

RUSSIA'S PAST AND PRESENT IN ANIMATED CARTOONS:

A SWAY SPACE GEOGRAPHY OF AFFECT IN FILM-WATCHING

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ABSTRACT

Over the last decade, the urgency Russians have felt to distance themselves from their Soviet past has diminished, and cultural materials referencing that period have become popular. Film and animated film in Russia has followed the same trend, although analyses of Russian film have remained representational. This paper will use Russian animated films as a clearcut example to spur a theoretical innovation in non-representational theory. I will show how affect creates a virtual space among the viewer and the film, producing a geography that can push beyond the representational binaries of past and present. A variety of moments from Russian animated films will enrich this space, showing how it makes a Soviet culture possible in the present day.

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INTRODUCTION

RUSSIAN FILM ANALYSIS TODAY

Sometime around the turn of the millennium, Russians began to turn a more positive eye on their Soviet past. The post-Soviet present no longer needed to be kept exclusive from Soviet traditions. This transition is visible in a number of media, as “the Postmodernist recycling of Socialist Realist models and myths represents one of the most distinctive trends in Russian mass culture over the last five years” (Lipovetsky 2004, 357). This trend is visible in Russian film of various genres from TV crime series (Prokhorova 2003) to blockbusters (Larson 2003). Analyses of this trend are usually interested in the status of Soviet ideology (Lipovetsky 2004, Avrutin 1999), Post-modernity, and simulacra (Lipovetsky 2004). Meanwhile, typologies of post-Soviet culture---dealing with male bonding, westernization, crime, and homemade heroes in an arbitrary and unjust ‘society’ (Beumers 2009, Larson 2003)---have been developing simultaneously. Imagery from an abandoned past has also returned to Russian animated film, but it has not seen any analysis.

Both this trend and its analyses are treated largely through the eyes of symbolic analysis, understanding the films as texts that represent interpretations of Russian reality. Representational analyses may assume that a film is an honest depiction of reality (as close as possible), and use film as a way to digest and understand the conditions of living in a particular place and time. Or they are interested in the representation itself, the people and powers behind it, and the biases or resistances it contains; they may ask how the ‘reality’ pictured was created and why it was created in that way.

As a result, our understanding of post-Soviet culture is one of representational logics. For example, Prokhorova (2003) says, “Post-Soviet crime series [...] function as both a mirror of the fragmented social life and a testing ground for a new identity discourse” (524). This is only part of the story. People do make and watch films in this mode. But representational approaches introduce two problems. First, representational logics operate on ‘rational’ rules that are assumed to be universally applicable, even though they aren’t. One of these logics---the exclusivity of supposed opposites like Soviet and post-Soviet culture---has become a barrier to understanding culture in post-Soviet Russia today. A second problem is related to the nature of film itself. Representational analysis concentrates on only one aspect of film practices: that of consciously seeing oneself in the mirror, considering what that means, and participating in a larger conversation. But people experience films in time and space in many less thoughtful ways. What makes film-watching indescribable, enthralling, and unique among other arts is missing here.

MY PROJECT

I draw on two areas of thought which emphasize non-representational, bodily, and spatial understandings of film to address my concerns with representational approaches to contemporary Russian film. I draw first from film geography and discussions of the spatiality of film. I then bring in current thought on affect for the non-cognitive and bodily aspects of film watching. Playing these two threads off each other, I propose a new spatialized theory of film-watching that I call *sway space*. It is based on the flows of affect between the bodies of the film and viewer(s). Bodies and affective flows generate a virtual space into which they also enact

geographies and relations. This space is meant to enfold the body as a spatial actor in film with the idea that it will resolve problems presented by representational analyses of post-Soviet art. In particular, I find that sway space supports a vision of the post-Soviet present that is easily Soviet as well.

I have chosen to use post-Soviet animation as context for my thought. My contribution does not hinge particularly on the films I have chosen. It actually contributes to the mundane events of film-watching in many places with many different kinds of films. I chose Russian film in general because it provides a clear demonstration of the failure of representational approaches to film. I chose animation specifically because it has not been included in discussions of Russian film identity and offers a uniquely diverse and non-representational collection of films.

Since my contribution is primarily theoretical, I devote two middle chapters to current literature and my theory of sway space. I start however with an introduction to Russian animation and a digestion of Russian film analysis today to ground my discussion. I end with a short conversation about methods and a brief demonstration of geographies suggested by sway space in contemporary Russian animated film. I analyze four films made in the last six years, all of which clearly exhibit Soviet references or characteristics to learn about the (post-)Soviet present. I also analyze one other film made earlier for its surprisingly interesting sway space geography.

RUSSIA'S PRESENT IN FILM AND ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

Representational analyses depend on many logics, but a primary one is the mutual exclusion of opposites. They assume that their material is organized in binary oppositions, where there is no middle ground between opposites, and opposites cannot occur at the same time. There are in fact many examples when a culture will divide something into two, and representationally establish a clear distinction between the two. Often this is accompanied by a clear power and moral differential between the two parts: good/bad, man/woman, strong/weak, self/other, and so forth. While such binaries explain a lot about society, they do not apply to all situations. Representational analysis is a powerful way to understand society, but it can be applied to things that are not actually binaries, and make them look binary even when they aren't. In the case of Russian film, a binary between Soviet and post-Soviet was constructed after the fall of the Soviet Union. That binary is now being dismantled, but representational approaches are unable to address this change because of their reliance on binary logic. I begin with a history and discussion of Russian animated film, and then investigate how representational analysis is insufficient for my project.

RUSSIAN ANIMATED FILM

A BRIEF HISTORY

The recent history of Russian animated film contains an iconic period in the 1970s, a distinct distancing from that period during perestroika and the 1990s, and a return to imagery from that period in the 2000s. My goal is not to provide a representational analysis of this history; instead I will provide some historical context for these developments particular to animation. I think a representational analysis, while revealing more concretely the break I'm hinging my argument around, would ultimately construct a false picture that goes against the point of this thesis. The break necessary for my argument is more present in analyses of films than in the films themselves, and it is in the analyses that it is causing problems. I follow my introduction to Russian animated film with a discussion of the content of broader Russian representational film analysis.

Russian animated film experienced a renaissance in the late 1960s leading to a powerful collection of work in the 1970s. Animators trained under Khrushchev's "thaw" and influenced by Italian neorealism began their careers. They worked to move beyond Disney's significant influence on Soviet animation and create animation more specific to Russia and the Soviet experience (MacFadyen 2005). SoyuzMultFilm, the primary animation studio in the Union, created a treasury of films for children¹ as well as a number of more critically and socially engaged films (also appropriate for children),² many of which are still popular today. This tradition is probably most prominently figured by director Yuri Norshtein, whose films have garnered immense popularity at home and significant attention and awards abroad. Khrjanovsky and Khrjanovsky are also important figures from this time.

The momentum of this period carried into the early 80s, when perestroika and the instability of the nineties changed animation again. Films and their critiques became biting, audiences moved their attention to new Western imports, and Soviet distribution and funding institutions disappeared (Beumers 2009). Film production dropped and the rights to Soviet animated films became mired in legal disputes. The imagery and ideas of the 1970s went dormant as Soviet things became a prominent other for Russians engaged in constructing a new society. Directors like Bronzvit, Maksimov, Shorina, and Bardin made films characteristic of this time (and still do). But in the 2000s new films being made by an increasingly active industry started reusing styles, imagery, approaches, values and stories from the 1970s.

Russians today do not need to cite their past. Many filmmakers choose to make films solely about the present.³ But the films I will analyze at the end of this thesis are definitively rooted in a Soviet past. *The Petrel* (2004) cites the Soviet classroom in a post-Soviet context. *Smeshariki: Without Anyone*

¹ Such as: *Malysh and Karlson* (1968, 1970), *Winnie the Pooh* (1969, 1971, 1972), *38 Parrots* (1976-1979, 1985, 1991), *The Jolly Merry-Go-Round* (since 1969), *Boniface's Holiday* (1965), *Just You Wait* (since 1969), *Crocodile Gena* (1969) and *Cheburashka* (1971).

² For example: *Island* (1973) *The Bremen Musicians* (1969), *Tale of Tales* (1979), and *Man in a Frame* (1966).

³ To name just a few: *Don't Forget* (2008), *I like Birds* (2007), *KJFG#5* (2007), *Change* (2008), *No One's Home* (2008), *How Bunny Didn't Change into Anyone* (2008), *City* (2005), *Careful, the Doors are Opening* (2005), *About Me* (2005), *The Evolution of Petr Sentsov* (2005)

(2008) is a sincere remake of Norshtein's *Hedgehog in the Fog* (1975), while *The Tree of Childhood* (2009) uses similar artistic styling as Norshtein's generation. *The King Forgets* (2006) is an idealistic student graduation film that follows on the traditions of *Contact* (1978), *How the Lion and the Turtle Sang a Song* (1974) and *the Bremen Musicians* (1969). Despite their references to the past, these films are importantly part of today. These films are either award winning (*The Tree of Childhood*), popular among Russians today (*The Petrel*, *Smeshariki: Without Anyone*), or from a new generation of filmmakers (*The King Forgets*). *Smeshariki: Without Anyone* is part of the only film project that reaches Russian television audiences regularly enough today to have become a household word like the films of the 1970s. It is also being exported to Germany and the US.⁴

These films and this history cross a distinct historical divide. The fall of the Soviet Union meant that life became unrecognizable: institutions, habits, careers, references, values ... they all changed. How could the past remain relevant with these changes? How could films that reconstruct such a different world be meaningful to audiences today? These are questions that representational analyses have answered looking at feature films. First I will explain in more detail why I'm joining this conversation studying Russian animation instead of feature films. Then I will delve into the available representational analyses of Russian feature films.

WHY RUSSIAN ANIMATION?

I've chosen Russian animation for several reasons. Russian animation is not studied. Animation featured prominently in Soviet culture, but only one book and one article address it in American academic discourse.⁵ There is no work on post-Soviet Russian animation. It is a large body of film work in Russia today; the animation industry was producing on average a hundred films a year before the economic crisis. This provides the animation community with more breadth for risky films, more basis to condense trends among films, and more voices involved in the exploration of identity in film. This makes it important to include animation in discussions of post-Soviet identity. Another reason I have already discussed---that it will reveal problems with representational approaches---is true of animation but presumably also true of other Russian film, since it all of it potentially negotiates the Soviet/post-Soviet break in identity.

I have a secondary, less arguable, but still somehow important motivation for studying Russian animation that will take some history to explain. Soviet animated film has a reputation for being not entirely representational. MacFadyen (2005) provides a unique glimpse of the filmmakers and audiences of the 1970s, who were involved in public debates about what Soviet animation should be. MacFadyen cites numerous articles from Soviet newspapers and journals that embraced a pre-linguistic, emotional, rhythmic, phenomenological, and superficially apolitical orientation in postwar animation. MacFadyen explains that this orientation began as early as the 1950s, when a concrete, structured, realistic, ideological approach was thrown out for films of "the type of meaning that would be conditionally or contextually dependent (*uslovnost'*), an insistence that animation be "*inexpressibly charming*" or "*boundlessly expressive*" (107). In this context, MacFadyen finds that, "Ex-pression is something expansive (boundless), unconstrained

⁴ I'm also analyzing *Bolero* (1992) for unrelated reasons I articulate later.

⁵ They are MacFadyen 2005 and Moritz 1997.

by the discernible boundaries of an objectively represented object, and therein lies its charm. It is attractive because it cannot be captured" (MacFadyen 2005, 107).

This trend develops and in 1976, the director "Khitruk went so far as to suggest that the cartoons of Soiuzmul'tfil'm are a form of symbolic representation beyond all narrative or linguistic structures, one that prompts a purely emotional interest" (MacFadyen 2005, 164). Another artist "went a step further and called sound, prior to anything linguistic, the genesis of a cartoon!" (156), an idea echoed today by Norshtein (Norshtein and Yabusova 2005). MacFadyen explains, "Here we appeared to be dealing with a pre-verbal, wholly affective series of utterances---the noise and tempo of heartfelt or heart-wrenching transformation. Actual words were seen as having an antagonistic relationship with music; sounds were not. The arrogance of language was asked to give way to "more expressive forms" of noises and music proper[...], of gesture and mime" (MacFadyen 2005, 156-157).

MacFadyen's (2005) findings reveal a community that apparently cultivated its non-representational identity even without the language to do so. MacFadyen is the first to recognize and emphasize this aspect of this culture in the West. Another encounter, provided by Moritz (1997), hints at these things, but reverts to representational habits. Moritz thought that the complex non-linear structures of award winning Soviet animated films made them hard to censor because the meanings they contain were dispersed and uncertain. This may be true, but instead of valuing them at one's first, experiential encounter with them, he urges that these films be watched multiple times so that the puzzles of their meanings can be untangled. I'm using Russian animation in this study because it, unlike perhaps other traditions, deserves to be interpreted in the way it is first encountered. I hope that my work approaches the way these films were understood to be by the community they were made within.

I don't know if this Soviet orientation has continued into today. In informal discussions with animators, it is my impression that the animation community thinks it stands apart in personality from other artistic traditions. One veteran of SoyuzMultFilm once told me, "We're all a bunch of weirdos around here." There is an animation school in Moscow where top animators teach the new generation, and presumably this history and orientation is part of what they impart.

If in fact post-Soviet animation is no longer substantially non-representational, I don't think this is a serious problem for my work. Animated films of the 1970s also contained symbolic force---Khitruk also states elsewhere that the moral or driving idea is the most important aspect of constructing a film (Khitruk 2005). Certainly, non-representational analyses should be applicable to heavily representational material. Privileging non-representational material for my analyses does not necessarily mean I will get more mileage out of my analyses, nor that it will be easier. My hunch however is that these films may retain some interesting non-representational dynamics. I consider this reason for using Russian animation less substantial because it is only a hunch and it is not integral to my contribution.

THE PAST AND PRESENT IN RUSSIAN FILM STUDIES

REPRESENTATIONS: FOUR PROBLEMS

Most representational work in Russian film studies understands the past as a model or reference point for the present. Larsen (2003) is a good example. She finds that masculine authority and national identity are both understood in terms of the past in two major Russian blockbusters. Director Nikita Mikhalkov presents a myth of a past where masculine sexual magnetism organizes morality in *Burnt by the Sun* (1994), which, Larsen quotes the director, “[I]s not about what was, but about what should be” (493). Mikhalkov constructs a paternal character from the past that the present should learn from. Director Balabanov of the film *Brother* (1997) takes the opposite approach, showing that the artistic heritage of the past has no application for his hero today. His hero instead constructs a paternal figure out of his criminal brother and violently asserts right and wrong through his own judgement. Mikhalkov’s film wishes to repeat the past, and Balabanov’s film dwells on how the past is incompatible with the present. Both of these films reveal representations of the past as playing a role in producing the present or future.

Using the past as a reference point would seem a sufficient explanation for the return of Soviet imagery to Russian blockbusters for a representational approach. Reference is what representational politics is all about. Nevertheless, Larsen includes another explanation. “Much of the pathos of these films derives from a common *anxiety* about what it means to be Russian at the end of the twentieth century, and most of the films articulate that anxiety in terms of threats to masculine “honor” and “dignity” (Mikhalkov) or national “might” and “right” (Balabanov)” (Larsen 2003, 493, my emphasis). Larsen isn’t the only author to think in these terms. Lipovetsky (2004) explains it this way:

These works do not try to expose the absurdity of violence hidden beneath Socialist Realist mythology. The target audience for these texts does not include nostalgic die-hards; rather they are all aimed at pleasing the middle-aged generation for whom Socialist Realism is more associated with childhood memories, and they are especially addressed to the first post-Soviet generation, for whom this aesthetic is distant and even exotic. No wonder the aforementioned texts of contemporary mass culture mostly perceive Socialist Realism as a positive experience. First of all, Socialist Realism serves as a recognizably “native” and therefore extremely appealing form of mass culture; second, it is a predominantly positive culture, emphasizing optimism and affirmative values, as opposed to the critical tone, deconstruction and “chernukha [dark and grim discourse]” of the post-Soviet decade; third, the utopian aspect of totalitarian discourse is re-evaluated in these works therapeutically, distracting the viewer or reader from everyday troubles.

(Lipovetsky 2004, 358, my emphasis)

I have highlighted in italics words that reveal a need to engage in brief discussions of the emotional substrates of identity. A simple reference isn’t enough. A representation isn’t enough. The reference must be accompanied by therapeutic emotions; the representational system motivated by anxiety and organized with threats. These sidetracks betray an awareness that representational logic can’t entirely explain the post-Soviet return of Soviet culture. Ironically they are accompanied by involved representational discussions, but no deeper investigation of this emotional substrate. A significant problem with these explanations is that they are vague. Who holds this anxiety and where is unknown. Identity anxiety becomes a tool that allows

representational analysis not to address actual bodies feeling and acting in space. These bodies are left to be understood as an indivisible block, while the bodies of the filmmakers are privileged. Meanwhile, the audience remains distant and inaccessible to the researcher, and thus their ever so important status can only be assumed.

A second problem emerges out of this one. A lack of defined bodies causes the mind to gain precedence in film analysis, a mind that can distinguish between times. Representational analyses assume that the 1970s and the 2000s are essentially different things. Lipovetsky, for example, theorizes that mixing these time periods becomes possible in three ways: with irony, through de-ideologization (filtering), or through the neglect of cultural inconsistency by Postmodern culture producers who seek success by appealing to a conservative public. These explanations, while superficially plausible, imply that despite the apparent mixing of Soviet and post-Soviet, they will always remain inherently separate from each other. These are band-aids covering the wound, and healing the wound between times and their representations is impossible. This betrays a reliance on representative logics which say that opposites cannot coexist (Massumi 2002). We will see how the world does not operate exclusively on such logics. Bodily presence does not entail such a separation and can instruct us in understanding this coexistence in less awkward ways. The 1970s and the 2000s must coexist in some meaningful sense outside of on a flat strip of film or enmeshed in a digital signature.

There is a third problem with representational analysis that is highlighted in trying to transfer the knowledge gained from representational analyses of feature films to animated film. Many of the generalizations derived from live-action about Russia's current identity discourse don't fit animation. Lipovetsky (2004) offers a digestion of some common themes. Post-Soviet films typically contain [I paraphrase]:

1. a pronounced binary opposition of good and evil.
2. a war or warlike activities: weapons, assassinations, explosions, threats, spies, etc.
3. heroic or epic archetypes. The hero doesn't transform. Social/ethnic features dominate individual personality or psychology.
4. no female characters, or insignificant female characters. Relationships between men motivate action.
5. easily recognized Socialist Realist citations: songs, mannerisms, etc.
6. efforts to cite or recreate "signs and sequences of Western mass culture."

(Lipovetsky 2004, 361-362)

These characteristics are out of tune with much of Russian animation. Unchanging characters and binary oppositions are features of some animation today, but with animation's differing goals and audience, war and masculinity are not obvious or common themes. In fact, female characters and issues are the focus of a number of animated films. This partly reflects a new generation of female directors in animation that may be absent in live-action filmmaking. Technology, friendship, multiculturalism, childhood, growing up, and spirituality are also explored in animation, if often in an uncritical fashion. The fact that animation can show this breadth, and live-action does not, means that learning from representations is easily an uneven way of learning about contemporary Russian identity.

The unevenness of representations is complimented by a fourth problem with representational analysis. Representational analysis is usually based on symbolic deconstruction. The meanings obtained from symbolic deconstruction can survive pausing a film, rewinding, frame-by-frame inspection, re-watching, and other techniques that break the onflow of film. Disrupting or ignoring a film's flow increases one's ability to absorb symbols, to become fluent in the language of film. Geographers are aware of the demands of the symbolic, "The spectators ability to 'read' a film depends [...] on a familiarity with intertextual frames: a knowledge of film language at its present point of development and an understanding of appropriate narrative conventions... [One must] recognize the complex social, political, and ideological forces that might affect those conventions" (Aitken and Zonn 1994, 7). No audience is ever perfectly fluent; audiences are not watching films necessarily to exercise or increase their fluency, and neither are audiences prioritizing symbolic analysis over being enthralled by the film-watching experience generally. Representational analyses are only meaningful with a symbolically engaged and literate audience, and especially meaningful upon repetition, which cannot be assumed. Thus, representations are potentially out of touch on two levels, that of how well they represent their audience, and that of how well their audience reads them. Such disconnections are overlooked in representational analysis.

The stories, social structures, and moral codes contained in representations are powerful. If they were meaningless, they would not reappear and reconfigure themselves through time, so representations survive despite their disconnections, unevennesses, and rigidities. Nevertheless, representations are incomplete when it comes to understanding Russia's return to their Soviet past. In representational logic, the past is recreated as something to be left behind, or to be emulated, as a society moves forward. Representational logics preclude other kinds of relationships to the past, like those that accompany more bodily interactions with film, as we will see.

CONCLUSION

Representational analyses struggle to understand a culture that is dismantling a cultural binary. The distance between Soviet and post-Soviet is written indelibly in history from these perspectives, and upon it they construct elaborate realities that are questionably real.

I move now to a more promising literature that begins in the same representational tradition as the Russian film analyses above, but is moving away from it. This literature is from geographies of film and cognitive film studies. It seems that the spaces and activities of film watching itself, as opposed to thinking about the content of films, gets lost in most analyses. Our body takes up and is surrounded by spaces. The place it occupies when watching a film must inform our encounter with film. I'm pursuing the body as a potential actor in the spaces of film watching because it seems to open doors to the non-representational in film, and a non-representational approach may more appropriately convey the mixing of Soviet and post-Soviet cultures.

SENSED PLACE IN FILM

INTRODUCTION

Film geography has long been representational. Recently, geographers and others outside the discipline have begun to talk about place and bodily sensation in our encounters with film. Their discussion still focuses on the content of the films, but they have moved to talking about the content in terms of the senses and the body. Meanwhile, cognitive film theorists have been discussing the apparent location of the viewer when watching a film. This discussion remains unresolved, but points in the direction of my third chapter on virtual spaces. The ideas from these two groups of research together point to a new spatial and bodily conception of film-watching.

FILM GEOGRAPHIES AND SENSED PLACE

Film has been used in a variety of ways in geography. Films are treated as objects in a political economy (Shiel and Fitzmaurice 2001) or a geography of cultural production (Cole 2008). They have long been treated as pedagogical tools in classrooms (e.g. Lukenbeal et al. 2007). They have also been used to discuss issues of place (Seaman 2008), social reality (Harvey 1990) and politics (O Tuathail 2005). Films can also challenge current social structures (Siciliano 2007). In these approaches, film reflects social relations that form in other places, like government offices, film studios, the streets of cities, and so forth. Film presumably may also construct and influence social relations in those places after watching it. These are classically representational ways of analyzing film.⁶

Recently, geographers and others have been hinting that this approach is insufficient. Vision, touch, and emotion appear as alternative avenues. Cresswell and Dixon (2002) say, "The reduction of vision to language games rather misses the point" (5), recognizing that visual aesthetic choices create worlds in film. Clarke (1997) goes further and calls film haptical, engaged through the sense of touch, and that this is what makes film captivating and fascinating. Marks (2000) outside of geography takes the touchiness of film further to look at how intercultural filmmakers use film to tell forgotten and undocumented stories and give sensations lost in translation between cultures. For her, film is a medium that can conjure smells and tastes and address people who have fallen through the cracks of symbolic discourse. Other authors see film as an "emotion machine" that provides a range of emotional experiences and benefits to viewers, among them the chance to enter into fantasy (Tan 1996, Eitzen 1999). These ways of engaging with film each have their own dimensions to explore, but as a group they point to a larger consensus that film does more than give us something to think about. It involves us; we are in touch with it, and we leave here behind. Walter Benjamin has perhaps the most elegant conception, saying that when we watch film, "We become somewhere else" (quoted in Cresswell and Dixon 2002, 5).

Understanding film through sensed location like Benjamin is relatively rare. Places in films are usually seen to inform upon the characters and narrative, playing support for a concept instead of

⁶Cresswell and Dixon's introduction (2002) also discusses how geographers have traditionally approached film.

constituting a relation between film and audience. Jazairy (2009), in contrast, explores sensed location in his analysis of Antonioni's *L'avventura* through the concept of "being in the landscape." He says, "The forms of the landscape are not prepared in advance for the body to occupy, nor are the bodily forms specified independently of the landscape" (Jazairy, 2009, 354). Interestingly, Jazairy leaves it unclear if the body he refers to means the viewer's or the characters' bodies. In his analysis, the landscape in the film takes on qualities of a character, having presence that motivates action and narrative as the human characters move conspicuously through it. A viewer senses this presence indirectly through certain techniques of shots and cuts, and can feel him- or herself floating indistinctly within that landscape. *L'avventura* exemplifies a non-representational, sensed relationship between landscape and body that opens to the potential of the body to create its own dynamic in that relationship.

Geographers are moving in an interesting direction looking at how the content of a film can affect bodies in space. More work here would be welcome. One aspect of place and film that geographers have not considered is where a person thinks he is when he is in the middle of watching a film. This turns out to be a challenging issue: is one in the place of the film, as geographers seem to think? Or in the theater? Both? Elsewhere entirely? These questions have been addressed in cognitive film studies, although not definitively.

THE PLACES OF FILM-WATCHING

The trouble of where one is when one is watching a film has already generated some discussion in cognitive film studies. Early thought was that film viewers were side participants in the action on screen, invisibly present to what was happening (Tan and Frijda 1999). This argument isn't very satisfying from an emotional standpoint, however, because it precludes the possibility of feeling the same emotions as a character on screen or really feeling like more than an observer of the action. It also means, as Currie (1999) argues, that a viewer would have to feel emotions corresponding to a side participant; that is, one would have to respond with embarrassment when a character revealed a secret, since the viewer as side participant isn't supposed to overhear private conversations. Another approach is through identification. Gaut (1999) clarifies that identification is not the viewer thinking that she is one of the characters on screen, or thinking that the character is her. It is instead the viewer imagining herself *in the position of* the character on screen. The viewers then "construe the situation of the character in terms of what properties he possesses" (Gaut 1999, 205). Both of these theories place the viewer in among the events on screen, as if that was a three-dimensional, lively, material space. These theorists put the viewer in the film just as she might be in the world.

Cognitive film theorists are avoiding the mysteriousness of our spatial encounter with film. They are interested in the activities of the mind, which must make things concrete. Unfortunately, this causes a problem for them when they have to deal with the fact that the place the viewer supposedly occupies is typically fictional. Tan (1996) originally believed that emotions in response to films were different from emotions in response to real life situations, fully dividing fiction and responses to fiction from 'real' life. Gaut (1999) argues that, "The possibility of real emotions directed toward situations known merely to be fictional must be allowed" (207). Currie (1999) reasons that to have real emotional reactions to things on screen, the viewers must be kept in a state of belief that the events and characters on screen are real.

The fact that the mysterious aspects of the space of film watching can be overlooked is important. It confirms how elusive this space is. It is not clear that this space exists when you're watching the film. The spacefulness of being wrapped up in a film is secondary to the narrative. Also, this space isn't very memorable. After watching a film, this space is not something a viewer considers when mulling over a film's impact. Also, it disappears when the film is over, and can even disappear while the film is still running if the film becomes boring. Our knowledge of this space is not available to our imagination. Instead, it is providing support for our imagination, making the two dimensional space of the screen seem three dimensional. It does this through our bodily senses. These aspects of this space make it seem connected to the bodily and affective. This space is neither importantly fictional nor importantly real.

This space is virtual and modulated by bodily affect, ideas I will flesh out in the next chapter. Questions about where one is when watching film might benefit from probing the not-quite-conscious, bodily part of film watching. In other words, going deeper than touch, closer than vision, and looser than emotion. Affect theory, popular today in geography, but having roots elsewhere, has the potential to enrich this conversation with its interest in how affect can define relationships. This literature is in the process of being developed theoretically as well as methodologically, so my work also contributes to affect theory.

Spaces of film-watching offer another layer to our understanding of the social aspects of film. Currently, film watching is subordinate to the film medium, even though without this process of encountering and relating, film wouldn't exist as a social medium. Film watching is not recognized as a process where new social relations are immediately negotiated on top of those already articulated in the film. I turn my attention to film watching because the social relations it potentially negotiates as a process should be more bodily and less representational. It will provide the keys to understanding the reemergence of the Soviet in Russia today.

AFFECT, SPACE, AND THE EMERGENCE OF THE REAL

AFFECT: BODILY, INFECTIOUS, AND MOVING

Affect is a way that bodies communicate with each other through space. Bodies come alive with affect, experiencing and broadcasting their ups and downs, frights, loves, and momentary truths. Bodies infect other bodies with their affect, and absorb and respond to flows from other bodies. Affect is not rational, so it works in reflexive, unconscious, non-representational ways.

Affect has gained attention lately in geography as a non-representational approach to culture and politics. Here I will use it to bring lived spaces and geographies to film watching as a practice between bodies. Affect provides the missing link to the mysterious, impersonal enthrallment, intense agitations, and deep boredoms of film watching.

The spatial aspects of affect are only now being developed (Thrift 2004, Thrift 2008). Affect has been used twice by geographers to talk about film in particular, one to discuss geopolitics (Carter and McCormack 2006), and the other about portrayals of animals in film (Lorimer 2010). These works focus more on affective bodies as actors or subjects of spatial politics than on the spatial dynamics of affect itself. My goal is to recognize the spaces and geographies created, modulated, and enhanced by affective ties between bodies. Our understanding of film watching can be improved through thinking about affect in space.

Affect, as we shall see, creates virtual spaces and motivates spatial connections between bodies, and it makes these things accessible to research. Affect is how the body acts out when watching films. Affect holds bodies in sway with film. It will show how the body can assert logics other than---and contradictory to---those developed in the narrative and symbolic layers of the film. This is key to understanding not only film, but how bodies assert themselves upon our wider lived realities.

Affect is both new and old as a subject of research, so I will start with a brief history of thought about affect. After these foundations, I discuss how affect has been studied in film. Then I proceed to affect as a spatial phenomenon, which I broaden into film through empathy. Lastly, I fit my non-representational geography into a political theory of simulacra so that it applies to my pursuit of the Soviet/post-Soviet binary in Russian animation.

AFFECT IN PHILOSOPHY: MOVING BEYOND THE MIND-BODY DIVISION

Affect has a long history in philosophical thought that contributes to its distinction from representation. Descartes set up the division between the mind and the body in Western thought. Kant later rested his philosophy of epistemology on this division. These two philosophers have largely defined how we think about thinking. For Kant, cognitive thought organizes and clarifies a messy world, and affect, which for him sits outside of thought, is a hinderance. The non-cognitive became a reservoir for spontaneous, irrational, inexplicable, bodily stirrings, the domain of affect. Importantly, Kant reversed the earlier platonic conception of the world, where the outside world contained the ideal of organization, and human conceptions were a pale reflection of it. Now, the cognitive mind is in charge, and it presents the outside world to our selves with more clarity (Woodward and Lea 2010). When the mind does that, it changes the world, just the way a representational analysis of a movie changes the movie. Much of what the body could contribute to knowledge was ignored or adjusted when (re)presented to the mind.

Studying affect means getting at thought before it is caught up and formalized in the cognitive mind. Or, more radically, it means tearing down the mind-body division when it comes to apprehending and responding to the world. Spinoza's philosophy built on some of Descartes's ideas, but refused to divide mind and body and refused to give one power or precedence over the other. For Spinoza, emotions, which are commonly associated with affect, are not to be suppressed by rationality. Spinoza lets intact bodies think, move, act, and interact as wholes. Bodies, minds, and even other parts of reality are all made of the same substance. This means that the apparent physical divisions between bodies can be less important because things can still transfer between them. These conceptions inform current definitions of affect as a force that can

be passed between bodies or emerge spontaneously from them. Affect causes bodies to act out into the world.

Moving beyond the representational paradigm also means moving beyond emotions as we typically understand them. Each person leads a unique emotional life that includes a limited range of expressions understood by the culture he or she lives in. These emotions can include the less defined energies of affect surging among them or they can simply be a sign system that communicates things about the person. When one reads anger on another person's face, one can decide not to approach that person. This is a representational approach to emotion. Affect remains unconscious, passing between people, shared by people, and not involved in strategic social decisions. One can become agitated without knowing why because someone nearby is agitated. The distinction between affect and emotion is useful because it helps explain interactions with animals. Animals are open participants in affective exchanges with humans and other animals, whereas humans cannot have emotion. Affect is seen as a way to bring animals more fairly into geographic consideration (see Lorimer 2010). Affect lets us draw on a wider range of activity than symbolic engagement, including the unconscious and non-human. This breadth comes out in film analyses with attention to affect, as we shall see soon.

Recent thought about affect has largely concentrated on it as an untapped liberating agency (e.g. McCormack 2003). But current thought in geography is beginning to see otherwise. Woodward and Lea (2010) say that although affect isn't well recognized or understood, it is very much used and manipulated in capitalist production. Woodward and Lea use the labels 'sad' and 'joyful' to describe different kinds of affective labor. They explain that laboring bodies rely on their own internal coherence to produce affect. Direction from outside, by contrast, ignores this internal coherence and produces exhaustion, such as when an assembly line or a service job dictates bodily activities of moving, smiling and relating. Bodies that are not structured like this maintain their potential for creativity and responsiveness. When affect is freely among bodies, it can collect, reinforce itself and cause new things to happen. Inhibited bodies are 'sad,' whereas bodies left to labor uncontrolled are 'joyful.' 'Sad' bodies proliferate in today's laboring landscapes. Woodward and Lea point to them as an important and appropriate subject of geographic interest in affect.

AFFECT IN FILM: SAD FILMS, LOOSE TRUTHS, AND COMFORTABLE CONTRADICTIONS

Explorations of the affect in film have found contradictory and unpredictable phenomena which correspond to wider literatures of affect. There are three studies of affect in film, two of which I will discuss briefly, and one which significantly informs this work.

First, Lorimer (2010) follows up on Woodward and Lea (2010) concerning elephants in film and finds that most films are set in tried affective registers that do not portray or encourage 'joyful' bodies. Only the avant garde seems to approach elephants openly. I suspect that this pattern will play out more broadly, where only rare films ask for the viewer to contribute substantially in the film watching experience. Nevertheless, I am not going to focus on those rare films because I want to discuss film watching processes that people engage in more commonly. I think there are

important geographies in ‘sad’ films, as bodies used to being directed are directed even in their leisure. The power imbalance in most film watching will reoccur as a minor theme in my thesis.⁷

Second, Carter and McCormack (2006) explore the political effects of affect in terms of geopolitics. They show how certain techniques used in the 2002 war film *Black Hawk Down* amplified and anchored affect. The film focuses on the visceral activity of combat, showing soldier’s bodies moving and reacting together in ways that emphasized their brotherhood. The political dimensions of the Somali war were not explored in the film alongside the bodies’ activities. Carter and McCormack argue that the abdication of geopolitical engagement in *Black Hawk Down* allowed it to resonate with post-9/11 American political projects. Because the film focused on physicality and affect, instead of, say, narrative and symbols, its political effect was undetermined. Carter and McCormack say the film provided “the conditions of emergence” (241) of unpredicted discursive truths. If the film had been made at another time, it wouldn’t have supported with post-9/11 American political ideology, and may have supported a very different project just as well. Its affective focus is what makes it so compelling in any political ideology. Affect can make things seem true, but which things those will be is hard to predict. *Black Hawk Down* set up a condition out of which the truths of the post-9/11 era could emerge as more true despite the film never addressing those truths itself. This kind of affective politics could be present in Russian animated films, especially since they may lack representational articulation, but this is not the focus of my work. Nevertheless, Carter and McCormack help us better understand the loose and powerful relationship between affect and truth.

Third, and most important for my work, Massumi (2002) does a philosophical investigation into a psychological study of a German animated film called *The Snowman*. The film, which has no words, drew attention originally because of the unusually powerful reaction children had towards it when screened on German television. Some psychologists chose to modify the film to make two more versions: one with a factual verbal soundtrack, describing events onscreen, and the other with a similar verbal overlay that included emotional language. These two versions and the original were shown to audiences of children that the psychologists monitored physically and interviewed subsequently.

Massumi (2002) explains the results of the experiment with affect because they do not necessarily make sense otherwise. The interviews revealed that the sadder the scene in the film, the more pleasant it was perceived to be. Moreover, the original version, with no words, was preferred over all the others. Massumi explains that because the wordless version does not engage the symbolic mind, opposites can coexist that are otherwise mutually exclusive, and so sadness can be enjoyed. What’s more, the enjoyment of the sadness can add up undisrupted by verbal narrative which would have reasserted the usual happy ≠ sad binary. As the film continues, the sadness can add up in a positive feedback loop. Bodies enjoy being affectively active; the enjoyment received from the continuing sadness of the film will compound with the earlier enjoyment and create even more enjoyment over time. In comparison, a film that documents a presumably sad event, such as an iconic person’s death, could treat it as symbolically marking the end of an era. Such a film may gloss over the positive affective substrate of actively mourning this person and time, and

⁷ See analyses of the first two films, *The Tree of Childhood*, and *Smeshariki: Without Anyone*, in contrast with the last film, *Bolero*.

instead move onto the next issue or event in the larger narrative. The coexistence of opposites and the potential for feedback loops would be gone. *The Snowman's* design allows its viewers to behave according to a different set of rules which contains important deviations from symbolic logics.

AFFECT IN SPACE: VIRTUALITY

In my earlier discussion of how we sense our location as we watch film, I suggested that the space of film watching is virtual. By this I do not mean that it is somehow related to spaces generated by technology as in the phrase “virtual reality.” Instead, I’m referring to a virtual realm described in Massumi (2002), which is integrally connected to affect.

Affect can’t stay still. It moves inside us, through us, among us, and escapes. As the force from which we take action, it cannot be inactive. The movement of affect defines the virtual space of film watching. When and where it moves, a space opens up and includes. When it fails to move, the space closes in. This space is not easily available to the conscious mind. It is where the body operates pre-consciously. Massumi (2002) cites a study in which the brain has clearly already made a decision a few seconds before the person knows he or she has made a decision. The virtual is this layer of reality out of which consciously recognized reality emerges. The space of film watching is virtual because it cannot be fully detected and understood by the conscious mind. It cannot be pinned down and defined, because it slips away as affect slips away, leaving the conscious mind grappling with the remainder binary of film world versus material world.

The virtual has three important properties that affect film watching. First, it is organized topologically. Topologies are spaces constituted by what’s inside them. Thinking of the virtual as a topological space can explain why sway space appears when engaged in a film, and disappears the moment it ends. Topologies are also organized by the spatial relationships inside it: what matters isn’t the absolute location of things, but their locations in relation to other things. The film and the viewer can be two of these things that are brought into topological relation by film watching practice, which creates a temporary space between them. Changing that space can affect other spaces and relationships in the same field. Affect can organize this topology and create social geographies from it, as we will soon see.

Another important property of the virtual is that things in the virtual are in infinite variation. Think of the virtual as the time when many options for the future are still available. These options are variations on each other. The breadth of possible variations is more important to the essence of a thing than the formalized instances we can recognize. So when viewers and films occupy this space, they are constantly in a state of potential, where they are all possible variations, of which only one outcome will become concrete. In this way, the viewer and the film can be thought of as variations on each other, defined as a group by the movements they take together. These variations can extend to multiple members of an audience sharing a film. The film may sway the whole group, or one body may champion the actions of another body and another. The virtual space of film watching is moving among these bodies as they awaken and subside affectively, calling them into temporary similarity with each other.

A third property of the virtual is that it changes the potentials of bodies that occupy it. Massumi (2002) explains using Ronald Reagan. Drawing from Reagan's autobiography, Massumi shows how Reagan managed to displace himself from his own body into the body of a man who had just learned as he awoke in the hospital that he had lost his legs. Reagan was called on not to act out a personality, as is usual, but an event that redefines a person. Reagan could not purely imagine himself as this other person, so he practiced becoming the person by performing the transition in front of other people. Right before the scene was shot he fell into a contemplative mode where all of his preparation came to a head, and when he opened his eyes and saw that he had no legs, he extended his own being into someone else. Massumi explains this time is a transition space where the body has no image. Reagan had given himself so many possibilities for how to be, that he became swept up in their variation, and was ultimately able to transition from one instance into another instance. Massumi says this is "a space of utter receptivity" (57). The body is open to the things that come upon it.

Thinking of the body as having no image---of the mind failing to project an image to itself for the body---explains the perception that one is present in the film as an invisible observer. When watching a film, some if not all particularities of one's body are left behind in the chair. The transition from one's body to no body doesn't have as big consequences most of the time as it did for Reagan. Viewers usually have not practiced and primed a particular body to fall back into besides their own. But one does float out of one's body temporarily. The virtual space one floats in is important. As Massumi (2002) says, it is a space where one is receptive, perhaps receptive to dynamics introduced by a film. This receptivity opens one to emotional contagion, ensuring that the viewer does feel similar to the film's hero, for example. Bodies merge in this space between screen and viewing room, the body of the viewer taking action as the hero does. This receptivity opens one to being more involved in the film than just an observer without having to recourse back to the labors of imagination and identification. The possibilities open to bodies in the virtual undergirds the spatialized experience of film watching.

These three properties of the virtual---topology, variation, and bodily receptivity---make for a more interesting vision of the process of film watching. Instead of it being a mental activity largely forgotten after the film is over, we can conceive of it as a populated and active space where bodies relate and change. I will call this space "sway space." I like this term because the word sway is both transitive and intransitive, meaning that people watching films can both be swayed and sway others in this space. It also includes the sense of movement and flow as a group. It brings imagery with it of seaweed swaying in a current, which is similar to how an audience may be buffeted by a film. This term risks seeming too passive, so it helps to remember that sway also means power and persuasion. Another marine image better corresponds to this meaning of how fish act in a school, each actively perceiving and responding to the group dynamic, and creating that dynamic as a member themselves.

The active nature of affect is one reason I don't call this space a place: typically places are seen as a space for stasis and stability. Sway space is better characterized by movement. This experience of space is unusual but not alien to geography. Seaman (Seaman 1980) takes a phenomenological stance to explore how people's bodies will take charge of their actions for habitual tasks. People's daily routines unfold before them as they are preoccupied with higher order tasks. They come into contact with each other through their habitual movements and

create “place ballets.” Seaman notes the interviewees’ use of words like “‘smooth,’ ‘flow’ and ‘rhythm’” to describe habitualized movements (158). Likewise, Castells (2004) highlights the importance of movement in space. Castells presents the “space of flows” as a way to understand the meaning of space when communication and transportation technology have collapsed the time it takes to cross distances. The “space of flows” requires a technological network infrastructure, flows of capital, culture, and information within it, and nodes where these things concentrate in the network. Castells recognizes different organizations in material space resulting from the “space of flows.” Castells uses his ideas to explore geographies of the internet, which, like the virtual, doesn’t have a single material or imaginary manifestation, so is better characterized as a space by what is flowing and acting within it than by some kind of boundary. Movement is a way to create and maintain spaces in other kinds of geographies as well.

I particularly like Seaman’s (Seaman 1980) and Castells’ (2004) choice of “flows” to describe these spaces. Although affect does move arbitrarily, as suggested by the word movement, I believe it can also be channelled, and that films are engineered to channel it and create flows in this space. These flows create topologies that can become meaningful social geographies, and ultimately contribute to our understanding of contemporary Russian animation. Here we have learned that viewers can enter a virtual space of affective flows when they are watching a film, a space in which they become receptive to moving with the film.

SWAY SPACE GEOGRAPHIES AND EMPATHY

There are two entities that can introduce a discernible geography into sway space. One is the film and the other is the viewers. It is not feasible to look at viewers in this study, but it is important to recognize that their bodies constitute this space, and their actions will do much to define it. The film, on the other hand, does not have a body. Without a body, it is unclear how it can take part in the liveliness and flows of virtual spaces. Film enters this space through techniques that give it bodily presence. When a viewer comes into contact with these techniques, the viewer can unfold them into something more than they are on their own. That unfolding creates spatial dynamics in sway space that modulates flows.

It is important here to briefly note the inequality of the viewer’s body and the film’s ‘body’ in sway space. The viewer’s body in the virtual becomes receptive. The film’s body never does, as it is recorded on film. Film as a medium in action cannot respond back to viewers as spontaneously as they respond to it. Other venues offer more interactive experiences with screens,⁸ but despite sophisticated film watching apparatuses, typical film watching is still largely one sided. Watching film with live audiences can mitigate this somewhat, as the crowd takes control of the film, responding as a whole, and making the film a smaller body among many. Nevertheless, film has long been ‘designed’ to affect people, and not the other way around, and so studying it inevitably entails tracking how films take power (hold sway) over their audiences.

There is a range of techniques available to film makers to control viewers’ bodies. Manipulating color, sound, light, movement, shots, and so on, will all contribute to the viewer’s visceral experience. At the most general and abstract, these manipulations do not seem particularly

⁸ See image 1 in appendix I.

bodily. But perhaps this is a trick of perception. Perhaps the mind sees them as not bodily, but the body, which specializes in feeling for other bodies, senses it very much a body. Film's unlikeness to bodies may be a misapprehension of the ocular and classifying mind. The body may relate to things as if they are bodies even when the conscious mind says otherwise, which entails including the physical manifestation of film as a kind of body. Understanding the film as a kind of body may help us at a basic level to imagine ourselves as bodies relating to the film, and it also will help us integrate our understanding of film as an instigator as well as director of flows in sway space.

Out of concern that discussing all of film technique is too large a task for the scope of this work, I would like to narrow my focus to a set of techniques that is more easily envisioned as creating a filmic body. The set of techniques I'm interested in is organized around eliciting empathy. Here, I'm interested in how empathy is related to the virtuality of sway space and how it produces a geography. Carter and McCormack (2006) take a similar approach in studying affect in film by targeting what bodies exerting in groups do on film.

Empathy is the act of feeling what someone else is feeling. It is different from sympathy, which does not require one to feel the same as another so much as to be aware of the other's feelings (a more representational interaction) (Escalas and Stern 2003). Empathy is spatial already. Early understandings of empathy include spatial references (see Escalas and Stern 2003). The term literally means 'in-feeling' and was coined to compare with sympathy ('with-feeling') after similar German words. A 1967 text says empathy is "a person's capacity to feel within or in another person's feelings" (in Escalas and Stern 2003, 567). Later definitions focus on the equivalency of feelings instead of location, but the idea of forgetting oneself to be absorbed by another---the body without image---is still present.

Empathy isn't an emotion or feeling in itself so much as a conduit for emotions and feelings to move between bodies. It opens pathways for flows. Empathy can also act as an amplifier. As pathways open, bodies open, and affects can come and bounce around more freely. It is important not to think of empathy as a proxy for flows in sway space. Because empathy creates geography itself, it is directing flows in certain ways that other cues do not. Empathy is an actor in sway space, one that we can see, not a neutral view of activities in sway space.

Opportunities for empathy in film draw viewers into the film and into the characters. It closes the space between them so that bodies are closer in sway space. A film's repetitive requests for empathy reinforce these connections, making them closer and stronger, and the tug the character and film exerts on the viewer can pull further. Empathy requests involvement, bonding, and entanglement in the situation at hand. If we think of this in terms of the virtual, we find that empathy arranges a topological relationship between the viewer's body and the film's body: the bodies can grow closer together than to other bodies, reorganizing the whole field. The entanglement and involvement of empathy is a tearing down of borders, a feeling of flows between bodies that have opened to each other, and are now variations on each other.⁹

⁹ *The Tree of Childhood* (2004) and *Smeshariki: Without Anyone* (2008), presented in the final chapter, are high empathy films.

Not using empathy leaves the film neutral, distant, or disconnected from lived reality. The film is not encouraging a flow between viewer and character. Often this means the viewer must supply for herself what the film might have offered. Some may be more comfortable than others with this task. This lack of information and connection creates a different dynamic in sway space. Yawning cavities can develop as lack of connection spreads out between nodes and nodes reorganize in relation to each other. These moments may be accompanied by feelings of instability, unsureness, fear, and frustration, or perhaps boredom, distraction, and withdrawal.¹⁰

These geographies are as momentary as film watching is. They soon disappear. But the time spent within them is important. That time is involved in the production of the present, because as the film is running, the present is also happening. When a body participates in a sway space, its geography becomes folded into that body's experience of space and time, its sense of connection to here and now. In this study, the here and now is a representational impossibility: the Soviet combined with the post-Soviet. But it is not a bodily impossibility. A body empathizing through a Soviet environment connects with that environment, and it becomes here and now. The body exerts outside of the representational binary of what here and now can only be and changes it. The here and now becomes as much Soviet as post-Soviet.

This possibility---of affect, the body, and non-representational dynamics defining reality---is more developed in Deleuze and Guattari's theory of simulacra. This theory sets out the relationship between non-representational and representational activities, which is an important final step in recognizing the political impact of sway spaces.

SIMULACRA AND RUSSIAN SWAY SPACES

Deleuze and Guattari rework Baudrillard's idea of simulacra to move focus from the inauthenticity and meaninglessness of copies to the creative aspects of cultural reproduction. Massumi (1987) condenses their ideas into one essay. He says,

The terms copy and model bind us to the world of representation and objective (re)production. A copy, no matter how many times removed, authentic or fake, is defined by the presence or absence of internal, essential relations of resemblance to a model. The simulacrum, on the other hand, bears only an external and deceptive resemblance to a putative model. The process of its production, its inner dynamism, is entirely different from that of its supposed model; it's resemblance to it is merely a surface effect, an illusion.

(Massumi 1987, fifth paragraph)

Simulacra, according to Deleuze and Guattari, construct ongoing reality. Simulacra create things that have never existed before. Their mimicry is a tactic to introduce new relationships into reality. Often, these new relationships are simply reproductions of old ones, conservative and limited in what they bring from the past into the present. These simulacra define who is good and bad; that is, they separate who is willing to comply with a limited definition of reality and who isn't. They organize exclusion and inclusion. These simulacra are as good as representations, which do the same thing.

¹⁰ *Bolero* (1992) and *The Petrel* (2004), presented in the final chapter, use little empathy.

Another kind of simulacra does more: these simulacra turn on the current accepted definitions of reality to push beyond them. They are not selective in what they bring forward: they embrace everything. They require a moment of representational reorganization, a re-organization of good and bad, inside and outside, as they bring the past into the present. This moment is when unplanned mutations can occur, and the deep difference the simulacra embodies has a chance to grab on. This moment is non-representational. Massumi says, "Reproduction, the forging of a new ethnic identity, are aspects of this process of simulation, but they are not the goal. The goal is life, a world in which the [metamorphosed being] can live without hiding and repressing his powers" (1987, sixteenth paragraph).

As of 2000, the existing representational reality included an essential gulf between the past and the present, between the Soviet and the post-Soviet. Conservative simulacra reproduce that gulf by reaffirming the representational logic creating it. These simulacra exclude non-representational reality. Nevertheless, many bodies remain tied to the Soviet: they were born there, they grew up there, they lived in the context of its fall, they swayed with Soviet connections. These bodies don't care that time is organized linearly in our minds. Bodies experience things flowing through the present. Thus, the body is excluded from a representational binary set up where times have apparently split into past and present, model and copy. For the body to fully live, to be fully included, it must break down this binary. The body works at that by producing copies which are not really copies.

The difference is sway space. In representational life, the viewer is reliving a nostalgic childhood of the 1970s. This is the false copy. In non-representational life, the viewer is living for the first time in the Soviet present. Bodies that grew up in the Soviet Union, or in its fall, are not only post-Soviet. They are also Soviet, even though they cannot be. They push for this reality in sway spaces, and eventually, the representational binary defining the split in times crumbles. Such bodies assert themselves in the reappearance of Soviet culture in Russian animation. They are forging a new identity of the Soviet post-Soviet: the Soviet present, a more inclusive present, a present where meaning is secondary and movement is primary.

Interpretations of Russian animation occasionally verge on this kind of vision. Moritz's (1997) explanation of Norshtein's nostalgic and nonlinear *Tale of Tales* maintains the representational gulf. "By the late 1970s, when Yuri and his wife Francesca shot *Skazka Skazok (Tale of Tales)*, several successful changes of leadership in post-Stalin Russia must have made it seem that the Soviet order would last indefinitely. So, rather than a specific protest against government policies, the message of *Tale of Tales* urges artists to accept the burden of keeping better times alive through art" (41). Simulacra will push this interpretation further to show how these films don't simply maintain memories of better times, but actually produce better times. Nugerbekov, a commentator cited by MacFadyen (2005), got it more straight on in 1984: "The goal of an artist is to rely upon folk culture and create things that give the viewer aesthetic pleasure, prompt interesting thoughts and a life-affirming world view ... The dream of each artist is to *unify the past and present*, to (also) try and *get ahead* of time and look into the future, to create the type of object where past, present and future *all come together*" (MacFadyen 2005, 98, emphasis in original). This is exactly what simulacra do in the sway spaces of Russian animation.

METHODS

FINDING AFFECT IN FILM: TECHNIQUES AND MICROPOLITICS

Because affect is not personal, emotional, or formalized in the conscious mind, it is hard to study. It slips away or withers upon recognition. This presents methodological issues that compound into theoretical ones. Many film studies, including this one, cannot monitor viewers or their social environment. Getting at the bodily in film is challenging when the only evidence available is the film itself and the body of the researcher. For representational analyses, looking at references and constructions in films has long been a valuable approach. But these methods imply structures as well as only focusing on representations. Connolly (2002B) introduced technique as a corresponding focus for embodied and non-representational post-structural analysis. Connolly (2002A) offers a compressed version of his reasoning, and Lorimer (2010) uses technique to explore a wider range of films. Both studies involve the researcher dropping analytical distance and becoming fully involved in the film, especially on first viewing, as well as looking more consciously for what film techniques created the film watching environment.

Connolly's (2002A) analysis of *Vertigo* provides a quick demonstration of how technique opens one to the non-representational dynamics of film. He "doubts that the world possesses a structure amenable to deep, authoritative interpretation" (second paragraph). He believes that how films are crafted can tell us more about micropolitics. Micropolitics are the small actions taken in spaces of living rooms, movie theaters and other places that then "set the stage for macropolitical action [...] by rendering large segments of the public receptive or unreceptive to them." (third paragraph). The idea that films change receptivity to political stances, instead of changing the political stances themselves echoes Carter and McCormack (2006).

Connolly's (2002A) focus on technique in *Vertigo* shows how the film produces the uncanny sense that a woman who has just jumped to her death from a tower is still alive. The director threw the timing of the sonic and visual perception of the event out of sync. He also made the body fall unrealistically, more like a large doll, which Connolly says is "below the threshold of conscious attention while the unnerving action was underway" (ninth paragraph). A structuralist explanation for thinking that she is still alive, provided by Žižek (provided in Connolly 2002A), is that we desire her to be so through the male protagonist. Connolly says that not everyone in the audience will share such a desire, but that they will still be haunted because of Hitchcock's technique. The unconscious's problems with Hitchcock's presentation of the suicide make viewers more receptive to the idea that she didn't fall, and didn't die, and that she could reappear later in the film, as she does. Micropolitically, tuning into embodied knowledge in this film gives the body and mind practice with contradictory experiences, and may prime one to be more open to such things in the future. Other studies of affect so far confirm this (McCormack 2003).

Technique is a valuable contribution to this study in particular. Techniques, like timing, cutting, movement, lighting, are what keep films engaging to watch. Sure enough, Jazairy (2009) discusses techniques in his analysis of *L'avventura's* "being in the landscape." He shows how the viewer can feel haunted, much like in Connolly's (2002A) *Vertigo*, by a character who has disappeared, and, as best as one can tell, has been engulfed by the landscape. Shots of crags and

other landscape features run too long, the actors don't act and often aren't in the shot or are a tiny part of the shot, a night rain storm invades one's hearing, and volcanos intrude in conversations onscreen. These techniques contribute to a sense that the figure and ground in the film have been reversed, emphasizing the landscape as an actor and the people as background elements affected by the landscape. Techniques are just as much in charge of the conscious sense of being in the film as they are in charge of the viewers' unconscious and affective responses to the films. Technique can potentially unite the conscious and unconscious aspects of film, and thus bridge our sense of location with our body's affective relationship with the film when watching.

EMPATHY ELICITATION TECHNIQUES

In this study, I have chosen to study a collection of techniques that elicit empathy from viewers. Empathy is interesting for both its presence in films and its activities there. Empathy is widely used in film, so the methods of analysis used here should apply to a wide variety of films, including many outside of this study. Empathy is also usually cued in heavily redundant and loud ways, so it is easy to identify as a researcher and be confident that empathy was intended to be part of the film's viewing experience. It is also so omnipresent that viewers get a lot of practice responding to it in film form, meaning that techniques of empathy elicitation are probably fairly successful, and that there may be consequences to wider human interaction through empathy due to widespread practice.

Empathy is not automatically given. Films must sway viewers to empathize. Most use well-worn techniques that involve picturing bodies in action. In this way, film ends up with surrogate bodies it can use in concert with its own virtual body. Faces are the most powerful. Viewers will physically mimic faces they see on screen. Shots of faces pervade films as a result of the space that opens between them and viewers. Progressively closer close-ups on a face can bring viewers in closer touch with a character (Plantinga 1999). Point-of-view editing gives a little more information about the character by showing their face and the object of their facial reaction. Faces aren't the only source of mimicry. Postures, movements, expressions, and habits of bodies can also open up this space (Plantinga 1999). An interesting aspect of the connection between mimicry and empathy is that mimicry both gives the substance of feeling traveling between bodies and gives the push to feel it in the first place. One does not follow the other. They are the same thing. Given a face to look at, the body does not open and then feel, instead, the feeling is the opening. Practicing and repeating this co-feeling will broaden the opening over time. This makes long shots of faces and people important, as well as scenes that give characters time to emote and respond to their circumstances. Such scenes and shots often linger much longer than would seem necessary to move a story forward (Eitzen 1999).

There are a number of representational techniques that also elicit empathy from viewers. The first aspect of establishing empathy is character design. Characters who are attractive, vulnerable, and who follow social rules are better at earning empathy (Tan and Frijda 1999). Audiences are more likely to side with characters who are similar to them, which brings about the bland "every man" character (Plantinga 1999). Characters who have to yield to a greater power, or who are put through trials and sacrifice are also easier to empathize with (Gaut 1999, Tan and

Frijda 1999). These techniques are meant to make it easy to stand with the character and follow them as they react to their world.

Relatedly, narrative design also affects how viewers empathize. Placing empathy scenes later in the film, after the character has earned the trust, admiration, and liking of the audience, improves the chances that the audience will actually empathize with the character. Placed too early in a film, an empathy scene can cause a viewer to avoid connecting or lose respect for the character, since the character is still a stranger and their emotional openness could be considered premature. Nevertheless, films are often built around high empathy characters who lead us through the narrative (Plantinga 1999), so early empathy scenes and character design are key to making the relationship with the viewer work.

Techniques for eliciting empathy do not guarantee that viewers empathize or that viewers are in lock-step harmony with characters on screen at any given moment. This may seem obvious, but it has a few important consequences. First of all, it means we do not know that a sway space necessarily exists as a result of, say, a long shot of an attractively presented character. Instead, there is only a potential for a sway space to develop between the viewer and the film in that moment. Further analyses based on these techniques must be considered with this in mind.

Secondly, even if we are fairly confident of the possibility of a sway space and that empathetically negotiated flows may be swaying the viewer, the viewer may also be initiating her own sways herself. In other words, the viewer could be responding to the film as much as she is swaying with it. Some of these responses are also primed by the viewer's relationship with the character. For example, if a high empathy character appears dumbfounded for a moment, the audience may empathize with being dumbfounded, or they may laugh. The laugh is a completely different response, but can be cued quite easily, and it may be just as much related to the connection between the viewer and the character as another response. Viewers who are experiencing an affect unlike the one portrayed on screen may be nevertheless following the film's sway or they may be responding uniquely of themselves. It may even be a combination. It is hard to tell, and knowing what the viewer really does is impossible here. Nevertheless, the presence of response affects, especially cued response affects, is important to the whole of sway space, and does not interfere with geographies of empathy.

Cataloging how films use techniques to elicit empathy minute by minute may provide interesting results for some films. Most films set up their connection and maintain it, making a methodical analysis dull and uneventful. A more interesting approach would be to catch the most telling moments in the film that reveal a general sway space geography. This should work well for this study because it speaks in terms of accretions over time: the Soviet present wouldn't be very meaningful if it occurred for five seconds in five years. Breaking down a representational logic would seem to take more bodily action by many bodies watching many films. Nevertheless, catching geographies in true moment by moment motion---which would include wafflings, oscillations, jiggles and other gestures---would be an interesting challenge. It would probably take a careful choice of films to bring the relationship between those momentary relations and their political and representational outcomes into clarity. Currently I don't trust my methods to be developed enough to provide any reliability to an analysis of that detail.

Because of this orientation, my analyses will be quite short. I think this is appropriate. Part of taking on non-representational theories is to avoid plumbing the depths of a film's content, which usually takes lengthy analysis. My analyses are meant to be a demonstration of how affect and sway spaces can undermine a representational binary, and that they can provide an appropriate way of understanding non-representational phenomena in film.

FIVE RUSSIAN ANIMATED FILMS

SWAY SPACE GEOGRAPHIES IN FIVE FILMS

I have chosen to analyze five films. Four of them are related to the representational binary I've already highlighted between Soviet and post-Soviet cultures. I will look at the first two in the context of dismantling that binary through empathetically modulated sway spaces. These first two films are powerful and typical manipulators of affect. I use the second pair of films to explore some different behaviors of sway spaces that are not operating primarily through empathy. I'm including a fifth film that was made significantly earlier in the post-Soviet period because it exemplifies a reoccurring theme in this thesis about the power relations between film body and viewer's body.

I begin with an *The Tree of Childhood* (2009) and *Smeshariki: Without Anyone* (2008). My second two films are *The Petrel* (2004) and *The King Forgets* (2006), and my last film is *Bolero* (1992). For descriptions of these films please refer to Appendix II. The filmography contains links to some films. I have watched all of them in theaters with large audiences.

THE TREE OF CHILDHOOD AND SMESHARIKI: WITHOUT ANYONE



The Tree of Childhood (2009)



*Smeshariki:
Without Anyone* (2008)



Hedgehog in the Fog (1975)

The Tree of Childhood and *Smeshariki: Without Anyone* are similar enough that it is worth looking at them together. Both films are following in the tradition of Norshtein, although in different ways, and both films have highly directed, tight sway spaces based on high empathy flows. They both break down the representational binary between Soviet and post-Soviet culture.

The Tree of Childhood picks up on the visual and felt style introduced by Norshtein in *Hedgehog in the Fog* (1975). *The Tree of Childhood* uses the same aesthetic of detailed drawings on cut-outs that are layered. Although *The Tree of Childhood* uses modern technology to achieve this, the feel of the film echoes the dreamy look and feel of Norshtein's paper originals. The film's backdrop is in misty unknown lands much as the original,¹¹ and emphasizes a frightening and personal journey through them. Both films have fairy tale references. Other elements of *The Tree of Childhood* do not clearly appear to be referring to anything, although the story about a young hero rising to beat a challenger has more of a western flavor than most Soviet animation.

Smeshariki: Without Anyone takes the opposite tack: it retains the story of Norshtein's *Hedgehog in the Fog*, but drops his styling in favor for a more energetic and commercial look. In fact, *Smeshariki: Without Anyone* follows Norshtein's film so closely that many of the same images and shots are repeated from the earlier film.¹² *Smeshariki: Without Anyone* uses its hedgehog character from other films in the series to make the resemblance to Norshtein's film unmistakable. Nevertheless, the film feels like a translation of *Hedgehog in the Fog*: the moral is clarified (or tweaked), events are made more concrete, and it all happens in the more tightly defined social context of the *Smeshariki* series. The film is also several minutes shorter than the original, so things move a bit faster. These elements of today's media context are seamlessly folded in with this older material.

Representational theories would struggle to deal with the mixing of the past and present in these films. *The Tree of Childhood* looks like a kind of nostalgic ideal, an inviting fantasy. Could it be used as a model for our present actions? Well, yes, the moral fiber of this child, who journeyed after a treasured friend and stood up to a selfish robber, is inspiring. But how does placing the film in the styling of the 1970s enrich this model? Representationally, styling makes *The Tree of Childhood* seem separate from this world, reinforcing a binary that the body can't understand. But the point is that this doesn't have to be a separate world. If one is to learn representationally from this child, the world he inhabits must be relevant to this one. That relevance could be articulated representationally, but it does just as well to collapse the reference and use the body instead, which is what this film does. The references to the past are not references, they are just the continuation of a tradition into the present day that is just as compelling now as it was then.

Smeshariki: Without Anyone also fits into the present all too well. It may seem like this film is trying to take the place of *Hedgehog in the Fog*, a kind of re-writing of the past to make it more meaningful as a model for the present. The lesson---“exploration will help you grow as a person”---has changed significantly from the original, which I can only hesitantly articulate as “the world sometimes stretches to something beyond itself.” The original moral was very much about Russian society in the 1970s, when Russians slowly lost belief in their society. Yet wondering about the potential for another reality does not seem to be the thrust of *Smeshariki: Without Anyone*. So yes, representationally, this film has been filtered and reconfigured, but not to make us reject or value the culture of the 1970s as a model for today. This is about the present alone, one that includes the past as part of the present, not as a model for the present.

¹¹ See images 2 - 6 in Appendix I.

¹² See images 7 - 15 in Appendix I.

These two films thus reveal a world where the division between this past and the present is no longer useful. The representational boundary between them is not maintained despite the prominence of the past in these films. If we look at the sway spaces of these films we find they are constructed to establish strong empathetic connections through which they can communicate about their characters. This makes for tight, energetic sway spaces and close affective geographies.

Both *The Tree of Childhood* and *Smeshariki: Without Anyone* insistently beg for empathy from viewers. Facial shots are large, common, redundant, and, especially in the case of *The Tree of Childhood*, long lasting.¹³ Both films use point of view editing as well.¹⁴ The faces are highly expressive. *Smeshariki: Without Anyone* moves through sequences of clear expressions with ease. For example, when Hedgehog is picked for entering the forest, he begins in ignorance, enjoying his pie. He then stops in surprise at everyone watching him, stops again in surprise as he understands his predicament, and then begins to look concerned while swallowing his bite of pie with trouble. This takes only four seconds. *The Tree of Childhood*'s hero is slower, but transitions from one expression to another are subtle, rich and impeccable on the child's attractive face. The wider narrative context of both of these films is also helpful for empathy. *Smeshariki: Without Anyone* benefits from being part of a series, where viewers can become familiar with characters, and are likely to be open to them from the start of the episode. *The Tree of Childhood* begins with an endearing bedtime routine for its child hero and then closely follows him through trials for the remainder of the film.

Both films want to establish and maintain an empathetic connection with their viewers, which means that if the viewers go along with it, there should be a strong flow of affect between film and bodies. This circle of flows can tighten as the film progresses, reassuring the viewer of his connection with redundant techniques. Neither of these films give reason to break the connection later in the film. Neither film appears clearly boring to me, either, which would also break the flow. The theater audiences for these films were eager for *Smeshariki: Without Anyone*, and enthralled by *The Tree of Childhood*, gasping when the hero puts his foot down. Thus, the flow through empathy opens a sway space and organizes bodies within it topologically. At the moment of film watching, the bodies of viewers are closest to the bodies of the film---the heroes and friends on screen and the body of the whole film itself. The viewer feels as if she is part of the film.

As affect flows, the bodies of the viewers are open to the antics of the bodies onscreen. How those bodies are living is important. In these films, the bodies of the characters are acting in a context that is both Soviet and post-Soviet, a world where the line between these things doesn't exist. The human bodies acting in this world make it real, more real than simply making a film that is never seen, or only analyzed representationally. As the viewer's bodies return to non-film spaces, or other film spaces, they can bring living freely with them, and sway other bodies. These two films give bodies practice at being wide open to the representational reorganization that

¹³ See images 22 - 48 for facial imagery and sway spaces in both films in Appendix I.

¹⁴ See images 15 - 21 for a point of view sequence in *The Tree of Childhood* in Appendix I.

comes through tight connections. In this case, that reorganization is the collapsing of the binary of Soviet and post-Soviet times.

Of course, not all films operate so powerfully through empathy. While my work has largely been geared towards imagining the geography of high empathy spaces, it is worth exploring other sway spaces as well to enrich that geography. *The Petrel* and *The King Forgets* are both still diffusing the Soviet/post-Soviet binary, but they have two contrasting geographies. In *The Petrel*, sway space is located entirely among the viewers, and in *The King Forgets*, sway space is unintentionally kept from them. I will start with *The Petrel* and follow it with *The King Forgets*.

THE PETREL



The Petrel (2004)

The Petrel, like the other films, fails to distinguish past from present. Although this film portrays a globalized Russia, other aspects of its classroom environment easily parallel generic childhood experiences of both the Soviet and post-Soviet periods. Today's world is parodied when a student comes in wearing in-line skates and headphones, and when students stereotyped as post-Soviet lowlifes walk in late explaining that the streetcar broke down. But the streetcar breaking down, and the practice of making excuses to the teacher could happen in either period. The class's task is to read aloud Gorky's communist poem "The Petrel", a common Soviet practice, which signals that very little has changed in the last fifteen years. Other common schoolroom situations, like the kid that is always eating, and the incapable yelling teacher, abound, making the classroom familiar to those in school today and those who were in school in the Soviet period.

Certainly, this film contains a representational critique. National heroes are not taken seriously, and teacher's authority does not command respect. What happens to this society today, with problems so like the previous one? If nothing has changed, maybe Russia's trajectory needs to be re-evaluated. Viewers who notice these things are referring to texts or memories of past where the past is clearly separate from the present. As their minds engage in comparison, their bodies are in sway space. In this film, sway space is not at all geared to encourage the evaluative mind, but to help bodies connect against the film.

Empathy doesn't play much of a role in *The Petrel*. *The Petrel* does include many face shots, a number of them close-up, which could elicit empathy.¹⁵ The film is not coordinated for empathy in other ways though. The characters have unattractive personalities and are drawn as caricatures. The film moves between these characters without giving one much time to get to know them. The teacher is the center of attention, but her grimaces and glares are an immediate turn-off. The bodies of the viewers are not encouraged to be open to the bodies on screen. Empathy is not flowing, so the sway space that opens in this film does not revolve around an affective connection with the film.

In this film, sway space opens because of humor, and is created and contributed to largely by the bodies in the theater. *The Petrel* is incredibly funny and it makes people laugh.¹⁶ I watched this film in a packed theater in Moscow that filled with guffaws. This film encourages sway spaces to open between people watching it. Laughter is infectious and bounces between bodies as they open to it. In a large sway space, flows bounce back and forth between nodes, pulling bodies into variation with each other where the slightest tickle will set the whole group off. This film primes that by not taking itself seriously. To laugh one must also let down one's guard, and this film is not threatening, even though people fall out windows, giant penguins appear spontaneously, and the whole classroom eventually washes out to sea. These exaggerations are ridiculous in caricature, not compelling possibilities for the viewers' futures.

As *The Petrel* unites its viewers in laughter, it unites their bodies in their shared past. Bodies born in Soviet times laugh as well as those born since, and they laugh together at shared experiences. *The Petrel* invites them not to live in the context on screen so much as respond together to a context they all share. This film doesn't encourage viewers to evaluate their past, present and future. Instead it asks them to come alive with laughter in an inclusive present.

THE KING FORGETS



The King Forgets (2006)

The King Forgets is a continuation of an orientation championed by films made in the 1970s. These films, including *Contact* (1978), *How the Lion and the Turtle Sang a Song* (1974), and *Bremen Musicians* (1969), articulate their points through song and dance. The craftsmanship of *The King Forgets* is a bit weak, and this has varying effects on the film. Unlike the other films I've reviewed

¹⁵ See images 49 - 52 in Appendix I.

¹⁶ I haven't discussed techniques that cue humor, but Eitzen (1999) has some interesting thoughts on it. Images 53 - 55 give some sense of the visuality of the humor.

here, sway space geographies make the entire argument of *The King Forgets*, but they don't manage to include viewers very well.

Understanding *The King Forgets* in terms of its relationship with similar films of the 1970s is not particularly fruitful. Even though *The King Forgets* structures an affective space in a similar way, these films do not come to mind when watching it. *The King Forgets* includes no clear visual references to those films, and looks rather like a continuation of Norshtein's aesthetic instead. Thus, the past reoccurred in this film entirely unflagged. This signals comfort with the past that is the result of sway spaces in other films dismantling the binary. The past is now part of the present so much so that its primary representational connection to the past can be erased or confused.

The King Forgets is representationally hobbled in other ways. It does not articulate a convincing argument and can easily be shrugged off as a useless fantasy. The film is organized around a threat of war that is repeatedly deflected. The threat of war, however, is never substantiated: the source of the threat is ridiculous and the motive never mentioned.¹⁷ The local kingdom never needs to address real reasons for strife, and so the film's resolution is impossible to apply to real life conflicts. The film is based on the assumption that human conflict is a mirage that can drop away under the right conditions. This representational argument is unsatisfying.

Paired with this argument are scenes that are intended to elicit empathy. There are a large number of face shots that run at some duration. The film begins with a humorous introduction to the king consisting of his morning dressing ritual. Having set up a connection with him, the film follows him for the rest of the story. Unfortunately, this set up is botched because the animation is simplistic. The faces are inexpressive, remaining mostly still, facing outwards, and bobbing some.¹⁸ Often emotional states are articulated by the eyebrows alone. These drawbacks mean that these characters don't have enough depth to encourage one to connect with them. The actual sway space dynamics are not boosted by high empathy as it looks like was intended.

The lack of empathy means that sway spaces are probably not very strong in this film, and that they may come and go while it is being watched. Viewers are unlikely to become attached to this film the way they might to *The Tree of Childhood* or *Smeshariki*. Nevertheless, *The King Forgets* compensates with song and dance. The longest scenes are not of expression but of rhythmic, coordinated, bodily exercise. These scenes, in fact, make the point of the film, and in a non-representational way. These scenes are what 'solve' the conflict between the local and foreign kingdoms. It is not a good representational argument, because no representations are required for this solution, but it is an excellent bodily argument. Bodies that sway together---those of locals and foreigners alike---connect with each other. *The King Forgets* is reminding viewers of this.

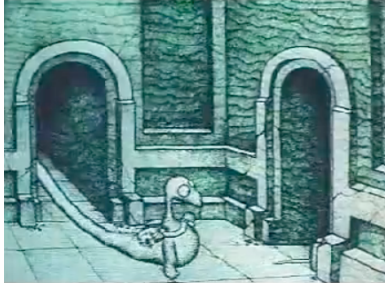
It is possible that the singing and dancing is enough to open a sway space with viewers, since empathy isn't the only ingredient in sway spaces. Nevertheless, what is interesting about *The King Forgets* is that it shows a sway space on screen without necessarily managing to include the

¹⁷ See images 59 - 60 in Appendix I.

¹⁸ See images 55 - 58 in Appendix I.

audience in it as well. Of course, then, the film seems to fall a little flat. Sway spaces are meaningless when one is not part of them. No geography springs out of this film because it is hard to get near the film, but the film presents a geography nevertheless.

BOLERO



Bolero (1992)

I want to include Bolero in my analyses even though it doesn't really fit with the other four films I've discussed. Bolero is from 1992, so its representational argument is organized around creating the binary that the previous four films collapse. This earlier work also required non-representational interventions to bring the new post-Soviet reality into being, so Bolero has an interesting sway space dynamic. Bolero is an example of a film that creates an energetic sway space but doesn't give the viewer a lot of direction about what to do in that space. It is a film that hands power over to the viewers in a way that the previous films do not.

Bolero is five minutes long and contains one long shot of a creature following its long tail in circles through a tunnel. Very little happens aside from that: the creature eats lunch and use the bathroom halfway through the film, and occasionally little insects and gnomes pop out of the walls and scurry across the floor.¹⁹ Meanwhile, Ravel's *Bolero* is marching through the whole film.

Bolero is a maddening film to watch because it gives no directions on how to digest what the viewer is seeing. There is no empathy in the film. While the creature with the long tail is attractively drawn and even has some human characteristics, it doesn't interact with the viewers or other creatures and has no apparent personality.²⁰ The film opens with views of uninhabited architecture instead of with an anecdote about this creature. The rest of the view is still, black and white, echoey, empty, and cold, so it isn't giving any clues for connection either. What's more, Bolero keeps this up without change for five minutes, an eternity of film time. The camera never moves. Bolero insists that there's something to be gleaned from what's on screen, but gives no hints to what that is. This film is annoyingly redundant and hard to ignore despite its antipathy for the viewer.

¹⁹ See images 64 - 66 in Appendix I.

²⁰ See images 67 - 68 in Appendix I.

The body here cannot connect and is trapped in its own internal life. Sitting in a theater, one cannot just leave or move on. One might feel frustration, boredom, impatience, disillusionment, and confusion. A different viewer might be curious about the film, since it is so different, and open themselves up to it. Yet another may read the representational message in the film and feel companionship with what it's depicting. Really, the film doesn't say what the viewer should make of it, leaving the viewer's minds and bodies to work that out for themselves. For those unused to this---probably a large share of viewers in fact---it could be quite traumatic. Bolero's sway spaces are unfocused, searching, wobbling, out of tune, and not clearly anywhere.

Bolero's representational story is forceful, but obscure. It shows the individual stuck unthinkingly walking in circles. The final minute in the film shows this individual replicated dozens of times, each walking in circles alone in an isolated room.²¹ I assume this is a depiction of the lifeless Soviet individual in the dysfunctional Soviet society. The only cue that this film portrays Soviet life is the title, which in its entirety is actually *Maurice Ravel and Ivan Maximov in a film of Enriched Spirituality: Bolero*. This title critiques the tendency for Soviet art to seek out escape from society via spirituality instead of facing social problems. This critique could easily be leveled at Norshtein's *Hedgehog in the Fog*. So Bolero is geared towards alerting the recently minted post-Soviet individual of the inadequacy of its preceding life. This critique is not exactly clearly presented though. One needs to be thinking in metaphors to catch it, which, given the structure of the film, is unlikely to happen as one is watching it.

Bolero has a more ambitious project in its sway space that is somewhat like *The King Forgets*. It forces the body, which has become accustomed to being directed to go in circles, to go in circles obviously, forcefully, and miserably. The lack of choice and the unpleasantness of life in that sway space come into focus. It's as if this characterization of Soviet life must be experienced highly compressed for the problem within it to be identified. The compression crazes the mind and body, and the body acts out to overturn reality. Meanwhile, it is also opening the body to a freedom it has rarely experienced before. It is fascinating that Bolero can accomplish both its hyper simulation of entrapment and its radical liberation of the body at the same time. These kinds of opposites could only exist in sway space, and they do so marvelously here.

CONCLUSION

In these five films, we have seen how the representational binary of Soviet/post-Soviet cultures is not compelling from a bodily perspective. Seeing the past through a referential or symbolic lens doesn't help these films make their points. Instead, these films are better understood as time spent living in particular ways.

Sway spaces appear between bodies, whether between human bodies and film bodies, between only human bodies, or between only film bodies. Through flows, these spaces articulate a nearness, an involvement, a sameness, when empathy elicitation is a major technique used in the film. When they don't or fail to use empathy, the space migrates, and pulls other bodies together while leaving some out. This reorganization happens in semi-conscious or unconscious bodily sway spaces and briefly becomes the lived relations for bodies in those spaces.

²¹ See image 69 in Appendix I.

These films also show that bodies have differing amounts of power over other bodies, and that not all bodies are predicted to be used to having complete undirected power over their actions. This has been a minor part of the thesis, but clearly an important one in terms of social relations.

Having developed these foundational thoughts about sway spaces and explored them briefly in the context of five Russian animated films, there is clearly more directions to take this in. There is probably a much wider variety of sway spaces and politics emerging out of them to explore. Also, other techniques that create flows and affect sway spaces need to be made more concrete. More studies that involve real viewers would be invaluable to understanding bodies in relations during film watching. And clearly, there are many more films with interesting sway spaces and non-representational politics to learn about.

Overall, this study has shown that there is a lot of potential in studying how bodies move through life together. This study has tried to develop the idea of film watching as a bodily practice of social importance. It has done this in the context of a representational binary that is being dismantled by bodily life in the present tense, with the hope that we can be more inclusive in how we approach film analysis. However, film watching is a small part of bodily experience, and certainly not the only encounter with representational logics. Broadening the idea of sway spaces out into the every day lives of bodies and people, or into other media spaces, could be fertile research for the future.

Post-defense notes:

Two issues came up in my defense that I would like to point out here, since I am now more clearly aware of them, and my reader may be thinking about these things:

1. I inadvertently constructed a new binary between symbolic and bodily orders as I tried to deconstruct representational binaries.
2. My thesis is speculative in that I do not know how to materially substantiate sway space as a real, detectable phenomenon. I lean heavily on theory instead.

You learn as you go.

APPENDIX I: IMAGES



Image 1. Travelers interacting with an advertisement projected on a screen at the Minneapolis airport. December 25th, 2010.

NOTE: I have taken screenshots from each film. The shots don't show the true dynamism of the sway spaces they help create. Much of the expressiveness of these films comes through in movement, which is missing here. These images also encourage close or repetitive study of isolated moments, a more representational practice. I provide them nevertheless in case access to the films themselves is limited.

Images 2 - 6: Misty imagery from 1975 repeated in films made in the late 2000s.



The Tree of Childhood (2009).
First misty world at minute 3:07.



The Tree of Childhood (2009).
Tree dreamworld at 4:16.
This image reappears multiple times.

Smeshariki: Without Anyone (2008)



Images 5 and 6: *Hedgehog in the Fog* (1975)

Images 7 - 15: *Smeshariki: Without Anyone* (2008) visually citing *Hedgehog in the Fog* (1975)



Hedgehog watches flies (1975)



Hedgehog in celestial forest (1975)



...with flies in celestial forest (2008)



Falling in water (1975)



(2008)



Lying in water (1975)



(2008)



Looking up at the stars (1975)



(2008)

Images 15 - 21. *The Tree of Childhood* (2009). Losing the teddy bear point of view sequence.

Minutes 1:02 to 1:05. The sequence starts with two shots of his object of interest (the lack of teddy bear),



one during sleep,



and the other after suddenly waking up.



Minutes 1:06 to 1:07. Three facial expressions:
first a look to check,



then blinking,

then full alarm.



Minute 1:09. A final view of the missing teddy bear.



Images 22 - 26. A sequence of face shots after the ball the children are playing with is stolen out of the air by a bird. The children turn to cardboard and are blown away.



Clearing his head.

Looking again.

Shock.

Cardboard children.

Back to shock.

Images 27 - 32. Close empathetic sway spaces in *The Tree of Childhood* (2009).



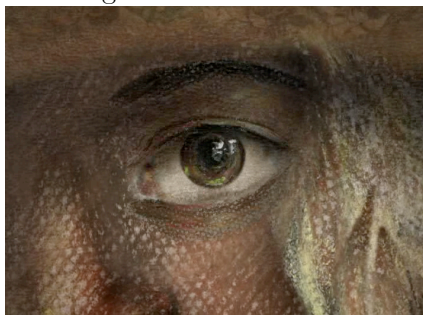
Yawning.



Drowning.



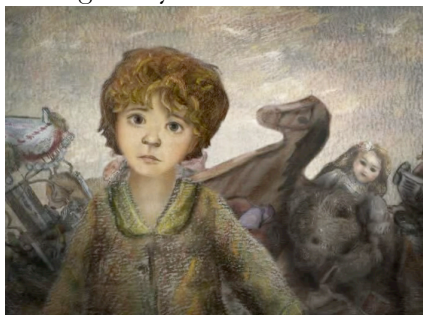
Seeing teddy bear turned to cardboard.



First view of antagonist.



Second view of antagonist.



Taking stance against antagonist.

Images 33 - 41: Expressive sequences in *Smeshariki: Without Anyone* (2008).



Chewing.

Learning of his trip to the forest... Swallowing.

It's sinking in.



Morose with failure.

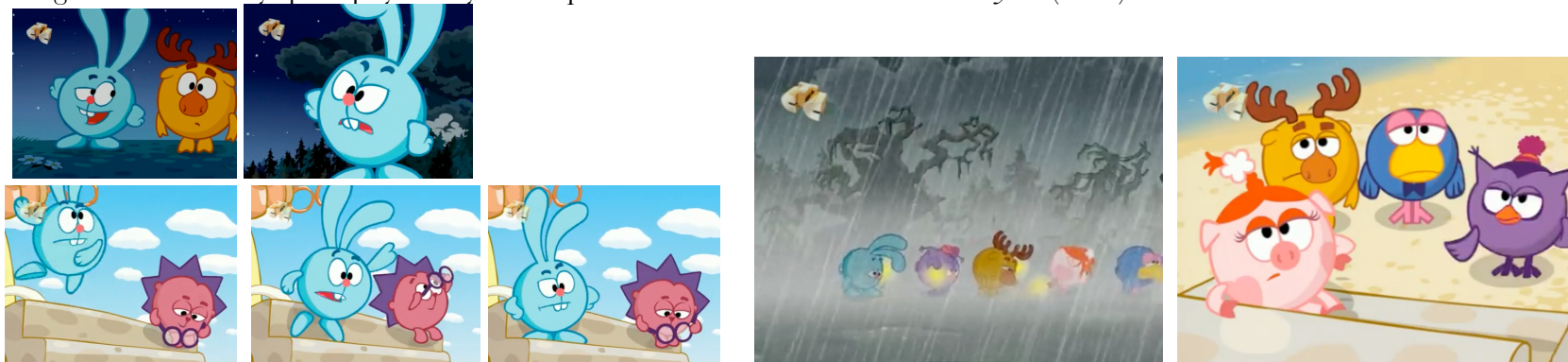
Heard something.

Looking around...

... some more

giving up again.

Images 42 - 48: Sway space physicality and expressiveness in *Smeshariki: Without Anyone* (2008)



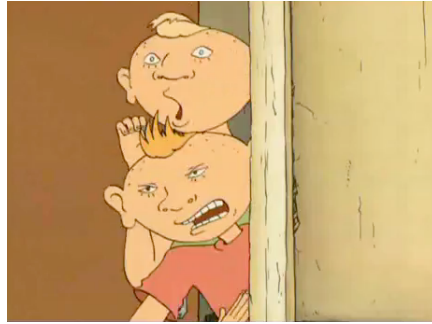
Rabbit is excessive, as always.

The whole group adds redundancy to the feeling.

Images 49 - 52: Unappealing face shots in *The Petrel* (2004)



First view of the teacher
(there's a fly in her hair)



Two lowlifes come in late.



Teacher angry



The know-it-all recites the poem.

Images 53 - 54: it is hard to take
the classroom seriously...



The class at sea.



Pushkin pulls Gorky's mustache.

Images 55 - 58: Lack of expression in *The King Forgets* (2006)



“I forgot where I’m going.”



“To war?”



“No, that’s unlikely.”

Images 59 - 60: The invading king.



First view, laughing aggressively.

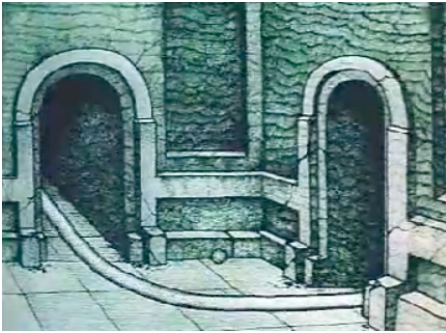


He’s tiny with huge hair!

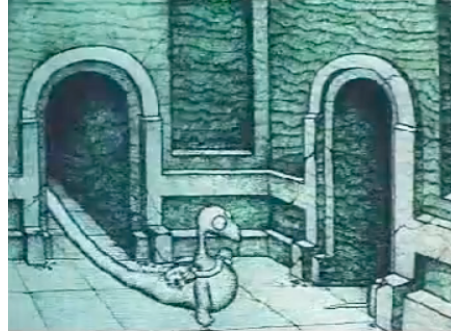


Images 61 - 63: singing and dancing scenes. Sway space enhanced by redundant bodies, human and non-human (horse, lion, and statues join in).

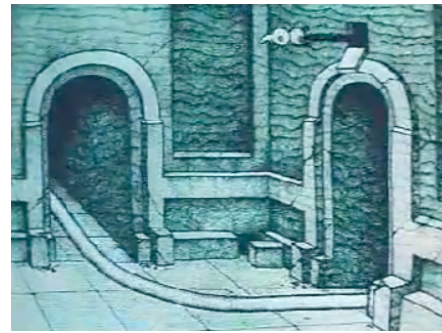
Images 64 - 66: Five minutes of this creature and his tail walking in circles in *Bohero* (1992).



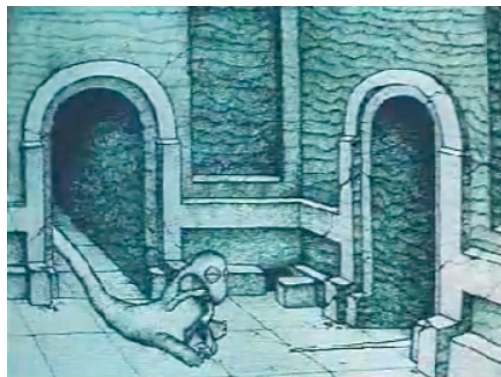
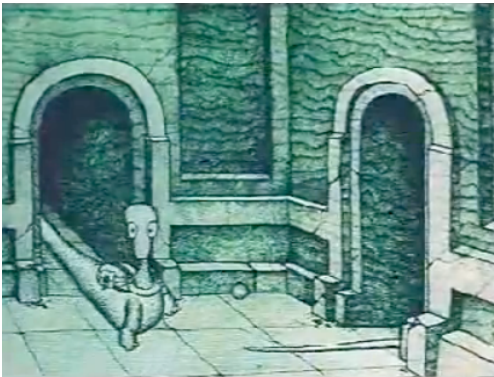
First shot at 26 sec and counting.



Creature appears at 39 sec.



Wall creature at 3.00.



Images 67 - 68: Sparse human characteristics: a look at the audience and lunch.

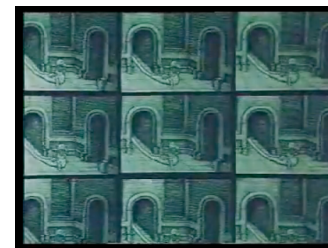


Image 69: View replicates in the last minute.

APPENDIX II: FILM DESCRIPTIONS

THE TREE OF CHILDHOOD

The Tree of Childhood describes a young boy's dream sequence in which he is looking for his stolen teddy bear. The film begins with him reading to his bear, and his mother telling him to "Leave your bear and go to bed." He fixes the bear's shoe and says goodnight. He awakes when his bear is pulled from him, and he frantically starts searching his room for it. The wall opens to reveal a large tree with a ladder, which he climbs, finding his bear's shoe along the way. In the tree he encounters three worlds. The first is a sort of Babylon with waterfalls, bushes, archways and stairwells. Here birds swoop by him carrying toys, and one has his bear. He tries to follow it but falls in water and drowns. This wakes him up, and he enters the next world. There, he finds his bear watching some children playing in an old fashioned European city. The children throw him their ball, but when he throws it back, it is caught by a swooping bird, and the children turn to cardboard. The city is blown away and he is taken away by a bird. He wakes up again to enter the third world, where a bird carries him to the top of the tree. There lives a giant sad-faced woman with a wide-brimmed hat and feathery arms. Her friends, the birds and some friendly looking beetles, are busy among mounds of toys. He finally finds his bear. She rises and says, "Leave me your bear" in the same tone as his mother. He responds, "Not for anything!" Instantly the piles of toys gathered at the top of the tree begin to fall, the world becomes unstable, and the boy and his bear fall to the bottom of the tree. The film ends with him sleeping there and the woman and her friends flying off into the distance as the tree slowly falls apart.

SMESHARIKI: WITHOUT ANYONE

Smeshariki: Without Anyone begins at a party with the group of friends challenging each other to do silly things. Piggy challenges Hedgehog to go into the woods alone in the dark. Once Hedgehog enters the woods, a thunderstorm breaks out. Hedgehog becomes terrified and runs blindly, eventually falling into a dry well. His friends comb the forest searching for him, but fail to find him. He eventually climbs out of the well to see before him a magically beautiful landscape. Deeply changed, he returns home to tell his friends about his experiences. Rabbit has been worried about Hedgehog, and is so excited once Hedgehog is back that he continually interrupts Hedgehog's stories. Eventually the group of friends accuses Rabbit of being too chicken to go into the forest himself, so he resolves to prove it to them. Hedgehog prevents anyone from going after Rabbit because he knows that Rabbit will feel the same transformative experience only after being alone and frightened in the forest (hence the title, "Without Anyone"). The film ends on this hopeful, soothing note of one friend ensuring another friend a chance to understand life more deeply.

THE PETREL

The Petrel begins with the teacher peering at her grade book to decide which student should come to the front of the room to recite. A fat student comes in late, impulsively eating a cookie, saying the streetcar broke down. Two gangly twins come in shortly after also saying the streetcar broke down. Another student makes a goofy noise, and the teacher demands, "Who did that?" The class cowers until the know-it-all says, "Fedotov did it." Fedotov claims innocence, and the

teacher asks him to leave the room, which he doesn't. The teacher calls the know-it-all to the front to recite. As the poem begins, water, stormy clouds and a petrel appear. The teacher interrupts to tell Fedotov to leave again and another student comes in late on in-line skates and ends up skating out the window. The know-it-all continues, and the classroom fills with more water and clouds. A penguin walks in late. The classroom disintegrates in the growing storm, the students, teacher, streetcars and desks floating in and out of view on a tossing sea. Fedotov becomes the petrel, whom the teacher pursues, but the petrel drops her into the sea and laughs. Then the school bell rings, and everyone floats out of the waterlogged room. Fedotov is left behind and becomes Pushkin, still misbehaving. Gorky comes in late with the same streetcar excuse. Pushkin makes fun of him, and they begin to fight. The teacher says, "Leave the classroom!" one last time, her glasses shooting at them, and they turn into flies and disappear.

THE KING FORGETS

The King Forgets starts with the sun shining down on a king riding a horse to Russian folk music. After the opening credits, we see the king get dressed and go for a walk. Part way through his walk, he forgets where he is going. He begins thinking about the treaty he signed with the neighboring king the day before, and wonders if the other king was serious. As a precaution, he gathers an army, but once he has it, he's forgotten why. He thinks a moment. The soldiers wait expectantly, and then he says, "Let's sing!" The army sings and dances until the neighboring king shows up with his army. The Russian king thinks the neighbors want to join them in singing, and he tosses the neighboring king (who is rather small) into the neighboring army. The neighboring army crumbles away, leaving the neighboring king with nothing to do but sing. He joins in and everyone decides that such meetings should happen spontaneously more often.

BOLERO

Bolero is five minutes long and contains one long shot of a creature following its long tail in circles through a tunnel. The viewer watches this from a room that intersects the tunnel. Long parts of the film show only the long tapering tail sliding through the room. These repeating twenty second periods seem like eternities. They are interrupted by smaller creatures who will pop out of the walls and floor, dart across the screen or play, before disappearing again. Towards the end of the film, the creature pauses to eat something crunchy, then to use the bathroom, and continues. The film ends with the image on the screen doubling and quadrupling as if seen on a bank of televisions or through a compound eye, the creature still walking. The film is named *Bolero* because Maurice Ravel's "Bolero" plays for the duration, except for stopping briefly while the creature eats lunch. The creature's footsteps are in rhythm with the plodding, cyclical, vaguely sad, music.

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