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**Nostalgic representations of the socialist
past in contemporary German and Russian
cinema**

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Introduction

The 20th century became a harbor for many turning points in history, which to a great extent influenced further development of the world and effected lives of millions of people. The emergence and spreading of the socialist regimes in different countries had to face a decline of socialist dogma in Europe and eventually ended with the collapse of the Eastern bloc. The Velvet Revolutions of 1989-1990, which one by one led to transformation of the established political regimes, brought democracy and freedom to Eastern European countries. One of the most remarkable symbols of these events was the destruction of the Berlin Wall in November 1989.

Nevertheless, the following reunification of Germany, which was initially awaited with hopes for a better future, did not only bring liberalization and amenities of capitalism to the former citizens of the German Democratic Republic, but also triggered disappointment and frustration. East Germans, whose skills, education and qualifications were recognized and appreciated in their homeland, were threatened by an unbelievably high level of unemployment which was aggravated by privatization of previously state-owned assets. Stability and predictability of life in the GDR suddenly seemed attractive to “Ossies” whose longing for the irrevocable past created “Ostalgie”, or nostalgia for the German Democratic Republic.

As in the case of the GDR, the expectations from the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 were disappointed by political and economic instability caused by a harsh financial crisis of 1998. Consequently, former citizens of the Soviet Union inevitably began to refer to the times under socialism, when they had felt more secure, enjoyed welfare benefits and predictability, which drastically contrasted with the problems they faced in a new-built society. Nostalgic feelings based on positive reconstructions of the past events filter memory recollections as a sieve, putting aside what does not benefit them. At the same time, those feelings might become actualized in the context of certain political, economic and sociocultural changes taking place in the society. Germany and Russia, though sharing common socialist legacy, are embedded into very different economic, political, and historical contexts, which might have an effect on different representations of the past.

Post-socialist nostalgia in both cases is a very complex, sometimes even ambivalent, phenomenon which represents itself in various mediating arenas. In this research, I focus on one of them: cinema. Cinematic representations, which are a very powerful instrument of shaping collective memory, may become an essential source of information about certain nostalgic images that exist in the minds of people. In a way, they create an unofficial version of history by reconstructing the past. In this thesis, I attempt to analyze how the socialist past is presented in German and Russian contemporary feature films.

Since this thesis focuses on nostalgic representations of the socialist past as they have been articulated in selected German and Russian films, the main goal of this research is to compare nostalgic images of the socialist past presented in German and Russian cinema, while taking into consideration the sociocultural, economic and political contexts of these countries.

Novelty of the study

Despite the fact that there are quite many works devoted to the topic of nostalgia and its representation in cinema, these studies mostly focus on the analysis of films either in Germany (Kapczynski, 2007; Mueller, 2008; Bondebjerg, 2010; Hodgins, 2011) or in Russia (Nemchenko, 2016; Abramov, 2012) and hardly provide a comparative analysis of cinematic nostalgic representations in two countries. Nevertheless, Germany and Russia appear to be quite interesting cases for comparison, because, on the one hand, they share a common socialist background, but, on the other hand, they differ dramatically in many aspects. The present research, therefore, attempts to fill in the gap in the investigation of the phenomenon of nostalgia in general, and, particularly, in cinema, while introducing a qualitative analysis of nostalgic representations of the socialist past focusing on a comparative aspect of Germany and Russia.

Research question and research tasks

The major question this research poses is: How are nostalgic representations of the socialist past mediated and communicated through contemporary German and Russian cinema?

In order to give a complete answer to the key research question, the following research tasks should be accomplished:

- To develop a coherent theoretical framework based on social constructivist approach to the study of collective memory and nostalgia;
- To identify what nostalgic images of the socialist past are constructed in selected German and Russian films;
- To reveal and examine major instruments of cinematic representation of the socialist past in contemporary German and Russian cinema;
- To identify and analyze strategies utilized to represent the socialist past in the selected films;
- To interpret and compare the results of the analysis while taking into consideration the sociocultural, economic and political contexts of Germany and Russia.

Methods and sampling

As the stated research tasks require an in-depth examination of the research object, the analysis was conducted by means of qualitative analysis of visual texts. The obtained data was subjected to sequential analysis based on three levels of coding procedures: open, axial and selective coding. For the analysis, in total eight feature films were selected: four German and four Russian. The main factor that determined the selection of films was the understanding of nostalgia as a longing for a positively reconstructed period of time in the past. Another factor taken into consideration was the popularity and success of the films in the box office.

The structure of the thesis

This research paper falls into four major components: introduction, two chapters and conclusion. The first chapter focuses on the analysis of literature constituting the theoretical framework of this research. I believe that the described theories are particularly relevant for my research project, because they all consider memory as a dynamic process, where the past is being constantly (re)constructed. Namely, the theory of social constructivism that claims that the reality is constructed and institutionalized through various types of interactions between different social actors, is complemented by the academic works of prominent figures in the field of memory studies such as Maurice Halbwachs, who was the first scholar to present the term “collective memory”, Jan Assmann, who developed the notion of cultural memory, and Pierre Nora whose conception of “realms of memory” as material or non-material entities that have a capacity to preserve and recall collective memories was also described in the paper. In the second section of the first chapter, the development of the phenomenon of nostalgia throughout history and various approaches to nostalgia within the field of social sciences are discussed. Finally, the last paragraph of the theoretical chapter introduces the readers to the general context of the formation of nostalgia in Germany and Russia and reviews literature devoted to nostalgic cinema in both countries.

The second, empirical chapter, starts with the description of the process of data collection, while naming the factors that influenced the sample of the films chosen for the analysis. The next two paragraphs investigate the major instruments and strategies utilized to represent the socialist past in cinema. The last part of the second chapter attempts to interpret the findings of two previous paragraphs while analyzing economic, political and sociocultural contexts of Germany and Russia. The conclusion finalizes the results of the empirical research, presents limitations of the thesis and facilitates the discussion on the implementation of the findings in further research.

Chapter 1. Social constructivism as a theoretical frame for the study of collective memory and nostalgia

1.1. Social constructivist approach towards the past. The phenomenon of collective memory

Social constructivism, a scientific paradigm which essentially presupposes that reality is being constructed and institutionalized through various types of interactions between different social actors, may be efficiently utilized as the principal framework for the present study of memory and nostalgia due to several reasons. To begin with, the process of remembering per se occurs within interactions between individuals and groups of people in the context of everyday communications, which matches the idea lying at the core of the social constructivism theory that reality is “intersubjective” – shared via interpersonal interactions (Berger & Luckmann, 1966: 37). Moreover, the reality in which individuals constantly communicate is constructed through the activities of social actors, maintained and transferred by individuals through means of social interrelations. Berger and Luckmann, proposing dual nature of reality, i.e. stating that it can be objective and subjective, advocate the view that those realities are interconnected and can easily be translated one into another (Berger & Luckmann, 1966: 153). Individuals construct their society based on their subjective reality, whereas the objective reality frames the actions of individuals. This point corresponds with the understanding of memory as a constantly changing subjective phenomenon, which, similarly to knowledge, is rebuilt and communicated in the society. As individuals reconstruct social reality, they also ascribe new meanings to the events of the past, and by doing so they tend to rethink and reinterpret it. Therefore, memory may be considered an instrument of constructing reality as the past is being constantly reinterpreted in order to pertain to the present, or even to unintentionally determine individuals’ actions in the future (Berger & Luckmann, 1966: 182).

For many years, the phenomenon of collective memory was studied primarily in psychology and surprisingly neglected by scholars in other fields, gaining in popularity there only over the past several decades. The outspread of this concept into other fields of study originated as many different lines of research as there are scholars to examine them. For psychologists, memory remains a significant object of investigation – there are dozens of journals within the field dedicated to the studies of memory processes, which include flashbulb memories, development of memory with age, memory processes during psychotherapy and many other topics (Roediger & Wertsch, 2008: 13-14). Anthropologists inquire into the topic of succession of memory across generations (Boyer, 2001 in Roediger & Wertsch, 2008: 17), while historians seek to present the most accurate and objective version of the past. Architects are concerned with the matters of commemoration, which presents itself in various memorials or monuments, while political scientists study the effects of past memories on today’s political decision-making. This review of the scientific fields investigating the issues of memory may go further, as well as the variety of topics

these disciplines cover. One more major realm of research that I shall turn my attention to regarding the development of the phenomenon of collective memory is social sciences.

The history of memory studies finding a niche within the realm of sociology in the last decades of the twentieth century was preceded by a milestone study *La Mémoire Collective* (published posthumously in 1980) by the French philosopher, sociologist and a student of Émile Durkheim, Maurice Halbwachs. Considering memory integral to the social context, Halbwachs claims it to be a socially caused and constructed phenomenon, which he coins by the term “collective memory”. Halbwachs’ study proposes that memories of individuals are determined by their membership in social groups – it is an individual who remembers, but it is a group that puts these memories into shape, constructs them, and even prompts individuals to remember or forget them. Our remembrances are so solidly connected to the groups we belong to that leaving the group may result in loss of memory about certain past events as the recollection of the past by a single individual is possible only through communication with other members of the group. Halbwachs illustrates this obligation of affiliation to a certain group in order to remember via the example of a child pulled out from the social frameworks s/he lived under until the age of ten. Both old and new recollections this child possessed will immediately disappear as s/he breaks all the bonds with the social groups s/he once belonged to. In order to recall some of the memories the child had, s/he will need to be shown at least pictures that reconstruct certain events that took place in the society s/he was taken from (Halbwachs, 1980: 37-38).

The memories of an individual are constructed and maintained by virtue of “social frameworks” – various factors that influence the reconstruction of one’s memories – cultural and political contexts s/he is put into as well as the membership in various social groups with commonly shared ideas, values and traditions inside these communities. That said, the more distant a social framework is in relation to individuals, the less power over their recollections it has. On this scale, Halbwachs highlights that family and religious communities have a stronger impact onto one’s memories while history and politics influence them rather indirectly (Halbwachs, 1992: 70). Let us now refer to another crucial point of Halbwachs’ work – the distinction between individual and collective memory.

1.1.1. Typology of collective memory. Communicative and cultural memory

Having described the major ideas of Halbwachs on the phenomenon of collective memory, it is worth to mention his remarks regarding individual memory. Though this research is devoted to the topic of nostalgia and, therefore, has a relation to collective memory, the notion of individual memory helps distinguish between these two types and contributes to a better understanding of collective memory. Writing about individual memory, Halbwachs notes that it often interacts with collective memory, but never merges with it as they both have their own derivative laws. Individual memory, which combines personal recollections of the past events, can base itself upon collective memory; however, if individual memory gets mixed with collective memory, it adapts and changes in accordance with it (Halbwachs, 1992). Besides, memories of every individual related to the same

events may be expressed by means of different choices of signs and influenced by different sociocultural and political contexts to which each individual belongs to. Collective memory, on the contrary, is not simply based on a combination of different personal memories but consists of a set of collectively shared memories and recollections. According to Halbwachs, every social group constructs its own memory that highlights the unique qualities which distinguish this particular group from others. Having reconstructed the images of the past in public consciousness, a social group is able to process its history, origins and internal development.

Apart from that, Halbwachs mentions other terms to denote the concept of memory: autobiographical memory that includes memories of events directly experienced by an individual, which is basically used interchangeably with the term of individual memory; and external, social or historical memory which contains the past recorded in historical documents. The latter kind of memory, though it has not been discussed much by Halbwachs in his own works, was reflected in research of other scholars.

Jan Assmann further elaborates on the approach to memory pointed out by Halbwachs in his study. Assmann divides collective memory into communicative memory and cultural memory, which in his theory are strongly differentiated. Communicative memory, according to Assmann, is built upon daily communications and exists and transmits itself through oral interactions between individuals (Assmann & Czaplicka, 1995). Such everyday oral communication which is characterized by a high level of disorganization, constant shifts in topics of discussion and interchangeability of social roles (individuals can easily switch their roles from a listener to a speaker, etc.) does not allow communicative memories last longer than three generations. This kind of memory, being embedded in the context of oral interpersonal interactions, appears to be highly unformalized. As a result, communicative memory does not have any fixation points that would connect it to deeper past.

Cultural memory, on the contrary, has a fixed point in the past and needs to be supported by various institutions and experts (priests, architects, poets, musicians, etc.) who embed it into certain storages of memory like texts, monuments, music, paintings, etc. Having been embodied in a material form, cultural memory cannot be completely changed, but rather reconstructed, because it gets reevaluated and reinterpreted in different ways by the members of a society who can relate to it through judgment, approval, denial, preservation, transformation, etc. Cultural memory, however, does not represent the past as it is; instead it transforms it into “symbolic forms”, which construct a myth. Therefore, through the preservation within institutions, cultural memory becomes “exteriorized, objectified, and stored away in symbolic forms that, unlike the sounds of the words or the sight of gestures, are stable and situation-transcendent” (Assmann, 2008: 110-111). Another specific feature of cultural memory lies in its threefold reflexiveness. First, cultural memory is practice-reflexive because it reproduces some widespread practice through, for example, rites. Second, it is self-reflexive because throughout history individuals tend to explain, reinterpret, criticize, approve it, etc. Finally, it is reflexive of its own image because, being strongly connected to a group’s identity, it, at the same time,

reflects the self-image of the group (Assmann & Czaplicka, 1995: 132). The two latter points seem to be especially important for the understanding of the concept of nostalgia, which is strongly connected with the identity of a social group and may be considered as a product of development of cultural memory throughout time. In the following paragraphs of this research, I will, among other factors, analyze these two points in more details.

1.1.2. Memory and history: the distinction between the concepts. *Les Lieux de Mémoire*, a study by Pierre Nora

Notwithstanding the fact that both memory and history participate in the formation of national identity while representing certain events of the past, these two concepts have fundamental differences which mark them apart. The need to distinguish memory and history was articulated already at the beginning of the 20th century with the debates around these two phenomena continuing to be a part of the contemporary academia.

Maurice Halbwachs, who was among the first scholars to study the opposition between memory and history, states that they appear to be two separate but closely interpenetrating concepts. Particularly, he considers the major objective of history to collect and preserve documental evidence of the events of the past, which allows to transmit memories to further generations when they are not able to communicate them through themselves. History tends to describe exceptional events of the past as a formal, hardly changeable set of facts arranged in a chronological order, hereby, presenting an objective view of the past, while marginalizing or even ignoring certain memories of different communities. According to Halbwachs, history starts when social memory of the past events fades and disappears: when people have memories to transmit through oral communications, there is no necessity to record them, but once they are gone – there appears the need for accurate registration. Memory has a strong connection to the context of the present serving as a mediator between it and the past, while history destroys this succession and differentiates those two realms of time. Halbwachs argues that it is not the event itself, but the memory of this event that becomes the major subject of history, which demonstrates how these two categories interlace with each other. What else is worth mentioning regarding history is that it conveys solid bare facts, while memory integrates different, sometimes even opposing, narratives of the same past events, which forms a complex understanding of the past. Jan Assmann (2011) contributes to the same understanding of memory, claiming it, contrary to history which presupposes a critical perspective from the outside, to be a set of unique experiences incorporated in an uninterrupted process of remembering that can only be shared among the members of a group which an individual belongs to.

French historian Pierre Nora is yet another scholar who contributed a lot to this discussion of the interrelation between history and memory. Claiming history to be a “problematic and incomplete” reconstruction of the past, Nora opposes it to memory, which is tightly bonded with the present and actively participates in the process of constant reevaluation of the past, often prompting into remembering and forgetting in order to adjust to the interests of various social actors. History,

at the same time, attempts to excerpt the memories from the context of social groups and embed them into a depersonalized, universally-applicable image of the past (Nora & Kritzman, 1996).

Nora examines the phenomenon of memory in the context of modernity, which he claims to be highly materialized, prone to archiving, museumization and obsession with the preservation of the past. In his fundamental study, *Les Lieux de Mémoire*, Nora focuses on the so-called “realms of memory” - material and non-material entities which have a capacity to preserve and recall collective memories (Nora & Kritzman, 1996). The phenomenon of realms of memory is so pervasive and diffuse that it can be displayed by a wide variety of examples: archives, museums, monuments, books, films, songs, traditions, events, landmarks, etc. Nora shrewdly observes that the nature of realms of memory is threefold as it embodies material, symbolic and functional elements. Even absolutely material objects such as memorials and documents, or functional ones as a university or a manual, may be considered realms of memory if individuals import a “symbolic aura” into them and ascribe certain meanings to them (Nora, 1989: 19). The scholar suggests that this phenomenon, which he considers a specific feature of modern time, was caused by the extinction of “spontaneous memory”: people strive to create archives, organize ceremonies and erect memorials “because all these activities do not occur in a natural way anymore” (Nora, 1989: 12).

Nora names the “acceleration of history” as the main factor influencing the universal contemporary desire to systematize the past (Nora, 1989: 8). Due to rapid development and advancement of the modern world where hardly anything remains constant and the future seems impossible to predict, individuals feel obligated to retain the present through archiving it. Yet, by doing so, people are not able to inherit the past either, because of all the swift changes which characterize contemporary life, the past has become distant. In order to recover the past, Nora indicates, people seek to reconstruct it with the help of archives (Nora, 1989: 13-14). Another explanation that he proposes correlates with the concept of “democratization of history” - the emancipation of different (sexual, racial, social, religious) minorities who previously, on the one hand, had little historical capital, but, on the other hand, had extensive memories, and for whom the rehabilitation of their memories is strongly related to reaffirmation of their identity (Nora, 1989: 7). The actualization of the minorities’ collective memories is analyzed by Nora through the process of decolonization, which is divided into three following types. The first type is international decolonization – a process through which the societies of the former colonies gain the ability to break out of the cultural trap they were put in by their status of a subservient nation and regain their cultural and historical identity while reclaiming their national or ethnic worldview. The second type is domestic decolonization by which Nora understands emancipation of different kinds of minorities within contemporary Western societies, who by reaffirming their collective memory at the same time strive for reaffirming their identity, which was disregarded by the majority in the past. Finally, the third type of decolonization, ideological decolonization, is ascribed to numerous collapses of totalitarian regimes and dictatorships in

different countries of the world in the 20th century, which prompted liberated people to restore their collective memory that had been previously forbidden, manipulated or demolished by the regime (Nora, 1989).

Considering the topic of this research through the lens of Nora's theory, the collapse of a totalitarian regime may stimulate people to preserve collective memories that contradicted with the politics of the oppressive state. However, apart from that, in German and Russian cases the dissolution of totalitarian states also provoked the reconstruction of positive collective memories, which, among other examples, is displayed in such realms of memory as films. In this research, I shall analyze how and whether those collective memories relate to each other in cinema and how these interactions are embedded in the broader context of the former socialist states. However, before proceeding to that, I should elaborate on the phenomenon of nostalgia, examine different approaches to it and introduce the context of the formation of nostalgia in Germany and Russia.

1.2. Origins of the phenomenon of nostalgia and its development

Until the nineteenth century, nostalgia had been considered as a simple, curable disease, as common to heal and recover from as a simple cold (Boym, 2001). Among the first patients diagnosed with nostalgia were Swiss soldiers dispatched to different lands to combat, domestic servants sent over to foreign countries to work, and other people of the seventeenth century who had left their homeland for a considerable period of time. The word “nostalgia”, which originates from Greek words “nostos” (“homecoming”) and “algos” (“pain”), appeared for the first time in a 1688 dissertation of a Swiss physician, Johannes Hofer, who used the term to describe a psychosomatic disorder accompanied by such symptoms as loss of appetite, nausea, fever heat, chest pain, susceptibility to suicide, and others, followed by melancholy and a strong desire to return home. Back then, it was treated by leeches, opium, purging of the stomach and walks in the Alps (Boym, 2001: 3-4).

In the nineteenth century, former inhabitants of rural areas were believed to be more inclined to suffering from nostalgia, and there was a strong hope that technological development and the rise of industrialization would put an end to this epidemic of nostalgia. However, not only did nostalgia spread far beyond its original outbreak in Switzerland (though, of course, nostalgic feelings began bothering people long before the seventeenth century and in other parts of the world), but it also became incurable: if, prior to that, returning to one's homeland was usually enough to cure nostalgia, now it was not as reliable a method. Industrial progress did not become a remedy for nostalgia, but quite the opposite – insomnia, anguish and fatigue became persistent among more and more people. At that time, the focus in the study of nostalgia shifted: on the one hand, from considering it as a physiological disease to viewing it as psychological peculiarity, and, on the other hand, from longing for unattainable space to yearning for irrevocable time (Boym, 2001: 6; Abramov, 2012: 7).

Starting in the mid-nineteenth century and throughout the twentieth century, the past was no longer something distant and unknown – it became heritage, and nostalgia got institutionalized in various museums, memorials and heritage foundations. In those realms of memory, using Nora’s terminology, a common understanding of national history was constituted and distributed, which placed nostalgic representations into the public discourse. Gradually, with the development of the concept of collective memory and the emergence of the field of memory studies, it became a subject of inquiry for many researchers in social sciences. In the following paragraphs I will review the most common sociological approaches to the study of nostalgia.

1.2.1. Post-socialist nostalgia as a defense mechanism, or “strain approach” to the study of nostalgia

Post-socialist nostalgia as a cultural phenomenon has been addressed by researchers in various fields of study. Svetlana Boym (2001), a prominent scholar who devoted a significant part of her work to the topic of nostalgia, defined it as a longing for home that has once, or never, existed. Boym argues that there are two types of nostalgia, which rather depend on either of the two parts constituting the word – “nostos” or “algos”: “reflective” nostalgia, which focuses on the *longing for the past*, and “restorative” nostalgia, which seeks to *reconstruct the past*. Boym does not speak about nostalgia as a longing for the past that actually existed, but rather, on the opposite – for the past that never existed in the form in which it is present in one’s mind. This train of thought probably led Boym to consider nostalgia as a longing for the future, as well. With this, Boym attempted to demonstrate that nostalgia is the process of the construction of a reality since it can also influence future actions of individuals through cultivating memories of positive events of the past. Talking about nostalgia in the post-Soviet context, Boym categorizes it as a defense mechanism against the rapid development of life after the collapse of the state, the massive disappointment in the new conditions of life and the consequences of transition followed by an economic crisis (Boym, 1994: 74). In other words, she describes the nature of the phenomenon of nostalgia as a response to a rapidly developing present in which there is no room for the past.

Bartmanski calls this approach to nostalgia used by Boym “strain approach”, referring to Geertz’s strain theory of ideology (Bartmanski, 2011: 218). The main distinguishing feature of this group of studies into nostalgia is understanding of nostalgic feelings as a response to the sudden transition from the past into a rapidly developing present with a sense of apprehension towards obscure future. Needless to say, influence of this approach to nostalgia may be traced in the works of other researchers. For example, Daphne Berdahl (1999) argues that nostalgia refers to the present rather than to the past, because it demonstrates delicate connections between different, even opposing, emotions that individuals sense in the present, and artifacts of the past which provoke them. These practices of commemoration demonstrate shifts in the value of objects of the past, which are reevaluated throughout time, and shifts in the demand for the products of the past that ensure the recognition of certain identities related to the past experiences – hence, comes the commercialization of nostalgia.

Following Boym's observations, Mitja Velikonja (2009) notes that every serious social change – be it smooth or abrupt – is accompanied by nostalgic feelings, which constitute a longing for romanticized and irrevocable past that is usually opposed to the present, and comprise a desire or even actual attempts to restore it. Referring to post-socialist nostalgia, the trauma caused by the severity of transition, or even multiple transitions – because this term implies a transition of economy and familiarization of the new market, a transition of values and ideology, a transition of political system, etc. (Velikonja, 2009: 536), – is cured by the means of museumization, as well as production and consumption of memorabilia of the old days. Gammon refers to the former by the expression “tourism-nostalgia relationship” (Gammon, 2002: 64), by which he means commodification of the past that is turned into an attraction through filtering it down to positive aspects only.

Abramov (2013), too, adheres to the opinion that the reconstruction of everyday lives of ordinary people who once lived under socialism in museums stems from waves of nostalgia that have swept over the countries of the former communist bloc, and that it involves the collection of artifacts necessary to nourish nostalgic feelings. For instance, Russians did not yearn for the Soviet life until ten years after the socialist regime had fallen; this was such a sudden and deeply traumatic experience for Russians that nostalgia for the USSR became a major phenomenon, which is profoundly engrained in contemporary Russian popular culture.

1.2.2. Consumerist approach to nostalgia

Though the aspect of consumerism in the studies of nostalgia has been already mentioned briefly, it should be examined in a rather detailed way in this paper. Some studies have proved that individuals' preferences for various products in their younger years are likely to determine their preferences throughout the rest of their lives. The research conducted by Holbrook and Schindler (1989; 1994) demonstrates that songs and cinema-related entertainment products that were popular during the late teens and early twenties of the respondents are prone to be liked more by them than those songs or motion pictures that were widely popular when they were fully mature or, on the contrary, had not reached the onset of puberty yet. Their observations subsequently suggest that one's preferences are influenced by nostalgic implications for those objects or experiences that were more available or better distributed when individuals were younger.

This point is also referred to by another group of researchers (Shaw & Chase, 1989) who attempt to examine the topic of formation of nostalgia and its causes. Among the factors found to influence the generation of nostalgic feelings they mention availability of the products imitating their counterparts from the past, Western linear perception of time which goes towards the unpredictable future, and dissatisfaction with the modernity. Specifically, they argue that the wave of nostalgia has flowed on the contemporary societies, because in comparison with rapidly developing conditions of present life, which plunges into the doubtful future, the past seems to be quite distinct and clear for people. At the same time,

this is reinforced by marketing and production companies which, by producing goods that substitute original counterparts, evoke feelings of loss and yearning for the past in their consumers. Another study also reveals that both tangible and intangible (music, events, aroma, etc.) objects may become nostalgia stimuli (Holak & Havlena, 1992).

In a more recent study (Holbrook & Schindler, 2003: 296-297), it has been also proved that not only the preferences for “arts- and entertainment-related” products originating from people’s youth effect their preferences in adulthood, but this may also be applied to a wider range of tangible and intangible products, such as cars, or fashion styles. This point may explain such an increasingly popular and profitable industry as Ostalgia, displayed, for example, by a supermarket “Ostpaket” that sells Eastern products in Berlin, or a popular board game “Überholen ohne Einzuholen” (a SED slogan) where players are to collect a Trabi, a phone and a party membership to join the GDR communist party elite (Berdahl, 1999).

Jonathan Bach (2002) believes that Ostalgia comprises of two forms, which he distinguishes relying on Marilyn Ivy’s studies on nostalgia in Japan: first, “modernist nostalgia” of the former Easterners for the socialist past as a longing for the fantasies that existed in people’s minds in the past, or nostalgia as “longing for a mode of longing”, and second, nostalgia deprived of any emotional attachment of the Westerners (mainly) as longing for the GDR lifestyle per se, or “nostalgia of style” (Bach, 2002: 552).

Commenting on “modernist” nostalgia, Bach interestingly notes that the utopian perspectives of socialism in the East intermingled with the images of a happy, flourishing and prosperous life in the West, mostly collected through television shows watched by East Germans, where that unattainable ideal of future seemed to have already been reached by Western materialism. Reunification, nevertheless, was not able to fulfill the expectations and desires of East Germans, which, consequently, led to post-socialist nostalgia that may be characterized not precisely by longing for the GDR itself, but by longing for the fantasies and desires, which were doomed to disappointment, Bach argues. What is more, after reunification, the nation, which used to be one of the most technologically advanced and economically developed ones in the socialist block, became almost “second-class citizens” (Bach, 2002: 548), whose experience, education and skills, though fairly often equal to those obtained by the Westerners, were not appreciated so much in the West anymore. Reunification did not only bring democracy, civil and political freedom to the East, but it also deprived it of economic stability and aspirations for the flourishing of the socialist dogma. It is in this context that nostalgia for the East fled into the Western market with goods and services designed to satisfy nostalgic reminiscence about the GDR, and by doing so this time Easterners actually used the market against the West itself. The “realness” of Western products now turned to their Eastern counterparts as they seemed to contain more symbolic capital and to appear more authentic to Easterners than the Western goods previously so scarce to get (Bach, 2002: 550). Bach explains that this may be a consequence of Easterners

being “ideal consumers” – those who fall for advertisements and get truly disappointed once they realize that they have been fooled by lavish with promises and alluring images on packages (Bach, 2002: 552).

Reflecting on the second type of nostalgia, Bach argues that the interest in socialist memorabilia shared by Westerners and by people who are too young to remember life in the GDR directly and, therefore, had to experience it vicariously, say, through old films and books, or family stories, is an example of Western marketing using East German identity. This kind of nostalgia, sometimes called “second hand” nostalgia (Velikonja, 2009: 538), or “historical” nostalgia (Holak & Havlena, 1992), is not operated by a sense of loss or longing for something left behind, but rather refers to a certain fashion or a lifestyle in a modern globalizing world, where marketing and production companies seek to indulge potential consumers by recognizable symbols of the past wrapped up in modern design. Though when analyzing nostalgic representations in cinema, which is a part of the culture industry, one should pay attention to the context of commercialization, this approach, however, is not able to completely fulfill the proposed research tasks of this thesis which attempts to examine the phenomenon of nostalgia from a broader perspective, taking into consideration historical, political, and cultural factors.

1.2.3. Other approaches to the study of nostalgia

Another group of researchers alludes to nostalgia in connection with the decline of utopian thinking and a desire to restore lost faith in an idealized, and, therefore, impossible to reach, future by focusing on the irrevocable past (Pickering et al, 2006: 921, 936). Scholars doing research within this framework argue that the emergence of nostalgia for the communist past resulted from the destruction of socialist mythology and became an attempt to regenerate a lost utopia with the help of a new nostalgic one, that appears to be “the desire for desire” (Stewart, 1984: 23). This approach attempts to shed light on the issue of how nostalgia is formed and developed; nevertheless, one may criticize it for an unilateral study of nostalgia, which leaves out of account other important issues and aspects. Therefore, this approach will not be used as a fundamental one in this research, which seeks to look into the phenomenon of nostalgia with more depth.

Bartmanski (2011), who argues that various approaches to nostalgia fail to acknowledge multiple aspects of the phenomenon, offers an alternative understanding of nostalgia. By means of comparative analysis of the phenomenon of nostalgia, which displays itself in some examples of streetscapes in Berlin and Warsaw, he ascertains that nostalgic icons are successful because they help reestablish successive temporal connections between the past and the present, which have been severed by sudden traumatic events associated with the collapse of the old socialist regime and further transitions into the new one. Being quite innovative, this approach, however, does not suit this research for it is based on the analysis of cultural icons and is quite difficult to adapt to the study of cinema.

Having reviewed different approaches to nostalgia, I conclude that strain approach can present a suitable framework for the analysis of nostalgic representations in cinema and answer the main research question posed in this work. Strain approach, that considers nostalgia as the process of (re)construction of reality and a defense mechanism against a sudden social change, fits well into the fundamental framework of my research based on the theory of social constructivism developed by Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann and previously discussed at the beginning of this paper. However, none of the studies presented thus far has introduced an all-embracing definition of nostalgia, though many of aspects that should be highlighted in it, have been discussed in the described approaches quite well. Therefore, I face the need to come up with my own definition, which would combine various constitutive elements of the phenomenon of nostalgia, and which I will use throughout this research. My definition embracing the core features outlined by various approaches is as follows: Nostalgia is a longing for a positively reconstructed period of time in the past which has emerged as a way to adapt to certain social changes and manifests itself through institutionalization, commodification and everyday practices. I believe that this definition will be suitable for the following research as it presents the past in the framework of social constructivism, while also indicating the ideas that underline strain approach to nostalgia.

1.3. Screening (n)ostalgia in Germany and Russia

Having examined various approaches towards nostalgia and produced a definition of it, I shall further discuss the context that preceded the appearance of post-socialist nostalgia in two countries: Germany and Russia. As the collapse of the socialist state, the formation of nostalgia and its mediation through cinema have peculiarities in both countries, it is essential to discuss them before moving forward to the analysis of nostalgic images in the selected films. This paragraph, therefore, aims at familiarization with the role of nostalgia in the post-socialist cinema in Germany and Russia and the general post-socialist context of two countries, which, however, will be discussed in more details in the final part of this paper.

1.3.1. (N)Ostalgia in post-reunification German cinema

The neologism “Ostalgie” is comprised of two separate words, “Nostalgie” (“Nostalgia” in German) and “Ost” (“East” in German); it first appeared shortly after the reunification of Germany as a designation for a generic and localized nostalgia for the German Democratic Republic, and later escalated into an entire flourishing industry producing objects that harbor these feelings and temporarily relieve of them (Hodgin, 2006: 213). Ironically, nostalgia for the German Democratic Republic, which was previously based on the socialist values, has become embedded in the capitalist market economy and became highly commercialized. Ostalgia and an increasing demand for the material reminders of the socialist past appeared, as it has been already mentioned, soon after the process of reunification had been over, of which the deconstruction of the Berlin Wall had been only a small part, and which had ended with a total merger of the

East Germany by the FRG. Initially enthusiastic about the reunification, the new citizens of the united Germany had to experience resentment and alienation from the West. It soon became clear that the price of the new Germany was high for them: their qualifications and education were not recognized in the West, which led to the loss of prestige while, at the same time, the level of unemployment went sky-high despite the inflow of money from the West, and the former guarantees of different social benefits disappeared leaving the Easterners alone with their problems in a new capitalized world (Zmarzly, 2014). Long-awaited Western goods could only be window-shopped as former GDR citizens simply could not acquire the benefits of the open Western world. The position of East Germans may be compared to that of the colonized people who had an external obligation to assimilate with the new society but who struggled with their desire to preserve their own identity (Jozwiak & Mermann, 2006; Cooke, 2005). Those burdens of transition after the fall of the Berlin Wall confronted a reaction from the East Germans— nostalgia for the German Democratic Republic, which, being reproduced and circulated through artifacts and objects of popular culture (starting from Ostprodukte and Ampelmännchen and ending with Ostel and Trabi Safari), found its way to post-reunification cinema, as well.

Generally, the so-called “post-Wende films” may be divided into three large groups (Bondebjerg, 2010). The films in the first group appeal to the sense of eventual loss, or even the burden of absence, and the fatal fall of the utopian paradigm of a socialist state. This group is comprised of the films that are abounded with difficult fates of the characters who observe the ruins of bygone grandeur and hopelessly pick up the objects of the past that have lost their former magnificence. Among the most famous examples of the films belonging to this group are such transition dramas as *The Promise* (1994) by Margarethe von Trotta, *The Legends of Rita* (1999) by Volker Schlöndorff and *The Lives of Others* (2006) by Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck, that are not only united by the theme of coming to terms with the past and tragic narratives of conflict with the system, which are deprived of any nostalgic representations of the socialist everyday life, but also by the fact that all the directors who shot them come from the West (Bondebjerg, 2010: 33-35).

Another group of post-reunification films is constituted by social cinema of everyday life, and the films belonging to this category attempt to concentrate on the present and mention the past only indirectly. The films in this group avoid critique of the socialist past and are rather focused on the image of contemporary Germany, while, nevertheless, the action of these films is mainly situated in the former East German regions. The films representing this group include, for example, *The Silent Land* (1992) and *Nightshapes* (1999) by Andreas Dresen.

The third group of films is composed of famous nostalgic movies of the late nineties and early 2000s, such as *Good Bye, Lenin!*, *The Sun Alley*, *Go Trabi Go*, etc., which refer to everyday social life in the GDR. The protagonists of these films do not search the answers to complicated questions, but rather enjoy their youth and young love. Particularly, these films tend to lack critical voices, or any politically loaded interpretation of the past; the protagonists prefer to live carelessly in the country where “*you cannot live, and so you dream*”, using the words of the protagonist, Micha, from the film *The Sun Alley*. These films are

designed for popular appeal and as such are criticized for their use of less complicated and rather classical narratives which are framed in the genres of romantic comedies, action films and literary adaptations (Pinkert, 2008, 2010). Generally, these new ostalgie comedies incorporate a satirical critique of social and political sides of communism while emphasizing on the everyday routine of people living in the context of a totalitarian system. Such a shift from the transition dramas of the nineties to the clearly nostalgic depiction of the GDR may be explained by a desire to step back from complex critique, willingness to confront different problematic aspects of the GDR past and a deep plunge into the politics (Cooke, 2005). Dominik Boyer, however, presents another vision of extreme popularity of these films by arguing that ostalgie does not even exist, which he partially demonstrates through the example of the film *Good bye, Lenin!* (2003). Claiming that it is woven by the historical imagination of the West Germans, he considers its popularity among East Germans as being a representative of the second stage of “post-socialist normalization” of life in East Germany. He argues that the first stage was presented by a “public discrediting of the social, cultural, and political legacies of state socialism as criminal, totalitarian, and destructive of human integrity”, which basically deprived East Germans of history and shrank it down to political prisoners, oppressiveness and surveillance (Boyer, 2006: 377). All in all, this turn to nostalgia in cinema did not deprive German cinema from the critical voices as well, which may be exemplified by the success of the previously mentioned film *The Lives of Others* (2006).

Though all the aforementioned categories of films appeared to be a reaction on the dramatic events of the reunification, the latter group drew attention of many researchers who tried to describe, analyze and explain nostalgic sentiments for the GDR that presented themselves in post-Wende cinema. For instance, the film *Good bye, Lenin!*, which saw a great deal of success, aroused a lot of interest in the academia. Kapczynski argues that *Good bye, Lenin!* is “nostalgic and national” because in burying the GDR past, it at the same time rejoices at the reunification (Kapczynski, 2007: 97). Moreover, despite the criticism of ostalgie coming from the side of Wolfgang Becker as a “childish bond” and a result of Western commercialization, the film itself abounds with visual and oral triggers of ostalgie which present the socialist past in Germany as a “collectible kitsch” (Kapczynski, 2007: 86, 97). Though based in a satirical tone, the film does not lack historical and family drama elements that represent the characters as victims of the regime (Uecker, 2007: 13), which cannot be said about another famous nostalgic comedy, *The Sun Alley* (1999). This film, although confirming all the negative stereotypes of the GDR such as products deficit, socialist propaganda, bureaucracy, etc., and building an oversimplified image of the GDR, also depicts the ability of ordinary inhabitants to adapt to the system and outmaneuver it. Another German comedy, *Kleinruppin forever* (2004), was also criticized for its oversimplification and lack of authenticity of the life in the GDR in order to please the wave of ostalgie while exploiting the discourse on unification by blending the identities of two characters living on the opposite sides of the Wall (Mueller, 2008). In the second chapter of this paper, a more detailed analysis of these films using the already existing studies shall be presented and interpreted while

embedded into a broader context of Germany. However, before proceeding with the actual analysis, let us first refer to the formation of nostalgia and its representation in Russian cinema.

1.3.2. Nostalgia for the USSR and its representation in Russian cinema

Whereas in Germany some authors like D. Boyer (2006) even question such a phenomenon as nostalgia for the GDR, the existence of nostalgia for the USSR in Russia is in no doubt. According to a recent survey conducted in November 2017 by Levada analytical center, about 58% of respondents regret the collapse of the Soviet Union (Levada-Center, 2017a). According to the results of the survey, the respondents mostly regret “the destruction of the unified economic system”, “the fact that people no longer felt like they were part of a world superpower” and “the increase in bitterness and mutual distrust” with 52% claiming that the collapse could have been avoided (Levada-Center, 2017a). The index of nostalgia for the USSR, though fluctuating since the beginning of the 20th century, still remains quite high, especially among the older generation. The reasons for nostalgia in Russia stem from the harsh nineties – the period that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union. The democratic freedoms, the fall of the Iron Curtain, the inflow of foreign goods and the possibility to freely go abroad fascinated many Soviets who welcomed the new Russia with excitement and hope. However, similarly to Germany, their hopes had been crushed by the economic crisis and the ambiguous political situation, which strongly contrasted with the stable, serene, clear and plain Era of Stagnation (Abramov, 2012: 54).

Talking about the consequences of the collapse and the presence of nostalgia among contemporary Russians, one should consider an interesting study of nostalgia for the USSR presented by Kasamara and Sorokina. In their research, the scholars claim that modern nostalgia for the Soviet Union is related to the so-called “authoritarian syndrome” which penetrates the contemporary Russian society. Using the theory of T. Adorno and operating on empirical data gathered from 1000 in-depth interviews with representatives of various social groups (pupils, students, military workers, the retired, homeless people, political elites, etc.), they argue that today’s Russians share the principal characteristics of this syndrome such as a need for a strong patriarchal leader, reluctance to take responsibility, hostility towards other nations, projection of internal problems onto external enemies, unwillingness to evaluate the authorities critically and the idea of supremacy of their own nation (Kasamara & Sorokina, 2011). In addition, one more crucial characteristic of authoritarian syndrome among Russians is post-imperial nostalgia and a desire to restore the “Vanished Empire”, as put in the title of a Russian film by Karen Shakhnazarov (2008). The study reveals that nostalgia for the USSR is related to three crucial aspects mentioned by interviewees of different ages – no matter whether they lived in the USSR or not. These include, first, a need for such a social organization and societal order that is based on a friendly and trustworthy atmosphere among people; second, social guarantees ensured by the state, and, third, a desire to live in such a strong, powerful and great empire as the Soviet Union supposedly was (Kasamara & Sorokina, 2011).

The topic of reinterpretation of the socialist past and construction of nostalgia in Russia is exploited to great extent by the mass media, entertainment industry, artists and policy-makers. Nemchenko (2016: 108-109) considers it as a part of the conservative strategy offered by the Russian state, while Abramov (2012: 6) believes that the media speculate on the topic of recent socialist past and make it a lucrative product that is actively being sold in television, press and, of course, cinema, where the spectators are turned into participants of virtual migration into the socialist past and get engaged with the creation and recreation of the Soviet myth.

Nemchenko (2016) argues that contemporary Russian cinema, apart from constructing nostalgia for the socialist past, is at the same time engaged in an oppositional process of demythologization of nostalgic sentiments. However, the films that attempt to examine the totalitarian past and come to terms with it were in some cases either unpopular (e.g. *The Edge* by Alexey Uchitel) or highly criticized for their harsh depiction of the Soviet past (e.g. *Riorita* by Pyotr Todorovsky). Such films and TV-series as *Pioneer Heroes* (2015), *The Thaw* (2013), *A Film about Alekseev* (2014) rather attempt to reconstruct and at the same time to demythologize nostalgia for the Soviet period, which may be considered a strategy of overcoming nostalgia that concurrently avoids devaluation of nostalgic experience (Nemchenko, 2016).

Moreover, Nemchenko states that starting in the mid-nineties, one can observe a tendency of transformation of nostalgia for the Soviet past that developed from the interest towards the sixties, the period of so-called Khrushchev Thaw, that originated as far back as in the final days of the Soviet Union, to the appearance of nostalgic sentiments for the Era of Stagnation of the seventies and eighties. If in the first case, the period of the sixties may indeed be attractive for nostalgic feelings as it is marked with antistalinism, a decrease in censorship and totalitarian rule, and liberalization of social and political realms of life, the attractiveness of the seventies and eighties is highly romanticized (Nemchenko, 2016: 109). The nostalgia for the seventies is also condemned by Kustarev (2007) who claims that such a positive image of this era was intentionally constructed and then exploited by the contemporary art and entertainment industries (one example of this may be media projects created by Leonid Parfyonov (Abramov, 2012)) which turned stagnation, products deficit and questionable equality into stability, welfare and longing for respectable relationships between people (Kustarev, 2007; Nemchenko, 2016). Nostalgia for the Era of Stagnation dating back to the seventies and eighties' became the topic of many Russian films including those that will be examined in this study and, particularly, in its next chapter, such as *Vanished Empire* (2008), *My Dad Baryshnikov* (2011) and *The House of the Sun* (2010).

Chapter 2. Analysis of nostalgic representations of the socialist past in German and Russian cinema

In this chapter of the paper, I will present the main findings of my research into nostalgic representations of the socialist past in cinema. In the first section, I will describe the methodology implemented in this project and the basis for data collection process, as well as explain the factors which influenced the selection of the films for the present study. In the following segments of the chapter, I shall present the analysis of the identified instruments and strategies of nostalgic representations of the socialist past in details, furthermore going beyond the context of the films and accounting for the broader sociocultural, economic and political contexts of Germany and Russia.

2.1. Empirical research design: Data analysis and sampling

As the main goal of my research is to compare how nostalgic images of the socialist past are shaped in German and Russian cinema, I decided to conduct the research with the use of qualitative analysis of visual texts implemented through open, axial and selective coding. The qualitative analysis makes it possible to examine nostalgia in cinema in a highly meticulous and in-depth manner. Analyzing nostalgic representations, one deals with the reconstruction of the past connected with certain emotional inflections, which are preferable to examine using qualitative methods because they allow to get a detailed understanding of the study object. Of course, this set of methods may be submitted to a certain level of subjectivity because it is based on the interpretations of one researcher, which are not, for example, tested against any statistical data; nevertheless, these methods are still relevant and better serve the purposes of this study which seeks to present a deep interpretation of the meanings constructed by the society and represented in visual data (Banks, 2007).

Coding procedures, which were implemented in the present research, presuppose such a method of analyzing data which is conducted by means of categorizing and sorting of textual information. Open coding is the initial procedure of textual data processing which involves identification of concepts that label and designate phenomena. At the next stage called axial coding, the already existing categories are complemented by new subcategories in order to provide further clarification and supplementation, or they are grouped into larger categories (codes and families of codes). The interrelations between different categories should be established at this stage, too. Finally, selective coding allows to choose, analyze and describe in the paper only those categories which correspond with the research questions, goals and aims that the study pursues (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The described technique of sequential analysis allowed me to distinguish between different topics, identify their usage in various contexts of the films, and compare implementation of different strategies and techniques in selected films. In my research, I categorized the data relevant for my study based on the notes (descriptions of scenes, citations, etc.) that I made while closely watching the films. Furthermore, the obtained textual data was then

subjected to all three stages of coding procedures. It should be noted that due to my inefficient knowledge of the German language, German films were watched in original language with Russian subtitles, which might lead to certain limitations of the data analysis. Another point to mention is that my study focused mainly on the narrative and textual aspects of the films, lacking, at the same time, analysis of stylistic instruments, aesthetic elements, choice of cinematographic techniques, etc.

Since this research intended to reveal and compare nostalgic representations of the socialist past in German and Russian cinema, eight feature films were selected for in-depth analysis: four German ones and four Russian ones. As my study focuses on the phenomenon of nostalgia in cinema, the main factor outlining the selection of the films was embedded in the definition of nostalgia as it is determined in the first chapter of this paper. Identifying nostalgia as a longing for a positively reconstructed period of time in the past, I have selected films which comply with this definition and present the socialist past rather from a positive, nostalgic side. Another factor which was taken into account and allowed to narrow down the sample was massive popularity of the films and their success in the box office. The synopses of the selected films are presented in Appendix 1 of this paper. The established list of the films is as follows:

German films

- 1) *The Sun Alley* (Leander Haussmann, 1999)
- 2) *Good bye, Lenin!* (Wolfgang Becker, 2003)
- 3) *Kleinruppin forever* (Carsten Fiebeler, 2004)
- 4) *The Red Cockatoo* (Dominik Graf, 2005)

Russian films

- 1) *Vanished Empire* (Karen Shakhnazarov, 2008)
- 2) *Hipsters* (Valeriy Todorovskiy, 2008)
- 3) *The House of the Sun* (Garik Sukachov, 2010)
- 4) *My Dad Baryshnikov* (Dmitry Povolotsky, 2011)

2.2. Instruments of representation of the socialist past in German and Russian cinema

In this segment of the paper, I will analyze the principal instruments employed in nostalgic construction of the socialist past in selected Russian and German films. Overall, four major instruments were distinguished: representation of the socialist past through family narratives, representation of the socialist past through the depiction of everyday life, representation of the socialist past through the depiction of communities and representation of the socialist past through first-person narration. Before proceeding with a detailed analysis of these instruments, it should be mentioned that the identified instruments of representation of the socialist past may be used not only for the analysis of the construction of nostalgic images but also for other purposes. In this research,

which strives to examine particularly nostalgic representations of the socialist past, I will focus on the contexts of the films in which the identified instruments serve to create nostalgic images.

2.2.1. Representation of the socialist past through family narratives

The first instrument identified in the course of the research is nostalgic representation of the socialist past **through family narratives**. Abramov (2012) claims that there are two essential components that constitute the basis of nostalgic feelings – the emotions that follow the perception of and memories about certain past events, and relation to one’s personal biography, which, however, does not affect the ability of nostalgic feelings to be collective. The latter element of nostalgia is twofold – on the one hand, personal experience of the past may itself be considered an object of nostalgia, while, on the other hand, personal narratives and family stories tend to strongly interrelate with other specific memories of the past (Abramov, 2012: 16). This experience should not be necessarily direct; it can be comprised of family memories transferred and perceived by an individual vicariously, which, nevertheless, facilitates a strong emotional response.

Russian films

One of the brightest examples of representation of the socialist past by virtue of family narratives is the film *My Dad Baryshnikov* (2011), where the theme of searching for and finding a family is one of the central ones. Young teenager Borya Fishkin does not know who his father is, but he is starting to suspect that his real dad is Mikhail Baryshnikov, a famous ballet dancer who immigrated to Canada and now lives in the United States. However, soon it turns out to be just a part of his fantasy of becoming a prominent dancer with noble roots, which falls apart when his real father is released from prison after having served a sentence for “*currency operations*”, or, essentially, what was then called “*fartsovka*”. Despite the fact that his real father is not a famous ballet dancer who lives abroad, Borya Fishkin still comes to terms with his family ties, as his real father turns out to be a loving and caring person. It is worth to mention that such a family narrative as the one presented in the film is likely to relate to the audience’s personal experience, as it narrates a story typical for the Soviet era. Fishkin’s mother, who seeks out “*imported happiness*” while the boy’s father is in prison for engagement in speculation during a massive products deficit, does not just represent a story of one ordinary family, but a story of a *Soviet* family. The interrelation between this exact family history and a broader national context is demonstrated throughout the film. Not only one can see it in the relationship between Borya and his parents, but there are also references to the life of the previous generations, Borya’s grandparents. During the family gathering celebrating the release of Borya’s father from prison, his grandfather says to the latter: “*You know, my father – your grandfather – was arrested five times. And two of them he was sentenced to execution by firing squad, and then he was given medals for the same deeds*”. This ironical statement demonstrates how a tragic life of one ordinary family may exemplify the fate of the entire nation living under the totalitarian rule. Of course,

in this example one can hardly claim that this family narrative is nostalgic – from this point of view, the socialist past is presented as a product of an unfair, ruthless, oppressive machine of the state in which such tragic history of a single family is just one example out of millions.

In the film *Vanished Empire* (2008) the same family narratives may be observed: throughout the entire film the story follows the development of a relationship between Sergei and his mother, who subsequently passes away. As she dies, Sergei and his brother have to live with their grandfather because their own father left the family many years ago. Even though in this film the state is not demonized or presented in a negative way, the family narrative plays an important role building up the basis of the whole drama. But in this case, the drama does not represent the pain of the entire nation – this is a rather personal story embedded in the social context of its setting. Even when the characters refer to their past life under the socialist regime, it does not sound tragic, but rather sentimental: *“I read Gumilyov’s poems to my first love the whole night through... Some people were running with rifles, screaming in the street... It did not bother us”*. Interestingly, in both mentioned films, the attitude towards the past is transmitted through the older generation, in both cases – the grandfather of the protagonist. In contrast to the previous statement, this one, however, embodies a rather nostalgic sentiment, and attempts to neutralize a negative context. The socialist past in this case is not seen as an external threat, but rather as a pleasant reality filled with youthful dreams which did or did not come true.

In two other selected films, family narratives are not introduced in such a persistent manner – they are predominantly related to the position that the characters, as members of a subculture, hold in the society, as well as their parents’ attitudes towards it. However, references to the hardships of life under totalitarian rule may be revealed through relation to personal family experience. Talking about the film *Hipsters* (2008), it is worth mentioning the conversation between Bob and his parents, who try to persuade him to change his lifestyle and adhere to the rules of everyday Soviet life. Bob’s father accuses him of being too naïve and refers to their family’s experience in order to explain to Bob that in a state like this, one cannot *“just dance”* and live the way s/he wants to: *“Do you know what this is and why it is here? This is what a man needs in the preliminary detention cell. Uncle Adolf was locked up because his name wasn’t politically correct. Aunt Fira was arrested because she had put Stalin’s portrait across the hall from the toilet. To me, they couldn’t even explain why I was locked up. But I’ve had experience enough for an entire lifetime”*. In this example, as in the film *My Dad Baryshnikov*, the state is presented as a rigorous mechanism of senseless subjugation, which the characters refer to while speculating on the challenges of the existence of alternative lifestyles under a totalitarian regime. In the end of the film, Bob indeed gets arrested for trying to purchase vinyl jazz records from an American as he gets framed by another speculator.

In this film one may also observe the development of a relationship between Polza and her mother; the latter is seen at the beginning of the film yelling and running around the flat with a belt trying to beat her daughter for being engaged in the hipster (stilyagi) movement: *“Don’t you understand that they will fire me? That I will have to sweep the streets - if they entrust me with the broom, of course?”*

How can I guide people when I have raised a spy in my own house?!” However, in the end of the film, Polza’s mother, though still quite strict, allows Polza and Mels to live in her apartment with their child. In this case, such family narrative is bonded to the idea of acceptance by parents. On the contrary to the two previously mentioned family plots in the film, one may also observe the relationship between Mels, Fred and their families, who do not harshly criticize them for their affiliation with the hipsters, except, probably, for Mel’s brother who once comes back home with a black eye. When Mels asks him *“What’s happened?”* he answers: *“Everyone has normal brothers and mine is a hipster”*. On the whole, the criticism coming from the side of the hipsters’ families is rather provoked by the fear of oppression and punishment from the state and society than a personal condemnation. However, in this regard, the film attempts to offer various points of view on the relationship between hipsters and their families and, at the same time, to demonstrate the attitude of the state and society through them.

German films

Representation of the socialist past through family narratives is also common in the selected German films. This instrument is put to use in one of the most famous examples of nostalgic cinema, *Good bye, Lenin!* (2003). Composed as an East German family drama, this film, in a paradoxical manner, reveals the burdens of adapting to the post-socialist space. The literal reconstruction of socialism in the film may be seen as escapism from the tragic reality and the discontent of the present to a clear and plain past, but it may also be considered a way to create a version of the past which individuals would love to have, but which had never actually existed. In this regard, the following words of Alex, the film’s protagonist and narrator, seem representative: *“The GDR which I was creating for my mother, more and more started to look like the GDR which I dreamt to live in”*. Not only does this line demonstrate that Alex, while making up the socialist past, imbued it with imaginary elements which were not quite historically accurate, but it also illustrates that in the process of the reconstruction of the past for his mother, Alex himself became nostalgic. The juxtaposition of historical and family narratives in the film is persistent: it starts with the video excerpts from a family archive and the protagonist’s recollection of his childhood memories interspersed with historical TV records of that period, then develops to political protests against the GDR government and Alex’s mother falling into coma, and ends with Alex’s mother dying a couple of days after reunification. It is worth pointing out that the entire period starting from the anti-government protests and ending with the official reunification is shown through the relationship between Alex and his mother. Interestingly enough, the narrator describes the major historical events that took place after the protests, including the destruction of the Berlin Wall, which occurred when his mother was in coma. Such composition of the film makes it possible to follow the development of the nation’s history through the lens of one typical East German family.

In addition to it, there is one more plot line which goes through the whole film: the relationship of the family with the father who fled to the West. Until the end of the film, it seems that Robert, the father of Alex and Ariane, left the family and moved

to the West because he had fallen in love with a woman there. However, Christiane, Alex's mother, reveals that he actually fled the country because he had a lot of pressure on him when working in the GDR, and they decided to move to the West together. Unfortunately, Christiane never had the courage to do it and stayed in the GDR with the children. This story of an East German family separated by the Berlin Wall is one out of many similar real-life experiences, which makes it relatable for many spectators. The film ends with a statement of Alex, which once again demonstrates a deep connection between the GDR past and the relationship with the mother for the protagonist: *"The country my mother left behind was a country she believed in; a country we kept alive till her last breath; a country that never existed in that form; a country that, in my memory, I will always associate with my mother"*.

Another film where family narratives serve as the basis for the whole plot is *Kleinruppin forever*, centered on the story of two twins whose parents had died in a car accident and who were raised by different sides of the Wall. After many years they meet when Tim, the twin who was raised in the West, in Bremen, goes to the GDR for a guided tour. In Russian translation, the film sometimes is named as *The Prince and the Pauper*, because the twin brothers live in completely different conditions: Tim from the West lives in a rich family of a pianist in a large villa, while Ronny lives with a night guard in a small cabin. The socialist life in the GDR is presented through the point of view of Tim, an alien in a foreign land, where everything is new and unusual for him. Such family story, perhaps, is framed in the film because it allows to demonstrate the GDR in a peculiar way: even though Tim and Ronny are twin brothers who were born together and in the same country, there is an abyss between them because of completely different – and this contrast is highlighted when the action moves from Western Germany to the GDR – conditions in these countries.

Family narratives are one of the simplest instruments of shaping the past which every spectator could relate to through personal experience. The films mentioned above mainly refer to an experience which is very common for people who lived under socialism and trigger corresponding memories of the past, ones that may or may not directly align with what is depicted in the film. On the other hand, members of the younger generations who did not experience the portrayed period of the past directly, absorb and collect those personalized images and compose a homogeneous notion of that time. However, as it was mentioned at the beginning of the paragraph, this instrument, among others, may or may not contribute to nostalgic representation of the socialist past – which was demonstrated in this paragraph through the contrast between different representations of the past by means of family narratives.

2.2.2. Representation of the socialist past through the depiction of everyday life

Another instrument revealed to construct nostalgic images is representation of the socialist past **through the depiction of everyday life**. Objects which used to be in use daily by former inhabitants of a socialist state indeed are able to evoke strong emotional response from them. Since everyday practices are

deeply rooted in one's culture, even though ex-Soviet or East German people now live in a democratic state, it takes time to learn how everyday life is organized there as they had to learn the specifics of everyday life in the newly formed socialist states once (Boym, 1994: 288). In this segment, I will analyze how the depiction of objects and habits of everyday life in a socialist state is persistently utilized in various forms both in German and Russian cinema.

Russian films

One of the most obvious constituents of everyday life and a powerful stimulus for nostalgia (Holak & Havlena, 1992) is **food**. Gastronomic habits of the past, which may form the so-called "culinary nostalgia" (Mannur, 2007), are essential not only as repeated everyday life practices, but also because of their symbolic power constituted through rituals of sharing and giving (Holtzman, 2006: 373). In this respect, food is an integrant of identity-making and, as such, plays an important role in the reconstruction of the past. In Russian films, food and beverages are depicted in different contexts: for example, through eating at a restaurant or a café (*Vanished Empire*, 2008), through buying food and drinks in the street (*Vanished Empire*, 2008; *Hipsters*, 2008), through eating in a canteen or at home (*My Dad Baryshnikov*, 2011) or during feasts and celebrations (*Vanished Empire*, 2008; *My Dad Baryshnikov*, 2011; *The House of the Sun*, 2010). These scenes in which food is depicted, do not, naturally, focus on gastronomy itself; instead, food serves as an auxiliary element for the events depicted in the films. For instance, one can see a blurred table covered with loaves of Russian black bread, sausages, canned goods and Soviet champagne in the background while characters are talking and dancing (*Vanished Empire*, 2008), or the audience sees some people buying ice cream wrapped in silver paper and drinking vending machine soda (*Hipsters*, 2008; *The House of the Sun*, 2010). Interestingly, the two latter symbols of Soviet gastronomic industry are widely commercialized in today's Russia: modern red vending machines stylized as Soviet ones are to be found in many supermarkets and public venues, and ice cream wrapped in silver paper is produced by many companies, some of which name it "USSR" or "11 kopecks" (a reference to the price of this type of ice cream in the USSR), or put a sign of "GOST" («ГОСТ», All-Union State Standard) on the package. Those products, which may have a different recipe and taste, are imbued by consumers with qualities of the products that were once sold in the same packages in the past. The fame and reputation of the products produced in the past are transferred to modern ones wrapped in the same package, which makes these goods popular not only among the older generation, who actually used to consume them, but also among the young people who had never had such an experience. In this case, the image of food in cinema may also be related to the phenomenon of "nostalgic consumption" (Kusimova & Shmidt, 2017).

One of the examples illustrating nostalgic images of food is the scene from the film *My Dad Baryshnikov* where Boris Fishkin, the protagonist, is having his breakfast. We see Fishkin spreading some processed cheese "Friendship" («Дружба») on a slice of wheat bread and washing it down with a drink from a ceramic cup with a flower on it – a typical Soviet piece of kitchenware of that time (see Appendix 3, 3.1.1.). Cheese "Friendship", though not the focus of the shot,

is still recognizable by its red and yellow package that has not changed much since its first production in 1933. Behind Fishkin, one may also observe homemade pickles and jam on the windowsill. Despite the fact that this scene mainly depicts a conversation between Fishkin and his father about Fishkin's dreams of becoming a dancer, one can hardly miss the image of the Soviet brand of cheese if s/he is familiar with it.

One more element of everyday life demonstrated in Russian cinema is **leisure**, which is represented by a number of various activities: playing electronic games, doing aerobics (*My Dad Baryshnikov*, 2011), dancing, etc. One such activity, playing with arcade machines, is shown in *The House of the Sun*. The scene in which we see Sasha, the main protagonist, playing a very popular Soviet arcade game "Basketball", starts off with an extreme close-up of the screen of another arcade game "Sea battle" ("Морской бой"), which becomes clear as soon as the camera pulls back, and we see the name of the arcade machine (see Appendix 3, 3.1.2.). As in the case of the depiction of food and beverage, playing arcade games in this example is not directly related to the plot of the film, but rather plays a role of a part of the filming set and facilitates a conversation between the characters. For instance, in this case, Sasha's parents find her in a cinema hall playing "Basketball"; as they start talking, her father, seeing that Sasha is distracted talking to her mother, starts playing "Basketball" himself and gets very enthusiastic about it. Even though the part with arcade games does not change the plot of the film in any way, the conversation between Sasha and her mother does. At the same time, the audience cannot miss the image of the arcade games – at first, we clearly see the arcade machine "Sea battle", and then when Sasha is playing "Basketball", the shot suddenly changes and the focus shifts to the game itself. Arcade games, indeed, constituted a large part of Soviet culture and still evoke nostalgic feelings – this may explain the creation of the Museum of Soviet Arcade Machines first in Moscow and then in St. Petersburg and Kazan. Such an overlap with current social trends once again affirms that cinematic representations are an essential source of information about collective nostalgic images and a powerful tool of translating these images to the audience.

One more example of how protagonists spend free time is by attending landmark **cultural events**. For instance, Sergei, the main character of *Vanished Empire*, manages to get two tickets to the film *Ivan Vasilievich Changes Profession* and then for the play *Hamlet* with Vladimir Vysotsky in the lead role. Another example is Sasha's boyfriend, one of the characters of *The House of the Sun*, who gets two tickets to the American movie *The Sandpit Generals*, which, according to him, were not easy to get and "people have been waiting in line since last night". Supposedly, such events highlight the epoch depicted in the films and certain phenomena of popular culture which had a strong influence on the Soviet people.

Fashion is another essential part of everyday routine that is also strongly related to nostalgic consumption, as some fashion tendencies of the past come back in style in the present and are speculated in the fashion industry. Clothing styles of different times are demonstrated throughout the selected Russian films: full skirts, narrow pants, long jackets, colorful bead laces and bright ties of the fifties (*Hipsters*, 2008); jeans, leather jackets, flared trousers and miniskirts of the seventies (*The House of the Sun*, 2010; *Vanished Empire*, 2008); and polka-dot

dresses, puffed-sleeve blouses, wide belts and, of course, also jeans popular in the eighties (*My Dad Baryshnikov*, 2011). Fashion tendencies of the past manifest themselves particularly often in scenes depicting parties and celebrations, as people tended to put on their most fashionable and valuable clothes to attend such events. An illustrative example of these fashion images is the scene from *Vanished Empire* that depicts a party where a friend of Sergei, the protagonist, plays the guitar in a band. Sergei invites his girlfriend Lyuda to this party, and as they enter the hall, we see a lot of young people talking, dancing or just walking back and forth. Behind Sergei and Lyuda, who are, by the way, dressed, among other clothing items, in a denim jacket and a coral dress, the audience can see the variety of outfits: miniskirts, polka-dot or flowery dresses with wide belts, long jackets, bright shirts, jeans, waistcoats, etc. (see Appendix 3, 3.1.3.). The whole diversity of clothing styles is particularly salient in one specific shot made from a bird's-eye view angle - not only do we see a crowd of young people dancing in a gymnasium, we also observe the signboard saying "Happy New Year 1974". This is the second time the temporal period in which the events of the film take place is mentioned in the film, and in this case it could have been intended to refer to one's personal experience and pose a question for the spectators: "What did I do in 1974?" Fashion style is surely one of the memories that may come up in their minds in this regard.

Usage of **music** that was popular in the past may be one more way of looking at the socialist past in a nostalgic manner. In Russian films the songs of such popular foreign artists as Boney M. (*My Dad Baryshnikov*, 2011), Deep Purple, Shocking Blue (*Vanished Empire*, 2008), Steppenwolf, The Doors, The Zombies, The Way We Live (*The House of the Sun*, 2010) and Soviet bands and musicians such as The Time Machine and Vladimir Vysotsky are heard. Generally, the music played is related to the time presented in the films. However, the film *Hipsters* does not fit in this sequence because even though the events in the film take place in the fifties, the majority of the songs used are those of the seventies and eighties, which at the same time correlates with the music played in other films. Stylized as jazz compositions, those songs are still recognizable, which, one may assume, could have been made on purpose in order to satisfy the needs of those who today are mainly nostalgic for the Soviet life - the generation whose youth fell on the seventies and eighties. However, this music could have been used in the films unintentionally because the director of *Hipsters*, Valery Todorovsky, was himself born in the sixties and probably could have wanted to transmit his own nostalgic sentiments through this film. Nevertheless, on the whole, the rest of the films utilize popular music not only as a follow-up, but also as a way to reconstruct the socialist past.

Two similar examples can be quite illustrative here in which we can hear popular songs of the depicted time with both films set in the seventies; however, in the first case, a foreign song is played, while in the second - a Soviet one. The first example is related to the scene with a party in a gymnasium that has been already described above. As it was mentioned before, Sergei takes his girlfriend Ljudmila to the party where a band in which Sergei's school friend, Kostya Denisov, is the bass player, performs the song "Venus" by the band Shocking Blue. The music played by the band seems to be widely and positively accepted by the audience as we see a large dancing crowd in the gymnasium. After playing that song, the

band takes a fifteen-minute break and Kostya takes Sergei to the bathroom to try smoking some weed. As Sergei smokes weed, he sees a hallucination – a sunset over the mountains of the Khwarezm region, accompanied by the song “Smoke on the Water” by the band Deep Purple. It becomes clear what kind of mountains those are only by the end of the film, when, after his mother's death, Sergei goes to Khwarezm, the “Vanished Empire”, as his mother called it.

Another example of the usage of popular music is the scene depicting a concert in a People's Hall in the film *The House of the Sun*. Before the concert, the dean is giving a lecture on socialism in front of several propagandistic posters with “*Communism is the bright future of the mankind*” in the middle of the scene. After his performance, the band The Time Machine should take the stage instead of the band Udachnoye Priobreteniye announced to perform before. The band The Time Machine is brand new – they have not performed yet and did not even have a name until their appearance on the stage, which we learn from the conversation of the musicians beforehand. As they start to play their song “Den' Gneva”, the audience, initially suspicious of them, soon shows them a warm welcome. However, as the organizer of the show and the dean notice that this song is anti-Soviet, they call the police and drive off the listeners. Both these examples not only demonstrate the musical tastes of that period of time, but also show the position of the prohibited music – be it Western, or Soviet underground – which, as the authorities propagated, transmitted values hostile to the Soviet regime. The first case demonstrates that because it was difficult to obtain records by Western bands, local musical groups sang their songs in small halls, such as gymnasiums, for the public striving to listen to this music. In the second case, one may observe what happened to local musical bands who attempted to play their own songs that were not approved by the state authorities but liked by large masses of listeners.

Finally, one more way to represent the socialist past is to create recognizable Soviet-era **interiors** in the films. Objects such as avoskas (string bags), carpets hanging on the walls, photo- and regular wallpaper typical for the Soviet era, brown wooden wall cabinets, bookshelves, sofas, and other furniture items are persistently demonstrated in Russian films (see Appendix 3, 3.1.4.). These are quite recognizable to a Russian spectator and may certainly evoke nostalgic feelings in those who possessed such objects in the past; a typical phrase “I had one just like this!” said with nostalgic excitement, may be a good example of this.

Various elements of Soviet everyday life are constantly demonstrated in Russian films. This may be explained by two interconnected factors: first, these objects may be utilized simply to construct a more plausible and recognizable image of the socialist past; second, using the advantage provided by the first, such images of the socialist past inevitably prompt spectators to recall their own apartments that contained the same everyday objects, i.e. to make them refer to personal experience of the past. However, people who did not experience life in the USSR directly and who base their knowledge about it on various sources such as family histories, books and films, construct their own image of the past and may even be nostalgic for these vicariously perceived idealized representations. In this regard, film makers may perhaps speculate on their feelings and construct images of the past filled with recognizable symbols of the Soviet era.

German films

In German films as well as in Russian ones, consumption of **food** and beverages is displayed in various contexts like eating in a café or drinking in a bar (*The Red Cockatoo*, 2005), eating in a canteen (*Kleinrupping forever*, 2004), having meals at home (*Good bye, Lenin!*, 2003), or having a drink at a party (*The Sun Alley*, 1999), etc. However, in many scenes in which characters eat or drink, the audience either does not see the food at all, or sees it only passingly. Nevertheless, the depiction of gastronomic objects is put in focus, for instance, in the films *The Sun Alley* and *Good bye, Lenin!* In the first one, for example, we may observe a bottle of Club Cola at the school party and a table covered with original Eastern alcoholic drinks such as red wine Kaminfeuer and a bottle of Fruchtwein (fruit wine), and other products like a pack of open sugar cubes (Würfelzucker) and mineral water Ambassador, which we can observe in the scene when Mario and Sabrina spend a night together. In the second case, the brands of the GDR products are demonstrated throughout the film as Alex attempts to find GDR-made products for his mother, such as Spreewald pickles, Mocca Fix Gold coffee, or Fillinchen crisp bread, which were replaced by Western counterparts literally overnight. One scene in this film is worth paying attention to – the scene in which Alex sets the table with Western products put in old East German packages presenting them as original GDR products. The products put on the table are clearly seen in this scene, and one may observe a bottle of Havelland apple juice, Spreewald preserves, a jar of Bienen honey, cucumbers, tomatoes and some confiture (see Appendix 3, 3.2.1.). Supposedly, the depiction of food may also be one of the stimuli evoking nostalgic sentiments, and also plays a role in reconstructing the socialist past in German films as well as in Russian ones.

Another element of everyday life, **leisure**, is also presented through various scenes in German films. For example, Micha's father spends his free time reading the newspaper Guter Rat (*The Sun Alley*, 1999), Ronnie's father is enthusiastic about wildlife photography (*Kleinrupping forever*, 2004; see Appendix 3, 3.2.2.), and characters in the film *The Red Cockatoo* (2005) spend their time dancing and listening to music in the club. One of the most illustrative examples here is the scene from *Good bye, Lenin!* in which Alex, as a child, is watching television: the screen shows a broadcast of Sigmund Jähn, the first German in space, onboard a spacecraft with a doll of a Sandmännchen – a fiction character that was highly popular on the GDR television. These references to cultural symbols of the GDR may also be an attempt to complement the reconstruction of the socialist past using recognizable images and to elicit an emotional response from the nostalgic audience – those whose childhood, just like Alex's, took place in the seventies.

Fashion styles are actively utilized to construct the epochs depicted in the German films: flared trousers and jeans, close-fitting bright and sleeveless shirts, canvas shoes, wide belts of the seventies (*The Sun Alley*, 1999), puffed-sleeve and baby doll dresses of different patterns of the sixties (*The Red Cockatoo*, 2005), jeans, lumberjack shirts, mini-skirts, high-waisted trousers of the eighties (*Good bye, Lenin!*, 2003). Likewise, in German films the variety of clothing styles may be better observed in scenes featuring mass gatherings of people. For instance, fashion of the seventies in the GDR is best seen in the scene where

Micha and his friends come to a party. As the party is shown as a very boring one, the characters are sitting in chairs and talking. We may clearly see the way they are dressed: young girls wear flowery blouses, high-waisted white shorts, turtleneck shirts, checkered midi skirts, waistcoats; young men wear flared trousers of different colors and patterns, canvas shoes, disco and close-fit shirts, etc. (see Appendix 3, 3.2.3.). As well as in Russian cinema, the depiction of fashion styles in German films is an efficient way of reconstructing the past, since clothing is one of the basic elements of people's everyday lives.

In contrast with Russian films, popular **music** of the depicted time is not utilized as much in German cinema, in some cases being substituted with songs of contemporary artists and bands. For example, in the film *Good bye, Lenin!*, only music intentionally written for the film by a modern French composer, Yann Tiersen, is played. In the film *Kleinruppin forever*, the depicted events are accompanied by contemporary musical voices of such popular German and foreign bands as Eskobar, Powderfinger, Dogs Die in Hot Cars, Die Sterne, etc., although, for example, the song "Reality" performed by Eskobar was very popular in the GDR. In the film *The Red Cockatoo*, songs of different timeframes are used – "Jailhouse Rock" and "Flaming Star" by Elvis Presley from the fifties and sixties, "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes" and "Auf den Flügeln bunter Träume" – from the thirties, "Die sieben Wunder der Welt" of the eighties and some other songs by contemporary bands. The same pattern is observed in the film *The Sun Alley*, where the audience may hear both songs by Wonderland and Nina Hagen, who were indeed popular in the seventies, and songs by more recent bands like Die Toten Hosen or Einstürzende Neubauten. Moreover, some of the songs were intentionally written for this specific film by Graeme Jefferies, Alexander Hacke and others. Nevertheless, the actual absence of music that used to be popular in the depicted period of time is also sometimes compensated by many references to it in different forms: posters of popular bands, discussions of the latest albums, depictions of record covers, etc.

Interior of GDR-era flats may be seen in all the selected German films at some point. One of the brightest examples here is the reconstruction of Christiane's room after her coming out of a coma in the film *Good bye, Lenin!* In order not to worry his mother, Alex makes her believe that the Berlin Wall has not fallen, and life goes on the way it used to. Thus, the first thing he has to do is to redecorate her room, where she will recover from her heart attack, the way it used to be before the fall of the Wall. With his friend Denis, he puts an old cupboard, lays a large carpet on the floor, takes off window-blinds and puts on light brown drapes on two sides of the window together with a net curtain, brings in a standard lamp, a piano, portraits in wooden frames, one of which can be clearly identified as a portrait of Che Guevara, a library case with, among others, books by Ursula Kuczynski, Anna Seghers and Mikhail Gorbachev, a writing desk with a lamp and two portraits sculptures, presumably, of socialist leaders. The walls of the room are covered with yellow wallpaper of repeating pattern. The whole room has a very recognizable appearance – one probably might find a similar reconstruction of living space in the GDR museum.

Another example of creating a GDR-era interior in a German film is demonstrated in a scene from *The Sun Alley*, in which Uncle Heinz comes from the Western Germany to visit Michael's family. As the camera follows the uncle from the front door, one may observe the interior of the hall and the living room: a clothes hanger with several avoskas on it, rock band posters, a large wall cabinet, a wooden table with a tablecloth on it, etc., which, as one may notice, overlap with the objects of interior depicted in Russian films (see Appendix 3, 3.2.4.). I believe that in the German case, as well as in the Russian one, generally, the reconstruction of interior is utilized not only to adapt the picture to the depicted time, but also to evoke an emotional response from a sentimental spectator.

2.2.3. Representation of the socialist past through the depiction of communities

Maurice Halbwachs, as described in the first chapter of this paper, argues that individuals memorize the past only through the social groups they affiliate themselves with. Images of the past cannot be remembered by an individual outside of the social context of the group whose collective identity is constituted by a shared understanding of the past, common rituals, traditions, beliefs and values. It is the membership in a group that prompts the conversion of personal images into a collectively framed and shared vision of the past. This vision, in turn, contributes to the formation of solidarity within a group. In this context, communities may be understood as social groups the members of which share common beliefs and values and transmit them through constant interactions with each other. By means of the depiction of communities in cinema, it is possible not only to represent the socialist past through the vision of a community, but also to use the image of the group for spectators to identify themselves with while watching a film. In both German and Russian films selected for analysis, various communities are depicted, which will be discussed in the following section of the chapter.

Russian films

In the end of the film *The Sun Alley*, Micha, the protagonist, interestingly concludes: *"It was a country once, and I lived there. If you ask me how it was, it was the most wonderful time of my life because I was young, and I was in love"*. Taken from a German film, this quotation actually displays a pattern demonstrated in both German and Russian films – a nostalgic look at the socialist past through the depiction of young people's lives. That said, youth in these films is depicted in a variety of ways, one of which is through belonging to subcultures – "culturally bounded networks of people who come to share the meaning of specific ideas, material objects, and practices through interactions" (Williams, 2011: 39). The major distinctive features through which a subculture is represented in Russian films are lifestyle, clothing style, music, beliefs, values and slang. In this regard, the socialist past is reconstructed by virtue of representation of a subculture, the position of an individual in it and its relation to the macro-structures, i.e. the oppressive regime of the socialist state, which attempts to eliminate any efforts of people to follow an alternative lifestyle. In the

selected Russian films, two major subcultures and their life in the USSR during different time periods are depicted: the hipsters (stilyagi) and the hippies. *Hipsters* and *The House of the Sun* should both be considered as bright examples of the depiction of a subculture's position in a socialist state. The two films concurrently attempt to demonstrate both the lifestyle of the community, the relationships inside it and the struggles with the state and the society for the right to live one's own way.

Hipsters, who appeared in the mid-fifties and continued to exist until the sixties, are said to be the first subculture to originate in the Soviet Union (Lupandin, 2011: 171). As it has already been described in the previous section, hipsters had their own fashion style that allowed them to be easily identified. Men usually wore colorful long jackets, bright bowties and plain ties, narrow and tight-fitting trousers of various colors, while women used to wear full skirts and dresses, colorful bead laces, extravagant make-up and sizable accessories – the uniqueness of their clothing style is demonstrated constantly throughout the film. The hipsters' specific slang was another distinctive feature of their culture, which is demonstrated in the film through the use of such words as “*Broadway*” (the main street in the city, in Moscow – former Gor'kogo St.), “*chuvak*” (a guy, a hipster), “*chuvikha*” (a hipster-girl), “*zhlob*” (a person who looks and acts like everybody else; not a hipster) and others.

Hipsters were predominantly influenced in their style by Western countries and especially by the cultural life of the United States. Hence comes their love of jazz and swing music, and, later, of rock-n-roll. However, original musical compositions that were really popular among hipsters are not played in the film – instead, songs by bands popular in the seventies and eighties, stylized as jazz and swing compositions, are utilized. As it has already been mentioned before, this peculiar feature of *Hipsters* may be explained through the adaptation of the film to the target audience, whose youth took place in the seventies and eighties, or through personal intention of the director who wanted to communicate his own nostalgic feelings to the spectators.

Hipsters were considered potential enemies of the socialist regime and, as such, they were constantly attacked by the members of the Voluntary People's Druzhina, which is present in several scenes of the film. For example, at the beginning of the film, Mels, the protagonist, and other members of the Druzhina surround a house where hipsters are dancing, and start catching them in order to cut their hair and clothes off in an effort to publicly condemn their alien, alternative lifestyle that contradicts the socialist norms and values. One illustrative example of how hipsters were criticized by the society and the state is presented in one scene in which different excerpts of newspapers with the picture of Mels and other hipsters appear on the screen supplied with the following headlines: “*Challenge to the Soviet ideology*”, “*Today you play jazz, but tomorrow you will sell your homeland!*” («Сегодня ты играешь джаз, а завтра Родину продашь! »), “*(Dancing) to foreign tune*” («Под чужую дудку»), “*Monkeys are among us*”, “*Jazz is not our music*”, “*They dishonor our youth*”. Another example is the scene in which Mels is expelled from the Komsomol for following hipster lifestyle. This scene once again demonstrates the public humiliation to which hipsters were subjected. Despite the negative associations which may come up with this

depiction of the challenges that hipsters faced, its use in the film, on the one hand, presents a complex picture of hipsters' life in the Soviet Union, and, on the other hand, supplements the portrayal of the cohesion within a community like this. Despite the fact that the community's life may be presented as a difficult one, the depiction of solidarity and a feeling of fellowship within the community is able to create a generally positive picture and a nostalgic view on the togetherness and unity of a social group in its struggle against the state.

However, the film does not simply represent hipsters as a single subculture spread in the Soviet Union; it may also be considered a collective vision of the position of a marginalized community under the oppressive regime in general. This idea is displayed well in the last scene of the film in which Mels walks through the "Broadway" as a large crowd of young people gathers around him. Many other representatives of various subcultures, such as punks, bikers, rappers, emo, hippies and others, join Mels and sing the film's final song with him. In this episode, extremely different subcultures coming from different times are demonstrated as a single group of people united by a desire to confront mainstream social values by offering an alternative point of view on the organization of the society. Supposedly, those viewers who did not belong to the hipster movement but have been affiliated with some other subculture at some point in their life would be able to identify themselves with the characters depicted on the screen. In such instances, this instrument allows the film to reach the audiences besides former hipsters, such as members of various other subcultures that existed in the Soviet Union and modern Russia. What is more, this way of representing the socialist past through the depiction of the life of a community is able to reach every spectator who is nostalgic for being young in general, because the characters of the film are not so much different in their daily lives from many other young people who study, go to parties, hang out with friends, fall in love, etc. In this regard, Maurice Halbwachs writes in his works that individuals are drawn to tradition because they fear a failure to create present social structures similar to those of the past. He explains nostalgia by specifying the effect of childhood and youth experience on it and interprets it through a desire to return to the past when an individual was immature and too inexperienced to notice certain meanings and interpretations of the objects around (Halbwachs, 1992: 73). Nostalgia, according to Halbwachs, is mourning for the lack of knowledge, awareness and innocence, which consequently may explain why all the protagonists of the selected nostalgic films appear to be young.

The image of another subculture, hippies, who basically filled the hipsters' niche of popularity in the sixties and seventies, is portrayed in the film *The House of the Sun*, shot by a musician Garik Sukachov. This may explain why so much attention is paid to music in the film: contrary to *Hipsters*, *The House of the Sun* utilizes original music of the seventies as one of the principal ways of reconstructing that era. Both musical compositions specifically written for the film and popular songs by foreign (The Doors, Steppenwolf, Christie, etc.) and Soviet musicians (The Time Machine, Vladimir Vysotsky) accompany the events depicted in the film. As well as in *Hipsters*, fashion of hippies is constantly demonstrated in the film, and one of the brightest examples of it is the scene of a party around the fire. As different representatives of the hippie movement are dancing, and the camera is

moving from one person to another, one can observe their clothing style from different angles: friendship bracelets, beads, headbands, loose shirts, ethnic and flowery patterns, flared trousers and jeans, long skirts, etc.

Soviet hippie slang is another detail used to represent the subculture in the film. Such words and expressions as “*pip!*” (from “people”, used as a reference to a group of people), “*gerla*” (from “girl”, a reference to a young woman), “*systema*” (“the System”, a reference to the hippie movement), “*hippovat*” (to be a hippie), etc. may be heard throughout the film.

Hippie lifestyle, as well as their beliefs, are demonstrated through the constant opposition with the authorities. For instance, in one scene, members of the hippie movement gather to hold a demonstration calling for freedom and peace, the release of an activist Angela Davis and the end of the war in Vietnam. A government official claims that the demonstration is agreed upon and approved by the government. However, it turns out to be a trap for hippies who are attacked by police officers and arrested. The attack is shown in the film in great detail, with hippies thrown on the ground, run over by mounted police, hit with clubs, beaten up and forcibly taken into the police bus. Another example may be the scene of the first concert given by the band The Time Machine, which has already been described before from a different perspective.

Like *Hipsters*, this film’s narrative is not limited to the depiction of a subculture in a socialist state. The central plot line of the film is the story of Sasha, a student from a wealthy Soviet family, who joins hippies as she falls in love with Solntse, a leader of one of the hippie communes who dies at the end of the film from some grave illness. Socialist past in the film is represented not so much through hippie subculture’s lifestyle but through the love story between two people who are young and romantic and enjoy their lives despite the attacks from the society.

German films

In contrast with Russian cinema, German films do not utilize the image of subcultures to present the socialist past; instead, they use images of communities that more people may identify themselves with. For example, in the film *The Sun Alley*, the socialist past is presented through the life of the neighborhood of Sonnenallee – a street divided in half by the Berlin Wall. Micha, the main protagonist of the film, walks around the neighborhood with his friends-teenagers who are occupied by hanging out together and listening to prohibited music records.

As well as in *Good bye, Lenin!*, this film is set in a restricted environment: if in *Good bye, Lenin!* the action of the film revolves chiefly around the flat where Alex’s family lives, in this film all the depicted events take place in the neighborhood of the Sonnenallee with the characters who live there. It seems as if the events portrayed in the film happen in some kind of an artificial bubble; even when Micha’s mother goes to West Berlin on the plea of burying her brother who died in their apartment, the audience never sees the Western side of the Wall and only gets to hear about that world from Micha’s mother: “*Everything is so bright over there*”. This could have been used in the film on purpose: on the one

hand, it allows us to look at the socialist past through one single community and take it as a model that exemplifies the life of ordinary young people in a socialist state who face different challenges on their way to adulthood. On the other hand, this technique presents the life in a socialist state as isolated and disconnected from the rest of the world. In this case, this device may be used as an opposing way of representing the socialist past. Through the lives of Micha, his friends and his family who live in the Sonnenallee, we learn about the deficit that existed in the GDR (Uncle Heinz regularly visits the family and brings them Western goods); about the hierarchy that exists in the socialist state (a girl whom Alex is in love with comes from an upper-class family; Stasi members have phones in their homes while regular people do not have a chance to get one for many years); about the attitude towards Stasi and the East German state: are ridiculed constantly throughout the film; about the attitude towards prohibited goods and the general desire to flee to the other side of the Wall (Micha's mother finds a lost passport that belongs to an older woman and tries to impersonate her in order to flee from the country), etc.

Just as in the Russian films described above, the plot line of this one focuses on the love story between Micha and Miriam, as well as Micha's relationships with his friends. Together they listen to prohibited records, go to parties and even think of organizing a resistance group. Supposedly, one of the reasons why this film is considered an illustrative example of the phenomenon of Ostalgie in German cinema is because it concentrates on common images of the past (living in an East German neighborhood, being young in a socialist state, etc.), which evoke a strong emotional response from the audience. The community in this film is presented as an example of a typical neighborhood in a socialist state and demonstrates common patterns of everyday practices, beliefs, desires and concerns regarding various aspects of life in the GDR.

Another German film that uses the depiction of a community as a way to represent the socialist past is the film *The Red Cockatoo* which, too, shows a love story of a young man, Siggi, who comes to Dresden from the province to work at the theater and joins a group of other young people, regular visitors of Red Cockatoo nightclub where every night, until the construction of the Wall, foreign musical compositions prohibited in the East are played. The group of friends dance to rock-n-roll music at Red Cockatoo, which seems to be a safe haven for freedom, youth and carelessness in the midst of a complicated political situation that soon will result in the erection of the Wall. The rapid changes in political situation in the GDR and its relationships with the West are depicted mainly through Siggi and Luise's relationship and through the life of the community of the club visitors. Generally, the GDR is represented in the film by virtue of depiction of the collision between the young, open-minded people and the authorities which takes place throughout the whole film. In an early scene, Siggi and Luise meet each other when Siggi walks through a field where many young people are dancing to rock-n-roll music played on a phonograph as the police come, break it and hit people with clubs. During this scene, Luise takes off her shoe and starts beating up a policeman, who, however, beats her with a club in turn. Another illustrative example of the collision between the state and the community of the Red Cockatoo is the episode in which many of the club's visitors with whom Siggi communicated are arrested. The court passes a sentence to

everyone who attended the club and performed there, except for Sigggi, who is acquitted. This creates a disagreement within the community, splitting it and prompting Sigggi to run away to the West right before the erection of the Berlin Wall. This ending of the film may be viewed as a symbolic win of the state over the freedom and free thought represented by the community of the Red Cockatoo club. Through this representation, the socialist state is demonstrated as a political body that at first gave a foundation for hopes and dreams for a better future, but at the end turned out to be a repressive machine of the totalitarian rule as claimed by Sigggi: *“This is a wonderful country. But they turned it into a prison where nobody can trust each other”*. The socialist past, therefore, is reconstructed via the life of the community and its opposition to the current regime of power. However, as opposed to the previously discussed German film, this one demonstrates that time in a twofold perspective. On the one hand, for the protagonist, this is a time of youth and romance with Luise accompanied by evenings filled with foreign music, champagne and dancing. On the other hand, the collision with the state is obviously depicted in a harshly negative way. At the same time, all the films discussed in this paragraph use the same instrument with different effects on the audience. This interesting feature will be explained in the next part of the paper, in which the main strategies utilized in the selected films and their effects will be discussed.

2.2.4. Representation of the socialist past through the technique of first-person narration

In this paragraph, I will focus on the last identified instrument of representation of the socialist past that I believe may exert influence on the nostalgic perception of a film by the audience. However, as it has been already mentioned at the beginning of the section devoted to the analysis of instruments, this instrument, as well as the others, should not be considered exclusively as a tool of nostalgic representation in cinema, as it may also be employed in film for other purposes and utilized in other contexts. Nevertheless, in this segment I am going to analyze the use of a first-person voice-over narration, which is a technique predominantly utilized in different German films. The usage of this instrument, however, has its peculiarities, which should be examined in the course of the research.

German films

As it has been noted above, the technique of a first-person narration is utilized in the majority of the selected German films. However, in different films, both the way this tool is implemented and the possible reasons for the choice of this technique may differ. For instance, *The Sun Alley* begins with a voice-over narration of the protagonist, Micha. Various events, explanations, feelings and portrayals of characters in the film are often accompanied by commentary from Micha, and the narration seems to balance between Micha actually describing events and expressing the emotions he experienced at the time. The technique of first-person narration in this film allows it to present past events embedded into a personal story told by Micha, a witness who experienced life in the GDR first-

hand. This tool, while making the story subjective, complements the focus on the depiction of everyday life in the socialist state while avoiding presentation of a more complex, ambivalent picture of the GDR.

At the same time, these remarks, heard throughout the entire film, appear to be made right at the very moment in the past when the events of the film are taking place. Nevertheless, at the end of the film, Micha pronounces his closing remark, which has been already quoted in this paper: *“It was a country once, and I lived there. If you ask me about how it was – it was the most wonderful time in my life because I was young, and I was in love”* – which clearly demonstrates that the narrator is telling his story about the past from the present, and not immediately when the depicted events actually took place. This discrepancy may be caused by the intention of the film’s creators to “pull out” the spectators from the constructed reality of the socialist past in which they were plunged earlier and to incorporate it into the present context. Another intention by the creators of the film may have been to interconnect the past and the present while demonstrating the contrast between them.

In *The Red Cockatoo*, the technique of first-person narration can be identified only in rare cases when the protagonist shares his interpretation and evaluation of the past events. Such specific usage of the instrument may be explained by the film’s dual genre, as it is presented, on the one hand, as a historical film, and, on the other hand, as a drama. Predominant lack of first-person narration allows it to present a seemingly objective image of the past with a focus on the historical development of the GDR in the sixties. At the same time, this narration tool personalizes the events depicted in the film and interprets them through Siggis point of view, which is in constant development throughout the film. Quite a spectacular example of it presents itself at the beginning of the film in an observation made by Siggis: *“Time steals beauty. This is the name of a statue in the park. Time steals beauty. Now I know that such is the path of all mortals through which we all go. We enjoy beauty of love, beauty of a man. Then time comes and takes beauty away...”* The film ends with a reference to this line as Siggis claims: *“It is not true that time steals beauty. When I think of Luise today, she did not grow old for me at all. It is just that she preserved her beauty and ideals for a long time. In my mind, Luise lives as a notion of the ideal, and she never gets old”*. Thus, first-person narration in *The Red Cockatoo* allows the film to create an impression a rather objective external reconstruction of the historical events framed, at the same time, by a personal vision of these events, which supposedly makes the story more reliable in the eyes of the audience by offering a perspective of a first-hand witness.

In *Good bye, Lenin!* first-person narration, on the contrary, is used throughout the whole film. The voice of Alex, the narrator, seems to walk the audience through both historical events, such as the first German in space, the 40th anniversary of the GDR, the resignation of Erich Honecker, the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Reunification, and the events that had an effect on Alex’s personal life such as his mother falling in and out of a coma, his dates with Lara, meeting his father, etc. At the same time, Alex’s guidance through his past is supplied with his commentary and a subjective evaluation of socialism, his life incorporated into this regime and the consequences of its collapse. In many cases, these

comments have a comical effect coupled with the images on the screen: for example, when Alex says that his mother has missed out on the progress Ariane made in economics (which she studied in the GDR before her university got closed), while on the screen we see Ariane serving orders in a Burger King drive-through. Therefore, in this film, the first-person narrative has a threefold meaning: as in the previously discussed films, it allows the film to present a personal story embedded in the context of socialism, to evaluate, and interpret the events of the past through the narrator's words, and it also contributes to the creation of a comic effect in the film.

Russian films

In Russian films, the technique of first-person narration is implemented only in one film, *My Dad Baryshnikov*. There, the narrative, too, emanates from a protagonist, but if in the film he is presented as a teenager, his voice-over and the ending of the film indicate that he is an adult now and is commenting on the experience he had during his youth. What is more, at the end of this film, Boris Fishkin, the narrator, refers in his speech to what happened after the events depicted in the last scenes of the film – how he was not accepted back to the ballet school, but turned out to be good at mathematics. This tendency of finalizing the storyline with an epilogue that connects the events of the past depicted in the film with their consequences in the future, i.e., nowadays, is observed in two more Russian films: *The House of the Sun* and *Vanished Empire*. In the former case, it is incorporated right before the final credits: on a black background, the audience sees the pictures of the main characters that go one by one supplemented by textual descriptions of how their lives turned out in the future. The main characters' mainly tragic fates contrast deeply with the happy days of the past, which, although filled with the struggle for the right to live the way they want to in a totalitarian state, are still presented as some sort of a youthful adventure, especially for the female protagonist, Sasha. In the second case, the technique of flash-forward is utilized at the end of the film: the scene is set at a modern airport when an unknown man comes up to Sergei, the main protagonist. The man turns out to be Stepan, Sergei's friend from his university days who moved to Finland in the nineties. When Sergei asks whether he is going to come back to Russia, he replies: "*God forbid, Seryoga. Our address is the Soviet Union, Seryoga. What is this? Where is Moscow? I do not recognize it. Everything is alien, mean. What is left? No, I am fine. Everything is okay*".

Even though the last two examples from Russian films from those described above do not represent the usage of first-person narration technique, I believe that they are implemented in these films for the same purpose. On the one hand, the creators of these films attempt to embody nostalgic sentiments by establishing a connection between past events and the context of the present while highlighting the opposition between the happy days of the past and the "*alien and mean*" life in the present. On the other hand, they also strive to do it by providing narration by a character who not only tells a personal story about the past, but also reflects on it in a positive way.

Overall, the technique of first-person narration has several purposes in the analyzed films. First, it creates an effect of intimacy between the narrator and the spectators. Second, it presents the events depicted in the film as a story experienced by a person directly, which allows the spectators to associate themselves with the character presented as their contemporary. Third, it may be used to create an opposition between the past and the present, which may be presented not only as different from the past, but as an alien and inferior one. Finally, it allows the film to personalize a story embedded in the context of the depicted historical events and transmit a positive evaluation of the events of the past through it.

2.3. Strategies of representation of the socialist past in German and Russian cinema

In the section above, common instruments of nostalgic representation of the socialist past in German and Russian films selected for analysis were described. Nevertheless, the image of the socialist past depicted with the use of the same instruments, happens to be presented in different ways throughout various films. The reason which underlies this discordance is the implication of different strategies to present the past in cinema. The term *strategy* in this paper shall be identified using the theory of practice by Pierre Bourdieu, who explains a strategy as such kind of behavior that corresponds with individuals' interests and enables agents to handle situations by investing capital and striving for it (Bourdieu, 1972). However, before plunging into the analysis of strategies, it should be stated that any of the distinguished strategies applied in films does not have to be mutually exclusive with another strategy or even strategies, because each of them might be utilized in films due to different objectives and reasons. Thus, let us now examine the differences, similarities and specificities of the usage of the distinguished strategies in German and Russian cinema.

Strategy of *normalization*, which manifests itself in a meticulous creation of authentic daily life, attempts to build up a picture of a life under socialism as of a normal life of ordinary people who had the same routine, desires and problems as people elsewhere. In Russian films *My Dad Baryshnikov* and *Vanished Empire* this strategy is developed predominantly through the depiction of authentic socialist environment and incorporation of common narratives which the majority of the audience could identify themselves with (see paragraphs 2.2.1. and 2.2.2. of this paper). Apart from that, in German films this strategy may often display itself in the presence of constant intensification of similarities between East and West, which might also demonstrate a willingness to prove wrong the notion about the former citizens of socialist states as of "victims" of the repressive regimes sharing common post-totalitarian identity (Forest et al., 2004: 363) who had to adapt to the terrible conditions framed by the oppressiveness of the state in the past. These German films, *Kleinruppin forever* and *The Sun Alley*, aspire to demonstrate the similarities between such different states (Hodgin, 2011: 173) and indicate that the German Democratic Republic was not such a terrifying place to live in. The two films both focus on the lives of young people who share a common set of concerns and interests: plans for the future, first love, partying

with friends, music, alcohol – the list may go on (see paragraph 2.2.3.). Surprisingly, as depicted in the films, young people who come from two polarized worlds do not differ that much – and it is partially through this comparison the strategy of normalization is put in the use.

As mentioned before, *Kleinruppin forever* is based on the story of a West German who finds himself in the GDR and at first gets constantly astounded by the organization of the society there and its dissimilitude to the life in the West. Nevertheless, by the end of the film, he does not only adapt to the life in the GDR but does not want to go back home as he finds a caring parent, devoted friends and a young love there which he lacked in the West. It seems to be that only in the East could he discover pure love and true friendship which contrast in the film with Tim's relationships in the West characterized by constant arguments with his father, hanging out with friends, who only seek to drink cocktails and flirt with attractive girls, and absence of real love. This manifestation of the film is verbally reflected in the words of a fisherman who saved Tim when he was initially trying to escape from the GDR: "*When you're happy, you don't care where to be. This is like fish, it doesn't care where to swim*". However, the strategy of normalization here gets interwoven with another strategy of representation of the socialist past – *romanticization*. The society of the German Democratic Republic is portrayed as having close ties between people who share kind and supportive feelings with each other. Remarkably, Tim from Bremen, a relatively big town, comes to a very small town of Kleinruppin where everyone seems to know each other. I believe that this part of the plot is not coincidental – the relocation of Tim from a more populated Western city to a provincial town of Kleinruppin might help highlight the romanticization of collectivism in a socialist state characterized by strong ties between people and mutual supportiveness which are often ascribed to the socialist regimes.

In *The Sun Alley*, the same strategy is put in the use as we are demonstrated a close-knit community presented in the form of a neighborhood where young people who live on the same street are best friends. Strong bonds between people, amicability and a sense of camaraderie are brought to the fore in these films that strive to normalize the socialist past, while romanticizing some aspects of it which seem to be attractive for contemporaries with true friendship being one of them. The final scene of *The Sun Alley* especially highlights this idea – at the end of the film, the whole neighborhood goes out in the street near the border to dance – which surprisingly reminds of the final scene in *Hipsters* (see paragraph 2.2.3.). The audience practically sees every character who was engaged in the film and many other people who walk dancing towards the Berlin Wall. Naturally, the incorporation of this scene into the film may be explained by different interpretations: it may refer to the future reunification of Germany met with excitement by Easterners, but it may also demonstrate that for such a close-knit community, united by a sense of collective spirit, nothing is scary or impossible – despite the notion that trying to cross the border one could get shot, the crowd of people continues to move forward while one of the guards says: "*There is nothing we can do*".

The strategy of romanticization also reveals itself in *Good bye, Lenin!* and *The Red Cockatoo*. Often presenting the socialist past rather from a negative perspective and criticizing the cruelty of the regime, which is demonstrated by collisions with the police and authorities in the films, they are not deprived of a nostalgic component. Both films, utilizing, among other instruments, the technique of first-personal narration, in closing remarks, already quoted before in the research, demonstrate longing for the past, which for Alex is strongly connected with his mother, while Siggi refers to it in relation to the love of his life, Luise. These relationships, however, are inevitably tied up with the socialist context of that time, which effects the construction of a romanticized, though sometimes criticized and even stigmatized, image of the socialist past.

The strategy of *romanticization* is also used in some Russian films, primarily, in *Hipsters* and *The House of the Sun*. The film *Hipsters*, presented by the creators as a “party movie” («фильм-праздник»), does not have so much in common with the depicted epoch of the fifties – instead, the film presents itself as an enchanting story which, not being completely deprived of attempts to demonstrate a complex image of the time by making references to tragic experience of the characters, generally represents an attractive and bright image of life in the USSR. It is worth to mention that the director of *Hipsters*, Valery Todorovsky, in one interview stated himself: “*We did not make a documentary or a historical film. This is a fantasy, almost a fairytale*” (Rossiyskaya Gazeta, 2008). Indeed, the film does not attempt to rigorously reconstruct the Soviet epoch, but rather to present an imagined, “carnival” story embedded in the scenery of the Soviet Union. Stylization in *Hipsters* takes place through the creation of the artificial reality put in the form of a musical. This reality is constructed by means of implication of bright, catchy, almost carnival clothes, which simply could not exist in the depicted period of time in the USSR, fictitious dialogues between characters or unconventional situations. Bright outfits of the hipsters are intentionally opposed to the dark clothing of ordinary Soviet people, which can be especially demonstrated in the scene where Mels goes into a clothing store in which there is absolutely no clothes of any colors except for dark ones. The example of unconventional events depicted in the film may be displayed by the episode of Mels playing the saxophone when Charlie Parker appears in the room and plays with him – fantasy which strongly contrasts with the Soviet reality where jazz was stigmatized as Western music.

Another film, *The House of the Sun*, which utilizes the same strategy of romanticization, implements it practically by means of the same tools as *Hipsters* does. First of all, the clothing of hippies in the film presents itself rather as a stylization than a reconstruction of the authentic outfit of hippies in the Soviet Union. Secondly, the film abounds with unusual events and dialogues which, in contrast to films based on the strategy of normalization, are hard to imagine taking place in life of ordinary Soviet people. For example, there is a scene in which Sasha comes to Solntse’s flat, and when she stands by the window, she casually talks to a man who turns out to be a distinguished Soviet poet and singer, Vladimir Vysotsky, who after this conversation goes back to his apartment and starts singing and playing the guitar. Evidently, such presentation of the socialist past appears to be rather a fantasy of the creators which has not so much to do with the everyday reality of ordinary Soviet people. What is more, both films

similar to the German ones that utilize this strategy, focus on friendship in the context of collectivism. The romanticization of this part of the socialist life is not unconventional: as revealed by the polls, in Russia, 34% of respondents regret the collapse of the USSR precisely because of “the increase in bitterness and mutual distrust”, while 26% say that they regret “the disintegration of relationships with friends and relatives” caused by the collapse of the regime (Levada-Center, 2017a). Being one of the major aspects which people are nostalgic for, friendship and trustworthy relationship between people are highlighted not only in Russian, but in German films as well.

Another strategy utilized solely in German films is satirization, which primarily presents itself as a strategy of harsh ridicule and mocking of the socialist past, and is employed in all the selected German films except, probably, for *The Red Cockatoo*. Notwithstanding that some of the selected German films happen to be comedies by genre and, as such, they presumably should depict the socialist past from a humorous side, the implementation of this strategy has a particular aim not only to amuse the audience, but also to employ social criticism on the German Democratic Republic. At the same time, mocking can be used in the films as a way to cope with the problems and traumas of the socialist past: if the characters of the films can ridicule the past, then the spectators can do likewise.

German films abound with examples that demonstrate how this strategy is utilized, with different aspects of life in the GDR being mocked. For instance, in the film *The Sun Alley*, one of the most illustrative examples of this strategy is the story of Micha’s friend, Wuschel, who, at the end of the film, is shot by a guard near the Berlin Wall and luckily survives as the bullet gets lodged in his copy of the The Rolling Stones album, *Exile on Main St*. However, Wuschel, who should be happy because he survived, is extremely upset and starts crying because the Rolling Stones album that he was desperately trying to buy throughout the whole film was destroyed. This episode ridicules the prohibition of Western goods and products that were speculated at the black market for sky-high prices and were in great demand by the East Germans. In *Kleinruppin forever*, the economic backwardness of the GDR is mocked in different scenes of the film. For example, when Tim first gets to a factory, he is shown a very primitive and easy scheme of monotonous work that consists of interchangeably lowering and elevating a slab and then collecting details. Tim ironically remembers the words of Ronni, his twin brother: “*I’m doing ECM now. The GDR is running at full speed*”. Finally, satirization is constantly used to its largest in *Good bye, Lenin!*, one example of which may be the fake broadcast of GDR news which is so authentically put together by Alex and his friend that Alex’s mother, until the very end of the film, does not doubt it. The scene in which they prepare a report on Western refugees running away from capitalism to the East harshly mocks socialist propaganda and a blind belief of Easterners in what is said by the media and the state.

Yet another strategy utilized in films that strongly interweaves with the strategy of satirization is called *reproduction of stereotypes*. Even though it, to some extent, displays itself within the other mentioned strategies, it may be distinguished separately as a crucial way of representing the past. The utilization of stereotypes, which enables the audience to easily and quickly recognize some aspects of the socialist life, may be implemented in accordance with different

intentions of the creators of a film: it may both participate in the process of stigmatization of the socialist past or, on the contrary, present an idealized image of it to the audience. The stereotypes at the same time may be of different kinds: stereotypes of lifestyles, stereotypes related to material objects, stereotypes of personal qualities; negative and positive. For example, at the beginning of *Kleinruppin forever*, when Tim and his friends come to the GDR and get off the bus, they take out their camera and shoot everything they see; at one point, they see a butcher shop, exclaiming: “*Oh look! Exactly like after the war*”, a queue standing outside it, to which they refer as “*one of the famous queues*”, and a Trabant, which drives on a very bad road with lots of potholes. This episode, therefore, ridicules the economic backwardness, underdevelopment and deficit of the GDR through the prism of various stereotypes in just one scene. On the one hand, utilization of stereotypes contributes to a quicker and easier recognizability of some aspects or objects associated with the socialist past. For instance, in *Good bye, Lenin!* one example out of many would be the depiction of pioneers visiting Alex’s mother who sing songs praising their Fatherland. On the other hand, it serves as another tool for application of irony and criticism, which intersects with the strategy of satirization. The depiction of the socialist reality through the lens of stereotypes may, in this case, be absurd and clearly ironical for the spectators. For instance, in *The Sun Alley*, Micha’s mother finds a passport of some old woman from the West and tries to apply makeup so that she would look much older and similar to the woman in order to flee with her passport to the West. This example ridicules the desire of the citizens of the GDR to flee to the West at whatever cost, which is of course shown in a quite absurdist manner. The tendency for usage of stereotypes of the socialist past in the ironic sense is not so intrinsic for the selected Russian films: the incorporation of stereotypes there is mostly used to present an idealistic picture. For example, the images of hipsters and hippies as of careless, beautifully looking people who spend most of their time having fun is rather a cliché than a reflection of the actual Soviet reality.

Another strategy connected to the satirization and production of stereotypes is *exoticization* of the socialist past, used solely in German cinema. The main idea behind this strategy is to present the German Democratic Republic as uncivilized in comparison to the Western Germany, and even a barbarous state, which creates an image of the socialist era in Germany as an extremely alien and distant time for the modern German people. For example, in the film *Kleinruppin forever*, at the beginning of the trip to the GDR, Tim and his friends travel in a bus while wearing T-shirts with the inscription “*DDR Safari 1985*”. In the same scene, one of Tim’s friends, Max, humorously asks whether the friends got vaccinations before traveling there. Obviously, both these observations in the film refer the audience to the notion of the GDR as a remote and distant country teeming with unexpected, for a foreigner, dangers of an unknown land. As Tim comes back from the GDR to Bremen, his friends welcome him with a phrase “*Welcome to the civilization!*” which once again indicates this strategy utilized. In general, in the film, Tim, akin to an Odysseus, goes through various institutions of the socialist system and attempts to cope with the different hierarchies and structures, which he finds striking in comparison with Western Germany’s: he gets into a local polyclinic, he is bailed from a police station in exchange for a bunch of bananas, he faces the Stasi, who monitor him constantly, he goes to

the military enlistment office, he does an internship at a factory where he does very monotonous and mechanical work, etc. All this constitutes quite a whimsy picture of the GDR as of an amusement park filled with various unusual experiences.

The context of post-socialist nostalgia is quite complex, which is represented in cinema as well: though all the films include a nostalgic component, none of them demonstrates a purely idealistic image of the past. Nevertheless, the implementation of certain instruments and strategies certainly forms, sometimes even in opposition to the director's intentions, a nostalgic response from the audience. The distinguished strategies of the representation of the socialist past demonstrate some sort of a paradoxical nature of nostalgic expression in cinema – strategies and instruments that present the socialist past in a positive light are interwoven with the strategies that criticize or stigmatize it, which sometimes takes place not only in the context of the same film, but even in the same scene.

At the same time, different strategies execute different functions in films. The strategy of normalization, on the one hand, might trigger feelings of nostalgia among the spectators by means of depicting authentic socialist lifestyles and referring to the common stories and narratives of ordinary people who are easier to identify with by the audience. On the other hand, this strategy presents the socialist past as a normal and integral part of one's life, which may operate to the understanding of GDR and USSR as a totalitarian regime the inhabitants of which appear as victims of their oppressiveness and their past is embedded in this context. In this regard, the strategy of normalization aims at presenting the socialist past from the perspective of daily life of ordinary people while focusing on the micro-level of organization of the socialist society, which, in turn is able to provoke a nostalgic response on the other side of the screen. At the same time, as it has been noted above, this strategy may intersect with romanticization, which presents some aspects of the socialist past in a better light than they actually used to be. Reproduction of stereotypes, even though it may contribute to romanticization in presenting an idealistic picture, can mostly be found side by side with satirization and exoticization, which rather mock and criticize the socialist state. At the same time, irony, satire and jokes about different negative aspects of the socialist state might also relate to self-mockery, which may be considered a way to cope with the trauma and does not have to contradict with the strategy of romanticization, for example. The identified strategies cannot be clearly divided into nostalgic and non-nostalgic; rather, in this case it is suitable to use the image of a scale and consider these strategies as those that are more prone to the formation of nostalgic images and those that are less leaning towards it, but still have a potential to do so. Therefore, such an interlacing of strategies forms a complex, yet paradoxical image of the socialist past that still is able to receive a nostalgic response.

2.4. Economic, political and sociocultural factors effecting the formation of nostalgic representations of the socialist past in German and Russian cinema

In the previous paragraphs, I have analyzed various strategies of representation of the socialist past and instruments that they use in the selected German and Russian films in order to construct a nostalgic image of the past. As a result, five strategies and four instruments were identified and examined. The distribution of strategies in Russian and German films appears to be of a special interest since such strategies as satirization, exoticization and, for the most part, reproduction of stereotypes, were revealed mainly in German films, while the strategies of normalization and romanticization were found in both cases. At the same time, the interlacing of different and even, at first sight, opposing strategies forms a complex image of the past. In this part of the paper, I shall attempt to interpret the results of the previous paragraphs by analyzing economic, political and sociocultural contexts of Germany and Russia which these films are embedded into.

As it was stated at the beginning of the second chapter, the selection of the films stemmed from the understanding of nostalgia as a longing for a positively reconstructed time in the past, and the high demand and popularity of the films in their own countries and in some cases even abroad. In total, the list of films was narrowed down to eight items which were analyzed in the course of this research. Even though during the process of selection of the films the chronological aspect was not brought to the fore, the selected films introduce a common pattern. Selected German films were produced, except for *The Sun Alley*, in the early 2000s, while selected Russian films were screened in the period from 2008 until 2011. These periods of time may reveal a certain context in Germany and Russia which contributed to the actualization of the memories of the socialist past and, consequently, created a demand for the production of the films focusing on it.

When interpreting those timeframes in a broader context of two countries, it becomes clear that they share a common pattern: the films were released at the times when both Germany and Russia went through an economic recession. In both countries, an economic crisis was characterized by a severe growth in unemployment, increase in prices, general economic instability which resulted in political and social instability accompanied by a lack of income security, growing social inequality, the decrease in quality of life and, eventually, discontent with the reality. All listed consequences of a recession presumably facilitated nostalgic feelings for the time when people enjoyed economic stability, predictability of life and the benefits of the socialist welfare state. In Germany, this situation is also complemented by a “recognition crisis” of East Germans that appeared after the reunification. During the existence of the German Democratic Republic, the Easterners lived within a predictable system of social guarantees which was plain and clear for them. Having awaited the reunification with hope that it would bring them prosperity and liberalization, they were dramatically disappointed: in the poll of 2009, less than a half of the surveyed believed that life actually got better after reunification than it used to be in the GDR (The Local, 2009). Post-reunification frustration which was embedded in economic burdens of transitions, turned one

of the exemplary countries in a socialist block into a state of economic instability and unemployment. The state-centered economy was not competitive enough in the new capitalist conditions which was aggravated by the processes of privatization and absorption of East German companies by Western businesses. Those negative consequences of reunification were complemented by the lack of recognition of people's qualifications in a newly formed country, which is well demonstrated in the film *Good bye, Lenin!* As a result, East Germans became "second-class citizens" with high-quality education and skills which were no longer in demand (Bach, 2002). Later on, however, the situation stabilized, while still leaving unemployment rates higher in East German regions. During the recession of the early 2000s, those especially vulnerable Eastern regions of Germany which had also largely depended on social assistance and financial support from the West after the reunification (Snower & Merkl, 2006) and had already been lagging economically compared to their Western neighbors, were in dire circumstances under the crisis, which led to actualization of memories of the past when, despite the totalitarian context, life had been stable and predictable, in opposite to the new capitalist conditions of reunified Germany.

Another aspect that should be considered regarding the formation of nostalgic representations in the society is political agenda. In Russia, there were three stages to the transformation of remembering the Soviet past (Evgenieva & Selezneva, 2016; Malinova, 2013). The first one was set in the 1990s during the late perestroika and was characterized by a destruction of the Soviet heritage accompanied by a shift in the system of cultural values from socialist into a democratic one by means of clear division into "them", the communists, and "us", the democrats. One of the most illustrative examples of this distinction was presented in 1996 during the presidential election campaign of Boris Yeltsin under the slogan "Vote or You Will Lose", which was employed in a number of posters. Those posters were divided into two halves and demonstrated the opposition between an oppressive and totalitarian communist regime which was presented through images of barbed wire, handcuffs and a uniform of concentration camp prisoner, associated with Yeltsin's opponent, Gennady Zyuganov, and a free, liberal and promising democratic state of Yeltsin depicted via the images of the global map, free hands and a denim jacket. Therefore, the representations of the Soviet past were not erased from the collective memory, but their emotional constituent was changed from positive to negative. Russia of the nineties tried to distance from the heritage of the Soviet era by strongly stigmatizing it, in order to present itself as a modern democracy, the values of which could not reconcile with the totalitarian past. However, already at the end of the nineties the situation changed back which could have been the result of a financial crisis of 1998 that, in comparison to the economic stagnation of the previous two decades, was much more destructive and severe. This may be explicitly demonstrated by public polls, which indicate that the percentage of people who regretted the collapse of the USSR had risen after the crisis from 66% in 1994 to 75% in 2000 (Levada-Center, 2017).

The second stage of the transformation took place in the 2000s, when the images of the Soviet epoch, which were strongly associated with stability and predictability that Russians lacked so much at the time, became increasingly used for the purposes of commercialization (Malinova, 2013). However, this popular

demand for the Soviet images, though originating at the time of the financial crisis of 1998, was also fortified by the political agenda of Putin's rule. It was later continued during the presidential rule of Medvedev and became a systematic and coherent political strategy in the third period of transformation of remembering the Soviet past – in the 2010s.

The idea of succession of the Soviet past and construction of the image of the great empire is constantly displayed in Putin's rhetoric (Malinova, 2013). However, while in the early 2000s Putin's speech included both positive and negative evaluations of the Soviet era, in 2005 his position was established clearly as he made his famous statement calling the collapse of the Soviet Union "the biggest geopolitical catastrophe of the 20th century" (Malinova, 2013: 122-123). Therefore, the Soviet past is getting integrated into the logic of Russian history and its heritage, one of the major points of which may be considered the victory in the Second World War, which became a powerful instrument operated by the political forces. According to surveys, between 1999 and 2017 over 80% of respondents claimed the victory in the Second World War to be one of the events of Russian history they felt proud of (Levada-Center, 2017b). Being such a crucial event for Russians, the Second World War contributes to the formation and maintenance of contemporary Russian identity while serving as an essential tool of construction of the socialist past in the public discourse (Kasamara & Sorokina, 2011).

This incorporation of the Soviet past into contemporary Russian history was accompanied by the change of rhetoric about the USSR from negative, spread in the nineties, to positive, framed not in the terms of totalitarianism and repressions but rather in terms of prosperity and power, which also contributes to post-imperial nostalgia (Kasamara & Sorokina, 2011). Again, this reconstruction of the social past in the public discourse may be demonstrated by the results of the polls, for example, about the attitude towards Joseph Stalin – while in 2001, 43% of respondents shared negative attitude towards Stalin, this figure decreased down to 12% in 2018 (Levada-Center, 2018). What is more, this political discourse on the socialist past does not only form a public attitude of people who actually lived in the USSR, but also enables to construct the image of the Soviet past in the minds of a post-socialist generation which reproduces family and media rhetorics (Kasamara & Sorokina, 2011).

In Germany, the conversation around legacy of the German Democratic Republic started right after the reunification and penetrated different discussion arenas. With the country being unified, the first step to deal with the socialist past was to organize courts persecuting GDR's officials mainly for such crimes as public office misuse or corruption. At the same time, with the opening of the files in the archives, there was a demand coming from the citizens to investigate the violation of human rights in the former GDR that revealed itself in such crimes as imprisonment of political dissidents or killings on the East German border, which, according to the recent data, accounted for 327 fatalities (The Local, 2017). Such persecutions, however, happened to be quite problematic because of the judicial principle of "no penalty without a law", according to which it was not possible to persecute anybody for the actions which were not considered criminal in the GDR (Clarke & Wölfel, 2011: 6-7). These judicial procedures, which took place until

2005, were promoted not only by grass-root movements and victims of the crimes committed under the regime, but also by the state, which plays an important role in coming to terms with the past and contributes to the formation of collective memory about the GDR, while transmitting it through education system and various specific institutions. One of the most crucial institutions of such kind is Federal Foundation for the Reappraisal of the SED Dictatorship, the logo of which, interestingly, is the flag of the GDR with its emblem taken out (Clarke & Wölfel, 2011: 7). The rhetoric of the state clearly positions the regime of the German Democratic Republic in a category of dictatorship similar to National Socialism regime, which can be vividly demonstrated, for example, by annual reports on the results of reunification and reevaluation of the GDR legacy by the Foundation. In these documents, the German Democratic Republic is presented as a totalitarian state dominated by the dictatorship of the SED with the focus put on the Stasi, the political prisoners and injustices of the regime (Federal Foundation for the Reappraisal of the SED Dictatorship, 2012), which totally contrasts with the state's attitude and agenda towards the socialist past in Russia. What is more, the former inhabitants of the GDR in this rhetoric are considered as "victims" of the regime, which is evident, among other examples, in the financial attitude towards them - the state provides the compensations to the victims of the SED regime, as well as it does in the case of the Nazi regime. This rhetoric, however, is not shared by other voices – despite the dominant state discourse on the past of the German Democratic Republic framed in the terms of totalitarianism and dictatorship, which also circulates among conservative politicians and, of course, victims of the regime, there is yet another group of actors and left politicians who agitate for offering a wider view on the GDR past which would also include everyday life experiences of those who lived a relatively normal life in the socialist state (Clarke & Wölfel, 2011: 9). This conflict of competing interpretations of the GDR legacy – demonization on the one side, and normalization on the other side, went out of the realm of public debates and found its way into, among other arenas, cinema. The reflections of both these sides of the argument were presented in the course of my analysis of contemporary German nostalgic cinema. On the one hand, the cinema seeks to normalize and romanticize the socialist past, thereby, admitting the "normality" of life there and reflecting on the economic instability and unpredictability nowadays in contrast with the GDR. However, on the other hand, such strategies as satirization, exoticization and reproduction of often negative stereotypes about the socialist past demonstrate the desire to distance from the GDR legacy influenced by the political agenda and dominant state discourse. As a result, the German films present a complex, ambivalent and contradictory image of the socialist past built on the balance between nostalgic feelings towards the past and inability to express them directly and clearly without implying any criticism on the GDR. In Russian films, where predominantly two strategies of normalization and romanticization are utilized, the image of the socialist past is influenced by the state rhetoric about the USSR, the development of which was demonstrated above. These nostalgic feelings, partially sustained by the state agenda, in turn, become relevant in the context of economic instability, which may explain why both German and Russian popular nostalgic films were screened precisely in that time period.

Conclusions

This research aimed at the investigation of nostalgic representations of the socialist past articulated in German and Russian cinema. In order to complete the major goal of the research and accomplish the research tasks, first, a coherent theoretical framework for the study of nostalgia was established. The empirical data analysis was conducted by means of a qualitative analysis of visual texts and a sequential analysis of the obtained textual data. The major findings of the cinematic analysis, which were further interpreted in a broader context of Germany and Russia, will be presented in this final part of the thesis.

The first finding of my research concerns the notion that both German and Russian films utilize the same set of major instruments of nostalgic representation of the socialist past, namely representation of the socialist past through family narratives, representation of the socialist past through the depiction of everyday life, representation of the socialist past through the depiction of communities and representation of the socialist past through the technique of first-person narration. Though these instruments were predominantly analyzed for their contribution to the formation of a nostalgic image of the past, it is not always the case as the same instruments may be used for other purposes, which was also specified in the course of the analysis.

Nevertheless, the use of the common instruments produces quite different representations of the past in different cases. For instance, if in some contexts, family narratives contribute to nostalgic reconstruction of the socialist past, in others, they act as translators of severe critique and stigmatization of the communist regime. This discrepancy is caused by the implementation of different strategies, which by using the distinguished instruments, direct the modalities of the representations of the socialist past in accordance with certain objectives. In the course of the analysis, five strategies of representation of the socialist past were identified and analyzed with many examples of their actualization in different contexts.

The function of the strategy of normalization is dual – first, it might facilitate the formation of nostalgic feelings by virtue of constructing authentic socialist reality and referring to the common narratives of ordinary people who lived in the socialist regime; second, it presents life under socialism as “normal” which is not only limited to a simple existence in the context of dictatorship. Another identified strategy of romanticization seeks to represent the socialist past in general or some specific aspects of it better than they actually were in reality. The strategy of reproduction of stereotypes, either helps create an idealistic and easily recognizable representation of the past, or contributes to the strategies of satirization and exoticization, which by mocking and ridiculing some aspects of life in a socialist state, impose criticism on it. These identified strategies of the representation of the socialist past demonstrate an ambiguous and even paradoxical image of nostalgia in cinema because the strategies and instruments that present the socialist past in a rather nostalgic light can be found side by side or intersect with the strategies that criticize or stigmatize it. As a result, this interlacing of different strategies presents post-socialist nostalgia as a very complex and ambivalent phenomenon, especially in German cinema, where the

described interweaving of sometimes even opposing strategies is quite common. Such specificities of representation of the socialist past by means of the implementation of strategies and instruments in German and Russian films aroused the need to interpret the obtained findings while taking into consideration the broader context of two countries.

East Germany and Russia, though united by the common socialist past, experienced both the regime and its collapse in completely different ways, which was inevitably reflected in cinema. The popularity of the selected films, which were released within two time periods: the 2000s in Germany and 2008-2010 in Russia, has been caused by external factors that influenced the actualization of the memories of the socialist past. One of the major reasons that underlies this process is drastic social change – in both these cases, this was the economic, political and, most importantly, social instability caused by an economic recession in Germany and Russia in the mentioned timeframes. Uncertainty, instability and dissatisfaction with life prompt remembering of the socialist past, in which life was clear, plain, stable and predictable. In Germany, the actualization of the past memories is also accompanied by a recognition crisis, which emerged among East Germans after reunification when they lost the prestige and recognition they used to have in their homeland.

Another aspect which was taken into account during the interpretation of the research results is politics and the attitude of the state towards the socialist past. The transformation of the memories about the Soviet epoch that consists of three stages was initially characterized by distancing from the Soviet past during Yeltsin's rule. However, with Putin coming to power, the political agenda changed, and the Soviet past became constantly presented as a coherent part of Russian history. One of the most crucial events of the Soviet era, the Second World War, became a powerful instrument of the positive reconstruction of the socialist past in the political discourse.

In Germany, the political discourse on memory about the socialist past is completely different from the Russian one. In the rhetoric of the state, the German Democratic Republic is clearly presented in the terms of totalitarianism and dictatorship similar to National Socialism, with former citizens of the GDR being considered as victims of the regime. At the same time, there are other voices that facilitate the discussion around the GDR legacy. Left politicians and common citizens of the bygone state call for a wider view on the GDR past that would also consider memories of those who lived a relatively normal life in the socialist state. The conflict between those two dominating discourses infiltrated into cinema, which was evidently demonstrated in the course of the analysis. Attempting to normalize and even romanticize everyday life in the German Democratic Republic, which could have been influenced by economic and social factors described above, and at the same time distancing from its legacy through satirization, reproduction of negative stereotypes and exoticization effected by the state political agenda, German films shape a heterogeneous and complex image of the past. On the other hand, in Russian films, the socialist past is presented predominantly through the strategies of normalization and romanticization, which can be influenced by the current state rhetoric regarding the USSR which facilitates positive reconstruction of the Soviet past. Thus, the

research revealed that nostalgic representations in German and Russian cinema are strongly influenced by external factors, such as sudden social changes, economic instability and political agenda towards the past.

Limitations and further research

The major limitation of the present study may be explained through the use of qualitative analysis of visual texts, which, while providing a deeper insight into the phenomenon of nostalgia, makes the research highly subjective in its analysis and further interpretations. What is more, the research, of course, does not present a complete picture of the phenomenon of nostalgia for the socialist past in cinema with the sample being limited to eight films. The fact that the German films were watched with Russian subtitles is another limitation of my research. Moreover, my study focused primarily on the narrative and textual aspects of the films, lacking, at the same time, analysis of stylistic instruments, choice of cinematographic techniques, etc. Besides, the analysis of the films comes to the conclusions largely influenced by the specifics of the chosen genre of the cinema - feature films. Nevertheless, the study fills in the gap in the investigation of the phenomenon of post-socialist nostalgia presented in German and Russian cinema in a comparative perspective. The findings of the research may be further complemented by other studies in the field which could extend the sample for the analysis in order to present a more complex view on the topic.

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Appendix 1. Synopses of selected German and Russian films

German films

1) *The Sun Alley* (Leander Haussmann, 1999)

In 1970-s GDR, 17-year-old Micha is one among many young people obsessed with Western culture. As he and his friends seek out prohibited records, dance and party to music from beyond the Wall, their lives are occasionally disrupted by grown-up issues and the oppressive government.

2) *Good bye, Lenin!* (Wolfgang Becker, 2003)

Young Alex's mother Christiane falls into a coma and misses the fall of the Berlin Wall. As she is forbidden from experiencing any stressful situations, Alex, his family, girlfriend, friends and neighbors soon become involved in an ever-increasingly complicated ruse in order to convince Christiane that East Germany still exists. Released to critical acclaim and winning numerous awards, *Good bye, Lenin!* is likely the most well-known and bright example of ostalgie in German cinema.

3) *Kleinruppin forever* (Carsten Fiebeler, 2004)

In a modern twist on "The Prince and the Pauper", two identical twins living on the opposite side of the Berlin Wall switch lives with each other. On a trip field to the GDR, West German teenager Tim meets his twin Ronny, who uses their likeness to escape to the West, leaving Tim stranded in a country that's foreign to him. In his struggles to adjust to life in the East, Tim finds friends, family, love and a newfound appreciation for his new home.

4) *The Red Cockatoo* (Dominik Graf, 2005)

It is early 1961 and Siggie, a young artist, comes to Dresden at the outset of his career. His new friends Luise and Wolle introduce him to the nightclub "Red Cockatoo", a hangout for beatniks and rock 'n' roll lovers. Soon, their lives are upended as their lifestyle clashes with the government and Stasi.

Russian films

1) *Vanished Empire* (Karen Shakhnazarov, 2008)

Sergei and his friends live a life typical of any students: they flirt with girls, buy contraband records and jeans, and struggle with growing up. Trapped in a complicated love triangle, Sergei ruminates on his archaeologist grandfather's tales of the ancient ruins he'd once uncovered – the titular "vanished empire".

2) *Hipsters* (Valeriy Todorovskiy, 2008)

Young Komsomol member Mels questions his beliefs when he falls for the "hipster" Polly. The hipsters adopt American nicknames, dance to jazz and wear garish clothes. Shrugging societal pressure, Mels, too, becomes a member of the counter-culture.

3) *The House of the Sun* (Garik Sukachov, 2010)

Sasha, the daughter of a party official, subverts all expectations when she falls in love with Solntse, the head of a hippie commune in the seventies USSR. Her new friends – speculators, revolutionaries, and artists – travel, party and revel in their relative freedom, not knowing what the future holds for each of them.

4) *My Dad Baryshnikov* (Dmitry Povolotsky, 2011)

Borya, a young Soviet boy, is dead set on becoming a ballet dancer. As he stumbles upon a contraband VHS tape, he becomes convinced that his absent father is, in fact, the famed dancer Mikhail Baryshnikov. Finding sudden success as a dancer, he seeks to increase his clout by peddling black-market goods, while in the background, the Soviet Union is in its death throes, stuck in a disastrous war in Afghanistan.

Appendix 2. Example of coding

«Мой папа – Барышников» (Дмитрий Поволоцкий, 2011).

Фильм начинается с поднятия пионеркой флага СССР у здания школы, что сопровождается гимном **[socialist propaganda]**. Однако главный герой, Боря Фишкин, надевает наушники, «которые по большому благу достались его маме» **[channels to access deficit goods]**, и гимн плавно переходит в песню “Sunny” группы Boney M. **[music]**, под которую все вокруг внезапно начинают танцевать. Нарратор комментирует: «...Тогда мне хотелось двух вещей: свободы и мяса. Мясо было в дефиците, свобода тоже. Хотя именно в этом году появилось слово «перестройка» **[products deficit]**.

Действие переносится в Московское хореографическое училище при Большом театре. В мужской раздевалке студенты перед занятием играют в игру «Ну, погоди» на «Электронике» **[leisure]**. После урока литературы в кабинет забегает школьница и просит сдать ей деньги для доктора Хайдера, «великого борца за мир и демократию» **[socialist propaganda]**.

Когда Фишкин возвращается из училища домой на электричке, он достает из внутреннего кармана пиджака переливающуюся картинку с женщиной в купальнике и рассматривает ее **[leisure; sexuality]**. По приезде Фишкин с одноклассницей идут домой мимо большой очереди в мясной магазин, где ругаются, кричат и дерутся **[products deficit]**. Затем герои проходят мимо группы неформалов, среди которых девушка в кожаной куртке, парень, одетый в спортивный костюм фирмы «Адидас», и молодой человек с ирокезом, которые танцуют под музыку из бумбокса **[youth culture; subcultures]**.

Когда Фишкин приходит домой, он видит, что его мама, работающая в «Интуристе», устроила вечеринку с иностранцами. На столе стоят бутерброды с черной икрой на советской посуде, гости танцуют под песню “Sunny” **[music]**. Примечательны женские наряды: платья в горох, платья с рукавами-фонариками, большие жемчужные бусы **[fashion]**.

Фишкин отправляется в свою комнату, на стенах которой висит множество плакатов групп “The Rolling Stones”, “AC/DC” и т.д. **[music; youth culture]**. Утром, перед уходом на работу, мама Фишкина смотрит аэробику по телевизору и крутится на диске-тренажере **[leisure]**. На экране отчетливо представлен интерьер гостиной: ковер на стене, фотообои с изображением природы осенью, шкаф-стенка **[interior]**.

Становится ясно, что Фишкин с его лучшим другом в свободное время занимаются фарцовкой и продают футболки с надписью «СССР» иностранным туристам. Рассказывая о своем занятии фарцовкой, нарратор отмечает: *«Почему я ходил фарцевать? Смешной вопрос. Это было круто! И потом - шмотки, деньги. Я был в курсе, конечно, что за это сажают. Но я быстро бегал, а Саня всегда стоял на шухере. Андрей, наш сосед, вернулся из Афганистана без ног. Он договорился со знакомыми в*

воинской части, и нам оттуда перекидывали ходовой товар для иностранцев: кокарды, ремни, знаки отличия всякие... А меняли на валюту, жвачку, сигареты, иногда, если очень повезет, на джинсы **[channels to access deficit goods]**. Сейчас смешно вспоминать наш бизнес, но тогда все мы жили в одинаковых квартирах с одинаковой мебелью и носили одинаковую одежду. А мечтали быть разными» **[smuggling; desire to stand out in a socialist state]**.

В очередной раз, Фишкин, возвращаясь домой из училища, пробегает мимо очереди за мясом **[products deficit]**. Однако, когда он приходит домой, мама отправляет его к бабушке, поскольку у нее в гостях мужчина. Нарратор рассказывает о том, что это обычная ситуация и что он часто жил у бабушки, пока его мама искала «импортное счастье» **[family narratives]**.

В столовой училища Фишкин с большим аппетитом ест пюре с котлетой из типичной советской посуды - белая тарелка с зеленым узором вокруг. Сбоку в кадре можно увидеть граненый стакан с напитком **[food]**.

Зарабатывая большие деньги на фарцовке, Фишкин однажды приносит домой мясо, чем чрезвычайно удивляет присутствующих бабушку и дедушку **[products deficit]**. Вскоре он приходит в училище в новых джинсах, вызывая восхищение окружающих. Однако остальные думают, что он получает все дорогие и зарубежные вещи от своего отца – балетмейстера Михаила Барышникова, поскольку Фишкин внушил им эту идею. Это продемонстрировано в диалоге между Мариной, «королевой школы», и Фишкиным:

-У тебя джинсы «Левис»?

- «Левайс»!

-А Барышников может мне такие прислать?

-Он все может!

-Ну, ты крутой! **[fashion; Western goods in a socialist state]**.

Однако, когда выясняется, что Фишкин занимается фарцовкой, его вызывают к директору школы и отчисляют за неподобающее поведение. После отчисления Фишкина показана еще одна сцена с очередью в мясной магазин, где люди кричат: «Стучите! Дверь откройте!» - снова и снова. На этот раз Фишкин, который недавно приносил мясо домой, сам встает в очередь **[products deficit; wins&losses]**.

Вскоре настоящий отец Фишкина возвращается домой. Он сидел в колонии строгого режима по статье «незаконные валютные операции», а затем с выходом амнистии его выпустили на свободу. Когда Фишкин завтракает, намазывая на батон плавленый сырок «Дружба» **[food; branding]**, отец пытается поговорить с ним о его увлечении балетом.

В честь выхода Фишкина-старшего из тюрьмы, дедушка Фишкина вспоминает: «Знаешь, моего отца, твоего деда, арестовывали пять раз, и два из них приговаривали к расстрелу, а потом за то же самое ему давали ордена» **[family narratives; demonization]**.

В конце фильма Фишкин, подружившийся с отцом, танцует перед комиссией для поступления в балетную школу под Вонеу М. **[music]**. В конце фильма имя Фишкина напечатано на афише Большого театра в качестве спонсора. Нарратор рассказывает, что он так и не смог реализовать себя в балете, зато поступил в «Плехановку» и исполнил свою мечту – его имя красуется на афише Большого театра **[narrative from the present about the past; wins&losses]**.

Appendix 3. Complementary visual material

3.1. Examples of the depiction of everyday life in Russian films

3.1.1. The depiction of food (*My Dad Baryshnikov*, Dmitry Povolotsky, 2011)



3.1.2. The depiction of leisure activities (*The House of the Sun*, Garik Sukachov, 2010)



3.1.3. The depiction of fashion styles (*Vanished Empire*, Karen Shakhnazarov, 2008)



3.1.4. The depiction of the Soviet interior (*My Dad Baryshnikov*, Dmitry Povolotsky, 2011)



3.2. Examples of the depiction of everyday life in German films

3.2.1. The depiction of food (*Good bye, Lenin!* Wolfgang Becker, 2003)



3.2.2. The depiction of leisure activities (*Kleinruppin forever*, Carsten Fiebler, 2004)



3.2.3. The depiction of fashion styles (*The Sun Alley*, Leander Haussmann, 1999)



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