—the alternative reality they create. Animation has been very present within this array of media through computerised moving images, special effects, and video games. It is also present in web sitcoms, on television, and in advertisements. While its history, aesthetic, and technological evolution have been widely addressed, its visual semiotics or potential for communicating ideas through the image still lags behind compared to other media. This thesis examines the alternative and imaginary reality created by a medium like animation and the ideological content it communicates.

Studies addressing new technologies in animation such as computer-generated imagery (CGI), are currently emerging.¹ In addition, concerns with globalisation have generated a broad array of studies criticising the Disney

¹ The large majority of North American MA and PhD theses written about animation appear to concern digital animation. For example: Ali Arya, “Personalized Face Animation Framework for Multimedia Systems” (PhD diss., University of British Columbia, 2004); Joanna Rose Bouldin, “The Animated and the Actual: Toward a Theory of Animation, Live-Action, and Everyday Life” (PhD diss., University of California, 2004); Ka Nin Chow, “An Embodied Cognition Approach to the Analysis and Design of Generative and Interactive Animation” (PhD diss., Georgia Institute of Technology, 2010); Jae-Woong Kwon, “The Development of Digital Cultural Products in the Age of Globalization: Focusing on the Korean Digitalized Animation Industry” (PhD diss., Temple University, 2006); Nancy C. Schwartz, “Integral or Irrelevant? The Impact of Animation and Sound Effects on Attention and Memory for Multimedia Messages” (PhD diss., Indiana University, 2005). Few theses appear to address classical animation, however it is worth mentioning some of them: Andrew Robert Johnston, “Pulses of Abstraction: Episodes From a History of Animation” (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2011); Christopher P. Lehman, “Black Representation in American Animated Short Films, 1928–1954” (PhD diss., University of Massachusetts, 2002); Rebecca Erin Miller, “The Animated Animal: Aesthetics, Performance and Environmentalism In American Feature Animation” (PhD diss., New York University, 2011); Christina Nereida de Juan, “Cartoon Textures: Re-Using Traditional Animation via Methods for Segmentation, Re-Sequencing, and Inbetweening” (PhD diss., Vanderbilt University, 2006).

Company almost exclusively for marketing products and shaping identity, gender roles, and childhood values.² Studies of other forms of animation, less known animators, or smaller production companies remain infrequent.³ Seen as the innocent child of contemporary media and animation is often considered innocuous and juvenile.⁴ Perhaps this perception is influenced by the mass media of animation being mostly aimed at youngsters, or perceived as such, both in its broadcast media and in the gaming culture.⁵ Animation's potential for propagating ideas makes this categorisation a problematic matter.

² For example, Henri Giroux, *The Mouse that Roared: Disney and the End of Innocence* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2010); Jack Zipes, *The Enchanted Screen: The Unknown History of Fairy-Tale Films* (London, New York: Routledge, 2011); Amy M. Davis, *Good Girls and Wicked Witches: Women in Disney's Feature Animation* (Eastleigh: John Libbey Publishing, 2006); Anne Petersen, "'You Believe in Pirates, Of Course...': Disney's Commodification and 'Closure' vs. Johnny Depp's Aesthetic Piracy of 'Pirates of the Caribbean,'" *Studies in Popular Culture* 29, no. 2 (April 2007): 63–81; Elizabeth Bell, Lynda Haas, and Laura Sells, eds., *From Mouse to Mermaid: The Politics of Film, Gender, and Culture* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995).

³ Less known animators and smaller animation production companies remain active on the internet through, for example, their YouTube channel or Facebook pages. Furthermore, several animation festivals post the trailers of the films of their yearly competition. However, most of these films do not reach a large commercial success and academic research about them remains infrequent. For examples of less known animation production, see BiFF Trailers, The Brooklyn International Film Festival (BiFF) YouTube channel, accessed January 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/user/BIFFTRAILERS/about>; HARVESTWORKS, Digital Media Arts Center YouTube channel, accessed January 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/user/harvestworksnyc/about>; ONF, National Film Board of Canada YouTube channel, accessed January 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/user/onf/about>; The CGBros, The CGBros YouTube channel (showcasing student and independent CGI animation films), accessed January 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/user/TheCGBro/about>; MadArtistPublishing, MadArtistPublishing YouTube channel (3D CGI short animated films, showreels, VFX breakdowns and cinematic trailers), accessed January 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/user/MadArtistPublishing/about>; Vancouver Film School, Vancouver Film School YouTube channel; accessed January 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/user/VancouverFilmSchool/about>; Tsession, Tsession YouTube channel, accessed January 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/user/Tsession/about>; Brown Bag Films, Brown Bag Films Studio YouTube channel; accessed January 2017; <https://www.youtube.com/user/brownbagfilms/about>; Les Sommets du Cinéma d'Animation, Festival International de Montréal, accessed January 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/sommets.animation/>; Assotsiatsiya Animatsionnogo Kino, accessed January 2017; <https://www.facebook.com/aakr.ru/>; Bol'shoi festival' mul'tfil'mov, accessed January 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/BigCartoonFestival/>; International Animated Film Festival KROK, accessed January 2017; <https://www.facebook.com/Film.Festival.KROK/>.

⁴ Paul Wells and Johnny Hardstaff, *Re-Imagining Animation: The Changing Face of the Moving Image* (Lausanne, London: AVA, 2008), 68.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 48. It should be noted here that video games also have this complex relationship with audiences. They are often associated with popular culture, entertainment, and their study remains a marginal field.

The adult versus child dichotomy is very strong in general popular culture.⁶ Adult animation is generally perceived as animated films, which include references to sex, pornography, violence, crude language, dark humour, and other themes deemed inappropriate for children.⁷ In contrast, children's animation comprises all films that avoid these topics and many of them are based on folk and fairytale narratives. While I do not doubt that some animated films or games might be more interesting to adults due to their content, I would like to address and challenge, with this research, the concept of children's animated films. Most of these films intended for youngsters are animated fairytales and perceived as innocent, but I see them instead as a medium contributing to nation building in which fairytales narratives and animated drawings are ideological tools utilised to communicate a message.

The concept of ideology has undergone many transformations and has been widely theorised.⁸ As anthropologist Clifford Geertz points out, the term “ideology”—which once meant a “collection of political proposals, somewhat intellectualistic and impractical but at any rate idealistic”—has become endowed

⁶ It is important to mention that this perception is present in the recent research in animation studies. However, it is still very strong in other fields such as anthropology and folklore.

⁷ These criteria include films, which are P-13 rated (for audiences older than 13 years old), R-rated (restricted audiences), and NC-17 rated (no one 17 and under admitted). Motion Picture Association of America, “Classification and Rating Rules. Revised January 1, 2010,” Motion Picture Association of America, accessed April 2016, http://filmratings.com/downloads/rating_rules.pdf.

⁸ The reader can find a large literature on the different approaches to the concept of ideology. For a marxist approach, see Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *L'idéologie allemande: 1845–1846*, accessed April 2016, http://classiques.uqac.ca/classiques/Engels_Marx/ideologie_allemande/Ideologie_allemande.pdf; Jürgen Habermas, *La technique et la science comme idéologie* (Paris: G/Denoël/Gonthier, 1978); Louis Althusser, *Idéologie et appareils idéologiques d'État*, accessed April 2016 http://classiques.uqac.ca/contemporains/althusser_louis/ideologie_et_AIE/ideologie_et_AIE.html. It is possible to find a study of ideology through the lens of social anthropology. For example, see John B. Thompson, *Ideology and Modern Culture: Critical Social Theory in the Era of Mass Communication* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990); John B. Thompson, *Studies in Theory of Ideology* (Cambridge: Polity, 1984). The reader will find a sociological and epistemology approach in the writings of Karl Manheim: Karl Manheim, *Ideology and Utopia* (London: Routledge: 1936). For a philosophical approach, see Paul Ricoeur, *L'idéologie et l'utopie* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1997). A historical approach to the concept of ideology can also be found in the writings of these authors: Jean-Pierre Faye, *Le siècle des idéologies* (Paris: Armand Colin, Masson, 1996), Terry Eagleton, *Ideology: An Introduction* (London, New York: Verso, 1991) and Emmet Kennedy, “‘Ideology’ from Destutt de Tracy to Marx,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 40, no. 3 (Jul.–Sept., 1979): 353–368.

with heavy negative connotations and associated with “integrated assertions, theories, and aims constituting a politico-social program, often with an implication of factitious propagandising.”⁹ In this research, I use the word “ideology” in its broad Greek definition, where ideology is perceived as a set of predefined ideas forming a discourse. This definition is also in accordance with the cultural studies approach which perceives ideology as intrinsically linked to culture because it is a system of thoughts, cultural symbols, and beliefs pertaining to a certain group and formed by such group.¹⁰ The ideological discourse used as a message in animation, for example, can be of a cultural, cognitive, moral, religious, political, social, or normative nature. However, while ideology does not essentially mean politics, it also cannot be completely exempt from politics. This is what French language refers to as *le politique*, a permanent construction of values allowing social order, as opposed to politics (*la politique*) which is the organisation of the State’s power. In an interview, philosopher Julien Freund explains the concept of *le politique*

[*le politique*] essentially lies in the choice of order, according to which certain institutions, laws and values are preferred. However, multiple criteria regulate the “right order” since ideas of sociality and humanity are vast and never exhaust their virtuality under specific conditions or under any specific concrete order. What defines [*le politique*] is the plurality of possible choices and, therefore, the necessary ideological debate

⁹ Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Culture: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 195.

¹⁰ Stuart Hall, *Cultural Studies 1983: A Theoretical History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 127–154. Cultural studies is especially interested in the ways ideology created a social system and distribute power.

accompanied by inevitable conflicts for power seizure, because power is the way to realize the idea we have of the right order.¹¹

Therefore, politics as conceived by Freund remains an integral part of the ideological discourse and cannot be fully dissociated from it. This thesis develops the concept of ideological discourse related to *le politique* as a form of social order. Ideology forms what is collectively perceived of as structural consistency. It provides cultural symbolic models, patterns of behaviour, and social organisational cues. Ideology sustain individuals and groups in two ways: it organises the perceived world they live in and it legitimises the social order. Geertz explains that “the power of ideology [is] to knit a social group or class together. [Ideologies] are extrinsic sources of information in terms of which human life can be patterned—extrapersonal mechanisms for the perception, understanding, judgement, and manipulation of the world.”¹² Ideology thus forms known cultural patterns, which in turn become the modes for a group to follow. It performs at the organisational and control levels of a society. In this thesis, I explore how ideology functions in animation as a cultural and social structure by analysing animated films’ aesthetic and content in relation to their specific cultural context and ethos, or national ideology.¹³

¹¹ “Car le politique réside essentiellement dans le choix d’un ordre, selon lequel certaines institutions, certaines lois et certaines valeurs sont privilégiées. Or, les critères de cet “ordre juste” sont multiples, parce que les idées de socialité et d’humanité sont vastes et n’épuisent jamais toutes leur virtualité dans des conditions déterminées ou dans quelques ordre concret que ce soit, Ce qui définit le politique, c’est la pluralité des choix possibles et, par conséquent, le nécessaire débat idéologique accompagné des inéluctables conflits en vus de la prise du pouvoir. Car le pouvoir est le moyen de réalisation de l’idée qu’on se fait de l’ordre juste.” Julien Freund, Interview with *Revue Critère*, “La mésocratie,” *Critère* (1978), accessed July 2016, http://agora.qc.ca/documents/Mesocratie--La_mesocratie_par_Julien_Freund.

¹² Geertz, 205–216.

¹³ Ideology also expresses the thoughts of groups that are not necessarily nations (cultural-political communities that are conscious of their autonomy, unity, and particular interests). For example, one can study the ideology forming the framework of sub-cultural groups such as teenagers, women, Goth, or athletes. They all form distinct communities with their own set of cultural symbols, beliefs, and modes of communications. In contrast, the ethos is the “character” of a nation, or its guiding myth, which is also based on ideology. Therefore, the terms “ideology,” and “ethos” remain interconnected. Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford, Malden: Basil Blackwell, 1988), 17.

A national ethos is manifest in the beliefs and aspirations of a culture, era, or community and promotes a certain cultural unity and order. It is an ideological model and a form of nationalism oriented towards utopian values rather than clear civic or political engagement. This idealised ethos remains a largely constructed paradigm on which the regular citizen (and the audience) should model his behaviour. In this thesis, I propose to see animation not only as a form of entertainment, but also as a possible mechanism of social control through national ideas.¹⁴ While an ideological framework seems unavoidable and necessary for a group, I specifically examine three examples in which national ideology is constructed and expressed: in a democratic context where multiple ideologies are possible, in a totalitarian context where the ideological discourse become propagandist, and in a diasporic context where the ideological discourse becomes the expression of the individual. In each of these examples, ideology is expressed through the content and the aesthetic of the animated films and the context of production in which they are created affects the clarity of the ideological discourse presented.

The methodology I utilise merges film criticism and film analysis, with anthropology and cultural studies.¹⁵ Its aim is to examine the way in which the content and aesthetics of animated films play a role in building the national identity and shaping how we perceive ourselves, our community, and the rest of the world. Cultural studies is an important framework for this thesis because it

¹⁴ Thompson, *Ideology and Modern Culture*, 3. In his overview of the concept of ideology in relation to media, Thompson states that all forms of mass communication in modern society emerge as new mechanisms of social control. Through these media, ideas of dominant groups can be propagated and diffused to possibly manipulate and control society.

¹⁵ It is important to note that even if some sources are labelled as “anthropology,” due to the academic background of the authors or aspects of culture they deal with, they nevertheless use a cultural studies framework. See for example, Douglas Kellner, “Toward a Multiperspectival Cultural Studies,” *The Centennial Review* 36, no. 1 Cultural Studies (Winter 1992): 5-41; Patricia Penn Hilden, “Readings from the Red Zone: Cultural Studies, History, Anthropology,” *American Literary History* 10, no. 3 (Autumn, 1998): 524-543; Stephen Muecke, “Cultural Studies and Anthropology,” *Oceania* 66, no. 3 Regional Histories in the Western Pacific (Mar., 1996): 252-254; Richard Johnson, “What Is Cultural Studies Anyway?” *Social Text*, no. 16 (Winter, 1986-1987): 38-80.

studies how cultural constructions are created through symbols, signs, and images, and how in turn, culture forms social systems such as ideology.¹⁶ Anthropology also contributes to my research as it does not see nationalism essentially as a political phenomenon. Instead, anthropologists—similarly to cultural theorists—view nationalism, nation, and tradition as cultural practices and social phenomena, largely constructed, imagined, or invented. It implies that the social world and its institutions in which we live are largely produced through and by imagination. These imaginary worlds, or social imaginary, as many anthropologists call them, are symbolic matrices, often constructed, maintained, and mediated by the media,

¹⁶ See for example, Tom Cohen, “‘Along the Watchtower’: Cultural Studies and the Ghost of Theory,” *MLN* 112, no. 3 German Issue (Apr., 1997): 400–430; Stuart Hall, *The Fateful Triangle: Race, Ethnicity, Nation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017); Stuart Hall, “The Question of Cultural Identity,” in *Modernity and its Futures*, eds., Stuart Hall, David Held, and Anthony McGrew (Cambridge: Polity, 1992), 274–316; Stuart Hall, *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* (London, Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1997); “Stuart Hall: Representation & the Media.” Directed by Mary Patierno and Sanjay Talreja. Stuart Hall Collection (Media Education Foundation, 1997), 56 min, accessed September 2017, <https://ualberta.kanopystreaming.com/video/stuart-hall-representation-media>; Hall, *Cultural Studies 1983*; Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (Paris: Seuil, 1957); Umberto Eco, *La structure absente: introduction à la recherche sémiotique* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1972); Paul Hodkinson, ed., *Media, Culture and Society: An Introduction* (London: Sage Publications, 2017); David Oswell, *Culture and Society: An Introduction to Cultural Studies* (London: Sage Publications, 2006); Paula Saukko, *Doing Research in Cultural Studies: An Introduction to Classical and New Methodological Approaches* (London: Sage Publications, 2003).

and in which people act as world-making collective agents.¹⁷ In his article on the subject, Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar argues that,

[...] social imaginaries are ways of understanding the social that become social entities themselves, mediating collective life. Often, social scientists and historians have tried to understand these entities in terms of ideas, theories, philosophies—what might be called “third-person” or “objective” points of view. But some crucial self-understandings are not formulated in explicit or theoretical molds. They are first-person subjectivities that build upon implicit understandings that underlie and make possible common practices. They are embedded in the habitus of a population or are carried in modes of address, stories, symbols, and the like. They are imaginary in a double sense: they exist by virtue of representation or implicit understandings, even when they acquire immense institutional force; and they are the means by which individuals understand their identities and their place in the world [...]¹⁸

The imaginary is thus, a collective force that creates social symbolic structures. Philosopher Cornelius Castoriadis believes that the social imaginary is what makes the institution of the individual as a social being able to function in society, because of his participation with collective significations possible. From this

¹⁷ See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, New York: Verso, 1983); Paul James, *Nation Formation: Towards a Theory of Abstract Community* (London, Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1996); Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992); David Lowenthal, “Fabricating Heritage,” *History and Memory* 10, no. 1 (1998): 5–20; Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006); Ernest Gellner, *Nationalism* (New York: New York University Press, 1997); Ernest Gellner, *Culture, Identity, and Politics* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Anthony D. Smith, *The Cultural Foundations of Nations: Hierarchy, Covenant and Republic* (Malden: Blackwell, 2008); Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (Reno, London: University of Nevada Press, 1999); Anthony D. Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); Tim Edensor, *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life* (Oxford, New York: Berg, 2002); Cornelius Castoriadis, *L'institution imaginaire de la société* (Paris: Seuil, 1975); Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004); Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis, London: University of Minneapolis Press, 1996); Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar, “Toward New Imaginaries: An Introduction,” *Public Culture* 14, no. 1 (Winter, 2002): 1–19; Johanna Sumiala, *Media and Ritual: Death, Community and Everyday Life* (London, New York: Routledge, 2013), 1; Eddy M. Souffrant, *Identity, Political Freedom, and Collective Responsibility: The Pillars and Foundations of Global Ethics* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 13; Astrid Erll, *Memory in Culture* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 110.

¹⁸ Gaonkar, “Toward New Imaginaries,” 4.

participation, the individual is constructed. In Castoriadis' philosophy, the imaginary is responsible for the foundation of social representation and social doings.¹⁹ In this sense, the Self and the collective are interwoven.

On the one hand, personal identity refers to what distinguishes a person from everyone else. Every individual is unique. However, individuality can be shaped because of a collective framework which forms collective identity pertaining to a specific culture. Culture includes many elements of a collective society which are passed down to one generation to the next, including: belief systems, social organisation, customs, rituals, materials, problem solving skills, forms of communication, knowledge, values, language, ideas, norms, rules, laws, ethics, morals, space organisation, standards, as well as, emotional and cognitive ways in which to interact with the world. These elements socialise the individual into being a member of a collective and this is how he learns to become who he is. Culture, therefore, greatly affects the formation of our personal identity and our behaviour, and influences how we see the world.²⁰ On the other hand, a collective identity refers to an individual's sense of belonging to a group, forming a part of his or her personal identity. Perception of the Self also situates the individual within the collective. Therefore, collective identity remains an important part of the individual identity.

In animation, one of the ways the Self—and by extension, the collective—is understood is through the audience's identification with the hero. As Christian Metz argues, this identification is necessary to make the film comprehensible.²¹ During a film's screening, the individual projects himself onto the hero. This allows him to share and experience (on the imaginary level) the same adventures

¹⁹ Castoriadis, *L'institution imaginaire de la société*; Sébastien Chapel, "L'imaginaire selon Cornelius Castoriadis," *La vie des idées*, accessed October 2016, www.laviedesidees.fr.

²⁰ "Culture, Identity, and Behavior" video (Films Media Group: Promedion Productions, 2004), accessed April 2017, <http://fod.infobase.com/PortalPlaylists.aspx?wID=103279&xtid=115831>.

²¹ Christian Metz, "Le significant imaginaire," *Communications* 23, no. 1 *Psychanalyse et Cinéma*. (1975): 33.

as the hero. Paradoxically, the hero never completely represents an individual as he remains a stock character, a type, and by displaying certain values and emotions, he stands for the personification of the collective.²² Therefore, when the American boxer Rocky (*Rocky IV*, 1985) wins his fight over his Russian Soviet opponent, it is not just the story of a man excelling at sports. Rather, it is the triumph of American values and of America itself over Soviet values and way of life, as personified in Rocky's rival.²³ The perception of the Self through the main protagonist is, therefore, crucial to the formation of the national ethos on the screen, animated or not.

In this thesis, I read animated films through the lens of cultural studies, ethnology and cultural anthropology, to show that what might appear to be a simple animated fairytale film can potentially have an impact on the viewer's identity construction and general perception of the world. Furthermore, not only does the content of animated films become political, but the design used is equally an artistic and ideological vehicle of meaning, responding to prevailing cultural and social conditions. Animation's diegesis and fairytale represent an imaginary world. The national ethos is equally imaginary, and represents a constructed reality in which members perceive they share the same values and past.²⁴ This

²² Leah D. Hewitt, *Remembering the Occupation in French Film: National Identity in Postwar Europe* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 10. More on the hero figure can be found in Umberto Eco, "Le mythe de Superman," *Communications* 24, La bande-dessinée et son discours (1976): 24–40; Joseph Campbell, *Le héros aux mille et un visages* (Paris : Éditions OXUS, 2010); Robert A. Segal, ed., *Hero Myths: A Reader* (Oxford, Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 2000).

²³ Rocky is an American film sequel produced between 1979 and 1990, and later in 2006 and 2015. The main protagonist, Rocky, is a working-class Italian-American who becomes wealthy and famous after discovering his talent at boxing. In *Rocky IV*, the hero has to face a Soviet opponent who previously had fought and fatally beaten his best friend.

²⁴ It is important to note that the paradigm for national identity never remains stable but rather is regularly challenged and modified by changes of socio-political nature. Therefore, within a single nation, one can find several ways of representing the national ethos.

imaginary construction of the world addresses, as Michel Bouchard and Tatiana Podyakova argue, both adult and children audiences.²⁵

Animation is now frequently associated with children culture. This strong division of audiences, however, was not always in place. Early animated films were not directed at any specific audience and were very permissive in their content. This included, for example, regularly lost or exposed female underwear (Minnie Mouse in *Plane Crazy*, 1928, and *Blue Rhythm*, 1931), drugs or alcohol (Betty Boop in *Snow White*, 1933), the mistreatment of animals by other animals (Mickey Mouse in *Steamboat Willie*, 1928), and sometimes, crude pornography (*Eveready Harton in Buried Treasure*, 1928).²⁶ This situation changed in the 1920s with the adoption of the Hays Code, the Motion Picture Producer and Distributor of America's (MPPDA) first official attempt to censor the film industry, including animation.²⁷ These new rules affected both the content and the design of films until 1968, when a rating system informing the viewers of the content of films was adopted.²⁸ What the Hays Code forbade in the 1920s became labelled after 1968 as “adult material” and from this period of censorship on, the child/adult dichotomy was used to describe live-action films as well as animated

²⁵ Michel Bouchard and Tatiana Podyakova, “Russian Animated Films and Nationalism of the New Millennium: The Phoenix Rising from the Ashes,” in *Children's Film in the Digital Age: Essays on Audience, Adaptation and Consumer Culture*, ed. Karin E. Beeler (Jefferson: McFarland & Company Publishers, 2015), 109–132.

²⁶ Karl F. Cohen, *Forbidden Animation: Censored Cartoons and Blacklisted Animators in America* (Jefferson, London: McFarland & Company, 1997), 10–13.

²⁷ In 1927, the Hays Code issued a document listing elements that were forbidden in films. These included nudity, drugs, sex, children's genitals, miscegenation, profanity, STDs, perversion, childbirth, white slavery, offence to the clergy or to other national groups. This Code was adopted more rigorously under Joseph Breen's (1888–1965) leadership. Cohen, 12. For more on this topic, see Leonard J. Leff, “The Breening of America,” *PMLA* 106, no. 3 (May 1991): 432–445; Thomas Patrick Doherty, *Hollywood's Censor: Joseph I. Breen and the Production Code Administration* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007); Thomas Patrick Doherty, *Pre-code Hollywood: Sex, Immorality, and Insurrection in American Cinema, 1930-1934* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).

²⁸ For example, Disney had to cover animal characters with clothes, and Betty Boop, made famous for her exposed garter, was depicted wearing sleeves and a long skirt, and became interested in more domestic activities. Cohen, 5–6. It was during this period that Walt Disney refined the content and design of his films, which would become the trademark of his studio.

ones.²⁹ This conception of animation, however, is somewhat limiting as it implies that youth animation cannot reach a more mature audience or vice-versa.

A central research question was considering that the use of fairytales is perceived to keep animation at a childlike level, why do animators continue using them? One answer might be that the fairytale offers a strong narrative. Furthermore, reaching a child-specific market could explain this choice as well. But that does not explain the success of films such as *Toy Story* (1995), *Shrek* (2000), and *Ice Age* (2002), which also proposed strong fairytale-like structure for more mature audiences.³⁰ Why would an animator or a studio create a film that repeats yet again an already well-known story? And aside from some technological component present in films, what can explain the popularity of stories like *Sleeping Beauty* or *Beauty and the Beast*, long after their initial production? Considering how animation comes forth nowadays in the realm of media, a study of the meanings carried by the animated image is in order.

In addition to their importance to animation's rating system, the concepts of child and childhood also find their place in the national discourse. As Nicholas Sammond argues,

The term *child* is broadly generic and sometimes serves to erase obscure important social differences and similarities between persons, some of whom are children, some of whom are not. [...] the term *child* is a highly potent discursive tool that is invoked to shape, limit, or foreclose arguments about social and material relations between individuals and classes of people [...].³¹

²⁹ This gave way to mature content animated films. Few examples can be named: *Fritz the Cat* (1972), a satire about college life, racism, politics and free love movement; *Persepolis* (2007), about the coming of age of a young girl during the Iranian revolution; and *Waltz With Bashir* (2008), an autobiographical film about the Lebanese War.

³⁰ *Toy Story* was the first fully computer-generated 3D film and set the norms for new CGI animation. Wells, *Re-Imagining Animation*, 30. The detailed ratings for these films can be found in the Film Industry Data database, accessed April 2016, <http://www.academicrightspress.com/entertainment/film> or Data on Movie Business, "The numbers," accessed April 2016, <http://www.the-numbers.com/movie/>.

³¹ Nicholas Sammond, *Babes in Tomorrowland: Walt Disney and the Making of the American Child, 1930–1960* (Durham, London: Duke University Press, 2005), 3.

In this thesis, I argue that most of the fairytale-animated films are ideological tools used to communicate a message rather than essentially entertainment products. With Sammond's comment in mind, I propose to see the concept of the child not only as an age group, but as the archetype of a young nation used in a national ethos discourse. In this sense, the adult/child dichotomy does not stand as an age group but rather as a marker of different levels of ideological discourse in animation.

Here I treat animated films as a form of discourse, as suggested in the work of Terrance Lindvall and J. Matthew Melton:

To have discourse, one must have communicating subjects, one of whom is the author (or *auteur*). This revived and reformed 'auteurism' approach must distinguish between the independent animator and the studio-driven, mass-produced cartoon. Yet, even in the latter, the voices of many authors whisper through the Studio Babel. The consciousness of the reader (his/her birth) occurs in encountering the author(s) in the words and images of the created text. The reader is neither a passive consumer of unyielding ideologies nor an independent constructor of brave new worlds, but one who seeks a meeting of the minds in the text.³²

Animation as a tool of communication and as a carrier of the studios' mark (auteurism), thus clearly fits the authors' definition of discourse. More than just language or text, a discourse is a historical, social, and institutional structure regulating beliefs, statements, terms and categories.³³ Seeing films as discourse enables me to fully acknowledge the rhetorical potential of the animated image.³⁴

My hypothesis in this research is that the content of animated films (the fairytale and its storytelling structure) and the type of design used for the

³² Terrance Lindvall and J. Matthew Melton, "Towards a Post-Modern Animated Discourse: Bakhtin, Intertextuality and the Cartoon Carnival," in *A Reader in Animation Studies*, ed. Jayne Pilling, 203–220. (London: John Libbey, 1997), 211.

³³ Sammond, 15.

³⁴ More on the rhetoric of the image can be found in Roland Barthes, "La rhétorique de l'image," *Communications* 4. Recherches sémiologiques (1964): 40–51.

drawings, form an idyllic and imaginary reality that expresses the representation of the national ethos of a specific group. Specifically, I investigate the American Dream, Soviet socialism, and a Russian diasporic ethos to show how seemingly similar content can carry different ideological messages in different cultural contexts.³⁵ Therefore, my film analyses examine the way animation is used as a medium to carry specific meaning on the screen, forming an ideal vision of reality, and supporting this ethos through ideology.³⁶ This alternative to the real world can be expressed through the content and form of the film—namely its visual composition, colours and movement—and the fairytale story it presents. The national ethos can be created in three ways: by an individual, by a group of people (represented in animation by a specific studio), or by an even stronger institutions, such as a government, all of which I examine in this thesis. In all three cases, I show how the reality formed within the animated fairytale created, maintained, or modified an ethos. As Donald Crafton suggests: “These [animated] alternate worlds, like those in fairy tales, may promote belief systems that are magically more powerful than our ‘realities.’”³⁷ To support my argument, I read images as text in animated films from three different geopolitical contexts in the twentieth century: within a capitalist setting (American animation); a Socialist

³⁵ This thesis specifically addresses the Russian diaspora in Paris and its surroundings, who left Russia before the creation of the USSR. The notion of “diaspora” describes migrant groups, who maintain their ethnic tradition and strong feeling of collectiveness in their host country. Diasporas are nations outside their nation-state. They have an internal organisation distinct from that of their host country and significant real or symbolic contact with their homeland. It is important to note that other Russian diasporas exist and, because of their different political, geographical and historical location, they do not necessarily share the same values and ideals as the one located in Paris. See, Lisa Anteby-Yemini and William Berthomière, “Disapora: A Look Back on a Concept,” *Bulletin du Centre de recherche français à Jérusalem*, no 16 (2005): 262–270; Boris Raymond and David R. Jones, *The Russian Diaspora 1917–1941* (Lanham, Maryland, London, The Scarecrow Press, 2000), 10; Marina Gorboff, *La Russie Fantôme: L’émigration russe de 1920 à 1950* (Lausanne: L’Âge de l’Homme, 1995), 35, 111; Ronald Hilton, “Russian and Soviet Studies in France: Teaching, Research, Libraries, Archives, and Publications,” *Russian Review* 38, no. 1 (Jan., 1979): 52–79; Dmitrij A. Gutnov, “L’École russe des hautes études sociales de Paris (1901–1906),” *Cahiers du monde russe* 43, no. 2–3 (April-September, 2002): 375–410.

³⁶ The concepts of ideology and utopia are not mutually exclusive: ideology legitimates the real, while utopia presents an alternative to it. For more on this topic, see Ricoeur, *L’idéologie et l’utopie*.

³⁷ Donald Crafton, *Shadow of a Mouse: Performance, Belief, and World-Making in Animation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), 219.

setting, more specifically animation made during the height of Stalinism; and finally, in a family-based context of production (Russian *émigrés* animation in France).³⁸ I chose these three examples because they share historical ties to one another: American animation influenced animation in the former Soviet Union, a new political entity from which Russian *émigrés* animators escaped.

As animation cannot be removed from its technological, artistic and economic context, each chapter of this thesis begins with an overview of the history of each geographical setting and the techniques used there, so the reader can grasp the context in which animation developed. Most of the animated films discussed in this study are from the first 50 years of the twentieth century. They were chosen on a on the basis of the years studied. All were intended to be screened in theatres for entertainment purposes. They are also available online for the reader's corroboration, and personal enjoyment. While all of these animated films were first intended to entertain or instruct larger audiences, I argue here they also reflect their particular eras, cultures, and ideologies designed for both propagandist and escapist reasons.

My analysis of these traditional animated fairytale films examines graphic design and folklore material such as fairy and folktales, exploring how such elements are manipulated and used in different ways to foster very specific perceptions, in order to show how these two elements of animation can function as a strong ideological tool.³⁹ My research demonstrates how folklore was used as a discursive element for its incredible malleability, to generate and to carry the

³⁸ In this research, I use official English translations for names, film titles and sources. When these were not available (and to avoid confusion) I provide a translation in English or transliteration based on the modified Library of Congress transliteration system, available online. See, Library of Congress, "Modified Library of Congress transliteration system," Library of Congress, accessed April 2016, http://www.fb06.uni-mainz.de/russisch/Dateien/Modified_Library_of_Congress.pdf.

³⁹ Folklore is generally perceived as the material and immaterial culture and customs of a group of people (the lore). Fairytales are believed to have originated from folktales, but are seen as a distinct genre of written literature. American Folklore Society, "What is Folklore?" American Folklore Society, accessed April 2016, <http://www.afsnet.org/WhatIsFolklore>; Jack Zipes, *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales: The Western Tradition from Medieval to Modern* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), xv.

ideological values of a studio, a government, or an individual. In this way, I hope to show how this innocuous form of art can also play the role of a political tool, which suggests to the viewers a solution for the unsatisfying reality they are confronted with.

Fairytales propose an ordered world to the viewers and, when associated with national values, strengthen their ideological message. A review of the literature, shows that fairytale scholarship is vast and diverse. Currently, Jack Zipes is one the most prominent scholar focusing on fairytales. He has demonstrated that tales are not merely innocent material for children, but really a product of a certain society and era. For example, the original Grimms' tales, which he recently translated into English, were first cleansed of their violent and sexual content, deemed not decent enough for younger audiences by puritan religious ideology. Later on, the tales were further modified to fit the artistic expectations of a more refined middle-class reading audience.⁴⁰ As Zipes has shown, the Grimms' original compilation of tales found its niche in a wider German nationalist movement and was therefore already embedded with political and ideological meaning.⁴¹ Zipes explains that as tales evolved they encoded and carried different information about society, and enabled the audience to use this information to expose or cover the complexity of social relationships.⁴²

Zipes' research on fairytales is not unique but is part of a larger and rich body of scholarship that includes such diverse approaches as structuralism, myth studies, psychoanalysis, children's development, gender studies, politics,

⁴⁰ Jack Zipes, *The Original Folk and Fairy Tales of the Brothers Grimm: The Complete First Edition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), xx; Jack Zipes, *Happily Ever After: Fairy Tales, Children, and the Culture Industry* (London, New York: Routledge, 1997), 5.

⁴¹ Zipes, *The Original Folk*, xxv.

⁴² Jack Zipes, *Why Fairy Tales Stick: The Evolution and Relevance of a Genre* (New York, Milton Park: Routledge, 2006), 94.

consumerism, and the commodification of culture.⁴³ Maria Tatar's work specifically addressing violence and sex in fairytales, and how they serve children's development deserves special attention.⁴⁴ Some scholars also have explored fairytales in relation to film and television. However, this is a fairly recent phenomenon. In fact, in the last 10 years, the popularity of fairytale films greatly increased within the cinema industry.⁴⁵ Several live-action fairytale-like films, or film and television series, such as *Snow White: A Tale of Terror* (1997), *Pan's Labyrinth* (2006), *Red Riding Hood* (2011), *Beastly* (2011), *The Chronicles of Narnia* (2005–2010), *Harry Potter* (2001–2011), *Beauty and the Beast* (1987–1990, 2012–on going), or more recently *Once Upon a Time* (2011–on going), have launched a wave of retellings of traditional fairytale texts.⁴⁶ This has prompted a renewed interest in fairytales and provided this field of study with new research material. Pauline Greenhill and Zipes deserve special attention for their research

⁴³ See for example, Carl G. Jung, "The Psychology of the Child Archetype," in *Sacred Narrative: Readings in the Theory of Myth*, ed. Alan Dundes, 244–255. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984); Marie-Louise von Franz, *An Introduction to the Psychology of Fairytales* (Zurich, New York: Spring Publications, 1970); Georges Jean, *Le pouvoir des contes* (Paris: Casterman, 1981); Marthe Robert, *Roman des origines et origines du roman* (Paris: Grasset, 1972); Valdimir Propp, *Morphology of the Folk Tale* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968); Hans-Jörg Uther, *The Types of International Folktales: A Classification and Bibliography, Based on the System of Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson* (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 2004); Zipes, *Happily Ever After*. Although Bruno Bettelheim's work remains controversial today, it certainly launched an interest in how tales function and deserves some attention. See Bruno Bettelheim, *Psychanalyse des contes de fées* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1976).

⁴⁴ Maria Tatar, *Spellbound* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015); Maria Tatar, *Enchanted Hunters: The Power of Stories in Childhood* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2009); Maria Tatar, *The Hard Facts of the Grimm's Fairy Tales* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003).

⁴⁵ Jack Zipes, Pauline Greenhill, and Kendra Magnus-Johnston, eds., *Fairy-Tale Films Beyond Disney: International Perspectives* (London, New York: Routledge, 2015); Pauline Greenhill and Jill Terry Rudy, eds., *Channeling Wonder: Fairy Tales on Television* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2014).

⁴⁶ Graeme McMillan, "Another Bite of the Poisoned Apple: Why Does Pop Culture Love Fairy Tales Again?," *Times Magazine*, May 30, 2012, accessed April 2016, <http://entertainment.time.com/2012/05/30/another-bite-of-the-poisoned-apple-why-does-pop-culture-love-fairytales-again/>; Neil Gaiman, "Happily Ever After," *The Guardian*, October 13, 2007, accessed April 2016, <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2007/oct/13/film.fiction>; Rhik Samadder, "Fairytale films are in Fashion—But can Hollywood Deliver a Happy Ending?," *The Guardian*, November 9, 2012, accessed April 2016, <http://www.theguardian.com/film/2012/nov/09/fairytale-films-hollywood>.

on fairytale films.⁴⁷ Furthermore to my knowledge and at present, Zipes is so far the only scholar who has dedicated several book chapters to animated fairytales.⁴⁸ Finally, due to Hollywood's recent investment in fairytale films and the development of the Internet, the interested reader will find several of the most recent American scholarly works in the form of public lectures made available for the general public and which are not necessarily published yet.⁴⁹ Within this obviously rich and dynamic scholarship, the dearth of work dedicated to the function of tales in animated films specifically is a glaring omission.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ It is important to note here that both authors, in collaboration with Kendra Magnus-Johnston and the University of Winnipeg also launched an International Fairytale Filmography database. Jack Zipes, Pauline Greenhill, Kendra Magnus-Johnson, International Fairytale Filmography database, University of Winnipeg, accessed April 2016, <http://iftf.uwinnipeg.ca/#>. Zipes, Greenhill, and Magnus-Johnston, eds., *Fairy-Tale Films Beyond Disney*; Greenhill and Rudy, eds., *Channeling Wonder*; Pauline Greenhill and S. E. Matrix, eds., *Fairy Tale Film and Cinematic Folklore: Visions of Ambiguity* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2010); Zipes, *The Enchanted Screen*; Zipes, *Happily Ever After*.

⁴⁸ Zipes, *The Enchanted Screen*; Zipes, *Happily Ever After*. In *The Enchanted Screen*, Zipes argues that the types of fairytale films are influenced by their mode of production. For example, he argues that the carnivalesque approach to fairytales sought to ridicule the conventional forms and ideology of the tale, the standard conservative approach maintains the original meaning of the tale and comply with the dominant ideology and market expectation, and the experimental approach (silhouette, claymation, and puppets) depends on the individual ideological and aesthetical perspective of the animator. In this last category, Zipes argues that experimental animators were more interested in their exploration of animation than in making an explicit political or social statement. Zipes, 53. My thesis, instead, proposes to look at this situation through the lens of a national discourse, which in itself cannot be completely separated from the mode of production and dominant ideology of the time. Furthermore, I show that political discourse is also present in experimental animated films.

⁴⁹ See for example, Maria Tatar, "The Attraction of Carnage: The Fear Factor, Preposterous Violence, and Empathy in Children's Literature" (Lowell Lecture Series: Gateway to Reading, Boston Public Library, 2014), posted May 13, 2014, accessed March 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WR10oa8hq18>; Maria Tatar, "The Big Bad Wolf Reconsidered" (lecture, Chicago Humanities Festival, November 3, 2013), posted January 13, 2014, accessed March 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mTTT9Gc5WdU>; Ruth B. Bottigheimer, "Fairytales and City Life: Literature and Society, Generic Shifts, and Worldview Changes" (Provost's Lecture, Stony Brook University, October 2014) posted October 24, 2015, accessed March 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jafLt6wz3Xs>; Margaret R. Yocom, "The Cinderella No One Knows: The Grimm Brothers' Tale of Incest, Fur and Hidden Bodies" (lecture, American Folklife Centre, Library of Congress, February 20, 2013), posted June 2, 2014, accessed March 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BqnyVc4IOKY&index=4&list=PLc7GYbJYkQbug3tRU-67O1yOJUvr_pCEp.

⁵⁰ Jack Zipes dedicated two book chapters to animated fairytale and fairytale films: "Animated Fairytale Cartoons: Celebrating the Carnival Art of the Ridiculous," and "Animated Feature Fairytale Films." Jack Zipes, *The Enchanted Screen*.

This lack of interest is particularly surprising in the field of animation, especially considering how widely promoted fairytales are. Walt Disney is probably the best example of how fairytales can be adapted for mass media. His animated feature films promote the values of the American Dream and are known around the world.⁵¹ The Soviet Union is also a good example of the use of traditional storytelling in animated films. During the heights of Socialist realism in the Soviet Union—between the mid-1930s and the mid-1950s—animation presented an aesthetic that was highly influenced by Walt Disney’s, and a narrative based mostly on fairy and folktales. The animated films of that period were filled with folklore motifs that carried socialist ideology through both the narrative and the design of the film. Soviet animation of that period has been little studied, and is also aimed at children. However, while they presented the same fairytale material and a similar design as Disney, Soviet animated films of the Stalinist period found their niche in the artistic theories of Socialist realism rather than in the ideology of the American Dream as reflected by the Disney films. While most authors agree that these films were supportive of the party’s ideology, they pay scant attention to their originality and depth.⁵² Researchers have neither looked deeply at how exactly socialist realist animation functioned within the Soviet ideological and aesthetic systems, nor tried to uncover the mechanism of the institutional discourse expressed through fairytales in this artistic field. My study addresses this gap in scholarship and points the way to further work in this emerging field.

⁵¹ For example, according to the New York Stock Exchange, the Walt Disney Company had generated 52 billion dollar revenue for the fiscal year 2015. This includes all assets of the company such as film and animation production, websites, theme parks, etc. “Walt Disney Company (The): (NYSE:DIS),” New York Stock Exchange, accessed April 2016, <https://www.nyse.com/quote/XNYS:DIS>.

⁵² Some, for example, characterise Soviet animation of the socialist period as inferior, childish, insipid, puerile and shamelessly copied on Disney’s films. Michel Roudevitch, “L’animation en fête,” *Bref* (Paris) 94, (Sept.–Oct. 2010): 5; Ralf Stephenson, *The Animated Film: International Film Guide Series* (London: The Tantivy Press; New York: A.S. Barnes & Co., 1973), 157.

Histories of Soviet animation were not written until the mid-1940s, and then were primarily authored by Soviet animators themselves.⁵³ Since any criticism of the political system then in place was dangerous, the resulting historical overviews are rather predictable and repetitive. They praise the productions for children of the time, the later adult animation made possible by a new political orientation, and the greatness of the studio organisation and of the people working there.⁵⁴ No critical history has been written in Russia so far and criticism from few dissatisfied animators, such as Yuri Norstein, came only much later.⁵⁵ The few scholars who have written about Russian and Soviet animation tend to abide by the longstanding child/adult dichotomy.

Laura Pontieri is one of the few scholars who has specialised in Russian and Soviet animation.⁵⁶ Her research focuses mostly on films made after the rise

⁵³ David MacFadyen, *Yellow Crocodiles and Blue Oranges: Russian Animated Film Since World War Two* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 2005), 63.

⁵⁴ See for example, Ivan Ivanov-Vano, *Kadr za kadrom* (Moskva: Iskusstvo), 1980; Ivan Ivanov-Vano, *Risovannyi fil'm* (Moskva: Goskinoizdat, 1950); Ivan Ivanov-Vano, ed., *Khudozhniki sovetского mul'tfil'ma* (Moskva: Sovietskiy khudozhnik, 1978); Ivan Ivanov-Vano, *Ocherki istorii razvitiia mul'tiplikatsii (do vtoroi mirovoi voiny)* (Moskva: VGIK, 1967); Semen Ginzburg, *Risovannyi i kukol'nyi fil'm. Ocherki razvitiia sovetской mul'tiplikatsionnoi kinematographii* (Moskva: Iskusstvo, 1957); Sergei Arsenin, *Mir mul'tfil'ma: idei i obrazy mul'tiplikatsionnogo kino sotsialisticheskikh stran* (Moskva: Iskusstvo, 1986); Sovexportfilm, *Soviet Animation* (Moscow: Sovexportfilm, 1986); Anatoliy Prokhorov, Natal'ia Venzher, *Sotvorenii fil'ma, ili Neskol'ko interv'iu po sluzhebnyim voprosam* (Moskva: Soiuz kinematographistov SSSR, Kinotsentr: 1990); V. Voronov, E. Migunov and A. Sazonov, *Fil'my-skazki: stenarii risovannykh fil'mov* (Moskva: Goskinoizdat', 1950); Dmitriy Babichenko, *Mastera sovetской mul'tiplikatsii: sbornik statei* (Moskva: Iskusstvo, 1972); Aleksandr Ptushko, *Mul'tiplikatsiia fil'my* (Moskva, Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1931); Fedor Khitruk, *Sovietskaia mul'tiplikatsiia: vchera, segodnia, zavtra* (Moskva: Soveksportfil'm, 1989); Grigorii Roshal', *Mul'tiplikatsionnii fil'm* (Moskva: Kinofotoizdat', 1936). One should mention the more recent monograph by Natalia Krivulya that includes contemporary semiotics and media theory. However, this resource was not translated into English and is not available in North America. Natal'ia Krivulia, *Labirinty animatsii. Issledovanie khudozhestvennogo obraza rossiyskikh animatsionnykh fil'mov vtoroi poloviny XX veka* (Moskva: Graal, 2002).

⁵⁵ Norstein was fired from Soyuzmul'tfil'm in the 1990s. MayFayden, 119. For more on Norstein's criticisms, see Clare Kitson, *Yuri Norstein and Tale of Tales: An Animator's Journey* (Bloomington, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2005); Serge Daney, Michel Iampolski and Serge Toubiana, "Iouri Norstein –Alexandre Kaïdanovski: Les artistes sont sereins," *Les Cahiers du cinéma* 427 (suppl.) Spécial URSS (Janvier 1990): 39-41.

⁵⁶ Laura Pontieri, *Soviet Animation and The Thaw of the 1960s: Not Only for Children*. (New Barnet: John Libbey, 2012). This monograph is based on her PhD thesis. Laura Pontieri, "Russian Animation of the 1960s and the Khrushchev Thaw," (PhD diss., Yale University, 2006).

of Stalinism, the period addressed in this thesis. Pontieri claims animation made during Stalin's power was aimed at children, and that Stalin's death enabled the creation of animation aimed at adults. The child/adult dichotomy argument is based on the general claim made by animators at the time and by critics, so this perception is not surprising. Pontieri's work is invaluable since there is so little written on the subject. She is truly a pioneer in the field and offers the first literature of the kind based on archival material, in the English language. Nonetheless, this thesis will show that there is a functional aspect of the fairytale and of national culture presented in films that has been overlooked.

In general, debates over children's versus adult animated films and over aesthetics and history tend to dominate discussion of Soviet animation. For example, Birgit Beumers and Natalie Kononenko have each written an article on Russian animation reflecting this dichotomy. Beumer's article argues that Soviet animation were not affected very much by ideological constraints, and Kononenko's focuses on the use of folklore in the representation of Ukrainians in Soviet animation.⁵⁷ Kononenko's study is particularly interesting because of her focus on folklore. Her argument, however, mostly addresses animation in Ukraine and not during the Stalinist period, which is the focus of this research. Finally, anthropologists Bouchard and Podyakova recently wrote a book chapter on Soviet animation. Specifically they examine contemporary Soviet animation in relation

⁵⁷ Birgit Beumers, "Comforting Creatures in Children's Cartoons," in *Russian Children's Literature and Culture*, eds. Marina Balina and Larissa Rudova, 129–152. (London, New York: Routledge, 2008); Natalie Kononenko, "The Politics of Innocence: Soviet and Post-Soviet Animation on Folklore Topics," *Journal of American Folklore* 1, no. 24 (2011): 272–294. In general, Beumers is known for her work on Russian and Soviet cinema, while Kononenko's work investigates Ukrainian folklore. See for example, Birgit Beumers, ed., *Directory of World Cinema: Russia, Volume 4* (Intellect: Bristol, Chicago: 2011); Birgit Beumers, *A History of Russian Cinema* (Oxford, New York: Berg, 2009); Birgit Beumers and Marina Balina, "To Catch Up and Overtake Disney?" in *Fairy-Tale Films Beyond Disney: International Perspectives*, eds. Jack Zipes, Pauline Greenhill, and Kendra Magnus-Johnston, 124–138. (London, New York: Routledge, 2015); Natalie Kononenko, *Ukrainian Minstrels: And the Blind Shall Sing* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1998); Natalie Kononenko, *Slavic Folklore: A Handbook* (Westport: Greenwood, 2007); Natalie Kononenko, "The Influence of the Orthodox Church on Ukrainian Dumy," *Slavic Review* 50, no. 3 (Autumn, 1991): 566–575.

to juvenile culture and how nationalism develops in children's mind.⁵⁸ In all cases, the perception of animation aimed at children audiences is very strong.⁵⁹

It is important to mention the few other scholars who provided the field with a new and original outlook on Soviet animation. David MacFadyen examines the emotional enterprise of Soviet animated films made between the mid-1930s and the end of the 1990s.⁶⁰ Stephen Norris also published a book chapter on contemporary animation, including a short historical background of Soviet animation.⁶¹ In addition, Maya Balakirsky Katz recently produced a book on Soviet animation focusing on the Jewish influence on official Soviet culture. She argues that many Jewish animators explored self-reflective ethnographic material in Soviet animation in order to represent themselves within Soviet culture. Balakirsky Katz's book provides a new interpretation of Soviet animated films based on Jewish history.⁶² Furthermore, Ian McMillen and Masha Kowell recently wrote an article on Soviet animation during the Krushchev Thaw. More specifically, their work proposes an analysis of three animated films from 1963 and their relationship to American Jazz music.⁶³ Other recent publications include Alexander Fedorov's article on the application of hermeneutical analysis to Soviet

⁵⁸ Bouchard and Podyakova, "Russian Animated Films and Nationalism of the New Millennium," 109–132.

⁵⁹ Interestingly, Bouchard, Podyakova, and Kononenko perceive contemporary animation as aimed to a dual audience. They all believe this new trend in contemporary Russian animation is due to the popularity of the DreamWork's film *Shrek* (2001).

⁶⁰ MacFadyen, *Yellow Crocodiles*.

⁶¹ Stephen Norris, *Blockbuster History in the New Russia: Movies, Memory, and Patriotism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012).

⁶² Maya Balakirsky Katz, *Drawing the Iron Curtain: Jews and the Golden Age of Soviet Animation* (New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, 2016).

⁶³ Ian McMillen and Masha Kowell, "Cartoon Jazz: Soviet Animations and the Krushchev 'Thaw'," *Film & History: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 45, no. 2 (Winter 2015): 24–38.

animated films of the 1940s. His research examines Soviet animated media texts in order to study the Cold War period.⁶⁴

Finally, there is a recent interest in Soviet animation from different academic circles. Several recent unpublished Master's and Doctoral thesis and presentations were produced on Soviet animation, most of them written by students of Eastern European background.⁶⁵ In each of these thesis, the focus of research varies from the negotiation between the artists and the regime, the ethnocentric representation of northern aboriginal traditions from Russia, and the role of fairytales in constructing gender identities. Several other sources are available in other countries than Canada and have not yet been translated or are not available to the general public.⁶⁶ Lastly, a database of early Russian and Soviet animation exists. It lists the name of the animated films, animators,

⁶⁴ Alexander Fedorov, "The Application of Hermeneutical Analysis to Research on the Cold War in Soviet Animation Media Texts from the Second Half of the 1940s," *Russian Social Science Review* 57, no. 3 (May-June 2016): 194–204. [Translated by Kenneth Cargill. A. Fedorov, "'Mediaobrazovanie': Tekhnologiiia germanevticheskogo analiza sovetskikh animatsionnykh mediastekstov vtoroi poloviny 1940-kh godov na temu 'kholodnoi voiny,'" *Mediaobrazovanie*, no. 1 (2015): 102–112.]

⁶⁵ See for example, Timo Lisenmaier, "Die Entwicklung des sowjetischen Trickfilms seit 1960 am Beispiel des Studios Sojuzmul'tfil'm" (MA diss., Karlsruhe, Hochsch. für Gestaltung, 2005); Irina Evteeva, "Protsess zhanroobrazovaniia v sovetskoi mul'tiplikatsii 60-80kh godov" (PhD diss., Leningradskii gosudarstvennyi institut teatra, muzyki i kinematografii imeni N.K. Cherkasova, 1990); Nadezda Fadina, "Fairytale Women: Gender Politics in Soviet and Post-Soviet Animated Adaptations of Russian National Fairytales" (PhD diss., University of Bedfordshire, 2016); Elena Korniakova, "Canadian and Russian Animation on Northern Aboriginal Folklore" (MA diss., Concordia University, 2014); Irina Chiaburu, "Subversion in the Soviet Animation of the Brezhnev Period: An Aesopian Reading of Andrei Khrzhanovsky's Pushkiniana" (PhD diss., Jacob University, 2015); there is an anonymous website whose author claimed he or she wrote a senior thesis paper entitled "Government Influence on Soviet Animation." Unfortunately, the author of this publication remains unknown and research to find a copy of the thesis was unsuccessful. See, "Soviet Animation," Soviet Animation, accessed January 2017, <http://sovietanimation.weebly.com/>; there are certainly other thesis located in the library of the Gerasimov Institute of Cinematography (VGIK) but the university catalogue is unavailable online.

⁶⁶ For example, in Germany, accessing a graduate student's full thesis is illegal. Personal correspondence with Petra Zimmermann, January 20, 2017. Examples of presentations include, Maulana Yodha Permana, "Tokoh dan Ideologi dalam Serial Animasi Gora Samotsvenov (gora samocvetov) 'Gunung Permata'" (presentation, University of Indonesia, 2014) accessed January 2017, <http://lib.ui.ac.id/naskahringkas/2016-06/S58013-MaulanaYodhaPermana>; Anatoliy Klots, "Depicting the Trickster: Soviet Animation and Russian Folktales" (presentation University of Washington, n.d.) accessed January 2017, <http://www.abstract.xlibx.info/as-other/2938273-1-depicting-the-trickster-soviet-animation-and-russian-folktales-c.php>.

collaborators, studio where they were produced, and provides when possible a short description of the narrative of each film.⁶⁷

Scholarship about general animation typically does not address the use of folklore in animation.⁶⁸ Literature on animation is, however, not without its own rich and dynamic erudition, with American, British, Italian, Australian, and Canadian scholars leading the way. Giannalberto Bendazzi and Paul Wells are pioneers in the field. Bendazzi has published three historical overviews of world animation.⁶⁹ Bendazzi's work remains one of the few research that tries to address animated films made in smaller countries. On the other hand, Wells has pioneered the articulation of the way animation had been studied in academic circles, establishing animation as a new intellectual discipline.⁷⁰ In general, the majority of the literature available concerns the history of animation, usually organised chronologically or by style.⁷¹ There is also a nascent field of criticism that focuses

⁶⁷ Russian Animation in Letter and Figures, accessed August 2015. http://www animator.ru/db/?ver=eng&p=show_film&fid=2358.

⁶⁸ With the exception of Kononenko and Fadina, whose work focuses specifically on Soviet animation. Kononenko, "The Politics of Innocence"; Fadina, "Fairytale Women."

⁶⁹ Giannalberto Bendazzi, *Cartoons: One Hundred Years of Cinema Animation* (Bloomington, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), and a more detailed and recent updated work: Giannalberto Bendazzi, *Animation: A World History. Volumes I-II-III* (Boca Raton: CRC Press, 2016); Giannalberto Bendazzi, *Le film d'animation. Vol. I: du dessin animé à l'image synthèse*. (Grenoble: La pensée sauvage, JICA, 1985).

⁷⁰ See for example, Paul Wells, "Animation: Forms and Meanings," in *An Introduction to Film Studies*, ed. Jill Nilmes, 194–215, (London, New York: Routledge, 1996); Paul Wells, *Animation: Genre and Authorship* (London, New York: Wallflower, 2002); Paul Wells, *Understanding Animation* (London, New York: Routledge, 1998); Paul Wells, *The Animated Bestiary: Animals, Cartoons, and Culture* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2009).

⁷¹ See for example, Eric S. Jenkins, *Special Affects: Cinema, Animation and the Translation of Consumer Care* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014); Rida Queiroz, *Animation Now!: Anima Mundi* (Koln: Tashen, 2004); Daniel Goldmark, *The Cartoon Music Book* (Chicago: A Cappella, 2002); Giannalberto Bendazzi, *Le film d'animation*; Leonard Maltin, *Of Mice and Magic: A History of American Animated Cartoons* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1980); Jerry Beck, ed., *The 50 Greatest Cartoons: As Selected by 1,000 Animation Professionals* (Nashville: Turner Publishing, 1994); Maureen Furniss, *Art in Motion: Animation Aesthetics* (New York: John Libbey Publishing, 1998); Maureen Furniss, *Animation: The Global History* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2017); Gordon B. Arnold, *Animation and the American Imagination: A Brief History* (Santa Barbara, Denver: Praeger, 2017).

mostly on industry, classification, gender and sexuality, race, etc.⁷² Upon a closer look, however, the reader will notice that the majority of such studies are about American animation. Finally, Walt Disney deserves a special mention as his person, business leadership, and artistic impact have generated a large body of scholarship as well.⁷³ Mostly absent from this body of research is any sustained focus on the use of fairytales in animation, especially in relation to constructing national the ethos. With this thesis, I fill a gap in the field of animated fairytales, and complement Zipes' and Pontieri's outlook on Soviet animation. In order to fully comprehend how tales and animation can work as aesthetical and ideological systems in national identity formation, I have organised this research into three chapters.

⁷² See, for example, Alan Cholodenko, "The Illusion of the Beginning: A Theory of Drawing and Animation," *Afterimage* 28, no 1 (July/August 2009): 9–12; Marcel Jean, *Quand le cinéma d'animation rencontre le vivant* (Laval: Les 400 coups, 2006); Hervé Joubert-Laurencin, *La lettre volante: Quatre essais sur le cinéma d'animation* (Paris: Presses Sorbonne Nouvelle, 1997); Nicholas Sammond, *Birth of an Industry: Blackface Minstrelsy and the Rise of American Animation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015); Lehman, Christopher P. *The Colored Cartoon: Black Representation in American Animated Short Films, 1907–1954* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007); Daniel Goldmark, *Funny Pictures: Animation and Comedy in Studio-era Hollywood* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011); Tom Sito, *Drawing the Line: The Untold Story of the Animation Unions From Bosko to Bart Simpson* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2006); Crafton, *Shadow of a Mouse*; Bell, Haas, and Sells, eds., *From Mouse to Mermaid*; Karen Beckman, ed., *Animating Film Theory* (Durham, London: Duke University Press, 2014); Suzanne Buchan, ed., *Pervasive Animation* (London, New York: Routledge, 2014); Suzanne Buchan, "Pervasive Animation Matters: From the Arts and Work of to the Everyday" (Inaugural lecture, Middlesex University,) posted December 5, 2013, accessed August 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=085jtAyzKIM>; the reader will also find several conference papers presented at the *Animated Reality Conference*, in Edinburgh in June 2011. Most of the papers were uploaded on YouTube under the title *Animated Reality Conference DVD 2-13*. AnimatedRealities. AnimatedRealities YouTube channel. Accessed January 2017. <https://www.youtube.com/user/AnimatedRealities>.

⁷³ See for example, Henry Giroux, *The Mouse that Roared*; Chris Pallant, *Demystifying Disney: A History of Disney Feature Animation* (New York: Continuum, 2011); Henry Giroux, "Disney, Southern Baptists, & Children's Culture: The Magic Kingdom as Sodom and Gomorrah?" *Z Magazine*, (Sept. 1997): 47–51; Didier Ghez, *They Drew as They Pleased: The Hidden Art of Disney's Golden Age, the 1930s* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2015); David Whitley, *The Idea of Nature in Disney Animation: From Snow White to WALL-E* (Franham: Ashgate, 2012); Tison Pugh and Susan Aronstein, eds., *The Disney Middle Ages: A Fairytale and Fantasy Past* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Sammond, *Babes in Tomorrowland*; Nicholas Sammond, "Manufacturing the American Child: Child-rearing and the Rise of Walt Disney," *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies* 13, no. 1 (1999): 29–55; Mark Langer, "Regionalism in Disney Animation: Pink Elephant and Dumbo," *Film History* 4, no. 4 (1990): 305–321; Mark Langer, "The Disney-Fleischer Dilemma: Product Differentiation and Technological Innovation," *Screen* 33, no. 4 (1992): 343–360; Daniel Kothenschulte, ed., *The Walt Disney Film Archives: The Animated Movies 1921–1968* (Köln: Taschen, 2016).

Chapter one explores how animation began and how tales came to be used during the rise of the studio structure in the 1930s to 1960s in the United States, a world leader in this field.⁷⁴ It offers a short overview of the history of animation, to provide the reader with an understanding of the different techniques and styles. It specifically focuses on Disney, who strongly influenced animation worldwide with his approach to the field, developing this art form into a strong and lucrative industry.

As I show in chapter one, in the United States, folklore elements such as fairytales were used as narrative structure to carry a specific studio's style. Most American studios preferred traditional European fairytales. Walt Disney, for example, used fairytales for their storytelling potential. This chapter demonstrates that he modified the tales to fit his personal vision of the world, and tried to protect the audience from events perceived as too traumatic or sad, such as death or violence. In addition, the Disney studio proposed an equally comfortable aesthetic, referred to as classical aesthetic, to carry their founder's vision of an ordered world. In this chapter, I argue that Walt Disney's animated films nevertheless embodied the national ethos of the American Dream, and the cultural ideals it carried. Without presenting clear elements of American culture, Disney's animation nonetheless is representative of American national identity. Fairytales as seen through the eyes of Walt Disney played a tangible role into contributing to this myth as this ethos constituted the main core of Disney's alternative reality. It took shape after World War I and the Great Depression, and was capitalised and sold to wide audiences.

As the United States offered a capitalist economic system favouring competition, other voices opposing Disney's ideology became important in

⁷⁴ The reader should note that I purposely do not address American propagandist films made during World War I and World War II. While these films clearly displayed ideological messages, they are of little help to my argument. Furthermore, this period of American animation deserves an entire thesis of its own.

animation.⁷⁵ The traditional tales structure as well as the classical design were later reinterpreted in order to fit the new generation of animators' own view of the world. The use of crude gags, violence, sex, and even murder in these artists' productions were meant to shake up the politically correct form, the national ethos, and to break the visual mould that Disney had set. Their work represented a counter-discourse and an alternative to the institutional model that Disney became, through both the formalistic choices and content that their films displayed. Without being anti-American, this new generation of artists challenged American cultural values by means of the new animation style they proposed and created an animated metadiscourse (or a plurality of discourse) that challenged Disney's and Hollywood's institutional models. Furthermore, each of these different styles recast a form of the American Dream, slightly differently from other preexisting ones.

Chapter two problematises the mode of production discussed in chapter one, by showing how within a different political and economic context, such as in the Soviet Union of the 1930s through 1950s, a plurality of animated voices was not possible, due to the economic and political system. This second aspect of my research represents the main core of my argument about how folklore and fairytales were used in animation as an ideological tool. While Soviet animators

⁷⁵ It is important to mention that during the early years of American animation, Hollywood studios were criticised for suppressing competition and using monopolistic practices. At the time, there were eight major studios competing with each other. Five of them were fully integrated conglomerates: Fox Film Corporation, Loew's Inc. (a parent company of MGM), Paramount Pictures, RKO Radio Pictures, and Warner Bros. Universal Pictures and Columbia Pictures were also major studios but owned fewer theatres. The Paramount decree of 1948 marked the end of an era in Hollywood's organisation and the monopoly of some studios. This Supreme Court decision aimed at breaking the monopoly of the big studios and separating production, distribution, and exhibition of film production. Prior to 1948, independent studios like Disney could not distribute their films because the movie theatres were owned and controlled by larger studios such as Paramount. In addition, independent studios often saw most of their profits kept by the distributors. The Paramount decree allowed independent studios for more control and generally, for a wider and fairer market. Bendazzi, 129. For more on this topic, see Yannis Tzioumakis, "Independence by Force: The Effects of the Paramount Decree on Independent Film Production," in *American Independent Cinema: An Introduction*, ed. Yannis Tzioumakis (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006); "US v. Paramount Pictures, Inc.," FindLaw, accessed September 2015, <http://caselaw.findlaw.com/us-supreme-court/334/131.html>; "The Hollywood Antitrust Case," *Hollywood Renegades Archive the Society of Independent Motion Pictures Producers Research Database*, accessed September 2015, http://www.cobbles.com/simpp_archive/1film_antitrust.htm.

borrowed Disney's aesthetic, their films constituted a socialist reinterpretation of the American Dream. In order to achieve such a goal, they had to draw from Russian traditions. In this chapter, I show that animated fairytales as interpreted in the Soviet Union played a crucial role in creating the new socialist nation.

Chapter two introduces how animation began and how the form and content of films were affected by the different political changes. Soviet animation had developed from a small marginal art form produced by a few individuals to an organised studio system as the new economic system got stronger under Stalin's socialism. The studio system that fostered Soviet animation had a major difference with that of the United States: it was centralised into one main governmental studio. This major difference, induced by socialism, influenced the type of animated films produced in the former USSR, as the Soviet production evolved in a competition-free environment and artists did not have to worry about their films' economic viability. I argue that this made animated fairytales' message strongly politically ideological.

In this single state-sponsored studio, designs based on Disney's classical animation and folklore-oriented content were used. Soviet animated films of this period employed folklore elements such as folktales, Russian retellings of Western-European fairytales, images of vernacular architecture and of traditional clothing, and the like. This is a step farther away from Disney's animation as not only the content and form but also the elements within the animated diegesis supported the national ethos. Soviet animated films of the Stalinist period were perceived by animators in the former USSR and worldwide as intended for children. I demonstrate in chapter two how the national symbols used in Soviet animation truly found their niche in the context of Socialist realism, and were designed to support Stalinist ideology and its ideals, including socialist utopianism and civism, controlled perception of minority groups, and promoted Russian ethnic superiority.

In this second chapter, I first challenge the popular notion that Soviet animation made during the height of Stalinism was solely aimed at children by showing how folktales were embedded with ideological meaning. I believe animated films were perceived to be a children's medium because—as in the case of Disney—we associate tales with the realm of fantasy and childhood. Instead I show how fairy and folktales were used because of their malleability. In the former USSR, animated fairy and folktales were used because they fitted the Soviet party's vision of a utopian society. In addition, I argue that the Disney style was adopted both to control the national production, but also because it presented an idea of an ordered world. Therefore, the use of both Disney's classicism (classical aesthetic) and folklore motifs (both visually and in the content of fairy and folktale) served Stalinist ideology and formed an institutionalised style of animation that remained unchallenged until the death of Stalin.

Within this socialist context, different types of animated counter-dialogues like those present in American animation could not be generated as the USSR's studio had a monopoly on production. I argue that Disney's formalistic style, and the folklore-oriented narratives, were not accidental choices. Socialism necessitated a strong ideological utopian discourse, which in the field of animation was fostered in the classical design and fairytale content of animated films. In the Stalinist context, the studio system and its formalistic and narrative choices were three cogs in a wider ideological machine set up by the party. Only after Stalin's death was the mandatory aesthetic and narrative system slowly lifted, once more enabling a plurality of styles and topics in animation and thus, an animated metadiscourse that challenged the official style. Soviet animators, however, never had a complete freedom of production. Incidentally, the change in animation's aesthetics paralleled the modification made to the national ethos, which also gained more latitude. In this second chapter, I demonstrate how the choice of design and the folklore-based content were much more than a strategy aimed at entertaining children. It was, as I show, one of many elements that

articulated Stalinist ideology and values, and served the education and indoctrination of the audience under the cover of “innocent” fairytales.

The third and final chapter of this thesis addresses a third context in which animated tales flourished: the Russian *émigré* animators in Paris, who fled Imperial Russia and the nascent Soviet Union after the Russian Revolution and the Civil War, in the late 1910s and early 1920s. Typically, members of a diaspora form a microcosm of their homeland in their host country, often displaying strong nationalist ideologies and discourse. Indeed, the Parisian context to which Russian animators fled was characterised by the presence of an already organised Russian community, of a strong Russian film community, and by an interest from Frenchmen and women in the exoticism that this ethnic group brought to their French national artistic production. I show that despite all these elements they could have benefited from, Russian *émigré* animators in Paris almost completely dissociated themselves from this community and its discourse on Russianness, and thus reduced greatly their potential at marketing their *oeuvre*. They had sporadic contact with French and Russian studios, but remained independent from the larger and more limiting artistic context offered by those institutions. Instead, Russian animators formed close personal and professional ties with a few people, who were admitted into their artistic world. I argue that this formed a unique family-based structure in their animated production and allowed for an almost complete freedom of expression.

This chapter shows that the small repertoire of films that Russian *émigré* animators left cannot be classified under any single banner of genre, style, studio, or movement, such as in the case of American and Soviet animated films. For example, one of the animators I introduce in this chapter, Ladislav Starevich, maintained the marionette technique and fable narrative structure that he had experimented with in Imperial Russia throughout his entire career. His production was influenced by French tradition in his choice of fables, which became more Western-oriented rather than using the Russian adaptation of these texts as he did

before. On the other hand, animator Alexandre Alexeieff's animated films were strongly influenced by images of nineteenth-century Imperial Russian culture integrated with a highly personal animation. The relation of these two figures to folklore was very loose and it served as a leitmotif for their global *oeuvre*. I argue that the folklore in their animation served their own condition of immigrant artists. This is perhaps the reason why their production does not neatly fit any traditional categories. In addition, I argue that their search for artistic freedom at the expense of their financial security can be thought of as a clear rejection of the aesthetics, modes of storytelling, and context of production that capitalist and socialist systems valued. In the United States and in the USSR, animators abided by the national ethos related in the studios' ideological mission. I demonstrate that Russian *émigré* animators, in contrast, shifted this national ethos to a family and individual one. The ethos articulated in their films supported their individual experience as *émigrés* and the family played the role of communal identity group. This chapter shows that this kind of production was possible because of the absence of strong studio structure in France and because the dichotomy between animation for children and adults was not yet fully articulated.

As I show, Russian *émigrés'* animation did not really fit into either French national production or the new Soviet animation but was truly a representation of the pre-revolutionary animation that bloomed in Imperial Russia before the Civil war. Therefore, the Russian *émigré* animators in France continued the tradition of early Russian animation when they went abroad. I see this as the counter-animation and animated metadiscourse that was absent from the Soviet Union, as discussed in chapter two. Their animated films are a rallying cry for a lost socio-political structure, a nostalgic look at their homeland and a reflection of their condition as immigrants. The uniqueness of their narratives and techniques are truly born out of their isolation. In this last chapter, the reader will notice that even in a very different context, the use of design and narrative based on folklore conveyed strong ideologies and values. In this case, however, it did not serve a

studio or government's ideology as in the United States and Soviet Union. Instead, the tale structure and folklore motifs articulated a very personal view of Russian animators' condition as *émigrés*. Chapter three, therefore, explores how ideology can become an expression of the personal.

In recent years, research has shown animation to be, as Paul Wells states, “a form that encompasses more than the American animated cartoon tradition [but] a medium of universal expression embraced across the globe.”⁷⁶ This study offers an interpretation of folklore in animated fairytales films and calls for a reexamination of a medium that is often associated with children's culture because of its connection with the tales. As Ian Wojcik-Andrews demonstrates, the concept of “children's film” remains complex:

There are films aimed at children, films about childhood, and films children see regardless of whether or not they are children's films. There are “children's films,” but there is no such thing as a “children's film,” regardless of what one might think watching *Return of the Jedi*, *A Bug's Life*, *Tarzan*, *Babe: Pig in the City*, *Back to the Future*, *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory*, *The Princess Bride*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *Mighty Joe Young*, *E.T.*, *The Rugrats Movie*, *The Lion King*, *The Goonies*, and *Baby Geniuses*, according to the Internet Movie Database website, the fifteen most popular kids movies searched today. Indeed, any attempt to universalize children's cinema, a children's film, or the nature of the child viewer, only reveals more closely the contradictions in which children's cinema finds itself situated.⁷⁷

Furthermore, Wojcik-Andrews argues that such children's films carry ideological values of consumerism and American ideals. This further supports my argument that “children” embodies a national discourse. In fact, folklore in animated films in general needs to be read more carefully as an ideological tool rather than a simple means of storytelling. One can therefore see how scholars really need to readdress fairytale animation, and focus on how the different elements that

⁷⁶ Wells, *Genre and Authorship*, 1.

⁷⁷ Ian Wojcik-Andrews, *Children's Films: History, Ideology, Pedagogy, Theory* (London, New York: Garland Publishing, 2000), 19.

constitute the films, are part of a broader functional system, influenced by the context of production as well as by artistic and technological developments, and that carry specific messages to their audiences. Animation is not just an entertaining medium. It plays a contributing role to the audiences' sense of self, community building, and perception of the world. The very act of drawing a line thus becomes a political act and animation's capacity to articulate the ethos of a nation should be taken seriously. Such is the work of this thesis.

Chapter 1

American Animation: Disney and the American Dream

The American animation industry was—and still is—by far the most successful in the world. Animators benefited from the studio system that already existed for cinema to develop their art. This explains the large production of American animation, which is important enough to have influenced animation worldwide either directly or indirectly. Establishing the historical foundation of American animation enables me to later compare and contrast how it evolved in different social and economic contexts such as in the former USSR and in the Russian *émigré* community in France. Portrayed by historians as the result of several innovations in the fields of optics, cinema, photography, and comic strips, animation is generally presented as a series of technological improvements in the field. In addition, most specialists present animation's history as a series of distinctive visual styles. Walt Disney stands in this history as the man who created the classical animation style characterised by rounder figures and narratives based on tales, most of the time fairytales.

In this chapter, I present a short history of early animation and of the rise of American animation, with special emphasis on Disney, through the lens of the formation of the American national ethos.¹ I argue that animation's aesthetical developments can be read as representational of the developments of the American Dream. This national ethos is expressed in Disney's animation through aesthetic choices and narrative, and animated films are treated as cultural artifacts and representative of the social group in which they were created. Disney used fairytales and aesthetics, and played the role of strengthening the national ethos

¹ The reader should note that the history of American animation I present is intentionally compressed and is not meant to contribute to animation's historical scholarship. Instead, my focus remains the national ethos expressed in animation.

(the American Dream) within an animated ordered reality. In this sense, his career and in his animated *oeuvre* embodied the American national ethos, and American cultural values. In contrast, other animators used fairytales as a counter-discourse challenging the social order of the animated reality created by Walt Disney. However, their work did not entirely reject the values held by the Disney studio, but rather announced the wider countercultural movement of the 1960s and 1970s, and the search for another version of the American Dream closer to their reality. In animation, this search for new models was expressed in a break with the classical style initiated by Disney. This chapter shows how the expression of the American ethos evolved through the history of American animation, its unique context of production, its various practitioners, and its developments in aesthetics. But before getting to the work of specific artists, it is crucial to look at how animation developed as a technology.

Centuries before Walt Disney and before there were any animators *per se*, animation—just like cinema—was born of different scientific experiments, especially in the field of optics and movement.² These experiments included the discovery of the persistence of vision—a phenomenon in which the viewer “sees” a continuous image in movement when looking at images in rapid succession—

² See for example, Jack C. Ellis, *A History of Film* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1979); David A. Cook, *A History of Narrative Film* (New York: Norton, 1990); Thomas Elsaesser, *Early Cinema: Space-Frame-Narrative* (London: BFI Publishing, 1990); David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *Film History: An Introduction* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2010).

and developments in photography and in the study of motion.³ From this research and other experiments, several early apparatuses were developed including: the magic lantern (c. 1645), and the Victorian era's "philosophical toys" like the praxinoscope which was the first moving image projector, and the cinematographe which was the first camera with a hook system that allowed for sharper image projection.⁴

Early filmmakers such as Georges Méliès (1861–1938) began to exploit the screen space (diegesis) to create a fictional reality such as in his fantasy film *Le Voyage dans la Lune* (*A Trip to the Moon*, 1902), a film about scientists going

³ See Bendazzi, *Cartoons*; Bordwell and Thompson, *Film History*; Arthur C. Hardy, "A Study of the Persistence of Vision," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 6, no. 4 (April 15, 1920): 221–224; Max Wertheimer, "Experimentelle Studien über das Sehen von Bewegung," *Zeitschrift für Psychologie* 6 (1912): 161–265; Joseph Anderson and Barbara Anderson, "The Myth of Persistence of Vision Revisited," *Journal of Film and Video* 45, no. 1 (1993): 3–12; Joseph Anderson and Barbara Anderson, "The Myth of Persistence of Vision," *Journal of the University Film Association* 30, no. 4 (Fall 1978): 3–8; Tom Gunning, "Cinema and the Variety of Moving Images," *American Art* 22, no. 2 (Summer 2008): 9; Helmut Gernsheim, *The History of Photography From the Camera Obscura to the Beginning of the Modern era* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1969); Mary Warner Marien, *Photography: A Cultural History* (London: Laurence King, 2002); Naomi Rosenblum, *A World History of Photography* (New York: Abbeville Press Publishers, 2007); Todd Gustavson, *Camera: A History of Photography From Daguerreotype to Digital* (New York: Sterling Innovation, 2009); Amy Lawrence, "Counterfeit Motion: The Animated Films of Eadweard Muybride," *Film Quarterly* 57, no. 2 (Winter 2003–2004): 15–2.

⁴ The Victorian era's "philosophical toys" were small gadgets meant to acquaint audiences with new discoveries via cognitive experiences. See Bendazzi, *Cartoons*; Bordwell and Thompson, *Film History*; Thomas Lamarre, "Magic Lantern, Dark Precursor of Animation," *Animation* 6, no. 2 (2011): 127–148; André Gaudreault, "From 'Primitive Cinema' to 'Kine-Attractography,'" in *The Cinema of Attractions Reloaded*, ed. Wanda Strauven (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press: 2006), 365–380; Tom Gunning, "The Cinema of Attractions: Early Films, Its Spectator and the Avant-Garde," in *Early Cinema: Space-Frame-Narrative*, ed. Thomas Elsaesser (London: British Film Institute, 1990), 56–62; Wanda Strauven, "Introduction to an Attractive Concept," in *The Cinema of Attractions Reloaded*, ed. Wanda Strauven (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press: 2006), 11–27; Tom Gunning, "Hand and Eye: Excavating a New Technology of the Image in the Victorian Era," *Victorian Studies* 54, no. 3 Special Issue: Papers and Responses from the Ninth Annual Conference of the North American Victorian Studies Association (Spring 2012): 495–516; Richard J. Leskosky, "Phenakoscope: 19th century science turned to animation," *Film History* 5 (1993): 176–189; Terry Castle, "Phantasmagoria: Spectral Technology and the Metaphorics of Modern Reverie," *Critical Inquiry* 15, no. 1 (Autumn 1988): 26–61; Tom Gunning, "Cinema and the Variety of Moving Images"; Theodore X. Barber, "Phantasmagorical Wonders," 73–86; Robert Soulard, "Le cinématographe Bouly," *Revue d'histoire des sciences et de leurs applications* 16, no. 4 Documents pour l'histoire des techniques (Oct.-Dec. 1963): 317–322; Robert A. Armour, "Comic Strips, Theatre, and Early Narrative Films 1895–1904," *Studies in Popular Culture* 10, no. 1 (1987): 14–26.

to the moon.⁵ The first animated films were made using live-action film and a stop-motion technique, an early technique used in “trick films” such as in Méliès’ work. This gave way for the first animators such as James Stuart Blackton (1875–1941) and Ladislav Starevich (1882–1965), to experiment with the medium. Later animators also animated hand-drawn images. Émile Cohl (1857–1938) and Winsor McCay (1869–1934) are some of the most important early animators who worked exclusively with drawings.⁶

During the 1910s, the field of animation became organised to make

⁵ For more on Méliès, see Madeleine Malthête-Méliès and Anne-Marie Quévrain, “Georges Méliès et les arts. Étude sur l’iconographie de ses films et sur les rapports avec les courants artistiques,” *Artibus et Historiae* 1, no. 1 (1980): 133–144; Katherine Singer Kovács, “Georges Méliès and the ‘Féerie,’” *Cinema Journal* 16, no. 1 (Autumn, 1976): 1; John Andrew Berton, Jr. “Film Theory for the Digital World: Connecting the Masters to the New Digital Cinema,” *Leonardo* 3, Supplemental Issue. Digital Image, Digital Cinema: SIGGRAPH ’90 Art Show Catalog (1990): 5–11; Lewis Jacobs, ed., *The Rise of the American Film: A Critical History* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1971); Tom Gunning, “‘Primitive’ Cinema: A Frame-Up? Or the Trick’s on Us,” *Cinema Journal* 28, no. 2 (Winter 1989): 3–12; Gunning, “The Cinema of Attractions,” 56–62; Georges Méliès, “Importance du scénario,” in *Georges Méliès*, ed. Georges Sadoul (Paris: Seghers, 1961), 188; Felicia Miller Frank, “Chateaubriand, Verne, and Méliès: L’Effet d’irréel –Liminal Landscapes and Magic Shows,” *Nineteenth-Century French Studies* 23, no. 3–4 (Spring–Summer 1995): 307–315.

⁶ For more on these animators, see Donald Crafton, *Emile Cohl: Caricature and Film* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990); Donald Crafton, *Before Mickey: The Animated Film 1898–1928* (Cambridge, London: The MIT Press, 1982); Stephen Cavalier, *The World History of Animation* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001); Christophe Wall-Romana, “Poire, Plume, Douve et bob: les fantoches filmiques de la poésie,” *The French Review* 81, no. 2 (Dec. 2007): 289–300; John Canemaker, *Winsor McCay: His Life and Art* (New York: Harry N. Abrams Publishers, 2005); Winsor McCay, *Dreams of the Rarebit Fiend* (New York: Dover Publications, 1973); Thierry Smolderen, *The Origins of Comics: From William Hogarth to Winsor McCay* (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 2000); Katherine Roder, *Wide Awake in Slumberland: Fantasy, Mass Culture and Modernism in the Art of Winsor McCay* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2014); John Carlin, Paul Karasik, and Brian Walker, eds., *Masters of American Comics* (Los Angeles: Hammer Museum and The Museum of Contemporary Art; New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2005); Sheila Graber, *Animation. A Handy Guide: From Pastel to Pixel* (London: A & C Black Publishers Ltd., 2009); Sybil DelGaudio, “If Truth be Told, Can ‘Toons Tell it? Documentary and Animation,” *Film History* 9, no. 2 Non-Fiction Film (1997): 189–199; Charles Solomon, *Enchanted Drawings: The History of Animation* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf) 1989; David Callahan, “Cel Animation: Mass Production and Marginalization in the Animated Film Industry,” *Film History* 2, no. 3 (Sept.–Oct. 1988): 223–228; Tom W. Hoffer, “From Comic Strips to Animation: Some Perspective on Winsor McCay,” *Journal of the University Film Association* 28, no. 2 (Spring 1976): 23–32; Jacob Covey, ed., *Daydreams and Nightmares: The Fantastic Visions of Winsor McCay, 1898–1934* (Seattle: Fantagraphics Books; London: Turnaround, 2005).

“cartoons” an industry of its own.⁷ Throughout the industry’s early effervescence, the techniques allowing for an exploration of the graphics led to a strong mode of production, needed to capitalise on the medium. Studios were founded on the basis of competition, commission, and constant production. Labour was rationalised, and production speed increased. New techniques such as the cel animation process were developed, enabling the animator to avoid redrawing the background and most of the character’s entire body.⁸ This technique dominated the industry for the rest of the decade and was used by most animators who wanted to simplify the time-consuming process of drawing. Animation’s change from a trade into a profitable business launched the first big studio era. Among the most successful studios of this period were the Pat Sullivan group and the Fleischer group, responsible for the creation of Felix the Cat and Betty Boop respectively.⁹

Felix was the most popular character and series of the 1920s and one of the first animated characters to become a star before Mickey Mouse. Pat Sullivan capitalised on Felix’s success by marketing products based on the character’s image. It was very successful and initiated the merchandising of animated star characters, a business strategy that later flourished under the influence of Walt Disney.¹⁰ Felix, like Betty, was a character imbued with a human personality,

⁷ For more early activities of the film industry, see Jean-Jacques Meusy, “How Cinema Became a Cultural Industry: The Big Boom in France between 1905 and 1908,” *Film History* 13, no. 3–4 War and Militarism (2002): 418–429; Gilles Willems, “Les origines du groupe Pathé-Natan et le modèle américain,” *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d’histoire* 46. Numéro spécial: Cinéma, le temps de l’Histoire (Apr.–Jun. 1995): 98–106; Jacques Choukroun, “Pour une histoire économique du cinéma français,” *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d’histoire* 46. Numéro spécial: Cinéma, le temps de l’Histoire (Apr.–Jun. 1995): 176–182; Michel Ghertman and Allègre L. Hadida, “Institutional Assets and Competitive Advantages of French over U.S. Cinema, 1895–1914,” *International Studies of Management & Organization* 35, no. 3 Corporate Political Strategy (II) (Fall 2005): 50–81.

⁸ Bendazzi, 20; John Randolph Bray and Earl Hurd, “Bray-Hurd: The Key Animation Patents,” *Film History* 2, no. 3 (Sept.–Oct. 1988): 229–266.

⁹ Bendazzi, 53. Pat Sullivan (1887–1933) produced Felix the Cat, but the character is now attributed to Otto Messmer. Raoul Barré (1874–1932) was responsible for the animation of the character from 1926–1927.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 57.

which was expressed through his design and movements. Both characters were part of a series that generated constant interest from the public. Felix's success paved the way for the beginning of the 'animated Star system' from which other famous animated actors would evolve: such as Mickey Mouse and Betty Boop—a flirtatious flapper, half woman half child, deeply rooted in the Jazz Age.¹¹

I believe that in many ways, through the animators's work on the personality of Betty Boop along with the commercialisation of Felix, the Fleischer brothers and Sullivan introduced the star system to animation. Hollywood's star system played an important role in carrying the American dream and stars represented its living model, as expressed by Nicholas Sammond:

With the advent of the star system and the development of national distribution networks, the medium became accepted as an important element in an emerging national mass culture [...] [, within which] [...] ran a pervasive discourse that centered on what it meant to be American, and why Americanness was important to the well-being and unity of the nation.¹²

Star system was an important step in animation as it later propelled characters such as Felix the Cat, Mickey Mouse, and Bugs Bunny to stardom. At the time in the United States, children and adults were perceived as in need of moral uplifting and of a model of Americanness, so that they could contribute to a unified American society.¹³ Like Hollywood actors, animated stars later embodied aspects of the American Dream as well.¹⁴

¹¹ In the mid-1930s Betty's character was modified into wearing more chaste clothing and orienting herself towards domestic tasks and loving animals. For more on this topic, see Heather Hendershot, "Secretary, Homemaker, and 'White' Woman: Industrial Censorship and Betty Boop's Shifting Design," *Journal of Design History* 8, no. 2 (1995): 117–130; Amelia S. Holberg, "Betty Boop: Yiddish Film Star," *American Jewish History* 87, no. 4 Performance and Jewish Cultural History (December 1999): 291.

¹² Sammond, *Babes in Tomorrowland*, 45.

¹³ Sammond, 41–42.

¹⁴ See, Karen Sternheimer, *Celebrity Culture and the American Dream* (London, New York: Routledge, 2015).

The American Dream is a complex national ethos, a social ideal associated with the United States' social, economic, political, and cultural organisation. It proposes a set of values and goals which are supposed to guide the individual into succeeding in achieving the Dream and constitutes a part of the American individual and national identity. It conceives that all men are created equal with certain unalienable rights, among which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, as proposed in the Declaration of Independence. Matthew S. Rindge argues that the American Dream is “the primary vehicle of personal and communal salvation” and “a foundational spirit based on optimism and the confidence in a bright future.”¹⁵ Rindge, however, sees in it the dominant religion in America with its set of values, sacred texts, rituals, symbols, holidays, and myths of origin.¹⁶ The American Dream is thoroughly woven into the fabric of everyday life and, as Lawrence R. Samuel argues, “[i]t plays an active role in who we are, what we do, and why we do it. No other idea or mythology even religion [...] has as much influence on our individual and collective lives [...]”.¹⁷

The notion of the American Dream can be traced back to the nation's beginning.¹⁸ However, the term “American Dream” took shape during the Great Depression. At a time, when the country struggled to maintain a sense of identity

¹⁵ Matthew S. Rindge, *Profane Parables: Film and the American Dream* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2016), 13–14.

¹⁶ Rindge, *Profane Parables*, 5–6.

¹⁷ Samuel, 2.

¹⁸ In the seventeenth century, Americans dreamed of a better life through faith, hard work, and perseverance. The eighteenth century was marked by developments in science and philosophy which affected the nation's ethos. By then, success was measured by individual moral code, accumulation of material wealth, and by one's standing in the community. In the nineteenth century, morality and position in the community were still important but were measured by one's profession and income. The emphasis on material wealth became even more important in the twentieth century. Rindge, *Profane Parables*, 3–4; Donna Packer-Kinlaw, “The Rise and Fall of the American Dream: From *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* to *Death of a Salesman*,” in *Critical Insights: The American Dream*, ed. Keith Newlin (Ipswich: Salem Press, 2013), 3–17; Lawrence R. Samuel, *The American Dream: A Cultural History* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2012), 9.

throughout the economic, social, and political agitation.¹⁹ In 1931, James Truslow Adams described what characterised the American Dream:

It is not a dream of motor cars and high wages merely, but a dream of social order in which each man and each woman shall be able to attain to the fullest stature of which they are innately capable, and be recognized by others for what they are, regardless of the fortuitous circumstances of birth or position.²⁰

The American Dream thus, is the championing of success usually but not exclusively defined materially.²¹ It is based on principles of social and individual prosperity and in many ways, it refers to the dream of western societies at large.²² While not central to the American national ethos, financial success remains an important part of ascending the social hierarchy.²³ Truslow Adams' words are inspiring, but his description remains incomplete as the American Dream is multifaceted, notions of success vary widely, and interpretations of the Dream have shifted over time.

Indeed, the American Dream has undergone many transformations reflecting American society's mutation. It served—and still serves—as the backbone to the great social movements of the twentieth century as in the late 1960s and 1970s countercultural years which were grounded in the idea of equal

¹⁹ Samuel, *The American Dream: A Cultural History*, 13.

²⁰ James Truslow Adams, *The Epic of America* (Garden City: Little Brown, 1933), 317.

²¹ Rindge, 13.

²² Ricardo Miguez, "The American Dreams: A Brief Historical Outline," in *American Dreams: Dialogues in U.S. Studies*, ed., Ricardo Miguez (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholar Publishing, 2007), 2.

²³ This makes the capitalist system a central aspect of the ideological identity of the American nation. For more on the American Dream and its ties to capitalism, America's corporate culture and the formation of the American social fabric, see Lee Artz and Bren Ortega Murphy, *Cultural Hegemony in the United States* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2000); Alan Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2007).

opportunities.²⁴ Religious reforms, political reorganisation, access to education, and expression of sexuality are a few of the many social transformations that affected the American national ethos. Therefore, it does not offer an immutable model and exists in many forms.²⁵ The American Dream according to Martin Luther King Jr. (1929–1968) is, for example, very different from the one projected by the leaders of the Ku Klux Klan, especially with regards to African American Civil Rights. However, both of these aspiring ideals do exist within the same larger American framework, along with many more versions of the American Dream. Although sometimes contradictory, they all define what it is to be American.

The American Dream has been a staple within popular culture.²⁶ In general, stories expressing the American Dream are filled with references to hard work, persistence, hope, dreams, difficulty to attain the Dream, with a focus on the importance of the family coming only second to strong morality based on or inspired by religion ideals.²⁷ With its appropriation by artists, politicians, scholars, religious leaders, athletes, and businessmen the American Dream is omnipresent in the American rhetoric and its day to day life.²⁸ The idealism of the American

²⁴ Samuel, 2–3, 9.

²⁵ For more on the American Dream's transformations, see Jim Cullen, *The American Dream: A Short History of an Idea that Shaped a Nation* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); Calvin Jillson, *The American Dream: In History, Politics, and Fiction* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2016); Walter R. Fisher, "Reaffirmation and Subversion of the American Dream," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 59, no. 2 (April 1973): 160–168; Michael A. Peters, *Obama and the End of the American Dream: Essays in Political and Economic Philosophy* (Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2012); Christopher Garbowski, *Pursuits of Happiness: The American Dream, Civil Society, Religion and Popular Culture* (Lublin: Maria Curie-Skłodowska University Press, 2008); Samuel, *The American Dream*; Melanie E. L. Bush and Roderick D. Bush, *Tensions in the American Dream: Rhetoric, Reverie, or Reality* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2015); Keith Newlin, *Critical Insights: The American Dream* (Ipswich: Salem Press; Amenica; Grey House Publishing, 2013); Thomas J. Courchene, *Rekindling the American Dream: A Northern Perspective* (Montreal: Institute for Research in Public Policy, 2011); Sternheimer, *Celebrity Culture and the American Dream*.

²⁶ See for example Garbowski, *Pursuits of Happiness*; Samuel, *The American Dream*; Sternheimer, *Celebrity Culture and the American Dream*; Rindge, *Profane Parables*.

²⁷ Miguez, "The American Dreams."

²⁸ Cullen, *The American Dream*, 5.

national ethos and its true achievement is, like most national ethos, contradictory as social inequalities can never fully be erased from society.²⁹ But the American Dream nevertheless appeals to most as it proposes universal values and the promise of a better life. It is a myth made national: an ideal produced by the collective imagination.³⁰ It remains an important part of the American national identity and is inseparable from American cultural values.

According to its own rhetoric, it is possible for any individual to achieve the Dream. However, as Eric S. Jenkins points out, the American Dream remains a localised concept because the hope for a better future can only be embodied on the territory of the United States:

In all its historical uses, the American Dream is a metaphor portraying fantasy as a real possibility. Metaphor is a perspectival figure whereby one term (dream) is seen through the frame of another (America); the American Dream metaphor envisions dreams through the frames of America. Due to the contrasting relationship of *America* and *Dream*, the metaphor creates a perspective that sees fantasy as a real possibility. [...] The Dream represents a fantasy or an idealised vision [...]. What makes the Dream uniquely *American* is the connection to a long-held myth—the idea that America is the land of possibility. [...] In this sense, the American Dream sets up a unique relationship between dreams and reality with specific obligations. [...] Through such figures as John Wanamaker, Henry Ford, Walt Disney and William Levitt, people ‘saw’ the reality of fantasy.³¹

Indeed, film and animation share an intimate relationship with the American Dream’s ideology, and filmmakers, such as Walt Disney, took on the role of

²⁹ See for example Bush and Bush, *Tensions in the American Dream*; Jennifer L. Hochschild, *Facing Up to the American Dream: Race, Class, and the Soul of the Nation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995); Sandra Hanson, *The Latino/a American Dream* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2016); Cal Jillson, *Pursuing the American Dream: Opportunity and Exclusion Over Four Centuries* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004); Miguez, “The American Dreams.”

³⁰ Samuel, 4; Cullen, 10.

³¹ Jenkins, *Special Affects*, 174–175.

national cultural myth-makers.³²

Admittedly, the name Walter Elias Disney (1901–1966) is so important to film animation, it often overshadows all others.³³ Walt Disney’s contribution to animation came not only from his indisputable talent for animating drawings. He was also a technical innovator, a successful producer, and a visionary businessman, all of which built his image and reputation, and made him an important icon not only of American culture but also of animation worldwide. Under his leadership, animation developed a classical aesthetic and new ideological values influenced by its mode of production as well as by the American Dream. More than just an icon, Walt Disney, as Steven Watt argues, embodies the American Dream:

Walt Disney operated not only as an entertainer but as a historical mediator. His creations helped Americans come to terms with the unsettling transformations of the twentieth century. This role was unintentional but decisive. Disney entertainment projects were consistently nourished by connections to mainstream American culture—its aesthetics, political ideology, social structures, economic framework, moral principles—as it took shape from the late 1920s through the late 1960s.³⁴

In the next pages, I will provide an overview of Disney’s rise from an ordinary American boy of a modest background into one of America’s most powerful businessmen. This, however, is not the only element of his personal history that embodies the American Dream. Disney also created a unique aesthetic mark, as well as, used strong storytelling to represent the national ethos: an ordered world where success and happiness was possible for anyone.

Born in Chicago, Illinois, Walt Disney came from a modest family and

³² See Robert Sklar, *Movie-Made America: A Cultural History of American Movies* (New York: Random House, 1975), 195–214.

³³ In this thesis, I use the term “Disney” to refer to the studio/company.

³⁴ Steven Watts, *The Magic Kingdom: Walt Disney and the American Way of Life* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2007), xvi.

spent most of his childhood on a farm in Marceline, Missouri. At the age of four, Walt Disney and his family moved to Kansas City. The two youngest boys of the family, Walt and Roy Disney, were put to work to deliver the newspaper every day before going to school.³⁵ Their father, Elias, an unsuccessful businessman with many financial and health issues, is described by most of Walt Disney's biographers as a hard and humourless man, who regularly beat his sons.³⁶

In 1919, after years of drawing and art classes, Walt Disney started working as a cartoonist and later in a commercial art studio, where he met Ubbe (Ub) Iwerks (1901–1971), another cartoonist who later became his first business partner.³⁷ Walt Disney decided to set up an animation studio in Hollywood, California. His brother Roy secured some financial backing and found a distributor, Margaret Winkler, who was interested in his work.³⁸ With Iwerks joining him, Walt Disney started working on the *Oswald the Lucky Rabbit* series and the image of the character was exploited and merchandised.³⁹ After refusing to sign a new disadvantageous contract, Walt Disney lost the rights to his

³⁵ The two oldest Disney brothers, Herbert and Ray, ran away in 1906. Walt Disney also had a younger sister, Ruth.

³⁶ Alan Bryman, *Disney and His Worlds* (London, New York: Routledge, 1995), 4.

³⁷ Ubbe Ert Iwerks is responsible for the creation of the character *Flip the Frog* (1928) but also of a sort of multiplane camera. The multiplane camera enabled greater depth and dimension of the image by photographing various cel at the time. Their first company, Iwerks-Disney Commercial Artists (1920), was short-lived and went bankrupt the following year. Walt Disney started working for the Kansas City Film Ad Company, later joined by Iwerks himself, where he did cutout animation. This first flirtation with the medium launched a lifelong interest and after the creation of a second company, Newman Laugh-O-Gram (1922), which also went bankrupt, Walt Disney decided to set up an animation studio in Hollywood, California. Davis, 34; Bendazzi, 87–88; “Walt Disney-The Man. The Teenage Years,” *Disney Park History*, accessed December 2014, <http://www.disneyparkhistory.com/teenage-years.html>.

³⁸ Margaret J. Winkler was the first woman to produce and distribute animated films. She was also the sole agent for Koko the Clown and Felix the Cat. Her company prospered and she married Charles B. Mintz. Gradually, she relinquished her business to her husband and his brother. Crafton, 206–208.

³⁹ The Disney brothers did not receive further income for the use of the character Oswald. Bryman, 5.

character to its distributor and legal owner, Charles Mintz.⁴⁰ In the interim, Walt Disney had created a new character: Mickey Mouse.⁴¹

Walt Disney was working on the third Mickey animation, *Steamboat Willie* (1928), when motion picture sound became possible.⁴² Recognising the importance of sound, he added it using the Cinephone, a sound system developed by Pat Powers to his latest film and it opened in New York in 1928.⁴³ *Steamboat Willy*, like the future cartoons that Walt Disney made, not only provided sound to the audience, but also provided a sound that was fully synchronised to the action. The characters danced in time with the music and some of the gags presented a sound-oriented humour. Although *Steamboat Willie* was not the first non-silent film, it was the first successful animated film with sound. It promoted Mickey to the level of international star, and was the origin of the new popularity of sound in

⁴⁰ The new contract included a reduced fee to Walt Disney for Oswald, even though the character had been very successful. Furthermore, Mintz had signed contracts with most of the Disney's studio animators. Since Walt Disney did not own the rights to Oswald, the cartoon could continue without him if he decided not to sign the contract. This situation is emblematic of animation in general and clearly shows the difficulties of studying the field. The rights of a character belong to the producer and not to the artist who created it. Therefore, a character like Oswald, which was created by Walt Disney, continued to be produced by other animators who could modify the character's features. This illustrates how difficult it is to talk about "ownership" in animation. Walt Disney refused Mintz's offer and lost most of his animation team. This unfortunate situation later influenced Walt Disney in how he dealt with rights for his characters. To this day, the Disney company is still very protective of copyrights. Bryman, 5. The Disney company reacquired the rights for Oswald the Rabbit in 2006. "Walt Disney's 1927 Animated Star—Oswald the Lucky Rabbit—Returns to Disney," *Press Release* by the Walt Disney Company, February 9, 2006, accessed December 2014, <http://thewaltdisneycompany.com/disney-news/press-releases/2006/02/walt-disneys-1927-animated-star-%E2%80%93-oswald-lucky-rabbit-%E2%80%93-returns>.

⁴¹ Just like Walt Disney's history, Mickey's name and creation is surrounded with myths. Most sources attribute the name to Walt Disney's wife, who found the character's original name, Mortimer, too serious. Bryman, 5; Bendazzi, 62. However, Disney's archivist David Smith said she objected to that version of the story and that Mickey developed without her input. Neal Gabler, *Walt Disney: The Triumph of the American Imagination* (New York: Vintage Books, 2007), 114. It is also not clear how much work Walt Disney did on Mickey and how much should be attributed to Ub Iwerks, but Iwerks certainly influenced the visual design of the famous mouse while Walt Disney was building Mickey's personality. Bryman, 5; Bendazzi, 62.

⁴² Walt Disney had already made two Mickey cartoons without a distributor: *Plane Crazy* (1927) and *The Gallopin' Gaucho* (released in 1929). *The Jazz Singer* (1927) was the first film that used sound. Paul Hollister, "Genius at Work: Walt Disney," In *Disney Discourse: Producing the Magic Kingdom*, ed. Eric Smoodin (New York: Routledge, 1994): 25; Davis, 77; Bordwell and Thompson, *Film History*, 150.

⁴³ Davis, 78.

animation. After this success, Walt Disney had to hire more animators to build up the *Mickey Mouse* series, thus launching the Disney studio of today. Mickey's renown grew rapidly and eventually far surpassed that of Felix the Cat.

In 1929, Walt Disney made *Skeleton Dance*, the first film of the *Silly Symphony* series, a series of musical shorts in which the images served only to illustrate sound.⁴⁴ This series was composed of 75 short films, all using prerecorded music synchronised with the image.⁴⁵ This specific use of prerecorded sound became the standard in animation. Walt Disney, who was constantly seeking higher quality in his films, soon became fascinated with coloured images and convinced his brother Roy to invest in coloured animation. *Flowers and Trees* (1932) by Disney was the first animated film to use 3-strip Technicolor, a colour film printing process using three filters of colour (blue, green, and magenta).⁴⁶ It also became the first cartoon to win an Academy Award that same year.⁴⁷ Disney negotiated a deal with Technicolor, giving the Studio the exclusive right to use the three-strip process for a period of three years.⁴⁸ The rising price of producing animation, in addition to the cost of sound and colour, prompted the Disney brothers in 1930 to manufacture and sell items with Mickey on them, enabling them to generate additional income to financially support the

⁴⁴ *The Skeleton Dance* is a non-Mickey film. Bendazzi, 63.

⁴⁵ Walt Disney's work was later characterised by main action closely synchronised with music, sometimes punctuated by a specific musical motif or tempo. This type of exaggeration was named "mickey mousing." It is also used pejoratively to point the manipulative or intrusive use of a film soundtrack. J. P. Telotte, *The Mouse Machine: Disney and Technology* (Urbana, Chicago: University of Illinois Press: 2008), 29; Stephen Handzo, "A Narrative Glossary of Film Sound Technology," in *Film Sound: Theory and Practice*, ed. Elisabeth Weis and John Belton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985): 409.

⁴⁶ These were distributed by RKO. For more information on the Technicolor process, see "The Three Strip Technicolor Process," Technicolor: Celebrating 100 Years' Blog Entertainment Life, accessed September 2015, <http://100years.technicolor.com/entertainment-life/the-three-strip-process/>.

⁴⁷ From 1932 to 1939, Walt Disney won all Academy Awards for Best Animated Short Film.

⁴⁸ The sources do not agree on the length of the contract, some talk about a deal of a period of three years (Bendazzi, 63) or two years (Bryman, 7).

studio.⁴⁹ Between 1931 and 1932, Walt Disney provided more training to his staff in order to increase the quality of his films.⁵⁰ In 1933, Disney won his second Academy Award with *The Three Little Pigs* (1932), a new instalment in the *Silly Symphonies*. Alan Bryman explains why the film was successful,

[...] *The Three Little Pigs* [...] was a great success for a number of reasons: its catchy tunes; its apparently optimistic message about the work ethic in the midst of the Great Depression; and most importantly, its investment of the three pigs with clear, identifiable personalities that brought animation to new heights.⁵¹

The film's theme echoes the ideology of the American Dream, which focuses on an optimistic message and values hard work. Its novelty was also in the expression of the characters' personalities not only through dialogue but also through movement. This film left an impression on animators worldwide.

The Three Little Pigs also featured the song "Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?" by Frank Churchill, which became extremely popular. Some biographers argue that Walt Disney was inspired by the Roosevelt optimism of the time, while others believe that the cartoon featured a moralistic message that a solid traditional household could survive adversity.⁵² In both case, the message featured a strong national message during hard times.

In addition to his instincts for plots and stories, Walt Disney started paying attention to the action and the mimicry of his personages.⁵³ In order to reach such details that would enable the animators to create credible characters, a new

⁴⁹ Bryman, 6.

⁵⁰ From 1931, art and drawing classes were offered for the animators working at Disney. Bryman, 7.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Franklin D. Roosevelt was the president of the United States from 1933 to 1945. He served during the economic depression. Bendazzi, 63.

⁵³ John Canemaker, "Disney Animation: History and Technique," *Film News* 36, no. 1 (Jan.–Feb. 1979): 17; Bendazzi, 65.

realistic aesthetic in film animation was launched, which became associated with the name “Disney.” In fact, reality became increasingly important as art training, rotoscoping, the multiplane camera, and stronger requirements for feature length films entered the Disney norms for producing animated films.⁵⁴ Realism became more and more dominant and synonymous in the world of animation with a very specific type of aesthetics, humour, and movement.

Walt Disney’s films were largely influenced by Hollywood: based on a star-system, oriented towards mass production, and founded in broad stereotypes which supported the dominant ideology.⁵⁵ At the time and still today, Walt Disney’s conception of the world and American values were articulated through the line and movement of the animated characters, which Marcel Jean calls Disney’s style in “O”:

This style is first, a specific idea of movement. A round and elegant movement, a turning and uninterrupted movement, a movement that hypnotizes like a spiral, a movement denuded of any roughness that intoxicates like a Waltz. [...] The Disneyan movement is not naturalistic. It is rather a stylization born from a very fine and precise observation of reality. [...] Everything converges towards a form of affected harmony that aims at making the viewer relaxed and available.⁵⁶

According to Jean’s theory, because Walt Disney’s graphic style was ordering the movement and action of the film, viewers were put in a euphoric state of mind and

⁵⁴ Bendazzi, 65. Rotoscoping was invented by Max Fleischer in 1915. It was a concept invented to simplify animating movement by drawing over live action film. See for example an interview with the actress who played the main character of *Alice in Wonderland* (1951). “Alice in Wonderland. Behind the Scenes—Live Action Reference” (video), posted November 20, 2012, accessed December 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LWwO-h7ZSlw#t=24>.) For more on rotoscoping, see Ray Pointer, *The Art and Inventions of Max Fleischer: American Animation Pioneer*, (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, 2017).

⁵⁵ Bendazzi, 70.

⁵⁶ “Ce style, c’est d’abord une certaine idée du mouvement. Un mouvement arrondi et élégant, mouvement tournoyant et ininterrompu, mouvement spiralé qui hypnotise, mouvement dénudé de toute brusquerie et qui enivre à la façon d’une valse. [...] Le mouvement disneyen n’est pas naturaliste. Il est plutôt une stylisation découlant d’une observation fine et précise du réel. [...] Tout converge vers une forme d’harmonie affectée qui vise à rendre le spectateur détendu et disponible,” Jean, *Le langage des lignes et autres essais sur le cinéma d’animation*, 23–24.

became open to the animated film. Abrupt movements were eased, rectilinear lines softened to impose an idea of harmony, fluidity, and suppleness. This movement was also personalised and became representative of the character's psychology. For example, Goofy's movements tend to be large and slow, showing both his slow mind and his good, even temperament. On the other hand, Mickey's walk is straight and assured, just like his good-mannered boy scout personality, thus reinforcing traditional American values.⁵⁷ The production of meaning and personality through design and line enabled the viewer to identify with the characters and was a technique that was kept for subsequent Disney films.

With time, Walt Disney's characters acquired rounder figures that made them look like newborns or teddy bears: larger head and eyes, shorter legs and arms as well as shapely buttocks.⁵⁸ Describing the Disney aesthetic, Bendazzi points out that: "[...] the neat lines, mixed with soft nuances, created a look as polished as the most perfectly kept home."⁵⁹ This constant return to comfort and security is a theme that was often used in Disney's films. According to researchers, Disney exploited themes that targeted children's primitive anxieties and pleasures such as their sense of shame, fear of separation, struggle to control impulses, love of adventure, and the loss of a parent, or a bad parent, like in the case of *Snow White and The Seven Dwarfs* (1937), *Pinocchio* (1940), *Dumbo* (1941), and *Bambi* (1942).⁶⁰ In these earlier films, the protagonist's relationship to a dead, gone, or unattainable mother is a particularly important theme. The concept of childhood and family as a basis for an ordered world are at the heart of

⁵⁷ Disney's iconic star was not always like that. In fact, the earlier Mickey displayed rat-like qualities and was more mischievous, brash, and cavalier. As the character's popularity increased, Mickey was refined into a more conservative and "cultured" mouse. His appearance also was softened into more juvenile and rounder features to make him more appealing and friendly. Canemaker, "Disney Animation," 16–17; Stephen Jay Gould, "Mickey Mouse Meets Konrad Lorenz," *Natural History* 88, *Natural History* 88, no. 5 (May 1979): 30–36.

⁵⁸ Bendazzi, 70.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Russell Merritt, "Lost on Pleasure Islands: Storytelling in Disney's Silly Symphonies," *Film Quarterly* 59, no. 1 (Fall 2005): 5.

Walt Disney's feature films and of the American Dream.⁶¹ By the middle of the twentieth century and up to the present, Disney's films were seen as an essential part of childhood and family entertainment.⁶²

Walt Disney's films also offer a clear distinction between good and bad and a final moral in harmony with the dominant ideology of the film, which is entirely supported by the line he draws. Thus, viewers could easily identify the good and bad characters due to both their actions and their design. This characterisation through the colour, the line, and the movement, in addition to realism, were some of the most successful animation elements Walt Disney brought to the field. His film philosophy was that, faced with a plausible environment, characters, and acting, most viewers feel comfortable in accepting the most impossible dream as ordinary behaviour.⁶³ Therefore, the capacity of the viewer to accept the animated characters as realistic and identify with them was

⁶¹ Walt Disney's films display a hero, which breaks with the family cell. After several adventures, the hero is generally reunited with the family or ready to form one of its own.

⁶² Davis, 128. Eighty percent of Disney's audience were women. Walt Disney was convinced women would contribute to animation in a way men never could. He viewed his audiences as sharing the same universal qualities. However, he believed only the honest adult (women) could be in touch with this aspect of human nature, as opposed to the sophisticated adult (men) who could not be surprised anymore. Davis suggests that Disney perceived women as being naturally attuned emotionally to the world of childhood. This general stereotypical view of women as being closer to children is not atypical of the era in which Walt Disney lived. While many women were working in the animation industry, generally they were doing mostly "non-creative" jobs such as inking and painting, and had no possibility for career advancement. For example, see in the appendix the letter from the Disney Studio to Miss Frances Brewer dated from 1939. Robin Allan, *Walt Disney and Europe: European Influences on the Animated Feature Films of Walt Disney* (London: John Libbey, 1999), 42–43; Davis, 130–131; Charles Solomon, *The Disney That Never Was: The Stories and Art From Five Decades of Unproduced Animation* (New York: Hyperion, 1968), 10. For more on this topic, see Mindy Johnson, *Ink and Paint: The Women of Walt Disney's Animation* (New York, Los Angeles: Disney Editions, 2017).

⁶³ Bendazzi, 66. This, however, was only possible with a strong observation of nature and of the mechanics of movements. According to Walt Disney, making a believable caricature of realism could only come with the understanding of how the body works. This stress on realism finds its roots in a larger trend of Hollywood cinema. Frank Thomas and Ollie Johnston, *The Illusion of Life: Disney Animation* (New York: Hyperion), 62; Davis, 84.

achieved by their movement and the design as well as their purpose for action.⁶⁴

By the mid-1930s, the limited financial returns that short films like the *Mickey Mouse* series provided, the growing cost of animation due to the many improvements Walt Disney was seeking, and competition from the Fleischer brothers caused him to consider working on a feature-length animated film.⁶⁵ He assigned the main animators to specific tasks depending on their own strengths, thus initiating the Taylorism mode of production in his animation studio.⁶⁶ This management technique, named after mechanical engineer Frederik Taylor (1856–1915) is based on the rationalisation of labour and seeks to improve efficiency, in order to save time for an industry. Specialised teams: ink, colour filling, scene design, filming, etc. were created. Each animator worked in his specialised field only. Although this technique existed in the past, it became the norm at the Disney studio and soon the standardised way to make animation across the country. In addition, the use of a common storyboard enabled each department to work towards the same ideas.⁶⁷ This structure worked like an extension of Walt Disney's personality enabling him to train many workers who would carry out his personal vision, beliefs, and taste.⁶⁸ Under this new working environment, Walt Disney initiated the conception of what was at the time his most complex work of

⁶⁴ To ensure all of his staff was consistent with his vision, Walt Disney provided them with art classes and artistic training, a major departure from previous traditions in animation. Life-drawing classes with professional art instructors such as Donald W. Graham from the Chouinard Art Institute, started in 1932 at the Disney studio. During these classes, animators watched motion studies, drew anatomy from live models, attended guest lectures on everything from colour, music, and comedy, to acting, staging, character analysis, and story analysis, watched films from all around the world, and any other activity that could improve their work. Richard Neupert, "Colour, Lines and Nudes: Teaching Disney's Animators," *Film History* 11, no. 1 Film Technology (1999): 77; Davis, 86; Canemaker, "Disney Animation," 16; Solomon, *The Disney That Never Was*, 7.

⁶⁵ Bryman, 7.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Walt Disney is seen as the one who initiated the use of the storyboard in studios. It consists of a bar sheet of the entire film, including text, sound, and image. The use of a storyboard allows for greater control over the production of a film, and more cohesion of the overall final aspect of it. Bendazzi, 66; Davis, 78; Mark Langer, "Institutional Power and the Fleischer Studios: The 'Standard Production Reference'," *Cinema Journal* 30, no. 2 (Winter 1991): 7.

⁶⁸ Bendazzi, 66.

animation based on the musical comedy genre.⁶⁹ Using a classical fairytale for its strong narrative component, Walt Disney and his team initiated the creation of *Snow White and The Seven Dwarfs* [sic] (1937).⁷⁰

At this point in the history of his studio, Walt Disney was responsible for the organisation and motivation of his workers as well as critiquing films before they went public. As Bryman claims, the project represents a mix of extreme perfectionism and high risk-taking: “The film received much adverse advance publicity and was dubbed “Disney’s folly”, because of its escalating costs and because many commentators doubted the capacity of audiences to sit through a long animated cartoon.”⁷¹ This was indeed a “folly” since this film brought the studio close to bankruptcy.⁷² Disney nevertheless took the risk. While working on its first feature film, the Disney studio continued producing short cartoons such as the *Silly Symphonies*, which were used as opportunities for experimentation. These short cartoons also provided financial support to supplement the many loans Roy had taken out for his brother’s project. Fortunately, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* was critically acclaimed and grossed \$8 million on its release and the enthusiasm of the audience for Disney reach new heights.⁷³ The film presents a strong narrative, songs that functioned as elements of the narrative or of the psychology of the characters, harmonious colours, and different moods to keep

⁶⁹ Disney’s original intent to take six or seven gags and put them together was soon dashed when he realised this project would need a stronger narrative to hold the audience’s attention. Interview with Franklin Rosborough Thomas, *Frank and Ollie*, DVD. Directed by Theodore Thomas (Walt Disney Home Video, 1995): 00:17:26.

⁷⁰ Interview with Franklin Rosborough Thomas, *Frank and Ollie*, 00:17:26.

⁷¹ Bryman, 7.

⁷² It often took one year for an independent studio to earn back the money spent for a single feature film. *Snow White* received the Grand Biennale Art Trophy from the Venice Film Festival. Snow White is the first fictional female character with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. Bendazzi, 67; Solomon, *The Disney That Never Was*, 6–7; “Snow White,” Hollywood Walk of Fame, accessed March 2017, <http://www.walkoffame.com/snow-white>.

⁷³ Bryman, 7.

the spectator interested.⁷⁴

After that success, feature films became the central focus of the studio. However, Disney studios did not achieve as great of a success as *Snow White* with their later productions *Pinocchio*, *Fantasia* (1940), and *Bambi*.⁷⁵ The lack of success with a feature length animation brought the company to serious financial difficulties, which were only fixed when *Cinderella* (1950) opened in theatres. This film marked a return to the style of storytelling pioneered in *Snow White*.⁷⁶ From this period, Walt Disney left most of the feature film responsibilities to a team of collaborators he liked to call the “Nine Old Men,” while he supervised the creation of his amusement park project, Disneyland.⁷⁷

Walt Disney’s importance to American history lies in the icon he became.

⁷⁴ Bendazzi, 67.

⁷⁵ A few reasons explain this diminished success: the high cost of production, poor performance at the box office, the outbreak of the Second World War, and a weakening of the European market, as well as years of expansion and the unionisation of the studios, which led to a nine-week strike in 1941. The 300 workers went on strike over wages, job security, working conditions, and union representations. During the war period, workers felt the economic squeeze at the studio that sometimes could not afford to pay them for their work. John Canemaker, “David Hilberman,” *Cartoonist Profiles* 48. (December 1980): 17–18. In addition, salary discrepancies and arbitrary compensations based on hierarchy seemed to be central to the workers’ dissatisfaction. For more on this dispute, see Adam Abraham, *When Magoo Flew: The Rise and Fall of Animation Studio UPA* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2012), 1–23.

⁷⁶ Solomon, *The Disney That Never Was*, 22.

⁷⁷ The ‘Nine Old Men’ were Milton Kahl, Marc Davis, Eric Larson, Wolfgang Reitherman (who would later manage the Disney company after Walt’s death in 1966), Les Clark, Ward Kimball, John Lounsbery, Frank Thomas, and Ollie Johnston. This group was named by Walt Disney himself, a name that echoes Theodore Roosevelt’s description of the U.S. Supreme Court. John Canemaker, “Disney Design 1928–1979.” *Millimeter* 7, no. 2 (Feb. 1979): 105; Bendazzi, 69; Solomon, 5. Disney’s amusement parks were built on their creator’s vision of a utopian microcosm, a concept he first initiated with his own studio in Burbank Street. Abraham, 3–4. For more on Disney’s amusement parks, see Charles Carson, “‘Whole New Worlds’: Music and the Disney Theme Park Experience,” *Ethnomusicology Forum* 13, no. 2 (Nov. 2004): 228–235; Anne Petersen, “‘You Believe in Pirates’”; Stephen F. Mills, “Disney and the Promotions of Synthetic Worlds,” *American Studies International* 28, no. 2 Special Issue on the Impact of US Culture Abroad (Oct. 1990): 66–79; Earl P. Spencer, “Euro Disney: What Happened? What Next?” *Journal of International Marketing* 3, no. 3 (1995): 103–144; John Schultz, “The Fabulous Presumption of Disney World: Magic Kingdom in the Wilderness,” *The Georgis Review* 42, no. 2 The Kingdom of Kitsch in American Culture (Summer 1988): 275–312; Laurence Graillot, “Une Approche du phénomène d’hyperréalité à partir d’études des parcs Disney,” *Décision Marketing* 34 (Apr–Jun. 2004): 41–52; J. P. Telotte, *The Mouse Machine*; Eunice Seng, “Utopia or Euphoria? Six Sites of Resistance in Disneyland and Singapore,” *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review* 16, no. 2 (Spring 2005): 39–57.

On the one hand, his strong orientation towards commercialisation—although limiting for the artists—brought to life one of the biggest empires in the world that even today includes animation, live-action film, television, internet broadcasting, amusement parks, shops, etc. Although he always presented himself as an average American, Walt Disney, the middle-class small town boy, turned into one of the world's most important icons and businessmen. He is the archetype of the triumph of the American Dream the embodiment of success through hard work. On the other hand, Disney's films utilised a high quality animation that became timeless due to its classical style he launched. In addition, Disney popularised the use of fairytales in animation. This type of narrative was already used before, but Disney's approach to fairytales was classical rather than humoristic or satirical as were the earlier cartoons, such as, the Fleischers' Betty Boop short *Poor Cinderella* (1934). The choice of classical tales also supports the ideology carried by the Disney style. Charles Solomon explains the narrative strategy of the studio:

Fairytales offered a source of familiar stories that diverse audiences across America would easily recognize. Because the tales already existed in numerous well-known versions, the animators were free to adapt and embellish them; as long as they retained the basic plot, the artists could change details and add comic business at will. Disney later discovered that critics and viewers would object to any tampering with *Alice in Wonderland*, *Peter Pan*, and other stories taken from a single literary source. But as long as a little girl met a wolf and said he had big eyes, audiences would accept the film as *Little Red Ridding Hood* regardless of any modifications.⁷⁸

Disney's films were, and still are, strongly criticised for bringing fractured fairytales, stripped of their original content and purpose to popular culture.⁷⁹ Although these criticisms may be just, it is important to remember that Walt

⁷⁸ Solomon, 61.

⁷⁹ See for example Justyna Desczc, "Beyond the Disney Spell, or Escape into Pantoland," *Folklore* 113, no. 1 (April 2002): 83–91; Jill P. May, "Walt Disney's Interpretation of Children's Literature," *Language Arts* 58, no. 4 Children's Literature (April 1981): 463–472; Zipes, *Happily Ever After*; Zipes, *The Enchanted Screen*.

Disney developed his business in a very specific time and had to abide by the Hays Code, which influenced his films as much as his personal ideology. Walt Disney's films carried the values of his time and integrated certain aspect of the American national ethos. In his earlier films, *Snow White*, *Dumbo*, *Pinocchio*, and *Cinderella*, the American Dream is expressed through the protagonists' initial aspiration (dream), their difficulties in attaining their dream, and the representation of hard work. In most cases the concept of "rags to riches," another element of the American national ethos, is also depicted.

For example, Snow White's dream of happiness is to find love. The viewer is introduced to the protagonist's wish, from the start of the film, in her introductory song: "I'm wishing / For the one I love / To find me / Today / I'm hoping / And I'm dreaming of / The nice things / He'll say [...]." Her wish is later repeated after she meets the dwarves, as she sings to them: "Someday my prince will come / Someday I'll find my love / And how thrilling that moment will be / When the prince of my dreams comes to me / Some day when my dreams will come [...]." The lyrics of Snow White's song support the idea of hope of what she perceives to be a brighter future.

At the beginning, Snow White is shown wearing rags and doing chores, one supposes, for her stepmother. Later, she happily cooks and cleans for the dwarves while singing, contributing to the idea that she works hard. The dwarves themselves are hardworking men who love their job. This is expressed once more in a song: "We dig dig dig dig dig dig in our mine the whole day through / To dig dig dig dig dig dig dig is what we really like to do / It ain't no trick to get rich quick / If you dig dig dig with a shovel or a pick / In a mine! In a mine! In a mine! In a mine! / Where a million diamonds shine! / We dig dig [...] from early morn till night / We dig dig [...] up everything in sight / We dig up diamonds by the score / A thousand rubies, sometimes more / But we don't know what we dig'em for [...]." This last comment confirms that they could easily get rich, but they

receive more satisfaction in the nobility of their work rather than in the financial outcome. During the film, Snow White faces adversity as her stepmother tries to kill her several times. Despite the obstacles she encounters, she reaches her dream and is taken away by a prince to his castle, thus confirming the “rags to riches” concept of the American Dream.

Pinocchio presents similar elements to *Snow White*. Dreams, wishes, and hopes are omnipresent in the film, emphasised for example, by the introductory song “When You Wish Upon A Star”: “If your heart is in your dream, no request is too extreme / When you wish upon a star, as dreamers do.” At the beginning of the film, Geppetto has his dream (almost) come true when the blue fairy brings Pinocchio to life. His wish is granted because he has “brought so much happiness to others.” Pinocchio’s aspiration is to become human, a dream he can only fulfil if he acts as a “good boy” encompassing being brave, truthful, unselfish, and choosing between right and wrong. To guide him, Pinocchio receives a conscience: Jiminy Cricket. Jiminy is first shown as a wanderer wearing rags. Then, the blue fairy makes him “Lord High Keeper of the Knowledge of Right and Wrong, Counsellor in Moments of High Temptation, and Guide Along the Straight and Narrow Path.” In addition to his new status and title, he receives new clothes, thus strengthening the “rags to riches” element of the American Dream. Jiminy also mentions he wishes to have a gold badge, which he receives at the end of the film for his work in keeping Pinocchio on the path of righteousness.

Pinocchio’s first step towards become a good boy is attending school. However, he turns away from schoolwork—and thus, from his dream—to follow paths where fun and an easy life are valued. First, under the influence of a cat and a fox, who convince him to become an actor, because, as the song mentions: “It’s great to be a celebrity” and “an actor’s life is fun;” and second, when he joins other children to go to Pleasure Island. There, he plays, eat sweets, drinks, and smokes. These are the reasons why he is partly turned into a donkey (Pinocchio

leaves the island before the full transformation is complete). When Pinocchio returns home, he finds out his father left to search for him and was eaten by a whale. Therefore, he has to go through several trials before being able to attain his dream and to become a real boy.

In *Dumbo*, the American Dream is once more reaffirmed. Dumbo's dream is to be part of the circus with the other elephants who have rejected him because of his unusually big ears and his clumsiness. The circus crew, the elephants, and himself are shown as hard workers when they build the tent before a show. The accompanying song emphasises their work and the effort they put in it: "Hike! Ugh! Hike! Ugh! Hike! Ugh! Hike! / We work all day, we work all night / We never learned to read or write / We're happy-hearted roustabouts [...] / When other folks have gone to bed / We slave until we're almost dead [...] / We don't know when we get our pay / And when we do, we throw our pay away / (When we get our pay, we throw our money all away) / We get our pay when children say / With happy hearts, "It's circus day today" / (Then we get our pay, just watching kids on circus day) [...]." Like in *Snow White*, this song places a clear emphasis on the value of hard work to make children happy rather than the desire to make money. Dumbo overcomes several difficulties: the rejection of the elephants, being ridicule for his clown job, his fear of heights, etc. He also overcomes his "handicap" by learning to fly using his ears as wings, thus making him a media sensation, the star of the circus, and gaining the respect of the other elephants and of the world. At the end of the film, Dumbo's friend, Timothy, becomes his manager, and Dumbo and his mother are given a private car on the circus train.

Cinderella is organised in a similar way. The film is introduced by the song "A Dream Is A Wish Your Heart Makes" and supports the concept of hope in a better life: "Have faith in your dreams and someday / Your rainbow will come smiling through / No matter how your heart is grieving / If you keep on believing / The dream that you wish will come true [...]." Cinderella's dream is later

confirmed in a song: she wants a change in her life. This happens when she falls in love with the prince at the ball, as explained in the song: “So this is love, Mmmmmm / So this is love / So this is what makes life divine / [...] So this is the miracle that I've been dreaming of [...]”

Cinderella is also depicted as hardworking in “The Work Song” where mice describe her housework for her stepmother and stepsisters, as well as, the work of the mice on the confection of Cinderella’s dress for the ball. Furthermore, like in *Snow White*, she attempts her chores singing, making the work appear almost pleasant. Cinderella’s difficulties lay in the unfair treatment she receives from her family: her stepsisters mock her constantly, they destroy her handmade dress, and when the royal general comes with the shoe, her stepmother locks her up in a room and later destroy the glass shoe. After Cinderella’s identity is confirmed as the mysterious woman the prince fell in love with, she marries the prince, rises up in the social hierarchy (“rags to riches”) and fulfills her wish of a better life.

Of the early Disney films, *Bambi* is the only one that stands apart from the others. This last film does not present the American Dream *per se*, as its narrative does not focus on a wish the main character has from the beginning. Rather, *Bambi* shows the maturation of young boy into a man, his meeting with a woman, and how they build their family. However, it also shows Bambi, the prince of the forest, becoming king. Bambi likewise has to overcome obstacles to attain this social position: he loses his mother, he confront hunters three times, has to flee a fire, and survives a gunshot wound. In the end, Disney shows that the rise in status to king can only come with personal maturation.

In addition to depicting the American Dream’s cultural values in the narratives of films like *Bambi*, *Pinocchio*, *Cinderella*, *Snow White*, and *Dumbo*, Disney also supported this ideology with the Disney’s rounded style of animation. First, the worldwide recognition of this style carried the idea of success through

hard work as Disney did not developed this style immediately. Rather, it was the result of several years of work in animation. Furthermore, his rounded style allowed Disney to displayed American values through a world in which visual order was prioritised. Therefore, the American Dream's function of social order and cohesion was echoed in the aesthetic of Disney's films. In the depression era, the gap between myth and reality widened, advancing into the realm of fairytale and the American Dream provided a source of hope to audiences. Movies, like Disney's, proposed images of contentment, happy endings, and better days ahead and fairytales embodied the possibility of attaining such a Dream.⁸⁰ The principles of social and individual prosperity are in many ways the dream of most western societies. What makes Disney's films American is their connection to a long-held myth of success, embodied by Disney himself. Through his figure, American cultural values and aspiration expressed in the animated fantasy diegesis of his studio were made possible.

Because of his public persona and because he often publicly described and theorised animation, many came to see Disney's style and content as the only one acceptable in the field, and he certainly was for many years the most prominent figure in animation.⁸¹ His career itself and his legacy embodied the American Dream. Even after his death, people refused to let go of his public image: Walt Disney could not be dead; his body was cryogenised to await new scientific advancements to bring him back to life.⁸² This tabloid news was refuted many times but somehow the urban legend still persists as seen in *The Weekly World News* in January 2011, which claimed that Walt Disney's frozen head was stolen

⁸⁰ Charles R. Hearn, *The American Dream in the Great Depression* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1977), 193; Sternheimer, *Celebrity Culture*, 83.

⁸¹ Bendazzi, 69-70.

⁸² Several tabloids have reported that Walt Disney's body was frozen. See for example, Bill Burnett, "Walt Disney Is Frozen: He'll Be Back in 1975," *National Spotlite*, n.d., Walt Disney Archive, Burbank, California. (hereinafter WDA); Pierre Grillet, "Disney In Deep Freeze Awaiting Resurrection," *National Tattler* (June 1969), WDA; Frank Cusimano, "Walt Disney Is Being Kept Alive in Deep Freeze," *Midnight* Oct. 4, 1971, WDA; cited in Gabler, xi.

and taken hostage.⁸³ If many have disapproved of and criticised the famous animator, his labour management, and his filmography, no one can overlook how important his accomplishments were, how significant his person is to the American national ethos, and how much the American ideology carried in his films changed the face of animation forever.

The American Dream as expressed by Disney is not the only one existing in American animation. Early American animation also displayed a sense of nationalism but not as clearly articulated as in Disney's ideology. Whereas Walt Disney's films were representative of the post depression era American Dream in their ideology and their rounded design, earlier animation such as the Fleischer brothers' Betty Boop and Pat Sullivan's Felix the cat, were sharp and provocative. These differences in aesthetic and content did not make them less national. Indeed, these films remained grounded in the American cultural and national ethos, but in a different way than Disney's animation. Like most of the earlier cartoons, Felix displayed clear references to American comics tradition, vaudeville acts, and American silent cinema. The character Betty Boop was deeply rooted in the Jazz Age, jazz music, and cabaret acts.⁸⁴ Her design was so close to the fashion of the 1920s America that several female performers accused Betty's creators of exploiting their images.⁸⁵

In addition, both Felix and Betty, like earlier American cartoons, presented

⁸³ J.B. Smitts, "Walt Disney's Frozen Head Stolen," *The Weekly World News*, January 13, 2011, accessed September 2015, <http://weeklyworldnews.com/headlines/27766/walt-disneys-frozen/>.

⁸⁴ Nicholas Sammond also argues that early popular American cartoon characters derived from blackface minstrelsy, a type of racial entertainment that developed in the United States in the early 19th century. See Sammond, *Birth of an Industry*; Nicholas Sammond, "A Space Apart: Animation and the Spatial Politics of Conversion," *Film History: An International Journal* 23, no. 3 (1991): 268–284.

⁸⁵ For example, Helen Kane (1904–1966) and Esther Jones (d. 1934) were both cabaret performers known for their baby singing style. "The 'Boop' Song is Traced; Witness in Helen Kane's Suit Says Negro Girl Originated Style," *The New York Times*, May 2, 1934; Richard Fleischer, *Out of the Inkwell: Max Fleischer and the Animation Revolution* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2005), 56.

exaggerated movements as well as morphing, stretching and other metamorphosis of the body. While this last characteristic is typical of early American cartoons, it also shares resemblances with American vernacular dance traditions in which the body seems disarticulated by sharp angled poses and movements that reach outside the central axis of the body. One can take example in popular American dances such as the Charleston, the black bottom, the jitterbug, and the Lindy Hop whose body movements were considered grotesque because they defied normal dance conventions. These dances contrasted with other couple dances popular at the time such as the waltz or the foxtrot, considered more respectable.⁸⁶ The Felix and Betty cartoons refer to the jazz dance traditions through their movements and music.⁸⁷

The American national ethos represented in these earlier animation examples do not present clear ideological ties with Disney's version of the American Dream but they still embodied the free spirit in American ideology of the late 1910s and 1920s. In fact, Felix and Betty became important symbols of American culture of that period. For example, Felix became the mascot different military divisions, university, and music group. Betty Boop also became the principal mascot used by American soldiers in the army.⁸⁸ Her importance to American popular culture was so great that famous actors and musicians wanted to be seen with her. Likewise, in January 1927, *Photoplay magazine* published an issue in which dancer Ann Pennington (1893–1971) is photographed teaching

⁸⁶ "America Dances! 1897-1948: A Collector's Edition of Social Dance in Film." (Films Media Group, 2003), accessed 12 June 2017, fod.infobase.com/PortalPlaylists.aspx?wID=103279&xtid=60397; Terry Monaghan, "Why Study the Lindy Hop?" *Dance Research Journal* 33, no. 2 Social and Popular Dance (Winter, 2001): 125; Nicolas Rayner, "How the Charleston Changed the World," *Dancing Times*, posted May 15, 2013, accessed June 2017, <http://www.dancing-times.co.uk/how-the-charleston-changed-the-world/>.

⁸⁷ For example, in *Betty Boop Red Hot Mamma* (1934), Betty's movements and constant bouncing are similar to jazz dance movements and she sings and dances to the audience in the fashion of cabarets acts. Jazz music and dance is also present in many Felix cartoons. John Canemaker, *Felix: The Twisted Tale of the World's Most Famous Cat* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1991), 74–75.

⁸⁸ Bendazzi, 54–55, 91–94.

Felix the Cat how to dance the black bottom. In this sense, Felix and Betty Boop remain grounded in American cultural history and identity, even if the values they display did not entirely agree with Disney's, whose ideology remains the most important in American animation history.

The national ethos as projected by Walt Disney was called into question by the subsequent generations. The postwar prosperity and its advantages—a corporate job, marriage, suburban house, children—seemed empty to the younger generation who had never experienced hardships.⁸⁹ This period was also marked by several social changes: the beginning of the Cold War, which created social paranoia and led to McCarthyism, and the persecution of the Left.⁹⁰ In addition, new young actors played film characters that depicted young Americans revolting against institutions. There was an awareness of socio-cultural fragmentation and a counter-culture, in the form of the Beatnik culture developed.⁹¹ Artists attempted challenging social order—and the institution that the American Dream represented—by talking about sex, presenting antiheroes, and challenging the concept of utopian suburban middle-class family life.⁹²

This rejection was expressed in animation by an attempt to distance the animator from the production studio and against the Walt Disney aesthetics of an ordered world. These changes coincide with Walt Disney moving to live action films and leaving his animation studio under the supervision of the Nine Old Men. During this period, many animation departments opened such as the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM), Warner Brothers, and United Productions of America

⁸⁹ Sternheimer, 159–165.

⁹⁰ For more on McCarthyism and how it affected American cinema, see Ellen Schrecker, *The Age of McCarthyism: A Brief History With Documents* (Boston: Bedford, St. Martin's, 2002); Cohen, *Forbidden Animation*.

⁹¹ Bendazzi, 129. The Beatnik culture was the counter culture of the 1950s. For more on the Beat Generation, see Preston Whaley, *Blows Like a Horn: Beat Writing, Jazz, Style, and Markets in the Transformation of U.S. Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004).

⁹² *Ibid.*, 170–211.

(UPA) and challenged Walt Disney's leadership, American national ideology, and Hollywood's institutional values by reintroducing cartoons as a medium for comedy and taking it in a completely different direction.⁹³ The free spirit characterising the silent comedies of the 1910s and 1920s reemerged in American animation in the 1940s and 1950s through characters such as Droopy Dog and the Wolf, Willy Coyote and the Roadrunner, and Tom and Jerry. Their creators, animators Tex Avery (1908–1980), Chuck Jones (1912–2002), and William Hanna (1910–2001) and Joseph Barbera (1911–2006) used parody, speed, topicality, irreverence, and silly humour.⁹⁴ In general, series productions were consciously adopted and basic stylistic choices such as the chases or the dichotomy of the characters (mouse/cat, hunter/hare) became a complete narrative.⁹⁵ The studios' production system was more casual than other animation studios and allowed artists to explore various artistic and humoristic paths.⁹⁶ Cartoons of that period

⁹³ For more on these studios, their main animators, and main characters, see Jerry Beck and Will Friedwald, *The Warner Brothers Cartoons* (Metuchen, London: The Scarecrow Press, 1981); Jerry Beck and Will Friedwald, *Warner Bros. Animation Art. The Characters. The Creators. The Limited Editions* (California: Warner Bros. Worldwide Publishers, Beaux Art Editions, 1997); Kevin S. Sandler, ed., *Reading the Rabbit: Explorations in Warner Bros. Animation* (New Brunswick, New Jersey, London: Rutgers University Press, 1998); Donald Crafton, "The View from Termite Terrace: Caricature and Parody in Warner Bros Animation," *Film History* 5, no. 2 Animation, (June, 1993): 204–230; Howard Rieder, "Memories of Mr. Magoo," *Cinema Journal* 8, no. 2 (Spring 1969): 17–24; Abraham, *When Magoo Flew*.

⁹⁴ For more information on Avery and Jones, see Jeff Lenburg, *Legends of Animation: Tex Avery* (New York: Chelsea House, 2011); Cruz Delgado Sánchez, *Tex Avery*, (Madrid: Cátedra, 2014); Joe Adamson, *Tex Avery: King of Cartoons* (New York: Da Capo, 1975); Robert Benayoun, *Le Mystère Tex Avery: Biographie* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1988); Floriane Place-Verghnes, *Tex Avery: A Unique Legacy (1942–1955)* (Eastleigh: John Libbey Publishing, 2006); M. Thomas Inge, "Mark Twain, Chuck Jones, and the Art of Animation," *Studies in American Humor* 3, no. 17 New Series (2008): 11–17; Chuck Jones, *Chuck Amuck: The Life and Times of an American Cartoonist* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1989); Chuck Jones, *Chuck Reducks: Drawing From the Fun Side of Life* (New York: Warner Books, 1996); John Canemaker, "Chuck Jones," *Cartoonist Profiles* 45 (March 1980): 14–18; Maureen Furniss, ed., *Chuck Jones: Conversations* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2005); *Chuck Jones: Extremes and Inbetweens*, DVD. Directed by Margaret Selby (Warner Home Video, 2000).

⁹⁵ Bendazzi, 97.

⁹⁶ At the time, production relocated from small studios to bigger ones and thus, animation moved closer to their producers. Independent studios such as Disney's had to find money to subsidise their projects. In addition, they also had to have agreements with distributors that owned film theatres, in order to have their animated film projected. Getting closer to producers meant that the animation departments did not have the responsibility of finding subventions or distributors. This allowed the animators more freedom. Bendazzi, 83.

also presented politically incorrect features on the screen, with characters cross-dressing, questionable gags based on crude ethnic or gender representations, accelerated pace, coarse satire, violence, paranoia, excess, chaos, anarchy, and anguish. The animated reality displayed by this new generation of animators was much more complex, and humour, as well as aesthetics, supported a critical view that was symptomatic of the post-war period. Their work represented an animated counter-discourse both through the formalistic choices and content, which their films displayed. They confronted the world and values of Disney and the American Dream of the 1930s by challenging animation's institutions.⁹⁷

In other words, not only did these animators react against Disney's style, but it also countered his vision of the American ethos and the entire production system it carried. They broke with the ideals carried during the depression era—namely traditional storytelling, clearly defined good and bad characters, realism and a socially ordered animated world—and it is representative of the American malaise towards the earlier American ethos. This reappraisal was represented in chaotic narratives, dry humour and style, and colour overlapping the contour lines. This new generation of animators formed a counter-animation, refusing to abide by the norms established by their predecessors allowing for new American ideological values to exist alongside the Disney model. The domestic and almost religious aspect of the American ethos that formed the Disney ideology took its roots in the American pioneer ideology of the beginning of the colony. This model was challenged and renegotiated by the American animation of the 1940s and 1950s which reintroduced the genre of comedy and existed alongside the Disney model.

More than just entertainment products, animated films also are representative of the changes in American identity, American society, and in its social discourse. Through animation, one can grasp a sense of the collective

⁹⁷ Crafton, "The View from Termite Terrace," 221.

identity's complexity, multifaceted nature, and constant evolution. Animated films are an artistic form used by artists to create a graphic reality of their own and their capacity at expressing national ideals should be taken in consideration. Disney understood this and made his films a true American social media by nurturing the national ethos' values. The articulation of clear ideological values that had formed the nation in post depression America are still in use today and they certainly assisted Disney in making his animated fairytales into a timeless animated *oeuvre*. However, if Disney found its inspiration in the values of the American Dream other animators across the Atlantic Ocean found these values and style appealing as well. Such as in the former Soviet Union where Disney's style impacted animated films made during the reign of Joseph Stalin (1878–1953).

Chapter 2

From Imperial Russia to the Thaw: Soviet Ideology and Identity Construction in Soviet Animation

The way animation developed in the former USSR is particularly interesting because it shares many similarities with the history of American animation. However, because of different socio-political changes and the increasing presence of governmental authority in every aspect of Soviet life, it followed its own unique path. Whereas American animation developed with a primary goal of entertaining audiences, Soviet animation's purpose was dual: it needed to entertain audience and to promote the newly born Soviet state and its ideology.¹ Both types of animated fairytale films carried their individual national ethos, but as demonstrated in the previous chapter, while the American context allowed for counter-discourse about the national paradigm, animation in the former Soviet Union was inextricably linked to an all-embracing ideological and political system.² Because of this, Soviet animated fairytale films became a major cog in a wider national ideological machine, which served the indoctrination of the population. The history of Soviet animation is therefore the history of its changing national ethos, which moved from an elitist ideology in Imperial Russia, to a political and intellectual one after the Revolution, and finally, to a political

¹ Stephen Norris argues that reading Soviet animated film as state propaganda is “far-too-simplistic.” He mentions that such a reading takes away the sheer enjoyment millions of Soviet citizens when watching Soviet animation. However, as we have seen with Disney, ideology in films and entertainment are not mutually exclusive. Norris, 216.

² Pontieri, 1.

and populist ideology under Stalinism.³ It is also the history of how fairytales and visual style were used as ideological tools to convey such a national model. Animated fairytales thus played an important role in identity construction in the former Soviet Union.

This chapter surveys how animation started in Imperial Russia, and how it evolved after the creation of the USSR through several political changes. I analyse the content and aesthetic—namely the composition and use of national culture—of Soviet animated fairytale films to show how animation functioned within the Soviet ideological and aesthetic systems, uncovering the mechanism of the institutional discourse expressed through fairytales and folklore in this artistic field. All films were chosen on the basis of their year of production and availability. As I show in this chapter, the political mutations brought a new definition of the national identity, expressed in animation through formalistic choices and narrative. I place a special emphasis on the period of Stalinist Socialist realism, as the animated films of this period have not previously been studied in depth.

Early Soviet animation and animated films made during and after the Thaw have been addressed by scholars such as Laura Pontieri, and are perceived

³ The former Soviet Union was a multi-ethnic empire and, as Terry Martin argues, “the first old European multiethnic states to confront the rising tide of nationalism and respond by systematically promoting the national consciousness of its ethnic minorities and establishing for them many of the characteristic institutional forms of the nation-state.” In this sense, the former Soviet Union articulated a national ethos which merged imperialist ideology and nationalism, showing that the two concepts are not mutually exclusive. Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nation and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939* (Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 2001), 1. For more on Imperialism, see Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994); Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978); Pepi Leystyna, *Cultural Studies: From Theory to Action* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), Ronald Grigor Suny, *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); Balachandra Rajan and Elizabeth Sauer, *Imperialisms: Historical and Literary Investigations, 1500–1900* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); Immanuel Ness and Zak Cope, eds., *The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Imperialism and Anti-Imperialism. Volume 1* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016); Anouar Abdel-Malek, *Nation and Revolution. Volume 2 of Social Dialectics* (London, Basingstoke: The Macmillan Press, 1981); Victor Gordon Kiernan, *Marxism and Imperialism* (London: Edward Arnold, 1974).

as aimed at adults.⁴ In contrast, the Stalinist period produced animation based on a canonical style and on fairytales, believed to be, aimed at children. This later style was largely dismissed and overlooked by specialists, precisely because of its association with younger audiences. Without completely rejecting Pontieri's interpretation, I want to nuance it by arguing that the Disney style and the fairytale narratives in the USSR's Stalinist era were not used solely to reach young audiences but rather were a tool to form and to educate the blooming national Soviet mind, regardless of the age of the audience.

The use of national artistic production to carry political ideology is not unique to the former Soviet Union. In her study of Canadian children's literature, Elizabeth A. Galway argues that,

The children's literature popular in Canada following Confederation did not simply reflect fantasies of childhood; it served as a means by which idealised fantasies of Canadian nationhood and identity could be played out. Writers were using the genre as a means of promoting and constructing specific ideologies of national identity and as a means of strengthening national unity by fostering knowledge of, pride in, and loyalty to Canada in the nation's youth. [...] In Canada, children's literature served as a means of fostering pride in the new country, strengthening national unity, and forming national identity.⁵

Similar to the Canadian children's literary model—and by extension the British one from which the Canadian example descended—socialist realist animation in the former Soviet Union was used to foster a Soviet national identity through the use of visual style and fairytales. However, Socialist realism's emphasis on

⁴ The Thaw was a period after Stalin's death in which artists partly freed themselves from the socialist realist authoritative mould that was formed. For more information on the Thaw and its cultural impact, see Polly Jones, *Myth, Memory, Trauma: Rethinking the Stalinist Past in the Soviet Union, 1953–70* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014); Steven Usitalo, *Russian and Soviet History: From the Time of Troubles to the Collapse of the Soviet Union* (Lanham: Rowan & Littlefield, 2008); Nicholas Tyrras, *Russian Intellectual and Cultural History From the Ninth to the Twenty-first Century* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2010), 321–329.

⁵ Elizabeth A. Galway, *From Nursery Rhymes to Nationhood: Children's Literature and the Construction of Canadian Identity* (New York, London: Routledge, 2008), 5–6.

nationalism was not a new phenomenon as a general nationalist input in the arts had already started when animation emerged.

Animation, like cinema, came to Imperial Russia during a time of conflict. The loss of the Crimean War in the 1850s and the social and legal reforms of the 1860s brought a time of cultural self-definition and questioning.⁶ During this period, several artistic slavophile populist movements, such as the *Peredvizhniki* (the Wanderers or the Itinerants) and the *Kustari* (the Russian Arts and Craft Movement), laid a strong basis for Russian nationalism in the arts.⁷ Under their patronage, recognisable visual symbols of Russian culture were formed.⁸ The populist input was also present in the staging of peasant life and folk culture in

⁶ Laura J. Olson, *Performing Russia: Folk Revival and Russian Identity* (London, New York: Routledge, 2004), 25; Janet Kennedy, "Pride and Prejudice: Serge Diaghilev, the Ballet Russes, and the French Public," in *Art, Culture, and National Identity in Fin-de-Siècle Europe*, ed. Michelle Facos and Sharon L. Hirsh (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 90; Rosamund Bartlett and Linda Edmondson, "Collapse and Creation: Issues of Identity and the Russian *Fin de Siècle*," in *Constructing Russian Culture in the Age of Revolution: 1881–1940*, ed. Catriona Kelly and David Shepherd, 165–224 (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 165–224.

⁷ The Wanderers were realist artists who favoured scenes of contemporary life and Russian national landscape. Their art was strongly nationalistic and avoided referenced to other European artistic trends. The *Kustari* on the other hand, consisted of a handful of gentry women who sought to revive the work of the Russian handicraftsmen peasants (named *kustari*) and to elevate it to the same level as high art. They later formed a community of artists in search of a more authentic Russian culture. This Romantic art movement was inspired by the Arts and Craft movement in Great Britain. The *Kustari*'s input was stopped by the Russia's Silver Age (1890s–1910s), a period when high standards for art where set opposing the growing popular arts, such as vaudeville, circus, cabarets, music halls, and Petrushka puppet theatre, a Russian free mobile theatre peepshow very popular at fairs and carnivals in Eastern Europe. Philip Cate Dennis, "Introduction." In *Defining Russian Graphic Arts 1898–1934. From Diaghilev to Stalin*, ed. Alla Rosenfeld (New Brunswick, New Jersey, London: Rutgers University Press; Rutgers: The Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum, 1999), 9; Louis Réau, *L'art russe: Le classicisme/Le romantisme/Le XXe siècle* (Paris: Marabout Université, 1968), 139; Wendy Salmond, "A Matter of Give and Take: Peasant Crafts and Their Revival in Late Imperial Russia," *Design Issues* 13, no. 1 Designing the Modern Experience, 1885–1945 (Spring, 1997): 6; Catriona Kelly, *Petrushka: The Russian Carnival Puppet Theatre* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 1–2; Beumers, *A History of Russian Cinema*, 6–7; John E. Bowl, *Moscow & St. Petersburg 1900–1920; Art, Life & Culture of the Russian Silver Age* (New York: Vendome Press, 2008), 9–31.

⁸ National cultural symbols included, for example, the creation of the *matrioshka* or Russian nesting doll, carved wooden furniture, toys, embroidered towels, and more generally, the native tradition of arts and crafts. This search for national culture paralleled the development in local ethnography. For more on this topic, see Alison Hilton, *Russian Folk Art* (Bloomington, Indianapolis: Indiana Press University, 1995); Wendy R. Salmond, *Arts and Crafts in Late Imperial Russia: Reviving the Kustar Art Industries, 1870–1917* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

ballets.⁹ The national identity of the staged characters in ballets of that period became an increasingly important element of the characters' personal identity.¹⁰ In literature, several Russian authors rewrote Western fairytales with Russian motifs and context. Alexander Pushkin (1799–1837), for example, wrote several adaptations and original fairytales. The complex Russian verses used by Pushkin elevated the tales to a form of elite culture and promoted a Russian nationalism through Russian themes. As we will see later in this chapter, these early forms of artistic nationalism later became highly popular in socialist realist animation, as a way to promote Russianness.

The art of film animation in Russia developed parallel to that of cinema.¹¹ Like in the Russian art movements, Russian cinema and animation shared with Russian mass culture a constant search for inspiration in the forms of higher culture. Animation and cinema were perceived not just as entertainment but also

⁹ This trend was present all over Europe. In the later eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century, the ideas that people had about themselves and the world around them were revolutionised. In ballets, this was expressed in the staging of lower class characters and popular culture through character dances of different national groups. These were dramatic changes at the time as ballet used to stage royalty, Gods, Greek and Roman mythology, biblical characters, personified archetypes such as truth, beauty, or justice, and other larger than life figures. "Sensuality & Nationalism In Romantic Ballet." Directed by Claudia Jeschke. Dance Through Time (Dancetime Publications, 2012), 00:03:48, accessed March 2017, fod.infobase.com/PortalPlaylists.aspx?wID=103279&xtid=60400.

¹⁰ "Sensuality & Nationalism In Romantic Ballet." Directed by Claudia Jeschke. Dance Through Time (Dancetime Publications, 2012), 00:05:12, accessed March 2017, fod.infobase.com/PortalPlaylists.aspx?wID=103279&xtid=60400.

¹¹ For more information on Russian and Soviet cinema, see Yuri Tsivian, "Pre-Revolutionary Russia," in *Oxford History of World Cinema*, ed. Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1996); Yuri Tsivian, *Early Cinema in Russia and its Cultural Reception* (London, New York: Routledge, 1994); Philip Cavendish, "The Hand That Turns the Handle: Camera Operators and the Poetics of the Camera in Pre-Revolutionary Russian Film," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 82, no. 2 (Apr., 2004): 201–245; Rimgaila Salys, ed., *The Russian Cinema Reader, vol. 1*, (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2013); Yuri Tsivian, "New Notes on Russian Film Culture Between 1908 and 1919," in *The Silent Cinema Reader*, eds. Lee Grieveson and Peter Krämer. (New York, London: Routledge, 2004), 339–348; Jay Leyda, *Kino: A History of the Russian and Soviet Film* (Princeton, Princeton University Press: 1983); Denise J. Youngblood, *The Magic Mirror: Moviemaking in Russia, 1908–1918* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1999); Peter Kenetz, *Cinema and Society Society: From the Revolution to the Death of Stalin* (London, New York: I.B. Tauris, 2001); Richard Taylor and Ian Christie, eds., *The Film Factory: Russian and Soviet Cinema in Documents 1896–1939* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988); Anna Lawton, ed., *The Red Screen: Politics, Society, Art in Soviet Cinema*, (New York, London: Routledge, 1992); Valérie Pozner, "Gorki au cinématographe: 'J'étais hier au royaume des ombres...,'" in *1895. Mille huit cent quatre-vingt-quinze* [online] 50, (2006) accessed October 2015. <http://1895.revues.org/1232>.

as a form of art.¹² For example, rather than chases or tricks, which formed the slapstick humour of American cinema, the humour used in Russian films was mostly based on situations. Cross-dressing and sexual role-playing were common themes used in Russian comedies of the period.¹³ The underdevelopment of the Russian comedy genre was later significant for animation, in which tricks and chases were almost absent.

Since Russian cinema tended to represent high culture, unsurprisingly the first Russian animator was also a representative of the elite culture. Aleksandr Shiryaev (1867–1941) was a dancer and later, ballet master at the Mariinsky Theatre in Saint Petersburg.¹⁴ His dance career led him to become interested in film, as he was especially concerned with the problem of dance notation and how to record choreographies. The first Russian animated films were not narratives, but rather short animated dances. Shiryaev transferred drawn images on long strips of paper.¹⁵ The paper film displayed simple drawings and an execution of complex dance movements that can easily be recognised by an audience acquainted with dance and theatre traditions. For example, in *Buffoon's Dance from The Nutcracker* (circa 1892), one can differentiate the ballets steps: *cabrioles*, *échappés*, *pirouettes en coup de pied*, etc.¹⁶ Like many pioneers of

¹² Tsvivan, "New Notes on Russian Film," 341.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 110.

¹⁴ In the available literature, his name is often anglicised to "Alexander." "A.V. Shiryaev: Between Dance and Animation," *Kinokultura: Online Journal of New Russian Cinema*, accessed December 2014, <http://avs.kinokultura.com/>; David Robinson, "Alexander Shiryaev: Dance to Film." *Film History: An International Journal* 21, no. 4 (2009): 302.

¹⁵ Robinson explains that to view these paper-films, they had to be "[...] moved between two spools, the images were viewed through a lens, and a revolving three-faced mirror prism served in place of a shutter on the principle of Emile Reynaud's Praxinoscope." Robinson, 302.

¹⁶ The discovery of Shiryaev's work is of capital importance because it changes the date of the first animated films ever made that was attributed to Emile Cohl for many years. Some historians are still reluctant to consider Shiryaev's film as the first since it was made for education rather than purely artistic purposes. Marc Belpois, "Une bombe russe à Annecy!," accessed August 2015, <http://television.telarama.fr/television/une-bombe-russe-a-annecy,43924.php>; Johannes Wolters "Annecy 2009 Opens!," *Animated World Network Blog*, accessed August 2015, <http://www.awn.com/blog/annecy-2009-opens>; Wendy Perron, "Alexander Shiryaev: The Hidden Genius of Ballet and Film" (video), *Dance Magazine Online Blog*, posted March 26, 2009, accessed January 2015, <http://dancemediacom.com/v/1743>.

animation, his short films were experiments with the medium. These films were not publicly seen until the twenty-first century.¹⁷

When Shiryayev indicated that his ballet company should acquire a camera to record the dancers' movements, parts, and the full ballets, his suggestion was rebuffed by the theatre's administration.¹⁸ The dancer then invested in a camera for his personal use and filmed a few choreographies, short stage comedies, and recorded family moments or "home videos" as they would now be called.¹⁹ Around 1906, Shiryayev, who probably discovered the stop-frame mechanism of the camera while experimenting, started making short trick films.²⁰ Later on, he made 20–25 cm tall puppets from *papier-mâché*.²¹ Shiryayev's choice of puppets is not surprising. Dolls made out of *papier-mâché* were already used at the Mariinsky theatre by Marius Petipa (1818–1910) to work on choreographic groupings.²² The animator was deeply impressed by this technique and that is probably the reason why he made his own articulated dolls. The use of puppets was also strongly rooted in the European cultural tradition. In this sense, Shiryayev's formalistic choice was influenced by Russian popular culture and elitist performing arts. Using one of the cut-out theatres that were popular nineteenth-century Europe, Shiryayev created six puppet films, all based on

¹⁷ Robinson, 301-302.

¹⁸ Anna Kisselgoff, "Critic's Notebook; Pioneering Russian Films Show Ballet Master's Wit," *The New York Times*, January 14, 2005, accessed December 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2005/01/14/movies/14russ.html?_r=0; David Robinson, "Master of Movement," in *Alexander Shiryayev: Master of Movement*, eds. Birgit Beumers, Victor Bocharov, and David Robinson. (Pordenone: Le Giornate del Cinema Muto: 2009), 20.

¹⁹ Robinson, "Dance to Film", 303-306; Peter Lord, "The Start of Stop-Frame: Animation's Great Lost Pioneer," *The Guardian*, November 14, 2008, accessed December 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/film/2008/nov/14/animation-ballet>.

²⁰ Perron, "Alexander Shiryayev;" "A.V. Shiryayev." An example of his trick film is *Pierrot and the Maid* (dates unknown), which showed a maid being teased by Pierrot, a familiar character from Pantomime and *La Commedia Dell'arte*. In the film, Pierrot disappears and reappears, turns from unanimated puppet to human, scaring the poor maid and playing tricks on her.

²¹ "A.V. Shiryayev."

²² Marius Petipa was the director of the theatre at the time. He hired Shiryayev as his ballet assistant and later as a master of ballet. Robinson, 302–307.

dance.²³ His understanding of body movements was so in depth that it allowed him to mimic the style of famous dancers, such as ballerina Olga Preobrazhenskaya (1871–1962).²⁴

Shiryaev's films as a product of an elite culture demonstrated the extent of his talent. It is interesting to see how much high art as ballet and theatre influenced his work. Although the puppet theatre and *La Commedia Dell'arte* were strongly rooted in European popular culture, nineteenth-century artists and choreographers used elements of popular culture in elite art for identity purposes. Shiryaev's *œuvre* also echoed the development of live action films based on higher culture. Furthermore, his interest in detailed dance movement addressed the dance specialist or admirer, rather than a general audience. Therefore, Shiryaev's films were the product of a higher culture and displayed an elite taste rooted in the cultural values of the late nineteenth-century Imperial Russia.²⁵

Elite culture can also be seen in Shiryaev's animated film *Pierrot-Artists* (dates unknown). Shiryaev set the action on a miniature stage.²⁶ In the film, two Pierrots paint a house on the stage background, thus bringing drawing and puppet animation together on the same screen. They are later joined by a female character, Colombine, who comes out of the painted house. The two pantomime dolls fight for her attention in order to dance a *pas-de-deux* with her.²⁷ In this film, Shiryaev's genius is again striking: the details of the movement of the puppet are so precise that it is possible to recognise the dance steps they are performing. For

²³ Robinson, 308.

²⁴ "A.V. Shiryaev." Olga Preobrazhenskaya was a Russian dancer known for her superior interpretation of the mechanical doll, especially, Colombine. Roland John Wiley, *The Life and Ballets of Lev Ivanov: Choreographer of the Nutcracker and Swan Lake* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 142.

²⁵ This is hardly surprising as Shiryaev was himself part of this elite group. While his films were not intended to be screened, they nevertheless addressed an audience with similar background as their creator.

²⁶ Perron, "Alexander Shiryaev."

²⁷ A fight between two male characters to get a female character's attention is not only a motif commonly present in folk dance but also in character dance, which is the highly stylised 'folk-like' dance presented during a ballet.

example, in a *pas-de deux*, the viewer can clearly see Colombine do a *piqué* on *pointe* in *attitude*, then do a preparation for *pirouette* with her feet in fourth position and arms in third, before executing her double *pirouette en dehors* with arms in fifth position. The film references classical dance traditions, showing animation's capacity at mixing genres on the same screen. Again, animation remained a medium that served high art.

In all of Shiryaev's films, the animated reality is limited to the space of the stage. The camera remains stationary and the artist limits the animated space to the theatrical stage rather than building a complex diegetic space (for example, inside the painted house or off-stage). This forms a frame of action within the framed image of the screen. With this formalist strategy, Shiryaev emphasised the theatre and ballet traditions once more. Furthermore, as no intertitles were offered to the viewers and dialogue was absent, the animated reality created on screen could only be communicated through dance movements. This further reinforced the impression that animation served elite culture as only viewers familiar with dance language and tradition could fully grasp the actions in the film. In spite of his undeniable talent, Shiryaev's animation experiments stopped around 1909 for unknown reasons. No one else is known to have picked up the medium until Ladislav Starevich a year later, whose work with puppets echoed Shiryaev's.

Ladislav Starevich (1882–1965) also was born in Russia, to a Polish family, and grew up in Lithuania.²⁸ As a child, he learned different art forms and was very talented at painting and drawing. In addition, he was exposed to early cinematic devices such as the magic lantern, the flipbook, and the thaumatrope, all of which he tried to duplicate.²⁹ He also experimented with photography. Later, he

²⁸ His name is spelled Wladislas Starewicz in Polish. When he moved to France, Starevich adopted the French spelling with a "w". However in many instances, his name is written "Starevich" such as in his company name *Film Starevich*. I have kept the spelling closer to English. Léona Béatrice Martin and François Martin. *Ladislav Starevich 1882–1965* (Paris, Budapest, Torino: L'Harmattan, 2009), 14.

²⁹ Starevich made two magic lanterns. His last one was made with two lamps that allowed projections not by transparency as before but by reflection. *Ibid.*, 17–27.

acquired a film camera, purchased from the Moscow producer Alexander Khanzhonkov (1877–1945).³⁰ From a young age, Starevich was interested in entomology and he owned an important collection of beetles and butterflies from which he never separated himself.³¹ It was his desire to film a nocturnal beetle fight that led him to animation.³² To film them, Starevich needed artificial light. However, this caused these night beetles to stop moving. An avid moviegoer, he recalled a stop-motion animation film by Émile Cohl, and using embalmed insects moved by wires, he decided to reproduce their movements frame by frame.³³ The resulting animated film, *Lucanus Cervus* (1910), was part of a scientific film on insects' lives.

This choice of subject matter was not unusual as early films often displayed scientific curiosities, bacterias, and other microscopic organisms.³⁴ This could be seen, for example, in Cohl's film *Les joyeux microbes* (*The Merry Microbes*, 1909) and in his general use of the iris shots (circular forms). The audience took the role of *voyeur* watching what they could not see in their day-to-day life. Therefore, Starevich's films were inscribed in their time and were clearly oriented towards strong intellectualism and scientific interest. After these first educational films, Starevich created stop motion films with narratives. This is important to the history of film animation in Russia because most of the films he

³⁰ Ibid., 39.

³¹ Ibid., 35.

³² Bendazzi, 35.

³³ Sources do not seem to agree on which of Cohl's film influenced Starevich. Some cite *Les frères Boutdebois* from 1908 (Pontieri, 5), while others mention *Les allumettes animées* made the same year (Salys, "The Cameraman's Revenge," 41).

³⁴ In fairs, films were often displayed along with other scientific curiosities such as X-rays, photography and microphotography. In fact, it was not unusual to present short films about the life of microbes, bacteria, or bugs, shown in an iris shot as if the audience looked into a microscope lens. These formalistic choices were used in animated films as well. Yuri Tsivian, "Media Fantasies and Penetrating Vision: Some Links Between X-Rays, The Microscope and Film," in *Laboratory of Dreams: The Russian Avant-Garde and Cultural Experiment*, eds. John E. Bowlt and Olga Matich. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 82, 84; Thierry Lefebvre, "The Scientia Production (1911–1914): Scientific Popularization Through Pictures," *Griffithiana* 47 (1993): 141.

made afterwards demonstrated an attempt to create a fictional story rather than being simple research in the field of motion pictures. Each narrative he produced was fairly complex and had a clear structure: initial situation, events changing the initial situation, action/reactions of his protagonists, and a conclusion. Furthermore, his full anthropomorphising and emphasis on the psychology of beetles made his work innovative and ahead of its time.³⁵ This early characterisation allowed the audience to identify with the main protagonists and, like in American animation, this would later be important in communicating a stronger political message in his film production in France. But in these early years, Starevich's films demonstrated elite cultural values.

The Beautiful Lukanida (Or the War of the Horned and the Whiskered) (1910) was Starevich's second animated film.³⁶ Using the stop motion technique, the film was a fantasy variation on the theme of *La belle Hélène*, a humorous story of adultery. *La belle Hélène* (1864) was a comic operetta by Jacques Offenbach (1819–1880) parodying the relationship between Helen of Troy and Paris, Prince of Troy, which brought about the Trojan War. The animator showed in his choice of narrative the deep influence that elite culture had on his work. In Starevich's film, Helen is caught cheating on her husband. Both flee, and the angry husband unsuccessfully chases her lover, Paris. War breaks out and the men fight until Paris lights up a barrel full of black powder, which creates an explosion killing them both. The film displayed several comical elements. For example, while he chases his rival, the husband tries to jump from a cliff into a lake. His belt gets caught in a tree and he hangs in an embarrassing position, unable to move. The ending remains dramatic, in accordance with the Russian cinema tradition in which films displayed narratives that typically end dramatically, an

³⁵ Beumers, 16.

³⁶ Researchers generally date this film by the date of its release and not that of its creation. Therefore, the reader will also find 1911 (Bendazzi, 36) or 1912, the most popular date.

inspiration from Russian nineteenth century theatrical melodramas.³⁷ In Starevich's film, the final shot shows the destroyed room and the motionless characters, whom we assume are dead. In the context of the film's conclusion, *The Beautiful Lukanida* remains rooted in Russian silent film tradition despite its non-Russian topic.

The Beautiful Lukanida was a step forward in Russian animation. As opposed to Shiryaev's work, it displayed a large depth of field and different places such as inside the castle, the gardens, Paris' castle, etc. These different locations helped in forming a coherent story and were visual stimulations for the audience. Furthermore, Starevich formed a believable complex diegetic space, which was important for the viewers' understanding of the animated reality. For example, the introductory shot shows the room of the throne and a grand door in the background. Through that door, the viewer imagines a ballroom as he can see couples dancing in this second plan. Editing was used in camera angles in order to provide a more complex diegetic space and also to create a visual rhythm in the film. For example, during a fight, when the beetles fall behind a wall, the shot suddenly changes angle to follow the fall of the characters behind the castle's wall. With these innovations, Starevich was successful in demonstrating that animation was indeed a work of art.

To make the diegesis more believable, Starevich added a full scenario to the film, marionettes wearing all sorts of costumes and accessories, like actors, with decors and specific lightning. Aside from the visual creation, he also filmed and edited the film himself. The film measured 230 metres, a rather long production for the time, and featured *Lucanus Cervus* beetles fighting for the attention of the beautiful Elena (Helen in Russian).³⁸ The film echoed the

³⁷ While other cinema traditions kept "All's well that ends well!" as a guideline principle, Russian filmmakers refused to abide by it, preferring "All's well that ends badly –we need tragic endings." Furthermore, Russian films presented a slow pace with frequent long poses and deliberate gestures that lingered the action. Bordwell and Thompson, 48; Tsivian, "Early Russian Cinema," 17–18.; Tsivian, "New Notes on Russian Film," 345–346.

³⁸ Bendazzi, 36.

structure of Aesop or Jean de La Fontaine's fables and had a humorous tone. It was a success inside and outside Russia, and was sold to London's Brokliss Film Society in 1912. It was so well done that some London newspapers believed that a famous scientist had trained the insects to perform for the camera.³⁹ Yuri Tsivian quotes one of them,

What is so amazing about this film is that the beetles portray the situation with such plausibility. When angry they shake their feelers and raise their horns, they march just like people... How is it all done? Not one of the viewers could explain it. If the beetles were performing then their trainer must be a man of magical endurance and patience. That the actors were indeed beetles is clear from careful examination of their appearance.⁴⁰

And indeed, Starevich had enduring patience: to create this film, he had to change the position of his beetle puppets frame by frame.⁴¹ A fact made even more impressive knowing he used approximately 20 insects for the war scenes.⁴² This first fiction film was therefore the first fully animated work in Russia to put a strong emphasis on characterisation and narration, a storytelling technique that was not really present in Shiryaev's repertoire.

Starevich continued his experiment with the beetle actors and in 1911, he animated *The Grasshopper and the Ant*, based on Ivan Krylov's (1769–1844) adaptation of La Fontaine's story.⁴³ This film presented a narrative with strong ties to Russian culture as it used the Russian adaptation of a fable rather than the original. The Russian adaptation of tales is an important national stylistic element

³⁹ Ibid.; Martin and Martin, 433.

⁴⁰ Yuri Tsivian et al., *Silent Witnesses: Russian Films 1908–1919* (London: British Film Institute, 1989), 586.

⁴¹ Bendazzi, 36.

⁴² Martin and Martin, 433.

⁴³ Ivan Krylov adapted several fables based on Aesop and La Fontaine's but with a satirical twist. He also wrote several original tales on Russian themes. This particular tale is sometimes translated as *The Dragonfly and the Ant*. Ivan Krylov, *The Frogs Who Begged For a Tsar (and 61 Other Russian Fables)* (Montpellier: Russian Life Books, 2010), 10.

to note as Starevich stopped using it in his films when he immigrated to France. *The Grasshopper and the Ant* received a prize from Tsar Nicholas II and was Starevich's first film to be screened at the Gaumont Palace in Paris and sold across Europe and in America.⁴⁴ More than just a simple fable, the film was a depiction of human social behaviour played by articulated wooden marionettes. For example, the grasshopper does not just sing and play all summer as the fable claimed. In Starevich's film, it also goes drinking with friends and gets intoxicated—enough so that it tries to drink from a violin that it confuses with a bottle. The element of drunkenness introduced by the animator can be read a comment on Imperial Russia's society of the time. Alcohol, vodka mostly, had been for centuries an important source of revenue for the government. However, alcoholism was so rampant during this period that in 1914 Nicholas II made it illegal.⁴⁵ Through the use of the fable, Starevich clearly condemned the abuse of alcohol. For example, he showed the drunken grasshopper gets violent with the ant and even proceeds to climb on a table to dance.

The film finds its rhythm in Starevich's cross-cutting editing technique that showed two actions happening at the same time but in alternating shots.⁴⁶ For example, the viewer can see the grasshopper having fun, while the ant works all summer long. Furthermore, the viewer can see the emphasis that Starevich placed on humour, which also was a visually stimulating element. The film displays several comic situations. For example, as the ant cuts wood for winter, a tree falls on her. The dragonfly sees it but instead of helping her, he starts playing music. Furthermore, the animator through the use of editing also created a faster narrative pace. This is one more element that made Starevich's production stand out, since

⁴⁴ Martin and Martin, 49–50, 434. Starevich made a later version of the same film after moving to France.

⁴⁵ Calire Suddath, "A Brief History of Russians and Vodka," *Times*, Tuesday, January 05, 2010, accessed August 2016, <http://content.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1951620,00.html>.

⁴⁶ For more on cross-cutting editing technique, see David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *Film Art: An Introduction* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2012), 244–245.

action based humour was not part of the Russian cinematic style of the time. Starevich's production nevertheless slightly contrasted with the "Russian style" in the 1910s' cinema. Russian films of this period displayed a very static *mise en scène* with long shots of immobile figures and little dialogue. The focus was not on action but rather on the psychology of the characters.⁴⁷ Early films' diegeses were also free of moralisation. In addition, evil was rarely punished and often, innocent victims suffered.⁴⁸ Yuri Tsivian quotes Russian ballet critic André Levinson (1887–1933) who described this new aesthetic system:

[...] The scripts were full of static poetic moods, of melancholy and of the exultation or eroticism or a gypsy romance. There was no external action whatsoever. There was just enough movement to link the long drawn-out pauses, which were weighted down with languorous day-dreaming. [...] It was in the immobility that their fate was decided. This was the drama. Nobody chased after their car. It did not gather speed. [...] Russian production was preoccupied with feelings, with the vibration of the atmosphere surrounding motionless figures. The relationship between patches of black and white, the concepts of chiaroscuro were more expressive than an occasional gesture by the characters.⁴⁹

Starevich's production in general proposed narratives with a pace regulated by film editing, which made his *œuvre* stand out from the usual classical Russian films of the 1910s. In addition, the humour in his films was created by unusual situations—in accordance with the type of humour typically used in Russian cinema—and by the actions of his characters, thus endorsing both the Russian and

⁴⁷ Russian film director Fyodor Otsep (1895–1949) believed there were three important schools of cinematography: the American school which exploited movement, the European school whose aesthetics was based on form, and the Russian school which emphasised psychology, as seen in the work of the leading directors of the time, Petr Chardynin (1873–1934), Vladimir Gardin (1877–1965), Yakov Protazanov (1881–1945), and Evgenii Bauer (1865–1917). Yuri Tsivian, "Early Russian Cinema," 13. For more on Bauer and Protazanov, see Beumers, *History of Cinema*, 22–36, 61–63; Alyssa DeBlasio, "Choreographing Space, Time and *Dikovinki* in the Films of Evgenii Bauer," in *The Russian Review* 66, no. 4 (Oct., 2007): 671–692; Ian Christie and Julian Graffy, eds., *Yakov Protazanov and the Continuity of Russian Cinema* (London: British Film Institute, 1993).

⁴⁸ Kenetz, 19.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 17–18; Yuri Tsivian, "New Notes on Russian Film," 345–346.

American film traditions. Moreover, in 1930, Starevich cited American cinema as his model and Charlie Chaplin (1889–1977), Buster Keaton (1895–1966), and D.W. Griffith (1875–1948) as his favourite filmmakers.⁵⁰ In contrast, the choice of Krylov's text made his work closer to the Russian tradition. This was also supported by the dramatic ending of the film as the viewer witnesses the dragonfly who laying in the snow, has stopped moving, and is covered with snow. In this sense, one can see Starevich's earlier films as not entirely representative of the cinematography of the time as he borrowed from both the Russian and American traditions.

Impressed by this original and highly detailed work and by his growing reputation, the producer Khanzhonkov offered Starevich a contract with his Moscow studio. In 1912, the young animator moved to the apartment inside Khanzhonkov's studio with a high salary, a workshop he could use to make film, and the promise of a small studio for his personal use.⁵¹ At the studio, Starevich worked as an assistant director, cameraman, operator, decorator, and actor, mostly on live-action literary adaptations, which included visual effects made with the use of animation techniques. The works of authors considered as part of the Imperial Russian literature such as Nikolai Gogol (*The Night Before Christmas* (1912), *Portrait* (1915), *Viy* (1918), *Night of May* (1918), *The Terrible Vengeance* (1912), *The Sorotchninsk Fair* (1918)), Alexander Pushkin (*Ruslan and Ludmila* (1913)), Alexander Ostrovsky (1823–1886) (*The Snow Maiden* (1914)), and Mikhail Lermontov (1814–1837) (*Taman'* (1916)) were particularly inspiring to him.⁵² Starevich animated all of the stories listed above. What these stories had in

⁵⁰ A number of shorts made by D. W. Griffith circulated in Russia prior to the Revolution. Martin and Martin, 52; Vance Kepley Jr., "Intolerance and the Soviets: A Historical Investigation," in *Inside the Film Factory: New Approaches to Russian and Soviet Cinema*, ed. Richard Taylor and Ian Christie (London, New York: Routledge, 1991), 52.

⁵¹ Martin and Martin, 43.

⁵² Except for Ostrovsky, who was known for his satirical realist writings. However, Starevich made use of his most unusual play, *The Snow Maiden*, which was based on a Russian folktale rather than on the author's usual social commentary.

common was that they were all influenced by the ideas of Romanticism, especially with concern to nature, the supernatural, and a past expressed in the revival of Slavic folk culture.⁵³ The elevation of folk culture to elite art was done as a way to promote national consciousness and romantic nationalism. Even if the artists did not clearly state political opinions, it was still a form of political commentary. Therefore, one cannot say for sure that Shiryaev and Starevich had strong nationalistic views when they made their films. Nevertheless, they set their *œuvre* in the Russian elite and higher arts' realm and found inspiration in the romantic artistic movement.⁵⁴

In addition to his work with live-action films, Starevich also continued his animation and made his most famous film and Khanzhonkov's greatest international success: *The Cameraman's Revenge* (1912), another comical tale of adultery and betrayal.⁵⁵ The use of this kind of satirical comedy of manners was popular in Russian theatre and although it remained neoclassical in form, it was nevertheless the first step in establishing the socialist realist national comedy.⁵⁶ Starevich's humour was therefore strongly "Russian" in nature and was also

⁵³ Prior to that, personal identity was expressed through filiation and religious allegiance. The idea of nation was formed later and was linked to traditional society as it was believed that the true nationhood rested with the "people" (*narod*). "The Origins of Nationalism, 1815–1863." Directed by Vejas Gabriel Liulevicius. The Great Courses. Episode 5 of *A History of Eastern Europe* (San Francisco, California: Kanopy Streaming, 2015), accessed March 2017, <https://ualberta-kanopystreaming-com.login.ezproxy.library.ualberta.ca/video/origins-nationalism-1815-1863>. For more on Romanticism, see Helen Gardner, Fred S. Kleiner, Christin J. Mamiya, Richard G. Tansey, and Kings, eds., *Gardner's Art through the Ages: The Western Perspective*. 11th ed. (Belmont: Thomson/Wadsworth, 2003); Patricia Fride R.-Carrassat, and Isabelle Marcadé, *Comprendre et reconnaître les mouvements dans la peinture* (Paris: Larousse, 1993); Claude Frontisi, *Histoire visuelle de l'art* (Paris, Larousse, 2001).

⁵⁴ Nikolai Gogol is sometimes spelled "Hohol" to follow the Ukrainian spelling. Gogol was an author of Ukrainian origin. He lived and worked in Russia and wrote in Russian. Many of his narratives are set in Ukraine and present Ukrainian local traditions. For these reasons, there are debates as to whether Gogol should be considered a Ukrainian or Russian author. For more on this topic see, Oleh Ilnytskyj, "Cultural Indeterminacy in the Russian Empire: Nikolai Gogol as a Ukrainian Post-Colonial Writer," in *A World of Slavic Studies in Honour of Howard Mozejko*, ed. Paul Duncan Morris (Bloomington: Slavica, 2002), 153–171; Edyta M. Bojanowska, *Nikolai Gogol: Between Ukrainian and Russian Nationalism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007); George S. N. Luckyj, *Between Gogol and Ševčenko* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1971).

⁵⁵ Leyda, 67.

⁵⁶ Martin Banham, ed., *The Cambridge Guide to Theatre* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998), 950.

influenced by high art. Birgit Beumers describes how Starevich wisely married humour and morals in *The Cameraman's Revenge*:

Starevicz [sic] endowed the insects with human agility and emotions, thus abstracting a tale of adultery and making it laughable rather than condemnable, because it pertains not to the world of human civilization. The moral codes of both worlds condemn adultery, but the setting in a non-human world distances the tale.⁵⁷

Tales and fables quickly became Starevich's preferred narrative style, which offered an opportunity for animating his beloved insects. *The Cameraman's Revenge* was the story of an unfaithful husband and wife, whose treachery is exposed. Instead of going to town for business, Mr. Zhukov (*zhuk* means "beetle" in Russian) visits his dragonfly-mistress who works in a cabaret. This dragonfly has another suitor: a grasshopper-cameraman. Mr. Zhukov gets upset at him and hits the grasshopper, who decides to follow the couple. He films their frolics through the keyhole of their bedroom door, another reference to the *voyeur* concept popular in cinema at the time. Upon his return, Mr. Zhukov finds his wife cheating with another man (an artist) and beats him up. Fortunately as Mr. Zhukov is a generous man, he forgives his wife and takes her to the movies. There, his unfaithfulness is exposed as the main program of the night. Mr. and Mrs. Zhukov's fight concludes after they destroy the screen and the projector room, and both are sent to prison. The dramatic ending was, once more, reminiscent of the Russian film tradition.

In *The Cameraman's Revenge*, Starevich once more called on the editing technique of cross-cutting. This was a rare technique in animation at the time. In the film, he made reference to several high arts such as painting (in the beetle artist), theatre and singing (at the music-hall), and cinema (with the grasshopper). Through the display of these different art forms, Starevich addresses class differences. The Zhukovs are from a higher class as they have their own house

⁵⁷ Beumers, 16.

and Mr. Zhukov has a respectable occupation: he is a businessman. Both encountered the lower class (for example, the dragonfly is a music-hall artist and Mrs. Zhukov's lover is a wandering painter) that ultimately led to their downfall.

The Cameraman's Revenge is striking due to the way Starevich brought careful attention to creating a three-dimensional space in his decors. For example, the Zhukov's living room is shown in an angle that exposed the corner of the room, and Mrs. Zhukov lover's apartment, displayed an opened window in an angle that created a sense of depth. In addition, *The Cameraman's Revenge* displayed a consistent and clever use of colour and lighting to indicate where the characters are: yellow for indoors and for an outdoors that are strongly illuminated; and blue for outdoors at night. The colour red was also used when the cameraman prepares his revenge: when he follows Mr. Zhukov and his mistress, while he films them, and at the theatre when he projects the film and ultimately gets his revenge.⁵⁸ These sequences are the ones presenting the highest element of suspense in the film. It is unclear if Starevich made use of the colour red to show anger or the rivalry between the two male characters but this formalistic choice nevertheless supports the idea of suspense in his film. This is further proof that Starevich's creative effort was aimed at forming a cinematic language for animation and elevating it to high art.

As Starevich was the first known animator in Imperial Russia who perceived animation as a form of entertainment, he became for a time the filmmaker in greatest demand by the Russian studios.⁵⁹ He created strong ties with several actors and directors such as Ivan Mosjoukine (1889–1939), Olga Obolenskaya (unknown dates), Evgenii Bauer (1865–1917), and Khanzhonkov.⁶⁰ These connections would prove useful in the future as at the end of 1913, Starevich decided to leave the studio to work independently. He produced several

⁵⁸ There is no information available as to if the colours were created by toning or tinting.

⁵⁹ Tsivian, "Pre-Revolutionary Russia," 162.

⁶⁰ Martin and Martin, 58–59.

films independently before World War I broke out, when audiences in cinemas exceeded those of all other art forms of public entertainment.⁶¹

During World War I, Starevich went back to work with studios. This period was characterised by a lack of raw materials but also the constant fear of being sent to the front lines. To avoid being mobilised, he joined the government Skobelev Committee to produce advertisements and patriotic films such as *The Lily of Belgium* (1915), an allegory of the German invasion of Belgium.⁶² In 1918, Starevich joined Trofimov's Russ company but produced only one film there before going back to Khanzhonkov.⁶³ While most Russian directors were eventually associated with a single studio, Starevich, because he owned his own little studio and thus was free to choose the subject matter for his films, was able to partially preserve his independence.⁶⁴ This would remain the case in France, where Starevich moved after the Revolution.

In 1917, Russia underwent two revolutions.⁶⁵ The first one, in February, was led by the Bolshevik party and eliminated the monarchy. This first revolution had little effect on the film industry. After the revolution, a reformist provisional government was formed (the Duma). The Bolsheviks, seeking power for the working and peasant class, were not satisfied with this arrangement. The second revolution, led by Vladimir Lenin (1870–1924), happened in October 1917 after the Duma failed to stop Russia's participation to World War I. This event led to the Civil War that lasted until 1922. After this second revolution, the Union of

⁶¹ Archie Brown, John Fennel, Michael Kaser, and H. T. Willetts, eds., *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Russia and the Soviet Union* (Cambridge, London, New York, New Rochelle, Melbourne, Sydney: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 249.

⁶² Crafton, *Before Mickey*, 241.

⁶³ Donald Crafton also mentions that Starevich worked for Josef Yermoliev (1889–1962) during this period. *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ His independence was only partially kept as he still had contract work with other studios at the same time as working in his own studio. Tsivian, "Pre-Revolutionary Russia," 162.

⁶⁵ For more on this topic, see Rex A. Wade, ed. *Revolutionary Russia: New Approaches to the Russian Revolution of 1917* (New York, London: Routledge, 2004); Vladimir Brovkin, *Russia After Lenin: Politics, Culture and Society, 1921–1929* (New York, London: Routledge, 2005).

Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) was formed.⁶⁶ The Bolsheviks' rise to power had a great effect on cinema and animation as communist ideology favoured state ownership of all film studios and companies.⁶⁷

Following the October Revolution of 1917, Starevich lost his job at the Khanzhonkov's studio in Moscow. Khanzhonkov, however, suggested coming with him to Crimea, where he had another studio. Starevich left Moscow and immigrated with a part of the film community to Yalta, which became known as the "Russian Hollywood."⁶⁸ Starevich recalled the difficult trip in his memoirs: "I left with my wife and my two children, the trip lasted almost two months, we moved forward gradually as the Red front advanced. I arrived in Yalta in May 1918."⁶⁹

Slowly, the Red army approached Crimea and the last White troops left the region in November 1920.⁷⁰ That same year, after a short stay in Constantinople, Tarente, and Milan, Starevich relocated in Paris where he was hired by Russian producer Pavel Thiemann (b. 1881).⁷¹ He opened a studio in Fontenay-Sous-Bois, near Paris, where he continued to work on animation for many decades. Again using puppets, Starevich made films inspired by moralist fables and

⁶⁶ For more on this period, see Christopher Read, *From Tsar to Soviets: The Russian People and Their Revolution, 1917–21* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996); Beryl Williams, *The Russian Revolution 1917–1921* (Oxford, New York: Blackwell Publishing, 1987).

⁶⁷ Bordwell and Thompson, 105–106.

⁶⁸ All researchers do not agree on the date of Starevich's departure, mentioning 1917 at times and 1919 as well (Bordwell and Thompson, *Film History*, 105–106; Crafton, 241). It also is unclear why Starevich immigrated to France. Some sources mention possible economic difficulties and disagreements with the regime. On the one hand there is no proof of him ever being supportive of the Bolshevik Revolution. Other testimonies mentioned that the Polish government had invited Polish *émigrés* to join the newly re-formed Poland. This could have been Starevich's intention. In any case, no document supports either of these theories. Bendazzi, 36; Crafton, 241; Martin and Martin, 76.

⁶⁹ "Je partis avec ma femme et mes deux enfants, le voyage dura presque deux mois, nous avançons au fur et à mesure que le front rouge se déplaçait. J'arrivai à Yalta en mai 1918." Martin and Martin, 73.

⁷⁰ The Red army was under the Bolshevik government and the White army was opposed to the revolutionary government. The Whites were supported by Britain, the United States and several other Western countries. Bordwell and Thompson, 107.

⁷¹ Martin and Martin, 77.

sentimentality.⁷² Starevich's and Shiryaev's early productions in Russia were somewhat elitist in the choice of subject matter as we have seen in their reference to ballet and the use of Russian adaptations of tales. The sources they used for inspiration were promoting certain aspects of folk culture and elevated them as an elite art. The merging of populist and elitist cultural forms served the redefinition of national identity and of Russian arts by intellectuals and artists. It found its niche in the wider social changes and cultural self-definition initiated by the Romantics. However, the two animators seem to have borrowed from the Romantics as they saw fit and used these national elements only as motifs or as narrative structures for their animation. Their films expressed some of the cultural values nurtured in the late nineteenth-century Imperial Russia. But describing these as purely nationalistic would be exaggerated as their political agenda were not clearly defined. Instead, their films express a discourse related to *le politique* and a certain construction of elitist offering a social order where Russian culture is promoted. However, like for the American Dream, the early national ethos in Imperial Russia was not immutable and transformed with time, reflecting Russian society's mutations. The elitist taste that the early animated production displayed thus ended at the same time as the Revolution started. The new socio-political changes brought by the Revolution profoundly changed Imperial Russia's society and called once more for new forms of national identity through art.

The October Revolution had unfavourable consequences for the young Russian film industry. The country lost some of their most prominent artists and producers. Animation in Russia came to a standstill for years, and film production was greatly slowed down.⁷³ The many companies that fled the country took their equipment with them. The USSR needed raw stock and production equipment,

⁷² This portion of Starevich's repertoire will be analysed in chapter three on French animation.

⁷³ In addition, Russia had lost most of its film and animated productions of this period. It is estimated that only 20 percent of early Russian films survived. One third of these existing films were reconstructed and restored. Of these restored films, many exist only in fragments. Youngblood, 75.

none of which were produced locally.⁷⁴ This greatly influenced the evolution of animation, which could not develop without cel. Russians remained diplomatically and economically isolated during the rest of the Civil war. In addition, Lenin nationalised cinema in 1919.⁷⁵ This decree required that all privately owned raw materials be registered with the government. Instead the raw materials were promptly hidden by the owners.⁷⁶ This worsened the raw material situation because more private producers and animators, such as Starevich, emigrated and took their material with them.⁷⁷ In addition, many film directors left or had difficulties finding work.⁷⁸

In the early Soviet years, the cultural values expressed in the first Russian animated films gave way to the new Soviet national ideology, where *le politique* and *la politique* (politics) merged into a single discourse.⁷⁹ However, this system of ideas was not entirely coherent as multiple interpretations of Lenin's political ideology were tolerated. Since the government was busy rebuilding the cities destroyed by war, no clear rule concerning art, including animation, was made, and arts in general became more heterogeneous. As Lenin did not dictate a specific state aesthetic, artists were free to visually interpret the party's discourse.⁸⁰ Like the new national ethos, the art and animation production of that

⁷⁴ Bordwell and Thompson, 106; Kenetz, 31.

⁷⁵ For a concise analysis of this decree, see Vance Kepley, Jr. "Soviet Cinema and State Control: Lenin's Nationalization Decree Reconsidered," *Journal of Film and Video* 42, no. 2 (Summer 1990): 3–14.

⁷⁶ Bordwell and Thompson, 107–108; Thompson, 21.

⁷⁷ Thompson, 21.

⁷⁸ Tsivian explains that: "In the eyes of the Soviet successors their pre-revolutionary reputations turned directors into 'bourgeois specialists' (*spetsy*). [...] not one of them was able to make a comparable career in the new Russia." Tsivian, "Pre-Revolutionary Russia," 162.

⁷⁹ This lack of a strong national ethos in Russian pioneers' animation is partly due to the humble repertoire of films available, to the few Russian animators, and to the limited distribution of these animated film.

⁸⁰ Elena Kornetchuk, "Soviet Art Under Government Control: From the 1917 Revolution to Khrushchev's Thaw," in *Nonconformist Art: The Soviet Experience 1956–1986*, ed. Alla Rosenfeld and Norton T. Dodge (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1995), 36.

period were largely embedded with Marxist theory. Although animators and artists were free to choose what form to give their *œuvre*, the message had to remain ideologically oriented towards politics. The new artistic movements of this period were supposed to lead to radical social ideas and to revolutionising consciousness by practicing experimentation, defying canons while still being under the control of the new leading party. This context led to a rich yet chaotic development in the arts, due to the plurality of voices and interpretations of the official discourse (metadiscourse).

The new government and new social structures called for a novel form of artistic expression and led to the development of the Avant-garde movement.⁸¹ In many ways, the Russian Avant-garde movement was able to develop because of the lack of interest of the government.⁸² It formed what is today one of the most celebrated artistic and intellectual movements in the world, and brought well-deserved fame to the Soviet film industry. Furthermore, the Avant-garde generated an increased interest from artists and from animators who wanted to experiment with different media, as art according to Marxist theory was seen as a political phenomenon.⁸³ During this period, the nineteenth century Imperial Russia national paradigm based on elitist cultural values, Romanticism, and the

⁸¹ In the 1920, the Soviets were looking for new images and medium that would more fully reflect the current realities of socialist society. At the time in USSR, an average of two out of five adults were literate, and most of the population lived in rural areas. This was a major obstacle to the new government and poster art soon became a means for communicating the party's ideology. M. Bezkhutry and M. Robotyahov, eds., *Kharkivs'kiy Khydozhniy Muzey* (Kyiv: Mystetstvo, 1971), xvii. Kenetz, 28; Philip M. Taylor, *Munitions of the Mind: A History of Propaganda From the Ancient World to the Present Era* (Manchester, New York: Manchester University Press, Palgrave: 2003), 202.

⁸² The term Avant-garde is part of a larger European phenomenon and is an umbrella for different artistic, literary, and theatrical experiments, which happened in the Russian Empire, more or less between 1908 and about 1925. The Avant-garde's artistic view was inspired by pre-revolutionary utopia and sought a universal, rational, and "scientific" approach to objects, nature, and society as well as the creation of a New Man, a concept that was later affiliated with Bolshevism. Later, under Socialist realism the New Man was believed to be born out of the social and political illumination that socialism provided. For more on this topic, see John E. Bowlt and Olga Matich, eds., *Laboratory of Dreams: The Russian Avant-Garde and Cultural Experiment* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996); Kristin Thompson, "Early Alternatives to the Hollywood Mode of Production: Implications for Europe's Avant-gardes," in *The Silent Cinema Reader*, ed. Lee Grieveson and Peter Krämer (New York, London: Routledge, 2004), 348–367.

⁸³ Matthew Cullerne Bown, *Art Under Stalin* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1991), 21.

idealisation of the past changed after the Revolution to a clear political and intellectual one, based on Marxism, revolutionary ideas, and the glorification of urban settings and the future. By participating in this new art movement, artists were part of a larger artistic and social movement, which sought to reform their national ethos into a Soviet national paradigm.

Animation benefited from developments in the Avant-garde in two ways. First, this period was dominated by experiments in all artistic fields, including film and animation, which supported the revolutionary cause and the new regime. This fuelled a new interest for underdeveloped media such as animation. In addition, Avant-garde artists crossed artistic genres and disciplines to fully democratise art. It was therefore not uncommon that many filmmakers and poets were also visual artists and animators. For example, the first Russian artist who experimented with animation was Vladimir Mayakovsky (1893–1930), a Soviet Futurist poet and active poster artist. His experiments with art and poetry intersected with animation, as most of his short films were political manifestos.⁸⁴

Second, animation also benefited from the several schools and organisations that were founded and flourished thanks to the new artistic input. These schools became important centres for artists to learn the techniques and the fundamentals of animation. For example, the VKhUTEMAS (Vysshie khudozhestvenno-tekhnicheskie masterskie or the Higher Art and Technical Studios) prepared qualified master artists, professors, and directors to work in the industry and in higher education, and fulfilled the state's goals for efficiency of production.⁸⁵ Several of the school's students later became some of the most

⁸⁴ It seems that none of Mayakovsky's experiments with animation survived. Bendazzi, 46.

⁸⁵ For more on the VKhUTEMAS, see Mitra Abbaspour, Lee Ann Daffner, and Maria Morris Hamburg, eds., "VKhUTEMAS. About the School," Museum of Modern Art, accessed August 2015, <https://www.moma.org/interactives/objectphoto/schools/15.html>; S. O. Khan-Magomedov, *VKHUTEMAS: Moscow 1920-1930. Volume 1-2* (Paris: Edition du Regard, 1990); Boris Pavlov, "Animation in the 'Russian-Hollywood' of the 1920s–1930s," *Animation Journal* 6, no. 2 (Spring 1998): 18–19.

significant personalities in Soviet animation.⁸⁶ During the 1920s and 1930s, the school became the central place of the elaboration of a new Soviet style, expressed mostly in the Avant-garde's Constructivist, Suprematist and Rationalist art movements. After the completion of their studies at VKhUTEMAS, most of the animators gathered in animation workshops given by local studios, where they created animated films.⁸⁷

Animation of this period was particularly rich in its artistic influences. It took its sources in local popular *lubki*, political manifestos, vignettes, book illustrations, and poster art traditions.⁸⁸ Therefore, early Soviet animation continued the nationalist search initiated decades before, by finding inspiration in popular art forms. However, the links to elite culture were removed to fit the Soviet Bolshevik cultural values and the new national ethos was grounded in the everyday life and the future rather than in an idealised past. During this period, animation and cinema turned away from narrative techniques to favour propagandistic ideas and a modern poster-like aesthetic. Pontieri's description of this type of animation clearly demonstrates how these films were representative of the *zeitgeist* of the time:

The Revolution brought with it a fervid impetus to any art accessible to the masses. Posters, caricatures, and animation were all able to convey in

⁸⁶ For example, painters Nikolai Khodataev (1892–1979), Zenon Komissarenko (1891–1978), and Juri Merkulov (1901–1979). Along with them were also, Daniil Cherkes (1899–1971), Ivan Ivanov-Vano (1900–1987), Valentina and Zinaida Brumberg (1899–1975, 1900–1983), Nikolai Khodataev's sister Olga Khodataeva (1894–1968), and Vladimir Suteev (1903–1993). All of them left their mark to Soviet animation.

⁸⁷ Leyda locates these workshops at the VGIK (All-Union State Institute of Cinematography, later renamed Gerasimov Institute of Cinematography), while Pontieri locates them in Mezhrabpom Film (first called Mezhrabpom-Russ) Pontieri, 11; Leyda, 274.

⁸⁸ Bendazzi, 46; Pontieri, 1. For more on these art traditions, see Alla Rosenfeld, ed. *Defining Russian Graphic Arts 1898–1934. From Diaghilev to Stalin* (New Brunswick, New Jersey, London: Rutgers University Press; Rutgers: The Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum, 1999); Alla Sytova, *The Lubok: Russian Folk Pictures, 17th to 19th Century* (Leningrad: Aurora Art Publishers: 1984); Wolfgang Till, *Lubok, der russische Volksbilderbogen: Städtisches Reiss-Museum Mannheim, 23. September bis 27. Oktober 1985: Münchner Stadtmuseum, 8. November 1985 bis 6. Januar 1986* (Munich: Münchner Stadtmuseum: 1985); Gosudarstvennyi Istoricheskii muzei, *Russkii risovannyi lubok kontsa XVIII-nachala XX veka. Iz sobraniia Gosudarstvennogo Istoricheskogo muzeia, Moskva* (Moskva: Russkaia kniga: 1992).

simple, linear traits and easily understandable conventions a message that could reach the largely uneducated common people. These popular forms of art were geared to serve the new Socialist order, promoting the construction of a new society, as well as clearly defining its enemies.⁸⁹

The most famous posters of the period shared a lot with the first animated films, since despite the attempts of the artists to present a narrative, animated films tended to look like a series of animated posters linked by intertitles.⁹⁰ The films like the posters and *lubki*, displayed caricature-like art, thick contour lines, and a juxtaposition of different images to convey a symbolic message.⁹¹ In general, artists had a strong nationalistic approach to art, but their national ethos was Soviet rather than Russian. This was depicted in early Soviet animation films, whose content avoided any references to ethnic difference. Although the movement promoted values that opposed bourgeois supremacy, its intellectual content was often complex, the messages contradictory, and the message was not communicated effectively to the masses. The national ethos displayed in animated films of that period was therefore highly political in nature and addressed intellectuals rather than the uneducated general population. The uniqueness of these artists' approach to animation, was that they were much more politically involved than their predecessors and used their art as a tool for their activism.

The films of this period are representative of the post-revolutionary confusion and of the diverse interpretation of ideology. This situation led to interesting visual juxtaposition that enabled the artists to speak through aesthetics rather than only through diegesis. The visual animated metadiscourse allowed for

⁸⁹ Pontieri, 6.

⁹⁰ The posters themselves often displayed a succession of several images in order to create a short narrative. Although this can remind a viewer of comic books, in Russia it originated from icon art and from the *lubok* print. Both art forms are characterised by the representation of several events in a single temporal unity. Most of the animated work done during this period was based on caricatures and was propagandistic in nature. Caricatures and parodies were easier to produce than story-based films, as animation was still underdeveloped. The main themes of the films of that period were political and social satires, popular, modern, and surrealist tales, as well as musical comedies based on current events. Pontieri, 6–7; Pavlov, 20–21; Ivanov-Vano, ed., *Khudozhniki sovetskogo mul'tfil'ma*, 3.

⁹¹ Pontieri, 6-7.

more complex animated films and gave space for interpretation from the public. For example, one can see such controlled freedom in the animated films of Dziga Vertov.⁹² Vertov started to explore animation in 1918.⁹³ *Soviet Toys* (1924) and *Humoresques* (1924) are his first two artistic films, both of which deal with current political events of the 1920s.⁹⁴ He used ink and paper, and paper cut-out animations for *Soviet Toys*. The film is based on a political cartoon made by Soviet political satirist Viktor Denisov (1893–1946), working under the pseudonym Viktor Deni.⁹⁵ It is representative of the animated metadiscourse, which was possible in this period, as it criticised Lenin’s 1921 New Economic Policy (NEP). Although the policy probably saved Soviet cinema and industries, it was far from successful in creating unanimity as it favoured certain citizens over others.⁹⁶

These inequalities are shown in *Soviet Toys*, through the protagonists’ caricatures: a business-looking man (or NEPman), a woman, and two priests, represent the people this policy favoured. In contrast, a worker, a peasant, and a

⁹² He is mostly known for his live-action films as well as his manifestos and writing on film. Bordwell and Thompson, *Film Art*, 331; Bordwell and Thompson, *Film History*, 108-109; Dziga Vertov, “‘Dziga Vertov: The Cine-Eyes. A Revolution.’ Source: D. Vertov, ‘Kinoki. Perevorot’ *Lef*, 1923, no. 3 (June/July): 135–143,” in *The Film Factory: Russian and Soviet Cinema in Documents*, eds. Richard Taylor and Ian Christie. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 89–93.

⁹³ He created an animated map for the first Soviet Agricultural Handicraft and Industrial Exhibition in his newsreels *Kino-Week* (*Kinonedelia*) and later in 1923 in his other newsreel *Kinopravda*. Lora Mjolsness Wheeler, “Dziga Vertov’s Soviet Toys: Commerce, Commercialization and Cartoons,” *Studies in Russian & Soviet Cinema* 2, no. 3 (2008): 248.

⁹⁴ *Humoresques* only exists in fragments at the Russian State Archive of Film and Photographic Documents (RGAKFD). Some specialists date Soviet Toys in 1923. Bendazzi, 47; Mjolsness Wheeler, 252; Pontieri, 10.

⁹⁵ Mjolsness Wheeler, 257; Pontieri, 7-8.

⁹⁶ In order to fix the economy, Lenin formed a policy allowing temporary private ownership and capitalist dealings, which resulted in the reappearance of raw stocks and an increased in film production. Bordwell and Thompson, 109; Mjolsness Wheeler, 254. For different interpretations on the NEP policy see Commission du Comité Central du P. C. (b) de l’URSS, *Histoire du parti communiste (bolchévique) de l’URSS* (Montréal: Éditions Drapeau Rouge, 1977), 277–285; Vincent Barnett, “Soviet Commodity Markets During NEP,” *The Economic History Review, New Series* 48, no. 2 (May 1995): 329–352; Paul Ashin, “Wage Policy in the Transition to NEP,” *Russian Review* 47, no. 3 (Jul., 1988): 293–313; V. N. Bandera, “The New Economic Policy (NEP) as an Economic System,” *Journal of Political Economy* 71, no. 3 (Jun., 1963): 265–279.

soldier from the Red Army, represent the masses.⁹⁷ The choice of characters indicates an interest from the animator in showing class distinction (businessman, worker, priest) rather than showing any ethnic difference. This is consistent with the early Soviet ethos which attempted to create an equal society. In the film, a table is set for the NEPman, who eats like a glutton until he gains so much weight he can no longer move. He then calls a woman, who starts dancing for him. The two priests and a worker realise the NEPman's stomach is full of money but cannot get any of it. The worker then merges with a peasant to form a single new character who presses on the NEPman's stomach with one of his legs. The stomach breaks and money flows out of it and is given back to the People's Bank. At the end of the film, soldiers from the Red Army form a Christmas tree and the protagonists become ornaments on the tree. The narrative ends on an image of the communist hammer and sickle superimposed onto the Christmas tree.

In this film, Vertov not only presented actual events, but also used stereotypes and symbols to communicate his point. However, while the use of symbolism makes the characterisation clear for the viewer, the overall film remains too intellectual to be fully understood. For example, the bald NEPman wears a business suit and is depicted as greedy and glutton, characteristics that are emphasised by his fatness and actions. His uncontrollable consumption of food and drink is clearly condemned in the film. The NEPman relationship to the dancer is that of an audience/performer and the performance is treated as one more service he enjoys. This increases his role as a consumer of goods, a role highly criticised by Soviet ideology. On the other hand, the woman has flirtatious intentions, which are confirmed by the provocative dress she wears, the kisses she blows to the NEPman, and the way she winks at him. In addition, she offers the

⁹⁷ In her article, Mjolsness Wheeler offers a highly refined interpretation of Vertov's animation in relation to the NEP policy. For the full analysis see Mjolsness Wheeler, 247–267.

NEPman a cancan performance to the popular Russian song *Kalinka*.⁹⁸ In this sequence, Vertov seems to condemn the Western influence that the woman displays. While the song is an obvious national symbol, the cancan refers to foreign influences and was seen as one of the least noble forms of dance. Once more, this element is in accord with Soviet ideology and its disapproval of Western values. Although these ideological elements are clear, the actions and intentions of the characters remains obscure. For example, after the NEPman calls for the woman, she comes as a maple leaf and is transformed into a woman. The meaning of the leaf remains mysterious for the viewer. Furthermore, the audience had to be very well acquainted with Russian politics and current events to understand that the priests are fighting because of a schism in the Russian Orthodox church.⁹⁹ Vertov's ideological film, like most of the animated films of that period, was strongly oriented towards the nascent Soviet national ethos.

Soviet Toys focused on the ideological message in the film—the NEP that is favouring certain citizens over others and how it is threatening to the Soviet collective—rather than its aesthetic. It features very simple lines depicting the small important details such as food on a table. The background of the image is represented only by a horizontal line in the back to show depth in the image. However, most of the action happens only on a single plane and the lack of details in the background emphasises the action and message rather than the narrative or the visual and kinetic quality of the animation. The film displayed two different formalistic choices: one showing the general action, and another one presenting a close-up of the protagonists' faces in an iris shot (circular forms), a stylistic

⁹⁸ Historically, female dancers have been seen as promiscuous because of the emphasis of the body in dancing and their precarious situation at the theatre. In addition to these elements, Vertov chooses to have his character dance a cancan, a typical French cabaret performance that originated in working-class dance halls and consisted in women kicking their legs as high as they could to exposing their petticoats and undergarment. For more on this topic, see David Price, *Cancan!* (London: Cygnus Arts; Madison, Teaneck: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1998).

⁹⁹ For more on the schism in the Russian Orthodox Church, see Edward Rosiof, *Red priests: Renovationism, Russian Orthodoxy, and Revolution, 1905–1946* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002).

element reminiscent of silent films and of Cohl's films. The irises were used to show the emotion separately from the action. For example, the portraits in the irises are much more detailed and stylistically complex but are not as refined in terms of movement since they only show the facial reactions of the characters. The character's emotions are expressed mostly in the movements of the eyes and sometimes the mouth. On the other hand, all actions are shown in a full-length shot, which means that the full bodies of the protagonists are displayed on the screen.

Soviet Toys has no sound *per se* but is accompanied by a general musical score that was present when no important action happened. The music changes when Vertov introduces a new action, for example, when the businessman falls asleep after overeating, when he falls on the floor, when the woman dances, etc. Music creates a rhythm with the movements of the characters that adds to the film's dynamic and each new event in the film is introduced by a new musical theme. In some cases, the music is meant to present the type of character. For example, Vertov used the popular Russian song *Kalinka* to accompany the woman dancing. This choice gives the dance a strong rhythm but also reorients the character performing a French dance to the Russian realm. The priests-characters also have their own motifs. Upon entering the screen, a musical theme resembling the rhythm of the Orthodox chants during Holy Liturgy begins. When they start fighting, the music changes again to a faster-paced tune. The priests' fight is shown as particularly foolish as the worker next to them laughs at them. This element of the film clearly condemns the dogma that the priest characters represent, another feature of the new Soviet ideological values. Finally, the worker has his own musical motif as well, which returns when he merges with the peasant into one person showing the collectivity. The film ends with an image of soldiers of the Red Army. Each soldier is a different size, similar to a *matrioshka* (nesting doll). They all merge and form a giant Christmas tree, where the characters opposing Soviet values hang like ornaments. The worker and the peasant on the

other hand climb the tree by themselves to form the top of the Christmas tree. With this image, Vertov emphasises the role of the individual as a member of the collective identified as Soviet rather than as an ethnic group or social class. It clearly shows that a united Soviet society and Soviet national values would overcome adversaries. Finally, the conclusion of the film has its own unique musical material that reinforced the message presented to the viewer with a completely different rhythm.

Music was already used in this way in live-action films before Vertov did so with animation. However, through this stylistic choice, Vertov, like Starevich with his use of colour, attempt to create a cinematic language for animation. *Soviet Toys* however, does not refer to elite culture, which was condemned as bourgeois. Instead, it presented complex ideological ideas to the audience with symbols they could recognise like the stereotypical characters clearly representing the good and bad people and the merging of the peasant and the worker into a single and stronger protagonist showing a united proletarian society. In this sense, the new ideology proposed by animated films like *Soviet Toys* is therefore much more populist than the films by Starevich and Shiryaev. Through the design of the film and values depicted, Vertov promoted Soviet ideology and defined the enemies of this new Soviet social order. However, the film's ideology was oriented towards an a certain intellectual understanding as the post-revolutionary national ethos, the character's actions, and the overall film were not easy to comprehend. The message was clearly ideological and criticises one of the government's decisions—the NEP. This makes *Soviet Toys* an animated metadiscourse as it remained politically ideological but was not entirely in accordance with the institutional ethos. This relative freedom of creation and criticism, allowed for experimentation with the medium in the new art departments and schools formed after the revolution.

Because of the creation of new educational institutions such as the VKhUTEMAS, studios also slowly added experimental animation departments to

their structures and Soviet animation really flourished at the beginning of the 1930s.¹⁰⁰ Most of the time, directors of animation departments supported young animators and left them free to choose themes and styles for their films. This meant the animators were more independent and could experiment with the medium. In all the studios of the former USSR, animators had to work with a small budget, no cel, and poor equipment. Because of this most of the films of this period used cut-out paper, marionettes, and paper drawn images. With a nascent art form, animators found inspiration in other arts: the slow rhythm and symbolism present in theatre plays and cinema, and the visual elements of *lubki*, poster art, and illustration. Although animation during this period included some high-quality films, it remained less developed than live-action film.¹⁰¹ The restrictive movement and minimal style it created was nevertheless inscribed in this experimental time when flat images ruled.

In 1925, the studio started to offer workshops under the direction of Ivan Ivanov-Vano (1900–1987) and Yuri Merkulov (1901–1979).¹⁰² At Mezhrabpom, animation was initially intended for live-action films' intertitles, but it soon became an important part of the studio. More than half of the animated films

¹⁰⁰ The expansion of the field of animation in the 1930s led to the success of the first amorphous animated hero created by Lev Atamanov: Kliaksa. He was born out of ink pots and had the capacity to change shape –a direct reference to the Fleischer's animated series *Out of the Inkwell* (1918–1929) in the United States. A son of the working class, Kliaksa was born with X-ray vision, which enabled him to spot class enemies. His movements and shapes fitted music rhythm. Born in 1934, the character soon disappeared. MacFadyen 65–66.

¹⁰¹ Ivan Ivanov-Vano claimed that between 1924 and 1929, an average of ten animated shorts were produced in the same studio. Giannalberto Bendazzi, *Le film d'animation*, 77; Olivier Cotte, *Il était une fois le dessin animé* (Paris: Dreamland, 2001), 229.

¹⁰² This studio was a German-Russian collaboration and partially private, born out of the new exploitation structures produced by the NEP policy. It co-existed with the newly formed Sovkino, a government-sponsored studio, but was dependent on Sovkino for the choice of scenarios, film exploitation, and raw material. The studio was reorganised and renamed Mezhrabpom-Rus' in 1928. Raphaël Muller and Thomas Wieder, *Cinéma et régimes autoritaires au XXe siècle: Écrans sous influence* (Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 2008), 29; Malte Hagener, *Moving Forward, Looking Back: The European Avant-Garde and the Invention of Film Culture, 1919–1939* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2007), 182; Léon Moussiniac, *Le cinéma soviétique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1928), 111. For more on Mezhrabpom Studio, see Aïcha Kherroubi, ed. *Le studio Mezhrabpom ou l'aventure du cinéma privé au pays des bolchéviks. 3 octobre-1er décembre 1996. Musée d'Orsay* (Orsay: Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1996).

made there were ideologically driven advertisements or propagandist films.¹⁰³ Subsequently, large orders for educational films and a desire from the animators to focus on narratives further influenced how animated films changed.¹⁰⁴ Several animators from the VKhUTEMAS worked at the studio. It formed one of the most important experimental animation departments and several examples of animated films influenced by the Avant-garde were made there.¹⁰⁵ Those films, like *Soviet Toys*, remained highly intellectual and politically ideological in nature.

By 1930, several active animation departments existed in different studios and animators regularly moved from one studio to another.¹⁰⁶ This was not an abnormal situation as many studios closed down, reopened, or merged with other companies. This nurtured the stylistic plurality characteristic of this period as no animator conformed to a specific style. This also means that the Soviet national ethos and cultural values were freely represented on screen. Several important Soviet animated films were born out of this period of experimentation. *The Post*

¹⁰³ Pavlov, 20; Kherroubi, 95.

¹⁰⁴ Pavlov, 22; Kherroubi, 99.

¹⁰⁵ *Interplanetary Revolution* (1924) is an example. It was partly based on a poem by Mayakovsky and partly on Iakov Protazanov's (1881–1945) successful science fiction film *Aelita* (1924). *China in Flames* (1925) is another example of the “social animation” made at Mezhrabpom-Rus'. This short film was dedicated to the Chinese revolutionary struggle and was made with cut-out paper. This film made in collaboration with animators Ludmila Bkatova, the Brumberg sisters Valentina and Zinaida (who were students at the time), Olga Khodataeva, and Ivan Ivanov-Vano. Both films displayed caricatures and tableaux-like structure linked by intertitles. Leyda, 274; Studiia “M.I.R.,” “Korifei rossiiskoi animatsii: Valentina i Zinaida Brumberg, portret khudozhnikov na fone epokhi” (video), posted August 13, 2013, accessed October 2015, 00:06:09. <https://vimeo.com/71776407>. Pontieri, 11; Bendazzi, 46.

¹⁰⁶ For example, the Brumberg sisters first worked from 1925–1930 with Khodataev and Merkulov, then with animator Ivan Ivanov-Vano (1900–1987). They later joined Mezhrabpom-Rus' in 1928, Sovkino from 1928 to 1933, went back to Mezhrabpomfil'm (the newly renamed Mezhrabpo-Rus') from 1933 to 1935 and in 1936, were hired at Soiuzmul'tfil'm, the state-sponsored animation studio. S. V. Kapkov, ed. *Entsiklopediia otechestvennoi mul'tiplikatsiii* (Moskva: Algoritm: 2006), s.v. “Brumberg sestry”: 129–130.

(1929) by animator Mikhail Tsekhanovsky (1889–1965), was one of them.¹⁰⁷ It presented the story of a letter travelling around the world based on an illustrated children’s book by Samuil Marshak (1887–1964). The film was praised in the former USSR and in the United States. *Black and White* (1932) by Ivanov-Vano, is another example.¹⁰⁸ The film is based on a 1925 Mayakovsky poem, written during his trip to Cuba, about a black man daring to challenge his white master’s authority. The graphic representation used for the film made it closer to a graphic experiment than to a “cartoonish” short. Although they present different stylistic designs, all of the films of this period, like *Soviet Toys*, shared the blunt display of an ideological message intended to explain to the audience, who they were as Soviet citizens, who their allies and enemies were, and what kind of values they should esteem. Therefore, the Soviet collective identity was articulated more clearly than in nineteenth-century Imperial Russia. While the earlier national ethos offered general symbols of Russian culture, the later proposed a clear representation of the collective (us) and those who are apart from the collective (them). This strategy would later be strengthened by and used in Socialist realism. These early Soviet animated films played an important role to Soviet society in articulating the new embryonic Soviet national ethos, which would later be fully achieved under Joseph Stalin’s (1878–1953) patronage.

¹⁰⁷ Prior to working in animation, Tsekhanovsky was a book illustrator. He is also known for his experiments with drawn sound technique, which created artificial optical polyphonic sound on transparent cel. For more on drawn sound in the former USSR, see Nikolai Izvolov, “The History of Drawn Sound in Soviet Russia,” *Animation Journal* VI, no. 2 (Spring 1998): 54–59; Andreï Smirnov and Liubov Pchelkina, “Les pionniers russes de l’art du son. Expérimentations musicales,” in *Lénine, Staline et la musique. 12 octobre 2010- 16 janvier 2011. Musée de la musique, Paris*, (Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 2010), accessed December 2015, http://asmir.info/articles/citedelamusique_catalogue2010.pdf.

¹⁰⁸ The film was accompanied by the voice-over of actor Konstantin Eggert (1883–1955), who read Mayakovsky’s poem. Unfortunately, the poor conditions in which the film was stored damaged its cel and soundtrack. The sound was completely lost, the first part of the film could not be restored, and there is no information available as to what kind of music accompanied the voice over. Excerpts from the song *Sometimes I feel like a Motherless Child* by Paul Robeson, an Afro-American singer who sympathised with the communist party in USSR, were later added to the film. Kherroubi, 101; “Chernoë i Beloe,” accessed September 2014, Memocast. <http://www.memocast.com/media.aspx?id=88948>. For more on Paul Robeson see Freedomways, ed., *Paul Robeson: The Great Forerunner* (New York: International Publishers, 1985).

From elitist ideology, to a political and intellectual ethos after the Revolution, the national paradigm under Stalin turned into a political and populist ideological model. In animation, the ideological discourse under Stalin was expressed through a return to traditional narrative mostly based on fairytale-like content and structure, the display of traditional culture, and an aesthetic supporting the idea of an ordered world. This was similar to Disney's rounded style.¹⁰⁹ These changes in animation became noticeable in the mid-1920s following Lenin's death in 1924, both in the aesthetic displayed on the screen and in the fairy and folktale, used for their a narrative structure and national content, thus making the national discourse much more accessible for the masses. If these strategies echoed the animated production in Imperial Russia that was also based on tale structure, they entirely rejected any form of elitism. Furthermore, the concepts of high art and popular art merged into a single category. The year 1927 saw a boom of animated productions based on storytelling and on a visual style that moved away from the complex Avant-garde aesthetic. Under Stalin, animated films were associated with children's culture because of a new targeted audience and because they were based on tales or poems addressed to them.¹¹⁰ However, more than mere material for children, fairy and folktales were used because of their malleability, which served Stalinist ideology and the collective identity.

These animated fairytale films promoted Soviet ideological values such as sacrifice, honesty, and hard work for the good of the collective, just like the earlier

¹⁰⁹ Several facts could explain the interest in narratives. First, with the end of the war the propagandist effort was less in demand. Furthermore, several children's cinema opened and fostered a new market for animation. N. Venzher, "Animation in the USSR," *Animafilm (Varsovie)* 1, (Oct.–Dec., 1978): 50; Pavlov, 22; Pontieri, 16–18.

¹¹⁰ The only films from this year that survived were *Sen'ka the African*, based on a poem by Korney Chukovsky (1882–1969), a very popular children's author, and *The Skating Rink* by Daniil Cherkas and Ivan Ivanov-Vano. Pontieri, 16.

Soviet films.¹¹¹ However, the representation of the Soviet society was shown through the lens of a Russocentric nationalism largely based on Russian literary material, folklore, and past artistic movements. Soviet animated fairytale films represented what Soviet life was supposed to be like and formed an alternative utopian reality to what Soviet society was experiencing in reality. Furthermore, the concept of children and childhood represented more than just a targeted audience. It was rather a new and important part of the Stalinist ideological message, as it represented the new blooming nation and the possibility of a better (Soviet) world. In this sense, Pontieri is right to view Soviet animation as based on the dichotomy between children versus adults. The rest of this chapter problematises her view on the topic and shows that in the Stalinist sense, the word “child,” “children,” and “childhood” are elements that are part of a larger ideological project aimed at constructing national identity.

The changes in stylistic elements serving the Soviet national ethos under Stalin—the fairytale structure, a new aesthetic, and the display of Russian national culture—can be seen, for example, in *The Tale of the Tsar Durandai* (1934) by Ivanov-Vano, Zenaida and Valentina Brumberg.¹¹² The film is representative of the period between post-revolutionary animation and the blooming of socialist realist animation. Like in *Soviet Toys*, the content of this film is strongly political in nature. However, the Soviet ideology seems moderate, as it was presented as a satirical folktale denouncing an inept ruler. The narrative is introduced with

¹¹¹ For more on Soviet values and ideology, see Vladimir Shlapentokh, “Social Values in the Soviet Union: Major Trends in the Post-Stalin Period,” Final Report to National Council for Soviet and East European Studies, Michigan State University, August 30, 1984; Vladimir Shlapentokh, “The Study of Values as a Social Phenomenon: The Soviet Case,” *Social Forces* 61, no. 2 (Dec., 1982): 403–417; David L. Hoffmann, *Stalinist Values: The Cultural Norms of Soviet Modernity, 1917–1941* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003).

¹¹² Some sources claim that during a guest lecture about modernism in animation at Disney’s studios, the architect Frank Lloyd Wright (1867–1958) showed *The Tale of Tsar Durandai* as an example of thought-provoking animation. (Abraham, 115; La Cinémathèque Québécoise, “Projections: Tsar Durandai,” accessed May 2016, <http://www.cinema.quebec.ca/en/programmation/projections/film/tsar-durandai>) However, Bendazzi claims the film was Tsekhanovsky’s *The Post*. (Bendazzi, *Animation: A World History: Volume I.*, 81.) See Wright’s full presentation in the appendix.

images of dancing lutins, all wearing traditional Russian clothing. The film references multiple Russian cultural symbols, mostly from late nineteenth century Russian art movements: popes, Russian peasant clothing, soldiers of the white army, traditional Russian dwellings, a bull decorated in a similar way as in the art of the *Kustari*, etc. In the story, the Tsar wants to marry a beautiful princess. To do so, he has to successfully complete three tasks: lifting heavy weights, riding a giant horse, and drinking an unusually large quantity of wine. As the Tsar is short and weak, he requests the help of his blacksmith to complete the challenges and marries the princess. However, his inadequacy is revealed, his blacksmith punished, and the Tsarina ends up annexing his territories to hers.

The Tale of the Tsar Durandai aesthetic was much closer to Disney's: the figures are rounder and move in a less mechanical way than the post-revolutionary films. The animators also abandoned cut-out paper for drawing on paper, which allowed for much softer movement on the part of the characters.¹¹³ However, the film also kept several elements of the post-revolutionary period: anonymous workers, enemies depicted as caricatures, and satirical humour. For example, the princess's castle is depicted as a merry-go-round, the white army as a pile of dominoes that can easily be moved around, and the cavalymen are riding rocking horses, etc. With this film the animators succeeded in presenting tsardom and court life as laughable and ridiculous, thus condemning monarchy, another element that was part of the Soviet national values. The use of a folktale presents a far-off kingdom and a narrative line based on fantasy. By connecting the storyline with the ideological message, the animators softened the blunt propaganda characterising the post-revolutionary animated films.

While this aspect of fantasy is often connected to children's culture, one cannot say with certainty if this film was intended for children or adults. As we have seen, the animation displayed a folktale narrative and an aesthetic closer to

¹¹³ The film was particularly striking as it was made entirely on drawn paper rather than on cel. "Animatsionnoe kino v SSSR," Entsiklopediia Otechestvennogo kino, accessed May 2016, http://2011.russiancinema.ru/index.php?dept_id=15&e_dept_id=6&text_element_id=31#_ftnref4.

that of Disney, which certainly would have pleased a younger audience. However, certain details seem too political for children to be aware of (for example, the white army soldiers wearing both an army boot and a peasant shoe). Furthermore, after the royal wedding, the animators refer to the nuptial night: the shy new bride is depicted in her bedroom wearing nothing but a corset and skirt with her breasts exposed, while the Tsar admires her. For these reasons, one cannot be sure which audience the film targeted.

In films such as *The Tale of the Tsar Durandai*, one can see how animated fairy and folktales, rather than being mere material for children, were used to support the Soviet party's ideology. Tales were used more and more throughout the Soviet era. The tales presented a hope for a utopian society and helped form an institutionalised style of animation and a national discourse that remained unchallenged until the death of Stalin. After Stalin's ascent to power, the Avant-garde artists were attacked for "formalism" because of their graphic style that was difficult to understand for many.¹¹⁴ The attack on formalism was a clear step towards the standardisation of animation but also towards a new redefinition of what being Soviet meant.

Within the newly flourishing animated films aimed at children, national folklore became a very important source of inspiration for animators. Children's literature and folklore narratives influenced most of the stories presented in animated films of the Stalinist period. This was a new trend, as prior to the 1930s folklore was thought to be backward and to reflect the ideology of the lower

¹¹⁴ Pontieri, 35. This term designated any art form, which was concerned with the aesthetic form, with a deviation from the narrative line, or with artistic innovation. Formalism was seen as a form of bourgeois influence because it neglected social issues and was inaccessible to the masses. In the Soviet Union of the 1930s, an official campaign against formalism was organised, artists alleged politically reactionaries were executed, and fine pieces of art destroyed. Many of these persecutions were the results of personal and professional jealousy. Kenetz, 93; Bown, 124–130.

class.¹¹⁵ This earlier repression of folklore affected animated films of the period, which avoided fairytales, but also, clearly rejected references to traditional culture, as is the case in *Soviet Toys*.¹¹⁶ The repression of folklore continued into the 1930s until Maxim Gorky (1868–1936) made a strong appeal in favour of folklore in a 1934 public speech. He stressed the relation between folklore and labour because it connected concrete life and the working conditions of the people. Gorky also praised folklore’s optimism about life that expressed the deepest morals and aspirations of the masses, as well as possessing high artistic value.¹¹⁷ Therefore, in the mid-1930s, the national discourse shifted from a focus on the future back to a focus on a romanticised past, which represented the Soviet collective rather than a Russian one. The Soviet national ethos under Stalin, however, represented most national groups of the USSR as nationality became a fundamental marker of identity.¹¹⁸ Nevertheless, the national paradigm was strongly influenced by Russian culture. It is therefore not surprising to see such a strong influence of national culture in a film like *The Tale of the Tsar Durandai*.

¹¹⁵ The first decade after the Revolution of 1917 was the Golden Era of folklore: the party and government were occupied with rebuilding cities and setting the new social order, and Avant-garde artists, scholars, and folklorists were able to work relatively undisturbed. However, when Joseph Stalin came to power in the mid-1920s, the government started criticising and censoring folklore. Numerous leaders called for the annihilation of folklore and of folktales especially, as they believed tales glorified Tsars and strengthened bourgeois and kulak ideals. Felix J. Oinas, “The Political Uses and Themes of Folklore in the Soviet Union,” *Journal of the Folklore Institute* 12, no. 2–3 (1975): 157–158; Felix J. Oinas, “Folklore and Politics in the Soviet Union,” *Slavic Review* 32, no. 1 (March 1973): 45; Zara Abdullaeva, “Popular Culture,” in *Russian Culture at the Crossroads: Paradoxes of Postcommunist Consciousness*, ed. Dmitri N. Shalin (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996), 216; Frank J. Miller, *Folklore for Stalin: Russian Folklore and Pseudo-Folklore of the Stalin Era* (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 1990), 6.

¹¹⁶ An example of the rejection of folklore can be seen in the Brumberg sisters’ film *The Samoyed Boy* (1928). In this animated short, a native boy from northern Siberia leaves his region and rejects his people’s superstitions to study in the city, under the banner of communism. The message clearly values education and facts over traditional beliefs. While the film represents an ethnic minority, this diversity was, as Pontieri points out, “controlled and channelled onto a state institution.” Pontieri, 17.

¹¹⁷ Oinas, “The Political Uses,” 158; Richard Stites, *Russian Popular Culture: Entertainment and Society Since 1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 71; Frank J. Miller, “The Image of Stalin in Soviet Russian Folklore,” *Russian Review* 39, no. 1 (Jan., 1980): 52.

¹¹⁸ Francine Hirsch, *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union* (Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 2005), 145.

Furthermore, as we have seen, the use of tales enabled the animators to soften the ideological message. Gorky's speech supported the new vision of Boris Shumyatsky (1886–1938), the head of the USSR State Committee for Cinematography (Soyuzkino).¹¹⁹ In 1933, Shumyatsky claimed that cinema needed genres infused with cheerfulness, laughter, optimism, and *joie de vivre*.¹²⁰ He urged Soviet filmmakers to make “films for the millions,” which for him meant films that conveyed a political message but in an entertaining manner.¹²¹ To engage with the audience, he advised filmmakers to concentrate on three genres: drama, comedy, and fairytales.¹²² Not surprisingly, these recommendations also affected the content of animated films, which almost exclusively displayed fairytale material.

At the same time folklore regained popularity in animation, the ideas of the Avant-garde in the former USSR clashed with the newly emerged state-sponsored direction of Socialist realism.¹²³ This imposed method applied a totalitarian control over the arts in general, put a halt to experimentation, and eliminated public traces of the Avant-garde. The Bolsheviks had realised that

¹¹⁹ Boris Shumyatsky became a very important figure in Soviet film industry as he was in complete charge of Soviet film production and censorship from 1930 to 1937. Soviet cinema was already subjected to censorship since the late 1920s, but the 1930s were particularly difficult for filmmakers. Between 1929 and the mid-1930s an unusually high proportion of the banned films were from the Republics, especially from Ukraine, Belorussia, Georgia, Armenia. Following purges in the film industry, Shumyatsky, like many other members of the film community, was arrested for “collaborating with saboteurs” and executed. Richard Stites, *Russian Popular Culture*, 85–94; Richard Taylor, “Ideology and Mass Entertainment: Boris Shumyatsky and Soviet Cinema in the 1930s,” in *Inside the Film Factory: New Approaches to Russian and Soviet Cinema*, eds. Richard Taylor and Ian Christie. (London, New York: Routledge, 1991), 193–216; Jamie Miller, *Soviet Cinema: Politics and Persuasion Under Stalin* (London, New York: I. B. Tauris, 2010), 20–22, 34–37, 38–42, 48–51, 53–54; Kenez, 115–117, 131–133, 138–139.

¹²⁰ David Gillespie, *Russian Cinema* (Harlow, London, New York: Longman, 2003), 41.

¹²¹ Miller, *Soviet Cinema*, 16; Stites, 85; see also Boris Shumiatskii, *Kinematografiia millionov: Opyt analiza* (Moskva: Kinofotoizdat, 1936).

¹²² Lilya Kaganovsky, “Stalinist Cinema 1928–1953,” in *The Russian Cinema Reader, vol. 1*, ed. Rimgaila Salys (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2013), 217.

¹²³ For more on Socialism realism and cinema, see Valérie Pozner, “Le ‘réalisme socialiste’ et ses usages pour l’histoire du cinéma soviétique,” *Théorème (Paris)* 8. *Caméra politique: Cinéma et stalinisme*, (2005): 11–17; Boris Groys, *The Total Art of Stalinism: Avant-Garde, Aesthetic Dictatorship, and Beyond* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).

pluralism (metadiscourse) meant that some ideas and values found in art possibly contradicted their own beliefs. They thus ended the heterogeneity in art in order to impose a “correct line.”¹²⁴ Pluralism was denounced, aesthetic experiments were perceived as “formalism,” and for these reasons numerous artists were victims of Stalin’s purges.¹²⁵ Under his government, the visual style based on realism became popular again, and satire and political themes started to be seen as direct criticism of the party.¹²⁶ Unsurprisingly, animation of that period followed the same trend and satirical narratives disappeared from screens.

Socialist realism was officially adopted in 1935 at the All-Union Creative Conference on Cinema Affairs, and elaborated progressively throughout the 1930s.¹²⁷ Subsequently, all art forms, including animation, were required to follow the new normalised authoritative mode of representation proposed by Socialist realism. This method sought an art that was easy for the masses to understand. Narratives had to have a moral focus and a clearly defined positive hero.¹²⁸ In addition, art and literature had to be uplifting, to reflect proletarian ideals and the every day, to focus on a realistic representation, to support socialist ideology, and, finally, as Richard Stites explains, they had to reflect the national distinctiveness of the Soviet people.¹²⁹ Accordingly,

Socialist realism gave the public part of what it wanted: “realism,” adventure, and moral guidance. Realism meant simple and readable prose and the here and now or a heroic past for the plot and setting [...] The masses consumed the new literature partly because no competition was permitted, but also because its characters were largely folkloric: firm and

¹²⁴ Kenetz, 92.

¹²⁵ Dennis, 2.

¹²⁶ Around 1936, satires could no longer be made. *Black and White* and *The Tale of Tsar Durandai* were some of the last satirical films. Pontieri, 36–37; Studiia “M.I.R.,” “Korifei rossiiskoi animatsii,” 00:08:31.

¹²⁷ Kaganovsky, 214–216; Bown, 90.

¹²⁸ Kristian Feigelson, “L’heroïsme bolchévique: mythes et représentations,” *Théorème* 13. Du héros aux super héros: Mutations cinématographiques, (Mai 2009): 22.

¹²⁹ Bown, 90; MacFadyen, 34.

self-controlled, but loving and good and brave [...] Socialist realist culture as a whole was a tortuous compromise between the art of old masters, folk culture, ideology, and some elements of popular commercial art.¹³⁰

Although its main ideological lines were clear, no distinct stylistic model emerged from Socialist realism. Because of the lack of a clear stylistic model, Socialist realism, like the Soviet national ethos, did not stay completely consistent over the decades but rather evolved as new rules emerged under different rulers.¹³¹ For example, Soviet animation under Stalin did not display the same style as under Nikita Khrushchev (1894–1971), even though they were both created under the banner of Socialist realism.

Like the American Dream in the United States, the new Soviet national project was only possible in a specific organisational production context. For this reason, the novelty of Socialist realism brought a series of administrative changes and reorganisation from which animation benefited.¹³² This allowed the national industry to grow stronger as the Soviet film industry liberated itself from foreign dependence and produced raw material.¹³³ Institutions such as the VKhUTEMAS, were reorganised and the teaching methods changed for more traditional ones based on academic realism—the style of the the nineteenth-century art group the

¹³⁰ Stites, 67.

¹³¹ This is not surprising as Soviet Socialism itself changed and evolved over its years of existence. Therefore socialist realist painting under Stalin was different from socialist realist painting under Khrushchev. For more on this topic, see Mark Sandle, *A Short History of Soviet Socialism* (London, Philadelphia: University College London Press, 1999).

¹³² This makes research in Soviet cinema and Soviet animation difficult as institutions and studios tended to change names regularly. For example, in 1922 Goskino became VFKO (Direction of Cinematographic Affairs) and later was renamed Goskino, Sovkino, Soyuzkino, GUKF, and later “Goskino USSR.” Until its complete dissolution in 1991, it changed name three other times. Kaganovsky, 208; Richard Taylor, *The Politics of the Soviet Cinema 1917–1929* (Cambridge, London, New York, Melbourne: Cambridge Press University, 1979), 153–154; Muller and Wieder, 41; Richard Taylor, *Film Propaganda: Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1998), 37; Emory Libraries & Information Technology, “Postwar Soviet Cinema: Soviet Film Industry,” last modified February 2, 2016, accessed November 2015, <http://guides.main.library.emory.edu/c.php?g=50813&p=326118>. For more on censorship during the heights of Socialist realism, see Natasha Laurent, *L’œil du Kremlin: Cinema et censure en URSS sous Staline (1928–1953)* (Toulouse: Privat, 2000).

¹³³ Kenetz, 118.

Wanderers—with a strong emphasis on national heritage including native tales and national symbols popularised by the *Kustari*. To avoid competition between state film societies, agencies and studios were centralised. This strategy monopolised power, reinforced State ideology, and allowed for more control and censoring in film production. Animation studios also were reorganised and if no stylistic model was clearly formed under Socialist realism, the new centralised animation studio undoubtedly abided by a Disneyesque aesthetic that could visually articulate the new social order proposed by Stalin.

In the mid-1930s, Disney's films became very influential to many Soviet animators.¹³⁴ Disney's fluidity in composition and movement was something the Soviet animators had never seen before: a graphic style that created visual order through movements and lines.¹³⁵ Beumers and Balina explain Disney's impact on Soviet audiences,

What particularly impressed audiences and filmmakers were the conveyor-belt production methods using animation celluloid, rarely employed in Soviet animation prior to 1936, and Disney's style and aesthetics, characterized by fast-moving plots. Eisenstein saw in Disney's cartoons the perfect embodiment of his ideas on totemism [...]—equating man with animals and merging the features of both identities—as shown in his montage in *The Strike* (Stachka 1924), where he used animal images to highlight his human characters' features: the fox for slyness, the owl for cleverness, the monkey for drunkenness, and so on. Animation lent itself especially well not only to the creation of magic worlds but also to translations of an unspeakable (Soviet, Stalinist) reality through Aesopian language, transferring social comment onto the animal world.¹³⁶

¹³⁴ In 1935, the first International Film Festival was organised in Moscow. It presented 47 feature films from 19 different countries. Three films by Walt Disney were screened and well received: *Peculiar Penguins* (1934), *The Three Little Pigs* (1933), and *The Band Concert* (1935), which remained in distribution after the Festival. (See the program of the Festival in the appendix.) The third prize was awarded to Disney's films. L. H. Cohen, "The Cultural-Political Traditions and Developments of the Soviet Cinema from 1917 to 1972." (PhD diss., University of Southern California, 1973), 557; Didier Ghez, "Amerikanskije Tsvetnye fil'my. Program of the Moscow Film Festival Leningrad, 1935." Disney History blog. Posted March 12, 2007, accessed December 2011, <http://disneybooks.blogspot.ca/2007/03/russell-merritts-and-j.html>; Pontieri, 38; Miller, *Soviet Cinema*, 26; Beumers and Balina, 125.

¹³⁵ Jean, 23–24.

¹³⁶ Beumers and Balina, 125.

Soviet animators adopted Disney's round style, realism, and themes, just like many American animators did before them. This interest in Disney came at a time when the influence of American production started to affect the Soviet one.¹³⁷ In animation, several animators embraced the American comic gag and Disney's style in "O." Furthermore, the slogan of the 1933 All-Union Conference on Comedy, "Give Us a Soviet Mickey Mouse," created a clash between Soviet animators who liked Disney and those who did not.

To nurture this new Disneyesque orientation in animation, Soiuzdetmul'tfil'm (Union Children's Animation), was founded in Moscow in 1936, under the direction of Alexander Ptushko (1900–1973).¹³⁸ It was renamed Soiuzmul'tfil'm (Union Animation) in 1937. It was the result of the unification of several studios and it became the official state sponsored animation studio essentially dedicated to animated films in the USSR.¹³⁹ Learning from Lenin's failure to consolidate a totalitarian ideological structure, Stalin thus eliminated all other possible animation competition.¹⁴⁰ By doing so, he removed any other

¹³⁷ Several important people in the field of cinema travelled to the United States to study the American film industry: for example, Boris Shumyatsky (1886–1938) wanted to create a Soviet Hollywood in Crimea, Sergei Eisenstein met with Walt Disney, and animator Viktor Smirnov (1896–1946) learned cel animation techniques at the Disney Studio in 1933. Taylor, "Ideology as Mass Entertainment," 214; Pontieri, 38. For more on Eisenstein views on Disney, see Jay Leyda, ed. *Eisenstein on Disney* (Calcutta: Seagull Books: 1986).

¹³⁸ Beumers, 77; Pontieri, 20–23; Leyda, 309; Bendazzi, 101–102; A. M. Prokhorov, *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*, 3rd ed., (New York: Macmillan, 1973): 332–333, s.v. "Ptushko, Aleksandr Lukich."

¹³⁹ Bendazzi, 101; Pontieri, 36. As Soiuzmul'tfil'm was subsidised by the Soviet government, the animators had the great advantage of never being worried about being paid or not, about how much their film would cost, or if they would be commercial success. The Soviet government did not skimp on expenses to develop one of the best animation traditions in the world and allowed animators more drawings per seconds than the average Western production. Despite this quality, foreign critics were not entirely enthusiastic about these films and often saw them as unimpressive "animated childishness" much inferior to the political satires of the 1920s. Maria Tereshenko, "Russian Animation in Search of a Hero," *Russia Beyond the Headlines*, December 17, 2009, accessed August 2015, http://rbth.com/articles/2009/12/17/171209_animation.html; Michel Roudevitch, "L'animation en fête," 5; Stephenson, *The Animated Film*, 157; Edera, 65.

¹⁴⁰ For example, Mezhrabpomfil'm (International Help Working Film), Sovkino (Soviet Cinema), Mosfil'm (Moscow Film), Moskinokombinat (Moscow Cinema Centre) and Gosvoenkino (National Military Cinema) were centralised in one main location.

possible discourse (visual or not) in animated film as well. The political satires and visual explorations of the 1920s were officially over.

At *Soiuzmul'tfil'm*, the American production model based on an assembly line was the norm. While the use of a capitalist model of production might seem odd, the Soviet Party carefully reinterpreted it to fit Socialist ideology. The choice of this mode of production finds its source in both the Disney American model, but also in the Soviet Stakhanovite workers' movement.¹⁴¹ Therefore, *Soiuzmul'tfil'm* stood as an example of successful Soviet production rather than a corporate one. This artistic and industrial model had many advantages for the party. The subdivision of work accelerated production and allowed for a larger native animated repertoire to be created. It also standardised the visual approach, which enabled a coherent discourse around the visual representation of a Soviet world. Finally, it centralised the animated work in a single studio, once more allowing for more control over the production of animated films, as well as, offering a strong and immutable institutional and ideological animated discourse. During this period, animators focused on animal characters based on the Disney tradition. By 1938, audiences saw the first attempts to create animated human

¹⁴¹ The movement was born out of Stalin's Second Five-Year Plan and took its name from Andrei Stakhanov (1906–1977), a miner who allegedly produced 14 times the norm of coal in 1934. This was the equivalent of 102 tons of coal in 6 hours of work. After Stalin's death, the validity of these numbers were called in question and seen as a propaganda manoeuvre. Bown, 71; Stites, 70.

characters, which embedded the positive image of a Soviet hero.¹⁴² The same year, the studio started using the rotoscoping technique (called *éclair* or *ekler* in Russian) as Disney had done before.¹⁴³ Another important aspect of in this studio was the production of almost exclusively cel animation. In addition, films became longer (up to 30 minutes) and the rounded Disney style was accepted as the standard.¹⁴⁴

These new working methods accelerated the enforcement of the hegemony of form that the party demanded with Socialist realism. Although Stalin did not abide by Disney's ideology and representation of the American Dream, in the rounded Disney style he recognised the possibility of visual order and a traditional approach to fairytales. The creation of Soiuzmul'tfil'm and the emphasis on "children," "childhood," and "youth" came at a time when Soviet families needed to be reinvented.¹⁴⁵ MacFadyen explains that Disney's "profound, sincere, and

¹⁴² Gregorii Borodin, "Kinostyidiia 'Soiuzmul'tfil'm': Kratkii istoricheskii obzor." Soiuzmul'tfil'm. Accessed December 2015. <http://new.souzmult.ru/about/history/full-article/>. *Uncle Styopa* (1938) and *Limpopo* (1939) featuring Dr. Aybolit, were arguably the first Soviet heroes that emerged out of the Soiuzmul'tfil'm tradition. *Uncle Styopa* was a film based on Sergey Mikhalkov's (1913–2009) children's poem series about an unusually tall young policeman who does good deeds. These popular poems were published in youth magazines and were adapted in animated and live-action films as well as comics. On the other hand, *Limpopo* was based on a story, which is part of the Dr. Aybolit series, by children's author Chukovsky. Dr. Aybolit (in Russian "Oy it hurts") was based on Hugh Lofting's (1886–1947) Dr. Dolittle. This Russification of the British children's classic is part of a larger phenomenon in the former USSR, where several classics were rewritten Soviet way. As we have seen, this was already done in the nineteenth century as well. For example, *Pinocchio* became *Buratino* and *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* became *The Wizard of the Emerald City*, etc. Alena Tveritina, "How Dr. Dolittle became Dr. Aybolit," *Russia Beyond the Headlines*, October 24, 2014, accessed December 2015, http://rbth.com/literature/2014/10/24/how_dr_dolittle_became_dr_aybolit_40881.html. For more on Chukovsky see Lauren G. Leighton, "Homage to Kornei Chukovsky," *The Russian Review* 31, no. 1 (Jan., 1972): 38–48; D. D. Miller, Susan Williams and Ronald Williams, "Children's Literature in the Soviet Union," *Language Arts* 53, no. 5 (May 1976): 531–535.

¹⁴³ According to former Soviet animators, the *éclair* or *ekler* technique reigned briefly and animators abandoned it around 1948. However, Norris claims it continued to be used until the death of Stalin in 1953. According to Norris, it was perceived as the form that could render best Soviet Socialist realism. Studiia "M.I.R.," "Korifei rossiiskoi animatsii," 00:11:32–00:11:34; Norris, 217.

¹⁴⁴ Cell animation and the rounded Disney style were all taught by Viktor Smirnov who had returned three years earlier from America. Michel Roudevitch, "La peau de l'URSS," *Bref* (Paris) 19, (Hiver 1993): 39; Anatoli Volkov, "L'énergie de la découverte," *Film soviétique (Soviet Film)* 10, (Oct. 1985): 37; Borodin, "Kinostyidiia 'Soiuzmul'tfil'm'."

¹⁴⁵ The divorce rate was 37 percent and abortions outnumbered births in Moscow at a ratio of three to one. MacFadyen, 73.

wider-reaching notion of kinship [...] could do double (and better) duty in the Soviet Union.”¹⁴⁶ As demonstrated in the previous chapter, Disney’s aesthetic was organised around the idea of realism, personality of characters expressed through movements and colours, rounder figures, and strong storylines (mostly based on fairytales). The films produced at Soiuzmul’tfil’m had a moralising emphasis and promoted friendship, loyalty, honesty, comradeship, and social justice, showing the victory of good over evil.¹⁴⁷ These values were equally promoted by the Walt Disney studios. However, in the former Soviet Union, they were inextricably linked to the Soviet national project and traditional culture. The animated films made at Soiuzmul’tfil’m also stood out from the American productions because they lacked the violence, chases, and gags that were typical in American animation shorts such as the ones made at Warner Bros. and MGM.¹⁴⁸ Maria Tereshenko remembers the words of Sergei Merinov, film director at the contemporary animation studio Pilot:

Films like ‘Tom and Jerry,’ where the heroes are always punching each other and playing mean tricks, have never been popular here [...] In our films there has always been less aggression. We staked our [films] not on action, but on psychology, humour and a dialogue with the viewer. This had nothing to do with special ideological concerns; it came out of the tradition or Russian folktales.¹⁴⁹

Ironically the use of Russian folktales was indeed an ideological choice as their promotion supported the larger Soviet nationalist project. Regardless of where animators took their inspiration, the lack of violence was another element Soviet animated films of the socialist realist era shared with Disney’s. Soviet animation, however, displayed a much stronger political ideology than American films

¹⁴⁶ Ibid, 32.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 44.

¹⁴⁸ Piero Zanotto, “Disegni e pupazzi animati di ieri e di oggi,” *Rivista del cinematografo (Roma)*, no. 12 (undated): 97.

¹⁴⁹ Tereshenko, “Russian Animation in Search of a Hero.”

because it espoused the State's undisputed ideology rather than a studio's. Furthermore, in the absence of numerous studios competition (thus the lack of an animated metadiscourse), the homogeneity of Soviet films also strengthened the State's ideology.¹⁵⁰ In addition, to make their films different from Disney's influence, Russian animators used national folklore as a strategy to avoid the crude propaganda of the earlier post-revolutionary animated films and the "vulgarity" of American Disneyesque values.¹⁵¹

In the former USSR, Disney's aesthetic was reinterpreted to show the order and harmony of socialist ideology. If Disney's animation embodied the American Dream of success through hard work and tackled individual success, then Soviet films expressed the higher achievement of society through the ideas of Socialist realism and collectivism. Through the nation-wide use of a single visual style and of a type of narration from fairy and folktales, the former USSR was seeking the creation of a dominant discourse to accentuate their ideology and promote nationalism. Therefore, the drawn line became an ideological tool to create social order within the constructed animated reality, which represented a utopian vision of Soviet society. Consequently, socialist realist animation played a role in forming the national Soviet ethos.¹⁵² The lack of animated metadiscourse in the former USSR nurtured this standardised animated form as well as the

¹⁵⁰ Imitating Disney was not without challenges. While Americans had been working with cel animation for several years, this technique was relatively new in the USSR. Smirnov introduced cel sheets in Russia in 1933–1934, but they were of a much inferior in quality. Soviet cels sheets were slightly grey or yellow compared to the transparent American ones, and their juxtaposition caused considerable darkening of the image. This meant that results were not similar to American films. Therefore, although Disney's style spread among animators, its development remained slow. Bendazzi, 177; Pontieri, 38–40.

¹⁵¹ MacFadyen, 73.

¹⁵² It is important to note that the term "socialist realist animation" comes from me. While most historian agree that films of the Stalinist period were influenced by Socialist realism, they generally avoid using this term when describing Soviet animation of this era.

ideological discourse offered by Soiuzmul'tfil'm to create a visual and discursive canon.¹⁵³

These visual and ideological elements can be seen in the 1942 film *Fox, Hare, and Cock* by Olga Khodataeva (1894–1968). The film tells the story of a fox building a house of ice and a hare building a house of wood. When spring comes, the house of ice melts and the fox tries to take possession of the hare's house. The hare cries for help. A goat and a bear come to his rescue but are unsuccessful in removing the fox from the house. Finally, a cock with a sickle comes to help the hare. With the help of the goat and the bear, the cock scares away the fox. At the end of the tale, all the victorious animals sing at the table, while the fox is outside, alone, and miserable.

The rounded Disney style is easily recognisable in this animated film. However, while the animals were very Disney-like, Khodataeva kept a strong symbolism of Russianness. For example, the hare plays on a balalaika, lives in an izba decorated with traditional motifs and where a pitch can be seen.¹⁵⁴ In addition, most of the animals wear traditional Russian clothing with the exception of the fox, who stands outside of the collective (because she is bad). She is therefore not identified as “Russian.” The collective is further supported with the image of all animals uniting their forces to push her out of the house, as well as in their final singing party, which concludes the film. The national symbols depicted in *Fox, Hare, and Cock* are almost exclusively Russian. This is not surprising as Russian culture was always more present and was generally shown as superior to all other cultural groups, although animation, cinema, and other media displayed

¹⁵³ For more on the standardisation of Soviet discourse, see Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever Until it Was no More: The Last Soviet Generation* (Princeton, Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006).

¹⁵⁴ These are all symbols of traditional Russia. The balalaika is a three-string instrument similar to a small-sized guitar but in triangular shape; the izba is a traditional countryside wooden dwelling; the pitch is a traditional oven used to bake bread and other goods. The pitch was generally the heart of the house and beds were displayed around or on top of it.

the cultural specificities of several ethnic groups across the USSR.¹⁵⁵ In this case, however, the animator demonstrated that this was not a problem as all animals—perhaps representing different ethnic groups—feasted together at the end of the film, just like the Republics of the former Soviet Union were supposed to share a common friendship within the USSR. Despite the diversity of species, all the animals wore Russian traditional clothing only.

The story “Fox, Hare, and Cock” originally appeared in the A. N. Afanasyev’s (1826–1871) extensive collection of Russian folktales.¹⁵⁶ Once more the animator chose a strong national symbol by selecting a native ethnographer and local traditional storytelling connected to the lower-class peasants. This strategy served both the socialist values of equal classes and Soviet nationalism and national historical authenticity. Nevertheless, Khodataeva modified the original tale, likely to suit Soviet audiences. In the film, for example, the hare received the help of two animals, the goat and the bear, before going to the cock, while the original folktale presented three animals, a dog, a bear, and an ox, before introducing the cock. The traditional tale also repeats each action three times and this was also not kept, perhaps because of time constraints or to keep the audiences interested. The original ending has been modified as well: Afanasyev’s version includes the fox’s murder by the cock, an image that did not agree with Socialist ideology and the representation of a positive hero. Khodataeva instead used the fox’s fear of the sickle (a strong communist symbol) to justify his removal from the house. In the original tale, the animals’ party celebrating their victory also was absent. The meaning carried by the image of the cock’s sickle as a powerful weapon, thus changed in the film in light of the images of the collective: the sickle becomes a symbol of the victory of socialism and socialist values, and of the friendship between the different people living in

¹⁵⁵ Bown, 165; Kenetz, 179–180.

¹⁵⁶ Aleksandr Nikolaievich Afanas’ev, *Narodnye russkie skazki A. N. Afanas’eva* (Moskva: Olma-Press, 2004), 39–41.

the USSR. Therefore, the film was not just an entertaining fairytale for children. Instead, in *Fox, Hare, and Cock*, the animator merged traditional motifs and the structure of the animal tale with a strong ideological message oriented towards politics and the construction of national identity.¹⁵⁷

The animated reality that films like Khodataeva's offered represented a utopian vision of Soviet society, which was much needed during Stalinist times as official discourse in the former Soviet Union was dual. For example, in December 1936, Stalin's new constitution went into effect. It planned to give equal rights to women, freedom of speech, of press, of assembly and meeting, and proclaimed the inviolability of domicile, of the person, and their privacy. It also claimed the Soviet citizens to be the freest on earth and celebrated the success of the new socialist state. Simultaneously, the 1930s were marked by fear and terror, collectivisation and pogroms against party members, professionals, militaries, and intelligentsia.¹⁵⁸ Live action and animated films made during this troubled time made no reference to current reality that Soviet citizens were experiencing. Animated fairytales were thus an important ideological tool in forming the national Soviet ethos.¹⁵⁹ They served the affirmation of a collective utopia even if they remained rather disconnected from the reality that Soviet citizens experienced.¹⁶⁰ The Stalinist Soviet normative discourse and fairytales shared a representation of a better world. This period was characterised by an increasing display of joy based on Stalin's key slogan of the decade which focused on analysing the quality of Soviet life: "Living has got [sic] better, living has got [sic]

¹⁵⁷ This is part of the classification of traditional tales according to the Aarne-Thompson Motif-Index and the Aarne-Thompson tale Type Index. Animal tales are stories in which the main characters are anthropomorphised animals. See Hans-Jörg Uther, *The Types of International Folktales*.

¹⁵⁸ Bown, 71.

¹⁵⁹ In some cases, foreign tales such as Hans Christian Andersen's, were adapted to the screen. Stephen Hutchings observes that foreign influences were carefully screened and examined to fit socialist ideology, a similar situation than in Soviet arts in general. Stephen Hutchings, *Russian Literary Culture in the Camera Age: The Word as Image* (New York, London: Routledge, 2004), 89.

¹⁶⁰ Kaganovsky, 217.

jollier.”¹⁶¹ As Alexander Prokhorov explains, “Stalinist cultural administrators changed the official line on folk culture, and the fairytale became a legitimate film genre because it helped to visualise Stalinist culture’s spirit of miraculous reality.”¹⁶²

Fairy and folk tales were the perfect medium for educating audiences in becoming model Soviet citizens as they offered a source of familiar stories that resonated with the Soviet audience.¹⁶³ Since they already existed in numerous well-known versions, it gave animators more freedom to adapt them while retaining the basic plot, so audiences would accept the film regardless of the modifications in the narrative.¹⁶⁴ Furthermore, it stimulated nationalism and educated the many ethnic groups that compose the USSR about their peers and themselves.¹⁶⁵ Therefore, the familiar narrative form and the rounded Disney style that created a euphoric state of mind, was not mere children’s material, but rather were tools used to create the hegemonic ideological discourse around Soviet representation, which supported Russia as the sovereign nation through hidden imperialism. This imperialist concept is clearly articulated in Soviet animated fairytales as well.

¹⁶¹ Bown, 110; Svetlana Boym, *Common Places: Mythology of Everyday Life in Russia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 110.

¹⁶² Alexander Prokhorov, “Arresting Development: A Brief History of Soviet Cinema for Children and Adolescents,” in *Russian Children’s Literature and Culture*, ed. Marina Balina and Larissa Rudova (New York, London: Routledge, 2008), 135.

¹⁶³ For more on fairytales’ malleability potential, see Greenhill and Rudy, *Channeling Wonder*; Jessica Teffin, *Marvellous Geometry: Narrative and Metafiction in Modern Fairy Tales* (Detroit: Wayne State University, 2009).

¹⁶⁴ Solomon, *The Disney That Never Was*, 61. As we have seen, modifying fairy and folk tales was not a new phenomenon in the country. Several classical nineteenth-century authors such as Krylov or Tolstoy, rewrote foreign tales in verses as a way to create a “new” Russian version and elevate it to elite culture. This trend continued on during the Soviet era as a way to boost nationalism and this was probably why animators based their films on Russian versions of tales before making films inspired by foreign texts.

¹⁶⁵ Animated films visually articulated Stalin’s formula of “socialist in content, national in form.” This meant that the culture depicted could be Ukrainian, Armenian, Georgian, or Uzbek, as long as the ideology was respected. However, Russian culture was always more prevalent and was generally shown as superior to all other cultural groups. The adaptation of national tales was equally problematic as it naturalised imperial imposition by adapting the story to the Russian canon. Bown, 165–166; Hutchings, 78; Kenetz, 179–180.

For example, after World War II the Brumberg sisters adapted a literary classic: *The Disappeared Letter* (1945).¹⁶⁶ The film came after the use of folklore and tales had slowed down during the approach of the Second World War, when the *agitki* style re-emerged.¹⁶⁷ During wartime, the Soviet government oriented animated films towards highly patriotic topics. Films displayed strong Soviet nationalism based on an idealised national past and glorified heroes.¹⁶⁸ During the pre-war period, animation production diminished, film lengths were shortened, few fairytale productions were made, and animation saw the temporary return of animated political satire.¹⁶⁹ Soon, most of the Soviet Union's institutions were evacuated.¹⁷⁰ After Hitler invaded in 1941, Soiuzmul'tfil'm and 60 of its employees, including the Brumberg sisters, were evacuated to Samarkand,

¹⁶⁶ This film is also referred to as *The Lost Letter*.

¹⁶⁷ The *agitki*, were 5 to 30 minutes-long films with didactic content aimed at the uneducated. They had no plot but were rather called "living poster" because they displayed short scenes of an event with long intertitles in between. They were presented in the Bolsheviks' agit-trains, or wagons that travelled to the remote territories of Russia by railway. The agit-train brought cinema to rural areas of the country that were undeveloped, too far from urban centres, or simply too poor to attend films. They were painted with slogans and caricatures and in addition to the movies presented, which were generally propagandistic in nature, they also carried propagandistic leaflets and printing presses. Beumers, 33; Bordwell and Thompson, 108; Kenetz, 27, 32.

¹⁶⁸ For more on the formation of heroic Soviet figures and their glorification, see Richard Taylor, "Red Star, Positive Heroes and Personality Cult," in *Stalinism and Soviet Cinema*, ed. Richard Taylor and Derek Spring (London, New York: Routledge, 1993), 69–89.

¹⁶⁹ For example, *The Political Satirical Journal* was a series of two films that lasted from 1938 to 1941 of which only the second part survived. Pontieri, 42. Several films on the fight against fascism and Hitler were made, such as *Cinematicircus* (1942), *Fascist Boots on our Homeland* (1941), and *The Vultures* (1941). In these three films, the invaders were depicted as ruthless animals in a very caricatured way. However, they still display a rounder line as opposed to the flatter images in the animation of the 1920s, a reminiscent of the Disney style taken at Soiuzmul'tfil'm.

¹⁷⁰ Lenfilm and Mosfilm studios were evacuated to Alma-Ata, Kazakhstan, in Central Asia. The Kyivnauchfil'm studios in Kyiv that were just opened in 1941 closed. The ones in Tbilisi, Georgia and Hayfilm (or Armenfil'm in Russian) in Yerevan, Armenia, limited their production to few films. Smaller studios like these were founded in the Republics but represented a marginal production, the large majority of animated films being made at Soiuzmul'tfil'm. Pontieri, 44; Kaganovsky, 226.

Uzbekistan, in Central Asia, where they stayed until 1943.¹⁷¹ First located in a school of mechanics, and later in an Armenian church, the studio barely functioned but artistic life nevertheless maintained a certain equilibrium.¹⁷² During this period, Socialist realism came into its own as the necessity for a patriotic point of view and clear modes of expression satisfied both artists and Socialist realism.¹⁷³ It was not until Soiuzmul'tfil'm returned to Moscow that production was fully set in motion again.¹⁷⁴ In the years following the war an extensive use of Russian folk and fairytales is noticeable in Soiuzmul'tfil'm's films. This coincides with the familiarity of Soviet audiences with Disney's *Snow White and The Seven Dwarves*, which was brought from the front as a war trophy.¹⁷⁵ The film *The Disappeared Letter* was one of the first made immediately after the conflict, and it carried this strong postwar Russocentric nationalism.

The Disappeared Letter is one of the rare Soviet animated films of the post-war period to last 40 minutes. Written by Gogol, the story is about a Cossack who is asked to deliver a letter to the Tsarina.¹⁷⁶ During his journey, after a festive evening, the Cossack wakes up and witnesses several strange appearances, trees

¹⁷¹ The rest of the employees stayed in Moscow to continue working on animated films. Many artists were provided with an exemption from conscription. The evacuated returned to Leningrad after the blockade was lifted. Bown, 144, 160; Borodin, "Kinostyidiia 'Soyuzmul'tfil'm'."

¹⁷² Bown, 156; Borodin, "Kinostyidiia 'Soyuzmul'tfil'm'."

¹⁷³ Bown, 143. In general, the art produced during the war period was direct and displayed images of victorious battles and of iconic mothers. Poster art resumed its function and remained popular until the end of the war.

¹⁷⁴ After the war, most of the animators moved to work in Moscow. Many came from the VGIK (All-Russian State University of Cinematography name after S. A. Gerasimov) where, by 1938, animators received two years of extensive art training. The program was opened after Soiuzmul'tfil'm started training its own staff to cope with the growing demand for new films. From 1945 to 1948, an 8-month program was taught at Soiuzmul'tfil'm. In addition, regular evening and daytime courses, workshops, training session, lectures, and reports were offered to allow animators to perfect their technique. Kitson, 23; Borodin, "Kinostyidiia 'Soyuzmul'tfil'm'"; Beumers, "Comforting Creatures in Children's Cartoons," 159.

¹⁷⁵ From 1955 to 1959, it was distributed in the USSR. Beumers and Balina, 125.

¹⁷⁶ *The Disappeared Letter* was based on Gogol's stories *The Disappeared Letter* and *The Bewitched Place*, written as part of a collection of short stories: *Evenings on a Farm Near Dikanka* (1831–1832). This collection showed the strong influence of folklore and peasant life on Gogol. Pontieri, 46.

coming to life, ghosts, and devils. The devils eventually steal the letter and the Cossack has to chase them and trick them to get it back. The next morning, the Cossack wakes up, unsure if he dreamed or not. He decides not to drink anymore and goes straight to Saint Petersburg to complete his mission. *The Disappeared Letter* is set in a romantic “Little Russia” (Ukraine). The film presents long shots of grandiose landscapes, and the original text from Gogol’s story: a romanticised and sexually charged description of the nature.¹⁷⁷

| | |
|---|--|
| Как упоителен, как роскошен летний день в Малороссии! Как томительно жарки те часы, когда полдень блещет в тишине и зное, и голубой неизмеримый океан, сладострастным куполом нагнувшийся над землею, кажется, заснул, весь потонувши в неге, | How ravishing, how majestic is a summer day in Little Russia! How exhaustively hot are those hours, when midday glitters in a quiet and swelter and the immeasurable blue ocean, reclining as a voluptuous dome over the land, it seems that it felt asleep drowning in languor, |
| обнимая и сжимая прекрасную [землю] в воздушных объятиях своих! Как полно сладострастия и неги малороссийское лето! [...] Такую роскошью блистал один из дней жаркого августа [...] | embracing and squeezing the beautiful [land] in its celestial embrace! How completely sensual and blissful is Little Russia’s summer! [...] One of those hot days of August is shinning with grandeur [...] |

Gogol’s choice of words describes Ukraine almost as a living desirable woman. If this depiction attests to Gogol’s love for this region of the world, the sexual symbolism certainly situated his work in the Romantic artistic period, which sought emotion, exoticism, eroticism, freedom, and humanity in art.¹⁷⁸ It glorified

¹⁷⁷ Thank you to Tamara Shtanova and Anna Kuteleva for the help with the translation of these verses.

¹⁷⁸ Gardner, Kleiner, Mamiya, Tansey, and Kings, eds. *Gardner’s Art through the Ages*, 701–723; Fride and Marcadé, *Comprendre et reconnaître les mouvements dans la peinture*, 47–48.

nature, the land, the peasantry—believed to be closer to nature—and its folk traditions. Romanticism used these beliefs to assert Romantic nationalism.¹⁷⁹ In addition to this idealised view of landscape, the animated film also displayed strong folklore motifs, an element belonging to both Romanticism, but also borrowing from the populist aspect of Soviet ideology. An example of the folk tradition can be seen in the style of letters in the film’s credits directly referred to the art of the *Kustari* artist Ivan Bilibin (1876–1942). Also, as in the previously described animated films, the characters wear traditional clothing. If the film *The Disappeared Letter* stayed faithful to Gogol’s Romantic story, one should also keep in mind the author was marked by the broader Russian imperial ideology and that his cultural links to Ukraine contrasted with his civic engagements to Russian nationalism, making Gogol significant for both Russian and Ukrainian nationalism.¹⁸⁰ This opposition is shown in the Brumberg’s film. Ukrainian and Russian elements were contrasted and left the audience with Russia’s view of Ukraine.

While the film depicted national Ukrainian symbols, such as the Cossacks, and Little Russia’s landscapes, it failed to present Ukrainian culture in a historically and culturally accurate light.¹⁸¹ For example, the Cossacks of the narrative are seen as equally worshipping an unrecognisable Hetman, the leader of their independent Cossack Hetmanate (principality) in Ukraine, and the Tsarina

¹⁷⁹ Romanticism was influenced by the writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who believed the peasants were “pure” because of they were closer to nature. This concept became known in popular culture as the “Noble Savage.” For more on this topic, see Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discours sur l’origine et les fondements de l’inégalité parmi les Hommes, suivi de La Reine fantasque* (Paris: A. Montaigne, 1973).

¹⁸⁰ George G. Grabowicz, “Three perspectives on the Cossack Past: Gogol’, Ševčenko, Kuliš,” *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 5, no. 2 (June 1981): 171–172; Bojanowska, *Nikolai Gogol*, 371, 375.

¹⁸¹ The Cossacks were members of the autonomous principality the Hetmanate. They were a semi-military group known for their strength in battle and abilities on horses. Its members typically wore a long and thin lock of hair at the top of their shaved head, thick and long moustache, Turkish-looking baggy pants, a semi-long tunic, and a large belt, with high boots. The Cossacks are an important character in Slavic history and folklore, and more importantly in Ukraine, where they had the autonomous Hetmanate. For more on the Cossack imagery in Ukrainian culture, see Serhii Plokhyy, *Tsars and Cossacks: A Study in Iconography* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002).

Elizabeth of Russia (1709–1762).¹⁸² The contrast between the two portraits is striking. The image of Elizabeth of Russia is similar to the official portraits made of her. In comparison, the Hetman wears clothes from an undetermined era that appears very remote from the one when Elizabeth was ruling Imperial Russia. Portraits of Hetmans of this time generally depicted them wearing fashionable clothes of the period's gentry. The contrast between the two figures is further emphasised in the *mise en scène*: the camera travels from the overshadowed picture of the Hetman, to the one of the Tsarina facing the light of a fire. She represents the period of the Enlightenment and the enlightenment for the Cossacks, themselves depicted in the film as superstitious, merry, and joyous people, who love singing, dancing, and who drink a lot.¹⁸³ Furthermore, they are seen as violent and intolerant people since one of them while breaking things with his sword shouts that the “Tatar scums” should not get in his way.¹⁸⁴ This last comment is interesting knowing that the height of the Cossack Tatars conflict dates from the sixteenth century, many decades before the setting of the narrative, which happened either during or after Elizabeth's reign. On the one hand, this presented Ukraine as a timeless land where strange things such as apparitions could happen, a concept consistent with Romanticism. However, it also further placed the Cossacks as living in the past since their reactions are linked to an outdated conflict.

¹⁸² *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*, accessed December 2015, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Ukraine/The-Cossacks#ref404443>, s.v. “The Cossacks.”

¹⁸³ Russian choreographer Igor Moiseyev (1906–2007) was consulted for the dancing scene, for more “authenticity.” It is interesting to note that Moiseyev was responsible for standardising folk dances from around the world for the professional Soviet theatre. Studiia “M.I.R.,” “Korifei rossiiskoi animatsii,” 00:11:15. For more on Moiseyev, see Mikhail Aleksandrovich Chudnovskii, *Folk Dance Company of the U.S.S.R., Igor Moiseyev, Art Director* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1959); *Moiseyev Ballet*, accessed April 2010, <http://www.moiseyev.ru/>.

¹⁸⁴ The Tatars are a tribe of Turkish descent of Muslim background, and were spread around Asia and Europe. The Crimean Tatars, located in Crimea were in the eighteenth century one of the most powerful in Eastern Europe. For more on Crimean Tatars see Paul R. Magocsi, *This Blessed Land: Crimea and the Crimean Tatars* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014); P. M. Polian, *Against Their Will: The History and Geography of Forced Migrations in the USSR* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2004).

In *The Disappeared Letter*, the depiction of Ukrainian culture in such a deprecating light can be seen as a strategy to rebuild a Russocentric nationalism in the former USSR. Profiting from the confusion brought by the war, several ethnic groups, such as Ukrainians, sought independence from the Soviet Union.¹⁸⁵ In this after-war period, Russocentric nationalism provided an element of strength and stability in an empire that was highly shaken by occupation. It was nurtured and turned into a product of “friendship of the peoples” through the re-emergence of pan-Slavism.¹⁸⁶ However, Russian culture was seen as the “first among equals” and minority Slavs, such as the Ukrainian Cossacks of the animated film, were perceived as the little brothers.¹⁸⁷ Serhy Yekelchuk explains,

High Stalinism did not reverse the policy of nation-building in non-Russian regions. In the mid-1930s ethnicity became reified, and all officially recognized Soviet nationalities were to possess their own ‘Great Traditions’—founding fathers, literary classics, and folkloric riches. In other words, indigenous cultural agents were allowed, and often encouraged, to articulate their people’s heritage. Still the message of the central media was unmistakably Russocentric. [...] Stalin and his associates accepted ‘Russocentric etatism’ as the most effective way to promote state-building, popular mobilization, and legitimacy among the masses of ethnic Russians, who had been poorly educated and were finding it difficult to relate to more abstract Marxist ideas. [...] far from being an assimilatory enterprise, an empire allows for the articulation of ethnic difference. Moreover, imperial rule necessitates the development of homogenizing and essentializing devices such as ‘India’ or ‘Ukraine’ that are useful both for imperial definitions of what is being ruled and for indigenous elites who can claim a broad domain that their cultural knowledge qualifies them to govern. Thus, Ukraine and the other non-

¹⁸⁵ For example, several national groups in the Soviet Union, such as Ukrainians and Crimean-Tatars, struggling for independence had been stirred up by an alien rule of occupying troops. The Nazis took advantage of the national hostilities towards Russians and encouraged it as a way to shake the Soviet Union’s national stability. Kenetz, 179.

¹⁸⁶ This concept proposed shared historical roots as well as indigenous differences as long as they did not undermine Russia’s historical past. Serhy Yekelchuk, *Stalin’s Empire of Memory: Russian-Ukrainian Relations in the Soviet Historical Imagination* (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 11; Hoffmann, *Stalinist Values*, 167.

¹⁸⁷ Bown, 165; Kenetz, 179–180; Martin, 432–461; Ronald Grigor Sony and Terry Martin, “Introduction,” in *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin*, ed. Ronald Grigor Sony and Terry Martin (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 13.

Russian republics remained distinctly different, albeit decidedly ‘junior brothers,’ in a Soviet family of nations.¹⁸⁸

This is precisely what is achieved in *The Disappeared Letter*. While Ukrainian culture, literature, and history were acknowledged, the overall tone of the film remained paternalistic. In addition, in *The Disappeared Letter*, the expression of Russianness and “friendship of the people” is depicted in the alliance of the Cossacks with the Tsarina.

The belittling of nationalities was not uncommon in the former USSR and, as Kononenko argues, the display of folklore played a large part in this imperialist attitude. While folklore can be used to underscore the unique features of a culture, it can also designate survivals of an outdated mode of life—one no longer practiced in urban centres or by the educated and the elite. During the tsarist period this “folk” label was applied to various non-Russian subjects.¹⁸⁹ Far from representing children’s culture, the use of folklore in *The Disappeared Letter* displayed the backwardness of Ukrainians.

For example, in the film, folklore is associated with the superstitious Ukrainian Cossacks, and civilisation is associated with Russian Saint Petersburg. The belittlement of Ukrainians can be seen in the depiction of the Romantic-like tranquil countryside, the absence of urban centres, the omnipresence of folk motifs, and in the depiction of architecture and dwellings. In Ukrainian villages, the houses do not appear stable: they are tilted and seem like they could collapse any time. The entire design of the village includes a lot of diagonal lines, thus reinforcing the idea of unsteadiness. In the context of the story, this supports the idea that Ukraine is an unstable place. Additionally, the visions of ghosts and devils the Cossack has in the forest, clearly show how superstitious he is. This further minimised the Cossacks’ status as fearless leaders, as well as undermines Ukraine’s seriousness as a nation.

¹⁸⁸ Yekelchuk, 4–5.

¹⁸⁹ Kononenko, “The Politics of Innocence,” 281.

The story of *The Disappeared Letter* ends with the main character giving up drinking, an element that was absent from the original story, to ride to Saint Petersburg. The Cossack crosses Ukrainian landscapes, accompanied with folk music. When he reaches the city, the musical score changes to a classical orchestra one. Saint Petersburg is shown in all its majesty with long shots of the neoclassical impressive buildings, giant port, statues, monumental columns, arches, and palaces. The Cossack, just like in Gogol's story, tells the audience about all the great wonders he saw there. However, Gogol mentioned that the wonders in Saint Petersburg made the hero forget his traumatic experience with the devils, and Gogol's story ends with the Cossack's return at home to his devil-free family life. In contrast, the film presents a striking opposing images of civilised Russia and underdeveloped Ukraine and ends with the Cossack discovering Saint Petersburg and its wonders. After the Cossack opts for temperance, a quality important in Soviet ideology, the narrator concludes the film by saying that the Cossack saw many wonderful things in Saint Petersburg and had many stories to tell for a long time. But, as the film presents no return to the initial situation and ends on the grandeur of Imperial Russia's capital, the audience witnesses the enlightenment of the Cossack through Russian culture. Although these imperialist elements do not take anything from either the high quality of animation the Brumberg sisters produced or from the innovative ways they animated Gogol's complex work of Gothic literature, a closer look at *The Disappeared Letter* shows it is a film embedded with a strong colonial spirit. Even if it seemed like a mere visual representation of a story taken from classical literature adapted for children, the animated film carried a strong political and national ideology. Soviet animated films were important markers of identity construction in the former USSR. *The Disappeared Letter* for example, taught Soviet audiences of Russian culture's greatness in relation to the one of smaller Republics.

Russocentric culture was omnipresent in many animated fairytale films of the Stalinist period. A striking example of which is found in a comparison of two works by Lev Atamanov (1905–1981), a prolific animator of Armenian origin.¹⁹⁰ Atamanov animated *The Dog and the Cat* twice, first in 1938, and then again in 1955. The first film was made at Hayfilm (or Armenfil'm), and was based on a poem by Hovhannes Tumanyan (1869–1923), considered Armenia's national poet.¹⁹¹ The narrative is about a shepherd-dog who pays a tailor-cat to make him a new hat. The dog returns to the shop several times only to realise that the hat he paid for was sold to a goat. The matter is taken to court, administered by the goat. Justice is not served and the cat walks away free. The film explains at the end that cats and dogs hate each other as a result.

At the beginning of the 1938 film, the narrative is introduced in the Armenian language, with Armenian music, and sheep performing a detailed Armenian dance. While walking in town, the shepherd-dog encounters several merchants: a bear selling grapes, a wolf selling lamb skewers (as his lamb-employee realises he might be next to be cooked), and a drunken pig selling wine. All of these characters speak both Armenian and Russian. They are depicted with threatening or caricature-like traits. Instead of buying wine from the pig, the shepherd buys cold water from an innocent-looking bunny that only speaks Armenian. The contrast of language between the characters presents the “Russian speaking” caricatured characters as threatening, non-trustworthy, and intoxicated. In contrast, the native speaker, the bunny, is displayed as innocent and trustworthy. Atamanov's political commentary here is striking: by buying water

¹⁹⁰ Lev Atamanov's most famous animated works included *The Yellow Stork* (1950), *The Golden Antelope* (1954), and *The Scarlet Flower* (1952). He moved to Yerevan in 1938 where he established the foundation for Armenian animation. Bendazzi, 102.

¹⁹¹ Films from the Republics, such as *The Dog and the Cat*, used similar aesthetics and techniques of storytelling as Soiuzmul'tfil'm, but remained separate as they expressed different sensibilities. Georgians and Ukrainians for example, were the first ones to establish their own film industry and developed their own national style. Kenetz, 10, 50.

from an Armenian bunny, the dog refuses to abide by Russian culture, or at least refuses to do business with them.

In 1955, Atamanov reanimated the same tale for *Soiuzmul'tfil'm* in Moscow. The Russian influence in the second work is unmistakable. This second film was based on the general motifs of Tumanyan's story, but uses Marchak's poetic adaptation instead of the original text.¹⁹² Therefore the Armenian story was changed for a Russian version of it. While this second film presented similar designs to the first one, a much stronger emphasis was put on displaying elements of Armenian culture including: musical instruments, background architecture, traditional clothing, traditional rugs and motifs as decoration, etc. These elements, however, remain superficial symbols compared to the more detailed Armenian depiction in the first film. For example, the Armenian dance at the beginning of the story was shortened and the dance steps are not as clearly depicted as in the 1955 film as the dance lines and formations that were easy to identify as Armenian in the first film were omitted in the second one.

In the 1955 version, the shepherd goes to the same market where he meets the same characters: the wolf, the pig, and the bear, who this time, sells watermelons rather than grapes. The bear selling watermelons is a strong symbol of Soviet cultural friendship, as a bear as early as the sixteenth-century has been used to represent Russia and is therefore a clear Russian symbol in this film.¹⁹³ The choice of exchanging grapes for watermelons, a fruit widely cultivated and used in cooking by the inhabitants of the Caucasus and of Central Asia, was not innocent either. It presents the bear (Russia) as a central part of Armenian culture. The watermelon is a recognisable symbol of Armenian's culture, especially for

¹⁹²Animation in Letter and Figures, "*The Dog and the Cat*," accessed August 2015, http://www animator.ru/db/?ver=eng&p=show_film&fid=3060.

¹⁹³ A. Rossomakhin and D. Khrustalov, "Rossiya kak Medved': Istoki vizualizatsii (XVI-XVIII veka)," *Tsentr etnicheskikh i natsional'nykh issledovannii IvGU*. Accessed August 2016, <http://cens.ivanovo.ac.ru/almanach/rossomahin-khrustalev-2008.htm>.

people living in the USSR.¹⁹⁴ In this context, this character clearly represents the friendship between Russian and Armenian cultures, which are merged into the symbol of the bear selling watermelons.

The rounded Disney style is used in the 1955 version as well. The Russian merchants, like most of the animals depicted, have a more full round shape when compared to the earlier designs by Atamanov, which makes them appear more friendly. Furthermore, the political commentary has disappeared from the first version. In both films, the pig is drunk and offers wine for sale and the dog buys water from a rabbit instead. However, since in this second version, no one speaks Armenian, the meaning of this scene is completely transformed. Since Russianness is not perceived as a threatening linguistic and visual element anymore, this scene simply presented drunkenness as something condemnable.¹⁹⁵ This is consistent with Soviet ideology: in 1950, the Party claimed it wiped out alcoholism from the country.¹⁹⁶ In reality, alcohol consumption had reached particularly high levels, especially after World War II, and by the end of the

¹⁹⁴ These kind of national symbols are frequently maintained as a popular reference for outsider cultural groups and are present in each nation of the world. For example, people living in France have cultural symbols such as *La Marseillaise*, the image of Mariann, and the Gallic Rooster. However, outsiders frequently see France through stereotypical images including wine, cheese, baguette, beret, and *marinière* (a shirt with horizontal navy and white stripes). Far from accurately representing the reality of these cultures, they are nevertheless important to mention because they are widely present in popular culture and nurtured in the media and in the tourism industry.

¹⁹⁵ By the 1930s new changes in animation such as sound in films profoundly transformed the face of cinema and animation and brought on more means to reach audiences. Furthermore, sound enabled the party to further develop their policy on language. Language policy was one of several nationalising policies developed by the Soviet party to form a unified (Russified) population. Since the USSR was formed of different ethnic groups, the use of a single language, Russian in this case, nation-wide in films and later, on television, fastened a national hegemony of culture. In the 1930s, several versions of films were made to fit the needs of the multilingual country. However, as Stalin's policy on language tightened, Russian became the main language in cinema and animation. For more on Soviet language policy, see Peter A. Blitstein, "Cultural Diversity and the Interwar Conjuncture: Soviet Nationality Policy in its Comparative Context," *Slavic Review* 65, no. 2 (Summer 2006): 273–293.

¹⁹⁶ Kate Transchel, *Under the Influence: Working-class Drinking, Temperance, and Cultural Revolution in Russia, 1895–1932* (Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg, Digital Research Library, 2011), 154.

1950s, a new campaign against alcohol consumption was undertaken.¹⁹⁷ While under Stalin, alcohol was permitted, temperance remained an important Soviet value. By buying water instead of wine, Atamanov's shepherd-dog demonstrated his value as a citizen and that his beliefs are clearly Soviet.

The final striking difference between the two films was the conclusion of the story. In the 1938 version, the dog's unfair situation is taken to a court administered by the goat. However, since Soviet ideology put much emphasis on an equal and fair society, using this ending would have demonstrated a failure of the Soviet justice system. Instead, Atamanov's second film shows that the goat and the cat are friends. The dog recognises his hat and tries to get it back, but he is kicked out of the house. Therefore, in this second ending, the goat's reaction was justified by the dog being unfair to him, rather than by a failure in the Soviet justice system. Atamanov's second film is therefore typical of the 1940s and 1950s when commitment to Stalin and to the USSR was actively renewed and tales were central to this commitment. The use of national culture in Soviet animation thus goes beyond the simple consideration of audience age.

Moreover, animated fairytales made during the height of Stalinism were popular with both adults and children, as N. Venzher points out: "But adults value animated films equally highly. Its form makes this branch of art an ideal go-between linking adults and children."¹⁹⁸ This is not surprising as animation was used to form and strengthen the Soviet national ethos. As the Cold War (1947–1991) increasingly isolated the Soviet Union, the display of national symbols

¹⁹⁷ The Bolsheviks extended the prohibition measures that had been in place since the mobilisation of 1914. These measures were eventually dropped as alcohol sales were a significant source of State revenue but led to a rise of alcoholism. To encourage temperance, several societies and journals were founded to promote sobriety propaganda. Kate Transchel, "Alcohol and Temperance in the Soviet Union and Russia since 1917," *Alcohol and Temperance in Modern History: An International Encyclopedia*, eds., Ian R. Tyrrell, David M. Fahey, and Jack S. Blocker. (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2003), 579–582; Martin McKee, "Alcohol in Russia," *Alcohol and Alcoholism* 34, no. 6: 824–829; Suddath, "A Brief History of Russians and Vodka."

¹⁹⁸ Venzher, 50.

grew in proportion.¹⁹⁹ The Cold War brought a need for identifying “national enemies,” which was also part of a larger model for national identity construction setting Soviet values (us) in opposition to Western values (them). Once more, the rounded Disney style and the seemingly innocent structure of the tale partially masked the heavy propagandist and educational purposes of these animated films. A good example of animated fairytales made during the Cold War, was the 1949 film by Ivanov-Vano, *Someone Else’s Voice*.²⁰⁰ The film opens with beautiful scenery in a forest, thus situating the action within the first few seconds. A voice-over introduces the story and tells the viewers what they are about to see. A nightingale is singing and other birds of the forest listen to his voice. The nightingale is small and looks like many of the other birds in his audience. Coming from foreign lands, a magpie returns home. She finds the nightingale’s concert old-fashioned and *passé* and is bored by it. She offers to teach him how to sing and the nightingale agrees to learn a new way of singing. The magpie then performs a jazz song, which horrifies the birds of the forest.²⁰¹ They make her stop by ripping-off her performing attire. The magpie is cast away and the birds go back to where they were at the beginning: they listen to the nightingale’s voice. The film ends on these words: “This fable has a moral truth, not just for magpies, but all birds who would only sign whatever is new!” further emphasising the educational and political message of the film.²⁰² In this film, Ivanov-Vano also uses Disney’s vision of an ordered world to carry the Soviet ideological content.

¹⁹⁹ For more on the Cold War, see Rana Mitter and Patrick Major, eds. *Across the Blocs: Cold War Cultural and Social History* (London, New York: Routledge, 2005); Michael F. Hopkins, *The Cold War* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2011).

²⁰⁰ Upon graduating from VKhUTEMAS in 1923, Ivanov-Vano joined the Gerasimov Institute of Cinematography, then started working for Mezhrabpomfil’m in the beginning of the 1930s, and by 1936 joined Soiuzmul’tfil’m. Kapkov, *Entsiklopediia otechestvennoi mul’tplikatsiii*, s.v. “Ivan Ivanov-Vano”: 283.

²⁰¹ Jazz music was not seen positively in the former USSR. Upon his return from self-exile in 1928 Gorky attacked jazz music, which he associated with homosexuality, drugs, and bourgeois eroticism. Decades later, these criticisms were recycled to fit Western rock culture. Stites, 73; Kaganovsky, 227–228; Tyrras, *Russian Intellectual and Cultural History*, 245.

²⁰² The English translation was provided in the film.

Someone Else's Voice displays a striking use of the Disney aesthetic. For example, the backgrounds of the forest display Russian-like vegetation (birch trees mixed with high and thin pine trees), but the rounded Disney style could easily make this introduction a part of a Disney film. The birds depicted in the film are quite similar to those found in Disney's *Snow White* as well. The film began with the voice-over of an invisible narrator, introducing the story, a narrative technique also used in early Disney animation. Like the famous American animator, Ivanov-Vano created distinct personalities for the birds, through their movements and depiction. For example, the magpie's movements are much more anthropomorphised than the other birds whose movements are closer to real birds. The magpie stands outside of the collective because Ivanov-Vano depicts her as bigger than the other birds of the forest. Her long tail forms an angle with the rest of her body, an angle that no other bird in the film shows. She also wears rather inappropriate things for a bird: fur, earrings, and a necklace. The way Ivanov-Vano makes the magpie move is unusual compare to how the other birds move. She walks around with pride and her head high, not looking or talking to anybody and moving her hips from left to right in a flirtatious way, like an imitation of the seductive walk of a Hollywood actress. In contrast, her movements during her performance are uncontrolled and staccato. The magpie's American-like performance disturbs the whole fluidity of the entire film and by extension Soviet life in general.

The magpie conveys an idea of superficial and promiscuous character. She talks louder than the other birds and has a nasal voice, compared to the other birds, who have soft melodious voices. The magpie stands as different from the other birds, which, including the nightingale, all look the same, echoing the communist concept of an equal society. Ivanov-Vano, show this by drawing the birds in a very similar way. During the performance, the magpie dresses-up in peacock attire to sing jazz music. The fact that she owns jewels and fur is a reminder of communist ideology concerning ownership and consumption. She

elevates herself to the level of beauty of the peacock, but her costume makes her look vain. Finally, the instrumentation of the magpie's performance is expressed through the sound of a trumpet playing the melody while other instruments improvise polyphonically around that melody. This musical structure is typical of Dixieland Jazz or hot jazz, an early twentieth century type of jazz from New Orleans.²⁰³ This type of musical style was already out of date in the United States. However, a greater consumption of American jazz in the USSR led Soviet animators to use it in the late 1940s and early 1950s to depict social corruption and infectious consumerism as jazz was perceived to be a product of Western imperialism.²⁰⁴ This reference to American culture along with the comment on consumption set the magpie as representing American capitalist values.

Ivanov-Vano depicts American culture with stereotypical characteristics. For example, the magpie is loud, impolite, superficial, and uneducated. She represents decadence, both physically, and on the musical and cultural level. She praises foreign countries where "people are free to sing whatever they want." Cultural decadence is especially obvious when she says: "Who cares how and what you sing, what's important is the effect you have on people." In contrast, the nightingale fits in the bird community. He represents the classical culture and sophistication of the Soviet people. The bird's ordinary physical appearance works to put an emphasis on his quality and virtuosity in music. His movements are soft, small, and controlled, and this also supports his sophisticated portrait. In addition, he does not need to stage himself, while the magpie has a whole theatre built for her performance.

The choice of birds also supports the film's general commentary. In Slavic traditions, the nightingale's song was long interpreted as a lament. It often symbolises poetry because it is a very creative bird, which sings spontaneous

²⁰³ Private correspondence with music specialists Tanya Karamanos, M. Mus. and Dr. Angeliki Koufou.

²⁰⁴ Yurchak, 163; McMillen and Kowell, 24.

songs. Also, the nightingale often takes on the qualities of the muse who inspires artists. It can be seen as a master of a superior art that inspires the human. On the other hand, fables depict the magpies as fearless and arrogant birds. They are attracted to shiny objects and are chatterbox characters. Finally, fables present peacocks as a symbol of vanity.²⁰⁵ In the film, this idea is reinforced by the peacock's costume that the magpie wears for her performance. Ironically, her performance is only appreciated by a crow, which is seen as an ugly bird with an unpleasant voice.

Like most animated films of the Stalinist period, Ivanov-Vano's film *Someone Else's Voice* follows the principle of socialist realist animation. The film is easy to understand and the use of a voice-over at the beginning completely eliminates any other possible interpretation than the one shown in the film. The narrative is clear: the nightingale (Soviet socialist values) is good; the magpie (American values) is decadent. The uplifting aspect in the film does not come from the narrative chosen but from the fluid graphic style that is used. Socialist ideology is clearly shown in both the narrative and graphic aspects of the film. For example, all birds look alike; the magpie is wearing jewels and trying to pretend she is someone that she is not—a human being and a Westerner. Finally, the film offers a clear moral focus. To make sure the viewers understand it, the voice over suggest at the end: "This fable has a moral and not just for magpies." The lovely Disney-like animation becomes an endorsement of intolerance and conformity, which is shown in the movie as a positive thing. The animal tale invented for *Someone Else's Voice* clearly showed how the desire to distinguish herself and to take foreign influence alienated the magpie from her own society. Furthermore, the design of the film assists the fairytale structure in creating a Socialist alternative reality where society and life are ordered, and where happiness reigns. Once more, this shows how Soviet animated films are not just oriented towards

²⁰⁵ See for example, Aesop's fables *The Peacock and the Magpie*, *The Peacock*, and *The Jay and the Peacock*. Aesop, *Aesop's Fables* (London: Printed by F.R. for Andre Hebb, 1647).

children but rather are strong ideological tools, which formed the Soviet mind of their audience.

Someone Else's Voice can also be read through a counter-discourse approach. As we have mentioned, the magpie represents the values which are rejected by Soviet socialist ideology. Alternatively, the magpie also conveys all the values that are possible in the West: freedom of speech, exploration of alternative styles of music, novelty, originality, individualisation, and private property (in the representation of her jewellery, fur, etc.)²⁰⁶ In this sense, the Soviet collective rejecting her, ripping-off her clothes, and chasing her alternatively present the people of the Soviet Union as conservative, living in the past, intolerant, and aggressive towards Western values. Even if these elements do not affect the moral message presented at the end of the animated film, they certainly offer a possible partial counter-discourse to Soviet official ideology.

Someone Else's Voice was not a traditional folktale but was rather created for the purpose of the film. This situation is not surprising as creating fairytales was common in the Soviet cultural context. In addition to tales that already existed, Soviet authors also created new Soviet “fairytales,” in line with the Soviet doctrine. Folktales on contemporary themes were written and encouraged, and displayed symbols showing the strength and greatness of the Soviet people.²⁰⁷ An example of these newly formed “realistic tales”—as they were called—is F. P. Gospodarev’s *The Scarlet Flower*, a tale of class struggle in a Soviet village.²⁰⁸ In this story, a kulak kills the Communist chairman of a collective farm. The hero is secretly buried to mask the murder. However, a scarlet flower grows out of the

²⁰⁶ I am grateful to Dr. Alla Nedashkivska for sharing these possible counter-discourse elements with me.

²⁰⁷ For more on the realistic tales, see Oinas, “The Political Uses.”

²⁰⁸ There is another Russian folk tale that bears the same. It was written by Sergey Aksakov (1791–1859) and shares similar motifs that the French *Beauty and the Beast*. Aksakov’s tale was made into an animated film in 1952 by Lev Atamanov. Sergey T. Aksakov, “Detskie gody Bagrova-vnuka,” accessed August 2016, http://az.lib.ru/a/aksakow_s_t/text_0020.shtml.

Order of Lenin pin that is on his jacket and betrays the place of his burial. The grave is then uncovered and the hero is miraculously found alive.²⁰⁹

This type of realistic tale also became very popular in Soviet animation because its structure carried strong ideological values. The animated film *Fedya Zaitsev* (1948), for example, was a type of realistic tale. The film's introduction presented painters, singing happily about how they like their job. They repaint the walls of a school so children can be more comfortable learning. Education is further emphasised by the lyrics of the song, which include multiplication tables, geographic knowledge, and mention how important it is to remember what year the military officer and diplomat, Mikhail Kutuzov (1745–1813), defeated Napoleon's troops. When the painting is finished, a great red band wishing children a great first day in school is put on the wall. When schoolboy Fedya arrives at school, wearing his Pioneers' uniform, he finds out he is the first one there, and takes great pride in being the first one among all other students.²¹⁰ This, according to him, will exclude him from any reading or class work. This is a clear indication of his inclination towards individuality rather than the collective valued by Socialist realism. Bored by himself, Fedya draws a character on the class's wall. His new friend is wrongly accused of drawing on the school wall and Fedya fails to tell the truth. He returns home and goes to bed. His graffiti comes back to haunt him during his sleep. At home, objects become animated and the Pioneers'

²⁰⁹ Oinas, "Folklore and Politics," 51.

²¹⁰ The Pioneers organisation was a Soviet youth scout club for children between ages 10 and 15. It was a place where children played sports, read, did crafts, got educated according to the communists precepts, and met other children. The Pionners organisation prepared children to their future role in the Komsomol, another youth organisation for older youth (14–28 years old). It was preceded by the organisation Little Octobrist (9 years old and younger). All three organisations existed until the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991. These youth groups were an important part of the socialist program as it prepared children to serve the State thought indoctrination. These organisations were highly moralistic, a sign according to Peter N. Streans, "[...] of the seriousness of childhood and children's social responsibilities." Peter N. Streans, *Childhood in World History* (New York, London: Routledge, 2006), 86–87; *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*, accessed December 2015, <http://www.britannica.com/topic/Komsomol>, s.v. "Komsomol;" *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*, accessed December 2015, <http://www.britannica.com/topic/Pioneers>, s.v. "Pionners;" *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*, accessed December 2015, <http://www.britannica.com/topic/Little-Octobrist>, s.v. "Little Octobrist."

youth journal rejects him, as does Anton Chekov's (1860–1904) literature. Fedya's toy soldiers, representing the collective, desert him for being a liar. When the final symbol of Mother Russia, a *matrioshka* (nesting dolls) insists he tells the truth to his teacher Fedya tries to break the doll with a ruler but as he breaks it another one inside takes its place each one calling him a coward. Abandoned by everyone and full of remorse, Fedya confesses the next day thus learning that you should not draw on walls and if you do, you must admit your fault and deal with the consequences.

Fedya Zaitsev is one of the contemporary tales written in the former Soviet Union. In these stories, the fairytale's narrative structure and motifs were kept but they are saturated in their ideological message and educational orientation. *Fedya Zaitsev* was considered a landmark film as it broke with the *ekler* tradition and is perceived to have broken with Socialist realism for that reason.²¹¹ However, it is clear that if the movement broke from Socialist realism, its ideology was still very present. In the film, the collective is highly valued; for example, when the teacher claimed that a lie from a single member of the class would betray the honour of the entire class. Like in the other films discussed previously, the fairytale narrative supports the ideological message and offers a tool for communicating this ethos while providing more entertaining subject matter. In this sense, the hero of the animated fairytale embodies the ethos, even if the main character is only a child, like Fedya.²¹²

The image of the child and the happy childhood became the most prominent symbol of the Soviet State after World War II.²¹³ The display of happy

²¹¹ Interview with Fedor Khitruk, Studiia "M.I.R.," "Korifei rossiiskoi animatsii," 00:12:33.

²¹² Children hero characters were especially used after World War II. For more on this topic, see Ann Livschiz, "Children's Lives After Zoia's Death: Order, Emotions and Heroism in Children's lives and Literature in the Post-war Soviet Union," in *Late Stalinist Russia: Society Between Reconstruction and Reinvention*, ed. Julianna Fürst (London, New York: Routledge, 2006), 192–208.

²¹³ Margaret Peacock, *Innocent Weapons: The Soviet and American Politics of Childhood in the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 20. This was reinforced as Margaret Peacock shows, by the claim that: "Soviet children [were] the happiest children in the world." *Ibid.*, 17.

life and happy childhood reinforced Stalin's legacy and provided a strong Soviet model to fight Western discourse in the Cold War. Therefore, "children's animated films" like *Fedya Zaitsev* were not just oriented towards a young audience but were rather one of the many tools used to strengthen the discourse around happiness in the country, for both children and adults. The use of fairytales was therefore not just a matter of audiences but a matter of politics.

The utopian Soviet national ethos articulated the concept of individual happiness through collective happiness, and its prototype was childhood, the central group guaranteeing happiness in the Soviet Union.²¹⁴ Therefore, the concept of children represents the archetype of the nascent nation. The care and attention lavished on children eventually stood for a broader model of paternalism.²¹⁵ Quoting Evgeny Dobrenko's work on totalitarian discourses, Alexander Prokhorov explains,

[...] such practices—socialist realist in particular—favor the infantile deindividualized audience obedient to the government as this audience's ultimate parent. Infantilism guarantees the underdevelopment of individual personality and agency. Dobrenko contended that under Stalin, socialist realist literature written for adults gravitated toward literature for children in its simplistic language, cult of hero, clear-cut polarization of the world of the fairy tale.²¹⁶

Dobrenko explains that this strategy was used because a child's consciousness was perceived to be easier to manipulate.²¹⁷ This idea was further supported by various changes in Soiuzmul'tfil'm's production orientation.

In 1947, Soiuzmul'tfil'm studios was once again reorganised, and the institution specialising in films for adults and children disappeared. Around the

²¹⁴ Catriona Kelly, "A Joyful Soviet Childhood: Licensed Happiness for Little Ones," in *Petrified Utopia: Happiness Soviet Style*, ed. Marina Balina and Evgeny Dobrenko (London, New York, Delhi: Anthem Press: 2009), 7.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 9.

²¹⁶ Prokhorov, 134.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 135.

same time, film administrators started claiming that children in the Soviet Union did not need special films since all films produced in the USSR were accessible to children.²¹⁸ It is plausible then to suggest that the use of fairytales in Soviet animation films was not solely a matter of audiences but was part of a larger project that aimed at a hegemonic discourse with the goal of forming a great nation-state. In addition to drawing on national heritage, animation had to present elements of moral instruction, two key elements for the socialist principles.²¹⁹ In many ways, the socialist project was similar to Disney's American Dream. Both were articulated around a similar structure as the fairytale: common social goals and values, clear definition of good and evil, and a conclusion presenting a happy ending.

However, the Soviet happy ending was only possible through a world bettered by socialism. This was articulated by an ordered visual line, the rounded Disney style, and by the fairytale structure. The words "happily ever after" resonated with the search for a better world in Soviet ideology and fairy and folk tales promote the feasibility of the Soviet utopian alternatives.²²⁰ According to Zipes: "Fairy tales hint of happiness. [...] They] map out possible ways to attain happiness, to expose and resolve moral conflicts that have deep roots in our species."²²¹ The Soviet national ethos of the Stalinist period was articulated around the idea of optimism and the conviction of creating a better life. Fairytales became the embodiment of the larger Soviet ideological project expressed, for example, in the famous lyric from the hit song *March of the Aviators* (1920): "We were born to make fairytales come true."²²² Animated fairytales were thus one of the many important cogs that were part of a larger ideological machine. As

²¹⁸ Ibid., 140.

²¹⁹ Beumers, "Comforting Creatures," 163.

²²⁰ Zipes, *Breaking the Magic Spell*, 3.

²²¹ Zipes, *The Enchanted Screen*, 1.

²²² Michael G. Smith, *Rockets and Revolution: A History of Early Spaceflight* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2014), 139; Boym, 110–111.

Pontieri points out: “[fairytales] provided a diversion for adults who wanted to find refuge in a fabulous story that would take them far from the problematic and sometimes frightening life of the years following the war.”²²³ In this light, it seems more and more difficult to make a clear distinction between animation for adults and children, as children were the embodiment of the Soviet national ethos. The heavy ideological machine that *Soiuzmul'tfil'm* became changed once more after the death of Stalin and the tendency towards emphasising young audiences ended in the 1960s, at the same time as the national ethos of the Stalinist period completely faded away.²²⁴

The death of Stalin in 1953 was an important turning point in all aspects of Soviet life. Following the tyrant’s death, animation, as other arts, became more heterogeneous and bloomed both in Soviet Russia and also in the Republics.²²⁵ When the de-Stalinization started in 1956 and the period known as the Thaw began, animation’s canon was greatly relaxed and restrictions loosened.²²⁶ Different animation forms were permitted, but still within the limits of the official ideology.²²⁷ The reintroduction of animated metadiscourse led to the break of the general immutable aspect of Soviet ideology in animated films. During this period, Soviet society opened up for economic reforms and international trade.

Animation greatly benefited from the Thaw: a new puppet-division at *Soiuzmul'tfil'm* offered new aesthetic possibilities; animators broke with

²²³ Pontieri, 49.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 41.

²²⁵ Kenetz, 5; Bernard Eisenschitz, “L’union des cinémas socialistes soviétiques,” *Le Nouvel Observateur (Paris)* 761, (17 June 1979): 82.

²²⁶ Kenetz, 225; Alexander Prokhorov, “The Cinema of the Thaw 1953-1967,” in *The Russian Cinema Reader, vol. 2*, ed. Rimgaila Salys (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2013), 14. For more on the impact of Stalinism, the destalinisation, and cinema’s historical and cultural developments during the Thaw, see Harold Shukman, ed. *Redefining Stalinism* (London, Portland: Frank Cass, 2003); Marcel Martin, *Le cinéma soviétique de Khrouchtchev à Gorbatchev (1955–1992)* (Lausanne: Éditions L’Age d’Homme: 1993).

²²⁷ Kornetchuk, 37; Margarita Tupitsyn, *Margins of Soviet Art* (Milan: Giancarlo Politi Editore, 1989), 23. For a deeper outlook at how censorship functioned during the Thaw, see Martine Godet. “L’œuvre dénaturée. Un cas de censure cinématographique dans l’URSS de Khrouchtchev,” *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 51, no. 4 (1996): 781–804.

rotoscopy (*ekler*) animation; and they could choose topics other than tales as a narrative structure. In addition, various independent studios opened in the Republics such as in Ukraine, Estonia, Armenia, and Central Asia.²²⁸ Although Socialist realism continued on until the 1980s, artists could now explore the individuality of their characters and challenge the viewer with non-linear narratives, irony, satire, contemporary themes, unhappy endings, unnatural movements, and even offer a critical view of their government, albeit a very soft criticism.²²⁹ For example, the theme of children and childhood was still very present in this period, but the idealised vision of a peaceful childhood in official Stalinist rhetoric was exchanged for children who held less ideological conviction, were more individualised, and abandoned by the adult world.²³⁰ The children of the Thaw, as the embodiment of the Soviet citizen, expressed the uncertainty facing the changes in Soviet ideological structure. While this led to more individualism from the citizens, they also had to face the insecurities that the lack of clear ideology brought. In the animation of the Thaw, both the fairytale structure and Disneyesque aesthetics were partly rejected, which supports the representation of this period of ideological insecurity. A new *auteur* style appeared

²²⁸ MacFadyen, 37. In most of these studios, the Stalinist animation style was abandoned. For example, in the Ukraine SSR, the studio Kyivnauchfilm introduced a series called *How the Cossacks*. The characters depiction included body with giant torsos and small legs, as well as movement not based on *ekler*. In addition, it showed flat backgrounds, and return to the technique of metamorphosis of bodies used in early American animation, where bodies could stretch and swish under different circumstances. *How the Cossacks* also displayed actions, which were not realistic but were closer to absurd. For example, in *How the Cossacks play football* (1970), a frightened character dug a hole in the ground to hide, instead of simply running away.

²²⁹ Kitson, 26, 28; Studiia “M.I.R.,” “Korifei rossiiskoi animatsii,” 00:20:02. The increasing individualisation of the character through movement, which the Thaw allowed, contrasted with the more static aesthetic under Stalin, even if this latter form of animation was emphasising more the human psyche than its predecessors. For a concise analysis of animated films made during the Thaw, see Laura Pontieri, “Russian Animated Films of the 1960s as a Reflection of the Thaw: Ambiguities and Violation of Boundaries in *Story of a Crime*,” *Studies in Russian and Soviet Cinema* 3, no. 1 (2009): 53–70; Pontieri, *Soviet Animation*.

²³⁰ Peacock, 125. This was the case in cinema too as in for example, Andrei Tarkovsky’s film *Ivan’s Childhood* (1962). The film depicts the experiences of Ivan, an orphan boy who participates in World War II. Unlike the films made during Stalin’s reign, it did not glorified war but instead presented the human cost of the war.

that some scholars refer to as “adult animation.”²³¹ What adult animation truly implies is a break with the Stalinist model of fairytale narrative animated in the style of Disney. As these were tools supporting Stalin’s vision of a Soviet utopia, this break was a necessary one.²³² Animated films of that period were in general much more complex in their aesthetics and narrative, and represented a new metadiscourse, the goal of which was to reinterpret once more what it meant to be Soviet.

Andrei Khrzhanovsky (1939–), for example, made *The Glass Harmonica* (1968). The film is about a musician whose music brings beauty to the world. The musician is arrested by important men and the world turns ugly. Only when a courageous young boy picks up the instrument does beauty return. The film’s narrative is introduced by a foreword reminding the viewer of the “greed, police terror, isolation, and brutalisation of humans in modern bourgeois society.” This introductory message is contradictory as it criticised bourgeois society (a Soviet concept) for the same horrors the Soviet citizen had to live with under Stalin’s government. While this film is therefore still following the precepts of Soviet ideology, it remains a clear departure from the unchallenged hegemonic message of Stalinist socialist realist animation.

²³¹ As demonstrated earlier in this chapter and in the introduction Pontieri and Beumers, in particular, see this strong division between children and adult animation.

²³² The animated production of the beginning of the Thaw, still demonstrated strong ties with Socialist realism of the Stalinist period. A reason for this might be that the animators were first hesitant to change their way of working so quickly, but most likely, the films were already in production process when Khrushchev announced the end of Stalinism. Several examples can illustrate this. Mikhail Tsekhanovsky animated the Russian folk tale *The Frog Princess* (1954) from the Afanasyev collection; Lev Atamanov made *The Snow Queen* (1957) based on Hans Christian Anderson’s (1805–1875) fairytale; Ivanov-Vano animated *The Twelve Months* (1956), a story retold by S. Marshak and in 1947, he made *The Little Humpbacked Horse* based on a poem by Piotr Yershov (1815–1869). All of these last four films of the early Thaw period displayed a strong Disney influence on visual style and songs. It is truly from the 1960s on, that animation really developed. Serial characters such as the rabbit and wolf in *Just you Wait!* (1969–2006) and *Cheburashka* were created. The later one was a character of a 1966 children’s story by Eduard Uspensky (1937–). The films in which Cheburashka appeared are Roman Kachanov’s *Gena the Crocodile* (1969), *Cheburashka* (1971), *Shapoklyak* (1974), and *Cheburashka Goes to School* (1983). Television also stimulated the production of short programs. In the early 1970s, a fairytale television program was launched: *Visiting the Fairy Tale*. The program lasted until 1995, a proof of his popularity on audiences. Kononenko, 275; Beumers and Balina, 133.

Khrzhanovsky kept the fairytale narrative style: a wandering musician travels to a city with the magical instrument he created that inspired high thoughts and fine actions. The citizens are in thrall to a yellow devil or a mysterious man holding money in his hand, and they obey a giant mechanical device deciding of their movement and actions. The nameless musician plays for them and seems to make them happy, but he is interrupted by the devilish man, is arrested, and taken away in a long towered high-walled hallway reminding the viewer of the walls around concentration camps. The magical instrument is then destroyed. One citizen possessing a rose, a reminder of the musician's power, is denounced by another citizen and taken away too. With this denunciation, the traitor character suddenly becomes bigger compared to the rest of the population and receives money from the devilish man. The film through the unique abstract narrative and highly symbolic images thus clearly denounced the Stalinist regime, the purges and unfair denunciations, and the materialist advantages that were created.

The Glass Harmonica is exceptional for its images, which were much flatter than those made at the height of Socialist realism. It presented a darker narrative and music, complex composition, strong diagonal lines echoing the work of Avant-garde artists, darker shades of colours, all of which created a feeling of uneasiness in the audience.²³³ Its use of famous European paintings accentuated the flatness and the unrealistic movement of the characters.²³⁴ The choice of portraits for the faces of the characters also increased the idea of realism in contrast with caricatures used in earlier animation. However, Khrzhanovsky still made use of past early Soviet animation tradition as the good characters were

²³³ The film was shelved by censors. Pontieri, 54.

²³⁴ It displayed several art pieces such as *The Moneylender and his Wife* (1514) by Quentin Metsys (1466–1530) a photomontage *Hjalmar oder Das wachsende Defizit* (1934) by anti-fascist artist John Heartfield (1891–1968). The character representing the party is a reference to René Magritte's (1898–1967) men with bowler hats. The work of Francisco Goya (1746–1828), Hieronymus Bosch (1450–1516), Pieter Brueghel the Younger (1564–1636), Giuseppe Arcimboldo (1526–1593), Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528), Pinturicchio (1454–1513), Raphael (1483–1520), Marc Chagall (1887–1985), Jan Lenica (1928–2001), Sandro Botticelli (1445–1510), Pietro Perugino (1446–1523), and El Greco (1541–1614) are also referenced. Pontieri, 149–167.

depicted with more realistic features and the denunciators or characters associated with the regime, with grotesque features. This aesthetic strategy was carefully used to criticise the past government and to carry, once more, a strong ideological message. For example, at the end of the movie, when the magical instrument is rebuilt, the grotesque faces from Gothic art change to beautiful Renaissance figures, showing the power of music, but mostly the power of dissident discourse in face of authority. *The Glass Harmonica* kept a tale-like structure, its narrative remained more symbolic than purely structural. The film is representative of the change in the national ethos, which rejected the Stalinist model similarly to how the regime was denounced in the film. In addition, the complete absence of national culture and folklore makes this film a representation of the striking break between Stalinist animation and animated films made during the Thaw.

The Thaw remained a rich yet confusing artistic era and animator Yuri Norstein (1941–) is perhaps the artist that best represented it.²³⁵ Norstein developed his unique mark in films embedded in surrealism, children’s dreams, and memories. His narratives are dislocated and his films are based on strong symbolism. In 1971, Norstein and Ivanov-Vano made *The Battle of Kerzhenets*, a film based on animated Russian icons, religious frescos, paintings, and illuminated manuscripts of the fourteenth through sixteenth centuries, in two-dimensional stop-motion technique.²³⁶ The film drew on early Russian film and animation: flat figures, unrealistic movement, long silent shots, silences, and symbolism closer to surrealism. The story is loosely based on a Russian legend of an invisible city that disappears under a lake in order to escape the Mongols’ attacks. The film’s high point is a battle between the Russian and the Mongol

²³⁵ Norstein’s most famous contribution to world animation was *Tale of Tales* (1979), a 29-minute animated film, voted in 2002 as best animation of all times. The film won animation prizes in competitions in Lille, Ottawa, and Zagreb. Kitson, 1–2; MacFadyen, 116. For more on Norstein, see Kitson, *Yuri Norstein*; Russel Taylor, “Soviet Blockbuster,” *Direction (Londres)* (Nov., 1987): 38–40; Irène Berelowitch, “Salut les artistes! La Russie. Yuri Norstein: Gogol, la pluie et le petit loup,” *Télérama (Paris)* 2271, (21 July 1993): 6–12; Éric Derobert, “Le conte des contes: De la Révolution à l’enfance,” *Positive* (Feb. 1985): 61–62.

²³⁶ Kitson, 40.

hordes. Narrative is almost absent from this film, which depicts soldiers going to war, war itself, and then the reconstruction of the city. The link to the original story is therefore very loose, as the audience cannot really understand many of its narrative elements. *The Battle of Kerzhenets* essentially used music as a soundtrack, thus showing an emphasis on a poetical approach to film animation.

By choosing frescos and icons, the animators created a light national propagandist film: saints or evangelists represent all Russian soldiers and their wives are images of the Virgin Mary. The outcome of the battle and the success of Russian troops are expected since their nation is constituted of Holy characters. While the introductory credits still displayed a complex calligraphy reminiscent of the *Kustari* art, and national symbols are also present in the representation of the famous Slavic artworks. The stylistic choices accentuated the flatness of the image and the characters' movements were similar to that of earlier Soviet animation made with cut-out paper. Like *The Glass Harmonica*, *The Battle of Kerzhenets* displayed an aesthetic break with the Disneyesque tradition of the Stalinist era.

The film includes long shots of the collective: masses of citizens from the city and groups of soldiers moving as one entity. The conclusion of the film also presents a similar link to socialist ideology: everybody works together to rebuild the city. These images are brighter than the rest of the film and serve as a reminder of the success of the Soviet ideological ethos oriented towards hard work for the collectivity rather than the individual. In the film, individuality compared to earlier socialist realist animated film is more accentuated. In the new era of the Thaw, however, individuality was not expressed through the concept of success through individuality, like in the American national ethos. Rather, individuality was exploited on the visual level to accentuate the idea of loneliness and isolation. *The Battle of Kerzhenets*, for example, after showing long shots of the soldiers and the citizens as a collective, presented the soldiers going to war, leaving a white Virgin Mary behind. As they disappear over the horizon, Mary is

standing by herself in a field outside the city walls. Slowly, as the music fades out, the city disappears behind her, accentuating her isolation and perhaps sadness. The background, now white, finally merges with the Virgin, making her slowly disappear too in a coat of old cracked paint, and leaving the audience with a feeling of anguish. This feeling was also created during battle scenes, in a sequence displaying a lonely white horse walking by itself while the battle rages in the background, and finally, in the post-war sequence, when soldiers are leaving the battlefield under the watching eyes of their dead soldiers.

The Battle of Kerzhenets' dislocated narrative and symbolic images reflected the change in ideology of the Party. The Soviet audience and the animators were exploring new ways of expressing what it was to be Soviet, and in Norstein and Ivanov-Vano's film, it was based on an expression of individualism and on the use of wordless symbolic images. While this aesthetic choice created a pure work of poetry, it also accentuated the feeling of anguish as the audience could no longer get a perfectly clear message from the film and were left with their personal interpretation. *The Battle of Kerzhenets* compared to other films made during the height of Socialist realism such as *Someone Else's Voice*, does not obviously lead the viewer to a particular ideological message. The audience remains much more active as an interpreter. This use of visual symbols was symptomatic of the uncertainty created by the dislocation of the Stalinist model that previously offered a clear visual and ideological guideline for animated films. It also shows the transformation of the intellectual and cultural environment of the animators as well as the change in the Soviet national ethos. *The Battle of Kerzhenets* shows a much softer political ideology, focussed more on the anguish of the individual facing new social changes. The atypical narrative without any clear hero or plot was also representative of the partial rejection of the socialist realist model and the search for new identity markers during the period of the Thaw.

The *Glass Harmonica* and *The Battle of Kerzhenets* also show how animated films of this period loosened their use of folklore and national culture as recurring themes. This was again due to the rejection of Stalinist ideology that was highly populist in nature. In contrast, animated films made during the Thaw displayed much stronger intellectualism. For example, several of Norstein's films referred to folklore, without having any or very little link to national culture. *The Hedgehog in the Fog* (1975), for example, claimed to be an adaptation of a folktale and *Tale of Tales* opens with a Russian lullaby, but these films do not display any other link to national culture. Both of these films represent a small animal (child) as the hero of the story. In both cases, the heroes are parent-less and have to face fearful situations without the help of anyone, accentuating once more the idea of isolation and the feeling of anguish. This was a similar theme used, as we have seen, in *The Battle of Kerzhenets*. Norstein's animation showed that the concept of happy children and childhood as the embodiment of Stalinist ideology, were reinterpreted and dislocated from their original model. The child as the archetypal symbol of the Soviet nation, had lost his parents (Stalin and its ideological discourse) and now had to face difficulties alone. The Soviet national ethos and its values displayed in animated films of the Thaw, proposed a new Soviet paradigm where individuality was increased but led to deep insecurities.

Animation historians often talk about the way Soviet animation developed, with emphasis on its various technological and formalistic innovations. The history of Soviet animation has always been presented in the light of the opposing concepts of children and adult animation. While this is not entirely false, this chapter has demonstrated how this view is much more complex than the simple dichotomy suggests. The development of Russian and Soviet animation is the visual representation of a wider search—sometimes imposed, sometimes not—aimed at defining the nation and by extension, the Self. For example, Shiryaev and Starevich's films merge populist and elitist cultural forms. Their animated production are the reflection of the emergence of the Russian cultural self-

definition that was initiated in nineteenth century Imperial Russia. This early form of nationalism based on a romantic past, was inputted by members of the social elite. It is therefore not surprising that early national culture was oriented towards the elite as well. Later, the Revolution and new Bolshevik regime called for a reinterpretation of the national identity and films of that period clearly embodied the ideological discourse of the time, when the concept of Soviet society had to be formed. The national model formed during the post-revolutionary period, though, was complex and addressed political activists and intellectuals. Stalinist animation, on the other hand, formed a much more populist ethos, which addresses the general population in a less challenging way than the Bolshevik discourse did. The national ethos of the Stalinist period displayed strong national symbols based on the country's past traditions, fairytale structures and the ordered Disney style were used to soften Stalin's ideological message and make it more accessible and acceptable to audiences. In the former Soviet Union, the hegemony of form expressed in the Disney style by making it the only way to do animation further emphasised the collective as opposed to the individual artist. This absence of animated counter-discourse allowed the Stalinist model to effectively form the Soviet minds of its citizens. In this new society, the "child," "children," and "childhood" embodied the larger Soviet ideological project of building a perfect society. This passed through the construction of a strong Soviet national identity. The complete articulation of Soviet identity finally achieved its goal under Stalin but was successful only because the entire political, administrative, social, and artistic discourses were coherent with one another. In this sense, Soviet animators and animation were some of the architects of their own system, one of many cogs in a larger structure that functioned like an engine. Animation was a strong tool in supporting ideological discourse since it was able to create an alternative and better reality, embedded in Russian tradition, simplicity, and ideal characters. The national ethos of the Stalinist period was only challenged after Stalin's death, when a third Soviet model was necessary. During the Thaw, Soviet national

identity was once more reoriented, this time towards a more individual interpretation of the national ethos. The formalistic changes in Soviet animation are therefore symptomatic of the changes in social ideological discourse. Thus the choice of design and folklore-based content were elements that articulated Soviet ideology and values. Soviet animation, in its complex evolution and multiple forms, is a true representation of the fragmented Soviet national ethos.

The circumstances, in which Soviet animation developed, were different from the American situation. Soviet animation evolved in a centralised context and this made the animated films' ideological discourse much stronger as no counter-discourse was possible. It also enabled the creation of a different national ethos than the American one, even if both paradigms share certain values. It is important to point out that both ideological discourses were not immutable and followed the social and political changes in their respective geographical location. In contrast, independent animators, such as Russian *émigré* animators living in Paris proposed a different ideological discourse, where the imaginary collective is formed by the animator.

In the absence of a strong studio structure in France and because the dichotomy between animation for children and adults was not yet fully articulated, Russian *émigré* animators developed a strong *auteur* animation tradition, outside of a studios' authority. They formed unique narratives and techniques, which were born out of their isolation and condition as *émigré* using designs and narratives based on folklore to convey strong ideologies and values. However in the case of the Russian *émigré* animators, it does not serve a studio's orientation or a government's ideology as was the case in the United States and the former Soviet Union. Instead, the tale structure and folklore motifs served a very personal view of Russian animators' condition of *émigrés*. The following chapter explores how ideology can shift from the national ethos to a family and individual one, and become an expression of the personal.

Chapter 3

Russian *Émigré* Animation in Paris: The Ideology Made Personal and the *Émigré* Condition

During his years in power (1922–1952), Joseph Stalin worked hard to erase all traces of both Imperial Russia and modernist experiments in arts. With this new page in its history, Russia’s glorious Silver Age was finished on its own territory. However, it was not completely dead, as it flourished in the various Russian diasporas of the world.¹ The values of the Silver Age were an important component in the development of a fashionable Russian exotic stereotype, from which Russian *émigré* animators benefited. In France, this enabled the Russian immigrants to receive quite a lot of interest from the locals.² For example, profiting from this “Russian fashion” in France, Serge Diaghilev (1872–1929) launched several Russian-themed art projects and exhibitions, and established a strong reputation as an impresario as well as strengthening the Russian stereotype for commercial purposes.³ Through his dance company, *Les Ballets Russes*,

¹ Bowlt, 29.

² Leonid Livak, “L’émigration Russe et les élites culturelles françaises, 1920–1925. Les débuts d’une collaboration,” *Les Cahiers du monde russe* 48, no.1 (2007): 24–25.

³ Diaghilev’s name was important to both French and Russian art. In Imperial Russia, while the art of the Wanderers and the Kustari sought national art through the rejection of Western European influences, Diaghilev’s *Mir Iskusstva* (World of Art), an Avant-garde art movement and journal cofounded by Diaghilev, Alexandre Benois (1870–1960), and Léon Bakst (1866–1924), kept its strong ties to French art. Réau, 171–172.

Russian modern art imposed itself on Europe.⁴ Contributing to the forging of the “Russian myth” based on orientalism and refined eroticism.⁵

The Russian myth was a mode of cultural nationalism largely preoccupied with forging specific images and symbols of an idyllic pre-revolutionary Russia rather than a realistic one. At the time, it was the last dominating fashionable form of orientalism, where Russians were perceived as dangerous, agitated, irresponsible, soft, cruel, and deeply childlike tender dreamers.⁶ From 1909 to 1929, *Les Ballets Russes* performed in Paris and popularised the Russian presence in France. Their use of orientalism and Russian folklore were inseparable aspects of a larger search for a Russian national identity abroad. Like the American Dream and the Soviet social and cultural project, the Russian myth and the community it formed were largely imaginary.⁷ As Imperial Russia was breaking down under the ravages of war, revolution, and a change of regime, its values and

⁴ In Russia, Diaghilev launched his first dance troupe. It was renamed *Les Ballets Russes* after the company moved to France. *Les Ballets Russes*' creative revolution brought together the most brilliant talents of the time to form the company's style, which mixed Avant-garde dance movement, music, and design. They revolutionised theatre decors, costumes, music, and dance in general. Vaslav Nijinsky, Georges Balanchine, Igor Stravinsky, Henri Matisse, Claude Ravel, and Pablo Picasso are a few of the numerous artists who collaborated with Diaghilev's *Ballets Russes*. Lynn Garafola, “Introduction: The Legacy of Diaghilev's Ballets Russes,” in *The Ballets Russes and Its World*, eds. Lynn Garafola and Nancy Van Norman Baer (New Heaven, London: Yale University Press, 1999), 3; *Ballets Russes*, DVD. Directed by Dayna Goldfine and Dan Geller (Zeitgeist Films, 2005): 00:06:47.

⁵ *Les Ballets Russes* borrowed from both Middle Eastern oriental fashion and the Russian nationalist art of the Kustari. Sally Barnes, “Firebird and the Idea of Russianness,” in *The Ballets Russes and Its World*, ed. Lynn Garafola and Nancy Van Norman Baer, 117–134 (New Heaven, London: Yale University Press, 1999), 117; Réau, 191; Oksana Bulgakowa, “The ‘Russian Vogue’ in Europe and Hollywood: The Transformation of Russian Stereotypes through the 1920s,” *The Russian Review* 64 (April 2005): 212; Judith Lynne Hanna, “Dance and Sexuality: Many Moves,” *Journal of Sex Research* 47, no. 2–3 (2010): 221. For more on orientalism, see Saïd, *Orientalism*.

⁶ Bulgakowa, 214.

⁷ Members of this Russian community did not have real tangible ties with each other. For example, several members of this community were not Russian *per se* but Russian-speaking Ukrainians, Jews, Armenians, or Byelorussians (Jews are considered an ethnic group in Russia). Yet, they still actively participated to the cultural life of *Russia abroad*. In this case, language and their state of *émigré*, were the main elements, which tied them to each other. The idea was to form an intellectual and cultural Russia, which carried values tied to its pre-revolutionary era, and which could evolve and grow without clear geographical borders. While they never participated in the fight against Bolshevism, the productions of Russian *émigré* animators contributed in the elitist values, which their community was fostering. Marc Raeff, *Russia Abroad: A Cultural History of the Russian Emigration, 1919–1939* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 26–27.

some of its best talents were embodying an idealised image of Russianness abroad. Russian *émigré* animators benefited from this interest to create a unique artistic contribution, and their work was influenced by the Russian myth as they both used and rejected this stereotype throughout their *œuvre* and in their way of working.⁸

This chapter addresses the work of the Russian *émigré* animators who fled to Paris after the Russian Revolution (1917) and the Civil War (1917–1922). They benefited from the presence of an already organised Russian cultural community, Russian film community, and from the interest of French men and women in the exoticism that their ethnic group brought to French national artistic production. While *émigré* animators did, for a short time, enjoy the network of the Russian diaspora, they rather quickly separated from it to establish their own home studios and formed a unique family-based structure in their animated production. They also rejected the discourse on Russianness that was nurtured by the diaspora. While this situation reduced their potential for marketing their *œuvre*, it allowed them to work with an almost complete freedom of expression. Through animation, they formed a personal animated discourse around their condition as *émigrés* representative of *auteur* animation. Their artistry was shaped and strengthened by their isolation in France as *émigrés* and by their isolation as artists from French studios, and the dislocation, which constituted their exile, was an important marker of their identity and of their animated films. They formed an art shaped by their social experience and by a very personal perception of animation, all of which was only possible with the absence of studio structure. For this reason, the ideological inclination that their film present is not oriented towards the dominant discourse of a studio as in the United States, or towards a propagandist governmental national ethos such as in the former Soviet Union. Instead, the the Russian *émigré* animators' film display an ideological structure loosely based on

⁸ François Albera, *Albatros: Des Russes à Paris, 1919–1929* (Milan: Mazotta, Cinémathèque française, 1995), 13–28.

the concept of nation and which is oriented towards the personal, thus problematising the concept national ethos even more.

In this chapter, I specifically examine the work of Russian *émigré* animators Ladislav Starevich, Bogdan Zoubowitch, and Alexandre Alexeieff.⁹ Because of their relative isolation from the French studio system, little has been written about them and what is available is not informative. Animator Nikolaï Izvolov expressed the same concern about the available literature on Alexeieff:

A reading of these publications leaves a strange impression: we keep on coming across the same things in the articles, the interviews, his memoirs and letters, which, far from complementing each other, make a truly excessive use of cut-and-paste.¹⁰

The situation that Izvolov experienced researching the work of Alexeieff is also true for Starevich and Zoubowitch. Since the professional structure that a studio could provide was replaced by a family-like structure—in which collaborators were life-partners, immediate family members, or close friends—their immediate social circle was rather small. This may explain why so little is known about them. Furthermore, in some cases, their collaborators still have the rights over their *œuvre*. This makes information about their work and copies of their films difficult to find.¹¹ In most cases, the original films are located in European

⁹ As most Russian *émigré* animators were working in isolation, this list might not be complete. Further investigation might uncover the work of other less known animators from Russia as well.

¹⁰ Nikolaï Izvolov, “Le prisonnier de la 4e dimension – The Prisoner of the Fourth Dimension,” in *Alexeieff: Itinéraire d’un Maître – Itinerary of a Master*, ed. Giannalberto Bendazzi (Annecy, Paris: CICA, Dreamland, Cinémathèque française, 2001), 55.

¹¹ For example, Bogdan Zoubowitch filmed *Le briquet magique* (*The Tinderbox*) after World War II. The film, however, was never put together. It was later restored and put together in collaboration with Julien Pappé (1920–2005), a film director from Poland, some time before 1991, the date when Michel Roudevitch interviewed Zoubowitch about this film. As both men are now deceased and neglected their estates, and as Zoubowitch did not have children, no one knows who owns the rights to the film. The original film has disappeared and only one copy seems to exist at the Bibliothèque de la direction du patrimoine cinématographique in Bois d’Arcy, France. Private correspondence with Jean-Louis Bompont, filmmaker, January 13, 2016; Michel Roudevitch, “Bob Maxfield, Bob Zoubovitch,” *Le technicien de film et de la vidéo* (Paris), no. 400 (15 Mar.–15 Apr. 1991): 87.

archives. Digital copies of the films are rarely made and in many cases, these films are so fragile that they are awaiting restoration.

Of the three, Alexieff has perhaps benefitted from the widest interest. The available literature generally examines his work and inventions, but little is known about his personal life. On the other hand, the life of Starevich was documented by his granddaughter in a book published in 2009.¹² This account does not document his private life either. However, it is one of the rare detailed accounts of his professional life. Although the biography contains some analysis of his films, a critical examination of Starevich's *œuvre* has yet to be done and this chapter contributes to this analytical perspective. Finally, Zoubowitch does not seem to have attracted much attention. Little is known of his life and career, and the list of his animated films remains incomplete. For example, while researching this thesis, I located photographs from one of his animated films in the private collection of the late animation historian Guiseppe Lo Duca (1905–2004) in France, yet to this day, none of the cinema archives in either Europe or North America that I have contacted have been able to identify the film.¹³ As none of the three animators discussed here had pupils working in their style to secure the legacy of their technique, a study of their *œuvre* remains critical as a way to reveal their personal experience of the world.

In France, these three Russian *émigré* animators continued abroad the stylistic work initiated in early Russian animation. I see their work as the counter-animation that was absent in the Soviet Union. Their animated films are a rallying cry for a lost socio-political structure, a nostalgic view of their lost homeland, and a reflection of their condition as immigrants. The uniqueness of their narratives and techniques was born out of their isolation. Even in this very different context, the use of design and narrative based on folklore in animation conveyed strong ideological values. In this case, however, it does not serve a studio's or

¹² See Martin and Martin.

¹³ See photos in the appendix.

government's ideology as in the United States—Disney and the American Dream—and former Soviet Union—Socialist Realism. Instead, the tale structure and folklore motifs served a very personal view of the Russian animators' condition as *émigrés*. The current chapter explores how ideology can become an expression of the personal. This was only possible because France offered very specific economic and artistic settings that enabled animation to develop as an individual craft. It is therefore crucial to explain this unique setting, which helped shape Starevich's, Zoubowitch's, and Alexeieff's unique animation style.

Animation in France was never as economically significant as it was in the United States. This is due in part to a much smaller market, two military conflicts (World War I and II), and animators' tendency to work individually, thus making an artistically significant but small production of films. The unique element of animated films made in France is that animation was never perceived as intended for children, but from the beginning of its existence, targeted larger audiences.¹⁴ This left a unique place for *auteur* animation, from which Starevich, Zoubowitch, and Alexeieff benefited.¹⁵ While American animators and studios were refining their films and production methods, European animation stayed a marginal practice led by a few pioneers as the field lacked structure and knowledge of the technique.

As mentioned in chapter one, Georges Méliès had already opened a niche for the market of fantasy film with his *féeries*. Later, frame-by-frame drawing animation was launched by Frenchman Émile Cohl. His graphic universe presented characters and stories without any reference to the real world, a first step in creating a visual language for animation, which is still used today. Cohl's influence on the field is unique, as he demonstrated the capacity of the medium to

¹⁴ As shown in the two previous chapters of this thesis the dichotomy between children and adult animation is not completely accurate. Jacques Kermabon, "Introduction," in *Du praxinoscope au cellulo: Un demi-siècle de cinéma d'animation en France (1892–1948)*, ed. Jacques Kermabon (Paris: Le Centre National de Cinématographie, 2007), 6.

¹⁵ *Auteur* cinema is a theory in which the director of the film is perceived as the most influential entity of the film's form, style, and meaning. Bordwell and Thompson, 381.

dissociate from trick films, and found sources of inspiration in popular graphic arts.¹⁶ His narratives did not follow a logical or chronological order. Instead, Cohl let images, as Donald Crafton says, “flow in a stream-of-consciousness fashion.”¹⁷ This narrative mode, along with a focus on a character’s thought processes rather than his actions, was popularised by the modernist artistic movement. It later influenced Alexeieff, as well as European animation as a whole.

For a short time, World War I boosted the market by creating an opportunity for propagandistic films. American companies, which monopolised the market before the war, left Europe when hostilities began. But European animation, like its cinema, still lagged behind the American film industry for a number of different reasons. First, European audiences still preferred American westerns, romances, and comedies to European wartime films. Furthermore, although French cinema had already entered the new era provided by sound, animation was still struggling in rudimentary conditions. This technological lag, however, enabled Russian *émigré* animators to develop a unique craft and to remain independent from the existing studios. By the mid-1920s most of the major studios and production companies were owned by American investors, and Europe was at an economical low point.¹⁸ During this time, American imports were a large part of French screen life. The popularity of Disney movies fostered a type of animation that was strongly influenced by its American competitor.¹⁹ Russian *émigré* animators, on the other hand, resisted this style. Europe was

¹⁶ Crafton, *Before Mickey*, 86.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 66.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 218; Bendazzi, 25. Ironically, the first cartoon series with recurring characters to appear in France, *Newlyweds* (1913–1914), was an American import made by Émile Cohl while he was working abroad. After this, the making of animated series became more popular. With few native productions to show in cinemas, the French studios competed with each other, using American animated films. Crafton, 218-219.

¹⁹ Bendazzi, 76.

struggling to find a niche in the field, and animators from the Old Continent could not compete with American imports.²⁰

In many places in Europe, animation was limited to creating intertitles for films, and advertisement shorts.²¹ During this period, two artisanal animators—Lortac (Robert Collard, 1884–1973) and O’Galop (Marius Rossillon, 1867–1946)—sought economic strategies to allow the labour-intensive field of animation to fit into the undercapitalised and decentralised national cinema.²² O’Galop set the first stone in motion stimulating an interest in fables, and Starevich would later follow suit. Lortac is credited with finding a profitable niche for animation in advertising, from which some of France’s most celebrated talent emerged including Alexeieff, Paul Grimault (1905–1994), Antoine Payen (1902–1985), and Étienne Raïk (1904–1976).²³ In the United States, many animators also started their careers in advertising, but left it as soon as possible. In France, commercials and public-service announcements remained staples of animation.²⁴ As Russian *émigré* animators were all using time-consuming techniques, advertisement

²⁰ Ibid., 25; Crafton, 217.

²¹ Bendazzi, 25.

²² Richard Neupert, *French Animation Today* (Oxford, Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), 45. O’Galop worked to form a distinct national style based on fables, comics, and poster art. The result was a graphic animated space exploiting flatness. He is responsible for films such as *The Frog Who Wished to be as Big as an Ox* (1921) and *The Fox and the Stork* (1923). Lortac is credited with establishing the first animation studio in Europe. His business, Publi-Ciné, a play on the word *publicité* (advertisement), was officially founded in 1925 and was quite prosperous. He is responsible for short films such as *Tuberculosis Threatens Everyone* (1917), *Professor Mecanist* series, and *Le Canard en ciné* (1921–1923), a comical newsreel referring to the parody newspaper *Le Canard Enchaîné*. Neupert, 45–46, 51; Crafton, 225, 229; Kermabon, 6; Pierette Lemoigne, “Lortac (Robert Collard) 1884–1973,” in *Figolés main: Une histoire du film publicitaire en France 1910–1970*, Program for the 9^e Sommet du Cinéma d’Animation, ed. French Archives of the Centre National de Cinématographie. (Paris, Centre National de Cinématographie: 2001); “Jean Comandon, des microbes sous les sunlights.” Cité des Sciences et de l’Industrie, posted December 19, 2012, accessed January 2016, <http://www.universcience.tv/video-jean-comandon-des-microbes-sous-les-sunlights-533.html>; Alain Carou, “Le Canard en ciné, série satirique,” in *1895 59*, (2009), accessed January 2016, <https://1895.revues.org/3926#tocto1n3>.

²³ Sébastien Roffat, “L’atelier Lortac: Cinéma d’animation et publicité dans l’entre-deux-guerres en France,” in *1895 59*, (2009), accessed January 2016, <https://1895.revues.org/3929>.

²⁴ In France, this was still the case in 1960. J.-P. Coursodon, “Bilan du cinéma d’animation dans le monde,” *Cinéma* (Paris) 48, (July 1960): 72.

provided a financial way to support their film animation projects, as well as an opportunity to experiment with the medium.

This situation only changed in the mid-1930s, when the American studio production system was adopted, with France leading Europe's way to organised animation studios. By then, talkies had become the norm and contributed to differentiating animation, which persevered its independent visual codes and language.²⁵ A few animators, though, such as Starevich, Zoubowitch, and Alexeieff, persisted in making an original product and resisted both the American influence and the studio productivity system. They formed the roots of the European animation style. But in these early years, this style was fostered only in the advertisement field.²⁶

Starevich, Zoubowitch, and Alexeieff all used objects other than cel to make their films. The first European films did not use transparent cels as they were rare in Europe prior to the 1930s. World War I had created a shortage of raw material, and paper cut-out figures were generally used in combination with a retracing method to transform an object into another one.²⁷ Aside from the war, the popularity of shadow theatre and puppet shows also explains this stylistic choice as they were strongly rooted in the European cultural tradition. Imagery based on folk prints such as *Épinal* prints in France or *lubky* in Russia was also persistent across Europe and generally displayed nonrecurring casts, retold

²⁵ Jacques Drouin, "Une nuit sur le Mont Chauve, Alexeïeff et Claire Parker, 1933," in *Du praxinoscope au cellulo: Un demi-siècle de cinéma d'animation en France (1892–1948)*, ed. Jacques Kermabon (Paris: Le Centre National de Cinématographie, 2007), 57.

²⁶ Crafton, 228.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 255.

proverbs, fairytales, or classical legends.²⁸ Even after cel became available again, Russian *émigré* animators kept the craft aspect of their work.²⁹

Without a strong studio structure, Russian *émigré* animators were able to experiment with the medium as they wanted to. However, it also meant that they themselves had to look for possible distributors, who could reject their work at will. Animation of this era was associated with harsh living conditions and was a homemade craft, but it was also synonymous with artistic freedom.³⁰ Starevich, Zoubowitch, and Alexeieff persisted in resisting studio productivity system and succeeded in creating an original product. Even today, their films cannot really be categorised as part of any genre or trend. In addition, the combination of their work cannot form a category in itself either. In France, they benefited from a very specific cultural and social setting provided by the Russian diaspora allowing them to find work, make professional contacts and friends, and it is crucial to take a look at how this Russian community outside Russia bloomed.

The three men were part of the largest wave of emigration from Russia and the Soviet Union occurring after the Russian Civil War (1917–1921) and

²⁸ The *Épinal* prints were inexpensive woodcuts and lithographs popular in France during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. They represented a wide range of subject matter, expressed in a folk style and displayed strong nationalist messages. Crafton, 257; “Print Collection 12: Prints, Popular Art, Images D’Epinal,” University of Pennsylvania Library, accessed April 2016, <http://www.library.upenn.edu/collections/rbm/print/printcoll12artprints.html>; Expositions: Les Galeries Virtuelles de la Bibliothèque Nationale de France, “L’illustration populaire,” Bibliothèque Nationale de France, accessed April 2016, <http://expositions.bnf.fr/contes/pedago/illustra/popu.htm>.

²⁹ In contrast to American animation, little effort was made to create series with recurrent characters. However, after Cohl’s *Newlyweds* was distributed, some French animators undertook the creation of an animated series. For example, Cohl also made five episodes of *Les Pieds Nickelés* based on Louis Forton’s (1879–1934) comic strip. Starevich later in his career also attempted animating a series based on a character named *Fétiche* (1934–1938). But in general, Starevich, Zoubowitch, and Alexeieff mostly made unique films rather than series. Crafton, 246; Éric Loné, “Les Aventures des Pieds Nickelés,” in *1895* 53, (2007), accessed January 2016, <https://1895.revues.org/2593>.

³⁰ This situation necessitated constant readjustment from the artists as they struggled between the desire to keep their artistic freedom and the necessity to find decent living conditions.

extending until 1941.³¹ For the most part, these *émigrés* relocated to Germany, Czechoslovakia, Poland, or France.³² Of the post-revolution wave of emigration, an estimated 120 thousand Russian *émigrés* settled in France in the 1920s and 1930s, 43 thousand relocating to Paris and its neighbourhoods.³³ The *émigrés* expected to return to Russia soon. However, within a few years of their immigration, the state of temporary exile converted into a permanent community abroad, known as *Russia abroad*, with Paris as its political and cultural capital.³⁴

It is, therefore, not surprising that Russian *émigré* animators chose Paris as their destination. Several reasons oriented their choice of destination towards France. The country had remained active in dealing with the Russian refugees' problem in spite of several European countries disengaging from it.³⁵ Paris' geographical location in Europe also made it a political centre for *émigrés* who wanted to continue the fight against Bolshevism.³⁶ In addition to these political reasons, Russia and France had for centuries benefited from diplomatic and

³¹ The first waves of migrants were White refugees who opposed the Bolshevik revolution. Although they were against Bolshevism, these "Whites" were not necessarily completely supportive of a monarchy either. This group was soon followed by political *émigrés* who sought refuge after the forcible expulsion of anti-Communists from the Soviet Union in 1922. Later in the 1930s, more tried to escape Stalin's purges and defected from the USSR. The term *émigré* designates people fleeing for political reasons. It was not used widely at the beginning of the exile, Russians preferring the term refugees or stateless people. Raymond and Jones, *The Russian Diaspora*, 1–9; Gorboff, *La Russie Fantôme*, 11, 26, 30; Robert H. Johnston, *New Mecca, New Babylon: Paris and the Russian Exiles, 1920–1945* (Kingston, Montreal: Mc-Gill-Queen's University Press, 1988), 67.

³² Raymond and David, 23; Raeff, 17.

³³ Raymond and David, 23–24; Raeff, 22–37; Johnston, 15–22.

³⁴ Raeff, 37; Johnston, 5; Jean Delage, *La Russie en Exil* (Paris: Librairie Delagrave, 1930), 7–8; Robert H. Johnston, "The Great Patriotic War and the Russian Exiles in France," *The Russian Review* 35, no. 3 (Jul., 1976): 303.

³⁵ For example, while Paris remained for them an expensive city to live in, the financial support, which the League of Nation and the Red Cross provided, enabled the *émigrés* to settle in the French capital. Furthermore, as World War I had left France with great need of workers, especially in mines, factories, workshops, and on the farms, the country was able to provide Russian refugees with immediate work. Vincent Bouvet and Gérard Durozoi, *Paris Between the Wars, 1919–1939* (New York: Vendome Press, 2009), 21; Raymond and David, 24.

³⁶ Raymond and David, 24.

cultural exchanges.³⁷ Thanks to these earlier cultural connections, a small Russian community was already settled in larger French cities such as Nice and Paris. The *émigrés* thus benefited from already organised social structures.³⁸ In general, they remained in a small circle of Russian immigrants like them, and their diaspora became a virtual state of exile with its own cultural leadership, social organisations, publishing network, schools, university, and film studios.³⁹ When Starevich, Zoubowitch, and Alexeieff arrived in France, it was through the Russian diaspora that they first found the bearings to face their new life.

When Starevich and his family arrived in France, they lived first in Joinville-le-Pont, with Joseph Lewinski (dates unknown), a small local film producer and Russian *émigré*. Starevich worked as a cameraman for Pavel Thiemann's studio, who also had fled Imperial Russia.⁴⁰ However, he found working difficult as his reputation created jealousy among his co-workers. While working for different studios, Starevich built a small personal studio at Lewinski's

³⁷ These were strengthened under Catherine the Great who sought the Westernisation of her territory, and popularised French as the language spoken at the Imperial Court. While the Patriotic War of 1812 significantly slowed down these Francophile feelings, French nevertheless impacted Russian culture greatly. Cultural exchanges were also nurtured through the many travels Tsars and aristocrats took to the French capital and the Riviera, and because the French literary market was open to Russian foreign literature. In Russia, this French fashion is one of several elements that stimulated Russophilia and stimulated nationalism. For more on the Russian and French cultural and social relationship, see Derek Offord, Lara Ryazanova-Clarke, Vladislav Rjéoutski, and Gesine Argent, eds., *French and Russian in Imperial Russia. Volume 1-2: Language use Among the Russian Elite* (Edinburg: Edinburg University Press, 2015).

³⁸ For example, six Russian churches already existed in France prior to the Revolution. By 1926, over 100 cheap cabarets and Russian restaurants were open in Paris, all providing balalaika and gypsy music performances, and national food. These were places where Russians frequently visited to meet friends, and where the French would satisfy their taste for exoticism. Gorboff, 46.

³⁹ Raymond and David, 10; Gorboff, 35, 93, 111; Hilton, "Russian and Soviet Studies in France," 52–79; Gutnov, "L'École russe des hautes études sociales de Paris," 375–410.

⁴⁰ In Russia, Pavel Thiemann struggled during the First World War to keep his studio opened. He and his studio suffered from the German pogroms from the local population. He eventually left for Ufa in the Urals, and only returned to Moscow after the February Revolution. Then, he emigrated to Paris and later to Germany. Youngblood, 26–32; Leyda, 116, 119; Bordwell and Thompson, 106; Martin and Martin, 78–81.

house to work on his animated films.⁴¹ There, he made his first “French” films.⁴² When Thiemann’s studio went bankrupt, Starevich left the Russian film community to focus exclusively on his animation.

His scission from this Russian community was certainly facilitated thanks to his daughter Irene, who was fluent in French. However, the separation was not definitive as the family soon moved to a larger place in Fontenay-sous-bois, close to Montreuil, where Albatros Films (previously named Ermolieff Studio) was settled.⁴³ Formerly known in Imperial Russia as the Ermoliev group, Albatros Films’ members fled to Yalta (Crimea) at the same time as Starevich, and relocated to France in 1920.⁴⁴ They formed the “Russian school” of cinema in Montreuil, a suburb of Paris. The studio supported mostly films made by the Russian *émigrés* with recurring themes of exile, travelling, and the feeling of

⁴¹ Martin and Martin, 78-81.

⁴² Starevich’s first films were *Dans les griffes de l’araignée* (*In the Spider’s Claws*, 1920), *Le mariage de Babylas* (*Babylas’ Wedding*, 1921), *L’épouvantail* (*The Scarecrow*, 1921), *Les grenouilles qui demandent un roi* (*The Frogs who Desired a King*, 1922), *La voix du rossignol* (*The Nightingale’s Voice*, 1923), *Amour Noir et Blanc* (*Love in Black and White*, 1923), *La petite chanteuse des rues* (*The Little Street Singer*, 1924), all of which, except *The Frogs who Desired a King*, were from an original story written by Starevich himself. *The Nightingale’s Voice* was distributed in the United States in 1925, where it won the Hugo Riesenfeld prize for the best short film of the year. It was the first time this prize was offered to a foreign production. Martin and Martin, 101, 138; L. Bruce Holman, *Puppet Animation in the Cinema: History and Technique* (Brunswick: A. S. Barnes, 1975), 22.

⁴³ Bruno Edera, *Full Length Animated Feature Films* (London, New York; Focal Press, 1977), 27.

⁴⁴ In 1917, Joseph Ermoliev (1889–1962) organised the evacuation of his company, first to Yalta, and later to Paris. In Yalta, Ermolieff’s studio made around 16 films including several anti-Bolshevik propaganda. In the 1920s, Iosif Ermoliev re-emerged as “Joseph Ermolieff” in France. He was the owner of the Films Ermolieff, later called Films Albatros, and launched a successful Russian *émigré* school of cinematography. In France, the group received the support of Pathé, for whom Ermolieff was working in Russia. When Ermolieff left for Germany in 1922, Alexandre Kamenka (1888–1969) became the director of Albatros Films. Youngblood, 26–32; Leyda, 116, 119; Bordwell and Thompson, 106. Albera, 87–98; Kristin Thompson, “Il gruppo Ermolieff a Parigi: esilio, impressionismo, internazionalismo,” *Graffithiana: Rivista della cineteca del Friuli* 35–36, (Oct., 1989): 42. For more on Ermolieff’s career in Germany, see Alexander Schwarz, “Der mobile Produzent: Iosif Ermol’ev in Rußland, Frankreich, Deutschland, USA,” in *Fantaisies russes: Russische Filmmacher in Berlin und Paris, 1920–1930*, ed. Jörg Schöning (München: Text + Kritik, 1995), 41–46; Andrei Korliakov, *Culture russe en exil, Europe, Série “L’Émigration russe en photos, 1917–1947.”* (Paris: YMCA-Press, 2012), 207.

being uprooted.⁴⁵ Albatros' films and studio were remarkably successful in the 1920s', a period during which French cinematography was struggling.⁴⁶ Albatros' cinematography made possible the rebirth of French national cinema as it was actively working to counter the growing American presence in French film industry. The studio benefited from the different Russian diasporas around Europe to distribute its films widely.⁴⁷ It was also the only permanent cinematographic troupe in early-1920s Paris.⁴⁸

Fontenay-sous-bois was therefore a comfortable nest for Starevich to settle in as he remained close to people of similar culture. Throughout his career, Starevich kept—and sporadically used—his connections in the Russian film community. For example, in the 1950s, after troubled circumstances around the distribution of his film *The Tale of the Fox*, Starevich signed a distribution contract with Alexandre Kamenka, who was Albatros' director.⁴⁹ Starevich's house also became a spot for Eastern European immigrants to meet.⁵⁰ His door was always open to newcomers, to the extent that the Starevichs were called “the Holy Family.”⁵¹ It is clear, then, that his distancing from the Russian diaspora was

⁴⁵ Interview with Lenny Borger, *Le cinéma des pêches*. DVD, Directed by Gabriel Gonnet (La Cathode, 2005): 00:43:15. The breakthrough Russians made in background designs enabled the Albatros studio to assert its place within French cinematography. Albatros Films revolutionised the decors, and used new camera angle shots and artificial light to dramatise the diegesis through a play between light and shadows. *Le cinéma des pêches*: 00:34:49.

⁴⁶ Thompson, 40.

⁴⁷ Albera, 12–18. Eventually, the studio collaborated with a new generation of French directors: Jacques Feyder (1885–1948), Jean Epstein (1897–1953), Marcel L'Herbier (1888–1979), and René Clair (1898–1981). By the mid 1920s, audiences started to lose interest in Russian exoticism and Albatros Films turned to French films. In addition, the coming of sound, which exposed Russian actors' accent or inability to speak French, and the economic crisis in France led to a hardening of the hiring processes and the marginalisation of *émigrés* in support of the natives. Many of the members of Albatros eventually relocated in Berlin and Hollywood. Gorboff, 35, 124; Thompson, 40; Interview with Constantin Morskoï, *Le cinéma des pêches*: 00:44:55; Alexandrov, 2; *Le cinéma des pêches*: 00:47:50.

⁴⁸ Thompson, 41.

⁴⁹ Martin and Martin, 206.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 79–83.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 94.

not absolute. In his new house in Fontenay-sous-bois, Starevich built a workshop, a projection room, a darkroom, and another studio, which would host all of his animated productions until his death.

It was in France that Starevich refined his animated films, which were presented in cinemas as complements to the main programs.⁵² With the help of his wife Anna and of his two daughters, Irena (later Irene) and Jeanne, he produced a large body of work.⁵³ When his animation did not bring him as much money as needed, the animator took on small advertisement contracts, a niche that was previously developed by Lortac and O'Galop.⁵⁴ Throughout his life, Starevich claimed he was making animated films for his own pleasure and not to make a profit. He certainly, however, exercised a strong sense of business, as in his distributing contracts he constantly reiterated his conditions, desires, and requests in terms of artistic freedom, remittances, working conditions, and especially copyrights. Initially, work was difficult as puppet films were a new genre in France. But Starevich took advantage of his contacts, former achievements, and reputation to find distributors.⁵⁵

Although Starevich claimed he made films only for his own pleasure, his films in France differed from those he made in Russia, as he switched from Russian-inspired narratives to French ones, proving he was indeed taking his new audience into account. The strong influence that Russian literature and Russian

⁵² Starevich's films of the 1920s were between 13 and 30 minutes long for a film representation, which lasted around 3 hours. It generally consisted of a documentary or series of short films (often humorous or satirical) followed by newsreels. The main film of the program was projected only in the second part of this program after the intermission. *Ibid.*, 102, 121.

⁵³ They collaborated on most of his films. Anna made the costumes for his puppets, Irene took care of the administrative work such as contracts and copyrights, and Jeanne acted under the pseudonym of Nina Star. For a short time, Bogdan Zoubowitch joined the Starevichs in producing films and acting. This collaboration, however, was short-lived. He seemed to be the only one outside his immediate family with whom Starevich worked. *Ibid.*, 93–97.

⁵⁴ Between 1939 and 1946, Starevich would have made around 17 advertisement films. *Ibid.*, 257.

⁵⁵ Starevich changed distributors often. As he did not have an exclusive contract with any of them, we can assume he simply went with the distributor that gave him the best offer. *Ibid.*, 85–97.

tales had on Starevich's earlier films was replaced by fables, mostly those by La Fontaine and Aesop. This clearly shows how Starevich was interested in anthropomorphism as these authors' fables portrayed stories involving animals. Fables, or Starevich's original scenarios based on a fable or fairytale structure, became the main narrative structure of his films. Starevich made, for example, *Le rat de ville et le rat des champs* (*The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse*, 1926), *La cigale et la fourmi* (*The Ant and the Grasshopper*, 1927), *Le lion et le moucheron* (*The Lion and the Gnat*, 1932), *Le lion devenu vieux* (*The Lion Grown Old*, 1932), and later *Le Roman de Renard* (*The Tale of the Fox*, 1941), all of which referenced La Fontaine's works. Starevich's use of fables was therefore a way for him to acknowledge the new society in which he lived.

In France, Starevich also used the tale structure to comment on current events in the Soviet Union. Although he was always perceived as apolitical, one can catch a glimpse of political commentary in some of his films. For example, in 1922, he made *Les grenouilles qui demandent un roi* (*The Frogs who Desired a King*), based on one of Aesop's fables. The film was produced by the Russian Art Society of Paris and distributed by Pathé. It tells the story of a group of deep-thinking frogs who are unsatisfied with how things are done in the Frogland Commonwealth. They protest against their government, and ask the god Jupiter for a king as a way to get better democracy. After Jupiter sends a log of wood, the frogs see no difference in this unsuitable ruler and rebel again. The frogs demand a ruler once more. Jupiter, exasperated, then sends a stork. During its coronation, the stork devours a part of the frog population. When they ask for Jupiter's help, he answers by sending them a thunderstorm. Just before being eaten, a frog bids farewell to his friends and delivers a moral: "Let well enough alone" admonishing the audience not to make changes unless you are sure it will improve your condition.

The Frogs who Desired a King is a commentary on a political situation seen from an outsider perspective. The choice of this fable is very telling. This

film was made shortly after Starevich's arrival in France and echoes Russia's situation: an unsuitable ruler overthrown (the Tsar) and replaced by a much greater danger for the kingdom (the Bolsheviks). Starevich did not have to make any explicit political statement, as his films were the visual expression of his perception of the world. For example, Jupiter complains about the frogs when he says: "These frogs know not when they are well off. They're almost human."⁵⁶ Frogland's society is depicted as particularly stuffy and foolish. When the stork arrives, the frogs are organising an official welcome, with speeches, an orchestra, a cameraman, etc. They wear the best clothes and top hats, but no one realises the stork is a natural predator. One of the frogs foolishly delivers a speech inside its beak before being eaten. The rest of the population is then forced underground (in the lake). Starevich used iris shots to emphasise the ridiculousness of the situation. For example, to see the log king's reaction (or lack of reaction) to the frogs' actions. The resulting comical sequence shows how silly frogs are. In addition, the film closes on an iris shot of a frog stuck in the stork's beak. The victim is bidding farewell to life and friends in a particularly dramatic manner with grand gestures, and goodbye kisses to the audience. This echoed the "Russian style" used in 1910s' Russian melodramas that displayed long shots of immobile figures and little dialogues. Jupiter's reaction is to put his sleeping hat back on his head, turn his back on the action, and go back to sleep. With this last image, Starevich showed that the dissatisfied society that had revolted had to pay for its mistakes, as even the Gods abandoned them.

Years later, in 1932, the political themes came back in his repertoire as Starevich animated another of La Fontaine's fables: *Le lion et le moucheron* (*The Lion and the Gnat*). The film once more echoes political issues in Russia: the autocratic ruler Nicholas II overthrown by his subjects. La Fontaine's fable is about a severe king lion who terrorises his weaker subjects. One of them, the gnat, is insulted by the king and declares war on him. The gnat proceeds to bite the lion

⁵⁶ English translations were provided in the film.

until he defeats him. Starevich shows in this humorous tale how the weak people can overthrow a frightening ruler.

Starevich was very interested in the theme of the ruler and what becomes of him. The same year he made *The Lion and the Gnat*, Starevich animated another fable about a king: *Le lion devenu vieux (The Lion Grown Old)*. The film tells the story of an old lion, king of the animals, who used to be feared by all. The lion no longer has the energy to attack his enemies and his subjects now mock him: the dog and the horse sit next to him and act as if the king was one of their friends, the donkey sits on his throne, and even the fly the king tries to catch, sticks its tongue out at him. As the old lion recalls his past military and romantic accomplishments abroad, the audience enjoys landscapes, cityscapes, and other curiosities of an oriental appearance, which echo orientalist paintings of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. While the king daydreams, his subjects paint over his coat of arms as they have decided to get rid of him. One by one, they hurt the old king with vicious grace. As the donkey, the most cowardly of the animals, approaches him too, the lion dies.

Starevich's biographers have claimed he was apolitical. However, *The Lion Grown Old* contradicts this statement as it offers an allegorical view of politics. The parallel the audience could make with Russian politics is striking and the lion's fate was quite similar to Nicholas II's: the monarch was first criticised, then forced to give up his power, before being killed. This film is more complex for the audience to understand, as it does not present intertitles to explain what is happening or the moral of the story. However, a viewer familiar with La Fontaine would understand that the ending of *The Lion Grown Old* was a direct reference to the author's fable: "[...] je voulais bien mourir / Mais c'est mourir deux fois que souffrir tes atteintes." (I willingly would yield my breath / But, ah! Your kick is double death!).⁵⁷ Starevich again showed that a leader dies politically before

⁵⁷ Ibid. English translations provided by the Musée Jean de La Fontaine. "The Lion and the Gnat," Musée Jean de La Fontaine, accessed March 2017, <http://www.musee-jean-de-la-fontaine.fr/jean-de-la-fontaine-fable-uk-160.html>.

dying physically. The overall serious tone of *The Lion Grown Old* contrasts with Starevich's other work, where themes are generally comical or mocking society.

Starevich's ridicule of society was initiated in Russia with *The Cameraman's Revenge*, and continued on in France. In *Le rat de ville et le rat des champs* (*The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse*), he criticised city dwellers' way of living. The entire film is organised around the idea of contrasts. For example, the country is seen through a light yellow filter while a blue filter is used for the city. Himself living in the suburbs, Starevich promoted with this tale the simplest ways of living and opposed the general urbanisation that was happening in France and in the Soviet Union. *The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse* is an interesting contrast between classical and modern as Starevich offered a modern retelling of La Fontaine's fable, but still kept its ties to the original text. For example, he cites La Fontaine's work: "... le rat de ville / Invita le rat des champs, / D'une façon fort civile, / À des reliefs d'ortolans" (... the town mouse / invited in the civilest way; For dinner there was just to be / Ortolans and an entremet).⁵⁸ On the other hand, Starevich's modern twist is noticeable in the several liberties he took with the fable. For example, the town mouse arrives in the countryside driving a 1920 convertible car before crashing into the town mouse's house. This introductory animation shot was superimposed onto a live-action shot of the city traffic. Here, Starevich merged his animated puppet world and real images, which creates an interesting superimposition of an old European tradition onto modern society. The formalistic choices reflected in the film support the entire narrative and strengthened Starevich's values of simplicity and tradition.

Society is portrayed in the film as stuffy, as all town mice are dressed up in the latest fashion and holding fans. Dinner in town included fine food served on a Turkish carpet and a laced tablecloth, music, and a dancing show. The latest looks particularly ridiculous as the rat-like puppets wear costumes *à la* Marie-

⁵⁸ Ibid., 18. English translations provided by "Town Mouse and Country Mouse," Fables of Aarne-Thompson-Uther Type 112. Selected and edited by Professor D. L. Ashliman, University of Pittsburg, accessed March 2017, <http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/type0112.html>.

Antoinette and smile to the camera to show their long front teeth, reminding the audience that they are rats. To accentuate the absurdity of the situation, the dancers turn around and their bums are exposed, as their long dresses cannot cover their tails. The party is disturbed by a cat, filmed in live-action.⁵⁹ In this sequence, Starevich brings the real into the animated diegesis, to remind the town mice—and the viewer—that reality will catch up with them. This scene is particularly interesting as Starevich used drawn technique when the mice realise a predator is present: a drawn image of the cat comes out of the puppet mouth in a similar fashion to speech balloons in comic books.

As in his other films, Starevich maintained the comical aspect of the story. For example, after the escape from the cat, one mouse lost a piece of its tail, which moved by itself and followed him inside the secure mouse hole. Starevich also created humour in his puppet's reactions. When the country mouse is surprised, his hat pops off his head, or his tunic gets lifted-up, exposing his underwear. In general, this character is seen as clumsy as he keeps falling and breaking things around him. The country mouse keeps creating situations that accentuate the simpleton nature of his character. For example, after the town mouse's car crashes, the country mouse pulls it to the city while the town mouse sits in the car doing nothing. When he tries to escape the cat, he keeps on running straight into a mirror, breaking it into pieces. This comical tone enabled Starevich to keep the story light.

As the evening comes to an end, the country mouse invites his host to join him for dinner in the countryside the following day. However, this part of the story is never shown and Starevich left the audience with a strong negative feeling

⁵⁹ The cat is not an element of the original fable by La Fontaine but is one of Starevich's additions. One should note, however, that the story exists in multiple versions, some involving a cat or a dog. For example, in Aesop's fable, the rats are disturbed by a dog, and in the Scottish adaptation by Robert Henryson (1425–1500), *The Tail of the Uponlandis Mous and the Burges Mous*, the mice's meal is disturbed by the cat Git Hunter. Aesop, *Aesop's Fables*; Robert Henryson, "Robert Henryson, The Complete Works: Fables," Middle English Texts Series, Robbins Library Digital Projects, University of Rochester, accessed August 2016, <http://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/parkinson-henryson-complete-works-fables>.

about life in the city, while life in the countryside remains unknown and open to romantic speculation. *The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse* ends with a sequence showing the town mouse in front of his house, under the stars shining in the calm night. By way of superimposition, Starevich showed the country mouse dreaming about the beauties he saw in town. But his reverie is disturbed by the memory of the cat. He then offers the moral: “ Fi du plaisir / Que la crainte peut corrompre!” (Ignore the pleasure / That fear can tarnish).⁶⁰ Starevich concludes the film with a final humorous situation when the country mouse gets inside his house, but closes his front door on his already wounded tail. The clear dichotomy between city and village in *The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse* shows how Starevich supported a discourse oriented towards a simpler way of life and more traditional values corroborated by his choice to live outside Paris. Furthermore, the ideological values of tradition are frequently displayed in his *œuvre* as well.

Perhaps Starevich’s most important and complex film was *Le Roman de Renard* (*The Tale of the Fox*, 1941). *The Tale of the Fox*, was an hour-long animated film, which Starevich had planned since 1929, when he started making the marionettes. In some sequences, the animator used between 50 and 100 puppets. This means that for an average of 75 puppets in the same sequence, the artist had to change their position 273,000 times to make 3 minutes of film, an unprecedented exploit as Starevich had only his family as a crew to work with.⁶¹ His marionettes were also much more complex than in his earlier films, with moving eyes and facial expressions. The puppet’s facial expressions changed depending on their emotional state: for example, when the king lion is in deep thought, his whiskers move, and when the puppet-badger is outraged, his fur straightens up as he speaks. Each puppet’s movement was a characterisation of its

⁶⁰ La Fontaine, 18. English translations provided by “Town Mouse and Country Mouse,” Fables of Aarne-Thompson-Uther Type 112 Selected and Edited by Professor D. L. Ashliman, University of Pittsburg, accessed March 2017, <http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/type0112.html>.

⁶¹ Annick Rougerie, “Le Roman de Renard,” Press Release, (Paris: Le Centre National de Cinématographie, 2003), 3.

personality. Starevich used close-up shots for dramatic effects, a large depth of field, and detailed decors. The film was unique in the softness of the puppets' movements, which resembled the real movements of a normal human being. Movement was indeed very important to Starevich, who mentioned it in his memoirs, as the essence of the art of cinema.⁶² The film was first produced in Germany, as this is where Starevich found a producer, and was released in 1941.⁶³

Before being an animated film, *Le Roman de Renart*'s original tale was not a novel but a compilation of animal tales in verse, compiled between 1170 and 1250 AD, and found in a manuscript, possibly written in France by a scribe. It tells the story of the adventures of a trickster figure—the fox—that tricks adversaries in order to get what he desires.⁶⁴ *Le Roman de Renart* is a satire of feudal society, and criticised the clergy, society and what was considered taboo at the time. It also mocks the French *chanson de geste* (song of heroic deeds) a type of medieval poem, and chivalric romances, as a way to expose society's hypocrisy. The main theme is organised around the struggle between the fox—which typified cunning—and the wolf, representing rough and naive strength.⁶⁵

In its animated film version, *The Tale of the Fox* is introduced by a sequence presenting a human hand pulling at the ear of a monkey-puppet. The animated character is being put down next to a projector and reprimanded by the movement of the hand. The puppet then sticks out its tongue at the human, and starts turning the handle of the projector to begin the movie. In this second film, there is another monkey-puppet that narrates the story. As the pages of a book turn, the audience is introduced to the story and to the main characters. *The Tale of the Fox*'s introduction proposes three levels of diegesis: the one where the

⁶² Martin and Martin, 113.

⁶³ Ibid., 187.

⁶⁴ Aurélie Barre, *Le roman de Renart: Édité d'après le manuscrit O (f. fr.12583)* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010), 2; "Introduction, Roman de Renart," Bibliothèque Nationale de France, accessed February 2016, <http://classes.bnf.fr/renart/livre/index.htm>.

⁶⁵ Rougerie, 4; "Introduction, Roman de Renart."

projector, monkey operator, and the audience are located; the diegetic space of the film within the film where the narrator and the book are; and the narrative *The Tale of the Fox*, which is animated from inside the book. This method enlightens the audience about the nature of animation as a medium carrying meaning: the triple *mise-en-abîme* that Starevich presented, forms a dialogue on intertextuality legitimating animation as a form of high art, by connecting it with classical literature. In addition, Starevich followed Méliès' example by challenging the dichotomy between the concept of reality and diegesis (fiction). The projector is perceived both within and outside the diegesis, thus making the audience part of the animated reality he created. One can then argue that the primary diegesis extends into our world to create an imaginary reality. This narrative technique addresses the problem of cinema as an image of reality, and gives his *œuvre* an uncanny sense of realism. It is further increased by the type of animation he tackled, which used tangible objects, made alive for the films' duration. The secondary and tertiary diegesis both represent fictional spaces where the animation can take place, both in the film and in the book. The discourse around the intertextuality and the nature of the media (within the book, the animated space, the "real/animated space," and the reality) certainly allows for some questioning. Starevich suggested through the *mise-en-scène*, that magic and fantasy can occur in reality as well.

The tertiary diegesis of *The Tale of the Fox* is organised in several sequences of the fox's adventures.⁶⁶ La Fontaine's version of *Renart et Tiécelin le corbeau* is the first of the fox's adventures to be shown.⁶⁷ Starevich referenced La Fontaine's fable by mentioning the author at the beginning of the film, when the raven is introduced: "Here we have [...] Master Raven, which Monsieur de la

⁶⁶ Of the recognisable tales, Starevich included (in this order): *Tiécelin le corbeau*, *La pêche aux anguilles*, *Le poisson des charretiers*, *Ysengrin dans le puit*, *Chanteclerc le coq*, *Tibert le chat*, *Le combat the Renart et Ysengrid*, *Le jugement de Renart*, *La confession de Renart*, and *Le siège de Maupertuis*.

⁶⁷ La Fontaine's version is known as *The Fox and the Crow*. In this version, the fox eats the stolen cheese instead of trying to eat the crow.

[sic] Fontaine brought to our attention.”⁶⁸ As the narrator introduces the fox’s first mischief, La Fontaine is quoted once more: “Ashamed, the raven belatedly swore never to be taken again.” The reference to the seventeenth-century fabulist was not necessary. Starevich, however, shows his desire to reach his French audience, which would certainly have been more than acquainted with La Fontaine’s fables. Furthermore, he brings to our attention to the idea of literature as a source for animation inspiration. As *The Tale of the Fox* has no known author, La Fontaine stands as a literary figure justifying the animated narrative.

After seeing some of the fox’s misbehaviour, the audience is introduced to the royal court where animals complain to the king about the fox’s behaviour. As they narrate their problems to the monarch, the audience can see the mischief happen on the screen. Far from being as seemingly innocent as the fairytales and fables Starevich had used in the past, *The Tale of the Fox* shows how its protagonist makes use of treachery, lies, theft, mutilation, and even murder to get what he wants. Discouraged by the fox’s bad behaviour and not knowing what to do to control the fox’s continuous threat to smaller animals, the king orders everyone to be vegetarian or to be punished by hanging. At the bottom of his decree, the audience can read that the king will be the only one allowed to have meat twice a week. Like in his previous animated works, the animator used the theme of an unfair ruler.

Starevich expressed the happiness of the king’s subjects through a long sequence presenting several images accompanied by a song: an orchestra playing, a choir of frogs signing, a rat tap dancing accompanied by a rat-band, etc. This strategy was used before in an earlier sequence showing a cat serenading the queen. This subplot of *The Tale of the Fox* is mentioned later in the film but is not fully developed. Initially, Starevich had planned a complex musical score and soundtracks for each animal and emotional state. When sound came to cinema, he was less than happy and said:

⁶⁸ The English translations were provided in the film.

Silent film had just given birth to a new art form, distancing itself from pantomime and theatre, when the “talkies” interrupted this process, pulling films towards theatre and rejecting silence in the darkness outside.⁶⁹

Sound film disturbed Starevich’s entire aesthetic based on codes of colour and music themes, such as in *The Cameraman’s Revenge*.⁷⁰ In addition, sound and later coloured films increased the cost of his production. However, *The Tale of the Fox* was carefully planned to fit the new realities of cinema. This section of the film is rather unusual in Starevich’s production, and reminiscent of Disney’s animated films in which long musical segments are introduced the animated diegesis. While the music-scene does not bring much to the narration, Starevich certainly gained in displaying his mastery of puppet animation, as well as, increasing the emotional aspect of the subjects in the animal kingdom.

Unfortunately for the animals, the king’s royal decree does not stop the fox’s mischief as he seduces, kidnaps, and eats the rooster’s wife. Once more, Starevich used sharp contrasts for this film’s *mise en scène*. On the one hand, he displays comical situations. For example, when the fox claims his friendship to the rooster, as the bird is busy reading the king’s decree, the fox is shown tasting his crest. These funny details are strongly contrasted by the fox’s perfidious and sometimes sadistic actions. In this last sequence, the fox seduces the rooster’s wife and asks her for a dance. They turn until she faints. Then the fox kidnaps and eats her. As her husband dramatically laments on her skeleton (which had kept the petrified shape of the victim), one of their chicks stands next to the relic, calling her “mama.” Once more, Starevich contrasted dramatic and comical situations, making the animated film’s narrative lighter. He also showed contrast in the image projected. For example, when the puppets waltz and in the chase by the barnyard dogs to catch the thief, a real life-action background is projected behind the

⁶⁹ “Le film muet venait à peine de donner naissance à un art nouveau, prenant ses distances avec la pantomime et le théâtre que le “cinéma parlant” interrompait ce processus, tirant le film du côté du théâtre et rejetant le muet dans les ténèbres extérieures.” Martin and Martin, 150.

⁷⁰ See chapter 2 of this thesis.

characters. Like in the introduction of the film, this aesthetic choice questions the real and animated on the screen. Starevich brings both together to show that they are not mutually exclusive.

After the fox's final misbehaviour, the king decides to punish him, but both of his envoys are tricked as well. The badger, his cousin, advises the fox to go talk to the king but he is undecided. At night, he dreams that a public fight is organised between himself and the wolf. In this sequence, a monkey plays the role of the commentator and explains how the fight is organised, who the judges are, what the public's reaction is, etc. Interestingly, the voice takes time to comment in some detail on the way the royal couple is dressed: the king wears a "modest uniform of a Corporal of the guard", and his wife looks "charming in satin" and fur. This clearly mocks court culture by contrasting the overdressed queen with the simply dressed king. This segment also was subjected to Nazi and Occupation censorship, as Corporal was Hitler's rank and at the end of the story, the fox fools the lion too.⁷¹ In fact, the fox pretends he has a hidden treasure for the lion in exchange for his freedom. The greedy king falls into the fox's trap but when he discovers he was fooled, he declares war on the fox.

This is a second reference to World War II. In addition, after the king's speech, his army cheers him in a similar manner as the Wehrmacht did with Hitler. While Starevich's puppets neither make the Nazi salute nor yell "Heil Hitler," they nevertheless yell an unidentified cheer and hold their spears as an extension of their hand in a similar manner. The lion's army attacks the fox's castle, and the fox once more defeats them with tricks. The king then realises the fox cannot be beaten and would make a good minister, a decision applauded by his subjects. This ending was also censored by the Vichy government.⁷² In fact, when the film

⁷¹ Ibid., 183; Neupert, 64

⁷² In the original script, the fox becomes Minister of Peace and Justice. The original ending was censored by the regime, along with other audio parts of the film. In the presently available version of the film, the earlier script was respected but the ending has not been changed back to its original version. Martin and Martin, 182–183.

came out, it was banned in some countries such as Italy and Spain. *The Tale of the Fox* is certainly, like its original text, a critique of society and politics in general: the ruler is seen as weak compared to the fox, smaller animals who could revolt against the tyrant are ridiculed, and the main source of their problems and pains—the fox—is offered a powerful position where he will legally be able to do anything he wants. With this particularly disturbing ending, Starevich showed that success in politics required one to be greedy and hypocritical, and that weak rulers surround themselves with equally dishonest people. Likewise, his film critiqued society for accepting this unfair situation. Claiming Starevich was not interested in politics is therefore misleading as his views on the situation are clearly articulated in this animated tale.⁷³ Through his films, the filmmaker expressed his ideological principles condemning politics and also noted how much he valued a simple and family oriented way of living.

Starevich's personal ideological values oriented towards tradition and family also were expressed in *Fleur de fougère* (*Fern Flower*; 1949).⁷⁴ The film referenced classical Russian literature, fairytales, and fables, showing animation's capacity to mix genres on the same screen. The narrative is introduced by a young boy asking his mother for a story. She points out that she does not know what story to tell him as she already told him about *Puss in Boots* and *Cinderella*. She adds that he also knows all of La Fontaine's fables by heart so her imagination is running out. An old man joins them. One presumes he is the grandfather, as he seems much older than the other puppet-characters, with an arched back and white hair. He tells the story of the fern flower that can realise all the dreams of its owner. This story is a Slavic myth about a flower blooming for only few hours,

⁷³ Martin and Martin, 10.

⁷⁴ The film won the prize of Best Children's Film at the Venice Film Festival. Neupert, 71.

during the Eve of Ivan Kupalo (St. John's), which marks the summer solstice.⁷⁵ For this film, Starevich used the version of the tale by Polish author Józef Ignacy Kraszewski (1812–1887).⁷⁶ This tale focuses on the hero's path in the forest, as well as his break and reconciliation with his family. Once more, the audience can perceive how omnipresent Slavic themes are to Starevich, this time through folklore rather than through political discourse.

In the animated film *Fern Flower*, like in the literary work, the young man decides to get the magic flower for himself. At night, he leaves his family asleep and proceeds into the woods to find the flower, which is guarded by the evil spirits of the forest. When he finally gets it, he wishes to be a prince living in a castle, and the flower grants his wish. The magic fern flower also warns him that he cannot share any of his wealth, or he will lose everything. As he returns to his village, his family does not recognise him. After his social status is acknowledged by everyone, he finally abandons his weeping mother for a wealthier life.

At this point in the story, Starevich switched to fables. A festive dinner is organised and the guests are introduced to the prince and to the audience. The camera stays on the first guests, a crow and a fox, while the narrator refers to La Fontaine's famous fable: "Hé! Bonjour Monsieur du Corbeau / Que vous êtes joli / Que vous me semblez beau" ("Ha! How do you do, Sir Raven? Well, your coat, sir, is a brave one!").⁷⁷ Like in the fable, the crow opens its beak and drops its cheese. The fox catches it and starts eating it. The camera then pans right to the other guests: a crane, an ox, frogs, a hare, a grasshopper, and an ant. The camera

⁷⁵ Ivan Kupalo marks the beginning of the harvest and is a fertility celebration marking an opportunity for youngsters to socialise. Celebrations involved several dances, future telling, and other games and songs with reference to sexuality. Kupalo Eve was believed to be filled with magic, talking trees, and witches gathering. Mykola Mushynka, "Kupalo Festival," Internet Encyclopedia of Ukraine, accessed January 2015, <http://www.encyclopediaofukraine.com/display.asp?AddButton=pages\K\U\Kupalofestival.htm>. For more on Ivan Kupalo, see Oleksa Voropai, *Zvychai nashoho narodu: Etnohrafichnyi narys* (Miunkhen: Ukraïns'ke vyavnitso, 1958-1966).

⁷⁶ Kraszewski wrote *The Fern Flower* in the nineteenth century. A similar story also existed in Russia, written by Gogol in 1830 (*St. John's Eve*).

⁷⁷ The English translations were provided in the film.

stops every couple of animals and the same introductory strategy (quoting a part of La Fontaine's text) is used to introduce the fable they represent.⁷⁸

After the guests have been introduced, the image fades out to open onto a fairytale sequence of a belated guest which will later become the prince's dance partner: Cinderella. In this movie, in general fairytale references are also really strong. For example, as Cinderella and the prince dance, wings grow on their backs, another reference to a famous fairytale: Hans Christian Andersen's *Thumbelina*. Starevich here uses intertextuality once more, to make his animated reality, a meeting point for all storytelling characters. After the dance is over, both protagonists lose their wings and the prince proceeds to declaring his love to the lady. Cinderella runs away, leaving her shoe to the prince's personal entertainer and third reference to fairytales: Puss. The story continues with sequences of the prince on his horse looking for his runaway love. This entire fairytale sequence, just like the fables sequence, shows strong court culture. Starevich's choice of fairytales is important as each one narrates the story of a rise in social hierarchy, just like Disney did in his films: underprivileged Cinderella going to the ball to become a princess, Puss tricking the king so his unfortunate master can marry a princess, and Thumbelina becoming a princess through her marriage to the prince of flowers. However, as we will see later, the animator did not quite value this social escalation but rather, emphasised it, in order to contrast its coldness to the simple family life in the countryside.

While searching for Cinderella, the prince arrives at his former house, where he finds out his family can no longer plough the land. He offers his horse to help plough and because of this, loses his wealth. On the other hand, his family ties are reformed as his mother recognises her long-lost son. The young boy helps the family working the land with his horse still wearing the court's majestic accessories. As he sits on the plough and lets himself be carried by the horse, the

⁷⁸ These fables are in order of the characters' apparition on the screen: *The Raven and the Fox*, *The Fox and the Grapes*, *The Wolf and the Crane*, *The Wolf and the Lamb*, *The Frog That Wished to be as Big as the Ox*, *The Hare and the Frogs*, *The Grasshopper and the Ant*.

audience cannot mistake Starevich's message: one who has land and family is the richest man on earth. In the following sequences, the animator clearly endorsed values of a simple lifestyle associated with traditional society by presenting the grandfather sowing grains, wheat growing, and harvest. Starevich shows the family sitting together in the middle of the harvested field, drinking and eating the bread they have worked for. The animated film ends with the boy pointing at a cloud that looks like Cinderella's carriage and noticing how fast it is disappearing, leaving nothing behind. Once more, the ideological message carried by film is clear as Starevich presented traditions of community work, countryside simplicity as opposed to grandiose and wealthy life, and the moralistic message that wealth, like Cinderella's carriage, does not last.

Fern Flower's message also can be linked to its author's personal life. It was one of the films that Starevich made after World War II. By the end of the war, his film production was affected by his family situation. In 1947, when he returned to making animated films after the war, his daughter Nina got married and moved away. His second daughter, Irene, was diagnosed with an eye disease that affected her vision. She went completely blind in 1950. In addition, his wife Anna suffered from severe and painful rheumatism, which deformed her hands.⁷⁹ As Starevich's working methods were based on a family structure, this situation provoked a noticeable decline in his production. *Fern Flower* thus is the animator's testimony to a mode of production in decline. Sadly, as he had no other pupil but his daughters and wife, this marked the slow decline of his career.

In general, Starevich's productions stand out by how similar and yet different they were from what the Russian *émigré* cinema tradition projected. His films do not reflect the Russian myth nurtured in the Russian diaspora. The "Russian presence" is only perceived through a critique of a ruler, as well as through the tales and through his choice of keeping puppets an old mode of animation. Starevich's choice of puppet animation is very telling. The artist

⁷⁹ Martin and Martin, 273.

continued the tradition of early Russian animation when he went abroad. The preference of such a physical material contrasted with the narratives. While the narrative brings him closer to French culture, the puppet, had a much stronger tradition in Eastern Europe, kept him closer to an “oriental” tradition, as opposed to French animation, which generally displayed paper cut-out animated films. It was a visual commentary on his perception of animation, which was to him both a craft and an art. His resistance to the studio structure was thus expressed both in how he made films but also in the formalistic choices the animated stories displayed. While he was a skilful artist, he chose to continue producing puppet-animated films, which took longer to make. The continuation of puppet tradition and constant critique of the ruler both represent an animated counter-discourse in relation to Soviet animation, but one acting outside of the former USSR. This discourse was more reminiscent of Imperial Russian values than Soviet ones *per se*. Starevich was nurturing “older” standards, both in the craft he displayed and in the way he saw animation.

The choice of fables made his films an animated discourse around his position as an immigrant as well. The diaspora’s Russian oriental stereotype with which he did not identify was not overly present in his *œuvre*. One, however, finds a certain sense of orientalism at times in Starevich’s films. For example, in *The Lion Grown Old*, the audience could see the past exploits of the lion in some unidentified middle-Eastern country. This sequence seems to belong more to *The Arabian Nights* than to a fable from La Fontaine. While this brought him closer to the “Russian myth” in its display of orientalism, Starevich used such symbols too sporadically to claim he was clearly influenced by it. His animation certainly exhibited a similar sense of both popular and elite art in its choice of narrative structures. In fact, La Fontaine’s fables were popular since they were part of the regular curriculum in children’s schools. However, since they are still considered a classical text, they are also part of a higher form of culture. His display of elite culture lay in the narrative contrasting with the French animation production of

the time, which was mostly based on humour, and with the American cartoons that saturated the national market. Elitism was also reflected in Starevich's production of extremely high quality of work for the time and in his vision of animation as an art and a medium of communication rather than a simple entertainment tool.

The choice of La Fontaine's fable structure can be seen as an acceptance of his new life in France and at the same time, brought him closer to his new audience. While Starevich always preferred short fables with a moral, his Russian productions generally borrowed from the Russian retelling of the fables. In France, he turned to the original French text to form a new animated world, more representative of his own reality. Through fables, he could express his values in his *œuvre*. The films projected Starevich's personal ideological values concerning mundane life and family. This made his animated fables, a representation of an ideology oriented towards the personal. For example, the animator's family-oriented mode of production is an expression of his relative isolation from French studios, as well as from larger communal groups such as the Russian film community and Russian diaspora. His animated films are representative of a lost socio-political structure, a nostalgic look at society, and a reflection of his condition as an immigrant. His distinctive style was thus shaped by his social experience as *émigré* and strengthened by his relative isolation from large film centres. This result was a very personal production displaying French influence as well as older forms of animation, reminiscent of his past career in Imperial Russia. Starevich's style and resistance to the studio structure was to be carried on by his friend, Bogdan Zoubovitch.

Not as widely known as Starevich, Bogdan Zoubovitch (1901–1999) is nevertheless a very important figure in the study of Russian *émigré* animation. Zoubovitch remains a mystery in many ways. The lack of sources on Zoubovitch is surprising, especially considering the quality of his films. Researchers will find no more than three or four sources on him, most of them shorter than one page, and a complete biography does not yet exist. Furthermore, a complete

filmography of his *œuvre* has yet to be compiled.⁸⁰ Such a lack of documentation on Zoubowitch extends to the task of identifying stills from one of his works. As mentioned before, I located and acquired four still images from one of his animated films in the private collection of the late animation historian Guisepe Lo Duca in France.⁸¹ While Giannalberto Bendazzi believes these could show a lost section of Zoubowich's *Wordless Story*, the photos only display one known marionette of the film.⁸² An audience familiar to Zoubowitch's work will, however, recognise his distinctive style of puppets. No one has been able yet to identify this film and its title remains a mystery. Several elements can explain this lack of information on the artist. First, like many Eastern Europeans, several spellings of his name exists: Zoubowitch, Zoubovitch, and Zoubovicz. Second, the animator sometimes signed his work as "Bogdan," sometimes as its Western shorter form "Bob," and in other circumstances he used the pseudonyms of "Wow et Zitch," and "Bob de Zitch." Unfortunately, Zoubowitch left no pupils to nurture the memory of his *œuvre*. It is therefore critical to look at his career and available films in order to give his art the scholarly attention it deserves.

Born in Vilkovicky, Lithuania Zoubowitch was a son of a Tsar's officer and was studying at the Petrograd Academy when the Russian Revolution happened.⁸³ First an actor in theatres and in cinema in the evening, his curiosity for all film techniques led him to take evening classes while working daytime in

⁸⁰ I provide a tentative filmography of Zoubowitch's known works in the appendix.

⁸¹ See photos in the appendix.

⁸² Personal correspondence with: François Lo Duca, January 13, 2016 to May 8, 2016; Jean-Louis Bompont, filmmaker, January 13, 2016; Jean-Baptiste Garnaro, Chargé d'études pour la valorisation des collections, Archives françaises du film (Paris), February 26, 2016 to March 7, 2016; Sam Woolmer, Client Services, National Film Board of Canada, May 3, 2016; Frank Gladstone, Executive Director, ASIFA-Hollywood (The International Animated Film Society), May 2, 2016 to May 8, 2016; Julienne Boudreau, Documentaliste, Cinémathèque québécoise, May 5, 2016; Giannalberto Bendazzi, May 8, 2016; Dan Sarto, Co-founder and Publisher, Animation World Network, May 8, 2016.

⁸³ Saint Petersburg changed its name to Petrograd in 1914. It was then renamed Leningrad in 1924 and, in 1991, recovered the name of Saint Petersburg once more.

the railroad company in Tsarskoye Selo.⁸⁴ In 1923, like so many of his compatriots, Zoubowitch emigrated from Russia to France. He later left France for the United States where he worked as an operator for Twentieth Century Fox studios.⁸⁵ However, most of his animation career happened in France, first with Starevich, and later by himself. After World War II, Zoubowitch opened his own animation studio with his wife Suzanne Peaupardin, who was the artistic director of most of his later production⁸⁶ Like Starevich, Zoubowitch established a family-oriented work structure to create his films.

It is not clear how or when Zoubowitch met Starevich, but it must have been a pleasant encounter for both men, as Zoubowitch worked for Starevich for two years. This is exceptional considering Starevich's refusal to accept any outside help for his films. Zoubowitch lived on the same street as his new boss. He came to work every morning to do several small jobs, and left in the evening.⁸⁷ Zoubowitch assisted Starevich in his work on *The Grasshopper and the Ant* (1927).⁸⁸ He also participated in his film *L'horloge magique* (The Magic Clock, 1928) as an actor, with Starevich's daughter, Jeanne (pseudonym Nina Star).⁸⁹ Zoubowitch is the only person who was ever part of Starevich's work and life (aside from his family).⁹⁰ He left Starevich while working on *La petite parade* (1930), in between 1928 and 1930. Then, he became a cameraman and worked

⁸⁴ Tsarskoye Selo (the village of the Tsar) was a city in the outskirts of Saint Petersburg, Russia. The Tsars had their winter palace in this city. During the Soviet times, it was renamed Detskoye Selo (children's village) and is nowadays part of the town of Pushkin.

⁸⁵ Korliakov mentioned Zoubowitch was back in France by 1944, but in an interview with Martin and Martin, the animator claimed he was still in the United States when Starevich died in 1965. Korliakov, 217; Martin and Martin, 95, 97; Roudevitch, 87.

⁸⁶ Korliakov, 217.

⁸⁷ Martin and Martin, 94.

⁸⁸ Roudevitch, 86.

⁸⁹ Jeanne Starevich used the pseudonym Nina Star when she acted.

⁹⁰ Martin and Martin, 97.

with Abel Gance (1889–1981).⁹¹ In addition to his technical work, Zoubowitch established a strong reputation by making advertising films for smaller studios. Such films are short in length and have simple narrative structures. For example, *Crème Eclipse: Cirage à la cire: Le nègre rêvait... (Eclipse Cream: Wax Polish: The Negro Dreamed..., 1932)* featured a shoeshine-boy dreaming of his body shrinking to the size of a black shoe. In the film, he waxes the shoe until he can use it as a mirror.⁹² This simple narrative structure was a way for Zoubowitch to test the medium's tricks on a shorter animation.

Zoubowitch is considered to be a direct descendent of Starevich's style because he used puppets exclusively and his films had a lyrical content. Zoubowitch's use of aesthetics and beauty to express emotions and poetry is what makes his works lyrical. In addition, he had a working technique similar to that of Starevich in the sense that he worked individually or under short contracts with small studios rather than being attached to a larger production studio, which explains the small repertoire he created. He claimed he did not make animated films for work, but as a hobby.⁹³ His *œuvre* thus remained marginal and driven by passion. The lack of information on Zoubowitch has created some problems with films' identification. For example, his first film *Le tango des chats* (The Cats' Tango) was found at the Bibliothèque de la direction du patrimoine cinématographique in Bois d'Arcy, France but was presumed to be Starevich's.⁹⁴

⁹¹ Roudevitch, 86. In 1951, Zoubowitch also started working as a director of photography in charge of advertisements for both the Studio d'Art Cinématographique and Les Films Pierre Rémond. Centre National de Cinématographie, "Films restaurés et numérisés," accessed January 2015, http://www.cnc-aff.fr/internet_cnc/Internet/AREmplir/Parcours/Collections/genres.html.

⁹² Centre National de Cinématographie, "Films restaurés et numérisés."

⁹³ Martin and Martin, 97.

⁹⁴ Researchers at the Archives thought they had a film by Starevich. The film had no introductory or end credits. Starevich's granddaughter was contacted and she showed it to Zoubowitch who recognised his first film. *Ibid.*, 96.

Right now, this film is no longer listed as part of their collection and seems to have disappeared.⁹⁵

Aside from his advertising films, the artist also worked on his own individual animated projects. By 1932, Zoubowitch made his second short film *Max et la mouche* (*Max and the Fly*) under the pseudonym of Wow and Zitch.⁹⁶ The film is based on an original script by the animator and tells the story of a mouse being annoyed by a fly. As the mouse chases it, the insect becomes twice as big as the mouse. This is a similar size effect as in the previous advertising film *Eclipse Cream* and is an example of how Zoubowitch's earlier advertising provided him with both an income and a way to test his animation techniques. Facing the giant fly, the mouse tries to kill the insect only to realize that it simply wanted to dance.⁹⁷ *Max and the Fly* like most of Zoubowitch's films was not widely distributed. Most are located at the Bibliothèque de la direction du patrimoine cinématographique in Bois d'Arcy, France. However, two of Zoubowitch's later films are available in North America: *Le briquet magique*, which was illegally downloaded and made available on Vimeo, and *Histoire sans paroles: À l'est rien de nouveau* on a DVD that is part of a book on early French animation.⁹⁸

Histoire sans paroles: À l'est rien de nouveau (*Wordless Story: Nothing New in the East*, 1934) is Zoubowitch's longest known production. As mentioned before, this film is one of the rare works by Zoubowitch available to the general public.⁹⁹ *Wordless Story* with decor by A. Ivanoff, and music by Jean Liaminé is unique in Zoubowitch's known repertoire since it is the only satirical film he ever

⁹⁵ See Centre National de Cinématographie, "Films restaurés et numérisés." See the list of Zoubowitch's known productions in the appendix.

⁹⁶ No information is available as to why he changed his name.

⁹⁷ Centre National de Cinématographie, "Films restaurés et numérisés."

⁹⁸ See Kermabon, ed., *Du praxinoscope au cellulo*; Les introuvables en cinéma, "Le briquet magique" (video), posted in 2015, accessed January 2016, <https://vimeo.com/120230067>.

⁹⁹ Most of Zoubowitch's known productions are located at the Bibliothèque de la direction du patrimoine cinématographique in Bois d'Arcy, France.

made on a geopolitical topic. As with *Max and the Fly*, *Wordless Story* is based on Zoubowitch's original script. The film is a commentary on the conflict between China, Japan, and the Soviet Union over the territory of Manchuria, but mostly, the inability of the League of Nations to keep world peace.¹⁰⁰ Manchuria, located between Mongolia, China, Japan, and the former Soviet Union, had been the centre of conflicts over its natural resources since the beginning of the nineteenth century.

In *Wordless Story*, the audience cannot grasp the language in which the puppets express themselves as no dialogue is heard. This choice is consistent with the title of the animated film: *Wordless Story*. Whenever the characters address each other, one presumes in Mandarin, Japanese, English, or Russian, the dialogues are replaced by meaningless sounds. Each character possessed its own distinctive sound. This stylistic technique emphasised the idea that these four nations could not possibly reach agreement, even through discussion. The protagonists' nature is also expressed through the design of the puppets. In the film each puppet represents a country: China, Japan, America, and Russia.¹⁰¹ All of them show stereotypes of the different nations: Japan and China have Asian-looking eyes; China wears a traditional Chinese costume and a long braid; America is depicted as Uncle Sam carrying a bag of money, and wearing a flag hat; Russia wears a fur hat, a beard, and a Cossack suit, etc. The Russian and Japanese puppets are dressed in military uniforms emphasising their role as aggressors in the film. The marionettes all have very different sizes and

¹⁰⁰ The League of Nations was created after World War I with the mission of maintaining World Peace. For more on the conflict over Manchuria, see Yōko Katō, "What Caused the Russo-Japanese War: Korea or Manchuria?" *Social Science Japan Journal* 10, no. 1 (Apr. 2007): 95–103; Asada Masafumi, "The Chine-Russian-Japan Military Balance in Manchuria, 1906–1918," *Modern Asian Studies* 44, no. 6 (Nov. 2010): 1283–1311; Li Narango, "The Power of Imagination: Whose Northeast and Whose Manchuria?," *Inner Asia* 4, no. 1 Special Issue: Travelling Cultures and Histories: Nation-Building and Frontier Politics in Twentieth Century China. (2002): 3–25.

¹⁰¹ Interestingly, the stereotyped puppet representing the Soviet Union, displayed a Cossack-like costume and features. This makes the puppet closer to an ethnic Russia rather than to the Soviet Union *per se*.

personalities: China is of medium size and weak; Japan is short and aggressive; Russia is short, dumb, and hypocritical; and America, the tallest of them all, moves slowly representing the country's slow reaction to international threats. Zoubowitch's aesthetic choices in making his puppets served the audience's understanding of the film and the emotional state of its protagonists. Furthermore, the wordless narrative presents puppet animation in its purest form: as a primarily visual medium. *Wordless Story* is reminiscent of earlier forms of animation and presents and praises its unique animated language.

The film opens on an image of earth where China and Manchuria are located on the world map. China wears a long tunic with a map of its territory on it. In the film, Japan viciously attacks China and rips the bottom piece of its map-costume: Manchuria. China seeks refuge in the League of Nations, while Japan to keep its power over the territory places a puppet emperor as a leader of Manchuria. The emperor stands on a stick, which is fixed in the ground. It cannot move like the film's other characters. Furthermore, it is pulled by wires, which Japan holds. Here, Zoubowitch makes an interesting analogy: a puppet within a world of puppets. On one hand, this shows how countries' governments are manipulating populations like puppets. The puppet emperor is the only marionette representing an individual rather than a country. He is also the only character whose strings are shown, and therefore shown as being manipulated. On the other hand, the unusual puppet situation creates a discourse around Zoubowitch's animation. The audience can see Japan controlling the limited movements of the emperor. Japan thus plays the same role as the animator in the sense that he controls the actions of his own doll. The other characters in the film all represent countries and have invisible strings. Their puppeteer, Zoubowitch, also remains invisible to the public. This analogy reminds the viewer of the powerful role of the animator who also controls the movements of the puppets and it equally casts him in the role of the manipulator. *Wordless Story* presents its creator's view on politics, but is conjointly a medium where the audience can equally be

manipulated in their political opinions. The manipulation does not last, of course, as Russia gets involved in the conflict and later America too. After America attempts making peace, Russia sneaks out of the conflict, stealing America's money. Japan is not sanctioned for its attack, and China receives nothing and loses its territory. The film ends on the same image of the earth as in the introduction, and the words "The End" appear under falling snow.

Similarly to Starevich's *œuvre*, Zoubowitch's satire resided in the opposition of contrasting images or sequences. This enabled him to both critique politics but also to develop a visual language, which consists of animation. Such contrasts can be seen in the tiny and energetic Japanese doll facing the taller and slower moving Chinese puppet. Another example of contrast is seen when the Chinese doll solemnly bows to the League of Nations' building, which lies under a glorious sun, an image contradicted by the violent Japanese puppet writing the word "pax" (peace in Latin) on the building with a machine gun. The same building, first depicted as glorious, soon shows that it is nothing but a cardboard image, thus exposing its uselessness. The animator's satire also resides in small details or situations. For example, the American puppet changes an old shoe into a warship, and the Russian yells and gesticulates in front of a motionless and stoic Japan. Zoubowitch mocks the Soviet puppet by presenting his audiences with a Cossack-like puppet. This contrasts greatly with the image of a modern and developed country the Soviet Union was presenting at the time. Furthermore, when the Eastern European puppet is knocked-out by Japan, it dreams of various long-lost symbols of the imperialist era, such as the tsar's emblem. The animator also mocks the American as after having all his money stolen by the Russian, the American puppet sits and prays, instead of acting to change its condition. Contrasts and satire allowed Zoubowitch to articulate a clear political discourse around Manchuria's situation. As the populations of these countries are not shown, this makes each puppet a governmental entity rather than a representative

of its people. Zoubowitch suggested through animation that the people are powerless with regards to their governments' decisions and actions.

In his book chapter about the film, Frédéric Rousseau expresses his surprise in regard to Zoubowitch's choice of narrative. He argues that at the time when the animator created *Wordless Story*, Hitler had risen to power a year earlier, and the Reichstag building was set on fire. Yet, in his animated film, Zoubowitch did not talk about Europe but about a conflict in Asia, which happened in 1931.¹⁰² I, in contrast, believe that Europe is indirectly at the centre of this satire as Zoubowitch's film clearly criticised the League of Nations (LON) for its inadequacy. As Rousseau points out,

[...] in the early 30s[,] the LON was not up to its task. In this sense, choosing the Far East crisis proved to be judicious; since after more than ten years of worldly and wordy international conferences in palaces on Lake Geneva, Japanese aggression imposed a painful awakening to the international community; in a few months the LON not only revealed to the worlds its pathetic impotence, it also created a precedent; it sent a liberating signal to conquering dictators.¹⁰³

In the troubled times that Europe was facing, the inability of the League of Nations to settle the Manchurian conflict was not a positive point. The animator's film enabled the audience to understand his position on this political issue. Therefore, Zoubowitch, without clearly mentioning his worries and fears about the upcoming conflict, proposed a historically oriented animated farce to force the audience to reflect on Europe's actual political situation. The animator questioned the concepts of territories and borders between the countries as he presented, for

¹⁰² Frédéric Rousseau, "Histoire sans paroles, Bogdan Zoubowitch, 1934," in *Du praxinoscope au cellulo: Un demi-siècle de cinéma d'animation en France (1892–1948)*, ed. Jacques Kermabon (Paris: Le Centre National de Cinématographie, 2007), 65.

¹⁰³ "[...] en ce début des années 30[,] la SDN n'est pas à la hauteur de sa tâche. En ce sens, le choix de la crise d'Extrême-Orient s'avère être très judicieux; car, après plus de dix années de conférences internationales mondaines et verbeuses dans les palaces bordant le lac de Genève, l'agression japonaise impose à la communauté internationale un réveil douloureux; en quelques mois la SDN ne révèle pas seulement au monde son impuissance pathétique, elle crée un précédent; elle adresse aussi un signal libérateur aux dictateurs conquérants." Rousseau, 66.

example, the border between the Soviet Union territory and Manchuria, represented by a simple broken and dotted line. On one side of the line, the Russian taiga forest is under a heavy snow. On the other side of the line are palm trees in a desert-like area. While the climate and the people living in these two contrasting country seems to oppose each other, Zoubowitch showed by the dotted line that these differences are only details for the powers who form these borders. This is especially interesting considering that the phrase “The End,” as already mentioned, is shown under the snow, therefore located in the Soviet Union. Zoubowitch thus showed the Soviet Union as the ultimate winner of the story.

Like Starevich, Zoubowitch avoids endorsing the oriental image of the Russian myth. Russia, however, was omnipresent in his *œuvre*. In some films, such as in *Wordless Story*, he communicates a clear personal political ideology. In other cases, he used lyrical subject matter to which he added a Slavic flavour. For example, in 1935, he created *Michka* (1935), the story of a bear named Mishka who woke up from his hibernation.¹⁰⁴ His rabbit friend tries to get him in shape by forcing him to exercise. While exercising, Mishka sees a bee and decides to steal all its honey from its hive. A swarm of bees chases him but he is able to run away thanks to the previous exercise he did.¹⁰⁵ This is once more an original script and while the narration is not about Russia *per se*, the title does refer to Eastern European culture as *misha* is generally used in Russian to refer to a bear. *Michka* (or little *misha*) thus emphasised a Russian connotation of a story that is not Russian at all. Here, Zoubowitch uses the cultural element for commercial purposes to give his film an aura of exoticism. While he was never close to the Russian film community or diaspora, the animator still used its exoticism to create an interest in his lyrical film.

¹⁰⁴ This film is sometimes anglicise as “*Mishka*.” Another film exists: *Le Réveil de Mischka* (1946). This is a shorter version of Zoubowitch’s film made by Carlos Vasseur and Paul Bianchi. Zoubowitch’s name was completely erased from the film’s credits. Centre National de Cinématographie, “Films restaurés et numérisés.”

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

Lyricism reappears in his *œuvre* after the war in 1946, when Zoubowitch made an animated classical fairytale: *Le briquet magique* (*The Tinderbox*, date unknown).¹⁰⁶ The film was made using 300 animated clay and dough marionettes and was composed of 46,800 images. This represents an impressive amount of work considering that Zoubowitch claimed he did animated films as a hobby. *The Tinderbox* took four years to produce.¹⁰⁷ The film was put together in collaboration with Julien Pappé (1920–2005), a film director from Poland.¹⁰⁸ French critics considered *The Tinderbox* a masterpiece and the film was entered in *Le Livre d'or du cinéma français*, a 1946 book that listed the best production in France.¹⁰⁹

Originally, *The Tinderbox* was a fairytale written by Hans Christian Andersen. Several versions of this tale exist, one of which is *The Blue Light* by Jacob (1785–1863) and Wilhelm Grimm (1786–1859). This tale is about a soldier coming back from war. On his way, he meets a witch, who asks him to go down a tree and to bring back her tinderbox. On his journey, the soldier can take as many of the copper, silver, and gold coins available to him. Guarding the coins are three giant dogs, which appear to be controlled by the tinderbox. The soldier kills the witch and uses the power of the dogs to keep himself rich and win the favour of the princess of the kingdom.

Aside from providing an entertaining story, Andersen's tale also critiques society. For example, he clearly shows that the soldier's newly acquired social

¹⁰⁶ Several dates are given for this film as it was not filmed and edited the same years: 1944, 1945, 1949, and 1960 respectively. Before that, Zoubowitch made several other films about which no information is available. He collaborated with Georges Clerc with *J'ai la vie dure* (*Life is Hard*, 1937). In 1941, he made *Symphonie de Minuit* (other titles: *Poupées Swing*, *Max et le [sic] mouche*). His 1944 animated film *Au Clair de la Lune* (*In the Light of the Moon*), was a black and white animation film starring Pierrot, Harlequin, and Colombine in a typical love triangle based on *La Commedia del Arte*.

¹⁰⁷ Korliakov, 217.

¹⁰⁸ The film was put together before 1991, the date of Roudevitch's interview with Zoubowitch. However, no one seems to agree as to when it was put together. A close friend and coworker of Pappé, has confirmed Pappé's collaboration in this project. Private correspondence with Jean-Louis Bompont, filmmaker, January 13, 2016; Roudevitch, 87.

¹⁰⁹ Korliakov, 217.

status and friendships are due to his wealth. After the soldier spends all his money, his friends lose interest in him:

Now that he was wealthy and well dressed, he had all too many who called him their friend and a genuine gentleman. [...] But he spent money every day without making any, and wound up with only two coppers to his name. He had to quit his fine quarters to live in a garret, clean his own boots, and mend them himself with a darning needle. None of his friends came to see him, because there were too many stairs to climb.¹¹⁰

As we will see later, the soldier's rise in society is also clearly shown in Zoubowitch's film, although in different ways than in the Andersen tale. To fit the cinema format, the story had to be shortened and several elements of the original tale were lost. For example, there is only one dog instead of three, and gold coins instead of copper, silver, and gold. This creates a few continuity problems in terms of the narration. For example, the first time he uses the tinderbox, the soldier already knows it is magic. Furthermore, he also knows how to use it, while no one has explained it to him. Finally, when the soldier's life is threatened, he uses the tinderbox to call on the dog for help. While only one was presented to the audience earlier, three dogs suddenly appear to save him. This suggests that Zoubowitch has animated the complete story, but for fear of repetition, this material was discarded in the editing process. The animator also omits the part where the soldier loses his fortune and his friends. In Andersen's tale, the soldier decides to smoke his pipe while reflecting on his situation and when he lights up the tinderbox, the first dog appears to grant his wishes. Because this crucial part of the story is missing in the film Zoubowitch had to create other occasions in the film in order to stay faithful to Andersen's social commentary. The critique of society is something that seemed important to Zoubowitch, an element of his work that was reminiscent of Starevich's films.

¹¹⁰ Hans Christian Andersen, *The Tinder Box*, The Hans Christian Andersen Center, accessed March 2016, http://www.andersen.sdu.dk/vaerk/hersholt/TheTinderBox_e.html.

The animated film *The Tinderbox* starts with an image of a soldier returning home from war. On his way, he meets an old witch who asks him to bring her a tinderbox in exchange for money. Zoubowitch presents complex puppet characters that moves with ease. Their faces are articulated to move as they talk. From the beginning, Zoubowitch displayed humour in the diegesis of his animated film. In several cases, humour uncovers elements of the diegesis pointing to the soldier's status in society. For example, when the soldier greets the ugly witch by saying: "Salut, admirable beauté! Mes hommages à vos pieds" (Hello, magnificent beauty! My respects to your feet). This is ironic for several reasons. First, the puppet of the witch is particularly ugly, thus the soldier is either a sweet talker or a liar. Second the fact that he greets her feet, contrasts with him calling her a beauty before. While these lines offer a rhythmical quality, they also highlight the animator's ironic sense of humour. The soldier greetings to the witch's feet also express a lack of knowledge of civilities. It seems that the soldier is trying to look like a gentleman but his lower social status still shows from his last words to the witch. This is one example of an element added by Zoubowitch that keeps the original social comment of Andersen's tale. The soldier's lack of civility also is clearly expressed when he later refuses to give the tinderbox back, although he had promised the witch he would do so. When she gets upset, he kills her by beheading her. His lack of apparent remorse is also very telling and gives him the status of a thief, a liar, and a murderer. These first impressions of the main character are important, as later in the story he is to become the country's ruler. As the witch's head lies next to her dead body, she slowly disappears. Once more, Zoubowitch used film tricks in order to create a magical diegesis. This kind of visual trick is frequently present in this film, such as the disappearance of the dog, dreams appearing, and the soldier's weapon moving around freely. This is a point of contrast with his film *Wordless Story*, which does not include elements of fantasy, but supports the magical narrative of *The Tinderbox*.

As in Andersen's tale, the film shows how money can change the social status of a person. For example, after the soldier kills the witch, he goes to town where he searches for a place to stay. He knocks at a door and asks the hotel-keeper for a room. Before he can answer, the soldier apologises for his neglected appearance and explains he just got back from war. The hotel-keeper opens his hand and asks for money, to which the soldier answers: "Oh, j'ai de quoi payer!" (Oh, I can pay). The original words in French emphasise the fact that he now possesses the money to pay for lodging, rather than just saying he is able to pay. He offers one gold coin and the hotel-keeper lets him in. Afterwards, the audience witnesses the soldier's display of wealth when he purchases fine clothes and is told that no woman will resist him with such a look. Like in the diegesis, the film *The Tinderbox* was finalised shortly after the war. In this context, it can be read as showing how money in post-war Europe allowed certain privileges. The entire sequence is not about the soldier looking for a place to stay or buying goods but rather, about how money suddenly changes his social status by providing him with an appearance of wealth.

Appearances are also central in Zoubowitch's social commentary in the film. The diegesis comments on the appearance of the characters and how it influences the general belief about their nature. For example, as we have seen, after finding a place to live, the soldier hires a tailor to get new clothes. The tailor claims no women will refuse him with this new kind of outfit, once more stressing his appearance rather than questioning the mysterious source of money from a simple soldier. Zoubowitch was once more using irony as the soldier's jacket and hat seems incongruous compared to how the other marionettes are dressed. When the soldier asks who is the most beautiful woman in the country he is told to look for the king's daughter. The soldier mentions he is deeply in love with the princess, whom he has never seen or met before. His love is entirely based on the princess' reputation for beauty, thus accentuating the superficiality of his feelings, but also his desire to acquire the princess like one more valuable possession. He

also mentions that she will love him back after one look at him, underlining his looks and beautiful clothes, which he gained thanks to the magic tinderbox rather than by working. Once more, human qualities and honesty are left behind at the expense of superficial physical beauty and impressions of wealth.

The soldier's meeting with the princess is also due to magic, as he does not have the social position to request a meeting with her. When the king finds out his daughter has fallen in love with a young man, he sends his guards to capture him. The soldier is sent to prison to await his hanging. From his cell, the soldier asks a child to go fetch his tinderbox, which he left at home, in exchange for a gold coin. Once more, the money allows him to receive special favours from society. Before being hanged, he requests the right to smoke one more pipe. When he lights the pipe with the tinderbox, three dogs appear. They attack the spectators who run away. They scare the soldiers who perform a military salute, recognising the dogs' status. Even the king and queen run away. By the end of the animated film, the audience realises that the magic dogs and the tinderbox are the reason for the soldier's wealth. In this last sequence, money does not save him but the providers of his money do.

The Tinderbox concludes with the soldier becoming king and marrying the princess. He proclaims he hopes he will be worthy of his power. The animated film ends with the classic Hollywood kiss between the soldier and the princess and an image of the castle illuminated by the sunset's light. Even at the end of the narrative, the murder is never addressed. The film can be read as criticism of society and the social strategy of the less wealthy, pretending to be from a higher social class through their appearance. In the case of the soldier, for example, he never admits the truth to his lady, and acquires a profitable marriage and social position based on this lie. Furthermore, the respect of his subjects is due to the fear they have of his dogs. Rise in society is a theme that was exploited before by Starevich in *Fern Flower*, but in *The Tinderbox*, Zoubowitch avoids giving a

solution or a moral message, and leaves the unfair situation of the unpunished murderer turned king.

Like Starevich, Zoubowitch worked with a small crew of close friends, with whom he repeatedly associated himself. For example, Witold Klimowicz (dates unknown) and Dimka (real name Dimitri Feodossieff, dates unknown) assisted him in making *The Tinderbox*.¹¹¹ A few years later, in 1951 and 1955, Zoubowitch worked on short advertisements with both of them.¹¹² Zoubowitch's crew was generally of French and Slavic origin. Aside from Dimka, one notices the names of his wife, Suzanne Peaupardin (dates unknown) as Assistant Director, and the sculptor, Luzane (dates unknown), who worked on his film *Au Clair de la Lune* (*By night, in the moonlight*, 1944), as well as on *The Tinderbox*.¹¹³ His last known film, *Le messager d'hiver*, also known as *Le messager de l'hiver*, or *Les petits ours s'endorment jusqu'au printemps* (*Winter's Messenger*, 1959) was also remade, with people accustomed to his work: Antoine Payen, and producer Sonika Bo, who previously worked with Starevich.¹¹⁴

Placing Zoubowitch's *œuvre* in context is complex as he left so few documents behind. However, his contribution to French animation is significant, as he formed an independent animation, which exploited puppetry throughout his own style. Both he and Starevich created in a mostly commercial field a niche for

¹¹¹ The names of Witold Klomowicz and Dimka appeared on films' and advertisements' credits but there is no other available information about them.

¹¹² Centre National de Cinématographie, "Films restaurés et numérisés."

¹¹³ Other collaborators include Grégor Crichine (dates unknown), Régine Flor (dates unknown), Le Varlet (dates unknown), Zlata de Navrotzky (dates unknown), Garnik (dates unknown), Philippe de Pois, Julien Pappé (1920–2005), Paul Ganne (dates unknown) and Gérard Prisé (dates unknown). There is no other available information about these people. The researcher will notice that these artists have a tendency to leave little production behind them and to work under a pseudonym. This makes the archival research particularly difficult. Their names are nevertheless listed: The Internet Movie Database (IMdB), accessed February 2016, http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1172606/fullcredits?ref_=tt_cl_sm#cast.

¹¹⁴ The film tells the story of a rabbit whose mission is to tell its friends about the upcoming dangers of winter. I found one of this film's original reel on sale in a store specialising in cinema in France. It was already sold to a private collector, whom unfortunately has not answered my emails. Private correspondence with Fred Karali, January 13, 2016. Boutique Boulevard du Ciné, accessed November 2012, <http://www.bd-cine.com/fiche.php?id=11671>.

animated puppetry. Zoubowitch's films are an expression of his personal ideological views on politics as well as a critique of social norms. His productions stand out from what the Russian *émigré* films projected as he avoided references to the Russian myth. The presence of Russian culture is only perceived through a few cultural and political references, as seen in *Wordless Story* and *Mishka*. Furthermore, Zoubowitch exploited French themes as well, for example, in *Au Clair de la Lune*, which is based on a French folk lullaby. His *œuvre* both reflects his detachment to the Russian diaspora, as well as his attempts at connecting with French culture. While interviewing Zoubowitch in his home, Michel Roudevich noticed how his house decoration was strongly influenced by his Russian culture.¹¹⁵ The animator's films are an expression of his position as an *émigré* artist, living halfway between two different cultures. Zoubowitch, like Starevich, was interested in making enough money to survive and continued his work, but rejected the idea of massive financial benefits. Both artists' production were marginal, familial, or extended to a small group of friends. Aside from their puppet-animated production, another type of animated films were produced in France by artists such as Alexeieff. His work, like those of first two animators discussed here, was an expression of his condition of *émigré*. However, instead of working with a popular art such as puppetry, Alexeieff was strongly influenced by the ideas of the Avant-garde. It is therefore crucial to introduce this art movement before analysing Alexeieff's contribution to animation in France.

As in many other countries in Europe such as Germany and the Soviet Union, the Avant-garde movement in France was fertile ground for experimentation. Art cinema flourished in Europe from this movement in reaction to popular entertainment cinema. Art films were deliberately produced outside the film industry and tried to create alternatives to the conventions of commercial narrative cinema.¹¹⁶ If Germany's Avant-garde tradition was rooted in De Stijl,

¹¹⁵ Roudevitch, 86.

¹¹⁶ Bordwell and Thompson, 158.

Suprematism, Bauhaus, and German expressionism, and the Soviet Union's in Suprematism, Constructivism, and Futurism, France's Avant-garde was oriented towards Dadaism and Surrealism.¹¹⁷ This created very different styles of animation across Europe: Germany's animation paid more attention to geometric forms, and the Soviet Union production, as discussed in chapter two, displayed a preference for diagonal lines and speed, as well as poster art.¹¹⁸ France's production, on the other hand, explored dreams and the subconscious, in a non-narrative sequence. This element of French Avant-garde became central to Alexeieff's production. As the Avant-garde also sought the bridging of all media, it was not uncommon in France, as in the Soviet Union, to see painters, filmmakers, or poets exploring animation.

Marcel Duchamp (1887–1968), for example, was an important French artist who experimented with animation in a short animated film called *Anémic Cinéma* (*Anemic Cinema*, 1926). This movie has no narrative and presents various moving shapes and *trompe l'oeil* geometric forms, which create optical illusions like a kaleidoscope. Illusions of language are also provided to the film's audience with circling tongue-twisters (“L'enfant qui tête est un souffleur de chair chaude et n'aime pas le choux-fleur de serre chaude”) and word games such as in “Inceste ou passion de famille à coup trop tirés.”¹¹⁹ Duchamp also played with semiotics and language.¹²⁰ For example, the end of the last sentence, “à coup trop tirés” played with the expression “à couteaux tirés,” which means the family is at loggerheads. Thus, Duchamp experimented with homonyms and language.

¹¹⁷ Bendazzi, 26.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 28. For example, Viking Eggeling (1880–1925; *Diagonal Symphonie*, 1925) and Hans Richter (*Rhythmus 21*, 1921) explored lines and geometric shapes, while Mikhail Tsekhanovsky (*The Post*, 1929 and *Interplanetary Revolution*, 1924) and Dziga Vertov (*Soviet Toys*, 1924) experimented with speed, diagonals, and caricatures.

¹¹⁹ This would translate as “The child who suckles is a breath of hot flesh and does not love hot-house cauliflower” and “Inceste and family's passion, with blows too pulled.” As tongue-twisters, these sentences are meant not to make much sense.

¹²⁰ Some authors have also analysed his film through the lenses of Freudian psychoanalysis. See for example, R. Bruce Elder, *DADA, Surrealism, and the Cinematic Effect* (Waterloo, Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2013).

Furthermore, in the first sentence, he created a word game with emphasis on the sounds S and CH: “L’enfant qui tête est un Souffleur de CHair CHaude et n’aime pas le CHoux-fleur de Serre CHaude.” The moving circle in which the text and the optical illusions appears, created the idea of a cycle, just like these tongue-twisters would be repeated faster and faster by children. Duchamp exposed in this film the primary essence of film as a visual medium. The play with written language that he proposed remains as a part of the visual experiment of the silent film. Visual experimentation was also later exploited by Alexeieff, who avoided words in his animated films. Furthermore, like Duchamp, Alexeieff broke with the traditional narrative frame.

Artist Fernand Léger (1881–1955) also influenced the work of Alexeieff.¹²¹ Léger experimented with animation in his only film: *Ballet mécanique* (1924).¹²² While the film is mostly a live-action production, it includes some animation at the beginning, with a swirling circular form moving like a kaleidoscope, similar to Duchamp’s film. In addition, he animated a paper cut-out puppet of a cubist Charlie Chaplin. The film itself is an amalgam of different images and unusual camera angles. The non-narrative 16-minute movie emphasises movement and rhythm through *montage*, but provides no real link between the sequences presented to the audience. Although the result is different, the technique used to create the two films is quite similar to the morphing images and dislocated narrative of Cohl’s animated film *Fantasmagories* (1908). These kinds of aesthetic choices were later reproduced through Alexeieff’s films.

¹²¹ Robin Allan, “Deux nuits sur le Mont Chauve –Two Nights on Bald Mountain,” in *Alexeieff: Itinéraire d’un Maître – Itinerary of a Master*, ed. Giannalberto Bendazzi (Annecy, Paris: CICA, Dreamland, Cinémathèque française, 2001), 80.

¹²² For more on *Ballet mécanique*, see Richard Brender, “Functions of Film: Léger’s Cinema on Paper and Cellulose, 1913-15,” *Cinema Journal* 24, no. 1 (Autumn, 1984): 41–64; Malcolm Turvey, “The Avant-garde and the ‘New Spirit’: The Case of ‘Ballet mécanique,’” *October* 102, (Autumn, 2002): 35–58.

On the purely graphic level, Alexeieff was particularly influenced by the work of another *émigré* animator, Bertold Bartosch (1893–1968).¹²³ Bartosch's film stood out from commercial animation and from the puppet animation popularised by Starevich and Zoubowitch. Bartosch's film *L'idée* (*The Idea*, 1930–1932) was based on Frans Masereel's (1889–1972) 83-woodcut-print novel.¹²⁴ The wordless book was an allegory of a man's idea. The main character is a naked woman representing the man's idea. He decides to send her into the world. She scares governments, who try to cover her nudity. She inspires another man, who stands for her and is being executed. She further inspires a group of people and creates a revolution. The film is remarkable for its use of superimpositions and fades, and for how Bartosch brought animation to its purest line. These elements greatly influenced Alexeieff who sought to create not a popular product, but true animated art.¹²⁵

Alexeieff is mostly known for inventing pinscreen animation, but he was also a book illustrator and an engraver. Born in 1901 in Russia his life history relates to the fallen Russian monarchy as he was the son of a school principal and an officer's of the Tsar's army. Alexeieff grew up in Constantinople, where his father was stationed.¹²⁶ After the death of his father, the family moved back to Russia settling in Ufa.¹²⁷ Alexeieff attended the Saint Petersburg Military Academy, where he studied art.¹²⁸ He explained that these years were highly

¹²³ Allan, 80.

¹²⁴ Bendazzi, 39; Neupert, 73.

¹²⁵ Also spelled as Alexander, Aleksandr Alekseevich, Alekseev, Alexeieff and Alexieff.

¹²⁶ Alexeieff's birth city is sometimes identified as Ufa (Bendazzi, *Alexeieff*, 15), Kazan (Bendazzi, 107; Katsumie Masaru, "Alexandre Alexeieff: A Pioneer of Modern Visual Design." *Gurafikku Dezain (Tokyo, Japan)*, no 12 (July 1963): 2), or Gatchina, Russia (Svetlana Alexeieff-Rockwell, "Biographie," manuscript (c. 2014), 9).

¹²⁷ Masaru, "Alexandre Alexeieff," 2.

¹²⁸ Susan Doll, "Who Were Alexandre Alexeieff & Claire Parker?" in *On Pinscreens and Harmonic Lines: The Animation of Alexeieff*, Booklet. In *The Animation of Alexeieff*, DVD (Facets Video, 2009), 4; Bendazzi, 107; Antonio Bisaccia, *Alexandre Alexeieff: Il cinema d'incisione* (Castel Maggiore: Book, 1993), 14.

influential to his career, as it was when he developed a unique art technique: drawing from memory or from imagination, and impressions of literary works:

[...] our teacher [...] used three different techniques to teach us how to see. The first was to take a sheet of paper, fold it in two, and draw a violin from memory on the left part of the paper. When we were done[,] he pulled a real violin from a bag, passed it around, and asked us to draw it on the right side of the sheet of paper. The second method was to draw something that had made a big impression on us, for instance a Christmas tree. For the third method[,] he read us a story and asked us to illustrate it. This task certainly taught me to illustrate a text starting at the age of ten.”¹²⁹

When the Revolution occurred, the 16-year-old Alexeieff fervently supported the revolutionary movement. His enthusiasm however soon soured when the Bolsheviks arrested and executed a member of his family, who was also supportive of the socialist cause.¹³⁰ After completing his courses, Alexeieff boarded a military ship to China, then India, and Egypt. In 1921, the Civil War had created discord and anarchy within the Russian army, and his crew dispersed in Dobrovnik, Yugoslavia.¹³¹

Alexeieff arrived in Paris in 1921 after following a fellow Russian refugee: Sergey Sudeikin (later renamed Serge, 1882–1946), an artist and set designer who was invited to join Diaghilev’s *Ballets Russes* in France.¹³² Both

¹²⁹ Doll, 4.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 5; Bendazzi, 108.

¹³¹ Bendazzi, 108.

¹³² Ibid., 108; Masaru, 2; Alistair Rowan, “Alexandre Alexeïeff at the National Library of Scotland,” *The Burlington Magazine* 110, no. 778 (Jan., 1968): 55; Garafola, 7. The *Ballets Suédois* were born out of the split between impresario Serge Diaghilev (1872–1929) and choreographer Michel Fokine (1880–1942). Closely modelled on its original enterprise, the company offered modern programs and although their repertoire was not as large as that of *Les Ballets Russes*, they nevertheless left their mark onto France’s and the world’s visual and performing arts. For more these characters see Dora Kogan, *Sergei Iu’evich Sudeikin: 1884-1946* (Moskva: Iskustvo, 1974); Serge Lifar, *Serge Diaghilev: His Life, His Work, His Legend: An Intimate Biography* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1976); Michel Fokine, Vitale Fokine, and Anatole Chujoj, *Fokine: Memoirs of a Ballet Master* (Boston: Little Brown, 1961); Nancy Van Norman Baer and Jan Torsten Ahlstrand, *Paris Modern: The Swedish Ballet, 1920–1925* (San Francisco, Seattle: Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, University of Washington Press, 1995).

men joined the Russian expatriate art community. Alexeieff first found work as a set and costume designer and painter, working with Louis Jouvet (1887–1951), George Pitoëff (1884–1939), *Les Ballets Russes*, and *Les Ballets Suédois*.¹³³ By 1925, he devoted himself to the more lucrative job of etching and book illustration, while continuing his drawing and painting studies.¹³⁴ He illustrated poetry books, but mostly famous Russian classical novels.¹³⁵ All of the Russian classics he illustrated proposed a narrative set in Imperial Russia. In fact, Russia was always very present in the artist's engravings and films and his daughter identified him as a "White Russian."¹³⁶ Alexeieff's engraving technique involved using a fine stylus, with which he carved hundreds of small holes to generate a wide spectrum of grays.¹³⁷ This technique had already been used with colours in pointillism by the post-impressionist painters Paul Signac (1863–1935) and Georges Seurat (1859–1891), artists who were very influential to Alexeieff's work.¹³⁸ Furthermore, his etching technique was the first step towards how to animate his engravings.

¹³³ Bendazzi, 108; Masaru, 2; Neupert, 82; Dominique Willoughby, "Alexandre Alexeieff (1901-1982)," in *Figolés main: Une histoire du film publicitaire en France 1910–1970*, Program for the 9^e Sommet du Cinéma d'Animation, ed. French Archives of the Centre National de Cinématographie (Paris, Centre National de Cinématographie: 2001). Louis Jouvet was an actor as well as a theatre and cinema director. Pitoëff left his mark as a theatre director and for having introduced French audiences to foreign theatres. For more on Jouvet and Pitoëff, see Bettina Liebowitz Knapp, *Louis Jouvet: Man of the Theatre* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1957); Jacqueline Jomaron, *Georges Pitoëff: Metteur en scène* (Lausanne: L'âge d'Homme, 1979); Jean Hort, *La vie héroïque des Pitoëff* (Genève: P. Cailler, 1966); André Frank, *Georges Pitoëff* (Paris, L'Arche Editeur, 1958).

¹³⁴ Between 1927 and 1931, he illustrated 12 deluxe editions of classical literature. Alexeieff continued to do book illustration throughout his lifetime and illustrated numerous French and Russian classics, including a version of Boris Pasternak's (1890–1960) *Dr. Zhivago* containing 202 illustrations. Masaru, 2; Bendazzi, 108.

¹³⁵ Notably, he illustrated *Anna Karenina* (1877), *The Gambler* (1867), *Dr. Zhivago* (1957), *The Karamazov Brothers* (1880), *Diary of a Madman* (1835), *The Queen of Spades* (1833), *Notes from Underground* (1864), and *The Nose* (1836).

¹³⁶ Alexeieff-Rockwell, 10.

¹³⁷ Neupert, 82.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.* For more information on these artists, see Russell Clement, *Neo-Impressionist Painters: A Sourcebook on Georges Seurat, Camille Pissarro, Paul Signac, Théo Van Rysselberghe, Henri Edmond Cross, Charles Angrand, Maximilien Luce, and Albert Dubois-Pillet* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1999).

The creative atmosphere of Paris, the artistic capital of the world, was very inspiring to young artists. Artistic innovations and experimentation in all fields of art prompted artists to explore different genres and medias. In the field of animation, the boundaries between artistic expression and commercial filmmaking blurred.¹³⁹ Alexeieff decided he wanted to try cinema and create art by animating his engravings.¹⁴⁰ The artist had little interest in commercial animation, which he thought was characterised by caricatures, linear qualities, flat backgrounds, and simplified shapes. He was mostly interested in maintaining the *chiaroscuro* effects, the textures, and tones that engraving allowed.¹⁴¹ Since traditional cel animation could not achieve such complex yet dynamic images, Alexeieff had to find an alternative method to animate his engravings.

This opportunity came in the person of Claire Parker (1906–1981), a young American and wealthy art student studying in Paris. After seeing Alexeieff's illustrations, she wrote to him with the hope of becoming his pupil. This event was the start of a long-lasting artistic and personal relationship.¹⁴² In 1931, she financed Alexeieff's project as well as supporting him and his family. It is unclear how the artist came up with the idea of a pinscreen, but he nevertheless designed a small screen with 500,000 retractable pins, mounted to form a perpendicular mesh.¹⁴³ A back layer of wax allowed for the pins to be held in place and offered a certain resistance to allow the artist to work with the pins. Used with a diagonal source of light, the pins pushed at various distances cast small oblique shadows of various lengths. For example, fully pulled pins cast longer shadows, which covered the screen, thus making it black. Pins pushed all

¹³⁹ Doll, 4–5.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 4; Bendazzi, 108.

¹⁴¹ Doll, 4. The *chiaroscuro* is the treatment of light and shade in drawing and painting.

¹⁴² Alexeieff eventually separated from his wife to marry Parker.

¹⁴³ Alexeieff made a first prototype to test his apparatus, which was constituted of 2000 pins. The second pinscreen (500,000 pins) took a year to make and measured 125 cm by 92.5cm. Neupert, 83–84; Bendazzi, 108–109; Doll, 5–6; Alexeieff-Rockwell, 32.

the way would make the screen look white. Pins pushed halfway cast half-sized shadows, which made the screen look half black and half white. But since the pins were so small, the eye perceived it as neither black nor white, but grey. By using different lengths, several nuances of grey could be made, exactly what Alexeieff was seeking. In addition, the pixellated image generated by the pinscreen was perceived as unpixellated, due to the small size of the pins.

Alexeieff used the pinscreen like a large piece of velvet. He worked with different objects such as rollers, spoons, forks, tapestry tubes, light bulbs, and *matrioshky* (Russian nesting dolls), which he rocked on the screen to achieve different shapes and shades.¹⁴⁴ Therefore, Alexeieff was “engraving” by pressure and truly melted the image into the screen. The presence of the Russian doll as a tool for his work is certainly interesting. One can undoubtedly say that Alexeieff was literally working with his heritage. The pinscreen was a highly sensitive device and while Alexeieff was working on the main image to be later photographed, Parker also contributed as she stayed behind the screen to push the pins back. In addition, Parker played a major role in designing the pinscreen, as Neupert explains:

Each [Alexeieff and Parker] could push pins toward the other’s side in what amounted to a constant creative interaction. Further, The French patent for this first incarnation of the pinscreen was granted in 1935 to Claire Parker, in part because she funded its invention but also because she served as a crucial creative engineer in building the final functional apparatus.¹⁴⁵

In addition, most of the time Parker also controlled the lighting and camerawork during animation. Their *œuvre* is therefore a completely collaborative work. Despite this collaboration, the pinscreen films represent Alexeieff’s impressions and feelings.

¹⁴⁴ The rocking movement was necessary as the pins offer an important resistance to pressure. I am thankful to animator Michèle Lemieux from the NFB who let me use the pinscreen.

¹⁴⁵ Neupert, 84.

In 1932, Alexeieff and Parker began shooting *A Night on Bald Mountain*, an eight-minute pinscreen animation of the musical composition that Modest Mussorgsky (1839–1881) wrote in 1876.¹⁴⁶ Mussorgsky's symphonic poem was a musical picture based on Gogol's story *St. John's Eve*, which referred to the legendary witches' Sabbath, supposed to have happened on Mount Triglav near Kyiv, Ukraine. The film had no screenplay and Alexeieff made no preparatory drawings for it either.¹⁴⁷ Instead, he used Mussorgsky's notes to the musical piece as well as Gogol's text. The animator mentions that when he encountered a word bringing an image or a memory, he liberated his fantasy.¹⁴⁸ Therefore, his work is much closer to the surrealist technique of automatism than to traditional cinematography.¹⁴⁹ Movement was achieved in *A Night on Bald Mountain* by photographing each pinscreen image one by one, and passing them at the rate of 24 images per second. Because of the nature of the pinscreen, when a mistake occurred, correction could be achieved only by starting all over again. The film was nevertheless completed in 1933.¹⁵⁰

It borrows from Léger's *Ballet Mécanique* and Duchamp's *Anémic Cinéma*, as seeming to explore dreams (or nightmares, in the case of *A Night on Bald Mountain*) in a non-narrative sequence. *A Night on Bald Mountain* also combines different images and unusual camera angles. The *montage*, movements, and morphing of images of the film emphasise movement and rhythm, however,

¹⁴⁶ The composer worked during the period of Romanticism and was seeking an ethnically pure Russian music. The musical piece was first intended to be an opera based on Gogol's *St. John's Eve*, a story written as part of a collection of short stories: *Evenings on a Farm Near Dikanka* (1831–1832). Mussorgsky's musical composition became popular only six years after his death, after his friend Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844–1908) published an arrangement of it. David Brown, *Mussorgsky: His Life and Works* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 84.

¹⁴⁷ Doll, 6; Bendazzi, 109; Neupert, 84.

¹⁴⁸ Bendazzi, 112.

¹⁴⁹ Automatism was used in different field such as painting, drawing, and writing. It was a technique where an author wrote whatever came to his mind on paper rather than organising his thoughts before writing. It was meant to express the subconscious. For more on surrealist techniques, see Fiona Bradley, *Surrealism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

¹⁵⁰ Doll, 6; Bendazzi, 109.

there are no real links between the sequences presented. The pinscreen film has no narrative and is built around a series of highly symbolic images, which creates a general feeling of uneasiness, grotesqueness, and recalls nightmares. The film's introduction presents a scarecrow, whose clothes are swept away by the wind, leaving only its cross-like structure. This religious connotation is followed by images of dark clouds and of a mountain—Bald Mountain, one supposes. Following that image are several disturbing ones: the clothes of a scarecrow flying like a ghost as if they had a life of their own; animals running; spectres moving in circles; the morphing of a mill and a pair of hands; a mouth laughing; a horse dying; a witches' sabbath; a rising moon; naked bodies dancing in the sky; a child who seems afraid, etc. Alexeïeff and Parker also added close-ups of the faces of scared children and grotesque animal-morphing (from a gorilla, to a crane, to a human face). This formalistic choice was used to create emotion due to the characters' proximity with the audience.¹⁵¹ This wordless animated work presented, like silent cinema, the essence of animation since it focused almost exclusively on its visual aspect. It further referred to earlier forms of animation, when sound did not exist and music was used instead. As the music slows down towards the end, the film concludes with the sun rising, the nightmarish sequences disappearing, and leaves the audience with a peaceful image of a peasant playing the flute in a field.

The film was the animated equivalent of Mussorgsky's symphonic poem: a poem of images. It was created out of Alexeïeff's impressions and feelings in relation to the music and formed a musical picture. The film is therefore a direct reference to Mussorgsky's music. The reference to the composer's piece is rhythmically supported by, for example, the repetition of the scarecrow sequence, which echoes the repetition of the first six bars of music. Another acknowledgement of the music happens in the repetition of movement of the

¹⁵¹ Norman McLaren, "Pinscreen," National Film Board of Canada, Québec, 1973. In *The Animation of Alexeïeff*, DVD (Facets Video, 2009), 00:30:00.

witches' Sabbath, which again have similar musical motifs. In both cases, the repetition in the movement and in the image echoed the musical themes of Mussorgsky's composition. This strong relationship to music can also be seen in the repetition of three shots showing the rising moon, which again created rhythm and movement rather than supporting a narrative.

Alexeieff and Parker worked with impressions and feelings that could be conveyed through the image rather than with a clear message or narrative. Neupert claims they wanted to "take advantage of the device's marvellous ability to generate gradual transitions from shot to shot and scene to scene while also producing a mirage-like visual softness to every filmed image."¹⁵² The beauty of *A Night on Bald Mountain* was that the audience was left with their own interpretation of the film. For example, the animators presented animals running to the sound of high-pitched music. This gave the impression that the animals were running away from an unseen danger. However, as no reason is given for their flight, these feelings of urgency are only created in the mind of the audience, and it can vary from person to person. *A Night on Bald Mountain's* structure is entirely organised around the idea of creating a feeling of uneasiness and fear, and for an audience the film remains a piece of emotional experimentation.

In addition to the choice of imagery presented, Alexeieff and Parker conveyed feelings of fear and nightmare through the style they used. Bendazzi explains how this film is very close to Alexeieff's life:

His chiaroscuro were his past recollections, nightmares and visions of the legends of pagan Russia, as well as images of the loved and lost native country. All these were strongly autobiographical elements, as Alexeieff himself remarked, which made his work into a lyrical anthology.¹⁵³

The artist himself many years after the making of *A Night on Bald Mountain* claimed that these were reminiscent of memories and experiences related to his

¹⁵² Neupert, 84.

¹⁵³ Bendazzi, 113.

father's death and his mother's depression.¹⁵⁴ Indeed, the blurry images of the film displayed mostly darkness, and showed what the pinscreen allowed the erasure of the lines meaning the loss of any tangible or physical point of reference. There are a few shots of a miniature model of a town that strongly contrasted with the rest of the film, as it is a clearly defined image with a lot of light. With such contrast, Alexeieff and Parker are unmistakably separating the real world (the village) from the realm of dreams (the nightmarish images). The images composing the realm of dreams present soft-edged lines. Considering the precision of the medium, one can only suppose the absence of clearly defined contour was what Alexeieff and Parker wanted to achieve. The artist claimed he wanted shades rather than the surfaces and lines that artists of his time typically used.¹⁵⁵ This formalistic choice makes solid forms on the screen difficult to perceive due to their "fuzziness." The inability to know what is in front of you adds to the spectators' general feeling of anguish. In addition, the generally clear rectangular frame of the image has been erased to vaguely mimic an iris shot. This gives the impression that the image is floating on the screen, again emphasising the idea of instability and unreality. At the end of the film, when the church's bells announce the beginning of the day, the image becomes clearer and presents more light compared to the darkness present in the rest of the film. This brought the audience back into a tangible and real world, where witches and ghouls do not exist and where nightmares are calmed.

In addition to the Avant-garde influence, a comparison of the working method and resulting animation of Alexeieff and Parker and to the work of Cohl

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 112; Neupert, 88; Drouin, 58.

¹⁵⁵ Bendazzi, 112. In a conversation with Ivanov-Vano, Alexeieff clearly expressed an interest in the way Soviet animators were creating a softness around the contour lines or their characters. This search for shades rather than lines echoes the theories of Heinrich Wölfflin about the linear (lines) and the painterly (shades) in Baroque and Renaissance art. Lev Atamanov, "Second rapport sur le cinéma d'animation en U.R.S.S.," in *Le cinéma d'animation dans le monde. 3^e Congrès International des Écoles de Cinéma et de Télévision, Cannes 1956. Cours et Publications de L'I.D.H.E.C.*, 120–164. (I.D.H.E.C: Cannes, 1956), 225–127. For more information on Wölfflin's theories, see Heinrich Wölfflin, *Principles of Art History: The Problem of the Development of Style in Early Modern Art* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2015).

reveals similarities between the two. Cohl developed a style that rejected normal methods of storytelling and drawing that was influenced by the Hydropathes and the Incoherents.¹⁵⁶ These artistic groups were obsessed with aesthetic issues, dreams, nightmares, and insanity.¹⁵⁷ Crafton explains Cohl's artistic method:

Rather than relate incidents in their logical order, he preferred to let images flow in stream-of-consciousness fashion. [...] Cohl developed specific codes for achieving these dislocating effects. His most characteristic, and most spectacular, was the extended metamorphic sequence in which the outlines of objects continually melt into other shapes.¹⁵⁸

Like his predecessor, Alexeieff was convinced that the motivating force of art was in the creative energy of the unconscious and the unknown, and that emotion was stimulated by movement and not by the beauty of the drawing.¹⁵⁹ The parallel between Cohl and Alexeieff is also present in the way both artists recycled old ideas from their other films. Both animators presented films that were embedded in strange metamorphosis, irrational juxtapositions, and non-sequitur imagery. But if Cohl was working with the contoured line of his characters, Alexeieff did the opposite: he worked the texture in the space inside the line, which he softened until it became imperceptible. The metamorphoses of Alexieff's characters were therefore happening from the inside out, while Cohl started from the outside line of the form to morph it from the "outside-in." This "inside-out" quality can be

¹⁵⁶ Cohl frequented anarchist and bohemian circles such as the modernist poets the Hydropathes. In addition, he was one of the founding members of a small group of anti-bourgeois artists in Paris called the Incoherents whose works predated surrealism. At Gaumont, he developed "Incoherent cinema," a style that rejected normal methods of storytelling and drawing. For example, in *Fantasmagories*, Cohl introduced his most famous character: the fantoche, a nameless puppet. This stick figure is reminiscent of a child's drawing and was consciously used by the animator as a reaction against bourgeois art as promoted by the Incoherents. Cavalier, *The World History of Animation*, 8; Crafton, 66–69; Wall-Romana, "Poire, Plume, Douve et bob," 293.

¹⁵⁷ Crafton, 63-64.

¹⁵⁸ Crafton, 66, 70.

¹⁵⁹ Drouin, 58.

seen in the metamorphosis happening in *A Night on Bald Mountain*, for example, in the grotesque animal-morphing of a gorilla, a crane, and a human face.

The film is truly representative of Alexeieff's life experience. The artist borrowed several subject matters from Gogol and from Slavic folklore, such as the child's face, the windmill, the image of a goat-demon, the devil, etc.¹⁶⁰ Russia is also omnipresent in the musical theme he chose, which played the role of a narrative structure. Alexeieff thus switched words for notes, and commented on the visual and audio qualities of animation as an emotional medium. His discourse therefore resided in the nature of the medium itself. The ideological values of *A Night on Bald Mountain* neither resided in a national political discourse—such as the one in Soviet animation—nor in the formation of a national ethos as in the United States. Instead, like Starevich and Zoubowich, Alexeieff articulates his discourse around his romanticised idea of Russia, which was largely formed by his status as an immigrant. Alexeieff never shared the political ideas of France's Russian *émigrés* and was not an avid frequenter of the Russian diaspora circles. Nevertheless, his family gravitated in a circle of friends mostly composed of *émigrés* artists who formed an extended family to replace the one lost in their former country.¹⁶¹ His rejection of the new Soviet reality was also expressed in his refusal to visit Moscow and Saint Petersburg after a personal invitation from the Soviet government.¹⁶² His French friends advised him not to get too close to his former compatriots and to realise he would never be able to go back to Russia. Alexeieff's animated films thus became the representation of the personal ethos of an *émigré* based on an idealised and imaginary perception of what Russia was.

While *A Night on Bald Mountain* was a sensation among artists, distributors were unfortunately not as enthusiastic, as the medium would not

¹⁶⁰ Giannalberto Bendazzi, "La matière dont les rêves sont faits –Such Stuff as Dreams are Made on," in *Alexeieff: Itinéraire d'un Maître – Itinerary of a Master*, ed. Giannalberto Bendazzi (Annecy, Paris: CICA, Dreamland, Cinémathèque française, 2001), 22–24.

¹⁶¹ Alexeieff-Rockwell, 10.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 16–18.

prove profitable unless the artists could produce a dozen shorts yearly.¹⁶³ Alexeieff and Parker separated the medium's dependence to traditional animation in order to form a serious work of art and bring animation to a higher sphere. Their active resistance to the popular sensibility, comedy, and caricature—as well as the flat and linear look of cartoons—limited the possibilities for exhibiting their work. Like many animators in Europe, Parker and Alexeieff decided to bring their talent to the young advertising industry where they could still enjoy a large degree of freedom and produce high quality animation.¹⁶⁴ This allowed Parker to take more charge of the style and content of their work. Like Starevich and Zoubowitch, Alexeieff and Parker worked with a group of friends, including Alexeieff's first wife the artist Alexandra Grinevsky (1899–1976), and the animator Étienne Raïk (1904–1976).¹⁶⁵ They produced several detailed advertisements, which were exhibited in theatres.¹⁶⁶ These advertisements were not produced using the pinscreen but more traditional methods of animation such as the stop-motion technique. Parker was particularly interested in the bold use of

¹⁶³ Doll, 7.

¹⁶⁴ Neupert, 88–89. It was while working in the advertisement that Alexeieff developed totalisation. This technique consisted of animating illusory solids, which are “drawn” on the frame by a long exposure time of a moving source of light. Using illuminated metallic spheres and composite pendulums, Alexeieff connected these tracing sources. The oscillations created could be planned because they were mathematically computed. He adjusted the forms traced by light and “animated” abstracted illusionary solids. He used this technique mostly for his advertisement films, especially to replicate the smoke of cigarettes. The advertising film in which he used totalisation, *Fumée* (Smoke, 1952), won a special award at the cinema festival of Venice in 1952. Bendazzi, 109–110.

¹⁶⁵ Friends referred to their group as “The Circus” because the four artists liked “clowning around” together. Alexeieff-Rockwell, 1. Thank you to pinscreen animator Michèle Lemieux from the National Film Board of Canada, who provided me with a copy of Alexeieff-Rockwell's biography.

¹⁶⁶ Etienne Rajk (Raik) was born in Hungary. He arrived in Paris in 1924 and started his career as a set decorator and Alexeieff's assistant when working for Georges Pitoëff. In the 1930s, he followed Alexeieff into advertisements until the beginning of World War II. He was sent to Alger, where in 1943, he produced his first solo puppet film. At the end of his life, Raik had produced over 200 advertising and animated films. Jean-Baptiste Garnero, “Etienne Raik (1904–1976),” in *Fignolés main: Une histoire du film publicitaire en France 1910–1970*, Program for the 9^e Sommet du Cinéma d'Animation, ed. French Archives of the Centre National de Cinématographie. (Paris, Centre National de Cinématographie: 2001).

colour that advertising allowed, an element that Alexeieff disliked for being too decorative.¹⁶⁷

With the outbreak of World War II, Alexeieff and Parker left for the United States. The large American studios based on assembly-line production and the large corporations were of no interest to them. This explains why in 1943, they worked for the National Film Board of Canada (NFB).¹⁶⁸ There, they produced their third pinscreen film, *En Passant (Passing By)*, 1944), while Alexeieff continued his engraving and illustration work as well.¹⁶⁹ The film was based on a French Canadian song and was part of a series of films on traditional music. This *chanson à répondre* (call-and-response song) is known by a variety of names including: *En Passant (Passing By)*, *En Passant par le Moulin (Passing by the Mill)*, or *Le Peureux (The Coward)*, and exists in several locations around

¹⁶⁷ Doll, 7-8; Bendazzi 109. Alexeieff and Parker's *Sleeping Beauty* (1935) deserves praise, as it was one of their most elaborate 1930s advertisement films. The five-minute short made for the Nicholas Wine firm was a narrative-based puppet animation owing little to the artists' previous experiments. It was composed of a spinning miniature and borrowed from classical dancing and theatre: the puppets' costumes referred to *La Commedia Dell'arte*, they replicated dancing patterns or posed in dancers position, and the decors switched between scenes also followed theatrical rules. The story of the sleeping beauty ends with a dancing party where other characters from other stories participate: Puss-in-Boots, Little Red Riding Hood, and the Wolf. The fast pacing and the structure of the scene arrangement is difficult to follow, however, one notices the use of saturated colours and the importance of music, which leads the character's movements and pace of the advertisement film.

¹⁶⁸ Although most sources claim the Alexeieffs came to Canada, Norman McLaren in an interview, mentioned they never actually came to the NFB to physically work there during this period. It is nevertheless important to mention that Alexeieff and Parker came to Canada in the 1960s to build a pinscreen for the NFB and train the animators on how to use it properly. Gerald G. Graham, *Canadian Film Technology, 1896-1986* (Newark: University of Delaware Press; London, Toronto: Associate Universities Presses: 1989), 108–109; Masaru, 2; Doll, 8; Bendazzi, 109; "Copy of a Letter from Claire and Alex Alexeieieff to Norman McLaren, Paris 9th Jan. 1960," NFB Archives; *Pincreen*, Directed by Norman McLaren, NFB, 1973.

¹⁶⁹ This is probably one of the most representational films they produced, presenting a squirrel, who is afraid of different things he meets. The Alexeieff-Parker animated film clearly reproduced the song in images. For example, when singing about the windmill, the audience saw a windmill and when talking about a rooster, the viewers saw a rooster. Alexeieff and Parker nevertheless left their touch even in a recognisable picture as *En Passant*, by giving the audience a reason why the character kept running away. The squirrel seems quite mischievous as he keeps getting in trouble. For example, he jumps on the mill's vanes and runs on them or eats the peasants' lunch in the field until he misunderstands a noise for a threat.

Canada.¹⁷⁰ The folk song is a tale about a man who misinterprets every noise he hears and keeps on running away.

In terms of aesthetics, *En Passant*'s images are definitely much clearer than *A Night on Bald Mountain*. The figures present more definition in their design and in their movement as well. Dominique Willoughby claims that,

[...] this tendency to sculptural solidification of bodies and landscapes in the light became more marked, emphasized by a great finesse in the modelling and a luxuriance of textures. It is important to note that for the first time the screen [...] offered a fully even grid, doubling the definition and resolution of the first screen.¹⁷¹

This sculptural solidification is not only explained by the improvements in their new pinscreen, but also by the fact that they had a clear contract with the NFB rather than developing a personal project. Alexeieff and Parker's previous work in advertising certainly had taught them the difference between work done under supervision and work done for their own pleasure. *Passing By* is the only film they made outside of France. When the war ended, the couple, now married, returned to Paris. During the post-war period, Alexeieff resumed engraving and book illustration, and the couple created two large-scale projects. The first one happened in the 1950s, when the couple worked on the introduction to Orson Wells' film *The Trial* (1962) based on a story by Franz Kafka (1883–1924). The introduction of the film presented a series of pinscreen still-drawings filmed without animation. Their second project also made in France was the creation of a wordless pinscreen adaptation of Gogol's short story *The Nose*.

¹⁷⁰ See for example the different versions sung by Josie Lacosta in Port au Port Peninsula in Newfoundland, ("1.8 Le Peureux," Memorial University of Newfoundland Digital Archives Initiative, accessed January 2015, <http://collections.mun.ca/cdm/ref/collection/gthomas/id/2977>), by Monique Jutras in Québec (*Chantons et Turlutons*, Monique Jutras, Monique Jutras Productions (CD), 2000) and by the group Vazzy in British Columbia (Vazzymusic, "En passant près d'un moulin" (video), posted January 15, 2016, accessed January 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zrDY1XHdTBS>).

¹⁷¹ Dominique Willoughby, "La synthèse cinématographique, des ombres aux nombres – The Cinematic Synthesis, From Shadows to Figures," in *Alexeieff: Itinéraire d'un Maître – Itinerary of a Master*, ed. Giannalberto Bendazzi (Annecy, Paris: CICA, Dreamland, Cinémathèque française, 2001), 187.

The Nose (1963), included very distinct images and a clear narrative structure, contrary to what the artists generally produced on the pinscreen. Gogol's 1836 satirical short narrative tells the story of a Saint Petersburg official whose nose leaves his face to gain a life of its own. Alexeieff's film is faithful to Gogol's story and the viewer can recognise the main sequences of the story: the barber discovering a nose in his bread; his attempts to get rid of the nose in the Neva River; an officer realising his nose has gone; the nose dressed-up as a high-ranking officer and pretending to be human; the nose refusing to reattach to the officer's face; and the officer waking-up one morning and realising his nose is back on his face. The essence of this eerie narrative is a man who has lost an essential part of what made him a man to society (his nose). This echoed Alexeieff's condition of *émigré* who had left behind a large part of who he was as well. The story is told by a series of speech-less animated situations. The film is accompanied by the experimental music of Hai-Minh (dates unknown).¹⁷² Once more, Alexeieff focused on earlier animation, where the image and music constituted the main tools of communication. With its dark, mysterious, and silent disappearing characters, metamorphosis of objects and flash-like synthesis of space and time, the film is a splendid example of surrealist narration and spontaneity.¹⁷³

The Nose is particularly interesting from a stylistic point of view: Alexeieff and Parker produced highly detailed images including domestic interiors as well as panoramas of nineteenth-century Saint Petersburg. The grandiose city of the Tsars is shown during the heights of its artistic greatness. It represents Alexeieff's hometown, but also the last cultural vestige of a lost world, expressed through images of its classical architecture. Moscow, the capital city of the Soviet Union, and its experimental art are completely absent in Alexeieff's

¹⁷² Hai-Minh's name was mentioned in the film's credits. However, no other information is available concerning this musician.

¹⁷³ Bendazzi, 113–144.

work. The artist's view of his homeland is what remained in his memories of a pre-revolutionary era. *The Nose* presented a highly refined movement of light when the sun rose and set: each time, the audience could follow the course of day light and see it running along the architectural lines of Saint Petersburg's buildings. Light was also used to present the psychology of the characters. For example, when the animators wanted to focus on their protagonists' feelings, they represented them with a strong light, while when they wanted to focus on their actions, their figures were generally dark and their facial traits imperceptible. In *The Nose*, each of the city's sceneries present deep perspective and the bodies of characters are displayed in the same solid structure as those in *Passing By*. Along with this last film, *The Nose* is one of Alexeieff and Parker's most refined animation productions in terms of the clarity of narrative structure and clarity of line. This is no coincidence as every time the artists had a clear storyline, the formalistic choices they made echoed the narrative.

In general, the Alexeieff-Parker production was characterised by short pinscreen projects occurring once or twice a decade, interspersed with several advertising films. The team only repeated their experience with non-linear narration with their last two films: *Pictures at an Exhibition* (1972) and *Three Moods* (1980). In between these personal projects, the artists produced several advertisements each year and Alexeieff continued working on book illustrations as well. Both films were based on musical works by Mussorgsky, and as is the case of *A Night on Bald Mountain*, they bear the same name as the composer's piece. Mussorgsky composed the piano suite *Pictures at an Exhibition* as a memorial to his friend, the Russian artist Viktor Hartmann (1834–1873).¹⁷⁴ The animators' *Pictures at an Exhibition* was supposed to be the first part of a musical trilogy, including the multiple parts of the composer's piece. However, the film remained unfinished. It illustrated Mussorgsky's music with images that the Alexeieff

¹⁷⁴ Encyclopaedia Britannica Online, accessed June 2017, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Pictures-at-an-Exhibition>, s.v. "Pictures at an Exhibition."

perceived as part of Mussorgsky childhood: images of his nanny, his mother, the military school in Saint Petersburg, a similar image of Ivan Bilibin's drawing of a *russalka* (mermaid), cut-out paper soldiers, etc. Aside from the few images explained in the introduction of the film, the rest remained symbolic for an audience that was not well versed in the life of the Russian composer. For example, a sequence presents a puppet-like character that popped out of an egg to jump and dance on a piano. This sequence is confusing and remains a rhythmic device more than it created any understanding about Mussorgsky. The film is unique, for the artists are not only showing images in movement but they are also rotating the pinscreen entirely, thus forming a visual rhythm of their own. As in *The Nose* and *A Night on Bald Mountain*, music and rhythm are at the heart of the Alexeieff and Parker production.

Their final production, *Three Moods*, was made on a final new pinscreen, on a musical theme by Mussorgsky, and was first screened in Milan.¹⁷⁵ Like in the music, one can perceive three themes in this last film. The first one was representative of old nineteenth-century Russia. The film starts on an image of cattle in a Slavic—suggested because of an Orthodox church in the background displayed the traditional architectural feature of an onion dome—countryside. The rhythm of the film also follows that of the music, in a slow panorama of a peaceful Russia, which reminds the viewer of Romantic art. This testimony of Alexeieff's impression of childhood images shows a clear nostalgia for the lost country.

The second theme of the film *Three Moods* is a study based on the Alexeieff-Parker production. It displays an amalgam of images and motifs taken from their previous animated films, which, as already discussed, were based on Alexeieff's personal impressions: *A Night on Bald Mountain* and *Pictures at an Exhibition*. This second part of the film is based on a musical score by Mussorgsky, which is much more experimental than the first one. It echoed

¹⁷⁵ Doll, 9; Bendazzi, 111.

Alexeieff's search for a higher form of animation. In addition, *Three Moods* is clearly a salute to the Russian composer as for this study, Alexeieff and Parker purposely excluded their films that were not related to Mussorgsky's *œuvre*.

The last section of the film is introduced by an image of a long table with money on it, a small shot glass, and a bottle. Behind the table is a person holding a hammer. Under the table, one can see the protagonists' bare feet, as well as a scale, and a lock. A flickering miniature figure, half man and half bird, is presented both on the edge of the bottle and on the character's left shoulder, like a sort of devilish entity linked somehow with the alcohol. The main character suddenly disappears to make room for a pyramid being built, followed by a flickering image of the scale holding music on the left side of the screen. As the music notes cause the balance to shift, coins falls on the other side of the scale, shifting the weight to the opposite side, showing that money weighs more than music. Every time the character hits the table with the hammer more money appears. These images, confusing at first, show a correlation to Mussorgsky's life. The composer was battling alcoholism and his work was rejected several times, which would explain the images of the bottle, the money, and the weight scale.¹⁷⁶ *Three Moods* also proved to be Alexeieff and Parker's swan song as Parker passed away a year and a half later and Alexeieff followed less than a year after.¹⁷⁷

While Parker's work was essential to the creation of their films, they nevertheless carry Alexeieff personal vision—one supposes this is the reason why there are no references to Parker's life.¹⁷⁸ Alexeieff and Parker's *œuvre* is

¹⁷⁶ Brown, 5.

¹⁷⁷ Alexeieff committed suicide. Doll, 9; Alexeieff-Rockwell, 107; Bregje Hofstede, "Alexandre Alexeïeff and the Art of Illustration," (RMA diss., Universiteit Utrecht, 2012), 13; personal conversation with NFB animator Michèle Lemieux.

¹⁷⁸ Alexeieff and Parker were very close. Parker acted as the extension of Alexeieff as she was working behind the pinscreen. He always included her in the creation process because her work was essential to the films. However, she repeatedly claimed that he was the artistic director and that the films carried his personal vision. Their work relationship is to me similar to the one of a choreographer to a dancer or of a film director to an actor. Parker carried the vision of Alexeieff on screen, but that did not make her less of an artist. One should note, Parker was more in charge of their advertisement shorts. Perhaps this is the reason why they are so different than the pinscreen films.

inseparable from Alexeieff's *persona*, which he carefully built. While he did not really interact with the Russian diaspora, he crafted myths around his personality, which was strongly influenced by the "Russian vogue." For example, in various articles he is described as a sort of dandy: a charming, elegant, educated, and self-absorbed yet poor person, born out of nineteenth-century literature.¹⁷⁹ Alexeieff reflected perfectly the image of the nineteenth-century artist: poor, talented, and misunderstood. This seems to have been the ideal model of the Russian artist, as Livak shows in his analysis of Russian *émigré* literature, which fits the French paradigm as well.¹⁸⁰ Alexeieff certainly fits this model. In his interviews, for example, the artist often described his poverty and the hunger he suffered in his early years in France. He proposed a clear discourse on his work being art, and his status, that of an artist (as opposed to craftsman). For example, Alexeieff never exploited the pinscreen for commercial purposes. He also turned down all proposals to use it to make advertising films, refusing to debase his apparatus.¹⁸¹ Once more, this coincides with Mussorgsky's *œuvre*, whose composer had no intention to debase music to the level of mere amusement.¹⁸²

Alexeieff justified his commercial work by claiming that most of the great paintings were made to support a monarch's, or the Church's, propaganda.¹⁸³ Alexeieff's image of the dandy-artist is added to that of the eternal immigrant and exotic Russian, who could not fully integrate French society, from which he isolated himself. Bregie Hofstede explains how Alexeieff treasured "his memories

¹⁷⁹ Hofstede, 18; Susanne Schmid, "Byron and Wilde: The Dandy and the Public Sphere," in *The Importance of Reinventing Oscar: Versions of Wilde During the Last 100 Years*, ed. Uwe Böker, Ricahrd Corballis and Julie A. Hibbard (Amsterdam, New York: Rodopi, 2002), 82.

¹⁸⁰ Leonid Livak, "Nina Berberova et la mythologie culturelle de l'émigration russe en France," *Les Cahiers du monde russe* 43, no. 2–3 Contacts intellectuels, réseaux, relations internationales Russie, France, Europe. XVIIIe-XXe siècle (Apr.–Sep. 2002): 470.

¹⁸¹ Izvolov, 59. For advertising films, Alexeieff and Parker seldomly used the pinscreen. Instead, they applied the stop motion technique and totalisation.

¹⁸² Allan, 78.

¹⁸³ Interestingly, Hofstede also notes companies Alexeieff worked for found him arrogant and unpleasant. Hofstede, 19.

of a ‘lost world’ and presented himself as a rare survivor from the Russia that was destroyed in the revolution.”¹⁸⁴ Therefore, the Russian diaspora provided Alexeieff with an initial stepping stone into France’s artistic world. Profiting from the ethnic stereotype that was born out of nineteenth-century Russian fashion, Alexeieff built himself an artistic image, which contrasts with his unusual *œuvre*.

The *œuvre* Alexeieff and Parker left to the world is an ephemeral cinematic sculpture, which now only exists on cel, as opposed to other forms of animation that leave behind drawings, puppets, or other material traces of their productions. Their animation is a complete study of light and shadow, which found its source in early innovations in cinema and in the cinematograph’s first screening, which Gorky called the “light in the shadows.”¹⁸⁵ Alexeieff and Parker’s animation presented an alternative reality to the world we know. This reality was dual, as it existed on the pinscreen, and as a negative reflection, behind the pinscreen as well. Thus, the exploration of the world was doubled in the apparatus they created. The artists wanted to explore the mind and the unconscious and their films are a clear representation of the human psyche’s structural model.¹⁸⁶ As revealed to the audience, the films represented the ego, or the part of the mind that is the most conscious. The pinscreen image stood for the super-ego, or the semi-conscious, which the artists tried to recover while working. Finally, the id is expressed through the flip side of the pinscreen. It is the part of Alexeieff and Parker’s work that they ignore most of the time, and that will never be revealed to audiences or researchers, as the original image is now lost. Alexeieff and Parker’s exploration of the human mind is therefore completed by the addition of their stylistic methods and pinscreen.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 18. Also in Alexeieff-Rockwell, 24.

¹⁸⁵ Pozner, “Gorki au cinématographe.”

¹⁸⁶ This model was first set by Sigmund Freud. For more on this topic, see Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (Peterborough, Buffalo: Broadview Press, 2011); Sigmund Freud, *The Ego and the Id* (New York: Norton, 1962).

In general, Alexeieff's artistic work borrowed from elite Russian culture such as classical music with *Night on Bald Mountain* (1933), classical literature such as Gogol's *The Nose* (1963), as well as Russian popular culture, such as the Bilibin inspired bird and Romantic imagery of the Russian countryside. If one cannot talk about a typical "Russian animation," Alexeieff's work certainly keeps Russian culture omnipresent. Even if there were inspired by French Avant-garde, Alexeieff's films were not representative of French production either. Alexeieff's *œuvre*, just like that of Starevich and Zoubowitch, is at the edge of any pure national style, and stands in isolation, just as its creators were isolated in their exile. Even if the three animators' *œuvre* does not entirely fit in the definition of art animation—especially Starevich's and Zoubovitch's, which is based on traditional narratives—it is nevertheless representative of this genre because they worked outside the film industry. Starevich's, Zoubowitch's, and Alexeieff's production are particularly close to *auteur* animation, which describes animated films in which the director's input is felt and whose individual style is easily recognisable.¹⁸⁷ While the concept of *auteur* officially emerged in the 1940s, I would argue that the three Russian *émigré* animators' work is nevertheless an early representation of this genre because of their distinct style, themes, and mode of production.¹⁸⁸

While the three animators left an undeniable mark on French—and world animation—France had to wait for a younger generation of animators (both native

¹⁸⁷ For more on the concept of *auteurism*, see Bordwell and Thompson, 381-402.

¹⁸⁸ The concept of *auteur* was initiated by Alexandre Astruc in his 1948 essay about "the camera-pen," in which he compares filmmaking to writing. Alexandre Astruc, "Naissance d'une nouvelle avant-garde, la caméra-stylo," *L'Écran français*, no. 144 (30 mars 1948): 5.

and naturalised French) to emerge and strengthen its national animation.¹⁸⁹ Despite exciting new changes in the field, Starevich, Zoubowitch, and Alexeieff continued to produce animated films the same way they always had, as if they were in separate bubbles with little contact with the external world. They stood as individuals doing highly personal work, representative of their personalities. Although they shared their individual visions and creative processes when asked, they also avoided taking part in important debates about animation, and did not associate with particular groups. Their artistry was shaped and strengthened by their isolation as immigrants and artists, and by the fact that none of them clearly belonged to any fashionable trends or studios. All three claimed a renunciation of the praise of a large public, which made them and their *œuvres* stand as unique. They were filmmakers who had no masters, and whose art was born out of their lifetime of experience as human beings. Their art was shaped by their social experience and by a very personal perception of animation.

This is perhaps the uniqueness of animation, French in this case, which developed outside the framework and strict structure of a studio.¹⁹⁰ This formed a fragmentary animation, which enabled animators to play the role of the artist with a capital A: a talented individual whose work is the product of his mind, soul, and

¹⁸⁹ Changes in animation included the emergence of national animation, the establishment of the Centre National de Cinématographie (CNC), a reorganisation of the industry, and the imposition of a committee (Comité d'Organisation de l'Industrie Cinématographique or COIC) that set the rules for cinema's business practices. The COIC banned American films in 1941, which encouraged local production. After the Second World War, animation became more popular: the Annecy International Animated Film Festival was launched and the International Association of Animated Films was created. Through these different institutions, interest and research on the work of Russian *émigré* animators was initiated. If French animation was still a centralised Parisian craftsman-like phenomenon, and still depended on the advertising market, the 1980s brought a decentralisation of the market and changed the general production of animation. Neupert, 78–82, 90–100, 111–114; Bendazzi 76–78, 156. For more on the Annecy International Animated Film Festival and the International Association of Animated Films, see: Jean-François Camus, "Annecy: Un centre de documentation pour l'histoire du cinéma d'animation," *1895* (Paris) 13, (Dec., 1993): 95–96.

¹⁹⁰ This situation is not unique to Europe. North America is not without its own set of experimental artists, including Stan Brakhage (1933–2003) in the United States, Norman McLaren (1914–1987) in Canada. Some studios, like the NFB for which McLaren was working, had the mission to develop animation and to support of Canadian animators and filmmakers. Documentaries, experimental films, and other forms of cinema and animation that are less commercial constitute an important part of the NFB productions.

emotion. My intention is not to diminish the talent or artistry of animators working under studio leadership. However, these artists had to work within certain constraints that did not exist in the production of Starevich, Zoubowitch, and Alexeieff. For example, the studio system provided a certain ideological denomination and artistic orientation, which the artists had to follow. Furthermore, the studio structure seems to nurture a certain company cult, in which films appear with the “brand” of the studio, while the *émigré* artist’s production did not.

Russian *émigré* artists were able to achieve complete freedom of creation. This, however, was only possible by working outside the studio system, along with the financial stability it provided. The extant *œuvre* of the Russian *émigré* animators is unfortunately much smaller than what Americans produced. In addition, they left very little biographical and artistic information, and what was left generally remained in the hands of their family. Furthermore, since they had no pupils, the visual tradition they created followed them to the grave, as opposed to Disney or Soiuzmul’tfil’m for example, whose studios still produce animated films oriented towards a clear aesthetic form and content. For these reasons, making a concise argument about unity of style in Russian *émigré* animators is very difficult, if not impossible.

Nevertheless, as demonstrated in this chapter, Russian *émigré* animators did share some common traits. Their *œuvres* represent a microcosm of their *émigré* condition within the larger macrocosm of French animation. It is the ideological expression of their experience in France. On the one hand, it is a tangible proof of nostalgia: the loss of the country of their youth. Their animation represents the distance with the Russian imaginary community in France and of its ideological values. While the Russian *émigré* animators all benefited from the diaspora’s presence, they partially rejected the Russian orientalism and communitarianism it nurtured. If their social situation and initial professional contacts largely depended of the Russian diaspora, their animation parted with it.

On the other hand, their films remain a product of this diaspora as Russian motifs persisted in their *œuvres*. Their use of folklore material, fairytales, and fable in their productions was part of a desire to give a structure to their animation. Only Alexeieff did not use the fairytale but nevertheless gave his world a “Russian” structure through the Mussorgsky’s musical tales and Gogol’s writing. The use of the tale, or Russian literature, which also uses narration, further inscribes their *œuvre* into nostalgia for a vanished epoch. Their animation represents their frustration with their physical and psychological isolation in France, their memories of Russia—or what they perceived to be Russia—and their attempt to understand French culture and audiences.

They expressed such ideas in different ways. Their techniques (puppet or pinscreen) and their family-oriented production belong to another world. The materiality of their technique echoes the work of the pioneers of animation, who were both artists and craftsmen. As their work involved the manipulation of tangible and modifiable materials, this makes them both artists and craftsmen. Their working methods correspond to the country they lost by creating another structure representing “home” through their work, a place where they could safely work. It thus became another largely imagined community where at least through their art the Russia they knew could survive. This was the case for a certain time, but the Second World War changed everything and it was in a lost Europe that their resistance in keeping a part of their world continued. This is one of the elements that made them marginal artists. Their animated *œuvre* represented a national ethos based on an imaginary community that is embedded in an imaginary projection of reality from the personal ideology of the artist.

Final Remarks and Conclusion

In an interview with Paul Wells, animator Marjane Satrapi (1969–) compared animation to writing. She observed that present society is overloaded with imagery, the public gets educated about the world first through images and later through words. This certainly demonstrates the power media such as animation has in disseminating human thought, how it can shape the way people think, and how images are an important part of both animation and ideology.¹ This thesis focuses on ideology forming the national ethos of specific cultural groups. However, far from being essentially a product of a political power, ideology remains intrinsically linked to a specific culture and can also be perceived as a product of a cultural collective. In the three cases presented—the American Dream, Soviet Socialist realism, and the Russian *émigrés* in France—ideology expressed the cultural framework of the national group in which it was produced.

As mentioned previously, the term ideology is often reduced to heavy negative connotations and specific political entities as in, for example, a totalitarian context. It certainly is a form of power expressed in the shape of a discourse rather than in clear physical actions, to direct at different levels the behaviour of others.² But, as seen through analysis of animated films, ideology is mostly a structural framework that offers schematic images of social order.³ It provides cultural symbolic models such as a national ethos, it regulates patterns of

¹ Wells, *Reimagining Animation*, 42–43; Jean-Benoit Lévy, *Les grandes missions du cinéma* (Montréal: Lucien Parizeau & Compagnie, 1994), 11. Cited in Leah D. Hewitt, *Remembering the Occupation in French Film: National Identity in Postwar Europe* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 23.

² Thomas M. Wilson and Hastings Donnan, eds., *Border Identities Nation and State at International Frontiers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 2.

³ Geertz, 218; Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, “The Continual Reconstruction of Multiple Modern Civilizations and Collective Identities,” in *Borderlines in a Globalised World: New Perspectives in a Sociology of the World-System*, ed. Gerhard Preyer and Mathias Bös (Boston, London: Kluwer Academic, 2002), 3.

behaviour, and it organises a society, which is why a collective accepts it as a structural consistency. Ideology, like the national model it forms, takes roots in cultural idea systems and presents a clearly defined framework for a social structure to develop. Therefore, different ideologies from different groups represent different cultural models. Furthermore, different ideologies—religious, moral, national, artistic, or political—within the same group are all aspects of the same cultural model. National ideology forms symbolical images, which in turn support the national ethos. Animation translates these symbolical images from the abstracted realm of ideology to the visual one of the animated screen. Therefore, analysing animated films allowed me to show how such a system of ideas is presented in narratives and how it is expressed through design.

In the animation of Disney presented in chapter one, ideology is presented under the traits of the American Dream. It identifies the group as the members of the American normative culture of the 1930s. It offers models of behaviour through clearly defined heroes and villains. It proposes a set of values and beliefs nurtured by this group—hard work, goodness, and truth—leading to individual success. Success itself is perceived as a personal journey to attain happiness, expressed through a rise of status in the group—social recognition and climbing social hierarchy—all of which must happen on a dedicated land, namely the United States. The national ethos also expresses the basic economic system of the United States by proposing that the rise within the group leads to material goods—the “rags to riches” concept. For example, Snow White and Cinderella find love which enables them access a wealthier life. Dumbo and Jiminy Cricket also find better social position and new possessions—a private car, new clothes, a gold badge, etc. Disney’s early animated feature films thus propose an ideal paradigm intrinsically linked to the American economical and cultural systems of the 1930s. In these films, the fairytale narrative embodies the possibility of a better future and the rounded Disney style supports the structural frame of the narrative and by extension, the American Dream. This model was not forced on Disney, rather, the

animator embraced a discourse that was already present in his cultural group. His animated films reflect the attitudes present in his society, in which the achievement of the American nation passes by the realisation of the individual's dream. Therefore, the American Dream paradigm still leaves space for individual achievement.⁴ In this sense, individual identity and collective identity are intrinsically linked.

In contrast, the national ethos in Russia and later in the Soviet Union addresses the people of Russia and of the Soviet Union. Through the different socio-political changes, the ethos moved from a form of Romantic nationalism in the late eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century, to a leftist nationalism in which the Soviet national ethos emerged. Like the American Dream, the Soviet model can only be achieved in a specific land and context, that is the Soviet Union. However, in the Soviet Union, animation was required to observe the clear political and cultural models imposed by the government.

In this Soviet national ethos, values of hard work, goodness, and truth, which represent models of behaviour are all elements which shape the members of the collective and serve to identify the outsiders to the collective. Shmuel N. Eisenstadt points out, this is not a unique model, as collective identity is generally produced by the social construction of boundaries:

These boundaries divide and separate the real manifold processes of interaction and social relationships; they establish a demarcation between inside and outside, strangers and familiars, kin and akin, friends and foes, culture and nature, enlightenment and superstition, civilization and barbary.⁵

⁴ See the Venn diagram "Individual and Collective Identity" in the appendix. These diagrams are not based on any quantitative analysis and are not meant to be used as a direct representation of statistical results. Rather, these figures are based on my own analysis of the three different ethos presented in this thesis. I emphasised the size and the overlaps of the circles only to help the reader visualise my argument.

⁵ Eisenstadt, 6.

While this is very close to the American Dream, the Soviet national ethos remains different because it responds to different prevailing cultural and social conditions. In particular, happiness according to the Soviet national ethos can only be achieved through a successful collective. This means that in this model, the individual identity is considerably reduced in favour of the collective. Furthermore, wealth is not understood in terms of material good like in the American Dream, but in terms of national and social growth. Therefore, one can find in this utopian model the expression of the socialist economic and cultural systems.

As seen in the second chapter of this thesis, the erasure of the individual was not always complete and varied depending of the socio-political situation.⁶ It shows how the national ethos, and by extension the collective identity, are continuously constituted, constructed, and modified. For example, in the post-Revolutionary context, the Soviet government was busy rebuilding cities, setting infrastructures and a new ideological framework for the newly formed Soviet collective. Therefore, the ideological discourse following the Revolution left some space for the individual, which was expressed in the visual experimentations of animators. Under Stalin, the ideological framework for the national ethos was fully formed and reinforced. Animator's work became homogenised and any discordant discourse was suppressed as illegitimate and punished. In this sense, the ideological system forming the Soviet national ethos really functioned as a form of social control. By contrast, the American Dream in the United States also functions as a social organisation framework. However, as explained in chapter one, the American Dream evolved in a socio-cultural context where counter-discourse was allowed and where many American Dreams coexisted. This makes

⁶ See the Venn diagram "Soviet Individual and Collective Identity" in the appendix. These diagrams are not based on any quantitative analysis and are not meant to be used as a direct representation of statistical results. Rather, these figures are based on my own analysis of the three different ethos presented in this thesis. I emphasised the size and the overlaps of the circles only to help the reader visualise my argument.

this social model fundamentally different than the Soviet ethos because it does not act as the unique model to follow and thus, cannot punish discordant discourse with the same strength. Furthermore, in the Soviet Union of Stalin, because of the homogenisation of discourse the space allowed for individual identity was also greatly reduced, making the collective the most important element of the national paradigm.

The animation in the Soviet Union of that period seems to be fully modelled on Disney's animation. It is, however, not that simple. The classical rounded Disney style in the United States exposed the values of the American Dream of the 1930s. By contrast, the same style in the Soviet Union—the fairytale structure and rounded style—was reinterpreted in order to remain intrinsically linked to a socialist realist ideology. In both cases, the design visually supports the idea of an ordered world and functions as the core of the ideological framework for identity even if they expressed different ideas. It is therefore essential to look at the socio-cultural context of animated films to fully understand their social role.

The case of the Russian *émigré* animators' ethos in France is also very different from the American and the Soviet models. In their case, the concept of the collective is complex. First, these animators share ties with several national groups. For example, they were all simultaneously members of a group of *émigrés* living in France, of a Russian diaspora in France, and they were also French citizens. One cannot speak of a clear national ethos as the animators did not entirely associate either with the Russian diaspora in Paris, or with French society. And yet, the microcosm they formed at home (family and friend based) offers a similar social structure. In their animation, ideology is presented under the traits of a personal ethos largely oriented towards the family with some ties to national identity that remains expressed and constructed by the individual. Therefore, the group presentedgroup of friends. Therefore in their films' ideology is mostly that of their own immediate surrounding with whom the animators identified.

The ethos that these animators formed and nurtured was their own personal hybrid ethos. It was constituted of elements from pre-revolutionary Russia, from their new life in France, and from their own situation as immigrants. This means that each of their ethos was different from one another and offered a different model. Therefore, calling this group “Russian *émigré* animators in France” is not really accurate as they are not an organised group and do not share ties with each other. Rather, they are individuals which had formed their own personal collective based on a their personal values. For example, in his films, Starevich values simplicity, tradition, and the family. His ties to Russia are perceived through political comments about inapt rulers, and a few folklore elements. Zoubowitch, however, exposes stronger political commentary and criticism of society. His ties to Russia are almost absent of his films and can only be perceived through some titles or names of characters as in his film *Mishka*. Finally, Alexeieff proposes an elitist view of his art and a much stronger identification as artist. In his films, Russia is perceived through pre-revolutionary Romanticised images and music.

The ethos they proposed served in a way to legitimise their art and position as artists but did not always sustain a clear model of behaviour or geographical setting like in the American Dream and the Soviet paradigm. In their films, success in achieving the ethos is difficult to grasp. Starevich proposed the clearest model where happiness is possible by living a modest life and nurturing traditional and familial values. In Starevich’s productions either the main protagonist reaches happiness or the film offers a moral ending functioning like an indicator of social behaviour. Zoubowitch’s films do not always seem to propose happiness to be possible. However, the few productions available makes it difficult to come to firm conclusions concerning his perception of the world. Alexeieff’s films have no clear ending and the ethos he proposed does not seem to lead to happiness. Rather, he seems to present a constant search without any outcome. Furthermore, in the absence of a clear narrative, his films convey ideas

through impressions rather than clear paradigm for social behaviour. Furthermore, the “fuzziness” of his stylistic choices supports the general feeling of anguish and discomfort. Because the Russian *émigré* animators’ films are so personal, they reflect their own attitudes towards society.

The family structure nurtured by the Russian *émigrés* animators leaves a lot of space to the personal and this, even if the individual remains constituted of multiples collectives (the family, Russia, France). This creates an ethos where the individual has a much stronger presence than in the American Dream or the Soviet socialist realist ethos because it is not nurtured by a national collective or a governmental entity but by the artist himself.⁷ The strong individualism of this ethos is not surprising as it has to exist as a counterculture within a larger homogenised group (Russians in France, for example). In this sense, the collective exists in margins of society but remains dominated by the animator’s view of the world. For example, even if Parker was the extension of Alexeieff, in the creation of their films it is still his views, which dominate. Their films are a representation of his memories and impression. This situation is also true of Starevich. Even if his daughter helped in writing the scenarios and his wife made costumes for the puppets, the films are nevertheless the expression of Starevich’s view of the world.

So the ideology organising the group is the complex representation of the animator’s view of the world, not based on the concept of a nation *per se*, but on a community sharing almost a filial link and some element of this nation. The artist is at the head of this collaborating group and plays the role of leader for the group. In this sense, the ethos confirms the artist’s position of power towards the group. This situation does not make their films less political in content. But the ethos

⁷ See the Venn diagram “Individual and Collective Identity” in the appendix. These diagrams are not based on any quantitative analysis and are not meant to be used as a direct representation of statistical results. Rather, these figures are based on my own analysis of the three different ethos presented in this thesis. I emphasised the size and the overlaps of the circles only to help the reader visualise my argument.

remains extremely fragmented because the ideology presents multiple facets of identification (Russian, outside the Russian diaspora, French elements, etc.) and these numerous elements are all present in the films I analysed.

It seems that the Russian *émigré* animators chose their own cultural symbols to construct their a cultural framework where they could function. In their films, the nation is reinterpreted in images that the animator feels are symbolical. In general, the model Russian *émigré* animators presented does not take in account the larger macrocosm in which they lived. Rather, it is a mosaic formed by different pieces taken from various socio-cultural contexts, which is perhaps why their paradigm is so multifaceted and fragmented. The ethos is not formed by a larger collective but really is constructed by an individual who remains at the centre of the ethos. In contrast, the individual imposed his vision of the world on the collective. In this sense, this system of thought expresses the system of production of these artists who lead a small working group constituted of members of their own family, or close friends. Furthermore, it also means that the constitution, the construction, and the modification of such ethos does not follow socio-political changes as in the American Dream and Soviet ethos but rather, follows the psyche of the individual creating the films. This means that a deeper exploration of such ethos might not be impossible for future researchers without having access to the personal material, such as diaries or letters, that these artists left.

What my analyses have shown, is that the Russian *émigré* animators' films are intrinsically linked to their condition of immigrants searching for roots—in their values oriented towards the family, in the society they criticised, and in reminiscence of their past memories. What links them, is a social organisation based on family ties and a nostalgic view of the past—in Starevich's use of puppets, for example, or in Alexeieff's depiction of a romanticised Russia. Their animation is representative of their physical and psychological isolation in France,

of what they perceived to be Russia, and of their attempt at constructing a new structure representing “home.”

Despite their differences, the three ethos presented in this thesis share similarities. They are all models that construct an imaginary collective. In these groups, the members do not necessarily share tangible links with each other. The American Dream, for example, addresses all Americans in the United States, but what these people share is a common citizenship and their national ethos. These individuals are not all related and do not know each other, which makes the unity of their nation an imaginary collective. The Soviet paradigm is equally imaginary: it was modified several times, following the changes in history, in borders, and in politics. Furthermore, the Soviet ethos presents an idea of what is to be Soviet that is not entirely consistent with the number of different ethnic groups living in the former USSR as the Soviet ethos was constructed from various elements of ethnic cultures of USSR but remains largely based on Russian culture. The collective imaginary is equally constructed in the case of the Russian *émigré* animators in France. While they share real links to their family and friends, they expressed it by building on different cultural elements taken from different places, carefully choosing the symbols they felt were important and those that were not. The films of these animators display the fragmented identity of their authors.

All of the three ethos presented are abstracted constructions based on an ideological framework which expressed the vision of a group. These abstracted constructions are based on values and visual cultural symbols. Furthermore, in some cases, the ethos presents the achievement of success as a quest for happiness but does not suggest clear tangible actions to achieve success. However, the different ethos displayed in films help in identifying who is in the collective and who is not. In this sense, the ethos functions as a cultural framework which expose what is perceived as correct and what is not. Furthermore, it makes the films displaying the ethos a cultural reminiscence of a certain socio-political

group evolving in a specific era of history. In this sense, understanding how ideological discourse functions and is expressed in animated films is of great significance to the study of film. Understanding animated film is equally important to the study of a society because the media culture represents the cultural memory of a collective and helps with the comprehension of how it is structured.

Ideology as a cultural system establishes certain patterns of beliefs and values for a larger society.⁸ As Geertz points out, it renders otherwise incomprehensible social situations meaningful and allows individuals to act purposefully within these situations.⁹ In this context, it is a necessary system because it maintains a sense of cohesion within the collective by organising and legitimising its social order. Whoever deviates from this discourse is perceived of as an outsider and has to be pushed away. One can see an example of this during the McCarthy era in the United States. In the case of the former USSR, any deviation from the official discourse could lead to arrests, forced-labor camp, and executions.¹⁰ In the case of the Russian *émigré* animators, expulsion from the collective is at this point impossible to examine as so little is known about their personal life and immediate group of friends. Therefore, ideology is important if not essential for the formation of a group.

⁸ Winston White, *Beyond Conformity* (Westport: Greenwood, 1980), 204; Lloyd A. Fallers, "Ideology and Culture in Uganda Nationalism," *American Anthropologist* 63, New Series, no. 4 (Aug., 1961): 677–678.

⁹ Geertz, 220.

¹⁰ The forced-labour camps in the former Soviet Union were also called "gulags." For more on the gulags, see Steven Anthony Barnes, *Death and Redemption: The Gulag and the Shaping of Soviet Society* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011); Jehanne M. Gheith, *Gulag Voices: Oral Histories of Soviet Incarceration and Exile* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Anne Applebaum, *Gulag: A History* (New York: Anchor Books, 2003); Oleg Vital'evich Khlevniuk, *The History of the Gulag: From Collectivization to the Great Terror* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004).

Geertz argues that ideology is a map of problematic social reality and a matrix building the collective conscience.¹¹ However, as he points out, it rarely does justice to the complexity of a society,

Ideology tends to be simple and clear-cut, even where its simplicity and clarity do less than justice to the subject under discussion. The ideological picture uses sharp lines and contrasting blacks and whites. The ideologist exaggerates and caricatures in the fashion of the cartoonist. Therefore, the ideological figure remains selective, oversimplified and often distorted. [...] The reality in which individuals live is much more complex than what ideology proposes because in reality, culture, personality and the social system interpenetrate.¹²

Ideology can express different facets of a group: religion, art, politics, etc. In this thesis, I have limited myself to the ways in which ideology expresses symbol of nationhood in animation. In some cultural cases, the national ethos can be clearly articulated by ideology like in the case of the American Dream and the Soviet national model. These two examples however, did not have the same impact, as one evolved in a context where counter-discourse were accepted (the United States) while the other one evolved in an all embracing homogenised propagandist system (the Soviet Union). The national ethos can also be fragmented when the collective, the individual, and the nation coexist confusedly within the same model, as seen in the Russian *émigré* animators' ethos. This last model is nevertheless a form that expresses the identity of the artist and his relationship with the nation.

This thesis also shows how models for national collective identity and the symbols that forms them can be reinterpreted and acquire a new meaning within new ideological frameworks. Quoting E. Galanter and M. Gerstenhaber, Clifford Geertz explains that the reinterpretation of similar symbols is not a new

¹¹ Geertz, 220.

¹² Geertz, 209 and 214.

strategy and that the construction and manipulation of symbolic systems, which are employed as models of other systems—social or psychological, for example—is done so that the structure of these new systems can be understood by the members of the collective. The symbolic model has to subsume the “unfamiliar something” and render it familiar with known symbolical elements.¹³ This is precisely why, for example, the Soviet ethos under Stalin displays cultural symbols borrowed from the late eighteenth-century and the early nineteenth-century Romanticism in Imperial Russia along with a Marxist discourse from the period following the Revolution. The historical discrepancy of these opposing symbols is irrelevant as a new system—the Soviet ethos under Stalin—proposed an additional system of meaning and thus, changed the way these cultural symbols are perceived.

Fairytales are another symbolic system which was used to make the ideology understandable and recognisable to individuals. Providing a familiar setting fairytales made the ideological framework more acceptable. In this sense, mythical stories and fairytales share a lot with ideology: they offer narratives about a new order, a sociogony, the representation of a social living, strong imagery expressed in types, models, or clear opposition between good and evil, and they also present the place of the individual within the collective. Fairytales and ideology are present in most media, can adapt to new utopian content, and help regulation of the future of a collective by proposing a normative framework for a reality. The overall discourse of ideology and by extension the national ethos can be created by imagination and form the imaginary collective.¹⁴ The concepts of nation, American, Soviet, or Russian *émigré* are all the expression of the collective and are all based on a constructed reality which is constantly

¹³ Eugene Galanter and Murray Gerstenhaber, “On Thought: The Extrinsic Theory,” *Psychological Review* 63 (1956): 218–227. Quoted in Geertz, 214–215.

¹⁴ Claude Rivière, “Mythes modernes au coeur de l’idéologie,” *Cahiers Internationaux de Sociologie* 90, Nouvelle Série, (Jan.–Jun. 1991): 11–24.

reinterpreted and reshaped as new imaginary collectives form, as sub-cultures affirm their existence, or as socio-political changes require new models of behaviour. Animation reflects these models of behaviour that strengthen the collective and also shape a part of the individual identity. In this sense, the fantastic reality proposed by the medium perfectly renders the collective imaginary.

Ideology forms cultural constructions (the national ethos), which give meaning to the boundaries between communities and between nations. In this sense, ideology is a constant companion to culture.¹⁵ The symbolic constructions of ethnicity and nation are often treated as important aspects of identity.¹⁶ But as Rogers Brubaker, Mara Loveman, and Peter Stamatov argue, from a cognitive perspective nationhood, ethnicity, and race, are perspectives on the world rather than clear aspects of a collective.¹⁷ According to Brubaker,

These include ways of identifying oneself and others, construing situations, explaining behavior, imputing interests, framing complaints, telling stories, etc., in ethnic rather than other terms. They include systems of classification, categorization, and identification, formal and informal. And they include basic schemas and taken-for-granted background knowledge, embodied in persons and embedded in institutionalized routines and practices, through which people recognize and experience objects, places, persons, actions, or situations as ethnically marked or meaningful.¹⁸

¹⁵ Bennett M. Berger, *An Essay on Culture: Symbolic and Social Structure* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 36.

¹⁶ Wilson and Donnan, eds., *Border Identities*, 4–7.

¹⁷ Rogers Brubaker, Mara Loveman, and Peter Stamatov, “Ethnicity as Cognition,” *Theory and Society* 33, no. 1 (Feb., 2004): 45.

¹⁸ Rogers Brubaker, “Ethnicity, Race, and Nationalism,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 35 (2009): 32.

Because most of these terms like “community” and “identity” are based on the collective imaginary, they take on different meaning in different contexts.¹⁹ For this reason, one cannot assume that every group is permeated by solidarity or homogenous ideological inclination.²⁰ Instead, groups and group identity are complex, multifaceted, and malleable. Communities and their ethos are constructed, deconstructed, and reconstructed through eras, depending on power conflicts and interests.²¹ According to Howard F. Stein, changes in these identity models result “from the struggles of the self and the system of relationships in which the self is embedded.”²² Even if a community tends to social order through homogenisation by creating social myths, discourse, and ideologies its ever-changing needs and interests call for new models to maintain its cohesion. Even in

¹⁹ These terms, along with the concepts of “race” and “ethnicity” have undergone many transformations and are still subjected to scholarly debate. For more on the historical changes of these concepts in cultural studies and in anthropology, see Hall, *The Fateful Triangle: Race, Ethnicity, Nation*; Hall, *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*; Hall, “The Question of Cultural Identity”; Viranjini Munasinghe, “Claims to Purity in Theory and Culture: Pitfalls and Promises,” *American Ethnologist* 33, no. 4 (Nov., 2006): 588–592; John Willinsky, “Chapter 5: Curriculum after Culture, Race, Nation,” *Counterpoints* 184, After Literacy: Essays (2001): 83–120; J. R. Kantor, “Anthropology, Race, Psychology, and Culture,” *American Anthropologist* 27, New Series, no. 2 (Apr., 1925): 267–283; Ana María Alonso, “The Politics of Space, Time and Substance: State Formation, Nationalism and Ethnicity,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 23, (1994): 379–405; Nancy D. Fortney, “The Anthropological Concept of Race,” *Journal of Black Studies* 8, no. 1 (Sep., 1977): 35–54; Regna Darnell, “The Anthropological Concept of Culture and the End of the Boasian Century,” *Social Analysis: The International Journal of Social and Cultural Practice* 41, no. 3 Culture at the End of the Boasian Century (November 1997): 42–54; Eugenia Shanklin, “Representations of Race and Racism in American Anthropology,” *Current Anthropology* 41, no. 1 (February 2000): 99–103; Edward J. McCaughan, “Race, Ethnicity, Nation, and Class within Theories Of Structure and Agency,” *Social Justice* 20, no. 1–2 (51–52) Rethinking Race (Spring–Summer 1993): 82–103; Clarence C. Gravlee and Elizabeth Sweet, “Race, Ethnicity, and Racism in Medical Anthropology, 1977–2002,” *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 22, New Series, no. 1 (Mar., 2008): 27–51; Mara Loveman, “Is ‘Race’ Essential?” *American Sociological Review* 64, no. 6 (Dec., 1999): 891–898; Scott MacEachern, “The Concept of Race in Contemporary Anthropology,” in *Race and Ethnicity*, ed. Raymond Scupin (Upper Saddle River: Pearson, 2012): 34–57; Yiorgos Anagnostou, “A critique of symbolic ethnicity: The ideology of choice?” *Ethnicities* 9, no. 1 (March 2009): 94–122; Chris Smaje, “Not Just a Social Construct: Theorising Race and Ethnicity,” *Sociology* 31, no. 2 (May 1997): 307–327; Hal B. Levine, “Reconstructing Ethnicity,” *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 5, no. 2 (Jun., 1999): 165–180.

²⁰ Peter Burke, *History and Social Theory* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), 60.

²¹ Willem Hofstee, “Family Matters: Community, Ethnicity, and Multiculturalism,” *Church History and Religious Culture* 89, no. 1–3 Religious Origins of Nations? The Christian Communities of the Middle East (2009): 55–60.

²² Howard F. Stein, “Ethnicity, Identity, and Ideology,” *The School Review* 83, no. 2 (Feb., 1975): 273.

the case of the Russian *émigré* animators, whose collective identity is considerably reduced in favour of the individual, the link to the nation is still present at different levels depending of the animators. One can therefore argue that the concept of nation is essential to identity. However, as these identities' structures lay on unstable ideological ground and fragile cultural assumptions ideological renegotiations become necessary for the survival of the identity model. A medium like animation offers a visual representation for these ideological systems. Animation and ideology are similar phenomena: they exist via images, and their preferred form is the story. Both are fictions or inventions, or rather, as Jean-Michel Frodon points out, "the articulation of a reality and a fiction, of a factual complex and a collective, imaginary 'work,' whose projection is recognized" by its members and by outsiders.²³ More than essentially a medium of entertainment, animation support the social norms. It can also resist such norms when the socio-political context allows it. It is thus both the expression of the imagined collective and personal identity.

In this thesis, I have argued that animated films expressed the national ethos of a specific group through fairytale structure and through design, offering an analysis of how ideology functions within animation as a tool contributing to the construction of the collective identity of a nation. The national ethos is formed by ideology and responds to different socio-political and cultural contexts. For this reason, I examined three different locations—the American dream, Soviet socialism, and a Russian diasporic ethos in France—to see how ideology and the imaginary concept of the national collective are produced and supported in a medium like animation. By analysing animated films in relation to socio-political and cultural changes, I sought clear examples of national construction in animated films.

²³ Jean-Michel Frodon, *La Projection nationale: Cinéma et nation* (Paris: Ed. Odile Jacob, 1998), 19. Cited in Hewitt, *Remembering the Occupation in French Film*, 6.

The results were conclusive but they have shown that ideology and the nation are concepts that are much more complex than what was expected as they sometimes allow a certain degree of space for individual identity. While researchers have demonstrated with success that the concept of nation is an imaginary construction of the collective, to my knowledge they have not taken in consideration the place that individual identity takes within the collective. It seems however, that the collective is built upon several elements—individual identity, politics, ethnicity, social reality, economical context—that are all interwoven and are active participatory aspects of the collective identity. Furthermore, my thesis brings forward the way the nation is expressed on the cultural level. The role of ideology as a social structural factor has been addressed by scholars such as Geertz. However, none have looked at what ideology can express (the national ethos) and how it is expressed (through the design and narrative of animated films). My thesis shows that these theoretical concepts should be problematised, questioned, or even challenged because they are much more complex than they appear. In some contexts, for example, one witnesses multiple ideologies and numerous national ethos, whose very existence depends on the type of society in which they evolve. The presence of multiple collective identities is not entirely surprising as counter-cultures and sub-cultures generally develop naturally within the same collective if the socio-political context allows it. Finding sub-culture within animators of the former USSR under Stalin for example, is much more difficult as the totalitarian context repressed it. Certainly, it does not mean that these sub-cultures did not exist during the Stalinist era. But finding traces of such cultural group remains a challenge for the researcher.

Researching the Russian *émigré* animators proved to be equally challenging as only a few films are available to the general public and very little information about their private life has been published. Therefore, the results that this thesis shows are interesting but not completely satisfying. The figure of Bohdan Zoubowitch was especially difficult to investigate and future research

trying to locate his films, his wife, or his friends would be useful understanding Zoubowitch's personality and vision of the world. More personal information about the Russian *émigré* animators might also show if individuals they worked with were expelled from their group for rejecting the structure these artists proposed. Furthermore, finding other examples of Russian *émigré* animators in France would certainly allow a clearer social structure on which these artists evolved to be addressed. Perhaps, extending the research to other regions of France would allow for the inclusion of more animators of Russian origin.

These results could be developed and extended in the future as this thesis is limited in its structure. Because of the length of this thesis, my research had to be restricted to a particular period of time and a certain style of animation. It would be interesting to see how different styles such as claymation or CGI are used to express ideological systems. Furthermore, researchers interested in phenomenology will not find the emotional responses (also impregnated with their own cultural system of belief) from the audience or the audiences' opinion regarding these animated film discussed in this thesis. Unfortunately, the time and space span of the films I choose are too far back in time and finding an audience that could respond exactly as one from the United-States, the Soviet Union, and of France of the 1930s is impossible.

This thesis opens-up several possibilities for further study. For example, the role of animation in shaping our contemporary society through ideological framework is particularly rich in research possibility. In an extensively globalised world, one could investigate if animation still articulates the ideological framework of a national ethos or if the concept of nation is now *passé*. Furthermore, with the extensive blurring of national borders and the access to the world both physically and digitally one wonders if contemporary audiences still connect with the concept of nation and the values carried in it, and, if that is the case, how is the national ethos expressed aesthetically?

The affect of new technologies on the audience is equally rich in research possibility. The animated films this thesis surveyed were initially presented in a controlled space-time continuum—the theatre. However, new technologies have developed—3D where the diegetic space invades the viewer’s space or 4D, another technology, which physical effects such as seat movement, smoke and rain effects, or scent have been added to films’ projections—further increase the audience’s perception of the diegetic space as real. Finally, Wii technology projects the audience within the diegetic animated space through the use of an avatar.²⁴ This last technique is mostly present in video games. Further research in the field of animation and identity, could address the ways in which these new technologies affect the national ethos and the sense of collective identity, if the perceived values presented on screen change because of these technologies and if the imaginary collective is enhanced or not by these new visual ways. In addition, presently, the growth of CGI technology increased the realism of the animated image to a point where the live-action and animated images become difficult to differentiate, a situation which did not exist in the type of animation presented in this thesis. One also wonders if the national ethos becomes more believable in CGI films than in drawn animated films.

Media has never been more present than in our twenty-first century society and the normal human being is completely immersed in a world overloaded by images. Mass media, such as animation, has become our modern rhetoric, and

²⁴An avatar is an icon or drawn character representing a person in computer games, video games, Internet platforms, etc. The avatar does not necessarily look like the person it represents, but remains an extension of its owner. Ian Bell, “How 4D Cinema works,” accessed July 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fLmrzC1VUW8>; Richard Verrier, “Are 4D Movies the Next Big Thing?” *The Sydney Morning Herald* (Sydney), Entertainment, July 12, 2012, accessed July 2016, <http://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/movies/are-4d-movies-the-next-big-thing-20120712-21xjs.html>. For more on the avatar, see Sandy Baldwin, *The Internet Unconscious: On the Subject of Electronic Literature* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015); Suzanne de Castell, “Mirror Images: Avatar Aesthetics and Self-Representation in Digital Games,” in *DYI Citizenship: Critical Making and Social Media*, ed. Matt Ratto, 213–222. (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2014); Dominic Power, *The Immersive Internet: Reflections on the Entangling of the Virtual With Society, Politics and the Economy* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

plays a prominent role in creating an alternative and imaginary reality through the ideological content it communicates. Wells demonstrates how animation influences our ways of seeing the world:

Animation and design have become the natural state of artifice that we exist within. Our every waking moment is bathed in its light. Aesthetically triggered semiotics systems sway our every judgement, our every decision. We are continually directed and manipulated, increasingly ceding control of our lives to an external confident authority of mood, colour, message and tone. Design, predicated in static or moving image forms, has been so deeply absorbed into the contemporary consciousness that it is hard to recognize the myriad ways in which it stimulates, challenges, pleasures and angers.²⁵

Media, including animation, are persuasive in their personal, political, economic, aesthetic, psychological, moral, ethical, and social message and leave no one unaffected. Tackling the ways in which ideology shapes the self and the collective is especially important as our own society is once more facing drastic socio-political changes: environmental problems, recession and economic decline, dictators in power, wars, mass migration, and terrorist attacks to name but a few. Understanding the social and cultural changes of a society is impossible without knowing the way media work as environments.²⁶ The study of animated films as structural discourse and ideological mechanism allows for a more thorough study of the society that produces and consumes these images.

²⁵ Wells and Hardstaff, 94.

²⁶ Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore, *The Medium is the Message* (Berkeley: Gingko Press, 1967), 26.

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Appendix

Letter from the Disney Studio to Miss Frances Brewer (1939).

“Disney, 1939: “Girls Are Not Considered for the Training School,” Animation Guild Blog, posted June 19, 2006, accessed September 2015, <http://animationguildblog.blogspot.ca/2006/06/disney-1939-girls-are-not-considered.html>.



WALT DISNEY PRODUCTIONS

3717 HYPERION AVENUE • HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA • CABLE ADDRESS: DISNEY

May 9, 1939

Miss Frances Brewer
4412 Ventura Canyon Avenue
Van Nuys, California

Dear Miss Brewer:

Your letter of some time ago has been turned over to the Inking and Painting Department for reply.

Women do not do any of the creative work in connection with preparing the cartoons for the screen, as that work is performed entirely by young men. For this reason girls are not considered for the training school.

To qualify for the only work open to women one must be well grounded in the use of pen and ink and also of water color. The work to be done consists of tracing the characters on clear celluloid sheets with India ink and filling in the tracings on the reverse side with paint according to directions.

In order to apply for a position as "Inker" or "Painter" it is necessary that one appear at the studio on a Tuesday morning between 9:30 and 11:30, bringing samples of pen and ink and water color work. We will be glad to talk with you further should you come in.

Yours very truly,

WALT DISNEY PRODUCTIONS

By: Mary F. Cleaver

Mary F. C.

MEC:HC

Modernism and Animation: A Presentation by Architect Frank Lloyd Wright

Didier Ghez, "Frank Lloyd Wright." Disney History blog. Posted December 14, 2006, accessed December 2011, <http://disneybooks.blogspot.ca/2006/12/on-february-25-1939-at-old-hyperion.html>.

WRIGHT:
(Cont.)

Russian mind instinctively possesses something which we have to learn and acquire - not it is taught by nature.

When they do these things it's just instinct with them. They are not very sophisticated. I went to Leningrad a year ago. The commissar picked me up and said my expenses and brought me over and didn't even let me pay my laundry bills or anything. They took the bills right out of my hand. They wouldn't let me pay a nickle for anything all the time I was there.

They are very generous and easy child-like - not child-like. We are childish when we get that way. They are child-like by nature.

It's a great social thing - that wielding of fifty-six nations like our states - only each one is a nation. There are fifty-six nations - not states - which form the United States of Russia. It is made up of colorful and amazing people. It is one of the wonders of the world.

They had twenty thousand workmen in Leningrad all these provinces in one meeting in the Lenin Theater. These brick-layers were all telling the architects what they thought was the best way to do it. They were very outspoken. They said, "All you think about is the size of the building. You don't think anything of the lives of the people. Why don't you learn the way the workers are laid? Why don't you learn the way the work is done on a building so you can make the plans for a building intelligently? Why don't you learn something about the lives of these people that live in these buildings?" I can't think of anything like that happening here.

WRIGHT: How did the workers react to that kind of thing?

WRIGHT: Oh yes. It was Shostakovich's music. You probably know some of his work.

WRIGHT: I know his things.

WRIGHT: I was regretting that you take picture music and illustrate it rather than doing something with music - having the two things made one. Haven't you got some guys who write the music? Even though it is crude and simple it would be good. You shouldn't make "Gloria de Leningrad" and these things which are not good music anyway. I don't care what Stokowski says - I wish he were here. He knows better. He's got some Russian blood in him himself. I can't believe he would imagine that you seriously are doing your best when you are merely illustrating pictorial music.

- BRITAIN:
(Cont.) In this film you must have seen perfect correlation between music and design. The whole thing is design - instinctive design, which is perfect design. There is no reason why you boys can't do that.
- EARLIER: We all have the desire to do that.
- BRITAIN: I'll bet that you entertain your audience less so one with this other stuff. Just take a drum with the "ton, ton, ton" and a blade at the top - line and a little sense of rhythm that is peculiar to the thing and a little sense of life and you've got it.
- Debusay made pictures. He degraded his form of art, which is music, to give a pictorial sense of something. That's not the great thing music can do. He made it entertaining and lovely.
- T. HEE: Do you find in Europe that there are a number of people who are not willing to accept modern architecture in the same way that are not willing to accept modern music?
- BRITAIN: It is just because they are ignorant because of their ignorance and stupid because of their ignorance. They don't know and they just can't see and why worry about it?
- T. HEE: Can't you educate by showing?
- BRITAIN: It's off education. Culture is what this country needs now. Culture brings something from the outside. Education takes something and tries to stick it on from the outside. Education tries to tell you and culture shows you. Best of all, show by being. If you can't do, show by what you can do. It's the only way that anything will ever come to the country. You can't get it over by the way of universities and schools. Think of trying to educate an architect in a university. Think of trying to educate you boys to do the special thing you're to do by sending you to school.
- You can only learn by doing - by getting out of the doing of it more and more fun and getting deeper and deeper into the thing that you wish to do, making it more and more the thing that gives you the most pleasure.
- T. HEE: There are a number of people who like the traditional.
- BRITAIN: Because they have never seen anything else, mostly. What they have seen else is usually pretty poor and doesn't stick on very well by comparison. Not being minded to take an interest in a thing, they pass it by and stick with what was. They are stupid people just like you. They are not our intelligent people - they are not the people of tomorrow - they are not the people

WEIGHT:
(cont.)

who are going to make exercises of honorum. They are simply baggage. We're carrying them along here as freight. They don't count really. A ship has ballast. You go up in a balloon and you have ballast. We've got a lot of this in this country - we've got more than we can lift maybe. I don't think it's so important. I never did. I've found out, having stuck to my guns for about 15 years, that they are wrong essentially. They really know nothing themselves - they really have nothing. I have yet to meet an architect who clung to tradition and who worked along that line. There's aician who really has little knowledge of anything he's doing. He likes it that way. It's easy. He uses it and he thinks that rest is not worth bothering about. We have these people and we'll always have them.

You don't see the results any more. You see the same thought, to be sure, but they haven't got so far as scraping the whole thing clean. Even your official buildings turned out by the government are not scraped clean at all. The thought hasn't changed yet. They can't change, but they can sense the movement and spirit of the time and get in the mood so far. You can't really get people born again. We've got to have a good many first class funerals in America before we get anything modern.

T. HEE:

I know a number of people who believe in having modern kitchens and bathrooms, and yet they wouldn't think of having modern bedrooms.

WEIGHT:

If you drive a modern car in front of a Colonial house, you insult either the car or the house everytime you do it.

T. HEE:

Yet they wouldn't go back to the old-fashioned bathroom.

WEIGHT:

They have to believe there are spiritual benefits from being one's self and we had by trying to be somebody else. It does something to you inside. It makes you none of a person when you see quite content to be your self then when you see trying to ape some other culture, time or period.

I went into the MacArthur's home the other day - Helen Hayes off the stage is just the same as on the stage. She loves the Victorian period and era and she has everything Victorian. Don't you tell, provided Helen could be happy if (and she is somebody - she's got great insides - she's a great person) if she had the culture now that would enable her to leave that era on the stage and go into a home which was Helen Hayes of the time and of the period, expressive and beautiful, wouldn't she be happier, a greater person, wouldn't she be living more truly and deeply? Would and be a finer thing, in other words? I think she would.

WRIGHT: That's the case we have for the genuine architecture. When we say "genuine architecture" we mean an architecture that more fully expresses our life - our desires - gives us a lighter and more splendid range of being ourselves. That's all it means.

You see, an artist is a great extrovert. He goes thru this period of introversion; then he becomes a great extrovert. He is able to see it - to build it or to do something with it. That's what makes him an artist. Until he can do that he isn't one.

No I don't think these people are so smart. I think they are missing an awful lot with their play-acting houses and their play-acting furnishings. They are all play-acting.

This made you're concerned with a play-acting critic, Miss your heart. Art is not play-acting in the first sense either. It's play-acting out of line - out of step in the wrong place.

When a man wants to live he doesn't want to play-act, does he?

T. HEE: There are a certain percentage who are romanticists.

WRIGHT: They are all romanticists. That's the capitalist system and romanticism.

T. HEE: They like the things that tend to bring back memories of the past. They like old-fashioned music...

WRIGHT: There will always be those people. They are dead people - they live in the past, not in the present or the future. They are gone. We should treat them tenderly and with consideration, and have the baskets ready.

T. HEE: There will always be that type of person. We have to try to appeal to the person who is like that.

WRIGHT: It is always nice to be kind. I don't think your efforts should center in that direction. If it does, we have no future for you and me. You aren't living in the past and have a future. It's over. But for a few men among us we would be living in the past. America wouldn't be going anywhere. We would be catfishing over and over again those memories.

I was glad to get to Williamsburg and look them up. I had many letters thanking me for what I did for Virginia. The editor was ingenious enough to take out Thomas Jefferson's diary and found his comments on the architecture of the restoration. It was most amusing. He said they were monstrousities. That they were a disgrace to the culture which they said they represented. By that time Tom himself had turned plastic and popped

Didier Ghez, "Frank Lloyd Wright." Disney History blog. Posted December 15, 2006, accessed December 2011, <http://disneybooks.blogspot.ca/2006/12/quite-few-of-you-seem-to-have-enjoyed.html>.

WRIGHT: up the whole business, so he was giving them hell for reasons just as valid as I might have.

(Cont.)

But he did build a fence - a single brick fence which showed he knew something about architecture and construction. If you were living today he would have shaken all of this stuff. He wouldn't tolerate anything but this modern point of view. I stand more nearly in Louis's shoes today than Delano or any of these capitalists. Take it from me.

But you fellows - there has never been anything like this - you've got a clean record. If you get it all mixed up with these sentimentalities, God help us. The more nearly you can strip the things you're doing clean, and establish this simple child-like correlation between things and make a child-like thing out of it and not get too sentimental about it, the better, I think.

There's one thing that bothers me in your productions, and I think people think the same about it - one can exorcise the senses quite with ingenuity. It's desirable. The moment you emphasize sensuality it becomes disagreeable. There is a touch of what I would call vulgarity that creeps into your films sometimes. I guess it's box office, and it gets a horse laugh from the worst element in the audience. I think you should be a little shy of that. Old Gray Head speaking.

ROSE: You once referred to "Sons of the Sea" as box office. Were there any examples of that thing you're talking about?

WRIGHT: When I was here before, I told Walt Disney that the introduction of the two condors was the thing that was, to me, the most remarkable thing of the film. It represented something greater than right now. Didn't they give him the prize in the east, and didn't they mention the fact of the two condors? What makes this? It's a thing that is to be seen.

ROSE: That was the well setup that was selected for the Metropolitan, wasn't it? (Marino agreed).

WRIGHT: I believe implicitly in the right-mindedness of the people. I have built 227 buildings, and they have all been experiments. I have found that everywhere the American business man is given a chance to choose between the right effect and a useless thing he will take the right thing. I think the American woman is the sure way. Of course, she is the exp, the cow, the constructer, and such sort likely to succeed to imaginative things than a man. But even she has pretty good sense concerning this thing we call the artistic.

So I believe that if you've got the thing on straight it will go home. I think after all we want those things

FRANK: to survive among us that have genuine character and virtue.

I think this education that you boys have probably been subjected to gets it all twisted for you. All this sentimentalizing over the colonial - the backward look. These colleges are all filled with Florida birds now. You know the story of the Florida birds, of course. Why not do it in the films. It would make a grand film.

ROSE: I don't know it.

FRANK: A little cousin of mine came in one day and said, "Cousin Frank, do you know why the Florida bird flies backward?" I said, "Hi, Richard, I don't." He said, "You are to say the bird flies backwards to keep the wind from his eyes." I repeated that, and he said, "Oh no. The Florida bird flies backwards because he doesn't give a damn where he's going, but he just wants to know where he has been." Wouldn't that make a great film?

The country needs films like that. You can do anything you damn please.

SEN: Everyone in this room has a different idea of how a thing is done, and you've got to sell 'em on your way. There are over 900 employees here, and everyone has to pass on a thing.

FRANK: That's wrong.

SEN: That's expressing individualism.

FRANK: They're fighting it. It's democracy. I believe in democracy. Democracy is in a sense a search for the rule by the majority and best. Get it from Carlyle - ask him. It's not every man for himself. It's a cooperative search for the best and for the right thing. When it ceases to do that you don't get results.

T. HUBB: That's what we're trying to do here. We haven't had any precedents to show us how to go.

FRANK: The thing you are in is as fresh as a dairy. Don't let it get bowled up with these sentimentalities. Tell Spokowski if he can't come in and write music for you that has the proper quality and appropriate to the thing you're doing you don't want him at all. Spokowski isn't running the show, is he? Put him in his spot.

SEN: He's running his end.

FRANK: There is no end - there's it. When you take music as one thing, your animation as another, your story as another thing, there you've got a division that's fatal right at the beginning. It's a damn shame for three men making these three the last of the only road to anything.

WRIGHT: you might call worth the name of art or worth the name of entertainment.

(cont.)

OTTO: The concert feature is an experiment. You have to start with something they know before you give them something completely new.

WRIGHT: That is talking down to your audience. I never did it in my life.

OTTO: You have to ease into this - you can't explode with it.

WRIGHT: Have you ever heard it?

OTTO: I think that if you had a man and cut the cuff off his trousers one week, he wouldn't be so sad as if you had cut off the whole knee. Then the next week you cut off the other cuff, and then the next week you cut it off to his knee, he would get used to it. That's my own personal feeling.

WRIGHT: I don't think it's like that. I think you have always got to work for an end in the fairly intelligent. You can make movies that won't count by the byside. But you can't depreciate your effort. I don't think you can.

you would be surprised (and I have been continually surprised) at the amount of intelligence possessed by people you wouldn't think had it. You would be surprised how almost-as-intelligent-as-we-are most people are. I have great faith in that.

Why have you got sudden blindness and today? It isn't an accident. Somebody started to do - somebody asserted the fact of the thing. It's soaking it's way all over the world. I'm no different from you. We're all alike. Our reactions would be very similar to almost anything. It takes a little character and guts and a stand-by to see it through. That's all.

People are very much, as people, like sheep. If you begin to turbotar and get them on the back and under to their idiosyncrasies you'll never get anywhere.

This commercialization of things - commercialization of everything. Do you know what you mean exactly when you say "commercialization"?

OTTO: Bringing it down to what most people like. You're just making it so that you'll find the biggest market for whatever you have.

WRIGHT: I think that's what's the matter with the country.

ROSE: It was once supposed that the public is paying our bills here. For that reason we have to consider what the public really wants.

WRIGHT: No. Because the public doesn't know what it wants. If the public is buying your bills it's entitled to have you stand up to the thing you do because you alone know - the public doesn't know.

I think you're going back on your public when you try to find out what the public wants and give it to them. No public knows. As compared to the fine thing they might have. They don't know what they miss. Show them that thing which they miss. Explode once or twice and see what the reactions are.

OTTO: Wouldn't we be missing something?

WRIGHT: No. Because we're all "let up" on the way the classics are good. That's good in the classic for us today to build - most of it, not all of it. Where it is concerned with principles, no. Principles never change and they never die. There are no periods and no ages.

All down the line there have been modern expressions of principle. It had the time; the time loved it and made it what it was. Isn't that so? Greek was modern, Roman was modern, Louis and all these periods were modern. When they were modern they were alive. People were getting something out of them.

All we've got is this old spiroch - these dishes of tripe handed to us. What's good in them? Only that in them which still reflects the principle of the thing done, which you could take and use to give us modernity today something of our life and time in the moment.

OTTO: In the life of humanity, the little time that has passed since Beethoven wrote his music and today is so short that you could still call it modern.

WRIGHT: If you're interpreting it, that's all right. But when you interpret music which is in itself not noble music... You're talking of Beethoven. I was talking about music that is already degraded music. If you take music which lives up to principle it is still modern - it will always be modern. That isn't what you're talking about.

You can't have modern music until we have new instruments to use. We can have a modern phase of that expression and this principle can find new expression.

Wagner came out of Beethoven. Wagner said, "I bow to God and Beethoven." Those were the only two he could take his hat off to. Out of Beethoven came Wagner. Out of Wagner can come something. This thing can go on indefinitely. How is it going to go on indefinitely? Now you can say, "See what Wagner went to." What did he go to?

- J. KEE: Remember when a certain automobile came out - the Chrysler Airflow?
- WRIGHT: In the best sense of the word - a hunk of.
- D. KEE: People didn't take to it.
- WRIGHT: It was no good. There was also the Ford, which is on the streets today. It might have been handled in such a way as to be a great success.
- T. KEE: You would say the Airflow was just a bad modern?
- WRIGHT: A bad, very bad modern. The principle was wrong. The backbone coming down the street.
- T. KEE: Do you think the Chrysler was more or less the one that led the way?
- WRIGHT: The Cord did and Chrysler followed. The Cord is not being made any more. (In answer to Professor's question.) Possibly Cord himself got tired of making money so slowly.
- Cord changed the whole principle of car design. I liked the principle of the front drive. I drove one of the first Cords in Wisconsin. Wherever I drove that car people would crowd around it...the boys, the men, the unlettered people saw in this thing something that they liked.
- I believe in concerning every fine thing you do. I don't believe you could miss if you got together a fine beautifully constructed thing with a decent story - if it had a real idea in it that clicked with life today - God, you couldn't stop.
- I. KEE: That car was not designed by the people. It was designed by engineers who wanted to give the people something. They didn't ask for that.
- WRIGHT: How could they ask for the Cord?
- (T. Kee becomes up streamlining.)
- I'm the original streamliner myself. Now the advertising experts are streamlining everything. The people like it, but did they ask for it?
- T. KEE: No, they didn't.
- WRIGHT: How did they get it? Some damn fool thought of it. I happen to be the boy who thought of it about 17 years ago and did it. I have drawings of cars - drawings of everything today - I have on record streamlined cars. A museum wants to buy them from me, but I won't sell them yet. I'm not yet dead.

Didier Ghez, "Frank Lloyd Wright." Disney History blog. Posted December 18, 2006, accessed December 2011, <http://disneybooks.blogspot.ca/2006/12/and-now-final-4-pages-of-frank-lloyd.html>.

WRIGHT: I wasn't conscious of the people asking for it. And you mustn't be here either. If you give them the right thing - quality - the people know quality when they see it - they know it the minute they see it. They look at anything they come up against. They might not be able to analyze it, but they hold to it and they respond to it.

We're a young nation - the only one except Russia. We have youth. That spirit of youth is susceptible to what we call truth - reality. The moment you let it go to seed you've got nothing. You've got only the husk and the thing itself is gone.

You have to have faith. You have to have faith in the right-mindedness of the people who are going to see what you do, and you can't be too damn sensitive if some damn fool don't see it. Many will. I realize the spot you're on, of course. You're got how many employees - eight hundred thousand or whatever it is - and they all have to eat - there's a big payroll to see. You're in the mire. You should really get fired by that so far as the production is concerned.

The American people wouldn't forgive you if you did it. The moment they feel you're trying to know-how on them they would desert you. The moment they caught you laying down what you felt to be the highest and best thing you've capable of doing to please them they wouldn't go to see what you did.

WRIGHT: They wouldn't like you if they caught you doing something for yourself. Chaplin's audience got him down.

WRIGHT: He wasn't himself. Just so long as Chaplin was himself he won. The moment he tried to get art-conscious and be something else, he lost. That's what I've been saying about Walt Disney.

WRIGHT: I don't believe we've ever played down consciously to the audience. Every once in a while we do something new and fresh, and we worry that it might be too strong. But everybody talks about it.

WRIGHT: You're right. Have your courage and your guts with you all the time, even if you don't see it Saturday night. You've got something in your hands that is immensely important to the future. You've got the moving picture right in your hands.

T. HEE: Regardless of MGM, Paramount, etc.?

WRIGHT: Yes. I think they have almost run their course.

ARMSTRONG: They are continually playing to box office.

WRIGHT: Yes - that's what kills it. They are spending millions of dollars to hold it up - but they can't do it because they have not been sincere. They put 10 writers on one story trying to make something out of it. They have faith in mass production. Instead of trusting one mind to do a fine thing and, respecting that, they have 10 writers on one story. Did you ever see anything finer than "Pygmalion"? Don't the people know it? You bet they know it. Why is it a fine thing? Because the mind that conceived it carried it through. We put it into effect. And do the people know it? You bet they know it. But do the pants pressers out here know it? Not yet. They couldn't afford to admit it if they did know it. Just for that they're going to die.

REPLIFIER: When George Bernard Shaw received the Academy Award for writing he said, "Hollywood has looked us to Olympus, and Olympus has smiled in its face."

WRIGHT: Don't let this idea "box office" and this idea of what pleases the people bother you. Concern yourself with the best and finest thing. If God, that you know and do it to the top and give it to them to the hilt and you'll go places and you'll never lose.

If the moving picture industry, squibed by Paramount and MGM and Fox had had that faith in life, and had that faith in the American people the cinema wouldn't be going down and out now. You're going up. That's what makes the difference.

You've had too much commercialization of the wrong spirit in the wrong way. The industry is prostrate with it, sporadically and otherwise, and now it's going to be the same in the entertainment field for pretty much the same reason I believe.

HARLINE: I've been trying to get those colored symphonies ...

WRIGHT: The symphonies are out up to what they can do. When he decides a symphony he too loses his child-like heart, and becomes self-conscious. It's a very dangerous thing.

HARLINE: Did you hear Prokofiev's new music?

WRIGHT: I haven't heard it. Stravinski could do that, or couldn't he? But you could do it yourself - that's the point. Simply by not trying to be symphonic or too damned artistic.

Whenever you're playing best together - having fun and putting in the music where it belongs in the picture - getting its effect - you ring the bell - that's what is going to make your success. Where you're trying to be artistic and thinking of the fellow in front and

- WRIGHT: Trying to please him you're going to lose out. I'll bet my head on it. I know from my own experience, it's a veteran sitting here talking to you. I've been there.
- T. HUR: Most of us do it because we like it ourself. That's the reason why we try to sell others on the piece of business.
- WRIGHT: Do you have to try to sell it there?
- T. HUR: Other people don't see it the way you do. Like Ben said before - they all pass on it. Consequently out of that there will be some ideas that are there and others have gone the way of all flesh.
- WRIGHT: Hit line - have a center line and stick to it. You'll find gradually all this will draw in together and go along.
- I have 36 boys working with me. They are all more or less rebellious - there are a few renegades - they are all volunteers. I have never asked a boy to work with me. I never turn over my hand - I never asked a friend to say a word for me in connection with a piece of work - I know if I went after a thing I could handle it my way. These boys all come as volunteers into this work. We have no arguments - we have very few differences. They work like hell, just as I do. I don't ask any one of them to do anything that I myself wouldn't do. I don't work as hard as I used to.
- I think that spirit is here too. It should be. When there get to be too many differences of feeling it's time to go arrange things a little. If you think you know of about it, you can start a thing of your own.
- SWETA: In the old days a fellow could go ahead and try to figure out a story, do the animation, and follow all through. Now-a-days there are too many strings in the making of the picture. We're not all thoroughly acquainted with music - with story construction, etc.
- WRIGHT: That's the danger. Then here comes that correlation - from Walt Disney himself. You have to have that center-that leader - just as I am with my boys.
- (See "Screener's Appearance.")
- WRIGHT: The music is all sentimental, right from the beginning. It's all off key from the beginning. There's something wrong about the whole thing.
- (See "Finocchio" - Sequence 11).
- WRIGHT: There's a lot of good stuff in there. Why can't you take that sound and make it into music. It doesn't give

WRIGHT:
(1964.)

much to make it almost music. I don't want that
sentimental music. You can do it. It's great stuff.

I do like it better than "Spencer's Apprentice."
I think this is not nearly it. The other is just
an attempt to take picture music and make a picture
to fit the picture music.

Program of American Coloured Films (Animated Films) Presented at the Moscow Film Festival in 1935.

Didier Ghez, "Amerikanskije Tsvetnye fil'my. Program of the Moscow Film Festival Leningrad, 1935." Disney History blog. Posted March 12, 2007, accessed December 2011, <http://disneybooks.blogspot.ca/2007/03/russell-merritts-and-j.html>.



I
«ТРИ МАЛЕНЬКИХ ПОРОСЕНКА»

II
«СТРАННЫЕ ПИГМЕИЦЫ»

III
«МИККИ-ДИРИЖЕР»

Центральная мультипликация на серии «Мульти-анимация»
производства американской фирмы «Юнайтед Артист» —
Корпорация

Ремиссер и художник

УОЛТ ДИСНЕЙ

звучащий на эти мульти — фильм на 1-м советском кино
фестивале третьей премии.

IV

«КУКАРАЧА»

цветной фильм в 3-х частях.

Производство Рудин-Пикчурс (Америка)

Ремиссер Ллойд Коркэн.

В главных ролях: Царита — Стеффи Дюма.

Павчо — Луи Альберто

Мартиниц — Лолэ Дасила. —

Все фильмы сняты по сюжету третьей серии «Три поросенка»



Когда на экранах появляются раскрасившие в разные цвета
картинки — «Сидди Сидформел» и «Маленький Мур» — это кино
каждому зрителю нового ягала и бурно понравится.

«Маленький Мур» — весьма полюбившаяся советскому зрителю
маленькая и шустрая, с толстой кожей и морщинками и «Сидди
Сидформел» — «такие симпатичные» — пользуются огромной
популярностью на Западе.

88 страниц повествуют о замечательных (иногда мулатов)
интересных (иногда смешных) звуковых фильмах талантливого
американского художника Уолта Диснея, в которых вместе
созданы все виды искусства — живопись, музыка, танец.

На первом советском кинофестивале в Москве картинка
Диснея — «Три поросенка» и «Странные пигмеицы» — были
звездой: большие и много заслуженных зрителей и подарком
третьей премии.

Особенные заслуги мультипликационной Диснея — раскраска,
дизайнер и мультики. На протяжении не только «Три поросенка»,
но и последующие картины — «Сидди Сидформел», «Маленький Мур»
и «Странные пигмеицы» — все участвуют в общем успехе.

Фильмы не только содержатся, все они — легкие, забавные,
веселые, интересные, замечательные — отчасти, конечно, и
интересные.

зачасту и безответственно, и курьезно, и в содружестве
вопросов буржуазного мира. Но блестящая техника движения
режиссуры, замечательная точность композиции звука и лирико-
варьябельные краски — все это делает фильмы Дисней уникаль-
но кинематографическими.

Студия Дисней — это своеобразная фабрика с очень сложным
производством. На 8—10 тысяч отдельных рисунков нужно
затратить около 6—8 миллионов долларов. Процесс изготовления
каждой такой карты очень сложный и разбивается на три периода.

Первый — это процесс создания эскизов. Дисней со своим
содружественным художником и художницами создает каждую кар-
тинку, отдаленные гротески и полуживых, в результате чего полу-
чается обширный материал, который своим разнообразием обеспе-
чивает основу.

Затем начинается второй период — работа по композиции.
Нужно добиться полной композиции (детализации) картин
и движения ее звуков, затиснуть диалог, музыку, звуки. Здесь
уже режиссером является сам Дисней. При помощи аниматор-
методов он создает за тек, чтобы персонажи выполнялись
в строго определенное время. Все звуки и музыка аниматорам
дают при помощи музыкальных инструментов.

Третий период — процесс рисования — самый сложный
и длительный. Из множества рисунков выбирает для фильма
художник. Она делает это и выстраивается в кадры —
делает, ищет, обдумывает работу над каждым.

Рисунки переводятся на целлулоид, раскрашиваются и поме-
щаются в слайсы. Изображения, которые мы видим на экране,
вышли из 4 дюймовой. Но целлулоидный фильм показывается

размерами с действительные — вальсера фигуранты, садистская
сестра и др. Из комбинации рисунков на перфорированном фоне
образуются приподнятые картины. Чтобы дать иллюзию дви-
жения, эти рисунки последовательно сменяются друг от друга.

Преимущество этих картин требует много времени и боль-
ших затрат. Так, например, картина «Три маленьких поросенка»
длится 15 минут и состоит свыше 2 миллионов кадров.

Студия Дисней выпускает ежегодно до 20 фильмов, сто-
имость которых составляет 15 миллионов долларов. Несмотря на
небольшую затрату и значительный расход пленки (при
съемке целлулоидной пленки приходится затрачивать пленку
в три раза больше, нежели при обычной) — фильмами Дисней
дадут очень большой доход.



Любовь к биографии Дисней — возделала лаванды — что, следовательно, зерно — Микки Маус.

Сын бедного фермера, он пробыл суровую школу жизни. Боязливо, когда торжественными глазами гляделась для мальчика да не единственными источником существования.

В 1923 году окончательней Уолт Дисней приехал в Голливуд. С собой он привез опыт с друзьями, один мушкетерами в чужие времена.

В первом чужием лагере, куда он привез его, Уолт Дисней начал себе студию. Очень быстро его «Disney Mouse» завоевала широкую популярность и начала ему приносить прибыль.

Оказавшись с первыми средствами, Дисней начал снимать кино. Дисней пришел к выводу, что желательнее снимать кино, он делает сама мультипликация более эффективна, яркая и фантастичнее, но он столкнулся с огромнейшей американской охрой к издательскому делу, отсюда вытекало финансировать производство цветных картин.

В конце 1937 года Дисней выпустил свой первый фильм «Девята и джунгли». Но настоящий успех и славу принес ему его мультипликация «Три маленьких поросенка».

На сцене короткометражных мультипликационных фильмов не была такого огромного художественного и материального успеха, как «Три поросенка». Голливудская индустрия пробовала побудить ряд фирм заняться делом кино Уолт Дисней, но в итоге успеха достигли с компанией «Телентор» — так как в результате кино постановки была мушкетерами.

Цветные фильмы не он заканчивается на один класс мультфильмов, а постепенно является мерка к мировой картинке. «Микки Маус» — один из создателей цветных картин, поставил американским режиссером Ллойд Корриганом, содержит в себе пять лаванды изредка художественного фильма.

В основу создания картин положены народный танец. Но основное отличие не в его оформлении, а в художественной гамме красок и тончайших переходах и оттенках.

Зритель видит на экране не «картинку», а живых персонажей людей, естественною окраску лица, одежды, предметов.

Все эти элементы, которые входят составной частью, являются последние достигнутым способом цветной съемки «Телентор», создательного духа американских инженеров Терри Т. Кэмпбелл и Диниэль Фрэнк Коэнштейн и составляет секрет изобретения.

У нас в СССР в области цветного кино работает целый ряд крупных специалистов и режиссеров (Александров, Тагер, Бил, Киселов, Профимов и др.). Нам удалось увидеть видеофильмы только по американскому документальному кино.

В результате достигнутый в области работы цветных фильмов и кино-режиссеров в области цветного кино, пока здесь первая экспериментальная картина — «Мушкетеры».

В настоящее время, в пролетарские квартиры боляла веревкой художественная цветная картина «Соловей-соловейчик» (художник Н. Эрн) и ряд экспериментальных короткометражных фильмов.

Советское кино имеет большие достоинства. Оно позволило увидеть миру свою мощь, подняло настроение, оно освободило миллионы неуспокоенных, сонливых и плачущих в измученные страны, возвысило кино технику и искусственно создает зрителя и красочно новой формой.

Краткое содержание картины

ТРИ МАЛЕНЬКИХ ПОРОСЕНКА

Жили три маленьких поросенка. Двое из них были очень веселыми и игривыми, а третий — самый и грустный.

Перестало у них жить в доме, и они ушли. Остался поросенок соорудил себе домик из соломы, другой — из палочек и прутиков.

Когда же подошла злая ведьма-козодоица, она отпугнулась с мужской и такими в своем чуждом брату. Она построила его из палочек своего маленького домика. Он убеждал последние жаркие и отпугивала прийти у себя в домик в палочку. Он сообщил им, что домики заменят постройки дома, чтобы избежать себя от ведьмы. Это задание было исполнено детьми и пеленкой первой «кто боится грядкого богатого поля».

В то время как она вырвала и сжег, испуганно побегла старый свин и искала их по домам. Среди измучен он разругал старинный домик. Маленький поросенок спускал в пещеру и помыслил к своему брату. Брок погнался за ним в свою маленькую домику, которую поросенок. Она поросенок погнался в своем, зрелищную брату. Счастливые тем, что спаслись, они начали играть и танцевать.

Вокс пытался пригласить в домик под видом зеркала, что старую разбитую прелесть, но это ему не удалось. Тогда он пошел на крышу и через дырку в стене свин спускался вниз.



Маленькие поросенки ушли. Двое из них и маленькая свинья в котле, куда свин и ушла. Он плавно облетел, который заглянул обратно в домик в котле и убежал, промолвил от блан.

Так три маленьких поросенка спаслись от старинного страшного волка.

Странные пингины



В холодной Антарктике живут пингины — Питер и Пола, хорошие друзья друг к другу.

Питер учится у Пола всевозможным морозным играм. Пола ищет свой хвост, как и Питер, потому что пингины одеваются таким образом. Это защищает их от мороза. Питер радостно играет и ныряет по льду в снегу и плавают в проруби, где водятся маленькие рыбки, тресковые и сельдь. Питер ныряет в воду за ледяными и рыбными пузырями. Питер ловит рыбу в проруби, но в проруби не получается. Питер ловит рыбу в проруби, но в проруби не получается. Питер ловит рыбу в проруби, но в проруби не получается.

Пола возмущена из-за этого, но ее мнение, конечно, не имеет значения. Она сердито улетает от него и отныне живет на льдине.

В этот вечер она возвращается домой и слышит стон Питера.

Питер страдает из-за своей борьбы Питер страдает Пола и становится снова ее другом.

„НУНАРАЧА“

Молодая девушка Черная нашла в альбомного танца Пола, которого приглашает на танец в крупнейший столичный театр. Пола хочет сдружиться с ней, но она отказывается, но директор не соглашается дать ей согласие, и Пола ее отталкивает.

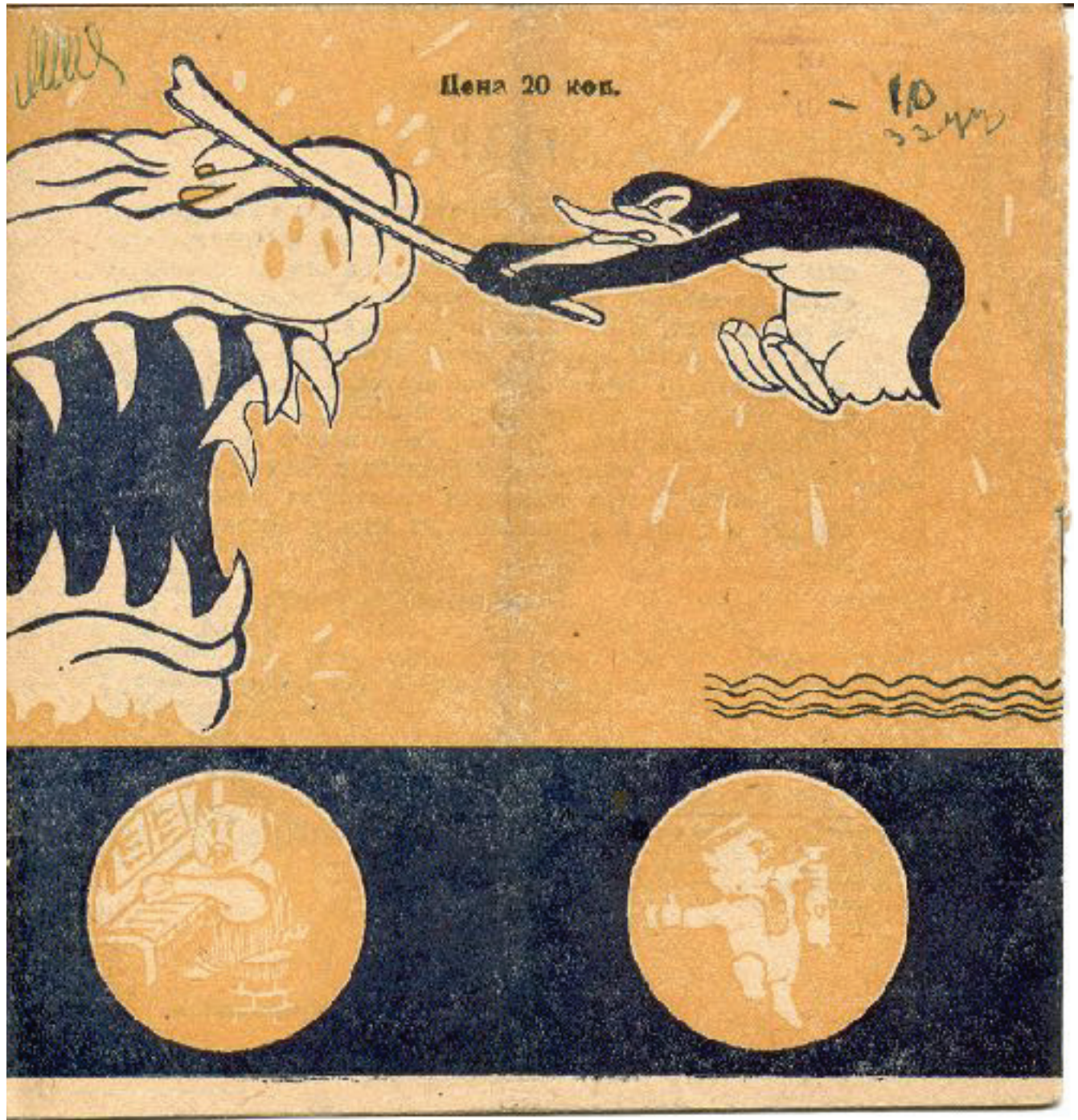
Оскорбленная девушка жалеет пошевелить Пола, но она просит у директора свое искусство, просит его и это снова приводит к спорной расправе „Нунарача“.

Возмущенный Пола бросает свою новую подружку и возвращается к своей старой подружке с Черной.

Директор театра похвалил блестящую исполнительницу песен и танца и предлагает ей вместе ехать на гастроли.



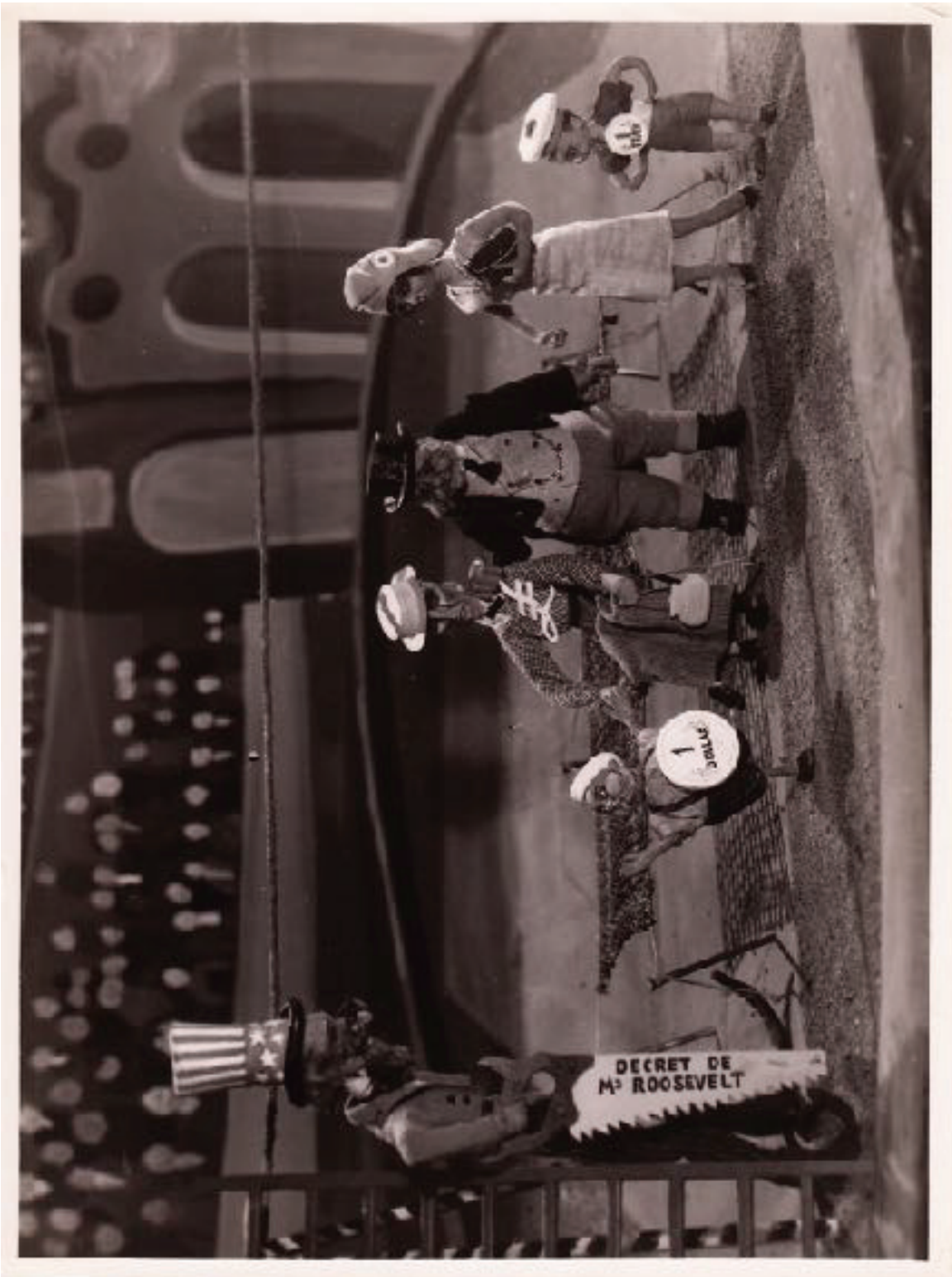
Рисунки выполнены по рисункам Л. С. Соловьева. Текст написан А. С. Соловьевым. Издательство „Детская литература“ Москва, 1955 г.



Photographs of an Unknown Film by Bogdan Zoubowitch. Personal Collection of the Author.







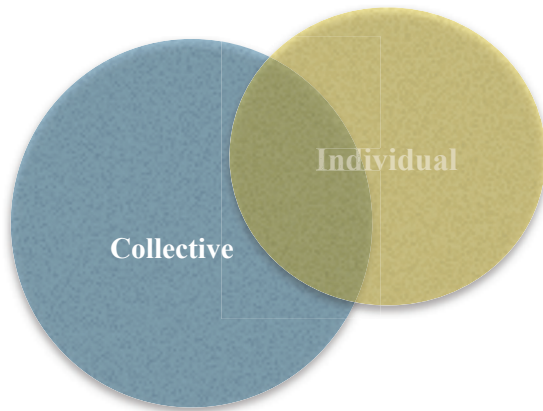


List of the Known Productions by Bogdan Zoubowitch.

| Film | Director | Year | Studio | Source of information |
|---|---|-----------------------------------|--|--|
| <i>Le Tango des Chats</i> | Bogdan Zoubowitch | N/A | N/A | Martin and Martin |
| <i>Crème Eclipse: Cirage à la cire: Le nègre rêvait...</i> | Bob Zoubowitch | 1932? | N/A | Centre National de Cinématographie (CNC) |
| <i>Max et la mouche</i> | Wow et Zitch | 1932 | N/A | CNC |
| <i>Histoire sans paroles: À l'est rien de nouveau</i> | Bob Zoubowitch | 1934 | N/A | CNC |
| <i>Michka</i> | Bob Zoubowitch | 1935? | N/A | CNC |
| <i>J'ai la vie dure</i> | Georges Clerc, Bob Zoubowitch | 1937? | Les Films Pierre Rémont | CNC |
| <i>Symphonie de Minuit (Poupées Swing, Max et le mouche)</i> | Bob Zoubowitch | 1941 | Films Michel Gascoin | CNC |
| <i>Au clair de la lune</i> | Bob Zoubowitch | 1944 | Studio d'Art Cinématographique | CNC |
| <i>Le briquet magique</i> | Bob Zoubowitch | Filmed in 1944; completed in 1946 | Magic Films Production; Studio d'Art Cinématographique | CNC |
| <i>Le Réveil de Mishka (Mishka)</i> (Shorter version of Zoubowitch's earlier film) | Carlos Vasseur; Paul Bianchi (Zoubowitch is not credited.) | 1946? | Consortium de Production de Films (Paris) | CNC |
| <i>Le messenger de l'hiver (Le messenger d'hiver or Les petits ours s'endorment jusqu'au printemps)</i> | Bob Zoubowitch | 1959 | Lux Films | Boutique Boulevard du Ciné |

Individual and Collective Identity

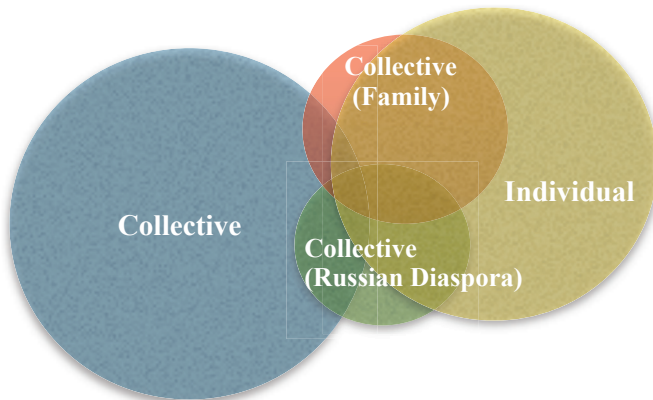
The American Dream



Soviet Socialism under Stalin

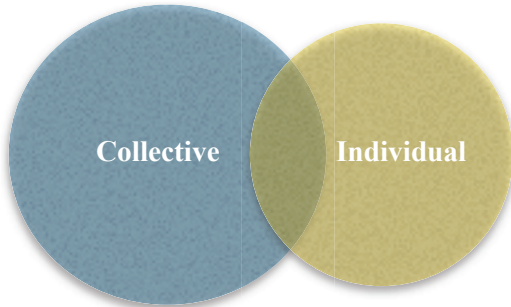


Russian *Émigré* Diaspora



Soviet Individual and Collective Identity

Imperial Russia



Bolshevism



Soviet Socialism under Stalin



Soviet Socialism after Stalin's death

