

Eduard Artem'ev and the Sonics of National Identity

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Eduard Artem'ev is a Soviet and Russian composer who has written many different types of music. He took an early interest in electronic music, writing some of the Soviet Union's first electronic releases alongside early works in choral composition, symphonies and suites from the late 1950s onwards. He has also written for opera and plays, including a famous 2002 adaptation of *Crime and Punishment*. He is best known, however, for his compositions for film. Artem'ev came into film on the merits of his electronic work, when the cinema of the 1960s required a new soundscape. Fifty years later, he has written for over a hundred films and is one of Russia's best-known composers as the screen-recordings of his film compositions can be heard over the tannoy of the Moscow metro, in Russia's largest supermarkets, and even Sochi 2014's opening and closing ceremonies. At the beginning of his career, Artem'ev was a composer who could respond to the needs of a film on the basis of his technical arsenal. By the post-Soviet period, he had become a composer able to create a nuanced cultural conversation within his film music.

Several works about Artem'ev have been published, most notably by Tatiana Egorova, who has written a biography and a comprehensive survey of Soviet film music. These primarily focus on the technical aspects of his creative process. In this study I will look at the cultural significance of his film compositions – an area that deserves considerable attention, given the impact his music has had on Soviet and Russian culture. The study of film music itself has taken strides in this direction, as earlier studies of the sound film era focused more on technical demands, while later works, such as Claudia Gorbman's seminal studies on diegesis and Alfred Schnittke's theories on cultural referencing, have offered a platform to study the acoustic element of film with the same cultural focus that is given to the visual.

National identity has a specific resonance in music, as well as in film. Music played a prominent role in the development of Russia's nineteenth century nationalist movements, while European trends such as Baroque and Classical have certain cultural codings from a Russian perspective. Exposition of national identity in Russian cinema has attracted significant interest. Over the 1970s and 1980s, many films gave 'expression to the

concerns, fears and hopes of the nationalists.¹ The issue of national identity changes in post-Soviet cinema, seen, for example, in the essays compiled in Birgit Beumers’ *Russia on Reels* (1999).² In studies on both periods, the films of three directors figure constantly — Andrei Tarkovsky, Nikita Mikhalkov and Andrei Konchalovskii. Artem’ev has worked on almost all of their films. I will look at films by these three directors, as they are the films most relevant to national identity within Artem’ev’s canon.

I. FILM MUSIC: THEN AND NOW

For the purposes of this study, reference will be made to four trends in Soviet and Russian film music. Two of these would have been more traditional for a composer like Artem’ev: the dramaturgic demands of socialist-realist cinema; and the Eizenshtein-Prokof’ev model of collaboration. The two others were emerging in the period when Artem’ev came into prominence: polystylism, best defined by fellow composer Alfred Schnittke; and electronic music, particularly within the ‘third wave’ of Soviet composers. The interplay between traditional and contemporary elements runs right through Artem’ev’s repertoire, and is something he has exploited to great effect.

Throughout the 1930s, the academic study of film music developed alongside that of cinema more broadly. Much like cinematography, music was seen to have a clear didactic function, sharing the social goals of political institutions: ‘dialectic-materialist thought and the battle for a socialist world.’³ Music as an expressive means is a notion heavily represented in academic literature of this era. As elaborated upon by Ioffe in his *Sinteticheskoe izučenie iskusstva i zvukovoe kino* (1937), music is able to access a viewer’s inner world like no other art form.⁴ This work also broaches the unification of the arts — an early-Soviet artistic vision that made socialist intellectuals initially predisposed to opera, and had an important influence on film. However, strict artistic hierarchies needed to exist in order to correctly convey the right message. Cheremukhin expanded upon this idea, placing music’s role under the slogan of ‘complete, conclude, colligate.’⁵ This is typical of

¹ John Dunlop, ‘Russian Nationalist Themes in Soviet Film of the 1970s,’ in Anna Lawton (ed.), *The Red Screen: Politics, Society, Art in Soviet Cinema* (London, New York: Routledge, 1992), 231–246 (p. 231).

² Birgit Beumers (ed.), *Russia on Reels: the Russian Idea in Post-Soviet Cinema* (New York: I. B. Taurus, 1999).

³ Jeremiah Ioffe, *Muzyka sovetskogo kino: Osnovy muzykal’noi dramaturgii* (Leningrad: GMNII, 1938), p. 15.

⁴ Jeremiah Ioffe, *Sinteticheskoe izučenie iskusstva i zvukovoe kino* (Leningrad: GMNII, 1937).

⁵ Mikhail Cheremukhin, *Muzyka zvukogo fil’ma* (Moscow: Goskinoizdat, 1939), p. 63.

the restrained and didactic audio-visual style developed from the mid-1930s. Music’s role in the dramaturgy of a film is one of visceral emotional agitation, allowing visual and verbal markers to convey information to the viewer in such a state.

The translation of this principle into practice can be seen in the films of Sergei Eizenshtein. Applying his theory of dialectical montage in a multimedia context, Eizenshtein developed audio-visual fugue. This involves thematic interplay between different voices — in this case, different art forms — in compiling a unified artistic expression that impresses upon the viewer. In order to optimally synchronize visual and musical themes, a collaborative relationship between director and composer is necessary. This is best exemplified by Eizenshtein’s work with Prokofiev, starting with an architectural plan to define rhythmic structure. From this, Prokofiev could design a piece of music over which Eizenshtein would mentally improvise a cinematographic plan, or Eizenshtein could shoot a sequence over which Prokofiev would mentally plan a score. This ‘*audiovisual* process was very like the method he used to create the montage for his pre-sound films,’ directly corresponding to the principles underpinning the work of this Soviet icon.⁶ This audio-visual model was one embroiled in fusing the arts by way of collaboration.

Within film academia, greater attempts had been made to break down cinematic dramaturgy into component parts. In Korganov and Frolov’s *Kino i muzyka* (1964), a chapter is dedicated to the principle of Kinopolifoniia. Rooted in Bakhtin’s theory of literary polyphony, rather than the traditionally musical definition, they break down cinematic dramaturgy into four component voices: visual action, verbal action, aural action and montage.⁷ Polyphonic relationships between components allow music to affect filmic development in specific ways — for example, development of character through development of a musical motif. This facilitates the filmmaker’s — and, indeed, the composer’s — imposition of authorial voice.

Here there arises a referential landscape for composers to draw upon, tying musical voices to specific cultural effects. This polyphony has a broader resonance in the ‘polystylism’ that emerged from the 1950s onwards, as defined by Schnittke. This is the musical tendency to refer to other pieces of music or styles on the basis of assumed listener knowledge, thus creating a distinct effect that goes beyond the two musical

⁶ Robert Robertson, *Eisenstein on the Audiovisual: the Montage of Music, Image and Sound in Cinema* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2009), p. 147.

⁷ Tomas Korganov and Ivan Frolov, *Kino i muzyka* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1964), p. 78.

sources. The two manifestations of polystylism are ‘the principle of quotation and the principle of allusion,’ differentiating between direct referencing of another piece of music and alluding to its stylistic components.⁸ Here, a voice is not a singular musical one but the artistic voice of another — either a specific composer or a group of people unified by a style.

As discussed by Stetsiuk and Abakumov, Artem’ev and Schnittke were both part of the ‘third wave’ of composers, whose work reconciled various traditions as they developed electronic music and applied it to film, with a necessity to mediate between ‘serious’ and ‘light’ forms of music.⁹ The ‘optimal’ balance was the polystylistic goal of such composers.¹⁰ Based on the term coined by American musician Gunter Schuller, the ‘optimal’ target was music affected by contemporary landscape, but not ignoring pre-existing moral and aesthetic values. The development of electronic music was intrinsically tied to this process — indeed, many of these composers were protégés of Evgenyi Murzin, innovator of the ANS – the Soviet Union’s first electronic synthesizer.

Although these are merely a few of the many trends in film music, they act as useful markers in mediating between Artem’ev’s historical and contemporary treatment of issues in film music, particularly when considering the complex issue of national identity.

II. NATIONAL IDENTITY IN PHYSICAL FORM

In comparison with the specificities of the Eizenshtein-Prokofiev method, Andrei Tarkovsky’s initial communications with Artem’ev broached more conceptual issues. The composer was to be less involved in defining the film’s form and more in developing mood: ‘for him chronometry was not so important as ‘condition.’¹¹ By the 1970s, Artem’ev had done some film work, mainly using equipment and techniques developed under Murzin. His first work for cinema was in 1963 - *Mechte navstrechu* (‘Toward Meeting a Dream’), a film about an inter-planetary expedition. For this he wrote a soundscape closer to special effects than a traditional score, tenuously placed between the diegetic and non-

⁸ Alexander Ivashkin (ed.), *A Schnittke Reader* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2002), p. 87.

⁹ Igor Stetsiuk and Maxim Abakumov, ‘*Tret’e napravlenie*’ i kinomuzyka Eduarda Artem’eva (Kiev: Natsional’naia muzykal’naia akademiia Ukrainy im. P. I. Chaikovskogo, 2005), p. 4.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Arkady Petrov, ‘Eduard Artem’ev i Andrei Tarkovsky (‘Muzyka v fil’me mne ne nuzhna’),’ *Salon audio video*, 5, (1996 <<http://www.electroshock.ru/edward/interview/petrov3/index.html>> [accessed 25th March], (para. 9).

diegetic, intertwined with songs written by another composer. His sonic contribution was to deepen the aesthetic effect of the futuristic materials on screen, giving them an extra (aural) dimension. For Tarkovsky's 1971 film *Soliaris*, the director wanted 'just atmosphere, just organization of sound and noise,' but got considerably more.¹² What started as a technical exercise, creating a futuristic soundscape for Tarkovsky, turned into a series of multi-faceted musical compositions. Artem'ev brought an audio-visual into cinema that concerned the cultural and the physical.

In *Soliaris*, culture is an internal condition associated with representing the physical in human memory. This culture is distinctly European. In a scene in the library of the space station orbiting Solaris, the camera peruses Breugel's Renaissance painting *Hunters in the Snow* (1565). The snowy landscape, similar to sequences from protagonist Kris' rural Russian childhood, is accompanied by an unfolding soundscape of rustling forestry, choral singing and the ringing of the Assumption Cathedral's belfry in Rostov, manipulated by use of the ANS synthesizer.¹³ The music draws from the Eizenshtein-Prokofiev model, with fugal interplay between cinematic and musical rhythm. The chiming of the bells does not specifically match montage shifts, but carry a similar pace; an audio-visual theme carried through the media. The natural but distorted soundscape defines the messy transition of the physical into art via human memory. The quintessence of human life — the source of memory in the film — is one both specifically Russian and European. This is reinforced by Artem'ev's 'dressing up' of Bach's *Ich ruf du zür, herr Jesu Christ* minutes later, as gravity is lost and the characters float past more examples of European art, with occasional cuts back to Bruegel's painting and a fire lit in the snow — another reference to Kris' Russian childhood.¹⁴ Artem'ev facilitates the Russo-European representation of human culture in using audio-visual rhythmic fugue, distortion of natural sound and manipulation of pre-existing music.

In terms of temporality, Tarkovsky's aesthetic style is significantly different to Eizenshteinian montage, which has a notable impact on the audio-visual element. The montage supremacy of the Eizenshtein tradition is replaced with a cinematic rhythm defined by the 'life of the object visibly recorded in the frame.'¹⁵ This allows time-pressure to be built on the basis of varying lengths of life in filmed objects. While this is

¹² Petrov, *Muzyka v fil'me mne ne nuzhna*, para. 4.

¹³ Tatiana Egorova, *Soviet Film Music: An Historical Survey* (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1997), pp. 78–79.

¹⁴ Petrov, *Muzyka v fil'me mne ne nuzhna*, para. 8.

¹⁵ Donato Totaro, 'Time and the Film Aesthetics of Andrei Tarkovsky,' *Canadian Journal of Film Studies*, 2, 1992, 1, 21–30 (p. 23).

not absent in films of the Eizenshtein tradition, a fundamental difference lies in montage not being the primary means of creating cinematic rhythm in Tarkovsky's films.

In *Soliaris*, this effect is seen in a sequence referred to as 'City,' in which ex-astronaut Berton drives through a network of tunnels and motorways. In this scene, a road soundscape is gradually transformed into a cosmic one. Individual vehicles zoom in and out of frame while the general cinematic object — the urban traffic network — seems immortal and unending. The montage rhythm, initially quite relaxed, gradually intensifies. Rather than emphasize frame changes, the soundscape beneath has a linear trajectory. Once Berton has ended a phone call, the motorway soundscape is gradually supplanted by increasingly intense electronic noise. This is comprised of shocks of sound that would generally be associated with the dials and controls of a spaceship, bearing a similarity, for example, to those heard in Artem'ev's sound design for *Toward Meeting a Dream*. Vehicular sounds are increasingly filtered through electronic sound effects, most notably reverb and saturation, giving the soundscape a broad and distorted feel which imitates that of a rocket taking off. The sounds of cars, as they would be heard in reality, fade away. The increased rate of frame change is matched by a move away from the actual sound of physical objects. Although going into the heart of human civilization, the soundscape goes further away from physical reality into a state representative of space travel.

Here, we have a sharp distinction between the external, physical world and the internal, introspective world of Berton. By turning everyday urban life into an overwhelming act of cosmic exploration, the viewer feels Berton's isolation, stuck in his car as a cosmonaut in a spaceship. Artem'ev achieves this effect by giving audio-visual rhythm a dynamic element, which, in the words of Soviet academic Lissa, helps demonstrate 'change in the localisation of the source of sound within a shot,' moving from diegetic objects within shot (cars) to an aural representation of what is in shot.¹⁶ It is important that this scene reaches a peak of chaotic movement within the frame and then cuts back to the dacha, the electronic noise cutting and natural stillness with the new frame. Only at this point is the time-pressure of the sequence really felt — the linear, indivisible soundscape matches the unending labyrinth of road networks, and only when the life of the framed object (the road network) ends can the soundscape do so. This cut sets the physical aspect of humble and rural Russian life against urbanization.

¹⁶ Zofia Lissa, *Estetika kinomuzyki*, (Moscow: Muzyka, 1970), p. 311.

Zerkalo (Mirror) of 1975, Tarkovsky's semi-autobiographical work, contains two particularly important examples of audio-visual interplay. Ignat, the son of protagonist Aleksei, encounters a woman in his father's apartment who asks him to read Pushkin's 1836 letter to Chaadaev. This refutes Chaadaev's impression of Russia's historical insignificance by pointing to Russia's simultaneous defence of and isolation from Christian Europe — a perspective more 'particularist' (neither East nor West) than 'universalist' (both East and West).¹⁷ Orchestral and choral sounds allude to dynamic climaxes, with rumbling timpani and stirring tremolo violins, but fail to reach their suggested peak. Sound wafts in and out of the boy's reading, starts up as he leaves, reaches an ironic sub-climax as he opens the door to his disorientated grandmother, and only peaks as he returns and the woman is gone — all that is left is the perspiration from her hot cup of tea that had been on the glass table. The music's long-awaited climax and consequent disappearance happens before the end of the shot, resolving a few seconds before the perspiration fades to nothingness. The score allows imperfect audio-visual synchronization — the narrative tension accompanying the simple Russian boy cannot correlate with his engaging this ghoulish agency of Russia's solitary history, compounding the solitude and uncertainty expressed in Pushkin's letter. This scene constitutes Tarkovsky's formal representation of Russia's historical particularism.

An episode entitled 'Sivash' centres around archive footage of Soviet soldiers wading through Lake Sivash. The soundtrack to this personal-historical blend has been explained in some detail by Artem'ev: 'as if a biblical exodus...a variation on one chord...what came to be was an odd, malleable and rather mystical sound.'¹⁸ The drama and dynamic excess are in tune with the intended 'biblical exodus' effect, as is the prayer-like theme of the underlying minor chord, occasionally sprung up by synthesized choir. A loose war drum, pitched to the root note of the chord, arhythmically rumbles in variation with 'diegetic' sound (this sound was not recorded simultaneously with the documentary footage, but is supposed to exist within its diegesis). This underlying theme relates to human narrative, imposing humanity on the Soviet soldiers — coming in over the face of the young boy's love interest, repeating over Soviet soldiers trudging through water and, after a poetic interlude, re-emerging over a colour shot of a boy in a snowy landscape. This runs against explosions of dissonant orchestral sound, loud cymbal crashes and the

¹⁷ Robin Aizlewood, 'Revisiting Russian Identity in Russian Thought: From Chaadaev to the Early Twentieth Century,' *The Slavonic and East European Review*, 78, 2000, 1, 20–43 (p. 29).

¹⁸ Petrov, *Muzyka v fil'me mne ne nuzhna*, para. 15.

clatter of disunited horns, with grainy pictures of mass death, the atomic bomb and the threatening rise of Mao's cultural revolution — another Eastern threat contained by Russia.

Artem'ev's two layers synchronize with physical associations, fleshing out the interplay between the personal and the historical in the traumas of war: the humble and unwavering spirituality of the Russian people against the chaos and destructiveness of the external. Flickers between different time frames within one montage sequence embody the Deleuzian effect of time-image, an 'expression of the difficulty of narrating national identity at a time of historical crisis or transformation.'¹⁹ In discussing Tarkovskian cinematography, Bell deems time-image 'that which deterritorializes or undermines the identity of truth...not the identity that is itself deterritorialized.'²⁰ Music has the same function as time-image in this respect, not an expression of identity but of its constant recalibration. Between spirituality and violence lies the Russian experience. Nationality is on the side of the personal when it comes to Russians — citizen and Soviet military experiences conjoined under one musical theme.

While *Mirror* veers towards particularism, the main theme in *Stalker* (1979) is an expression of universalism. Tarkovsky demanded a theme that blended generic Western and Eastern aesthetics: 'we don't just need an Eastern instrument playing a Western melody...on the contrary — a mixture of the two cultures' spirits.'²¹ The theme's drone is played on an Indian tambura, its melody on a medieval block-flute and a countermelody on a Dutar, in the style of an Azerbaijani mugam.²² The melody is a variation on fourteenth-century spiritual Pulcherrima Rosa, traditionally sung with Latin text. The piece's construction employs fugal interplay between melody and countermelody as thematic markers (here — traditional West and traditional East), and Schnittke's 'principle of quotation.' Artem'ev tied together core Soviet film music traditions as well as East and West as cultural markers in creating Tarkovsky's universalist theme. This was of crucial importance to the film, Tarkovsky telling him 'it is of utmost importance to me, so I can proceed to shooting,' marking a return to the traditional collaborative method.²³

Relation to physical form becomes apparent in a scene entitled a 'journey into the Zone,' the three protagonists' railcar journey through industrial wasteland into the

¹⁹ David Martin-Jones, *Narrative Time in National Contexts* (Edinburgh University Press, 2006), p. 1.

²⁰ Jeffrey Bell, 'Thinking with Cinema: Deleuze and Film Theory', *Film-Philosophy*, 1, 1997, 1, 1–6 (p. 4).

²¹ Petrov, *Muzyka v fil'me mne ne nuzhna*, para. 30.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid., para. 28.

mysterious Zone. Sound is the main source of cinematic rhythm — the visual element is comprised of barely more than a few shots, generally panning across the men's faces and the industrial landscape. We initially hear the diegetic sound of the railcar hitting the tracks at regular intervals. As time passes, distortion is added to the impact between car and rails, alongside a delay effect with increasingly heavy feedback. The 'clean' sound of the car chugging along is reduced. By the end of the sequence, practically all that is audible is the feedback of the distorted delay signal, creating a 'detached' and 'otherworldly' effect.²⁴

Diegetic music creates an illusion of space, requiring the viewer to locate the source of sound on screen.²⁵ Here, much like in the 'City' episode of *Soliaris*, the transformation of diegetic into non-diegetic draws character and viewer away from diegetic reality into an internal space. The journey into the Zone will be a journey into the self. In combination with the East-West theme, this bolsters *Stalker's* blended cultural landscape and internal search for identity. The film's finale, orchestrated by Artem'ev and Tarkovsky, is a collage of sound blending industrial noise with Beethoven's *Ode to Joy*, set against the miraculous act of telekinesis by Stalker's daughter. This best illustrates the role of the physical in the sound world — a marker, set against the internal and the cultural (here — industrial sound against Beethoven).

Prominent twentieth-century philosopher Nikolai Berdiaev describes Russians as a 'people in the highest degree polarised...a conglomeration of contradictions.'²⁶ A particular stress is put on the religious notion of utopia in contrast to present-time drudgery, that 'on the idea of divino-humanity lies the imprint of cosmic and social utopia.'²⁷ Indeed, the music Artem'ev set to Tarkovsky's films has its utopian religious underpinnings, with his elaboration on Bach's church cantatas and adaptation of old spirituals. This, in conjunction with the mediation between Russia's particularism and universalism, describes the audio-visual aspect of Tarkovskian cultural identity: somehow grounded in European high culture and spirituality but somewhat apart and isolated, both past and future, both doomed and glorious in solitude. This contradictory coexistence perhaps explains why *Stalker* is considered 'a visual tribute to the survival of the Russian

²⁴ Ibid., para. 32.

²⁵ See Claudia Gorbman, 'Narrative film music,' *Yale French Studies*, 60, 1980, 183–203.

²⁶ Nikolai Berdiaev, *Russkaia ideia* (Paris: YMCA-Press, 1946), p. 5.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 175.

Idea.²⁸ Such an achievement would have been impossible without the music of Artem'ev, a composer who was brought in as a technician but proved himself to be much more.

III. NATIONAL IDENTITY IN CULTURAL CHARACTER

Artem'ev's most longstanding artistic relationships have been with brothers Nikita Mikhalkov and Andrei Konchalovskii. Some of Mikhalkov's earlier films are set in the nineteenth century and laden with a negatively-coded nostalgia. *Neokonchennaia p'esa dlia mekhanicheskogo pianino* (Unfinished Piece for a Mechanical Piano) of 1977 and *Neskol'ko dnei iz zhizni Oblomova* (Oblomov) of 1979, based on classic literature, are concerned with 'the failed ideas of the Russian intelligentsia in the late nineteenth century.'²⁹ The music needed to be 'nostalgic, and about Russia.'³⁰ Both films contain citation of operatic and classical works — Donizetti's *Nemorino*, Bellini's *Casta Diva*, Rachmaninov's *Five Vespers* and the well-known flute melody from Gluck's *Orpheus*.³¹

Frolova-Walker discusses the nineteenth-century efforts of the highly-educated, often Slavophiles, to capture the essence either of peasant music or Orthodox Church music, and bring it into developing musical cultures. Musical models included 'single-line chants of Russian and Byzantine tradition' and *protiazhnaia* song, seen as the epitome of peasant folk.³² The end result, however, was often far from that which it attempted to imitate. In Mikhalkov's early films, Artem'ev superimposed generic features of traditional Russian music; as he says, 'I employed melodic turns similar to Russian folk-song, reduced everything down to a minimum, simplified it down to five notes,' thus emulating a longstanding elite appropriation of folk music.³³ The polystylistic 'principle of quotation' creates a referentially high culture soundscape with crude renderings of traditional music. This underlines the shallowness and detachment of Russia's nineteenth-century intellectual elite.

In *Oblomov*, the central theme is an idea carried through time, as seen in Artem'ev's

²⁸ Nancy Condee, 'No Glory, No Majesty, or Honour: The Russian Idea and Inverse Value,' in *Russia on Reels*, 25–33 (p. 33).

²⁹ David Gillespie, 'New Versions of Old Classics,' in *Russia on Reels*, 114–24 (p. 117).

³⁰ Arkady Petrov, 'Eduard Artem'ev: Elektronnye fantazii,' *Klub kbudozbestvennoi samodeiatel'nosti*, 19, 1981 <<http://www.electroshock.ru/eduard/interview/petrov2/index.html>> [accessed 25 March 2016], (para. 28).

³¹ Tatiana Egorova, *Vselennaia Eduarda Artem'eva* (Moscow: Vagrius, 2006), p. 92.

³² Maria Frolova-Walker, 'Music of the Soul?' in Simon Franklin and Emma Widdis (eds.), *National Identity in Russian Culture: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 116–131 (pp. 123–24).

³³ Petrov, *Eduard Artem'ev: Elektronnye fantazii*, para. 28.

working process: '[I] acoustically developed, 'spread' its [the melody's] scope, creating a sense of limitless space.'³⁴ Set over pictures of the protagonist's childhood, we first hear a fiddly melodic passage played on a synthesized baroque-era harpsichord. Melodic turns carry through the soundscape by means of heavy reverb and delay. This is not just a contemporary rendering of antiquated music — the sound production literally stretches the motif through time. This theme is reprised whenever the slovenly modern-day Oblomov thinks back to his childhood — it develops texturally with a female choir texture that eventually reduces to a single female voice over images of his mother. This brings to mind 'meta-diegetic' soundscape — 'supposedly narrated or 'imagined' by a character in the film.'³⁵ While not being diegetic as such, a female voice over the images of his mother belongs to Oblomov's psyche in the same way that visual memory does. This stretches the sonic time-frame alongside the visual. Simultaneously, the melody simplifies and refines down to a recognizable line. The droning choral and string textures at the basis of the theme seem stretched and almost rhythmless — the chord changes are scarcely distinguishable and the texture is unwavering. The musical idea is carried through time from Oblomov's past to present — a formal incarnation of nostalgia, given a negative flavour by virtue of his present-day sloth.

In *Unfinished Piece for a Mechanical Piano*, a self-playing mechanical piano is brought to the resplendent manor, a footman pretends to play it, but retreats as it continues to play itself. The pretentious, bourgeois protagonists' obsession with this contraption continues throughout the film. Among them is one child, detached and uninterested in the adults, with his own mysterious and wondrous soundscape of orchestral and electronic sound. He wanders into natural landscapes, visual cuts bridged by swirling synthesizers, a flute line with a Gluck-like quality, bass guitar emphasizing pedal notes and a growing orchestral texture. On its repeat, this is blended with diegetic rain at a nearby lake, the boy smiling among the lush greenery followed by a cut to the adults dancing around the performerless piano. Like in the films of Tarkovsky, the sonic shift synchronizes with the scene cut, imbuing two opposing atmospheres in neighboring scenes. But this is not a simple opposition of inner and outer worlds — the lakeside scene involves the harmonious coexistence of diegetic and non-diegetic, as well as orchestral and electronic, while the next scene centres around a performerless piano, lacking both internal reflection and external expression. Artem'ev's soundscape helps express the

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Gorbman, *Narrative film music*, p. 196.

Russian Idea — a pretentious and soulless technological present, but hope for a Utopian blend of contemporary and traditional — Artem'ev's combination of musical technology and genuine expression.

The most thorough musical exposition of Soviet identity can be heard in Mikhalkov's *Svoi sredi chuzhikh, chuzhoi sredi svoikh* (At Home Among Strangers) of 1974. This story of a Cheka officer's redemption among his comrades during the Civil War is a setting for heavy musical stylization — in Schnittke's terms, the 'principle of allusion,' including 'micro-elements of an alien style...[of] another age or tradition (characteristic melodic intonations, harmonic sequences, cadential formulae).'³⁶ The film's opening sequence is set to *Pesnia o mechte*, adapted from typically socialist realist poetry written by Mikhalkov's mother. It is composed in the style of contemporary popular music. Driven by bass guitar, drums and electric guitar, the melody follows a descending harmonic sequence with an organ playing a chord on each tone of the scale, overlaid by popular singer Aleksandr Gradskii. The melodic turns and harmonic development of this piece bears an interesting similarity to Procol Harum's *A Whiter Shade of Pale*. While it is hard to say whether this was a specific influence, Artem'ev certainly drew from Western contemporary music, openly admiring Crimson King and Emerson, Lake and Palmer among others.³⁷ The music accompanies scenes of communist brotherhood, the film's protagonists-to-be celebrating in a montage sequence just after the Revolution, symbolically destroying an old carriage and reveling in the new era. The pop music over the top gives this 'new' an even newer dimension — relating it to the modern day.

Artem'ev infuses contemporary rock and baroque into Morricone-style American-Western music in a chaotic meeting of three plot lines, as gangs of bandits and White officers orchestrate a robbery of a train carrying communist gold. As they loot the train, the chugging railroad-style rhythm of shuffling snares is heard, with organs and bass guitar grooving over a repetitive chord sequence and a trumpet playing a declaratory motif over the top — a contemporary orchestration of American-Western style adventure music. In a sudden cut, we follow the gaze of Brylov — the anti-Bolshevik arch-bandit — to a dream-like scene of Russian aristocratic leisure, accompanied by a baroque composition for harpsichord. This theme reoccurs when Brylov later dies. This fulfills Gorbman's notion of 'metadiegesis,' the musical source not on screen but existing within the dramatic frame — the imagination of the character whose mind we have entered. This refined,

³⁶ Ivashkin, *A Schnittke Reader*, p. 87.

³⁷ Egorova, *Vselelnaia Eduarda Artem'eva*, p. 66 and Petrov, *Eduard Artem'ev: Elektronnye fantazii*, para. 16.

ordered and antiquated music defines the mind of the anti-Soviet villain and can be said to exist within his psyche. This is our only insight into Brylov’s emotional motive within the film — the restoration of bourgeois leisure, the polar opposite to the epic labours of the communists. Artem’ev blends stylistic associations and the ‘principle of allusion’ to set this music directly against that used for the communists.

The film’s theme is a piece with dramatic dynamic extremes. With a floating trumpet theme, reminiscent of the Western adventure style, a bass guitar playing pedal notes and an arpeggiating guitar, its stylistic soundscape is, again, mixed. It can draw comparison with Soviet-Estonian composer Arvo Pärt’s *Pro et Contra*. This piece, an important early example of polystylism, is structurally divided in order to musically interface the thematic ‘pro’ with the ‘contra.’ This is the precise formula used by Artem’ev in the harmonic construction of *At Home Among Strangers*’ theme — only the theme is established on the ‘contra’ and resolves on the ‘pro.’ The initial melodic phrase starts up over a minor harmonic development with string-based countermelody, which is then transposed up a third over the relative major chord for a response section, at which point the string-based countermelody becomes more elaborate and creates an ornamented, romantic soundscape. The ‘contra’ section of the film’s theme is harmonically almost identical to the second movement of Pärt’s ‘Pro et Contra,’ ‘Largo.’

E. Artem’ev — trumpet theme from *At Home Among Strangers*

Contra -----

18 Pro-----

23 -----

The positive-negative interplay is used often — scenes of stress and worry are accompanied by the theme and, when the music reaches its positive response section, are

intercut with tender memories of brotherhood. Protagonist Shilov ultimately returns with the gold he is alleged to have stolen, redeeming himself, and prompting an adapted arrangement of the theme. Instead of transitioning to the 'pro', the minor harmonic sequence is repeated, a string-based fugal countermelody takes the trumpet's place, and the dynamic is raised to a climax, a drum kit comes in and transforms the interrupted rhythmic soundscape into a flowing 6/8, explosively relieving tension on the comrades' reuniting. Only at the very end does it move to the major, ending the film on the 'pro'. This film is 'true socialist spirit history 'as it should have been,' the emotional bond between the comrades winning the day.³⁸ Artem'ev's music doesn't just bring out emotional content but, in integrating contemporary music, drags Mikhalkov's vision of what Soviet identity should be into the modern era.

Konchalovskii's *Siberiade* (1979) portrays a village community across several generations, one subject to Soviet 'exploitation of Siberia's natural resources for the sake of progress and the benefit of future generations.'³⁹ Hereupon rises a conflict between nature and technology.

The film opens with an exploding oil tower as layers of trebly synthesized noise create a chaotic soundscape. The synthesizers wildly arpeggiate (an electronic effect that causes notes of an arpeggio to be played at random in the key of the engaged note), with a delay effect that causes random feedback on one of the many notes. There is an underlying sense of musical pattern, but it is far too wild and chaotic to identify. A variation on this theme occurs over caesuras between the eight component stories, when newsreel footage is shown in relation to historical developments. This blends with a layer of diegetic noise — trains, guns, people — a musical version of Konchalovskii's combination of stock and staged film. The wild synthesizers and unpredictable harmonic development show the rapid, uncontrollable tide of history. A layer of synthesized choir becomes more prominent each time the theme is repeated, suggesting the mechanization of man. The footage explicitly links this to Soviet industrial development.

Lindi is a choral piece, comprised of two children's voices. This typical 'folk melody,' usually accompanies a particular character's departure from the village — Konchalovskii matches this with slow-motion footage and a complete cut of diegetic

³⁸ Birgit Beumers, *Nikita Mikhalkov: The Filmmaker's Companion 1*, (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2005), p. 28.

³⁹ Vida Johnson, 'The Nature—Technology Conflict in Soviet Film: A Comparison of *Siberiade* and *Farewell*,' *Studies in Comparative Communism*, 21, 1989, 3, 341–347 (p. 347).

noise, a gaze carried from a particular character watching another leave.⁴⁰ The folk melody is associated with heritage and the natural landscape that gets left behind. As the film progresses, the fragment continues to occur but has stronger and stronger electronic effects applied to it, which give it an exaggeratedly electronic sound. This carries the narrative effect of technology winning out over nature. Drawing from the Russian Idea, this shows a fundamentally warring duality within Russian identity.

The main theme, referred to as *pokhod*, is a mediation between the two others. The synthesizer melody 'is clearly based on a scale akin to folk melodies' and its secondary texture is a synthesizer playing ordered arpeggios — a reduction of the wild arpeggiation in the caesuras.⁴¹ As the drums come in, they are filtered through heavy reverb and contain a high frequency of tom fills, emulating the sound of industrial labour. This, as the predominant theme of the film, is the container for Russian identity within the Soviet Union — somewhere between the wild push of modernization and humble, natural ancestry.

Mikhalkov's 1981 film *Rodnia* (Kinfolk) centres around a middle-aged woman of rural background who visits her daughter in Moscow, encountering the wild cultural and technological aspects of city life. Most important from a musical perspective is the interplay between the traditional and the modern. After a culturally-confused soundscape including Verdi, Boney M's *Sunny*, and a score littered with heavy electronics, the film ends with a musical collaboration between Artem'ev and the Pokrovskii folk ensemble. Beumers juxtaposes this against 'the artificial classical music of Verdi,' showing 'Western music as artificial, and folk tunes for genuine scenes.'⁴² While she correctly identifies the musical themes as being coded with cultural outlooks, relating to earlier work by Lissa on melodic centres as representations of cultural background, this binary ignores the cultural blend in the finale.⁴³ Under the polyphonic folk vocals there emerges a bass guitar and drum groove most likely to be found in, say, a Boney M song. A distorted electric guitar begins to play a countermelody, blending in as an extra polyphonic layer within the voices. This is *Kinfolk's* take on Soviet identity — a blend of the traditional Russian and the modern, foreign, and technological.

This begs the question of what would happen if the Soviet were taken away and just the Russian left. Of course, this issue came to life ten years after *Kinfolk* with the

⁴⁰ Stetsiuk and Abakumov, *Tret'e napravlenie*, p. 47.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Beumers, *Nikita Mikhalkov: The Filmmaker's Companion*, p. 76.

⁴³ Lissa, *Estetika kinomuzyki*, p. 308.

dissolution of the Soviet Union. Cinema of the 1990s lacked a 'single dominant ideology,' with 'no real agreement as to what 'Russianness' consists of.'⁴⁴ In the films of Mikhalkov we see an attempt to create a new structure of hero. His public speeches highlighted cinema's didactic and example-setting function, 'shaping the consciousness of the masses' and serving as 'a model, a symbol.'⁴⁵ It is in this context that a pattern of paternalism emerged within his films, and gave music an interesting role.

The music in *Utomlennye solntsem* (Burnt by the Sun) of 1994 is almost entirely citational. We first see the hero, Kotov, lying naked with his wife and daughter in a bania. Their innocence and comfort is underpinned by non-diegetic, lethargic guitar playing harmonic allusions to Stalin-era hit *Utomlennoe solntse*. This later becomes a lazy orchestral rendition, with Kotov and his young daughter floating on a riverboat. 'Proletarian' touches are few' in this film, and the lethargic variations on this popular tango reinforce the leisurely, cultured lifestyle of this Soviet hero.⁴⁶

Egorova discusses a theme referred to as 'Portrait of Stalin' at some length. The greatest exposition of this theme is set over the final scene, as a hot-air balloon bearing Stalin's portrait emerges from beyond the horizon, and the arch-antagonist Mitia finally lays bear his ideological motives in saluting it. The music's primary purpose is to infuse a sense of terror into the scene, with brash horns, malevolently metronomic rhythms underpinned by diminished arpeggios, and crashes of dissonant harmony. Most notable, however, are the melodic fragments that occasionally appear over the top of this soundscape — distorted quotations of *Shiroka strana moia rodnaia*, from the famous Stalin-era musical film *Tsirk* (Circus) of 1936. They emerge over the top of the terror-scape out of melodic and rhythmic context, turning the Stalin-era musical anthem into its 'deformed and sinister antipode.'⁴⁷ In *Circus*, this piece appears over mass marches with crowds proudly carrying Stalin's portrait. Artem'ev's melodic, rhythmic and genre-based inversion of its principle line effects the piece's transformation into a piece of cultural information with completely opposite associations. This is the demonic face not just of the man who was once a father to the Russian people, but also of those cultural associations that supported such a condition.

⁴⁴ Richard Taylor, 'Now that the Party's Over: Soviet Cinema and Its Legacy,' in *Russia on Reels*, 34–42 (p. 41).

⁴⁵ Nikita Mikhalkov, 'The Function of a National Cinema,' in Birgit Beumer (ed.), *Russia on Reels*, 50–56 (p. 50).

⁴⁶ Denise Youngblood, 'The Cosmopolitan and the Patriot: the Brothers Mikhalkov-Konchalovsky and Russian Cinema,' *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, 23, 2003, 1, 27–41 (p. 34).

⁴⁷ Egorova, *Vselelnaia Eduarda Artem'eva*, p. 138.

The music of this film de-codifies conceptions of national identity formed in the Soviet Union — the father and the persecutor, bourgeois and the proletarian, even the native and the foreign — the title song itself is a South American style tango adapted from a Polish piece. Kotov's paternal model is not one of moral clarity but an archetype of honest ambiguity: '[Mikhalkov] understands that those tragic times defy simplistic categorizations.'⁴⁸ Artem'ev's referential music, steeped in polystylism, plays a crucial role in this by decoding preconceived cultural associations.

In his first works with Mikhalkov and Konchalovskii, Artem'ev was brought in for his technical expertise, seen in his innovative use of sound technology in their films of the 1970s. By the 1990s, his compositions were an essential component of any film he worked on, and underpinned all cultural dialogue within such films — whether it be about the Russian intelligentsia, Soviet identity or post-Soviet paternalism.

IV. NATIONAL IDENTITY AS SET AGAINST THE FOREIGN

In the post-Soviet period, Artem'ev's use of synthesized electronic sound significantly diminishes. In the films of Mikhalkov and Konchalovskii, he continues to use studio technology and audio effects, but draws back to more traditional styles of instrumentation. This marks his transition from a composer initially used for his specific technical expertise to one able to create specific cultural effects unlike any other, which is particularly interesting in films interfacing the Russian with the foreign.

Mikhalkov's paternalism goes international in 1998's *Sibirskii tsirul'nik* (The Barber of Siberia), which depicts a love affair between a nineteenth-century Imperial cadet, Andrei, and an American, Jane. 'Mikhalkov's idealized vision of the pre-revolutionary officer's honour and dignity,' offers more as a model to be emulated than Kotov does.⁴⁹ The film verges on opera, with an almost constant presence of score music, melodramatic narrative excesses and the very title, a play on *The Barber of Seville*. This is not to mention the role of Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro*, the opera performed and adored by Andrei in the film.

Egorova deems the film's music a 'guide,' acting as a commentary on and

⁴⁸ Youngblood, *The Cosmopolitan and the Patriot*, pp. 36–37.

⁴⁹ Susan Larsen, 'National Identity, Cultural Authority, and the Post-Soviet Blockbuster: Nikita Mikhalkov and Aleksei Balabanov,' *Slavic Review*, 62, 2003, 3, 491–511 (p. 502).

illustration of plot development.⁵⁰ While she likens this to the Hollywood traditions, it also harks back to the days when opera was considered a model for the audio-visual in Soviet cinema, harnessing music's expressiveness.⁵¹ In a dueling scene between Andrei and a love rival, wildly swirling violins blend with the clink of swords and dynamic accents closely match montage shifts. This synchronicity, a cinematic effect inherited from opera, creates tension by means of music's expressiveness — unifying musical tension with character experience, and making the viewer feel Andrei's honourable struggle.

Jane is unable to grasp Russian culture, setting her apart from Andrei. Under her very American voiceover description of Maslenitsa, a stereotypical balalaika-based piece plays, one layer playing the distinctive tremolo style of chord emphasis and another playing a heavily-accentuated single line melody — another disingenuous extrapolation of *narodnaia muzyka*. This meta-diegetic music is not a representation of Russia but of Jane's impression of Russia, suggesting that foreign understanding can never transcend the superficial.

Mozart, the vessel of Russian paternalism, is adored by Andrei and his unknown American son, but is foreign. Andrei jumps off stage while performing *Marriage of Figaro* and attacks his rival for Jane's affections. A theme starts up with fugal melodic interplay between a trumpet and string line. This blend of melodic voices is an expression of Andrei and Jane's tragic interplay. The jump away from Mozart into fugal interplay, two voices striving to unify, shows the frustrated nature of Russian identity — finding some expression in European culture but seeking something more. The expression of Russian identity in *Barber of Siberia* is one of lauding honour and dignity, but in a mysterious form that is inaccessible to the outside. Artem'ev engages with operatic, citational and dramaturgic musical functions in putting this problem to sound.

Andrei Konchalovskii's *The Inner Circle* (1991) depicts father-persecutor Stalin's Russia. Konchalovskii made this English-language production 'to explain Russia to the Americans.'⁵² Most analysis addresses its flawed representation of Russian culture, but there is some intent in this that Artem'ev helps construct. Artem'ev worked on several American projects with Konchalovskii — the role of the composer diminished by American films demanding little more than soundtrack. In films such as *Homer and Eddie* (1989), the non-diegetic soundscape is filled with popular songs of the day. Artem'ev

⁵⁰ Egorova, *Vselelnaia Eduarda Artem'eva*, p. 140.

⁵¹ Ioffe, *Muzyka sovetskogo kino*, p. 23.

⁵² Youngblood, *The Cosmopolitan and the Patriot*, p. 31.

skillfully employs the ‘principle of allusion,’ matching soundtrack songs’ stylistic properties, but this Schnittke-style take on American film does not have Soviet-style music’s expressiveness. The score for *The Inner Circle* is a step back towards the Soviet tradition.

The film oozes insincerity, the actors ‘affecting exaggerated ‘Russian’ accents,’ and the ‘mannequin-like impersonation of the dictator.’⁵³ This is reflected in plot development, Beria being the supposed arch-villain but Stalin really being behind everything, as is ultimately exposed. The only cited positive is that the film ‘definitely got the period details right.’⁵⁴ This blend of period accuracy and disingenuity is reflected musically. Il’ya Erenburg discusses Stalin’s ‘angry’ reaction to Shostakovich’s opera *Ledi Makbet Mtsenskogo uezda*, with a consequent *Pravda* publication calling it ‘muddle instead of music.’⁵⁵ Its departure from traditional Soviet operatic principles lay in ‘open expression of base passions’ and ‘ideological deviation.’⁵⁶ Artem’ev uses Stalinism’s simple opera-style music, subservient to visual dramaturgy as Cheremukhin articulated in the 1930s, setting mood and highlighting the emotional pace of certain scenes, leaving a basis for didactic overtones. The only real theme relates to protagonist Sanshin and his wife, done in a fake muzak style, with reverberating, over-produced acoustic guitar and stirring strings playing easy, consonant harmonies. This helps construct the contrived and disingenuous expression of characters’ internal passions, stemming from the backlash against *Ledi Makbet*-style audio-visual dramaturgy. The score supports a fake, foreign gaze on Russian identity with select Stalinist period details.

Urga (1991) takes the Russian abroad, portraying the friendship between a Russian in Northern China and a Mongol from a nearby rural area. The film’s first theme is that of isolated Mongol culture, led by swooning, pentatonic flute and secondary string textures with heavy reverb that carry like the screams heard in the love scenes on the steppe. Variations in accompaniment show cultural interchanges — an electric bass guitar sliding in as the Mongol, Gombo, goes into an industrialised Chinese town. This shows Mongol heritage coming into contact with different historical developments, best shown as the flute melody is transposed onto an electric guitar when the steppe becomes part of a TV world. However, the gaze of ‘the Russian, a seemingly secondary character, is, in fact, the

⁵³ Ibid. p. 31–32.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Andrei Konchalovsky, *The Inner Circle: An Inside View of Soviet Life Under Stalin* (New York: Newmarket Press, 1992), p. 35.

⁵⁶ Irina Kotkina, ‘Soviet Empire and Operatic Realm: Stalinist Search for the Model Soviet Opera’, *Revue des études slaves*, 84, 2013, 3/4, 505–518 (pp. 514–5).

primary concern.⁵⁷ The tune is Western in harmonic and formal development, carrying only generic features in a Western construction of the oriental. This creates a reductive formulation of Mongol culture accessible to a Western audience — the Mongol will be a basis for formulation of the Russian's identity.

The second theme quotes *Na sopkakh Manchurii* (On the Hills of Manchuria), a song about the Russo-Japanese war. An acoustic guitar constantly plays non-diegetic improvised fragments of its main melody, accompanied by tremolo balalaika, until it is played diegetically when Russian Sergei sings it in a nightclub. At this stage, having heard it vaguely and now in full, the viewer has the same sensation as Sergei — a tune vaguely stored in cultural memory and coming to the fore. This runs alongside Sergei's struggle to drag his heritage into the present. The Russian and the Mongol are outsiders together; the music conveys their shared struggle to cling on to their heritage. From a Russian perspective, this blends particularist and universalist outlooks. The Russian is neither Chinese nor American, perhaps not even European, seen when 'Chinese opera music...changes the music to Wagner's opera *Lohengrin*,' as he struggles to stay awake in his truck.⁵⁸ This diegetic music shows the reality of the Russian's tenuous cultural position in the film world, while the score music reflects his inner search for his cultural origins. He holds a cultural identification with another in-between, one who is very different to him. While not fully universalist, this cannot be particularist either. The score music is fundamental in opening up this new negotiation of Russia's global identity, in a film about the Soviet Union's dying days. It is the epitome of Artem'ev's style, replete with cultural reference, traditional music and contemporary sound technology.

CONCLUSION

Rather than locking himself away in the laboratories of the third wave, creating music that only 'people who have studied in a conservatory can understand,' Artem'ev has used technology to broaden film music's remit, finding an optimal balance between contradictory tendencies of 'elite' and 'mass' music.⁵⁹ This has permitted the blending of

⁵⁷ Lars Kristensen, 'The 'Far East' Neighbour in Nikita Mikhalkov's *Urga*,' in Lars Kristensen, Ewa Mazierska and Eva Näripea (eds.), *Postcolonial Approaches to Eastern European Cinema: Portraying Neighbours on Screen* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2013), 277–302 (p. 283).

⁵⁸ Ibid. p. 285.

⁵⁹ Khrushchev's assessment of avant-garde music developed in the 1960s; see Egorova, *Vselennaia Eduarda Artem'eva*, p. 35.

diegetic and non-diegetic sound, incorporation of contemporary styles and aural representation of technological progress. It has also allowed him to engage with Utopian and futuristic aspects of Russian/Soviet national identity, including the Russian Idea and Russia’s tenuous relationship with the path set out by West, the so-called ‘path of progress and civilisation for all mankind.’⁶¹

He has related to a broad range of styles and modes of cultural expression — the period specifics of baroque, the artistic and social demands of opera, the historical role of folk — and articulated the relationship between their genuine and disingenuous manifestations. He is able to employ both traditional and new musical forms for specific cultural effect. The philosophical diktats of Ioffe, Cheremukhin etc. are just one mode of thinking, as is Schnittke or the ‘third wave’. Film music’s artistic boundaries are both well-defined and simultaneously transcended. Artem’ev’s thorough knowledge and expert application of these forms allows a well-articulated cultural landscape.

This cultural landscape is the searching nature of Russian identity, that ‘Russian national identity lies not in the resolution but in the nature of the discussion.’⁶² Artem’ev’s versatility has allowed him to expose the many facets of this discussion. His breadth of cultural output in films relating to national identity underscores Russia’s multitude of cultural elements — a basis for the self-examining culture shown, and heard, on screen.

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⁶⁰ Stetsiuk and Abakumov, *Tret’e napravlenie*, p. 8.

⁶¹ Berdiaev, *Russkaia ideia*, p. 42.

⁶² Franklin and Widdis, *National Identity in Russian Culture*, p. 4.

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