

**FACING THE ENEMY: AN ANALYSIS OF ONLINE DISCOURSE OVER THE
REPRESENTATION OF THE NAZI ENEMY IN FYODOR BONDARCHUK'S 2013 WAR FILM
*STALINGRAD***

By

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Abstract

Fyodor Bondarchuk's 2013 *Stalingrad* was both the Russian Federation's first IMAX production and its highest grossing domestic blockbuster. *Stalingrad* was also steeped in controversy, particularly over its Nazi character Peter Kahn labeled by some as "an enemy with a face" and by others as a glorification of Nazism. Though similar depictions of Nazis developed in Hollywood and other Western cinema nearly 50 years ago and represent shifting understandings of the Second World War, a recent surge in literature on present-day representations of Nazism in world media has largely overlooked the area of the former Soviet Union. The thesis attempts to fill this gap by attempting to explain why the representation of the Nazi figure in *Stalingrad* generated the divided discourse it did by conducting a thematic analysis of a corpus of film reviews published online between September and November 2013. In doing so, this thesis identifies a memory war, in which three major meta-themes relied upon by Russian film critics in discussing *Stalingrad*'s Nazi. These meta-themes suggest certain societal anxieties with the present-day narrative and memory of the Great Patriotic War, including worry over foreign interference in Russia's national mythology and whether or not the memory of the war can be successfully transferred to and instilled in the youngest generation.

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Note on Russian Transliteration

All Russian language titles, phrases and names referenced in this thesis are transliterated into Latin script using the BGN/PCGN system, unless that script was a part of a webpage URL. The only exception made to this is the name of the film's director, which is consistently published in English-language press and academic scholarship as "Fyodor Bondarchuk." The director's name is thus rendered "Fyodor" in the thesis title and body, and transliterated in Russian language citations according to BGN/PCGN standards as "Fëdor."

Introduction

No event has greater significance in contemporary Putinist Russia than the Great Patriotic War, which has reclaimed its former Soviet-era status as foundational societal myth.¹ Certainly, the war and its mythology were never completely forgotten, even during the Yeltsin period when it was relatively de-emphasized. The sheer number of Soviet citizens who fought and died—the most recognized war dead estimate stands at nearly 26.6 million—has ensured that a majority of Russian families have or had relatives who participated in or were victimized during the war.² And Russians still overwhelmingly (consistently around 95% to 98%) express that Victory Day, the May 9th state holiday commemorating the victory over the Nazis, is important to them, with slightly fewer acknowledging that they plan to actively celebrate the day.³

¹ Serhy Yekelchuk, “Memory Wars on the Silver Screen: Ukraine and Russia Look Back at the Second World War,” *Australian and New Zealand Journal of European Studies* 5, no. 2 (2013): 5; Stephen M. Norris, *Blockbuster History in the New Russia: Movies, Memory, and Patriotism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012): 136-141; Gregory Carleton, “Victory in Death: Annihilation Narratives in Russia Today,” *History & Memory* 22, no. 1 (2010): 144; Ivo Mijnsen, “The Victory Myth and Russia’s Identity,” *Russian Analytical Digest*, no. 72 (2010): 6–9; Valerie Sperling, “Making the Public Patriotic: Militarism and Anti-Militarism in Russia,” in *Russian Nationalism and the National Reassertion of Russia*, ed. Marlène Laruelle (New York: Routledge, 2009): 218–71; Stephen Hutchings and Natalia Rulyova, “Commemorating the Past/performing the Present: Television Coverage of the Second World War Victory Celebrations and the (de)construction of Russian Nationhood,” in *The Post-Soviet Russian Media: Conflicting Signals*, ed. Birgit Beumers, Stephen C. Hutchings, and Natalia Rulyova, 1st ed, Routledge Series on Russian and East European Studies (New York, NY: Routledge, 2008): 137-138; Stefan Rohdewald, “Post-Soviet Remembrance of the Holocaust and National Memories of the Second World War in Russia, Ukraine and Lithuania,” *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 44, no. 2 (2008): 173–84; Stephen M. Norris, “Guiding Stars: The Comet-like Rise of the War Film in Putin’s Russia: Recent World War II Films and Historical Memories,” *Studies in Russian and Soviet Cinema* 1, no. 2 (2007): 183-185; Thomas Sherlock, “Destroying a Settled Past, Creating an Uncertain Future,” in *Historical Narratives in the Soviet Union and Post-Soviet Russia: Destroying a Settled Past, Creating an Uncertain Future* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007): 162-163; Valerie Sperling, “The Last Refuge of a Scoundrel: Patriotism, Militarism and the Russian National Idea,” *Nations and Nationalism* 9, no. 2 (2003): 241. Status during the Brezhnev period: Graeme J. Gill, *Symbols and Legitimacy in Soviet Politics* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011): 198, 212.

² The official estimate given by the Russian Academy of Sciences stood at 26.6 million in 1993. However, estimates in Western and Russian scholarship vary wildly. See: Michael Ellman and Maksudov S, “Soviet Deaths in the Great Patriotic War: A Note,” *Europe-Asia Studies* 46, no. 4 (1994): 671–80; Michael Haynes, “Counting Soviet Deaths in the Great Patriotic War: A Note,” *Europe-Asia Studies* 55, no. 2 (2003): 303–9. Survey data shows over two-thirds of Russians had family that died in the war. Narodnyy prazdnik - 9 maya (Public Opinion Foundation (Public Opinion Foundation (hereinafter “FOM”), May 2, 2012), <http://fom.ru/Proshloe/10430>.

³ *Pamyat’ o Velikoy Otechestvennoy* (FOM, May 8, 2013), <http://fom.ru/Proshloe/10913>; *Odna na vsekh pobeda* (FOM, May 6, 2011), <http://fom.ru/Proshloe/44>; Sperling, “Making the Public Patriotic,” 237-239.

It should then be no surprise given this consistently popular sentiment that the Great Patriotic War has developed into the centerpiece of contemporary Russian nation building efforts under the guidance of Vladimir Putin and his party United Russia. The Russian state has devoted significant resources and efforts to promoting a renewed war narrative, exemplified by the re-introduction of military hardware in 2008 that delivered further pomp to the Victory Day parade on Red Square; the re-institution of Soviet traditions like the ‘Memory Lesson’; the funding of Great Patriotic War themed events as part of the Patriotic Education programs funded from 2001 through 2020; and even the establishment of a presidential level commission to root out and check criticism of the Soviet war effort and victory.⁴

But the reimagining or re-purposing of the Great Patriotic War in present-day Russia is not simply the sole domain or project of the state. The Russian film industry released its first Great Patriotic War film, Nikolai Ledbedev’s *Star*, in 2002 after a nearly 15-year hiatus.⁵ Since then, many bigger, better-funded war films have been released, several of which re-defined Russian box office potential. But these films represent something more than just windfall profits. Russia’s cultural elite were actively seeking to produce new heroes and symbols to make Russians proud again, a concept that film scholar Stephen Norris has deemed blockbuster history.⁶ As Norris makes clear in his book *Blockbuster History in the New Russia*, a number of major Russian film directors, such as Nikolai Ledbedev, Nikita Mikhalkov, and Fyodor Bondarchuk, energetically advocated their own very different visions of the glorious past to Post-Soviet audiences. While these directors often times do receive state funding and support and might even be members of United Russia, Norris emphasizes

⁴ Wood, 177-178; Sperling, “Making the Public Patriotic,” 230-240; Andrew Osborn, “Medvedev Creates History Commission,” *Wall Street Journal*, May 21, 2009, sec. Business, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB124277297306236553>; John Wendle, “Russia Moves to Ban Criticism of WWII Win,” *Time*, accessed April 19, 2015, <http://content.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1896927,00.html>.

⁵ Norris, “Guiding Stars: The Comet-like Rise of the War Film in Putin’s Russia,” 164.

⁶ Stephen M. Norris, *Blockbuster History in the New Russia: Movies, Memory, and Patriotism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012).

that the link between directors and government, is less one-sided than may be believed—patriotic-themed war films were being conceived of and produced before Putin came to power and there has been no state decree on the ideological content of Post-Soviet film.⁷ In all actuality the Russian state has perpetually been playing catch-up on the cinema front, introducing and funding a number of completely unsuccessful initiatives to increase production of patriotic-styled films.⁸ Russian filmmakers have truly taken the initiative in crafting Russia's many recent historical and war themed blockbusters, which express quite diverse conceptions of Russianness set in either Russia's imperial or Soviet past. This appears at least to be largely based on their own personal tastes and patriotic visions, as well as what they believe will gain them further prestige and financing.⁹ Numerous big name Russian directors have therefore chosen the Great Patriotic War as the setting of their national ideal.

But is the war being fought in Post-Soviet Russian multiplexes today the same war that was depicted on Soviet cinema screens? Some scholars declared that many of the films released in the 2000s were more 'Soviet' or 'Stalinist' than what had been released in the 1940s.¹⁰ Though the communist ideology has been stripped away, the perception appeared to largely be that little differentiates the Post-Soviet cinematic discourse from Soviet one. However, at least one dramatic shift had been identified, which completely reimaged a traditional Soviet motif and meta-narrative element. . Stephen Norris, among others, has written that the representation of the Nazi enemy in a number of war films released in the mid-2000s radically deviates from the clichéd, stereotyped ultra-villains found in the Soviet war meta-narrative, since they establish the Nazi as a tragic figure, caught between forces out

⁷ Norris, *Blockbuster History in the New Russia*, 307-309.

⁸ 1. Jasmijn Van Gorp, "Inverting Film Policy: Film as Nation Builder in Post-Soviet Russia, 1991-2005," *Media, Culture & Society* 33, no. 2 (2011): 252-254.

⁹ *Id.*, 254.

¹⁰ Carleton, "Victory in Death," 147-148; Mark Lipovetsky, "Post-Sots: Transformations of Socialist Realism in the Popular Culture of the Recent Period," *The Slavic and East European Journal* 48, no. 3 (Autumn 2004): 357-358; Gregory Carleton states in a later article that this Neo-Soviet paradigm has dominated scholarship on Post-Soviet Russian culture, but that it is necessary to move beyond it. See Gregory Carleton, "History Done Right: War and Dynamics of Triumphalism in Contemporary Russian Culture," *Slavic Review* 70, no. 3 (Fall 2011): 615-617.

of his control—what this thesis will call the “good Nazi.”¹¹ Picking up on Norris’ work, Denise Youngblood also proposes that the depiction of the German enemy in several recent Russian films runs counter to older Soviet sentiments and conventions.¹² She goes a step further by briefly describing what she sees as a major shift in how Nazism has been portrayed in Soviet/Russian film in the conclusion of *Russian War Films: On the Cinema Front, 1914-2005*. She claims that the Nazi has evolved from the obviously evil, to the idiotic, to the ‘non-existent,’ to human being, and suggests that others should pick up on this phenomenon.¹³ Yet, the work of these scholars appears to be the total extent to which such representations of Nazis have been studied in the Post-Soviet Russian cultural space.

On the other hand, there has been a recent and rapid surge in scholarly attention on the phenomenon of depictions of Nazism in world cinema, primarily oriented towards films and miniseries coming out of Hollywood and Germany.¹⁴ Much of this has been seemingly motivated by the release of Quentin Tarantino’s 2009 *Inglourious Basterds*, Oliver Hirschbiegel’s 2004 *Der Untergang* [*Downfall*], and the 2013 German public television miniseries *Unsere Mütter, unsere Väter* [*Our Mothers, Our Fathers*]. These pieces have

¹¹ Stephen M. Norris, “Guiding Stars: The Comet-like Rise of the War Film in Putin’s Russia: Recent World War II Films and Historical Memories,” *Studies in Russian and Soviet Cinema* 1, no. 2 (2007): 163–89; Oleg Sulkin, “Identifying the Enemy in Contemporary Russian Film,” in *Insiders and Outsiders in Russian Cinema*, ed. Stephen M. Norris and Zara M. Torlone (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 118–120.

¹² Denise J. Youngblood, *Russian War Films: On the Cinema Front, 1914-2005* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2006), 228–230.

¹³ *Id.*, 232–233.

¹⁴ Laurel Cohen-Pfister, “Claiming the Second World War and Its Lost Generation: *Unsere Mütter, Unsere Väter* and the Politics of Emotion,” *Seminar: A Journal of Germanic Studies* 50, no. 1 (February 2014): 104–23; Petra Rau, *Our Nazis: Representations of Fascism in Contemporary Literature and Film* (Edinburgh University Press, 2013); Sabine Hake, *Screen Nazis: Cinema, History, and Democracy*, *Wisconsin Film Studies* (Madison, Wis: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2012); Daniel H. Magilow, Kristin T. Vander Lugt, and Elizabeth Bridges, eds., *Nazisploitation! The Nazi Image in Low-Brow Cinema and Culture* (New York, NY: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2012); Karolin Machtans and Martin A. Ruehl, *Hitler - Films from Germany: History, Cinema and Politics since 1945* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Sara Buttsworth and Maartje Abbenhuis, eds., *Monsters in the Mirror: Representations of Nazism in Post-War Popular Culture* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2010); Charles P. Mitchell, *The Hitler Filmography: Worldwide Feature Film and Television Miniseries Portrayals, 1940 through 2000* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2009); Lester D. Friedman, “Darkness Visible: Images of Nazis in American Film,” in *Bad: Infamy, Darkness, Evil and Slime on Screen*, ed. Murray Pomerance (Albany: State University of New York Press, Albany, 2004), 255–71.

made contemporary audiences both squeamish and retrospective by placing Nazi soldiers and officers in the role of protagonists, tragic heroes, and even victim.

But it is also evident that this is not a new phenomenon in the West, as Norris and Youngblood argue it is in Russia. Saul Friedländer claimed as early as 1984 that the representations of Nazis found in film and novels in the late 1960s and 1970s, in generating the kind of disgust they had from critics and audiences, were evidence of the development of a “new discourse” on Nazism and the Holocaust in Western media.¹⁵ This new discourse reflected the challenging and subversion of the official post-war narratives in the West, revealing eagerness among authors, directors and audience to explore and fantasize the perceived power and sexuality of Nazism. Recent scholarship still argues so: “This obsession is ‘rooted in the uncanny feeling that the Nazis are ‘us’, reflecting the dark side of ourselves and our society [...] as well as an expression of fear for what our own society might do to us on purpose, in the name of progress.’”¹⁶ The shift in imagery and the subsequent re-imaging of the Nazi enemy in the West therefore become prisms through which modern anxieties, such as changing gender roles and definitions of masculinity, are being indulged and reflected upon by modern audiences and directors.¹⁷ Thus, the Nazi figure in the West now functions as a useful foil in exploring not only once taboo subjects and memories of the Second World War—were our boys any better than the Nazis?—while also potentially functioning as a

¹⁵ Saul Friedländer, *Reflections of Nazism: An Essay on Kitsch and Death*, trans. Weyr Thomas (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 12-17, 20-21.

¹⁶ James J. Ward, “Utterly without Redeeming Social Value? ‘Nazi Science’ Beyond Exploitation Cinema,” in *Nazisplotation! The Nazi Image in Low-Brow Cinema and Culture*, ed. Daniel H. Magilow, Kristin T. Vander Lugt, and Elizabeth Bridges (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2012), 108, quoting Eva Kingsepp, “The Freak in the Gas Mask”: The Cultural Significance of the Nazi Undead,” unpublished paper, 2010.

¹⁷ See Marcus Stiglegger, “Cinema beyond Good and Evil? Nazi Exploitation in the Cinema of the 1970s and Its Heritage,” in *Nazisplotation! The Nazi Image in Low-Brow Cinema and Culture*, ed. Daniel H. Magilow, Kristin T. Vander Lugt, and Elizabeth Bridges (New York, NY: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2012), 31-32; Michael D. Richardson, “Sexual Deviance and the Naked Body in Cinematic Representations of Nazis,” in *Nazisplotation! The Nazi Image in Low-Brow Cinema and Culture*, ed. Daniel H. Magilow, Kristin T. Vander Lugt, and Elizabeth Bridges (New York, NY: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2012), 39-45, 51; Lester D. Friedman, “Darkness Visible: Images of Nazis in American Film,” in *Bad: Infamy, Darkness, Evil and Slime on Screen*, ed. Murray Pomerance (Albany: State University of New York Press, Albany, 2004), 258-259.

stand-in or proxy for discussing contemporary social issues. Already, the imagery of Nazism found in the B-movies of the 1970s, and often censored, has entered the mainstream. These are the very images that will likely remain engrained in the public's imaginations long after the last veterans and Holocaust survivors have passed—a prospect that is fast approaching.

Yet the Russian case either goes completely unmentioned in this literature or is specifically excluded from consideration, as is the case with Sabine Hake's book *Screen Nazis: Cinema, History, and Democracy*. Hake claims she omits an analysis of Russian representations of 'screen Nazis' because she lacked proper access to subtitled Soviet and Post-Soviet films.¹⁸ But Hake's larger reason for excluding the Russian case is theoretical—the Russian experience with Nazism is fundamentally different from those Western democracies she studies.¹⁹ Hake's book appears to be the only text that has gone beyond mere description or categorization of 'screen Nazis' in the West by analyzing the affect such images generate among Western audiences; she goes so far as to claim that her book is the first, in any language, to attempt to do so.²⁰

This all means that not only is the recent flurry of scholarship on cinematic representations of Nazism almost completely devoid of an understanding of a major combatant country, it also suggests that what little theory or conceptual framework currently exists is unlikely or unable to explain cinematic representations of Nazism in the former Eastern Bloc and Soviet Union. And if the claims of Post-Soviet film scholars are assumed to be true, that the recent inclusion of 'good Nazis' in the Post-Soviet war narrative are a relatively recent subversion of Soviet convention, then it suggests that the same kind of 'new discourse' of remembering the war and Holocaust that Friedländer and other Western scholars identified decades ago in the West is now taking place in the Russian Federation. And since the collective memory of the Second World War binds the Russian nation together,

¹⁸ Hake, 27.

¹⁹ *Id.*, 9, 27.

²⁰ *Id.*, 4.

its divergence and evolution are all the more critical to assess and probe. It is therefore imperative that this new discourse be located, that the cultural reference points and mind sets surrounding this new discourse be identified, and how widely and why this new discourse has been accepted or rejected uncovered.

Given this seemingly monumental gap, this thesis aims to re-focus scholarly attention on the ‘good Nazi’ motif taking shape in Russia today. It does so namely, because this motif re-surfaced well after the publication of Norris’ article in arguably its most vivid form in Fyodor Bondarchuk’s 2013 blockbuster *Stalingrad*. This film remains, with a viewership of nearly 6.2 million theatergoers, the highest grossing domestic picture in the history of the Russian box office with a take of 1.67 billion rubles—well over its equally enormous by Russian standards budget of 1.2 billion rubles (roughly 30 million USD).²¹ Seemingly produced and released to coincide with the 70th anniversary of the battle, the film also became Russia’s entry for Best Foreign Language Film at the 86th Academy Awards. Despite its overwhelming financial, as well as moderate critical success, the film was embroiled in controversy. Film reviews as well as online commentary acknowledged the divided reception of the film, with some slamming Bondarchuk’s Nazi character Peter Kahn, which was declared to glorify Nazism. Eventually a petition was even launched on the website Change.org, directed at the Ministry of Culture, seeking to ban the sale of the film in Russia and to strip it of its Oscar entry status.²² That petition was eventually signed by 34,799 individuals, and was even referenced in critics’ reviews and the general press.

²¹ “Stalingrad,” *KinoPoisk*, n.d., accessed April 20, 2015, <http://www.kinopoisk.ru/film/468196/>; “Bondarchuk vedët s VTB peregovory o finansirovanii ‘Stalingrada,’” *RIA Novosti*, accessed April 20, 2015, <http://ria.ru/culture/20110516/375267863.html>; “Ekranizatsiya romana ‘Dukhless’ s politicheskim podtekstom vyidet v 2012 g.,” *RIA Novosti*, accessed April 20, 2015, <http://ria.ru/culture/20111209/511291318.html>.

²² Petr Morozov, “Ministerstvo Kul’tury RF: Zapretit’ Prokat Fil’ma ‘Stalingrad’ F. Bondarchuka Na Territorii RF; Zapretit’ Prokat Etogo Fil’ma Za Rubezhom, Otozvat’ Zayavku Na ‘Oskar,’” *Change.org*, accessed April 18, 2015, www.change.org/p/министерство-культуры-рф-запретить-прокат-фильма-сталинград-ф-бондарчука-на-территории-рф-запретить-прокат-этого-фильма-за-рубежом-отозвать-заявку-на-оскар#share.

This thesis therefore aims to answer the following question: why did the portrayal of the Nazi figure in Bondarchuk's *Stalingrad* create such a divided and often times irate public discourse? As this thesis will argue, the Nazi figure in *Stalingrad* became the site of what is described as a 'memory clash' or a 'memory war,' a conflict between competing group memories. In this specific case, such a clash was occurring over Bondarchuk's vision of the war. His film and that film's Nazi represent a kind of institutional memory being presented by one of contemporary Russia's most successful and renowned cultural elite—a project that received significant state support. But Russian audiences and film critics were apparently divided in their reception of that vision, with some praising and others rejecting his representation of the Nazi enemy. The 'good Nazi' had become the site for the public to frame and express their displeasure and resistance, or acceptance, to a seemingly new aspect to the evolving narrative of the war.

To explore this memory clash and to understand why the debate over *Stalingrad*'s Nazi was framed as it was, this thesis conducts a reception study. The concepts of 'memory event' and 'memory clash' are first discussed, and then the thesis turns to presenting the narratives of the war apparent from the literature on the Russian war cult—one grounded in a 'simple' Soviet past with a clear dividing line between Russian heroes and Nazi villains, and a 'Post-Soviet' memory of the war that disrupts and subverts the motifs and symbols of the Soviet period in showing a more human and complex Nazi. The thesis then provides background on the film's production, its state backing, and the character that the debate focuses on: Peter Kahn, the Hauptmann played by German actor Thomas Kretschmann. The thesis then overviews film reception methodology and decides to focus on film critics' reviews of the film as a potential source for identifying the cultural lens or meta-themes used in discourse surrounding the film and its Nazi. With this methodology in place the thesis then analyzes the corpus of *Stalingrad* film reviews available, and showcases the various themes

utilized in these reviews in discussing the Nazi figure—themes that also suggest a number of underlying societal anxieties with the narrative of the war. In doing so, the thesis will contribute to scholarly understanding of a controversial motif taking shape in the Russian cultural space, one that is intrinsically apart of the developing Post-Soviet war cult—the foundational myth of contemporary Russian society.

Chapter 1: Memory Events and Memory War

This chapter addresses only a sliver of the literature on collective memory, itself an elusive but widely-debated phenomenon, so as to introduce two key concepts both developed as part of a multi-university collaborative project on memory in the post-Soviet region, *Memory at War*.²³ The first of these concepts is the so-called “memory event,” which is what Fyodor Bondarchuk’s *Stalingrad* represents for this thesis. Such events are of scholarly interest because they are the foci of clashes over the ‘real’ or ‘true’ representation of historical events, like the Great Patriotic War—which represent so-labeled, “memory wars.”

Collective Memory

Wulf Kansteiner posits in discussing the methodological challenges behind the study of collective memory that its students are embarking on the slipperiest of slopes, pursuing perhaps the most elusive phenomenon in the social sciences.²⁴ This thesis is not aimed at getting bogged down in the minutiae of that enormous debate. However, it still makes an effort to provide an understanding this term *collective memory*, since at its heart, this thesis is addressing how at least a segment of the Russian public is internalizing and criticizing a particular image, a particular memory, of the Great Patriotic War.

Maurice Halbwachs’ work is arguably the starting point for any discussion of collective memory—his basic argument that groups construct their own images of reality by shaping and reshaping their past *together* is the conceptual glue that binds many researchers of collective memory and forms the basis for collective memory studies.²⁵ Definitions of

²³ Researchers from the University of Groningen, University of Tartu, University of Helsinki, University of Bergen and the University of Cambridge contributed to the project, which was funded through 2007-2013. The project’s website has since been taken down: <http://www.memoryatwar.org/>.

²⁴ Wulf Kansteiner, “Finding Meaning in Memory: A Methodological Critique of Collective Memory Studies,” *History and Theory* 41, no. 2 (May 2002): 180.

²⁵ Motti Neiger, Oren Meyers, and Eyal Zandberg, “On Media Memory: Editors’ Introduction,” in *On Media Memory: Collective Memory in a New Media Age*, ed. Motti Neiger, Oren Meyers, and Eyal Zandberg (New

collective memory therefore stress the shared, societal aspect of this layer of memory, of a representation or understanding of the past, from those of an individual. However, while most scholars of collective memory pay tribute to or cite to Halbwachs, they are quick to move beyond his work, which is described and perceived as incomplete, rigid, and severely outdated.²⁶

A major point of divergence in the literature is over who produces memory. Early theories of collective memory provided only for a top-down process of collective memory construction, with elites handing down grand narratives to be consumed by the public. However, more recent scholarship, dubbed the ‘popular approach’ and the ‘dynamic approach,’ has shifted some of the onus away from the elite, and provided for the fact that memory can and is generated from below.²⁷ Yet, these approaches disagree over the details of the popular production of memory. Scholars of the dynamic approach have criticized the earlier popular school, which is largely based on Foucault’s concept of counter-memory and political resistance, as treating popular memory as too unified and for ignoring the fact that dominant societal myths cultivated by the elite can still be popular among the populace—every grand narrative does not become the site of political protest.²⁸ Other scholars regard the popular approach as incomplete, since it overlooks the fact that members of the public can and do have devious or complex reasons for playing with the past.²⁹ And sometimes memory makers are, deliberately or mistakenly, misunderstood.³⁰

York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Barbara A. Misztal, “Theorizing Remembering,” in *Theories of Social Remembering, Theorizing Society* (Maidenhead, England: Open University Press, 2003), 51.

²⁶ Kansteiner, 181; Misztal, 54.

²⁷ Misztal, 61-62, 70-71; Richard Ned Lebow, “The Memory of Politics in Postwar Europe,” in *The Politics of Memory in Postwar Europe*, ed. Richard Ned Lebow, Wulf Kansteiner, and Claudio Fogu (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 4.

²⁸ Michael Bommers and Patrick Wright, “‘Charms of Residence’: The Public and the Past,” in *Making Histories: Studies in History-Writing and Politics*, ed. Richard Johnson et al. (Routledge, 2013), 255.

²⁹ Misztal, 71.

³⁰ Jeffrey K. Olick, “Introduction,” in *States of Memory: Continuities, Conflicts, and Transformations in National Retrospection*, ed. Jeffrey K. Olick, Politics, History, & Culture (Durham [N.C.]: Duke University Press, 2003), 7.

This leads to the other divide between these two more recent approaches—what is the aim of memory production. For the popular approach, the process of memory production is completed in the service of political goals, in the service of advancing certain interests or claims for resources.³¹ Though not denying that memory can be generated for political goals, the dynamic approach is more attuned to memory as a process of negotiation over identity.³² Memory here is never unitary, but always in a state of contest.³³ Therefore, this approach involves a dialectic between various actors—potential between actors at the top and the bottom or between actors at the bottom.³⁴ Such dialectics become all the more intense in times of societal or ideological collapse, as during the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe. In such circumstances, where a dominant national memory is crumbling and losing its social or political legitimacy, other actors see their opportunity to promote their own narratives, which provide the social and historical continuity needed during and after such a crisis. Those narratives also come to legitimate the need for these groups and to explain the actions they take within the new societal circumstances.

This focus on memory from below has only been animated and emboldened by the technological development of the last two decades. Internet connectivity, along with the ubiquity of digital media and cellular technology, has conceptually changed the way that people relate to their world and form and consume memory.³⁵ This has even led to the rise of the term and focus on ‘digital memory,’ which at its most basic level is collective memory as conceived and devised online.³⁶ But this literature on collective memory and the digital era

³¹ Lebow, 4, 6; Misztal, 62.

³² Misztal, 71.

³³ Olick, 7.

³⁴ Misztal, 73.

³⁵ Kansteiner, 183; Rutten, “Why Digital,” 221;

³⁶ Rutten, “Why Digital,” 219-220; Joanne Garde-Hansen, Andrew Hoskins, and Anna Reading, eds., *Save As... Digital Memories* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Jose Van Dijck, *Mediated Memories in the Digital Age* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007).

has been criticized as too Western centric, particularly by scholars of the post-Soviet space.³⁷ These same scholars claim that the post-Soviet space has seen a rampant and ubiquitous drive by both regimes and publics to try to build new identities out of the ashes of communism, particularly on the online sphere which until quite recently was completely overlooked. This is despite the fact that Russia is consistently ranked as one of the most social media active populations globally.³⁸

Memory Event

In order to update scholarly conception of memory to the realities of the digital age and to counteract this supposed Western-centric understanding of memory, the *Memory at War* team developed the novel concept of “memory event.”³⁹ A memory event, according to one of *Memory at War*’s lead researchers Alexander Etkind, is the, “re-discovery of the past that creates a rupture with its accepted cultural meaning.”⁴⁰ Etkind continues by stating that this concept modifies Pierre Nora’s idea of a ‘site of memory.’⁴¹ The stress here is on the fact that Nora’s concept of ‘sites of memory’ is simply too static and permanent for the present-day, given that modern art and memorialization are more often being generated electronically than in stone or steel as they were with Nora’s sites.⁴² Not only does this mean that ‘sites of memory’ are gradually more, but not always, physically intangible, they are also accessible from any number or kind of devices and means simultaneously. Moreover, this has also means that these kinds of memory events can have an ‘explosive’ impact on everyday life

37 Ellen Rutten, “Web Wars: Digital Diasporas and the Language of Memory,” *Digital Icons: Studies in Russian, Eurasian and Central European New Media*, no. 4 (2010): 172; Uilleam Blacker and Alexander Etkind, “Introduction,” in *Memory and Theory in Eastern Europe*, ed. Uilleam Blacker, Alexander Etkind, and Julie Fedor (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 7; Rutten, “Why Digital,” 222.

38 Russia Has World’s Most Engaged Social Media Audience (ComScore, July 2, 2009), <http://www.comscore.com/Insights/Press-Releases/2009/7/Russia-has-World-s-Most-Engaged-Social-Networking-Audience>; Russia Has World’s Most Engaged Social Media Audience Worldwide (ComScore, October 20, 2010), <http://www.comscore.com/Insights/Press-Releases/2010/10/Russia-Has-Most-Engaged-Social-Networking-Audience-Worldwide>.

39 Uilleam Blacker and Alexander Etkind, “Introduction,” in *Memory and Theory in Eastern Europe*, ed. Uilleam Blacker, Alexander Etkind, and Julie Fedor (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 7.

40 *Id.*, 6. Alexander Etkind, “Mapping Memory,” *Eastern European Memory Studies*, October 2010, 4.

41 *Id.*

42 Blacker and Etkind, 6.

and ways of remembering historical events or figures, since both the event (site) and the means to react to them are more readily accessible and available. By changing sites to event then, the *Memory at War* team sought to reflect on the spatial and temporal changes that are occurring in memory generation.

This shift to ‘memory event’ seems all the more necessary given that the most intense debates over the past in Russia are seemingly occurring over memoirs, films, and online discourse and multimedia that are rapidly produced and distributed, rather than over traditional commemorative sites such as monuments, museums or archives.⁴³ Likewise, these kinds of memory events are increasingly perceived as being initiated by private persons, enthusiasts and arm-chair historians in Russia, rather than the state, though the political and cultural elite have at times been certainly active in the online sphere.⁴⁴

Memory events have been understood by the *Memory at War* team as including a whole host of cultural mediums, including for the aims of this thesis as films and film premieres.⁴⁵ But the very fact that a film exists or has been distributed should not, as Rolf Fredheim would argue, make such a product a memory event by default. Fredheim criticizes Etkind’s definition as operationalizing the term ‘memory event’ as too flexible, given that it can be stretched to fit the dictates of an author who wants to study a particular piece or commemoration.⁴⁶ Simply because content is generated, or an event held, does not, however, mean that it has affected collective memory—indeed some seeming memory events simply flash before our eyes. Instead, Fredheim argues that the emphasis has to be shifted from the event itself to the impact of the event or to the representation of the event in the media

⁴³ Blacker and Etkind, 5; Ellen Rutten, “Why Digital Memory Studies Should Not Overlook Eastern Europe’s Memory Wars,” in *Memory and Theory in Eastern Europe*, ed. Uilleam Blacker, Alexander Etkind, and Julie Fedor (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 227.

⁴⁴ Etkind, 5; Blacker and Etkind, 6.

⁴⁵ Blacker and Etkind, 6; Etkind, 4; Stephen M. Norris, “Patriot Games: The Ninth Company and Russian Convergent Cultures after Communism,” *Digital Icons: Studies in Russian, Eurasian and Central European New Media*, no. 8 (2012): 68.

⁴⁶ Rolf Fredheim, “Detecting Memory Events,” *Eastern European Memory Studies*, May 2013, 9-10.

discourse—be it online or offline.⁴⁷ This would appear to fit with the intent expressed by Etkind in the first discussions of memory events, in which they only receive their power by whether or not the memories they push are perceived as “game-changing” or “identity relevant”—whether the new memory generates discourse.⁴⁸ The focus of the *Memory at Wars* team had been largely on those ‘memory events’ that created substantial web traffic or user comments on forums, like the Victory Day parade in Lviv in 2011 or the media frenzy after the 2010 Smolensk plane crash. But memory events also include films, which can be considered as ‘game-changing’ or ‘identity relevant’ in terms of the number of theatergoers, the box office results, the number of user reviews on film websites, and by critical buzz like awards. But attached to this consumption is also whether the content of these films reinforce or subvert some genre or cultural conventions that generate discussion of social issues or taboos—for example, Quentin Tarantino’s *Basterds*, which was both a major financial and critical success, that was perceived to be bending the rules of Holocaust remembrance and social taste.⁴⁹

Memory War

Fredheim’s criticism therefore re-orient this thesis to another major concept of collective memory studies hinted at before—that memory events are the focus points for the clash of competing memories. The concept of memories competing or clashing is not novel to the *Memory at Wars* team, though they do put the rather memorable label of ‘memory war’ upon it.⁵⁰ Such clashes represent the staking out of various positions—potentially over political or resource claims, or potentially over issues of identity. In staking out or defining

⁴⁷ *Id.*, 10.

⁴⁸ Etkind, 5.

⁴⁹ Daniel Mendelsohn, “Tarantino Rewrites the Holocaust,” *Newsweek*, August 13, 2009, <http://www.newsweek.com/tarantino-rewrites-holocaust-79003>; J. Hoberman, “Quentin Tarantino’s Inglourious Basterds Makes Holocaust Revisionism Fun,” *The Village Voice*, August 18, 2009, <http://www.villagevoice.com/2009-08-18/film/quentin-tarantino-s-inglorious-basterds-makes-holocaust-revisionism-fun/>; Ben Walters, “Debating Inglourious Basterds,” *Film Quarterly*, (2009), <http://www.filmquarterly.org/2009/12/talking-point-debating-inglorious-bastards/>.

⁵⁰ Lebow, 13-15.

new memories, various details are either accentuated or forgotten, what Istvan Rev called, “remembering otherwise.”⁵¹

But this by no means a smooth or easy process. What one actor wishes to forget, is what another group wants to remember. And the reasons to remember or forget may vary—because memory is a source of historical truth that provides a basis for societal identities; because memory provides certain societal roles to those able to claim that they are the only ones who may symbolically represent a past event or trauma; and/ or because there is opposition to the commercialization or banalization of a particular image of the past.⁵² What then becomes of analytical interest are the larger themes or frames used to construct the competing narratives and how these clashes result in changes to a particular society’s memory. In order to discover why a specific memory is being contested, would then require an analysis of the wider discourse surrounding the particular memory event.

This literature review has therefore shown that collective memory in Russia is forming over the discourse and debate over various memory events, which certainly includes Bondarchuk’s *Stalingrad*, Russia’s foremost Great Patriotic War blockbuster. The question then becomes, how can the memory clash over Bondarchuk’s film and its depiction of the Nazi be analyzed, in order to understand why the various ‘combatants’ are for or against that representation of the enemy? This is the subject of the following chapter, which first entails a brief discussion of film reception studies and its value to memory studies, as well as the methodological limitations made quite obvious in the literature. The chapter will then establish a methodology for identifying a segment of the discourse surrounding the film that can be analyzed for how Russian critics and web users are reacting to its depiction of the “good Nazi.”

⁵¹ Stephen Greenblatt, Istvan Rev, and Randolph Starn, “Introduction,” *Representations* 49, “Special Issue: Identifying Histories: Eastern Europe Before and After 1989” (Winter 1995), 9.

⁵² Misztal, 123-124.

Chapter 2: Soviet and Post-Soviet War Cult Narratives

This chapter highlights conflicting meta-narratives of the Great Patriotic War so as to contextualize and provide insight into (1) the kinds of materials contributing to Post-Soviet collective memory formation in Russia today and (2) potential reference points used in framing discussions of *Stalingrad* and the Nazi figure. Though the cult of the war has at times been downplayed for political reasons, there is no denying that the Great Patriotic War functioned as a major pillar of Soviet and Post-Soviet mythology and identity—Western scholars have gone so far as to label the war narrative as the foundational societal myth under both Brezhnev and Putin.⁵³ And the cult of the Great Patriotic War as developed by Soviet authorities has been well documented.⁵⁴ The discussion below therefore outlines how the war cult developed generally, but is oriented towards the cult on film and how the Nazi enemy factored into these films, since these materials are the most likely reference points for potential film critics in their discussions of *Stalingrad*.

Stalinist Narrative

The outbreak of war in 1941 led to the rapid establishment of an official propaganda campaign aimed at uniting the Soviet people against the Nazi aggressor. Konstantin Simonov's poem "Kill Him" or Il'ya Erenburg's article "Kill," among the most cited examples of this propaganda campaign, are by no means subtle in their intent. While it fluctuated in the severity of its discourse, this hate campaign went so far as to suggest at times that no German prisoners would be taken alive, that the war of extermination being

⁵³ Graeme J. Gill, *Symbols and Legitimacy in Soviet Politics* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 198, 212; Wood, "Performing Memory," 173-174; Sperling, "Making the Public Patriotic," 219-221, 237-240.

⁵⁴ Amir Weiner, *Making Sense of War: The Second World War and the Fate of the Bolshevik Revolution* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2001); Nina Tumarkin, *The Living & the Dead: The Rise and Fall of the Cult of World War II in Russia* (New York: Basic Books, 1994).

waged by the Nazis would be returned upon them, and that no Germans, even those Volga Germans living in Russia, could be trusted.⁵⁵ This vilification also played out on the cinema front. Of 72 feature films made between 1942 and 1945, 48 were war films.⁵⁶ It is widely acknowledged that these wartime feature films depict a Nazi figure caricatured as evil, savage and murderous.⁵⁷ Though some of these wartime films mocked or ridiculed Nazis, these films present the Nazi enemy as ugly, inhuman, and brutish monsters. Films described as representative of the genre at this time, such as *She Defends the Motherland* (1943), *Rainbow* (1944), and *Zoya* (1944), showcase a truly barbaric enemy who commits acts of extreme violence against women and children.

This hate campaign was curtailed as victory looked within reach. Rather than being an asset, the absence of any ‘good’ Germans was perceived by Soviet authorities as a political liability—how could the Soviets hope to win over the German people if anti-German imagery and brutish Nazis dominated Soviet discourse?⁵⁸ The hate campaign thus gave way to sloganeering and post-war propaganda that emphasized the separation between average German citizens and the “Nazi.”⁵⁹ The immediate post-war Stalinist films therefore present a kind of divergence in the cinematic rhetoric on the war. Nazi soldiers were still featured in post-war war films as the enemy, but there were also glimpses of ‘decent’ Germans—a phenomenon also occurring simultaneously in Hollywood film.⁶⁰ For example, the 1950 film

⁵⁵ Tumarkin, *The Living & the Dead*, 73-75; Weiner, 163-165; Neia Markovna Zorkaia, “All for the Front! All for Victory!,” in *The Illustrated History of the Soviet Cinema* (New York: Hippocrene Books, 1989), 174-175, 189.

⁵⁶ Richard Stites, *Russian Popular Culture: Entertainment and Society since 1900*, Cambridge Soviet Paperbacks 7 (Cambridge [England]: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 113.

⁵⁷ *Id.*, 113-116; Peter Kenez, “The Picture of the Enemy in Stalinist Films,” in *Insiders and Outsiders in Russian Cinema*, ed. Stephen M. Norris and Zara M. Torlone (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 106; Youngblood, *Russian War Films*, 57, 233; Denise J. Youngblood, “A War Remembered: Soviet Films of the Great Patriotic War,” *The American Historical Review* 106, no. 3 (June 2001), 843; Peter Kenez, “Black and White: The War on Film,” in *Culture and Entertainment in Wartime Russia*, ed. Richard Stites (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 169-170; Zorkaia, 182-189.

⁵⁸ Weiner, *Making Sense of the War*, 164-165.

⁵⁹ Norman M. Naimark, *The Russians in Germany: A History of the Soviet Zone of Occupation, 1945-1949* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1997, 1995), 251-254.

⁶⁰ Beverly Crawford and James Martel, “Representations of Germans and What Germans Represent: American Film Images and Public Perceptions in the Postwar Era,” in *Transatlantic Images and Perceptions: Germany*

The Fall of Berlin depicts German civilians being slaughtered by their own government, resulting in one scene in which a mother, holding her dead child, curses Hitler for the destruction he has brought upon the German people. But this same film shows Soviet soldiers battling hundreds of Nazis, who through various camera techniques are represented as a faceless mass, rather than human individuals.⁶¹ The 1949 film *Meeting on the Elbe* goes even further, featuring “decent” Germans who are friendly and sympathetic to the soldiers of the Red Army, in contrast to the former Nazis who ally with the Americans. Yet even this portrayal was controversial in its time, and the film was only released after Stalin personally intervened on its behalf following heavy criticism from the Ministry of the Film Industry.⁶²

The curtailing of the hate campaign represents but a piece of a larger drawing down of the war cult by Stalin. Not only did Stalin de-memorialize Victory Day by changing its status from national holiday to a regular workday in 1947, he also in short order demoted and removed those who had been given heroic status during the war, such as General Zhukov.⁶³ The emphasis shifted away from glorifying soldiers and the sacrifice of the Soviet people to the role of the Party and Stalin, whose policies and leadership had brought final victory.⁶⁴ This did not mean the end of the war films genre though. Indeed, war films were still being released, but now the emphasis was on Stalin was the major hero, depicted as using his superior strategic mind to more or less win the war single handily, as in *The Fall of Berlin*.⁶⁵ Though the so-called Khrushchev Thaw led to some questioning of this Stalinist war narrative, on-screen Germans remained as they had in the Stalinist period. Germans remained conventionally “vicious and brutal,” though there were occasional sympathetic

and *America since 1776*, ed. David E. Barclay and Elisabeth Glaser-Schmidt, Publications of the German Historical Institute (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

⁶¹ Richard Taylor, *Film Propaganda: Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany*, 2nd rev. ed (London: I.B. Tauris, 1998), 61.

⁶² Kenez, “The Picture of the Enemy in Stalinist Films,” 110-111.

⁶³ Nina Tumarkin, “The Great Patriotic War as Myth and Memory,” *European Review* 11, no. 04 (October 2003), 597.

⁶⁴ Matthew P. Gallagher, *The Soviet History of World War II: Myths, Memories, and Realities* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1976), 39-40.

⁶⁵ Youngblood, *Russian War Films*, 95-102; Taylor, *Film Propaganda*, 99-122.

representations of German civilians, as in the 1961 film *Peace to Him Who Enters*.⁶⁶ Increasingly, however, the Nazi enemy was simply disappearing from the screen—presented as tanks and airplanes rather than flesh and blood individuals or by not being present at all.⁶⁷ This was largely the result of these films placing the emphasis on the home front, rather than on the battlefield.

Brezhnev's War Cult

But the battlefield would return, bigger and louder than ever before, under the official ideology taking shape under Leonid Brezhnev's secretaryship. The resurgence of the war cult was a part of a wider search by the Soviet leadership for symbols and myths to shore up and legitimize Brezhnev's authority. First and foremost, Brezhnev could and would not be linked ideologically to Khrushchev, who Brezhnev had personally ousted. Brezhnev was also too far removed from Lenin and the Revolution, and could also not, after nearly a decade of de-Stalinization, rebuild the cult of Stalin.⁶⁸ Instead this period was marked by "developed socialism," commonly described in Western scholarship as a conservative meta-narrative that was both uninspiring and unenthusiastic in comparison to what had come before it.⁶⁹

At the core of this meta-narrative stood the Great Patriotic War. The overall plot of the official master-narrative that took shape in this period, and lasted until the collapse of the Soviet Union, is summed up as follows by Nina Tumarkin:

[...] collectivization and rapid industrialization under the first and second Five-year Plans prepared the country for war, and despite an overpowering surprise attack by the Fascist Beast and its inhuman wartime practices, despite the loss of 20 million valiant martyrs to the Cause, our country, under the leadership of the Communist

⁶⁶ Julian Graffy, "Scant Sign of Thaw: Fear and Anxiety in the Representation of Foreigners in the Soviet Films of the Khrushchev Years," in *Russia and Its Other(s) on Film: Screening Intercultural Dialogue*, ed. Stephen Hutchings (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 36.

⁶⁷ Youngblood, *Russian War Films*, 233.

⁶⁸ Graeme J. Gill, *Symbols and Legitimacy in Soviet Politics* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 192.

⁶⁹ *Id.*, 202, 211; See the discussion on Western scholarship during this period in Mark Sandle, "Brezhnev and Developed Socialism: The Ideology of Zastoi?," in *Brezhnev Reconsidered*, ed. Edwin Bacon and Mark Sandle, *Studies in Russian and East European History and Society* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave, 2002), 167-173.

Party headed by Comrade Stalin, arose as one united front and expelled the enemy from our own territory and that of East Europe, thus saving Europe—and the world—from Fascist enslavement.⁷⁰

Though this master narrative may have been partially played up to provide Brezhnev with a wartime service record due to Brezhnev's ego—he had a disposition for the theatrical and by the end of his life he had amassed over 200 awards and medals, a process that sped up as his health deteriorated—the war represented an event that all Soviet citizens had some attachment to, either through their own wartime service or experience, or through their parents or grandparents.⁷¹ The war was still a fresh memory, and its legacy became progressively more tangible as the regime built monuments and memorials throughout the country with increasing regularity. Moreover, the state instituted various new traditions and everyday rituals, and reinstated Victory Day as a national holiday, with paid time off, in 1965. The war cult therefore returned to prominence and found a popular resonance with the Soviet people in the public square.

The Brezhnev era war cult also found its voice on film, which led to the production of true cinematic behemoths. Critics and filmmakers during the early Brezhnev period indicated a clear preference for Stalinist era films like *Rainbow* and *Person No. 217*, declaring them representative of the war films genre—almost completely disregarded the films of the Thaw.⁷² The war films genre therefore took a turn away from the retrospection of the Thaw, and instead began churning out massive productions that treated the war as something to be experienced as entertainment. And just as the heroism portrayed and the message of glory was great, so was the sacrifice, and reverence for that sacrifice, of the Soviet people.

⁷⁰ Tumarkin, "The Great Patriotic War as Myth and Memory," 601.

⁷¹ Gill, *Symbols and Legitimacy in Soviet Politics*, 193; Lawton, "Toward a New Openness in Soviet Cinema, 1976-1987," 4; Tumarkin, *The Living & the Dead*, 132. Brezhnev also lacked the wartime service record and renown that Stalin and Khrushchev had had—therefore the war cult became a vehicle for Brezhnev to insert himself into battles he was likely never involved in or to inflate the importance of what little fighting he may have been involved or associated with. Adrienne Nolan, "'Shitting Medals': L.I. Brezhnev, the Great Patriotic War, and the Failure of the Personality Cult, 1965-1982" (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2008), 29.

⁷² Youngblood, *Russian War Films*, 144-145.

A major marker of the genre in this period would undeniably be Yury Ozerov's five-part epic *Liberation*, with a total run time of nearly 8 hours. Produced to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the end of the war, the film was the epitome of the Brezhnev era war cult in its size and message—the final credits indicate that 20 million Soviets died during the war, in contrast to all other nations. But this film was also representative of the fatigue that Soviet audiences had—they were increasingly going to the movie theater less often than they had before, and seeing melodramas or comedies over war films.⁷³ Indeed, the box office for *Liberation* was partially inflated by mandatory attendance for party members.⁷⁴ Despite this audience fatigue, however, epic length war films were still being released well into the 1980s, like Yury Ozerov's seven hour *The Battle for Moscow* released for the 40th anniversary of the war's end.

Western scholars of Soviet film paint these films as wholly “conventional,” “insufferably flat,” “undistinguished,” and loud in comparison to some of what was released in the late 1970s and the 1980s.⁷⁵ These same scholars also argue that some of these later films, such as Elem Klimov's 1985 *Come and See*, are more aesthetically pleasing or experimental, or represent a more critical exposé of the war. Unfortunately, there is no comprehensive study of how the enemy was depicted during the late Soviet period—during or after Brezhnev. Yet, even those films that are praised over the ‘conventional’ films of 1960s and 1970s do not deviate from portraying the Nazi enemy as it had been in the past. One need only watch the climax of *Come and See*, in which Nazi soldiers burn villagers alive

⁷³ Stites, *Russian Popular Culture*, 169-170; Youngblood, *Russian War Films*, 142-143, 146.

⁷⁴ Youngblood, *Russian War Films*, 158; Stites, *Russian Popular Culture*, 169.

⁷⁵ Lawton, “Toward a New Openness in Soviet Cinema, 1976-1987,” 20; Youngblood, *Russian War Films*, 145-146.

in barns and pose with their victims for photographs, to witness arguably one of the most brutal and horrifying depictions of Nazism in Soviet film history.⁷⁶

The Post-Soviet Period: Soviet Redux?

Though the Soviet Union collapsed over 20 years ago, the language and meta-narrative of the Soviet period lives on. For one, Stalinist and Brezhnev era war films remain accessible and popular: widely available on DVD and for download online; exhibited at contemporary film festivals coinciding with Victory Day; and regularly broadcast on state television.⁷⁷ A quick review of program schedules for major television networks reveals that Soviet era war films fill the airwaves on national holidays like Victory Day (May 9), Defender of the Fatherland Day (February 23), Russia Day (June 12), and Navy Day (the last Sunday in July). On May 8th and May 9th in 2014 and 2015, for instance, the following Brezhnev era films were aired, sometimes multiple times: Vladimir Chredel's 1969 *Five from the Sky*; Yury Ozerov's *Liberation*; Sergei Bondarchuk's 1975 *They Fought for Their Motherland*; and Leonid Bykov's 1977 *There the Soldiers Went*.⁷⁸ These films were intermingled with Stalinist melodramas, documentaries about the war, as well as the latest blockbusters, including *Stalingrad* and Sergey Mokritskiy's 2015 *Battle for Sevastopol*, which had only been released in theaters a month before Victory Day.

Beyond the fact that Soviet films still inhabit the Russian cultural space and media, socialist realist aesthetics and plot devices were being reused in Post-Soviet films, at least in the early to mid-2000s. Phrases like "more Soviet," "more Stalinist," and "Post-Socialist Realist," are bandied about by Western film scholars discussing Russian war films of the first half of the decade, particularly Nikolai Lebedev's 2002 *Star*, the first cinematic depiction of

⁷⁶ The working title of the film was *Kill Hitler*. "9 Maya REN TV Pokazhet Kul'tovyy Fil'm O Voyne 'Idi I Smotri,'" *REN TV*, accessed May 21, 2015, <http://m.ren.tv/novosti/2015-05-07/9-maya-ren-tv-pokazhet-kultovyy-film-o-voyne-idi-i-smotri>.

⁷⁷ Youngblood, *Russian War Films*, 231; Carleton, "Victory in Death," 144.

⁷⁸ The three major networks considered were: Channel One (<http://www.1tv.ru/shed>), Rossiya 1 (<http://russia.tv/tvp/>), and the Moscow channel TV Tsentr (<http://www.tvc.ru/tvp>).

the Great Patriotic War produced in nearly 15 years.⁷⁹ Mark Lipovetsky and David Gillespie share the view that these films depict war as it was in the Stalinist period, with a near wholesale recycling of Socialist Realist techniques—first and foremost a clear binary between heroes and villains, good and evil.⁸⁰ In doing so, these films are not only reproducing the Soviet meta-narrative, but actually stunting what many scholars see as a much needed reflection on the Soviet past.

But it is not just Post-Soviet film that maintains Soviet rhetoric and war cult meta-narrative. Western scholarship makes it quite clear that under Vladimir Putin's stewardship the Russian state has re-adopted numerous Soviet symbols and practices, while also adding greater pomp and circumstances to others.⁸¹ While this thesis cannot not hope to survey ever speech or every new state sponsored event and institution for references to the war or Nazism, an overview of official Victory Day commemorations reveal that the Soviet meta-narrative, in the same terms used by Nina Tumarkin, lives on in official discourse. In reviewing the presidential address given during the Victory Day parades between 2010 and 2015, it was the sacrifice of the Soviet people that saved Europe (2010, 2014, 2015) or the whole world (2010, 2011, 2012) from Nazi fascism.⁸² And that sacrifice was both immense and terrible: in 2010 President Medvedev declared that the "the Soviet Union had taken the brunt of the fascists," who had thrown three quarters of their forces at Russia. Medvedev went on to state that every family in Russia had someone who had died or went missing on

⁷⁹ Lipovetsky, 357-358; Gregory Carleton argues this film is actually more Stalinist in outlook and message than the 1949 version based on the same book. Carleton, "Victory in Death," 148.

⁸⁰ Lipovetsky, 361; David Gillespie, "Defence of the Realm: The 'New' Russian Patriotism on Screen," *The Journal of Power Institutions in Post-Soviet Societies* 3 (2005).

⁸¹ Sperling, "Making the Public Patriotic," 221, 228-245; Wood, "Performing Memory," 173-179.

⁸² "My Preklonyaemsa Pered Vsemi, Kto Nasmert' Stoyal Za Kazhduyu Ulitsu, Kazhdyy Dom, Kazhdyy Rubezh Otchizny," *Prezident Rossii*, May 9, 2015, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/49438>; "Parad Pobedy Na Krasnoy Ploshchadi," *Prezident Rossii*, May 9, 2014, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20989>; "Voyennom Parade v Chest' 68-Y Godovshchiny Velikoy Pobedy," *Prezident Rossii*, May 9, 2013, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/18089>; "Rech' Vladimira Putina Na Voennom Parade Na Krasnoy Ploshchadi v Moskve," *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, May 10, 2012, <http://www.rg.ru/2012/05/10/putin-rech.html>; ystupleniye Na Voyennom Parade, Posvyaschennom 66-Y Godovshchine Pobedy v Velikoy Otechestvennoy Voiny," *Prezident Rossii*, May 9, 2011, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/11196>; "Pobeda I Svoboda: Vystupleniye Prezidenta PF D. Medvedeva," *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, May 10, 2010, <http://www.rg.ru/2010/05/10/tekst-vystuplenia.html>.

the battlefield, been starved to death, or been killed in the concentration camps. President Putin made similar references in 2012 to “our country taking the brunt of Nazism,” in 2014 to the “millions” that had died for victory, and in 2015 to the fact that the “Soviet Union took the enemy’s most cruel blows,” resulting in the “the decisive battles of the Second World War.” References to Nazism in these same addresses would not be out of place in the wartime hate campaign: Nazism was an ideology, “which destroyed the foundations of civilization” (2010); Nazis were “barbarians” that were “aggressive” and a “terrible and cynical power” (2012); whose plans were “misanthropic, bloody, arrogant” (2013); and represented a “dark force” that was “deadly” (2015). Yet, in 2015, President Putin also declared that the anti-Hitler coalition opposing this dark force had included partisans, including partisans from Germany—the one and only positive reference to Germans in any of these six speeches. But even given that, it is quite evident that Germans, specifically the Nazis, are overwhelmingly conceived of as they were in the Soviet period: as a brutal and terrible enemy, rather than any victims of circumstance or politics.

War Revisited in the 2000s

Though Soviet era rhetoric remains engrained in contemporary discourse, the Russian public and cultural elite has also displayed willingness and an interest in probing the darker aspects of the war. Elena Trubina of Ural State University has argued that segments of the Russian population are forming a “cosmopolitan memory” of the Great Patriotic War, at the very least online.⁸³ This is the result of much greater access to information and chances to interact with non-Russians than ever before. On Russian blogs and forums, it is now possible to see ‘nationalist’ users claiming that Russia’s sacrifice won the war alongside other Russian commenters who, for example, downplay Stalin’s role or claim that Victory Day should be officially changed to commemorate all war dead, and not just those of the Soviet Union.

⁸³ Elena Trubina, “Past Wars in the Russian Blogosphere: On the Emergence of Cosmopolitan Memory,” *Digital Icons: Studies in Russian, Eurasian and Central European New Media*, no. 4 (2010), 66-76.

But this kind of reflection is not limited to the Internet. A flush of war films and television miniseries were released in the 2000s that alluded to and dealt with topics that had never been treated before: penal battalions, wartime cannibalism, and the arrogance and missteps taken by Soviet high command.⁸⁴ These films have been argued by film scholars to be subverting the Soviet narrative of the war, and therefore forging a distinctly Post-Soviet narrative.⁸⁵ Most fundamentally changed here is the representation of Germans. The Nazi ‘beasts’ of the Soviet period are replaced in several of these films with “an enemy with a human face.”⁸⁶ Denise Youngblood, for example, believes that the 2005 miniseries *Echelon* contains the first allusions to Soviet mass rape, while Aleksey German Jr.’s 2003 *The Last Train* stands out as the first Russian film to ever have a Nazi protagonist.⁸⁷ Aleksandr Rogozhkin’s 2002 *The Cuckoo* plays on this trope of coming to realize that the Russian enemy is a human being too, though in the ‘Fritz’ here is actually a Finn.⁸⁸ The dividing line between traditional enemy and hero as well as victims and perpetrators, was thus blurred being blurred in such films. Seemingly then the kind of shift in discourse that scholars like Saul Friedländer had recognized in Western media as early as the late 1960s had apparently begun take occur in Russia’s rapidly developing domestic film industry.

Norris’ discussion of the reception of these types of films is not very detailed, but it does suggest that this new Nazi was controversial, but in some quarters praised. The most radical of the films, *The Last Train* appears to have been more oriented towards the international festival circuit, rather than domestic consumption. KinoPoisk data indicates that the film apparently took in a little over 1,000 USD in Russia.⁸⁹ Norris is quick to qualify that

⁸⁴ Youngblood, *Russian War Films*, 218-223; Norris, *Blockbuster History*, 115-141; Elena Baraban, “Forget the War: Wartime Subjectivity in Post-Soviet Russian Films,” *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 54, no. 3–4 (2012), 304-308.

⁸⁵ Baraban, 298; Norris, 176.

⁸⁶ Norris, “Guiding Stars,” 176; Sulkin, 118-120.

⁸⁷ Youngblood, *Russian War Films*, 223; Norris, “Guiding Stars,” 171; Sulkin, 119.

⁸⁸ Norris, “Guiding Stars,” 170.

⁸⁹ “Sbory/ Posledniy Poyezd,” *KinoPoisk*, n.d., accessed May 29, 2015, <http://www.kinopoisk.ru/film/95322/box>.

the film had limited critical response. The review in *Iskusstvo Kino*, which praised the film for departing from ‘habitual stereotypes’ about the German enemy, is the only one seemingly in print according to Norris.⁹⁰ The four comments Norris found on *The Last Train*’s kino.ru page for the film included one comment with glowing praise for German Jr.’s Nazi protagonist, while another labeled the same figure a “blasphemy.”⁹¹ Comments written on the KinoPoisk page, starting after 2010, suggest the same dichotomy, with one user Su-35 railing against the portrayal of the ‘fat German,’ the same people who, “killed millions of our countrymen.”⁹² The issue here is simply that this film was not intended to and did not make the kind of splash that *Stalingrad* was. But it, and the other films that contained sympathetic portrayals of Germans, did challenge the traditional Soviet narrative of the war, and thereby presented and established the possibility for a new kind of representation of the war.

The discussion above suggests potential frames of mind that could be used in discussions of *Stalingrad* and its Nazi. Evidently from the literature, the Soviet motif of evil Nazi has been disrupted by the inclusion of sympathetic portrayals of such characters—while by no means every film made after 2002 had ‘good Nazis,’ a number have included such portrayals. Film critics (or audience members) may then pull from these films in discussing *Stalingrad*. Critics will likely measure *Stalingrad* against what has come before, either positively or negatively. But the discussion of the Nazi is not only limited to this dichotomy, and other potential themes will be discussed in Chapter 5, regarding the results of the analysis.

⁹⁰ Norris, “Guiding Stars,” 179.

⁹¹ *Id.*

⁹² Su-35, “Patsifizm ili ekzistentsial’nyye uzhasy mazhora v pubertate,” Comment, *KinoPoisk*, (February 19, 2011), www.kinopoisk.ru/film/95322.

Chapter 3: Background on *Stalingrad*

Before delving into the methodology, this thesis will now provide background on *Stalingrad*, principally its production; the role the Russian state played in that production; and an overview of the film's Nazi character, Peter Kahn.

Film Production

Initial shooting took place over 17 days in the fall of 2011 with the remainder filmed between May and July 2012.⁹³ However, screenwriter Il'ya Til'kin reportedly spent nearly 3 years researching and writing the first draft script, apparently submitted to the government for funding consideration at some point in 2009.⁹⁴ This original script was at least partially based on Vasiliy Grossman's *Life and Fate*, though it was heavily edited once Sergey Snezhkin joined the production team. A review in *Kommersant*' suggests, based on an anonymous source involved in *Stalingrad*'s production, that Snezhkin had been particularly shocked at the original script's reliance on and depiction of the rape of the female lead, Katya, by German soldiers, supposedly reacting: "Well, one cannot show how the fascists...our girls."⁹⁵ Beyond this snippet though, it is not clear how individual characters and roles changed between the first script and filming. However, what is much more evident from early media reports is that Til Schweiger—a German actor who played the role of Hugo Stiglitz in Tarantino's *Inglourious Basterds*—turned down an offer to star in the film since he refused to play a Nazi.

Estimates for the film's budget were consistently reported around 28-30 million USD, despite the fact that Bondarchuk and the film's producers had not yet firmly decided whether

⁹³ Oksana Naralenkova, "V masshtabe Gollivuda," *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, February 9, 2012, <http://www.rg.ru/2012/02/08/stalingrad-site.html>.

⁹⁴ "Fëdor Bondarchuk Prosit Deneg Na Stalingrad," *Gazeta.ru*, November 10, 2009, http://www.gazeta.ru/news/culture/2009/11/10/n_1423016.shtml.

⁹⁵ Andrey Plakhov, "V Raskopkakh Stalingrada," *Kommersant.ru*, October 9, 2013, <http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/2314393>.

to film and release in IMAX 3D until February 2012.⁹⁶ This was itself a historic announcement, since it made *Stalingrad* Russia's first IMAX production—and its only domestic IMAX production until Nikolai Ledbedev's *Flight Crew* is released in 2016. According to producer Aleksandr Rodnyanskiy the decision was made to film in IMAX to fulfill Bondarchuk's goal of immersing the audience in the true grittiness and experience of war, something only IMAX could deliver.⁹⁷

Such statements plays into wider claims made by the production team that *Stalingrad* was meant to represent a new kind of war film. Bondarchuk declared that his initial goal had always been to direct a war film “which I myself had never seen.”⁹⁸ Bondarchuk also asserted that he initially worried over the spat of war films released in 2010, like Nikita Mikhalkov's *Burnt by the Sun 2* and Aleksandr Kott's *Brest Fortress*, which could have stolen his thunder and eroded public enthusiasm for another film about the Great Patriotic War.⁹⁹ His worry turned into relief, however, since these films were nothing like his script.¹⁰⁰ And although much of the press about the film hyped that *Stalingrad* would mark the 70th anniversary of the actual battle, Bondarchuk actively downplayed this.¹⁰¹ He specifically stated in February 2012 that he was not filming a “colossal movie about the Great War,” but rather a film “about people,” which he was not aiming to release for the 70th jubilee.¹⁰² Likewise, Bondarchuk emphasized he was trying to one-up Steven Spielberg's *Saving*

⁹⁶ “Fëdor Bondarchuk podumybaet snyat' fil'm ‘Stalingrad’ v 3D,” *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, July 7, 2010, <http://www.rg.ru/2010/07/07/stalingrad-anons.html>.

⁹⁷ Oksana Naralenkova, “V masshtabe Gollivuda.”

⁹⁸ Fyodor Bondarchuk, F. Bondarchuk pro zlyu molodezh', kul't smurfov i “Stalingrad” v 3D, interview by Sirotkin Kirill, RBK Print, September 27, 2013, <http://top.rbc.ru/viewpoint/27/09/2013/879170.shtml>.

⁹⁹ Lyudmila Bezrukova, “Kamni i kadry,” *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, April 28, 2011, <http://www.rg.ru/2011/04/28/bondarchuk.html>.

¹⁰⁰ *Id.*

¹⁰¹ In fact, the film had to be limitedly released in St. Petersburg in September in order to meet the calendar range for Oscar consideration. The film was only widely released in Russia on October 10, 2013.

¹⁰² Oksana Naralenkova, “V masshtabe Gollivuda,” *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, February 9, 2012, <http://www.rg.ru/2012/02/08/stalingrad-site.html>. In a separate interview producer Aleksandr Rodnyanskiy qualified that the film was not simply a drama, but was a genre conforming war film with extra special emphasis on the characters' uniqueness. See Anton Dolin, “Aleksandr Rodnyanskiy: «Soznaniye Russkoy Auditorii Infantiľ'no»,” *Vedomosti*, February 10, 2012, http://www.vedomosti.ru/library/articles/2012/02/10/aleksandr_rodnyanskij_soznanie_russkoj_auditorii_infantiľno.

Private Ryan, but aimed to touch Russia's theatergoing audience, which in Bondarchuk's opinion were youths between 12 and 25.¹⁰³

Bondarchuk's gambit of filming a new kind of war film for the youngest generation evidently paid off big. *Stalingrad* was an unprecedented financial success, becoming the highest grossing film of 2013 after only 11 days—despite, as *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* reported, the many *nedobrozhelateli* [ill-wishers] urging people not to see the film.¹⁰⁴ Though there were certainly mixed reactions from critics and audiences, Rodnyanskiy was quick to defend the film in the days following the premiere, citing that over half of critics' reviews were positive and reviewers on KinoPoisk.ru scored the film higher than average—overall 7.2 out of 10.¹⁰⁵ *Stalingrad*'s financial success and popularity were allude to when the film was broadcast on Rossiya 1 on May 9, 2014. Press materials announcing the television premiere urged people to tune in since the film had been such a historic film: Russia's first and only IMAX production; watched by over 6 million Russians theatergoers; and was the most successful war film in Russian distribution.¹⁰⁶

Russian State Support

Stalingrad's enormous success was made possible by remarkable financial support from the Russian government. Bondarchuk's estimated budget of 30 million USD remains an astronomical sum for a Russian film production. For context, most Russian war films before *Stalingrad* had normally received only a few million from the Federal Fund for Social and Economic Support to National Cinematography (hereinafter "Cinema Fund")—and also

¹⁰³ *Id.*

¹⁰⁴ Valeriy Kuznetsov, "'Stalingrad': novyy front," *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, October 21, 2013, <http://www.rg.ru/2013/10/21/kino-site-anons.html>.

¹⁰⁵ Fyodor Bondarchuk, F. Bondarchuk pro zlyuyu molodezh', kul't smurfov i "Stalingrad" v 3D, interview by Sirotkin Kirill, *RBK*, September 27, 2013, <http://top.rbc.ru/viewpoint/27/09/2013/879170.shtml>.

¹⁰⁶ Susanna Al'perina, "'Stalingrad': novyy front," *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, May 8, 2014, <http://www.rg.ru/2014/05/08/stalingrad.html>.

usually did not recoup these costs after release.¹⁰⁷ Yet, Bondarchuk eventually received the entirety of his estimated 30 million either directly from the state or through investment from state corporations: 10 million USD from the Cinema Fund; at least 6 million USD from the television network Rossiya 1; and somewhere near 20 million USD from Russia's VTB Bank, of which the state is a majority shareholder.¹⁰⁸

At the time that Bondarchuk sought funding from the government in 2009, major changes were occurring in how films were funded and supported by the state. In December 2008 the Government Council for the Development of Russian Cinematography was founded and personally chaired by Prime Minister Vladimir Putin.¹⁰⁹ This council was charged with making state support for national film more effective and establishing safeguards to protect and promote the Russian film industry. The following December witnessed the apparent fruits of this council, with the re-establishing of the Cinema Fund, which was tasked with supporting the production, distribution and exhibition of national films. The Cinema Fund would answer directly to the Government of Russia, and has a Board of Trustees that has generally included: Nikita Mikhalkov, Chairman of the Union of Cinematographers of the Russian Federation; Vladimir Tolstoy, an advisor to President Vladimir Putin; various deputy ministers; and CEOs from several state corporations related to television and film broadcasting.¹¹⁰ These Trustees are responsible for choosing top national film studios to be given a share of the Cinema Fund's annual budget. In 2010, for example, eight film companies were selected, including Mikhalkov's Studio Tri-Te and Bondarchuk's Art Pictures, each of which was granted roughly 250 million rubles (approximately 6 million

¹⁰⁷ Serhy Yekelchuk, "Memory Wars on the Silver Screen: Ukraine and Russia Look Back at the Second World War," *Australian and New Zealand Journal of European Studies* 5, no. 2 (2013), 5.

¹⁰⁸ Fyodor Bondarchuk and Larisa Yusipova, "«Spasibo Putinu za «Stalingrad»," *Izvestia*, October 28, 2013, <http://izvestia.ru/news/559639>; Kseniya Boletskaya and Aleksey Rozhkov, "Fil'm O L've Yashine snimet 'Tsentral partnership,'" *Vedomosti*, May 16, 2013, http://www.vedomosti.ru/lifestyle/articles/2013/05/16/central_partnership_snimet_film_o_lve_yashine.

¹⁰⁹ *The Film Industry in the Russian Federation* (Strasbourg: European Audiovisual Observatory, September 2010), 8.

¹¹⁰ "History and Mission," *Cinema Fund*, n.d., accessed May 29, 2015, <http://eng.fond-kino.ru/fund/mission/>; "Popechitel'skiy sovet Fonda," *Fond Kino*, n.d., accessed May 29, 2015, <http://fond-kino.ru/fund/structure/>.

euros).¹¹¹ It is apparent, however, that the Cinema Fund has given support outside of this budget, given that Bondarchuk was guaranteed 10 million USD from the Cinema Fund at some point in late 2009 or 2010.

Bondarchuk gave at least some suggestion that Vladimir Putin was personally involved in supporting *Stalingrad*. While Bondarchuk claimed during an interview with *Izvestia* that no one interfered on his behalf to secure his loan from VTB, in his next breath he said that *Stalingrad* could not have been made without Vladimir Putin's support—in his darkest days Bondarchuk apparently turned to the Prime Minister when *Stalingrad* was “only a script” and a small set model.¹¹² Though Bondarchuk only blusters in a follow-up question by the interviewer about how deep Bondarchuk's connections go, it is well known that Bondarchuk has been an active and formal member of Putin's United Russia party since 2009.¹¹³

It should be noted that substantial changes occurred in state film policy during the film's production and following its release. In May 2013, Vladimir Putin's Press Secretary Dmitriy Peskov reaffirmed the government's stance that it expected films it funded to promote “affirmative spiritual and national values.”¹¹⁴ A few days before Peskov's announcement, the Minister of Culture Vladimir Medinskiy announced he had met with the head of the Cinema Fund to take him to task for funding unworthy films, though he did manage to mention that a major patriotic blockbuster, *Stalingrad*, would soon be released.¹¹⁵ And even though the state provided funding to films that have been considered anti-regime or run counter to the supposed ideological goals of the state, such as Andrei Zvyagintsev's

¹¹¹ *The Film Industry in the Russian Federation*, 17.

¹¹² Fyodor Bondarchuk and Larisa Yusipova, “«Spasibo Putinu za «Stalingrad».”

¹¹³ “Izvestnyy rezhissër Fëdor Bondarchuk vstupil v partiya ‘Yedinaya Rossiya,’” *RIA Novosti*, April 17, 2009, <http://ria.ru/culture/20090417/168379405.html>.

¹¹⁴ “Peskov: Nepravda, chto Surkovskoye nasledie - eto plokho,” *Vedomosti*, May 22, 2013, http://www.vedomosti.ru/politics/news/2013/05/22/peskov_nepravda_chto_surkovskoe_nasledie_eto_ploho

¹¹⁵ *Id.*; “Medinskiy: Fond kino dolzhen proizvodit' patrioticheskiye blokbastery,” *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, May 22, 2013, www.rg.ru/2013/05/22/medinskiy-anons.html.

recent film *Leviathan*, the state is also willing to take action to censor or ban such films from viewing domestically.¹¹⁶

While *Stalingrad* was certainly not censored, there were at least some independent media rumblings that the film was not what the Kremlin had expected. In November 2013, only a few weeks after the film was released, Ivan Demidov, Deputy Minister of Culture in charge of film and at one point on the Cinema Fund's Board of Trustees, resigned from office. While the mainstream press did not link *Stalingrad* to this resignation, there was at least some speculation online that Demidov had actually been sacked because Vladimir Putin was displeased with *Stalingrad*.¹¹⁷ There were also claims that Vladimir Medinskiy had been rebuked by a Putin aide over the film, which the aide reportedly claimed was a film in which, "Russian soldiers look like idiots, and Russian women are prostitutes, ready to sell the Motherland for a piece of bread."¹¹⁸ Though this appears to be nothing more than rumor, it was apparently widely shared on Russian social media. And even Bondarchuk publically acknowledged in an interview that *Stalingrad* would not have received the funding it had under the current climate surrounding state film funding and policy.¹¹⁹ Bondarchuk also admitted in the same interview that he did not know whether President Putin had watched the film, despite it being in theaters for over a week. After some further probing, Bondarchuk further concedes that Putin had attended screenings for Bondarchuk's 2005 film *9th Company*, which Putin had stated he greatly enjoyed, as well as several other films released in 2013, such as *Legend No. 17*.¹²⁰ At the very least then all of this suggests that something appeared amiss with the post-premiere reaction of the government, particularly Putin's silence.

¹¹⁶ "Oscar-Tipped 'Leviathan' Released in Russia, Defying Complaints," *Yahoo News*, <http://news.yahoo.com/oscar-tipped-leviathan-released-russia-defying-complaints-110437155.html>.

¹¹⁷ "Demidova uvolili iz-za Bondarchuka," *APN Severo-Zapad*, December 8, 2013, www.apn-spb.ru/news/comments15184.htm.

¹¹⁸ api_x, "Fil'm 'Stalingrad' mozhnet stoit' Medinskomu portfelya ministra," *LiveJournal*, *Agentstvo Politicheskikh Rassledovaniy*, (November 2, 2013), www.api-x.livejournal.com/1178.html; Andrey Levkin, "Medinskiy, Putin, «Stalingrad»," *Polit.ru*, November 5, 2013, <http://polit.ru/article/2013/11/05/al051113>.

¹¹⁹ Fyodor Bondarchuk and Larisa Yusipova, "«Spasibo Putinu za «Stalingrad»."

¹²⁰ *Id.*

***Stalingrad*'s Nazi Figure: Peter Kahn**

Given that this thesis is examining the discourse on the controversy surrounding *Stalingrad*, particularly its depiction of the Nazi, it is both appropriate and necessary here to provide some background on the major Nazi character in the film: Hauptmann Peter Kahn. Kahn is a central character in the film, onscreen for slightly over one quarter of film's runtime, or roughly 33 minutes. He functions as a foil to Captain Gromov, the leader of the Russian soldiers defending the house the Germans seek to control.

The role of Peter Kahn eventually went to the German actor Thomas Kretschmann, who has a long history since his first role in the 1993 German production *Stalingrad* of playing Nazi officers. Kretschmann indicated in one interview that he was drawn to the role because of the complexity of the character, who had “no exit and no hope”—something that the interviewer had also picked up on from discussing the film with producer Aleksandr Rodnyanskiy.¹²¹ In another interview Kretschmann explained that he took the role of Kahn, because, “In *Stalingrad* my character is not a Nazi monster, but rather a living person, and that is important for me.”¹²²

This complexity plays out onscreen. Though Kahn is pitted against Captain Gromov and the other Russian protagonists, his story is mainly a romance with a Russian woman, Masha, that he cannot actually communicate with—she speaks no German, and he no Russian. In the first scene featuring the two [33:45 to 37:55] Kahn tries to explain that he visits her because she resembles his wife Christina, who died of tuberculosis. Kahn has apparently visited Masha before and brings her canned food.

¹²¹ Thomas Kretschmann, “Tomas Krechmann: «U moyego geroya net vykhoda i net nedezhdy»,” interview by Dariko Tsulaya, *KinoPoisk*, August 20, 2013, <http://www.kinopoisk.ru/interview/2225733/>; Pëtr Fëdorov, *Tomas Kretschmann, Fëdor Bondarchuk O 'Stalingrade'*. *Industriya kino ot 11.10.13*, Fil'm Pro, YouTube, October 11, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NPKBoYDCa_0.

¹²² Thomas Kretschmann, *Ya eshchë raz okunut'sya v etu istoriyu, raskryt' eë s drugoy storony, s russkoy tochki zreniya*, *Kommersant*, October 4, 2013, <http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/2305706>.

It is clear that Kahn is not aware of the events that would transpire directly after this, in which Oberstleutnant Henze, Kahn's commanding officer, orders all numerous city dwellers, including Masha, onto the square for a 'demonstration.' The Nazi colonel then selects a Jewish mother and daughter to be a "sacrifice to the old Gods," having them burned alive inside of a bus [40:55 to 44:50]. Before the bus is torched, Kahn enters the square and yells out, "What in God's name are you doing!" After the bus is set ablaze, the Russians storm the square and the ensuing battle results in a German retreat.

Kahn is next shown, bloodied and dirty, entering Masha's housing complex. He arrives in her room, and without dialogue, grabs the knife from her hands, picks her up off the floor, and forcefully tears her clothes off—filmed in slow motion [46:10-47:50]. Shortly thereafter Kahn is depicted sitting on Masha's bed, next to a nude Masha, and gives the following soliloquy:

Take a look at this filthy animal. Peter Kahn. Recipient of an Iron Cross. Born to respected Prussian stock. Field Marshall Paulus...invited me to lunch once. He called me a hero. A hero... It's impossible to wage war against you people. You know nothing of honor. You're all bandits, who'd shoot someone in the back. You're not fighting for victory, you want revenge. I came here as a soldier...you've turned me into a beast. [53:10-54:55]

The relationship portrayed on screen after this point brings to mind a forbidden love. Kahn is later discovered by Oberstleutnant Henze half-dressed in Masha's room, which renders Henze "speechless" and leads to the claim that Kahn has failed as an officer. But Kahn clearly cares more about Masha than his career—he not only saves her from a crowd being herded on to train cars on an armored motorcycle, but blatantly returns her to the Nazi headquarters, where he is threatened with execution if he does not successfully assault the Russian position: "[this Russian whore] turned my best officer into a mindless idiot" [1:11:10 to 1:16:20].

The last third of the movie involves two final assaults on the Russian position. During the first assault Kahn acknowledges the presence of a young recruit, clearly only a teenager,

who has been sent as part of reinforcements. The film has this young soldier gunned down as the troops retreat. Kahn is again rebuked as a disgrace to the Wehrmacht, though he is given one final chance. Sitting in Masha's room, with Masha's head in his lap, the two express their love to one another. Kahn finally cries out "Damned War! Damned country! Damn building!" [1:35:36 to 1:35:50]. Kahn then tries to ferry Masha to safety so that after the battle he can begin his life with her. Unfortunately, after much tenderness between them, Masha is deliberately shot in the head by one of the Russian characters for being a "German whore"—a scene set with somber music and shot in slow motion. Kahn, enraged, leads the final assault on the house with the support of several tanks, and actively searches for Gromov. The two mortally wound each other in a standoff and even slump into one another, until the house is demolished by artillery fire that the Russians call in on their own position to destroy the advancing German forces.

This character is unlike anything seemingly shown in Soviet film. Certainly, Kahn is by no means a saint. But he is depicted here as a man, with faults and emotions—an individual who has become disillusioned with the war and who is capable of great love and great rage. While he is certainly central to the overall plot in opposing the Russians, his romance with Masha and his musings are not. Instead, these aspects give him, and consequently the German side of the war, a human (and indeed at times romanticized) face.

Chapter 4: Methodology

While understanding how consumers of films receive and react to such cultural vehicles seems like a natural research path for collective memory studies, the literature suggests a serious deficiency in this regard. Several scholars have attempted to rectify this perceived gap by highlighting that the theory and methods of reception studies could aid in answering larger questions about processes related to memory formation and internalization.¹²³ Since this project is focused on the discourse surrounding a film, it looks to film reception studies and audience research in choosing an appropriate method for locating a data body and conducting an analysis. This chapter first outlines the state of reception studies research and the methodological limitations and constraints of the field. The thesis opts to examine film critics' reviews of *Stalingrad*, which were then analyzed using the thematic analysis approach outlined below.

Reception Studies

While scholars of collective memory like Wulf Kansteiner and Alon Confino have pushed for the adoption of reception methodologies in the study of collective memory, an overview of the field reveals a deficient research paradigm. Robert C. Allen, in reflecting on the state of contemporary film reception research, remarked that despite 25 years of audience research, Janet Staiger, one of the biggest names in reception, still felt, "the need to devote an entire chapter of her book to the proposition that people have always talked during, after,

¹²³ Mark A. Wolfgram, "The Memory-Market Dictum: Gauging the Inherent Bias in Different Data Sources Common in Collective Memory Studies," in *Dynamics of Memory and Identity in Contemporary Europe*, ed. Eric Langenbacher, Bill Niven, and Ruth Wittlinger (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2012), 56-57; Motti Neiger, Oren Meyers, and Eyal Zandberg, "On Media Memory: Editors' Introduction," in *On Media Memory: Collective Memory in a New Media Age*, ed. Motti Neiger, Oren Meyers, and Eyal Zandberg (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 16-17; Mark A. Wolfgram, "The Process of Collective Memory Research: Methodological Solutions for Research Challenges," *German Politics and Society* 25, no. 81 (Spring 2007): 102-104, 106; Wulf Kansteiner, "Finding Meaning in Memory: A Methodological Critique of Collective Memory Studies," *History and Theory* 41, no. 2 (May 2002): 180, 195-197; Alon Confino, "Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method," *The American Historical Review*, 1997, 1395-1399.

(and she might have also said, before) watching movies.”¹²⁴ But this seemingly sorry state is the result of the recent shift away from the text (the film) as the center of analysis in reception studies.¹²⁵ For too long the field simply did not care what was happening beyond the contours of the screen or outside the theater.

More recent film reception studies have centered on studying the audience, or more specifically the physical people watching the film. However, methods of physically observing individuals and recording their reactions has essentially been abandoned, mainly due to the costs involved and serious concerns over the representativeness and generalizability of the samples and data such studies generate.¹²⁶ Instead, most contemporary audience research involves what Henry Jenkins deems “reading the tea leaves,” in which researchers endeavor to study audiences by analyzing what was left behind after a viewing: letters to the editor, fanzines, reviews, diary entries, online comments, and blogs.¹²⁷

This type of contextual approach has its advantages and disadvantages, which have been both enriched and problematized by the advent of the Internet. For one, the concept of audience is more complex than ever before. Though the audience of a film at its most basic remains a collective of receivers, most of whom are generally unobservable or beyond the reach of any research team, the traditional identifiers of audience such as sharing a medium,

¹²⁴ Robert C. Allen, “Relocating American Film History,” *Cultural Studies* 20, no. 1 (2006): 57.

¹²⁵ Daniel Biltereyst, Richard Maltby, and Philippe Meers, “Cinema, Audiences and Modernity: An Introduction,” in *Cinema Audiences and Modernity: An Introduction*, ed. Daniel Biltereyst (Oxon ; New York, NY: Routledge, 2011), 2; Annette Kuhn, “Cinema Memory as Cultural Memory,” in *Dreaming of Fred and Ginger: Cinema and Cultural Memory* (New York: New York University Press, 2002), 3-4.

¹²⁶ John L. Sullivan, *Media Audiences: Effects, Users, Institutions, and Power* (Thousand Oaks, Calif: SAGE Publications, 2013), 217; David Deacon, “Why Counting Counts,” in *Research Methods for Cultural Studies*, ed. Michael Pickering (Edinburgh University Press, 2008), 92-93; Pertti Alasuutari, “Introduction: Three Phases of Reception Studies,” in *Rethinking the Media Audience: The New Agenda*, ed. Pertti Alasuutari (London: Sage Publications, 1999), 14; Ann Gray, “Audience and Reception Research in Retrospect: The Trouble with Audiences,” in *Rethinking the Media Audience: The New Agenda*, ed. Pertti Alasuutari (London: Sage Publications, 1999), 32; Kim Christian Schröder, “The Best of Both Worlds? Media Audience Research between Rival Paradigms,” in *Rethinking the Media Audience: The New Agenda*, ed. Pertti Alasuutari (London: Sage Publications, 1999), 46.

¹²⁷ Allen, 48-81; Henry Jenkins, “Reception Theory and Audience Research: The Mystery of the Vampire’s Kiss,” in *Reinventing Film Studies*, ed. Linda Williams and Christine Gledhill (London : New York: Arnold; Co-published in the United States of America by Oxford University Press, 2000), 167; Janet Staiger, *Perverse Spectators: The Practices of Film Reception* (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 43-55.

place, or time have been dismantled by the digital revolution.¹²⁸ While people are still certainly going to the movies, they are also increasingly consuming films at home on their laptops, on the metro with their tablet, or on their phone while at the gym or in the park. With such disparate and diverse potential audiences, traditional audience measures have been rendered outdated—and it is next to impossible for any researcher to claim a representative sample.¹²⁹ At best, film reception methodologies may be able to provide insight into a single subset or layer of a modern audience today.

And just as concept of audience has become more convoluted in the digital age, so have the means with which audience members discuss and interact with films. Audience members are now merely a few clicks away from forums, chat rooms, wikis, blogs and webpages all dedicated to films they loved or hated, allowing them to connect with other audience members on an unprecedented scale. The anonymity and access the Internet provides have generally also decreased the costs of speaking one's mind, and led to claims of a turn to a "participatory culture," in which the concept of audience has definitively shifted from passive spectator to active producer.¹³⁰ Such audiences are seen as contradicting and supplementing traditional media messages and traditional media producers—when something goes wrong, fans are quick to let loose on directors, producers and screen writers. And increasingly they are doing so by creating their own multi-media products, going so far as to creating their own videos and fan fiction.

But while all of this material is a treasure trove for reception studies, its existence has only made issues of representativeness and generalizability all the more complicated. Even being able to identify basic demographic data about online posters, particularly in the Post-

¹²⁸ Denis McQuail, *Audience Analysis* (Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications, 1997), 1-2; Alasuutari, 6.

¹²⁹ Kansteiner, 193; Sullivan, 217.

¹³⁰ Sullivan, 216-219; Henry Jenkins, *Fans, Bloggers, and Gamers: Exploring Participatory Culture* (New York: New York University Press, 2006), 149-153.

Soviet space, is simply not possible.¹³¹ And though material might at first seem readily accessible, it also generates various technical and methodological issues: what has been moderated or deleted, what of privacy or other settings that are excluding hundreds of search engine results; how to operationalize the significance of a given blog entry over another; etc. And in the Russian Federation social media and Internet use, though rapidly expanding into the regions and becoming less expensive, is still largely the realm of young urban professionals and students—raising questions of representativeness and samples for any researcher of online discourse in that country.¹³² The larger question of how to study the *Stalingrad* audience has ostensibly become the question of which sub-segment of the wider discourse to study and why.

In sifting through possible subjects of study, this project spent considerable time and effort in exploring the possibility of analyzing online comments on Russian social media sites. As discussed in more detail in the Conclusion, this approach is hypothetically quite rich—a search on the popular blogging platform LiveJournal.ru using the terms (in Russian) “Stalingrad,” “Bondarchuk” and “Germans” produced over 5,740 results in April 2015. But the technical issues that arose in trying to access this material was simply unmanageable for this thesis: (1) results with known dates on LiveJournal were not appearing in date ranges using Yandex’s Russian blog search function (<https://blogs.yandex.ru/>), which has been used as a tool in most studies of Russian social media; (2) searches conducted for overlapping date ranges on Yandex did not include results that had been found in previous searches; and (3) only the first 100 LiveJournal results were accessible using LiveJournal’s search function,

¹³¹ Ellen Rutten, “Web Wars: Digital Diasporas and the Language of Memory,” *Digital Icons: Studies in Russian, Eurasian and Central European New Media*, no. 4 (2010), 172-173.

¹³² Michael S Gorham, Inguun Lunde, and Martin Paulsen, “Introduction,” in *Digital Russia: The Language, Culture and Politics of New Media Communication*, ed. Michael S Gorham, Inguun Lunde, and Martin Paulsen, Kindle Edition (London: Routledge, 2014); “Development of the Internet in Russia’s Regions” (Yandex, 2013), http://download.yandex.ru/company/ya_russian_regions_report_2013.pdf; Daphne Skillen, “The Next General Elections in Russia,” in *Globalisation, Freedom and the Media after Communism: The Past as Future*, ed. Birgit Beumers, Stephen Hutchings, and Natalia Rulyova (London ; New York: Routledge, 2011), 31; Heather MacLeod, “Examining Political Group Membership on LiveJournal,” *Digital Icons: Studies in Russian, Eurasian and Central European New Media* 1, no. 1 (2009), 14-16.

despite an attempt to mimic this function by constructing a Custom Search Engine on Google. The aim in raising these issues here is to suggest that with the right tools and know-how there is a seemingly vast amount of discourse surrounding *Stalingrad* online, which this thesis is merely scratching.

Film Reviews and Film Critics

This thesis instead chose another traditional focus of reception studies research that is arguably more manageable but equally worthwhile in analyzing: film reviews. In the reception studies literature published in the 2000s, mostly aimed at establishing socio-historical context and analyzing audience reaction through the material it generates, film reviews have become a go-to staple.¹³³ This is mainly because film reviews act as a conduit through which the public forms or reinforces its opinions or expectations about a particular film, and provide frames of reference for those who have not yet seen a film in social situations.¹³⁴ But it should be clear from the outset, as Henry Jenkins rightfully cautions, that critical response to a film is not the same as audience response.¹³⁵ While critics may believe they have the power to completely influence the masses to their own personal tastes and whims, consumers do choose to see films that critics pan, and interact with films in ways that go beyond, or even subvert, what film critics say in the run-up to a film's release.

But this should not suggest that film reviews are not a worthwhile endeavor of reception study. Rather, film reviews have been argued to act as both an influencer of audience choice and a predictor of audience members' decision-making—claims that have

¹³³ Kuhn, 5; Staiger, 68, 164.

¹³⁴ Jenkins, 169-171; Suman Basuroy, Subimal Chatterjee, and S. Abraham Ravid, "How Critical Are Critical Reviews? The Box Office Effects of Film Critics, Star Power, and Budgets," *Journal of Marketing* 67 (October 2003), 104; Wesley Shrum, "Critics and Publics: Cultural Mediation in Highbrow and Popular Performing Arts," *American Journal of Sociology*, 97, no. 2 (Sept. 1991), 352.

¹³⁵ Jenkins, 170; Morris B. Holbrook, "Popular Appeal versus Expert Judgments of Motion Pictures," *Journal of Consumer Research* 26, no. 2 (September 1999): 146.

been empirically supported.¹³⁶ Regardless of why a reviewer pens a review though—and for professional reviewers this is often revolves around financial interest and incentive—in order to be successful, a reviewer needs to be able to effectively speak to his or her readership.¹³⁷ This implies that film reviews retain a cultural resonance, since a successful review must play to and be framed in a way so as to discuss how a particular film measures against the cultural norms, tastes and logic of readers. In this way, film reviewers have been described as “gate keepers” or “taste makers” who are guarding their culture’s sensibilities while also mediating audience response.¹³⁸ Therefore, film reviews may act as a window into a particular culture’s values, moods, and collective memory; as public displays of the socially acceptable norms and potentially even of ideals of national identity; and as mediums for discussion of societal memories or norms using culturally specific themes and frames that can be analyzed. And these reviews are also transforming into actual sites of film discussion, since readers increasingly have the ability to “like,” share and comment on these very reviews.

Identifying the Data Body

In order to identify the corpus of online *Stalingrad* film reviews the thesis looked to recently published reception studies from a number of scholarly journals as well as the literature on Nazi imagery in mass media to select an appropriate collection method. Unfortunately, much of this material was devoid of any discussion of how the film reviews discussed were located and selected, an approach that leaves the reader with the impression that the material was more or less cherry-picked. Such an approach creates a major handicap, for example, in studying Nazi imagery in contemporary mass media, since later scholars will

¹³⁶ Wen-Chin Tsao, “Which Type of Online Review Is More Persuasive? The Influence of Consumer Reviews and Critic Ratings on Moviegoers,” *Electronic Commerce Research* 14, no. 4 (December 2014): 563; Wenjing Duan, Bin Gu, and Andrew B. Whinston, “Do Online Reviews Matter? - An Empirical Investigation of Panel Data,” *Decision Support Systems* 45 (2008): 1009–1010; Suman Basuroy, Subimal Chatterjee, and S. Abraham Ravid, “How Critical Are Critical Reviews? The Box Office Effects of Film Critics, Star Power, and Budgets,” *Journal of Marketing* 67 (October 2003), 103-104.

¹³⁷ Tsao, 560; Charles Taylor, “The Problem with Film Criticism,” *Dissent*, Fall 2011, 81.

¹³⁸ Holbrook, 146-147; Shrum, 351-352.

be at a loss for gauging just how representative or widespread such reactions and opinions are, without having to replicate the whole analysis—this is the case with Stephen Norris’ “Guiding Stars” article on Russian war films from the 2000s. Other approaches were just as unsatisfying. For example, David Bathrick’s article on the American reception of the 2004 German film *Downfall* focuses only on reviews from the “elite press,” indicated by footnote to include nine publications.¹³⁹ Why exactly only these nine were selected, while other major national publications were not, simply goes unstated.

This thesis aims to avoid and overcome such shortcomings by detailing exactly how the data body was located and constrained. It does so by taking an approach similar to Matthew W. Hughey in his article: “The White Savior Film and Reviewers’ Reception.”¹⁴⁰ Hughey relied on the Movie Review Query Engine (MRQE), an online film review index, to locate reviews for the 2007 film *Freedom Writers*. Hughey’s MRQE search resulted in 131 total reviews, which was later reduced to 119 after eliminating those criticisms published outside North America, or in languages other than English.¹⁴¹

Since the MRQE does not include Russian language reviews, the thesis turned to the Russian website KinoPoisk.ru, which could best be described to a Western audience as a Russian composite of the major English-language film websites IMDb and Rotten Tomatoes. The site is extremely popular with Russian web users, ranking among the most visited websites in the Russian Federation according to web traffic analysis from Alexa, a subsidiary of Amazon.¹⁴² KinoPoisk includes the latest news on domestic and international films, as well as individual film subpages, which include production information, box-office figures,

¹³⁹ David Bathrick, “Whose Hi/story Is It? The U.S. Reception of *Downfall*,” *New German Critique* 34, no. 102 (Fall 2007): 1–16.

¹⁴⁰ Matthew W. Hughey, “The White Savior Film and Reviewers’ Reception,” *Symbolic Interaction* 33, no. 3 (Summer 2010): 475–96.

¹⁴¹ *Id.*, 482.

¹⁴² As of May 2015, the site was the 22nd most visited page in the Russian Federation, a few ranks below Twitter, but directly ahead of both Ebay and Yahoo. “Kinopoisk.ru: Site Overview,” *Alexa*, accessed May 10, 2015, <http://www.alexa.com/siteinfo/kinopoisk.ru>.

and a film rating set as a percentage out of 100. This rating is generated based on a compiled list of online reviews from various Russian media sources, including magazines (like *Rolling Stone*, *GQ* and *Variety*), major Russian newspapers (*Vedomosti*, *Izvestiya*, *Kommersant*), and major online newspapers (Lenta.ru, Gazeta.ru). A blurb for each review is provided in a style reminiscent of Rotten Tomatoes, with a green or red background box to indicate whether the review is positive or negative. Each blurb indicates the publication, author and publishing date, and provides a short highlight or quote from the piece along with a link to the full review or in some cases to the review's source page.

Stalingrad's KinoPoisk rating came to 61%, based on 59 reviews, 36 of which were deemed positive and 23 negative.¹⁴³ A table listing these 59 reviews, with the review's title, publication, author, and publishing date, is provided as Appendix A to this thesis. Each of these 59 reviews was assigned an identifier (e.g., Review 17, Review 48) in order to distinguish and simplify the discussion of the results in following chapters. Of these 59 reviews on KinoPoisk, 58 were accessible and printed for eventual coding—Review 39 from *Novoye Vremya* was set behind a paywall, and despite purchasing a subscription, the article remained inaccessible.

Though these reviews represent a substantial data body in and of themselves, the thesis sought to confirm whether other Russian film review websites that compile film reviews did not differ substantially in content from KinoPoisk. In order to identify such sites, the thesis again relied upon Alexa web traffic data. In limiting the results to the Russian Federation and to the category *Iskusstvo/ Kino/ Obzory* [Art/ Film/ Reviews], several additional Russian websites devoted to film were identified for use in a potential crosscheck.¹⁴⁴ However, only one of these sites, Megacritic.ru, utilized a rating score system

¹⁴³ "Kritika/ Stalingrad (2013)," *KinoPoisk*, accessed May 6, 2015, <http://www.kinopoisk.ru/film/468196/press/>.

¹⁴⁴ 12 Russian sites were identified this way: (1) megacritic.ru; (2) Bucwar.ru; (3) kinotom.com; (4) yaokino.ru; (5) womankino.ru; (6) kino-interior.ru; (7) vkadrenet.ru; (8) kioobzor.net; (9) media-news.ru; (10) releasesoon.ru; (11) kinouho.livejournal.com; and (12) ajvideo.ru. Several of these sites did not actually include

based on an aggregate of compiled third-party reviews like KinoPoisk. Many of the reviews used on Megacritic.ru's *Stalingrad* page were duplicative of the KinoPoisk results. Nonetheless, an additional 16 film reviews were incorporated into the data body using this cross-check method. A table of these 16 reviews is provided as Appendix B in the same format as the KinoPoisk listing. The final data body therefore amounted to 75 total reviews, 74 of which were accessible by the author.

Thematic Analysis

In order to understand how these film reviews were discussing Bondarchuk's depiction of the Nazi figure, if at all, an analytic framework needed to be conceptualized. In constructing such a framework, this thesis again relied on Hughey's *Freedom Writers* article. Hughey implemented a three stage coding process, involving two read-throughs of his 119 collected film reviews: a first read-through in order to identify and refine potential codes, many of which had been pre-selected for confirmation based on language and topics from his secondary literature; and a second in order to mark those codes directly in the text. During the third stage of the coding process, Hughey categorized how the codes he identified complemented one another in constructing overarching themes, meta-themes, which the reviewer assumed, "readers understand a priori."¹⁴⁵ For Hughey, these meta-themes represented cultural reference points that were theoretically reproducing and contesting racial discourses around this particular film.

A process similar to Hughey's is adopted here, though the methodology was supplemented by step-by-step instructions from the research manual *Applied Thematic Analysis*.¹⁴⁶ Furthermore, the themes and meta-themes here will be based on the discussion of

actual film reviews, or had apparently been taken down. "Top Sites in: Category All Categories > World > Russian > Iskusstvo > Kino > Obzory," *Alexa*, accessed May 5, 2015, <http://www.alexa.com/topsites/category/Top/World/Russian/Искусство/ Кино/Обзоры>.

¹⁴⁵ Hughey, 484.

¹⁴⁶ Greg Guest, Kathleen M. MacQueen, and Emily E. Namey, *Applied Thematic Analysis* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2012).

the Nazi figure and how the discourse surrounding that figure is being discussed, likely in relation to the memories and narratives of the war overviewed in Chapter 2.

The first step of the analysis involved the gathering and printing of the reviews and conducting a first read-through of the entire data set. During this read-through initial patterns and potential codes were identified and written down in a ‘code book.’ A number of potential codes had already been pre-formulated and could be checked for in the text based on the discussion in Chapter 2. Potential codes included: (1) claims that Bondarchuk’s movie is not like ‘great’ Soviet films; (2) Bondarchuk’s Nazi glorifies Nazism; (3) Bondarchuk’s Nazi is Hollywoodesque; (4) Bondarchuk’s Nazi disgraces the memory of veterans; (5) references made to depiction of the ‘good Nazi’ in films discussed by Stephen Norris in his “Guiding Stars” article; (6) declaration of a need to explore the dark or shady elements of the war on screen; (7) Bondarchuk’s Nazi adds humanity to the war narrative; and (8) war is not a ‘black and white’ issue. However, the thesis aimed at discovering all discernable potential codes and patterns, and was not solely oriented to confirming the existence of just these eight codes.

Moreover, the first read-through also aimed to identify other potential indicators that could be useful in establishing the overall discourse surrounding the Nazi Peter Kahn, including references to the character in the review’s title; the types of pictures used in the review, if any; and whether or not the article allowed for comments. These comments can represent readers’ interaction with these texts and involvement in the discourse over the film, and therefore could be analyzed in their own right. Does, for example, the discussion in these online comments mirror the same codes found in the reviews?

After this first reading, a second reading was initiated in order to mark codes in the actual text to facilitate a visual readout of how the codes were interacting. Relevant text was also taken directly from each article and placed into the ‘codebook,’ with the text highlighted and marked with numbers that represented specific codes. These codes were then grouped

into discernable themes, which revealed several underlying anxieties in discussing the Nazi figure amongst film critics. The results of the analysis are discussed in the subsequent chapter.

Chapter 5: Analysis

This chapter first discusses the results of the coding process and the major themes discernable from these codes. These codes and themes clearly established that many critics were underscoring that *Stalingrad* was a “game-changing” event, or, as Review 26 insinuated, “a turning point in the history of the image of the war on screen.” Such claims only shore up the choice of Stalingrad as an memory event worth studying. Beyond this, the coding process revealed a data body rich in references to the Nazi figure, though the majority of the discussion of that figure was not particularly verbose. However, the analysis uncovered at least three meta-themes at play in the critics’ discourse over the Nazi figure and changes to Russia’s war narrative.

Codes and Themes Identified

During the first reading of the data body, 40 initial codes were written into the codebook. During the second reading, most of these codes could be grouped into themes, which included the following: (1) the relationship between Kahn and Masha [Codes: “Two girls motif”; “First discussion of wartime rape in 50 years”; “Germans raped our girls”; “German-Russian Hollywood Romance”; “Masha loved the Nazi”; “victim”; “German sexuality foil for Russian morals”; “love story aspect disappointing”]; (2) attempts to explain why the movie was made [Codes: “made to please the state”; “made for a different generation”; “made for the Oscars”; “made to instill patriotism”; “made for foreigners”] (3) references to Soviet director Sergei Bondarchuk, Fyodor’s father [Codes: “comparison of father and son”; “*They Fought for the Motherland*”; “*They Fought for Katya*”]; (4) German more interesting than “our boys” [Codes: “more sympathetic portrayal”; “romantic/Shakespearian Nazi”; “Germans are exotic”]; (5) opposition to any ‘good Nazis,’ colloquially labelled the “All Nazis must Die” theme [Codes: “Killing Germans is good”];

“glorification of Nazism”]; (6) claims and facts about *Stalingrad*’s significance [Codes: “record box office”; “turning-point”; “mega-blockbuster”; “unprecedented controversy”]; (7) introduction of Western values of humanism [Codes: “reference to Western humanism”; “inserting humanity into the war”]; (8) inappropriateness of portrayal [“trivialization of history”; “strangeness”; “liberal influence”; “too soon”]; (9) references to Hollywood [“Hollywood influence”; “comparisons to American films”; “comparisons to Western directors”]; (10) comparisons to Soviet film [“referencing the Brezhnev era war cult”; “different than Soviet canon”; “Soviet Nazis were different”; “do we need this kind of movie?”]; and (11) references to other Post-Soviet films [Codes: “*Burnt by the Sun 2*”; “*White Tiger*”; “Aleksey German and *The Last Train*”; “Post-Soviet film canon”]. Therefore, these codes and the themes outlined above clearly show that the discussion of *Stalingrad*’s Nazi figure did indeed include, but was not limited to, comparisons with the Soviet canon or to the films of the 2000s, as was expected from the literature on the nearly 70 years of a cult of the Great Patriotic War in Russia.

***Stalingrad* as “Game-Changer”**

This body of film reviews added considerable support to choosing *Stalingrad* and its reception as a worthwhile research subject. First and foremost, all of the reviews referenced the film’s use of IMAX, with nearly all explicitly stating it was Russia’s first production in that format. Moreover, a number of reviews highlight that the film had a budget of 30 million USD and had opened on at some 2,000 screens.¹⁴⁷ These kinds of numbers were simply unprecedented: Review 58 claims, “the film is the most expensive ever shot in Russia;” Review 34 declares, “Such a massive promotion, our cinema has never known before;” while Review 41 asserts, “Fyodor Bondarchuk wanted to direct the most massive film in the history of Russian cinema, and that he did.” And even those reviews that trashed the film, like

¹⁴⁷ Reviews 8, 15, 27, 34, 40, 41, 50, 74.

Review 8, declared: “However, the film *Stalingrad*, this is the next mega-blockbuster, a milestone in the history of national cinema and the next candidate for the Oscar. In general then it is necessary to understand what people are saying.”

And once *Stalingrad* hit theaters, people seemed to be saying a lot. Review 51 notes: “Certainly [*Stalingrad*] has garnered praises or curses,” while Review 35, titled “*Stalingrad*: Film and Germans” encourages readers to see *Stalingrad*: “Only so often in recent years has a film emerged from our cinema, which gives rise to such a stormy reaction from choking delight to vigorous protest.” In those reviews published nearly two weeks after the premiere, it was noticeably more likely that the controversy aspect would be raised.¹⁴⁸ Pravda.ru’s review of *Stalingrad* claimed, “Discussions on the recently released film ‘*Stalingrad*,’ of Fyodor Bondarchuk, are not quieting down – the film has been in theaters for more than two weeks, but the disputes about it continue to excite the entire community of Russian movie-buffs.” Critic David Sheyderov continued, “Incidentally, this very controversy of whether this picture is good or bad positions this film as a very significant event in the domestic film industry – even Nikita Mikhalkov’s scandalous sequels to *Burnt By the Sun* (*Exodus* and *Citadel*) were not deliberated over this hotly.”

So hot, indeed, that it created an online petition:

The nemesis Kahn generally drew a response publically, particularly in the city of Samara where they even passed a petition, demanding the banning of *Stalingrad* from exhibition, due to the fact that its ‘positive and afflicted hero is the German Kahn.’ For the viewers of Samara things were not as they expected them to be.¹⁴⁹

Reviews 4 and 6 go even farther in discussing this petition by actually staking out positions. Review 4 begins, “Almost 18 thousand people signed an online petition, addressed to the Ministry of Culture, in which they are demanding the ban of the distribution of the film ‘*Stalingrad*’ globally and to recall its ‘Oscar’ nomination.” Author Natal’ya Afanas’eva

¹⁴⁸ Reviews 1, 4, 5, 6, 7.

¹⁴⁹ Review 1.

continues, “The main complaint of disgruntled viewers, who signed the petition, is that the film ‘appears as a blatant glorification of Nazism.’” But Afanas’eva defends the film, “But Fyodor Bondarchuk is not guilty.” Instead, Afanas’eva lames the blame on the Russian audience and public, who are unwilling to revisit the war outside the Soviet narrative: “absolutely any attempt today to talk about the events of the Great Patriotic War causes in society a very pained reaction.” She concludes her review on a rather somber note: “But the Soviet people were confident in the Great Victory and the deeds of Soviet soldiers, and no “good Fritz” could shake this faith. And, I fear, no patriotic film can fix this.”

Review 6, written by Alexandr Kondrashov, takes a rather different line. Kondrashov cites a number of rather negative reviews from other ‘major’ critics, and then claims that significant opposition to the film is also being generated online:

On the Runet there began the collection of signatures under a letter to the Ministry of Culture with the demands: «to hold liable the individuals who decided to fund the film *Stalingrad*», and considered their life-long expulsion from commissions and boards, considered the allocation of state funding for the film; to ban the distribution of the film in the Russian Federation and abroad, to call off the film’s bid for the Oscar film award. It is not inconceivable that this is a cunningly conceived PR stunt of the picture’s producers, in order to channel the protest and expose the film’s critics as outdated fuddy-duddies [...] and international scandal only increases *Stalingrad*’s chances of becoming a nominee.¹⁵⁰

But while the author first sees this petition as a potentially calculated PR stunt on the part of the producers, he then argues, as is discussed in greater detail below, that *Stalingrad* is destroying Russia’s national mythology. He concludes his review by stating that Bondarchuk and the producers have, “made a sacrifice out of the Motherland’s history, betray our grandfathers, and cripple the souls of our children. I signed the petition on the Runet.”

Critics’ Discussion of Peter Kahn

Review 4 and 6 therefore draw the battle lines of the discussion over the ‘good Nazi.’ For some critics, like Review 4, this figure is actually an interesting or positive development

¹⁵⁰ Review 6.

in Post-Soviet war films, while for others, like Review 6, it is an insult to the memory of the war and the wartime sacrifice of the Russian nation. But the focus below is not on simply whether a review is for or against the ‘good Nazi.’ Rather, the emphasis here is on how the discussion of the Nazi figure and the perceived change the ‘good Nazi’ brings to Russia’s foundational myth is being presented and framed. The kinds of responses expressed in some of the reviews considered here suggested at least two meta-themes, one of a need for a fresh take on the war and another on how the ‘good Nazi’ is the work of foreign influence and interference. The discussion of these meta-themes below presents how the clash of memory over the Great Patriotic War is coming to head over this figure and in the process revealing certain anxieties among Russian film critics with the state of Russia’s war cult as presented through *Stalingrad*.

Of the 74 accessible reviews, only nine made no textual reference to the Nazi characters in the film. That said, three of those nine reviews still featured screenshots of *Stalingrad*’s Nazis quite prominently.¹⁵¹ But the actual length and depth of the discussion of the ‘good Nazi’ in the remaining 65 reviews varies widely. Overall, the majority of these reviews include short descriptions of Kahn that signaled varying levels of disgust or fascination: intelligent (Review 58); “a fascist James Bond” (Review 4); brave (Review 23); valiant (Review 25); “antihero-fascist” (Review 35); “a romantic hero, a European knight” (Review 50); tragic (Review 51, 56): “not the tantamount evil-doer, but not the good German (Review 45); “depicted to the viewers as a completely vivid personality, who is passionate, grieves, rejoices and loves” (Review 5); “a noble adversary” (Review 67); “fascist scum” (Review 6); “fascist invader” (Review 66); “better than other Fritzes, but still a Fritz”

¹⁵¹ Reviews 20, 22, 24, 47, 53, 60, 62, 68, and 74 made no reference in the Nazi figure in their text. However, pictures of Peter Kahn were still featured prominently in some cases. The only image used in both Review 22 and 47 was the production still of the mortally wounded Peter Kahn and Captain Gromov glaring at one another. Review 60 included a gallery of 22 production stills from the *Stalingrad* film’s webpage, 10 of which were of Peter Kahn or other Nazi soldiers.

(Review 11); “psychopathic and extraordinary” and “generally a complex Fritz” (Review 14); “he lives up until the final minutes of the film and dies practically as a hero” (Review 16); as “one with a human face” (Review 9); and a “burnt out war dog” (Review 61).

Clearly then Russian film critics were drawing drastically different reactions to the same figure. And while not every review discussed the ‘good Nazi’ in-depth, a number of those that did could be considered, due to the codes involved, to represent two opposing meta-themes: (1) that the ‘good Nazi’ represents a new development in the myth of the Great Patriotic War necessary for revitalizing the memory of Russian sacrifice for a new generation, and (2) that this figure represents the product of foreign interests and values that dilute the myth of the Great Patriotic War. Yet discussion was not only limited to this apparent binary. A third meta-theme based around the relationship between Peter Kahn and Masha was also detected, which raised interesting claims about this film’s depiction of wartime rape and collaboration.

A New Myth

One of the major codes themes identified in 15 reviews was referencing to the Soviet canon, which usually meant that the review in question fell short of this glorious pantheon. Yet several reviews used this same code to do the opposite, arguing that *Stalingrad* represented a positive breakthrough or turning point in the development of Post-Soviet Russia’s war mythology.¹⁵² In the case of Maria Tokmashev’s review for *RIA Novosti*, such a claim comes rather abruptly at the end of her piece:

[...] And here it is worth giving proper credit to the director, Bondarchuk, who did not dive into the jungle of ideology or divide the soldiers into bad Germans and good Russians. He even suggests that both hold ideals of military honor and virtue. And only this, I believe, can be considered a breakthrough in Russian war cinema, funded by the state.¹⁵³

¹⁵² Reviews 31, 32, 49.

¹⁵³ Review 32.

At least in this review then, although without any further elaboration, the author was under the impression that the ‘good Nazi’ not only added to the positive development of the war cult, but was specifically seen as an element supported by the state. While the discussion of the ‘good Nazi’ motif in Reviews 31 and 49 does not invoke state support, they arguably go farthest in discussing how the ‘good Nazi’ figure represents the formation of a new mythology that needs to be embraced.

Review 49, written by Dmitry Bykov, suggests this meta-theme from its very subtitle: “The film «Stalingrad» opens a new era in the understanding of the Second World War.” That same line is repeated in explaining what previous war films of the 2010 lacked—a true reimagining of the war: “Bondarchuk’s film opens a new era in conceptualization of the Second World War and masters this mission.” Bykov then recalls the Soviet canon:

In Soviet film there were various treatments of the war: until the Thaw, victory was declared by our ruling party, and in general we were Marxist-Leninist-Stalinists. During the Thaw policies were relaxed: we won because we were kinder, more humane, more merciful; we were in the first place people, and the inhuman opposed us. During Stagnation war film began to degenerate: the film epic “Liberation” already was the triumph and pinnacle of officialese [...] “War film of the 70s to the 90s lost the main thing – the point: it continued to exploit critical subjects («In August 44») or to shock the viewer with egregious cruelty («Come and See»).

Stalingrad, however, represents a break with the Soviet period: “Now begins a new interpretation of the war—metaphysical: apparently a gap of 50-60 years is necessary.”

Stalingrad marks this break from the Soviet continuum by introducing the ‘good Nazi,’ which for Bykov represents a needed dose of humanity. Bykov continues:

“At last it is possible to formulate the key element, under which the [new] myth goes on: in order to produce a truly epic take on the war, we must differ more from those from that time than they from each other. It sounds horrible, but between the warring Germans and Russians deadlocked around Stalingrad the difference was less than between the soldiers of the forties and viewers of the 2010s. This is not a generational barrier, but an anthropological one.

¹⁵⁴ Review 49.

¹⁵⁵ *Id.*

Bykov invokes the Trojan War in explaining what Bondarchuk has done with his film in terms of the ‘good Nazi’ motif:

[...] We poorly understand the difference between Achaeans and Trojans, although we understand, that the Achaeans were right, but the best scene of “Troy” is when Achilles and the old man Priam weep together, mourning Hector, Patroclus, and all the dead. In Bondarchuk’s film there isn’t conciliation, but the main theme is not that “we are better.” He counters the attempts of today’s propagandists like Skoybedy to assign victory to the grandfathers; after nearly 70 years after Victory the squeal is ‘We won and we will establish order,’ which looks like unwarrantable back-slapping. You were not victorious. Bondarchuk didn’t film this about why ‘we’ won, but about what this battle made of people; about how great pressure gives rise to the superman. The Germans are not caricatured monsters, but rather equal and formidable adversaries; in the finale the German and Russian burn together, seized in death’s embrace.¹⁵⁶

Bykov emphasizes that: “There is no justification of Nazism or apology for Stalinism, because the film is not about fascism or about Stalinism.” Rather this is, “A new movie about the war – this film is about how Achilles and Hector head to head talked with Athena and Mars. Taking to this will be difficult, but is necessary.” The ‘good Nazi’ motif, rather than being a frivolous story element, functions for Bykov here as a symbol that will rehabilitate the myth of the Great Patriotic War. By returning the role of hero to the people and stripping the war of its obvious politics and good and evil dichotomy, the film successfully promotes a new take on the war myth, one needed to breathe new life into a canon that had lost its purpose.

Nina Tsyrukun’s review for *Isskusstvo Kino* echoes Bykov’s discussion of the ‘good Nazi’ as a turning point in the war myth. Invoking the Oscar race, the article’s lead-in claims, “Nina Tsyrukun talks about this film, which is laying the beginning of a new war mythology.”¹⁵⁷ Tsyrukun launches into a discussion of the mythological aspects of Soviet film:

Soviet film developed a remarkable mythological tradition way back in the 1930s, and war film preserved it for a time. Mark Donskoy’s *Rainbow* filmed in the midst of the war became the pinnacle, imbued with evangelical motives of martyrdom

¹⁵⁶ *Id.*

¹⁵⁷ Review 31.

and of ascending to Calvary [...] Eventually mythologism was replaced by the fulfillment of an ideological government order. The tradition dissipated, faded, the last splash was Larisa Shepit'ko's «The Ascent», and today only Sergei Loznitsa is its guardian («In the Fog»).

¹⁵⁸

At first glance, *Stalingrad* does not appear to be the likely successor in returning to contemporary cinema any sort of mythological aspect in the vein of *Rainbow*:

Fyodor Bondarchuk's film, set up as a "big national project," officially looks like a myth-epic narrative, the heroes of which, as it pertains to them, from beginning to end, remain under given characters-signs. But "national" today sounds as a synonym of "patriotic," and patriotism is thought of unconditionally as the superiority of the nation (composed of, to be sure, various ethnicities). Accordingly the core of the myth becomes the image of the soldier-savior-deliverer without fear or reproach, confronting the enemy, who is deprived of all elements of humanity (its curious that in the squad there are no young ones of various nationalities, as would be expected in this type of project—all entirely Russkies).

¹⁵⁹

But actually, as the author points out, *Stalingrad* is surprisingly different, in that it includes two prominent Nazis, one given a human role:

Nevertheless, in the film are two Germans, who have faces. One of them is a colonel, a figure almost a caricature damn near in the spirit of the *boyevyk kinosbornikov* [wartime short films]. A lotus eater and a beast [...] The second is a career officer-Prussian Peter Kahn from "nobility," carrier of a medieval ideology, evidently, considering himself as Alexander the Great, calling soldiers to India. It is he who it falls to to voice the conceptual dominant idea of the film. The Russians appear to him as barbarians, who wage war for revenge.

¹⁶⁰

But Kahn is more than just a warrior: "He is living on-screen in psychological withdrawal." And Masha's death drives him into a rage, a desire for revenge just like his Russian enemies. As the author concludes, "This new take on the bloody events, of course, became possible only now that so many decades have passed after war's end; this is the beginning of a new mythology, which is still not worked out, but is already developing."

Therefore, both Reviews 31 and 49 promote the 'good Nazi' as the needed element to revitalize the war cult for today. Both reviews suggest that the war cult in the Post-Soviet period before *Stalingrad*, as defined by *Burnt by the Sun 2* or the patriotic war films genre

¹⁵⁸ *Id.*

¹⁵⁹ *Id.*

¹⁶⁰ *Id.*

generally, had grown stale. This is important. If the memory of the war can become banal and lacks “a point” or a message, the underlying issues would appear to be that the memory of the war can fade away too. But neither author wants this—instead, the implication is that this new aspect of the ‘good Nazi’ pumps new life into the war myth and helps to make the war more human and potentially closer to the audience, who must remember the war’s sacrifice and story.

Our History for an Oscar?

But other critics saw this new myth not as the savior, but as a sign of the beginning of the end of Russia’s hold on its foundational myth. Reviews 6 and 8, both published in the business weekly magazine *Odnako*, are the clearest examples of this line of argumentation, though they are not the only reviews to express such sentiments.¹⁶¹ However, these two reviews are among the most descriptive pieces in the entire data body in discussing the Nazi figure and make the starkest claims about the Nazi figure being a Hollywood import or creation. In these reviews the inclusion of the ‘good Nazi’ motif in *Stalingrad* is seen as the introduction of a foreign, Western element into Russia’s historic victory in an attempt to win an Oscar—a process undermining the sacred memory of the war.

Aleksandr Kondrashov’s review, “Stalingrad Pizza, or How Bondarchuk Jr. Surrendered Pavlov’s House,” is written as a kind of rebuttal of Bykov’s piece (Review 49), which Kondrashov invokes in introducing his review:

[...] Dmitriy Bykov, one of the first (and, it seems, last to), praised the film conceptually for creating a new myth about the war, in which «our historical or ideological correctness is no longer important», which is to say that fascists and those who beat them, are to be regarded as Trojans and Achaeans: «Achilles and the old man Priam together weep, mourning Hector, Patroclus».¹⁶²

¹⁶¹ Similar sentiment is expressed in Reviews 35, 36, 40, and 66. These reviews suggest an inappropriateness in the presentation of the ‘good Nazi,’ and in the case of Review 35, that it is too soon to have such “universal” depictions in Post-Soviet film. Review 29 concludes: “With the release of “Stalingrad” it is necessary to ascertain the ultimate death of the Soviet tradition of war film. Why and how it came to pass is the subject for a separate discussion.”

¹⁶² Review 6.

After discussing the controversy surrounding the film and the petition, Kondrashov then discusses the representation of the Russian in Western film. In American film, the Russian is almost completely absent, save for Schindler's List, in which Russian soldiers appear as "sullen barbarians, as horsemen of Genghis Khan." Even worse is the portrayal of Russians in German film:

And how in Germany? In the landmark serial "Our Mothers and Fathers" the Russians finish off the [German] wounded and rape the nurses. Germans are tragic heroes, misguided by Nazi propaganda and worthy of compassion, but the Americans? On them are all hope, they are saviors.¹⁶³

According to Kondrashov, this display of 'good Nazis' and 'bad Russians' had begun to infiltrate films released in the late Post-Soviet period, with films like *4 Days in May* (A 2011 German-Russian co-production) and in Mikhalkov's *Citadel*. But with Stalingrad, it has gone too far. The Russians here are "stupid, wild, cruel. They kill their own." But equally as bad is the presentation of the German enemy, Peter Kahn:

Hauptmann Kahn (Thomas Kretschmann) rouses greater sympathy than our captain. The German is truly macho (ours is lesser). The fascist bugger, who kills our "mothers and father", raping "sisters," reveals a complex personality. His director as well as his actor, explain, he is loving, anguished (granted, he doesn't reflect on the theme "What am I doing here, in Stalingrad, a low-life, executioner?) He is also without remorse.¹⁶⁴

And in the end, this German tries to save the Russian girl Masha, only for her to be shot in the head—which to Kondrashov seems rather senseless: "And the words of the Germans about the Russian enemy obsessed with revenge are proved out."

The review returns to Bykov's Greek myth analogy. Kondrashov sums up the finale of the film: "And the Homeric conclusion: Patroclus entwines with Hector in an ambrosial death languor as if anticipating the signing in a better tomorrow of Russian-German gas contracts." Heroism and wartime sacrifice in Bykov's analogy becomes a kind of joke here. But Kondrashov continues, and sets up what he believes is the real issue:

¹⁶³ *Id.*

¹⁶⁴ *Id.*

Thanks to Dmitriy Bykov; he saw through the Greek message of the film's authors, who send us back to that time and to country where there is not yet (or not anymore) an understanding of good and evil. Conscience and sin. Where they do not acknowledge shame. There they worship pagan gods, who take the guise of the Oscar, television broadcasting, the golden calf, the Emmy.¹⁶⁵

According to Kondrashov, the sacrifice made to these Hollywood gods was the history of the Motherland, which costs Russia its faithfulness to its veterans and the souls of its children. In the end, as noted before, Kondrashov felt this was just too much and concludes his review by stating that he signed the petition to ban the distribution of the film in Russia and to take it out of Oscar consideration.

Dmitriy Puchkov, who also goes by the moniker “Goblin,” penned an equally scathing piece with Review 8: “*Stalingrad*: Marketing and Speculating on our Respect for History.” Puchkov is a former soldier, translator and blogger who found success online—over 600,000 people are subscribed to his YouTube page alone. Puchkov also maintains a well-known and well-documented displeasure of Bondarchuk and his films, saying as much in his review. This dislike has focused around what Puchkov sees as Bondarchuk's disrespect for Russia's past. Stephen Norris actually devotes a full chapter of *Blockbuster History in the New Russia* to Puchkov's production of a video game, *The Truth about 9th Company*, aimed at countering Bondarchuk's version of the Soviet-Afghan War in his 2005 film *9th Company*.¹⁶⁶ Puchkov's game became a relatively modest success and was even cited by Duma officials as the kind of patriotic game that was needed in the Russian gaming industry.

Though Puchkov was apparently not inspired to develop a videogame in this case, he is clearly not a fan of *Stalingrad* either. One aspect that bothered Puchkov most was the inclusion of the ‘good Nazi’ motif:

Of course, in a progressive and modern film, the German occupiers are people too. That is the dream of all liberal idiots that the Germans be shown as people too. So what if the Germans attacked our country, killed 27 million of our countrymen? From

¹⁶⁵ *Id.*

¹⁶⁶ Norris, *Blockbuster History in the New Russia*, 143-156; Norris, “Patriot Games,” 82-93.

the idiot's perspective, in the end these Germans are not worse than the Russians who fought for the Motherland, for their families, for life. Let's equate the aggressor with the defender, and the murderer with the victim. Let's forget about the genocide and muse about how the murderers left fathers and mothers, kids and dogs at home. You forget about your own dead, you become familiar with European values.¹⁶⁷

For Puchkov, Russian 'liberals,' like Bondarchuk and his army of producers, propagate an alien memory of the war with this 'good Nazi' figure. This reflects a shift in thinking, an abandonment of the Soviet memory. Indeed, Puchkov goes on to say:

[...] Today they pull at the seams with this shit in feature films, and tomorrow they will outlaw Soviet symbols and decorations. And the day after they will begin to applaud the march of the Nazis and Vlasovites, as they are already doing in the Baltics and Ukraine. It is wonderful, that the state gives money for the shooting of such.¹⁶⁸

Instead of promoting Russian heroism and patriotism, Puchkov equates Bondarchuk's film with the memory of the war taking shape in those countries generally perceived as against Russia. This 'good Nazi' is simply the beginning of the end, of the importation of a foreign vision of the war on Russia's big screen.

But what for? What does Bondarchuk gain from promoting such a memory of the war? Puchkov implies that this tampering with Russian national mythology is all in the service of appealing to an international audience, specifically the Academy. Puchkov sarcastically claims: "I wish that the German Hauptmann crept into the cellar to the reconnaissance officer Gromov and they fervently loved each other—now that would be a bombshell. For this they would at once give a sack of Oscars."¹⁶⁹

Both Reviews 6 and 8 describe the "good Nazi" as the corruption of the war narrative for a foreign purpose, Oscar glory, and in the process suggest an anxiety over the trajectory of the war cult. Is this the sign of things to come—our heritage and wartime sacrifice being corrupted and re-imaged in the style and terminology of the West, in order to curry Western favor and prizes? The suggestion from these two reviews, as well as Reviews 34, 35 and 65,

¹⁶⁷ Review 8.

¹⁶⁸ *Id.*

¹⁶⁹ *Id.*

is that this ‘good Nazi’ representation is inappropriate, at its most basic level, because these characters are Nazis! Indeed, Review 65 goes so far as to use language straight from the hate campaign:

[...] the German aristocrat does not evoke from me even the slightest sympathy: everyone who wears a Nazi uniform and honestly fights for the vile ideology, needs to be destroyed ruthlessly and as soon as possible in order that these *nelyudi* [monsters, inhumans] are not given the time to kill even one good person.¹⁷⁰

Changing the war narrative to conform or play to Western sensibilities, epitomized by the inclusion of the ‘good Nazi,’ thus turns our attention away from what really matters: ‘us.’ In adopting the ‘good Nazi,’ Russians are being forced to sacrifice to Hollywood the memory of *Russian* sacrifice and *Russian* heroism for some universalist message that puts murderers and rapists on the same footing as the heroic defenders. This turn to universalism or Western-like humanism has therefore put Russia on the wrong track.

Such anxiety over the trajectory of the war cult appears, at least in the case of Puchkov’s review, to have had a particular reach and popularity. Unlike the majority of the other reviews in the data body, Puchkov’s was recorded and embedded below the text version of the review. As of May 30, 2015 this video, hosted on oper.ru, had registered 1,380,641 views, as well as 535 shares on Facebook and 326 shares on VKontakte.¹⁷¹ The very same video uploaded on YouTube garnered 1,150,099 views and 35,356 likes as of the same date. Assuming that all of these views and likes are from real persons, and not some kind of Internet bots, they provide some indication of the reach that Puchkov’s criticism of *Stalingrad* had. And they show that those views may have struck a chord with a sizeable number of Runet denizens. But this is a question for another project—one without the time and space limitations here that could delve into actual audience commentary, either in online comments and the wider Russian blogosphere.

¹⁷⁰ Review 65.

¹⁷¹ *Siniy Fil 64: x/f “Stalingrad,”* YouTube Video, 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sLWlyANDov0>; *Siniy Fil 64: x/f “Stalingrad,”* Oper.ru Video, 2013, <http://kino.oper.ru/video/view.php?t=582>.

Loving the Invader: Victim or Traitor?

Beyond these two dueling meta-themes, the analysis also uncovered a third concerning the sexual relationship between the Nazi figure and Russian women. A number of codes regarding the love story aspect and rape scene in the film were eventually marked in 20 of the 74 total reviews. Again, as with the discussion of the Nazi figure, the discussion of this particular theme regarding the romance was addressed rather briefly and often just in order to outline the film's plot. However, several reviews framed this issue as something more than a simple love story motif, and raised a debate over concepts like victimhood and collaboration during the war.

Arguably the boldest and clearest articulation of this debate comes from Review 65, which, as noted before, was left largely unimpressed with the inclusion of the 'good Nazi' motif in *Stalingrad*. Not only did critic Svetlana Stepnova state that she could have no sympathy for anyone wearing the Nazi uniform, she also stated that the film's theme of: "the ambiguity of the war, in which it is very difficult to divide people into bad and good, is in my opinion, revealed as too trite and secondary." But, this theme in the film at least led to one positive development: "On the one hand, it is good, even if it is after a half-century of delay, but we finally started talking about the fact that women were raped by fascists—they are not traitors to the Motherland, but rather unfortunate victims of the war."¹⁷²

This claim that Masha was a victim was stated in other reviews as well.¹⁷³ Masha is described as a "victim" in Review 50, who is tragically left to be the object of Kahn's every desire. Review 27 bluntly states, "No one defends Masha, she has no family." And Review 63 claims that Masha was not suffering from Stockholm syndrome, as others had suggested. Instead, "Masha had no choice." She was unable to protect herself from this Nazi, who not only raped her, but also made it impossible for her to live in her complex without harassment.

¹⁷² Review 65.

¹⁷³ Reviews 2, 50, 63.

But not every film critic saw Masha as the victim. Seemingly ignoring the rape scene, film critic Timur Borovkov explicitly declared in Review 16 that Masha was the most irritating character:

But the most irritating in the film is the Russian girl, the favorite of the German officer, who without apparent reason (physical abuse, threats of reprisals on family, espionage in the end) falls for the German, and at the end of the film downright becomes his mistress, calling him affectionately Petya. As If these are not the same Germans who exterminated all her family, destroyed her city and forced her to live in inhumane conditions?! ¹⁷⁴

In the end Borovkov was happy that she died: “And, speaking honestly, I even felt joy, when the bullet of the Russian sniper cut the thread of her existence.” Regardless of what transpired onscreen, for Borovkov, sleeping with the enemy was more or less a capital offense.

Thus, the ‘good Nazi’ figure in *Stalingrad* raises issues regarding the boundaries of collaboration and victimhood during the war. Indeed, this meta-theme seems natural to discussions of the war and Holocaust—what would you have done in these same circumstances? What are the boundaries of acceptable behavior in war and how do people react under extreme stress and hardship? Was Masha supposed to die fighting, or facing a hopeless situation make the best of it? These are larger questions about the war narrative underscore the discussion over the ‘love-story’ between the German and the Russian. And, given that this subject was seen as a taboo that had not been addressed for nearly five decades, this meta-theme regarding wartime rape points to another point of contention in the memory of the war: is falling in love with the Nazi captor understandable in these circumstances, or is it treason? The question once again becomes whether or not this meta-theme will turn up elsewhere—is the audience thinking of the Nazi enemy in this same way.

¹⁷⁴ Review 16.

Conclusion

This thesis attempted to answer why the Nazi figure in Fyodor Bondarchuk's 2013 film *Stalingrad* generated the controversy it had according to the Russian press. The discussion and analysis above argued that the answer would be found in the clash of memories over the myth of the Great Patriotic War. In *Stalingrad*, a state funded megablockbuster with the largest domestic box-office gross in Russian history, the Soviet narrative of the war, with its brutal Nazis, was being disrupted by the inclusion of Hauptmann Peter Kahn, a character described in reviews with terms like noble, sympathetic, romantic, and as "an enemy with a human face."

The body of film reviews analyzed for this thesis project represents a small but significant portion of a much wider discourse surrounding *Stalingrad*. Nevertheless, this material revealed a number of themes and meta-themes being used to discuss this 'good Nazi' figure for its merit or its lack thereof. On the one hand, the 'good Nazi' is seen by some as a foreign import, which is being hoisted upon Russia by a cultural elite more interested in film awards than in preserving the 'true' essence of the war for future generations. For some critics under this type of lens, it is simply unexplainable how the state can be complicit in funding and supporting such a project—how can they fund such trash? But one man's trash is another man's treasure. For other film critics, *Stalingrad's* Nazi actually represents the turning point or next generation of films that will commemorate Russia's wartime sacrifice. For these critics, Russia sorely needs to update its national mythology in order to breathe new life into a stale national narrative. By adding in Hollywood production values as well as a dose of humanity with more sympathetic and accessible characters, namely 'good Nazis,' the focus of the war film becomes the human element, which provides the basis for a new Post-Soviet mythology. And yet others focused on the relationship between this 'good Nazi' and a

Russian beauty. Was what was shown onscreen the first step in discussing another dark aspect of Russia's past? Or did all of this simply suggest collaboration, worthy of a bullet to the head? The same character, interpreted and viewed under different lens, therefore became something more—the object of competing claims over the national narrative of the Great Patriotic War.

This thesis has suggested and provided evidence on the shifting representation of Nazism in post-Soviet Russian film and how film critics received this 'good Nazi' figure. However, this approach only scratches the surface of what is clearly a much larger discourse surrounding Bondarchuk's film—a discourse that in other mediums or outlets is not necessarily beholden to the formatting and word count restrictions or editorial oversight that many film reviews may or may not contend with. The key question here becomes whether or not the themes and lens found amongst Russian film reviews of *Stalingrad* are being reproduced elsewhere, or are Russian audiences talking about the 'good Nazi' in other ways, if at all?

Online comments are one place where the discourse over Bondarchuk's Nazi appears rich. During the coding process, for example, 55 of the 74 blogs were found to have had comments enabled. On these 55 blogs there was a total of 2,179 comments. Though some of these comments were relatively short, perhaps one or two lines, many were rather verbose and detailed commentaries, sometimes even longer than the actual review. Beyond the sheer time constraints in trying to translate and code these comments, accessing them was not always possible. Review 41, for example, apparently had 322 comments at one time, though they had at some point been archived by *Vedomosti* and no longer viewable.

The discussion of *Stalingrad* is certainly much larger than just these 2,000 or so comments on these film reviews. As discussed in Chapter 4, this thesis spent considerable time and effort searching for discourse on the Russian blogosphere in first attempting to

identify potential audience segments and reactions. A preliminary search in April 2015 on just one popular blogging site, LiveJournal.ru, resulted in 5,740 blog entries using fairly specific search terms: “Bondarchuk,” “Stalingrad,” “Germans.” But this thesis simply did not have the time, technical know-how and resources to sift through such potentially enormous data sets. As previously discussed, there are many methodological and technical concerns to be overcome. But such memory clashes do and will continue to occur online. If researchers truly want to understand consequential issues like national identity formation or Holocaust remembrance in the Russian Federation, they will need to begin delving into materials that are often difficult or near impossible to establish in traditional terms of representativeness and sampling.

Nevertheless, this thesis has also contributed to the literature on depictions of Nazism in contemporary media by expanding it beyond the confines of the West. Though ‘screen Nazis’ literature has suggested that the ubiquity and cinematic longevity of the Nazi image in Hollywood and the West is due to the Nazi figure’s ability to play on the fear and fantasies of audiences living in democratic societies, the case of Russia (or the former Eastern bloc generally) was excluded from consideration, largely because its experience with Nazism was so radically different. The analysis here arguably supports that supposition. At least in *Stalingrad*, the discussion of the Nazi figure was inexorably linked to the Post-Soviet identity crisis. The data body revealed a debate over a perceived turning point in Russian film, which for some was corrupting the very roots of Russia’s foundational myth. Rather than anxieties over the sexual revolution or technological progress as in the West, *Stalingrad*’s ‘good Nazi’ is responsible for discussions over foreign cultural influence, discussions over unstated Nazi atrocities for-so-long ignored, and discussions of the next generation—what legacy do we leave our children to remember the Russian nation’s greatest triumph? The question, yet

again, turns to whether these are the same anxieties found beyond these reviews—in the wider reception of *Stalingrad* or any other Russian film depicting Nazis and Nazism.

And for the foreseeable future, Russian cinema will likely continue to be inundated with ample numbers of screen Nazis. In 2015 alone there will be at least three Great Patriotic War set films: *The Battle of Sevastopol* and a remake of the Soviet classic *The Dawns Here are Quiet*, which were both released in April shortly before this thesis was submitted, as well as *Panfilov's 28 Men*, which has a *300*-esque infused online ad campaign and is due to be released this fall. Regardless of the type of screen Nazis that make an appearance in these films, this thesis has strongly suggested that scholarly understanding of the trajectory of the Post-Soviet war cult will remain stunted and deficient without studying such figures. This thesis has at least attempted to begin bridging this gap, and, hopefully, has provided a basis for future fruitful studies.

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Appendix A: Table of KinoPoisk Aggregated Reviews

Review Identifier ¹⁷⁵	Review Title ¹⁷⁶	Review Publication	Review Author	Date (All 2013)
Review 1	Не только кино Ne tol'ko kino [Not only a movie]	VM.ru	Yekaterina Roshina	Nov 13
Review 2	Приказано выжать Prikazano vyzhat' [Ordered to Squeeze]	Iskusstvo Kino	Andrey Arkhangel'skiy	Nov 1
Review 3	Союз Брежнева и Спилберга: анализ фильма «Сталинград» Soyuz Brezhneva i Spilberga: analiz fil'ma «Stalingrad» [The Union of Brezhnev and Spielberg: An Analysis of the film <i>Stalingrad</i>]	Echo Moskvyy	Nikolay Kirichenko	Oct 31
Review 4	Почему фильм "Сталинград" кого-то оскорбляет Pochemu fil'm "Stalingrad" kogo-to oskorblyayet [Why the Film <i>Stalingrad</i> Insults Some]	RIA Novosti	Natal'ya Afanas'eva	Oct 30
Review 5	Нужен ли России такой "Сталинград"? Nuzhen li Rossii takoy "Stalingrad"? [Does Russia Need Such a <i>Stalingrad</i> ?]	Pravda.ru	Anton Yevseyev	Oct 29
Review 6	Сталинградская пицца, или как Бондарчук-сын сдал «Дом Павлова» Stalingradskaya pitsa, ili kak Bondarchuk-syn sdal «Dom Pavlova» [Stalingrad Pizza, or How Bondarchuk, the son, Surrendered Pavlov's House]	Odnako	Aleksandr Kondrashov	Oct 24
Review 7	Около «Сталинграда» Okolo «Stalingrada»	Chaskor.ru	Aleksandr Chantsev	Oct 23

¹⁷⁵ Original listing available as of May 31, 2015: <http://www.kinopoisk.ru/film/468196/press>.

¹⁷⁶ Three versions of the title are provided in the following order: (1) Cyrillic Russian title in bold; (2) title in BGN/PCGN Romanized Russian; and (3) author's English translation in brackets.

	[About <i>Stalingrad</i>]			
Review 8	«Сталинград»: маркетинг и прочая спекуляция на нашем уважении к истории «Stalingrad»: marketing and prochaya spekulyatsiya na nashem uvazhenii k istorii [<i>Stalingrad: Marketing and Speculating on our Respect for History</i>]	Odnako	Dmitriy Puchkov (Goblin)	Oct 18
Review 9	Пепел и алмаз Pepel i almaz [Ashes and Diamonds]	Zavtra	Anastasiya Belokurova, Il'ya Malashenkov	Oct 17
Review 10	Дом без фундамента Dom bez fundamenta [A House without Foundation]	Novyye Izvestiya	Viktor Matizen	Oct 16
Review 11	Федор Бондарчук и война миров Fëdor Bondarchuk i voyna mirov [Fyodor Bondarchuk and War of the Worlds]	Moskovskie Novosti	Igor' Gladil'shchikov	Oct 15
Review 12/13	«Сталинград»: за и против «Stalingrad»: za i protiv <i>Stalingrad: Pros and Cons</i>	Colta	Vasiliy Koretskiy/Igor' Gulin	Oct 14
Review 14	«Для нас он простоват, «Сталинград Бондарчука» «Dlya nas on prostovat, «Сталинград Бондарчука» [For Us He is Folksy: Bondarchuk's Stalingrad]	Afisha.ru	Eduard Limonov	Oct 14
Review 15	Фильм Бондарчука: ругать нельзя хвалить. Он никакой Fil'm Bondarchuka: rugat' nel'zya khvalit' [Bondarchuk's Film: To Praise or Scold: Neither]	Odnako	Andrey Sorokin	Oct 13
Review 16	О фильме "Сталинград" — пусть это будет только начало O fil'me "Stalingrad"— pust' eto budet tol'ko nachalo	Odnako	Timur Borovkov	Oct 13

	[About the Film <i>Stalingrad</i> —This is Just the Beginning]			
Review 17	"Сталинград" Фёдора Бондарчука: Старые герои нового времени Fëdor Bondarchuk's "Stalingrad": Staryye geroi novogo vremeni [Fyodor Bondarchuk's <i>Stalingrad</i> : Old heroes for a New Time]	Tribuna	Mariya Bezruk	Oct 13
Review 18	Идет кино народное... Idët kino narodnoye... [On National Cinema...]	Novaya Gazeta	Yelena D'yakova	Oct 12
Review 19	В окопах "Сталинграда" V okopakh "Stalingrada" [In the Trenches of <i>Stalingrad</i>]	Rossiyskaya Gazeta	Valeriy Kichin	Oct 11
Review 20	Бондарчук контузил спецэффектами, но в сердце не попал Bondarchuk kontuzil spetseffektami, no v cerdtse ne popal [Bondarchuk Injured by Special Effects, and in a Rage Misses]	Rossiyskaya Gazeta	Oleg Koryakin	Oct 11
Review 21	Фильмы недели: «Сталинград», «Великая красота», «Философы: Урок выживания» Fil'my nedeli: «Stalingrad», «Velikaya krasota», «Filosofy: Urok vyzhivaniya» [Films of the Week: <i>Stalingrad</i> , <i>The Great Beauty</i> , <i>The Philosophers</i>]	The Village	Nastya Kurganskaya	Oct 11
Review 22	Рецензия + трейлер: «Сталинград» Retsenziya + treylep: «Stalingrad» [Review + Trailer: <i>Stalingrad</i>]	Variety Russia	Vasiliy Stepanov	Oct 11
Review 23	«Сталинград»: в ад и обратно «Stalingrad»: v ad i obratno	MK	Nikita Kartsev	Oct 11

	[<i>Stalingrad</i> : To Hell and Back]			
Review 24	Блондинки, брюнетки и Билл Найи Blondinki, bryunetki i Bill Nayi [Blondes, Brunettes and Bill Nighy]	The Hollywood Reporter	Semen Kvasha	Oct 11
Review 25	Андрей Сидорчик: «Сталинград». Охота на «Оскара» Andrey Sidorchik: «Stalingrad». Okhota na «Oskara» [Andrey Sidorchik: Stalingrad. Hunt for the Oscar]	Argumenty i Fakty	Andrey Sidorchik	Oct 11
Review 26	Стилен град Stilen grad [Snazzy Grad]	Vedomosti	Oleg Zintsov	Oct 10
Review 27	Бондарчук против немцев: «Сталинград» выходит в прокат Bondarchuk protiv nemtsev: «Stalingrad» vykhodit v prokat [Bondarchuk against the Germans: <i>Stalingrad</i> Released]	Argumenty i Fakty	Yelena Menyshenina	Oct 10
Review 28	В раскопках Сталинграда V raskopkakh Stalingrada [In Stalingrad's Excavations]	Kommersant	Andrey Plakhov	Oct 9
Review 29	Сайлентград Saylentgrad [Silentgrad]	Interfax.ru	Nikolay Ziborov	Oct 9
Review 30	Так победим Tak nobedim [Thus We Are Victorious]	GQ	Nikita Kartsev	Oct 9
Review 31	Как невесту родину мы любим Kak nevestu rodinu my lyubim [As a Bride, We Love the Motherland]	Iskusstvo Kino	Nina Tsyркun	Oct 9
Review 32	"Сталинград": великий IMAX с великим 3D "Stalingrad": velikiy IMAX s veikim 3D	RIA Novosti	Mariya Tokmasheva	Oct 9

	[Stalingrad: Great IMAX with Great 3D]			
Review 33	Сталинград Stalingrad [<i>Stalingrad</i>]	Rolling Stone	Aleksandr Kondukov	Oct 9
Review 34	Сталинград: крупный план Stalingrad: krupnyy plan [<i>Stalingrad: A Close-up</i>]	Trud.ru	Leonid Pavlyuchik	Oct 8
Review 35	"Сталинград": кино и немцы "Stalingrad": kino i nemtsy [<i>Stalingrad: Film and Germans</i>]	Fontanka	Igor' Shusharin	Oct 8
Review 36	В альковах Сталинграда V al'kovakh Stalingrada [In the Recesses of Stalingrad]	Kommersant' (Ogonëk)	Andrey Arkhangel'skiy	Oct 7
Review 37	В жанре технологического реализма V zhanre tekhnologicheskogo pealizma [In the Genre of Technological Realism]	Ekspert.ru	Vyacheslav Surikov	Oct 7
Review 38	Сталинград Stalingrad [<i>Stalingrad</i>]	TimeOut.ru	Denis Ruzayev	Oct 7
Review 39	Цитадель под названием «Оскар» Tsitadel' pod nazvaniyem «Oskar» A Citadel Entitled "Oscar"	Novoye Vremya	Ol'ga Galitskaya	Oct 7
Review 40	300 по-сталинградски 300 po-stalingraski [300 in Stalingrad]	Gazeta.ru	Vladimir Lyashchenko	Oct 7
Review 41	Они сражались за Катю Oni srazhalis' za Katyu [They Fought for Katya]	Lenta.ru	Sergey Obolonkov	Oct 7
Review 42	Сергей Минаев: «Сталинград» Sergey Minayev: «Stalingrad» [Sergey Minayev: <i>Stalingrad</i>]	Vzglyad (vz.ru)	Sergey Minayev	Oct 7
Review 43	Оборона с погружением Oborona s pogruzheniyem [Defense Immersed]	Kommersant' Weekend	Lidiya Maslova	Oct 4

Review 44	Что немцу хорошо Chto nemtsy khorosho [What is Good to the German...]	Vedomosti	Anton Dolin	Oct 4
Review 45	"Сталинград": это не видеоаттракцион "Stalingrad": eto ne videoattraksion [<i>Stalingrad</i> : This is No Video Attraction]	M24.ru	Ivan Raspopov	Oct 4
Review 46	Враг у ворот и в постели Vrag u vorot i v posteli [Enemy at the Gates and in Bed]	Komsomol'skaya Pravda	Stas Tyrkin	Oct 4
Review 47	"Сталинград" Бондарчука - искусственный мирок "Stalingrad" Bondarchuka – iskysstvennyy mirok [Bondarchuk's <i>Stalingrad</i> : An Artificial Little World]	Nezavisimoy Gazety (ng.ru)	Dar'ya Borisova	Oct 4
Review 48	Мне не больно Mne ne bol'no [I am not in pain]	Iskusstvo Kino (Kinoart.ru)	Yelena Stishova	Oct 4
Review 49	ИДЕТ ВОЙНА АНТИЧНАЯ: Фильм «Сталинград» открывает новую эпоху в осмыслении Второй мировой IDĖT VOYNA ANTICHNAYA: Fil'm «Stalingrad» otkryvayet novuyu epokhu v osmyslenii Vtoroy mirovoy [An Antique War Is On: The Film <i>Stalingrad</i> Opens a New Era in Understanding the Second World War]	Profile.ru	Dmitriy Bykov	Oct 4
Review 50	"Сталинград": солидный фильм для солидных господ "Stalingrad": solidnyy fil'm dlya solidnykh gospod [<i>Stalingrad</i> : a respectable film for respectable gentlemen]	RIA.ru	Alena Solntseva	Oct 4
Review 51	Они сражались: в прокат выходит	RBK Daily	Marina Latysheva	Oct 4

	«Сталинград» Федора Бондарчука Oni srazhalis': v prokat vykhodit «Stalingrad» Fëdora Bondarchuka [They fought: Fyodor Bondarchuk's <i>Stalingrad</i> Released]			
Review 52	Сталинград: Парни из преисподней Stalingrad: Parni iz preispodney [<i>Stalingrad</i> : Men from Hell]	Empire (Film.ru)	Boris Ivanov	Oct 3
Review 53	Еще один великий фильм о великой войне Eshchë odin velikiy fil'm o velikoy voyne [Another Great Movie About the Great War]	Afisha.ru	Mariya Kuvshinova	Oct 2
Review 54	Фильм "Сталинград" не обманул ожидания Fil'm "Stalingrad" ne obmanul ozhidaniya [The Film <i>Stalingrad</i> Did Not Fail Expectations]	Radiovesti.ru	Anton Dolin	Oct 2
Review 55	Федор Бондарчук отстоял свой «Сталинград» Fëdor Bondarchuk otstoyal svoj «Stalingrad» [Fyodor Bondarchuk Defended His <i>Stalingrad</i>]	Izvestia.ru	Larisa Yusipova	Oct 2
Review 56	Позор для всего вермахта. Коротко о «Сталинграде» Pozor dlya vsego vermakhta. Korotko o «Stalingrade» [A Shame for the Whole Wehrmacht: Briefly about <i>Stalingrad</i>]	Snob.ru	Vadim Rutkovskiy	Oct 2
Review 57	Это проект «Сталинград» Eto proyekt «Stalingrad» [This Project <i>Stalingrad</i>]	Fontanka.ru	Yevgeniy Vyshenkov	Sept 28
Review 58	Премьера недели: «Сталинград» Prem'era nedeli: «Stalingrad»	Sobaka.ru	Dmitriy Bunygin	Sept 23

	[Premeire of the Week: <i>Stalingrad</i>]			
Review 59	Дары волхвов Dary volkhov [Gifts of the Magi]	Seance.ru	Denis Gorelov	Sept 19

Appendix B: Table of MegaCritic.ru Reviews

Review Identifier ¹⁷⁷	Review Title	Review Publication	Review Author	Date (All 2013)
Review 60	Сталинград Stalingrad [<i>Stalingrad</i>]	Newsrab.ru	Sergey Mezenov	Oct 11
Review 61	Жизнь, смерть и судьба: «Сталинград» Федора Бондарчука Zhizn', smert' i sud'ba: «Stalingrad» Fëdora Bondarchuka [Life, Death and Fate: Fyodor Bondarchuk's <i>Stalingrad</i>]	Tramvision.ru	Aleksandr Chekulayev	Oct 10
Review 62	«Сталинград»: неприступная крепость «Stalingrad»: nepristupnaya krepost' [<i>Stalingrad</i> : An Unassailable Fortress]	Weburg.net	Kirill Ilukhin	Oct 11
Review 63	Спасти рядовую Катю Spasti ryadovuyu Katyu [Saving Private Katya]	Kinoafisha.ru	Aleksandr Kazantsev	Oct 7
Review 64	Рецензия к фильму "Сталинград". Прощайте, ребята Retsenziya k fil'mu "Stalingrad". Proshchayte, rebyata [Review of <i>Stalingrad</i> . Farwell Guys]	Kinonews.ru	Roman Volokhov	Oct 12
Review 65	Рояль в кустах Royal' v kystakh [Piano in the Bushes]	Ruskino.ru	Svetlana Stepnova	Oct 22
Review 66	Сталинград: ФЁДОР, ДЕНЬГИ НЕ ДОШЛИ! Stalingrad: FËDOR, DENGI NE DOSHLI [<i>Stalingrad</i> : Fyodor, the Money Hasn't Come]	Kino-govno.com (Kg-portal.ru)	Yuriy Lushchinskiy	Oct 17
Review 67	Сталинград Stalingrad [<i>Stalingrad</i>]	Kino-teatr.ru	Aleksey Filippov	Oct 8

¹⁷⁷ Original listing available as of May 31, 2015: <http://www.kinopoisk.ru/film/468196/press>

Review 68	Рецензия к фильму «Сталинград» Retsenziya k fil'mu «Stalingrad» [Review of <i>Stalingrad</i>]	Afisha@mail.ru	Boris Grishin	Oct 9
Review 69	Сталинград: Превозмогли Stalingrad: Prevozmogli [<i>Stalingrad: They Prevailed</i>]	Kinokadr	Roman Korneyev	Oct 9
Review 70	Они сражались за Сталинград Oni Srazhalis' za Stalingrad [They Fought for Stalingrad]	Ovideo.ru	Vera Alyonushkina	Oct 11
Review 71	Сталинград Stalingrad [<i>Stalingrad</i>]	Uralweb.ru	Oleg Petrov	Oct 11
Review 72	"Сталинград": В общем и целом "Stalingrad": V obshchem i tselom [<i>Stalingrad: Overall</i>]	Ovideo.ru	Maxim Malyukov	Oct 10
Review 73	Новое кино о старой войне Novoye kino o staroy voyne [New Film about an Old War]	Kinoafisha.ru	Ol'ga Egorova	Oct 8
Review 74	Бондарчук российского кинематографа Bondarchuk rossiyskogo kinematografa [Russian Cinematography's Bondarchuk]	Kino.myvi.ru	Anton Shirokikh	Oct 10
Review 75	«Сталинград»: Не посраим земли русской? «Stalingrad»: ne posramim zemli russkoy? [<i>Stalingrad: Do We Not Disgrace the Russian Land?</i>]	Proficinema.ru	Faina Fardo	Oct 2